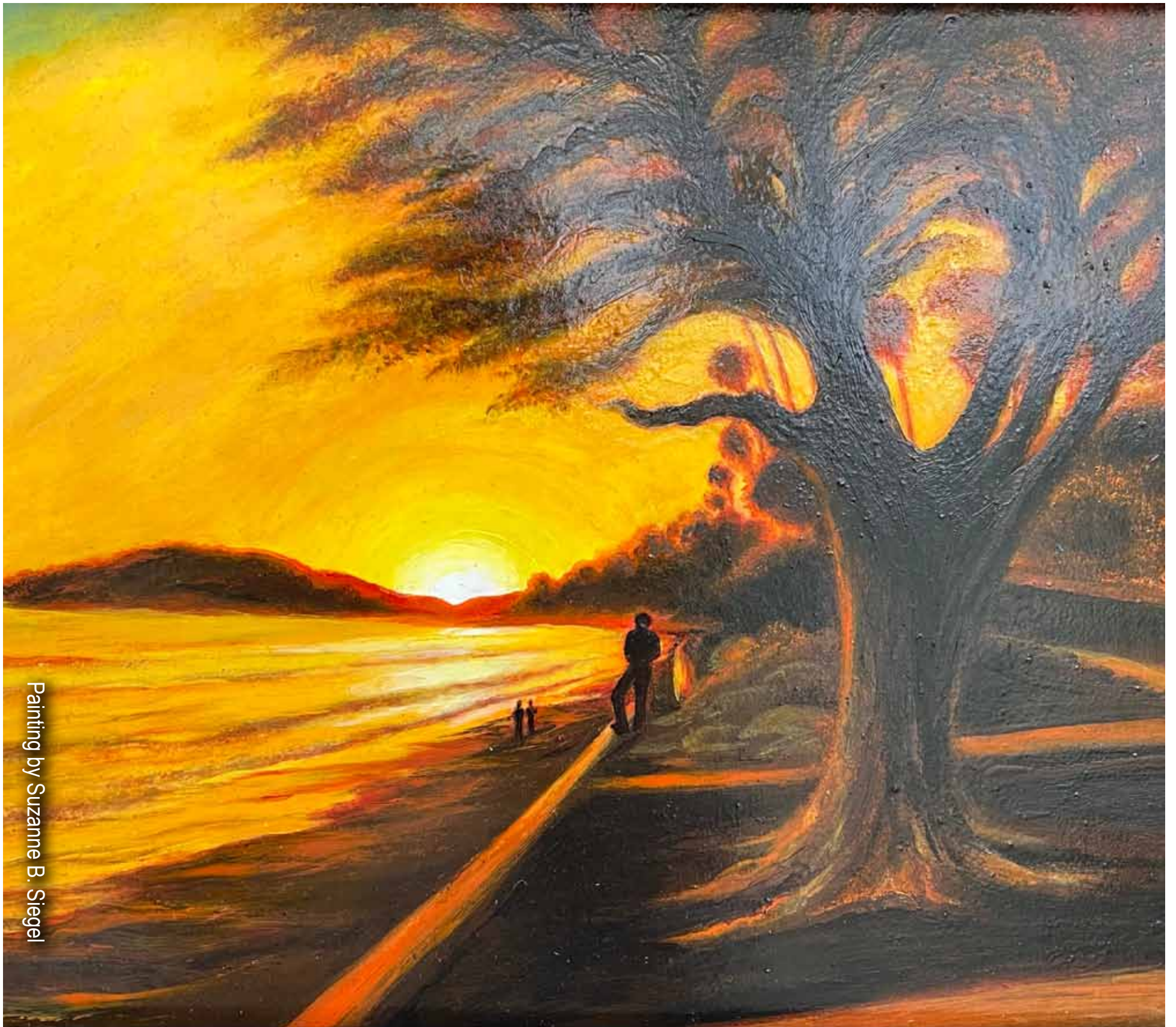
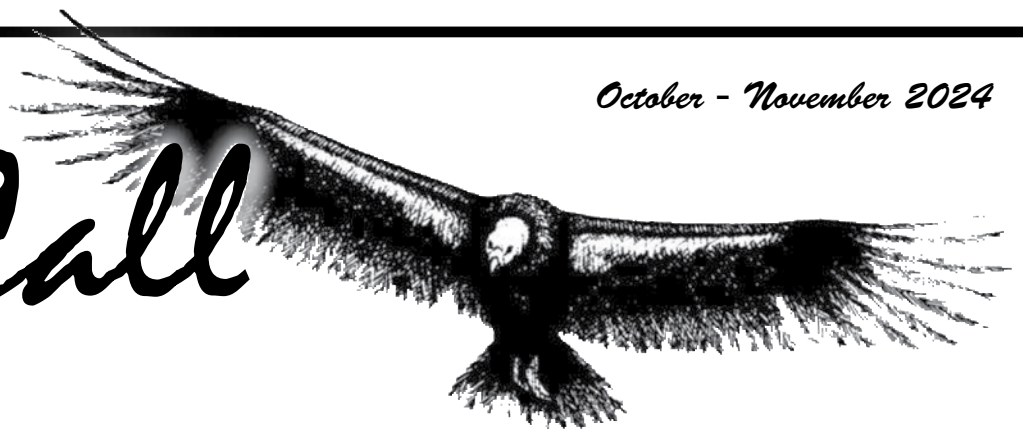


Vol. 24, No. 5 of 6

October - November 2024

Condor Call

Journal of the Sierra Club's
Santa Barbara - Ventura Chapter



Painting by Suzanne B. Siegel

Plastic Suit ... Oil Boot ... Political Winds ... Ag things ... 75 Years!

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Back page

JOIN THE CLUB - ONLY \$15 - FREE BAG - SIERRACLUB.ORG



Volunteers extraordinaire at our first-ever sponsorship of the Ventura Land Trust's Wild & Scenic Film festival in August. They are Joan Lutz and Julie Henszey. These are the fun kinds of events you can volunteer for too! See story below. (Photo by Condor John)

Local help needed

Editor's note: This story is about help needed for the Santa Barbara Group; however, if you live in Ventura County, there are also similar volunteer positions available, including being on our Executive Committee. Contact Condor John at 805 452-2885 or john@gmusman.com

The Sierra Club covering Santa Barbara' South Coast is welcoming people who want to make a difference for the future of our communities and our planet.

These volunteer positions don't require more than a few hours per month and can be done from home. They could include planning events, communicating with members, and keeping an eye on local government to encourage environmentally friendly transportation initiatives, among others.

As the nation's premier environmental group, we rely on volunteer leaders to be active and engaged in these critical areas.

If you love the outdoors, if you want to protect your community and if you want to see the planet remain healthy for future generations, roll up your sleeves and join us!

Contact Emily Engel for more information at 805-637-1052 or emilyaengel@gmail.com

Each of the positions below may entail a few hours per month. Specific needs for the SB Group include:

clude:

Group Treasurer to track our income/expenses, attend monthly group gatherings 2nd Tuesdays at noon.

Group Secretary to record minutes on 2nd Tuesday at noon, maybe an hour per month.

PR/Social Media Chair, which could entail reaching out to local media to promote club events, posting on social media, conducting interviews and public statements as needed. Time: three hours per month.

Events Chair activities include planning events, organizing group participation in community events and working with other volunteers, about three hours per month.

Transportation Chair would likely include keeping notes on transit modes and experiences and sharing them with the group. Also representing the Sierra Club at local government meetings that address transportation issues and working with other groups, about three hours per month.

Membership Engagement Chair is important and would include growing and maintaining an engaged and active member/ volunteer base, welcoming new members and planning fun events for them and directing them into other volunteer roles, about three hours per month.

Sierra Club sues Exxon for plastic pollution

A coalition of non-profit environmental organizations [filed a lawsuit](#) on Sept. 23 against Exxon-Mobil, the world's largest producer of single-use plastic polymers.

The coalition includes the Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation, Heal the Bay, and San Francisco Baykeeper.

The complaint, filed in San Francisco County Superior Court, alleges violations of California nuisance law and California unfair competition law and alleges Exxon concealed the harms caused by plastics. The California Attorney General's Office filed a separate action addressing the same crises.

"As alleged in our complaint, Exxon profited by claiming plastics are safe and recyclable. But we know better now—our environment and health were being sacrificed just to protect Exxon's bottom line," said Allison Chin, President of the Sierra Club's Board of Directors. "Plastic Pollution has risen to be one of the defining environmental issues

of our time. If we're going to clean up the mountains of plastic waste, Exxon needs to clean up its act."

The suit further alleges that Exxon systematically led the public to believe that plastic waste is easily and safely disposable via recycling, incineration or landfills, when in reality, plastic persists in the environment for thousands of years, leaking toxic chemicals that are known to harm human health and the environment. Exxon's conduct has exacerbated the environmental crises of plastic pollution and harmed California's coasts and waterways.

Even with recycling programs in place, in the U.S. less than 5% of our plastic is recycled into another plastic product, despite being labeled as "recyclable." Exxon-produced polymer resins are directly responsible for over 6 million metric tons of plastic waste annually — equivalent to the weight of 300,000 garbage trucks — which end up contaminating our environment and our bodies, at every stage of its product lifecycle.

"For 40 years, the Surfrider Foundation has been fighting to protect our ocean, waves, and beaches. We've battled plastic pollution through beach cleanups, public education, and commonsense policy initiatives at the local, state, and federal levels. Despite these tireless efforts, 85% of items collected in our California beach cleanups in 2023 were still single-use plastics," said Jen-



LOCAL PROTECTION

State takes on Big Oil

"We are taking on Big Oil and having a real chance of winning."

Gov. Gavin Newsom backed up his comment when he signed various bills Sept. 25 that will require fees that companies must pay to cover the cost of cleaning up 40,000 idle wells across the state, along with another bill that will strengthen local government's power to restrict oil and gas production (AB 3233) and another that would shut down the 1,000-acre Inglewood Oil Field by 2030.

And the Sierra Club was right in the thick of it, along with other ecogroups.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "more than a century of oil and gas drilling in California has left more than 100,000 wells unplugged, allowing them to leak planet-warming methane and dangerous chemicals, such as benzene. The cost of properly closing these wells could run as high as \$23 billion according to a [recent Sierra Club analysis](#)."

That analysis noted such wells are "Primarily concentrated in Kern, Los Angeles, Ventura, Fresno and Santa Barbara counties, and these wells are overwhelmingly located in rural and predominantly Latino counties with household incomes that are far lower than the state average."

About 40,000 of California's uncapped wells are classified as idle, meaning they haven't produced any oil or gas in at least two years.

"This is a landmark victory for taxpayers and communities most affected by the harmful health impacts of neighborhood oil drilling," said Assembly member Gregg Hart (D-Santa Barbara), who wrote the bill (AB 1866).

"Sierra Club staff, volunteers, and our coalition partners have mo-

bilized at every step of the process to pass these vital pieces of legislation to #MakePollutersPay," said Jasmine Vazin, Deputy Director of the club's Beyond Dirty Fuels Campaign.

She added that the Sierra Club's report on the state of idle wells in CA "facilitated bill concepts and provided data for supporting arguments throughout this legislative session." Staff also sent out major outlet stories to elevate the issues, and "our digital arcs generated hundreds of constituent calls."

Her conclusion was that "this victory exemplifies how effective cross capacity coordination builds the power to win."

On another issue, our Assemblymember Steve Bennett (D-Ventura) weighed in by defending deeper state involvement in monitoring gasoline production, which is likely

to decline as more electric cars overtake gas car sales. California Energy Commission, meantime, has offered a list of 12 options for policymakers to help manage the industry decline.

"While I recognize that the industry has an obligation to maximize profits, we have an obligation also to maximize what's in the interests of the public," Bennett said.

Western States Petroleum Assn. called the actions "political theater" adding that the moves would "cost jobs while forcing us to bring in more oil from overseas." Indications are that the oil industry will fight the new bills in court.

However, the Sierra Club analysis argues that "Plugging all unplugged wells could create at least 54,974 direct, indirect, and induced jobs across the state, with 33,969 attributable to wells in Kern County."

~ Compiled by John Hankins



AB 3233 SIGNED!

affirms the rights of local governments to protect their residents from oil and gas pollution.



AB 1866 SIGNED!

requires oil companies to plug their idle wells more quickly or pay increased fees, protecting public health and creating thousands of new jobs.



AB 2716 SIGNED!

imposes fines on low-production wells that are putting communities at risk in the largest urban oil field in the country.

COVER PHOTO
Artist Suzanne Siegel's vision of "a Saffron Sunset at Butterfly Beach" in Santa Barbara, acrylic and ink on canvas. If you like her style, contact her at (269) 226-0257 or PO Box 2782 Kalamazoo Mich. 49003.



Plastic Free Goleta is helping to diminish use of drastic plastic, which is a scourge on the earth and sea (See story Pg. 4). It's part of the new Go Green Goleta advocacy and there's a video with tips from city staff; go to the top link for English y el enlace inferior para español:
https://youtu.be/hwhvBbw_C0o
<https://youtu.be/4dU5r15g4pc>

OCT. 30 HEARING

Want another Ocean of Oil?

By Jon Ullman

There's a fire brewing in the ocean.

The CA Fire Marshal could enable oil drilling on the Gaviota Coast that stopped a decade ago after the Plains Pipeline burst.

[Santa Barbara Independent columnist Nick Welsh summarized it perfectly writing:](#)

"In 35 minutes, about 142,000 gallons of crude burst out of a corroded section of the pipe. Before anyone knew what happened, thousands of gallons of oil oozed its way back into the ocean.

Hundreds of animals living in and out of the water were covered in oil and died. A Santa Barbara jury would find the pipeline company guilty of nine criminal charges—one felony and eight misdemeanors—for violating basic safety practices that operators knew or should have known would lead to this catastrophe. A 10-mile stretch of the pipeline located along our county's coast was badly corroded, some spots by as much as 85 percent.

Back then, no one verified. Today, we are being asked to blindly trust Sable Oil and the state government agencies calling the shots that the pipeline can safely be restarted. In fact, it's worse than that. Instead, we are being told to trust. And blindly.

As part of the deal, Sable Offshore—a brand-new company cre-

ated with money borrowed from ExxonMobil—bought the pipeline itself, which Exxon had previously bought from Plains All American. It is now seeking permits from the California Fire Marshal to reactivate the pipeline. It is not proposing to replace the existing pipeline, but instead to repair the old pipeline, which is reportedly corroded and badly pitted in at least 80 spots.

In addition, Sable is also seeking a special waiver to not include a protection system that is a basic safety feature used on pretty much all underground oil and gas pipelines. It prevents pipeline corrosion.

What do any of us, including the County of Santa Barbara, know about this proposal? Pretty much nothing."

What to do

CAL FIRE should protect us and not let Sable Offshore restart the Plains Pipeline with the flip of both a proverbial and actual switch. The stakes are too high for one California agency to waive requirements for a failed pipeline.

One thing Santa Barbara County can do is deny the transfer of ownership to Sable: On October 30, Santa Barbara County Planning Commission will vote whether to allow Sable Offshore to take over Plains Pipeline and Exxon's other oil processing facilities, thereby allowing Exxon to avoid liability for resulting spills and other disasters.

Sable is a speculative startup that would simply go bankrupt in the event of a spill and leave taxpayers on the hook for major liabilities. We need everyone to email comments in advance and show up at the hearing in downtown Santa Barbara.

Email Planning Commission board assistant, David Villalobos, with a comment opposing Sable taking over Exxon's facilities: dvillalo@co.santa-barbara.ca.us



It was standing room only at the turn-out at the State Lands Commission meeting in Goleta for comments on the Exxon/Sable transfer of ownership from Exxon and possible restart of offshore oil rigs now on standby. Sierra Club opposes the move. (Photo by Katie Davis)

ENERGY WRAP

Oil industry passes on gasses

By Katie Davis

Earlier this year I pointed out a glaring omission in Santa Barbara County's proposed Climate Action Plan: It gave big oil a free pass.

While Ventura and Los Angeles counties climate plans counted oil industry pollution and included measures to reduce it, Santa Barbara's plan did not.

Over several months the Sierra Club and our allies mounted a vigorous campaign to convince Santa Barbara County to include oil and gas pollution in their Climate Action Plan. And it worked!

On August 27 we got a 3:2 vote by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors in favor of passing

community greenhouse gas pollution so that we can accurately see how we're doing over time. And it was unfair because all the rest of us were challenged to reduce emissions, while the oil industry was left off the hook.

Nor was this a minor omission. If Exxon's facilities, shut down since the 2015 Refugio oil spill, but once one of our largest polluters, were turned back on, [pollution would soar](#), even as the county could claim to be meeting climate goals.

It won't be easy to reduce pollution sufficiently, and it's much harder if we leave out the most polluting industry.

A single oil operation could erase the work done to reduce carbon

Another rationale given by the county was that it lacks regulatory control over oil and gas facilities. However, the county has more control over the oil industry through its permitting authority than over other sources of pollution, such as our cars' tailpipes. If the plan was restricted to what the county directly controls, there would be virtually nothing to count.

The coalition asking the county to fix the dirty oil loophole included the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Center, Community Environmental Council, CFROG, the Center for Biological Diversity, Food & Water Watch, CAUSE, the Coastal Chumash band, the Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation, SBCAN, the Clean Coalition, Los Padres ForestWatch, Citizens Climate Lobby, 350SB, UCSB Environmental Affairs Board and many others.

We asked the Board of Supervisors to amend the Climate Action Plan to include emissions from the fossil-fuel industry.

To that end we submitted [legal opinions](#), a [25-org sign-on letter](#), and our members and supporters sent in a flood of comment letters. We also held meetings with staff, supervisors and the county's consultants.

The Climate Action Plan contains good measures that will ensure our transportation and buildings can be powered by renewable energy, that there is public charging for electric cars, more bike paths and affordable housing to reduce commute times.

To the extent these reduce pollution from burning fossil fuels, it will contribute to California's goals to address climate change, which is driving record heat, wildfires, and other impacts. It will also save lives lost to air pollution that contributes to asthma, respiratory illness, heart disease, and cancer.

According to scientists, the next few years are critical ones for climate action. Local Climate Action Plans should be real ones that meaningfully contribute to California's goals, but that only works if we are transparent and honest about tallying emissions and don't give the most polluting industries a free pass.

Our campaign ultimately succeeded in convincing our Board of Supervisors to ask staff to fix this. However, our work is not yet done. We need to return in six months, around February of 2025, to ensure the pollution reduction measures and goals for the fossil fuel industry that the Board requested from staff are meaningful and formally adopted as part of the County's Climate Plan.

And we need to continue to fight the restart of Exxon's shuttered facilities and other oil projects that would take us backwards.



No Oil sign at a recent protest at the Santa Barbara Administration building (Photo by Gabriel Vargas)

an oil and gas resolution in addition to the Climate Action Plan that calls for staff to return in six months with measurable ways to reduce oil and gas emissions as part of climate goals, recognizing the state goal to phase out oil and gas production, and removing wording that implied the county can't regulate oil and gas.

The problem was that Santa Barbara County's [2030 Climate Action Plan](#) challenged the community to cut our emissions in half but left out the one industry most responsible for climate pollution in the county and the world — the oil and gas industry.

The goal itself was appropriate. Reducing greenhouse gas pollution 50 percent by 2030 (below 2018 levels) is in line with what the global community [agrees is necessary](#) to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The problem was in how the county was tallying pollution and measuring success at reaching the goal.

Using twisted logic, they were leaving out the biggest polluters and contributors to the problem — Exxon/Sable, Cat Canyon producers like HVI (previously Greka), and all other oil and gas facilities.

That made the exercise both untrue and unfair. It was untrue because we need a neutral tally of all com-

pollution by every other person, every home, every small business, every farm in the county. Even as we switch to electric tractors, ride our bikes to work, install solar on our schools, and purchase EVs and heat pumps, this one industry would have been getting a free pass — their pollution not even counted.

In contrast, Ventura and Los Angeles counties do count oil industry pollution and are taking action to reduce it. Los Angeles is working toward [phasing out oil](#) drilling and Ventura County requires the use of "electrically powered equipment from 100 percent renewable sources" for oil and gas exploration and production and prohibits trucking oil and venting or flaring of gas if feasible. Ventura's regulations survived settlement with the oil industry.

So why did our climate plan exclude pollution from oil and gas facilities? To comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the county must include measures to reduce sources of pollution they count. Rather than make this notoriously resistant industry play by the rules, they decided not to count oil industry pollution. However, CEQA requires we [tally all pollution](#) from all activities — not pick and choose and pretend that pollution is less than it really is.

Condor Call

SierraClub.org/SantaBarbara-Ventura ~ All phone numbers 1-805 area code

EDITOR: 'Condor' John Hankins, 452-2885
260 Pacos St. Ventura CA 93001 • John@gnusman.com

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Sierra Club

SierraClub.org/santabarbara-ventura

Post Office Box 31241, Santa Barbara, Ca 93130-1241
Santa Barbara 617-3106 • Ventura 988-0339

Change of Address: address.changes@sierraclub.org or (415) 977-5653

NATIONAL OFFICE & MEMBER SERVICES: (415) 977-5500

2101 Webster St. Suite 1300, Oakland CA 94612

WASHINGTON LEGISLATIVE OFFICE: (202) 547-1141

50 F Street, NWW, 8th Floor Washington, D.C., 20001

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jonathan.Ullman@SierraClub.org

• EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE •

Katie Davis (Chair): 451-4574, kdavis2468@gmail.com

Jim Hines (Vice-Chair): 340-9266, jhcasitas@gmail.com

Gerry Ching (Secretary): 964-5411, gching@cox.net

Member at-large: Steve Colome sdcolome@gmail.com

Member at-large: Elisabeth Lamar 805-667-7617 elisabethlamar@hotmail.com

Rebecca August (Arguello Group Rep): 350-0629, rebeccaugust@mac.com

Niki Stokols (Conejo Group Rep): ConejoGroupHiking@gmail.com

Emily Engel (Santa Barbara Group Rep): emilyaengel@gmail.com

• GROUP CHAIRS •

Arguello: Rebecca August 350-0629, rebeccaugust@mac.com

Conejo: Niki Stokols, ConejoGroupHiking@gmail.com

Santa Barbara: Jim Taylor, jim@carpedata.com

Ventura Network: OPEN - Contact 805-452-2885, john@gnusman.com

• CLUB SERVICES •

Forest issues: Jim Hines, 340-9266, jhcasitas@gmail.com

Conservation SB: Kate Mullin, mullin@shelter-vet.com

Conservation Vta: Jim Hines, 340-9266, jhcasitas@gmail.com

Legal: David Gold, 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@aol.com

Outings: Maureen Hernandez, Moenandez@gmail.com

Political SB: Katherine Bradford, katherinebradforddsb@gmail.com

Political Vta: David Gold, 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@aol.com

Transportation: Kent Bullard, 218-6945, KentBullard@yahoo.com

Typography and production by Dan Fuller

We get around, Come join us

Even at age 75 (yes, our club locally is that old, see back page story) your local Sierra Club is active in so many ways from hikes to bikes to fighting polluters and working toward a better, cleaner world. See page 1 story on how to help in Santa Barbara and Ventura.

Sierra Club is the largest and most enduring grassroots environmental advocacy organization in the nation. Our motto: Explore, Enjoy & Protect the Planet.



Alex Alcantar at work in the Ventura Bike Hub, where bikes are fixed and given to those who need them, notably kids! Photo by Nina Danza, our Sierra Club bike contact on MeetUp.



Students at UCSB have their own Sierra Club connection and we love to invite the young to get involved; after all, they will inherit the earth. Photo Geordie Skully.



Condor John at Yosemite, who for two years has volunteered at Sierra Club's Heritage House, full of the club's rich history, from John Muir to Rachel Carson and our current leaders.



Oh, we have fun too even with our serious struggle against polluters, notably oil, plastic and pesticides. So here, Katie Davis and Wendy Santamaria invited all Earth Day participants to toss a bean bag at the oil polluters. Did some miss? Photo by Jim Taylor.

COASTAL CLEANUP

Thousands picked up local trash

The annual Coastal Cleanup Day on Sept 21 this year calculated 28,751 volunteers scoured beaches, creeks, rivers and inland areas, and that's just with 60% of the cleanup sites reporting as of press time.

Those volunteers picked up 242,312 pounds of trash and an additional 12,461 pounds of recyclable materials for a total of 127 tons. About 75 percent of the trash that volunteers have removed is plastic, a material that never completely biodegrades and has numerous harmful environmental consequences.

Preliminary results in Santa Barbara and Ventura were similar, with hundreds of volunteers cleaning beaches and creeks, including Sierra Club members. In Goleta, Creek Week was celebrated beyond this date to Sept. 28.

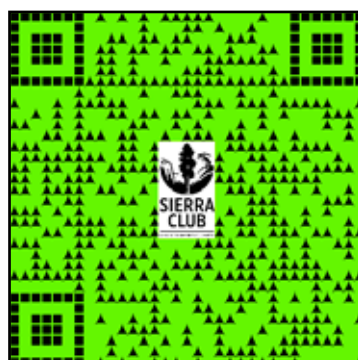
In Santa Barbara County, with not all the sites reporting yet, 1,022 volunteers at 32 sites covered 85 miles and picked up over 4,929 pounds of litter. Ventura county results were absent as of press time, but last year was a great success with 1,287 volunteers participating either on their own or at an event and picked up 7,800 pounds of trash and recyclables.

Volunteers hauled trash from than 20 local sites for Ventura County. Notably, about 150 Huehene High School students were among volunteers who tackled the Ormond Lagoon and surrounding Ormond Beach area. While inland sites focused efforts on waterways from Camarillo, Ventura and Fillmore to Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley.

Statewide, participants scoured more than 750 cleanup sites, removing hundreds of thousands of pounds of trash before it could be washed out to sea during the rainy season.

Data has over the last 40 years revealed a great deal about the extent and nature of the marine debris problem.

About 75 percent of the trash that volunteers have removed is plastic, and that up to 80% of the trash collected on the California coast originates on land.



If you have a printed Condor Call in your hand, you can tap into this QR code to get a full color version that has hot links! Try it.

\$23 BILLION QUESTION:

WHAT CREATED CALIFORNIA'S ORPHAN AND IDLE WELL CRISIS?

DECEMBER 2023

Sierra Club's report on the state of idle wells in CA "facilitated bill concepts and provided data for supporting arguments throughout this legislative session," noted Jasmine Vazin, Deputy Director of the club's Beyond Dirty Fuels Campaign. Three oil companies: Chevron, Aera Energy, and California Resources Corporation are responsible for 68% of the state's current idle wells, and they have the funds to do it. To view the document, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/IdleWellsReport>

Read our blog



Most meetings continue online for now *Group News*

The public is welcome to our programs

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

~ Meets 4th Thursday 7pm of every month, via internet for now. Email Secretary Gerry Ching for the agenda: gching@cox.net
~ Chapter website and blog at: www.SierraClub.org/SantaBarbara-Ventura

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

~ We meet 2nd Tuesdays, 11-12pm of each month. For details and to follow the South Coast area, contact: <http://www.sbsierraclub.org>
<https://www.FACEBOOK.com/SBSierraclub>
<https://TWITTER.com/SBSierraClub>
<https://www.INSTAGRAM.com/SierraClubSantaBarbara>
<https://www.MEETUP.com/SierraClub-SantaBarbara>
<https://tinyurl.com/SBGroupBlog>

ARGUELLO GROUP

Our North County Group will keep you informed on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SierraClubArguelloGroup ~Volunteers needed; your talents could make a difference. Call 350-0629 or: RebeccaAugust@mac.com

VENTURA NETWORK

~ For board meeting dates, times and location email: sierraclubventura@gmail.com
~ Get latest info about the western Ventura County group via Facebook and a blog: <http://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubFB>
<https://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubBlog>
~New MEETUP site for hikes, outings etc: www.meetup.com/SierraClubVentura

CONEJO GROUP

~ Events, outings and meetings will be sent to you if you send an email request to: ConejoGroupHiking@gmail.com.
Or view the Conejo Group website: www.sierraclub.org/SantaBarbara-Ventura
www.sierraclub.org/SantaBarbara-Ventura/outings



Ditch the plastic cups, bottles

By Deborah Williams

Editor's note: Another practical action story that you can take to help tone down Climate Change. Williams is a UCSB lecturer in Environmental Studies.

When you are at a party, a coffee shop, a gym or a store, are you dismayed by how many single-use bottles or cups you see?

This month's column focuses on ditching single use beverage bottles and cups – and offers great, win/win alternatives.

Americans buy about **50 billion** disposable water bottles annually, which averages out to **156 plastic bottles** a year for every person in our nation. These containers demand **more than 17 million barrels of oil** to produce. Last year, Gatorade alone had about **7 billion** dollars worth of sales in the US.

While a plastic water bottle may take only a few minutes to use, it requires up to **450 years** to degrade completely -- polluting our waterways, oceans, lands, landfills and wildlife. Consuming water from the tap, as opposed to a plastic bottle, **reduces** energy consumption by 85% and greenhouse gas emissions by 79%.

Plastic water bottles are also bad for our health. Scientists have found microplastics in **93%** of tested bottled water. Another **study** discov-

ered that a liter of three tested brands of popular bottled water contained between 110,000 and 370,000 plastic bits.

Plastic and Styrofoam cups also pose problems. A Styrofoam cup results in about **33 grams of CO2**, and takes about **500 years** to decompose. Both the carcinogens benzene and styrene are used to manufacture polystyrene.

What about single use "paper" cups? Most beverage cups for coffee and tea contain both paper and a thin plastic (polyethylene) waterproof lining. Because the lining of the cup starts degrading when the hot beverage is in it, the cup releases, on average, **25,000 micron-sized plastic particles** into the coffee or tea that is being consumed. The plastic lining also makes the cups almost always **not recyclable**.

Then there is the plastic lid, which **adds to** pollution and human health problems. Even 100% paper cups have a **significant impact**, producing both CO2 (up to 110grams per cup with a paper sleeve), and resulting in about 6.5 million trees being cut down annually.

Fortunately, there are terrific alternatives.

Wherever we go, we can carry and drink from a reusable beverage bottle, many of which can take hot or cold drinks. Aluminum, stainless steel, ceramic and glass water

bottles are a great choice, as well as bottles made from BPA-free plastic.

Some very helpful "best of" lists include: "30 Best Water Bottles to Keep You Refreshed" from **Men's Health**; "The Best Water Bottles" by the **New York Times Wirecutter**; "15 of the Very Best Water Bottles" by **New York Magazine**; and **bon appetit's** Best Water bottles list.

There are a multitude of wonderful options. Some "best of" lists can be found on **Wired's** choices; **epicurious's** picks; and **Forbes'** vetted list. Fortunately, most coffee shops will use the reusable cup/mug you bring in, and some, like **Starbucks**, will accept them for Drive-thru orders.

If you want flavor, vitamins and or electrolytes in your water, just add powder or tablets. There are many highly rated options, including lists from: **New York Magazine** ("The very Best Electrolyte Powders and Mixes"); **99Boulders**; **Rolling Stone**; and **verywellfit**.

Final thoughts. Drinking bottled water is expensive and can be from 240 to 10,000 times **more expensive** than tap water.

Finally, you're also helping to influence others. Speaking from my own personal experience, when one of my students brought a personal mug to a Coffee Chat, that was when I decided I must do this in the future -- and I have.



More hiking and less destruction of forests, amen! Forest conservation is one of the Sierra Club's oldest legacy campaigns, dating back to early efforts to protect California's sequoias in the 1890's.

GREETING FRIENDS

Shake hands with trees

By Jim Hines

My first handshake with a tree was when I was 6 years old and I grasped the limb of a large Poplar tree growing at the entrance to my family's ranch, the tree shook my hand and hundreds of Autumn yellow leaves fell to the ground showering me along their way. . . I felt one with the tree . . . my lifelong bond with trees was made that Autumn morning.

Growing up with trees and appreciating their beauty and their importance to our world has been a true delight for me.

We had hundreds of different varieties of trees on our ranch property north of Lake Casitas: flowering trees, oak trees, evergreen trees, fruit trees and most of those are still standing today, a testament to their power and durability.

One of my favorite visits is to our former homesite on a hill which we called The Pine Grove where a large grove of Aleppo pines my father planted decades ago still dominates the hilltop site. My father is buried beside one of the large pines.

Trees provide life-giving oxygen, hold soil from eroding, provide wildlife habitat, provide shade, dazzle us with beauty and remain stately partners in our world. www.VenturaTreeAlliance.com is just one example of local efforts to plant and protect trees.

For many years I worked as the salesperson for what is known in the nursery industry as a specimen tree growing nursery. We grew, dug, boxed up and delivered to our clients many varieties of trees from 30 foot tall to 100 foot tall. Trees which had to be lifted by large cranes onto flatbed trucks and moved along roads and freeways in southern California with Highway Patrol escorts because of the tree's size. Many times, our trees had to be craned over the top of lavish estate homes to be planted in the backyards.

Trees are amazing, resilient and seemed to enjoy their journey from our growing fields to their new homes, many times homes of the rich and famous. The Sierra Club is a major

supporter of all things trees, not just working to protect the great wild forests of North America but also to the urban forest, for trees live among us.

One of the projects I am currently working on for the Sierra Club is protecting urban forests for their wildlife habitat value across the western U.S. I am working with a committee to develop a wildlife protection ordinance for the City of Los Angeles which would among other things protect trees and plants which are used by wildlife in the city.

Trees in an urban setting reduce air pollution, cool our world, provide habitat for urban wildlife and enhance our lives with beauty.

We have a great climate to grow trees here in the Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter region of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. On the mild coast we can grow tropical flowering trees such as Jacaranda, Acacias, Cassias, Metrosideros (a group of about 50 species of trees & shrubs), and many more as well as subtropical fruit trees.

In our inland areas we can grow hardy flowering trees such as Crepe Myrtle and Magnolias as well as citrus and deciduous fruit trees.

So, make your world, a world of trees, trees and more trees.

I have lots of trees in my urban forest on my property, 10 white birches surround the garden pond, a large multi red trunk Arbutus 'Marina', lots of lace leaf Japanese maples, a tropical red flowering Metrosideros, a dwarf southern Magnolia known as 'Little Gem', a Tulip flowered Magnolia, red leafed redbud, a red leafed Euphorbia and more.

My yard is cool on hot days, birds sing in the trees and delight me.

And just think, my love and appreciation of trees began with that one handshake with that large Poplar tree years ago.

~ For the trees, Jim



HINES CHRONICLES

Political winds blow strong

Editor's note: The joy and sorrows of environmental activism are recounted every issue with the popular Jim Hines Chronicles, reflecting the emails by our premier lobbyist and activist. This covers the last two months (Aug-Sept). Jim is vice-chair of our Chapter and Ventura Network. He is available as a speaker.

By Jim Hines

Sept 24: **The scheme** which is being put in place as we speak is to get enough election deniers in place in the election offices of 4 or more states (2 states are already in place, Georgia and Arizona) to NOT certify their states election results if it shows that Harris is the winner in those states.

Sept 24: **I am excited** and my heart is filled with joy seeing so many of you responding to my last week's action alert asking you to be the voice for our voiceless mountain lions and other wildlife and contact the CA Governor's office asking the governor to sign AB 2552 to ban anti-coagulant rodenticides. Governor's office says they were overwhelmed with comments in favor

Sept 20: **YOU can help** the Sierra Club help Kamala Harris become President. Here is the Sierra Club page for letter writing training: [Letter Writing to Elect Kamala Harris: Quickstart Zoom Training](https://www.sierraclub.org/letter-writing) · [Sierra Club Political \(mobilize.us\)](https://www.sierraclub.org/political)

Sept 12: **A very dangerous** document is ready to be implemented by the Trump Administration in January 2025 should American voters decide to return President Trump to the White House. Regarding the central

coast region of California where I live, Project 2025 would (short list):

- ~ Reject Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.
- ~ Return Santa Rosa Island to its former ranch owners.
- ~ Trump will declare a National Energy Emergency and could open up endless protected areas to oil and gas.
- ~ Canceling the Biden Administration's 30 x 30 Conservation Plan.

~ Slashing the budget for the National Park Service, affecting Santa Monica Mtns National Recreation Area.

~ Elimination of work on the federal endangered species act.

For a complete analysis of the destruction Project 2025 will create is here: <https://tinyurl.com/Project2025Alert>

Sept 6: **One more step** was taken today in the creation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. NOAA announced the release of the final environmental impact statement.

Sept 5: **I took part in** a most unusual meeting today: a newly formed Trump supported "National Monuments Disinformation Brigade" they call themselves. It's working to spread disinformation across the American west regarding the past and future designations of national monuments. It pays to have friends in low places (former Trump Administration officials) that allow me access to attend/participate in these types of groups.

Aug 29: **Sierra Club also** has a commitment to promoting sustain-

able organic gardening. And from September 10-12 we welcome The National Heirloom Expo to the Ventura County Fairgrounds. on the importance of saving and growing heirloom seed varieties of vegetables and flowers. I fondly remember growing up on my family's organic farm in the Ojai Valley and so much of what we grew were ancient varieties of flowers and vegetables.

Aug 28: **Out of nowhere** this past week I have received requests from eight residents of Santa Paula who want to be involved in our Sierra Club wildlife protection campaigns. I don't know who is promoting our work in Santa Paula; I have not spoken recently in the Santa Paula area. But people sure want to be engaged in wildlife protection, it seems to evoke a positive passion in people.

Aug 14: **A major source** for funding to acquire the 6500-acre Rancho Canada Larga Open Space (a top priority 30 x 30 conservation project in Ventura County) is from the California Climate Bond (Prop 4) on the November 2024 ballot. However at this time, Sierra Club California has NOT taken a position on this ballot bond.

Aug 12: **A positive** no brainer to certify by the State Coastal Commission that the proposed Chumash Heritage Marine Sanctuary is consistent with California protecting the coast. The real concern now is the timing of any official sanctuary designation . . . if it extends too late the final comment period will extend into January 2025 which is OK if American voters give us a Harris Administration but if vot-

continued to page 5

SIGHTINGS

By John Hankins

We are here to *Explore, Enjoy and Protect* the planet (Sierra Club's motto), despite turmoil in the political and environmental realms.

Check out the stories and links below on what happened in the last two months.

Join us by getting involved and have fun too. We offer activities and activism and free hikes. See Group News box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved or enjoy our free hikes via links on page 5, including via MeetUp and internet lists. If you'd like to be an official hike leader, contact our hike teacher Gerry Ching at:

gching@cox.net

Donations help a lot, and the money stays here at home doing good stuff. Donate here:

www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

Aug. 1: **New conservation** strategy to protect Montane Forests in Southern California launched, designed

to bolster the resilience of these 'sky islands' located at higher-elevations with climate-informed actions. Check it out here:

[Southern California Montane Forests Project | Climate Science Alliance](#)

Letter to editor

The recent evacuation in Pierpont due to a 2,000-gallon gasoline leak at the Sinclair station should be another wakeup call for those still addicted to petroleum. The lingering effects of the spill will haunt the neighborhood till well past Halloween.

I for one am glad to be driving an electric vehicle; my fuel comes from my solar system. A solar spill is called a "nice day". Learn more about electric vehicles on Oct. 6 in Ventura Harbor. <https://driveelectricweek.org/4123>

Kent Bullard
Ventura, CA 93004
(805) 218-6945
kentbullard@gmail.com

Political winds...

continued from page 4

ers give us a Trump then the sanctuary is likely dead.

Too much politics in DC and too much internal infighting between the tribal nations involved has delayed the sanctuary dangerously close to not happening.

Aug 9: **Space X launches** by Elon Musk are harming the marine environment off the coast of Texas, and now the CA Coastal Commission has caved into the demands of Elon Musk to launch many more rockets at VAFB.

Aug 7: **Wildlife Wednesday** is where we inundated the Biden Administration with our concerns about it not acting to protect America's precious and endangered wildlife. Most activists focused on gray wolf protection ... protecting wolves evokes a lot of emotion in people on both sides of the issue.

Biden Administration is attempting to save democratic candidates for U.S. Senate seats which could tilt the balance of power/ All the while wolves are being hunted, trapped and poisoned in the Rocky Mountain states.

Aug 1: **Refugio State Beach** is now open after being closed for repairs since the February storm caused numerous trees to fall and a sinkhole near the entrance. Reservations made months ago are honored and pent-up demand has scores of campers glad to be back.

Aug 5: **Mission Creek Restoration Project** at Oak Park starts and aims to enhance wildlife habitat, water quality, aesthetics, and flood control. Key activities include removing concrete structures and invasive plants, restoring the creek channel, and planting native vegetation. Construction is expected to be completed by October, with plant and tree installation occurring in the fall. Located along W. Alamar Ave from W Junipero St. to Tallant Rd.

Aug 9: **"Monumental"** was the Word from Violet Sage Walker, chair of the Northern Chumash

north and inland to clean out the Santa Ynez and Santa Maria rivers, due to encampments and debris. The project entails drones and GIS surveys and partnership with the county of Santa Barbara. The aerial Survey and GIS map is provided by Harry Rabin, whose work is well-known with HTO to stop oil leaks off Summerland, many left abandoned decades ago. A grant from the Rose Foundation is helping to pay for the work.

Aug 22: **Sea Level rise** estimates along the California Coast are now available thanks to Cal State University-Channel Islands students and faculty. The study found that Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Diego counties will lose the most beach parking compared to other coastal communities in California. Check out the details here: <https://tinyurl.com/bhza2c6r>

Aug 29: **Rincon Island** hearing to



Kent Bullard, our Transportation leader and head of EV Advocates, helped Condor John set up a booth at the Topa Topa brewery in September for a special event by REI on saving the trees. Other eco groups included CFROG, Ventura Land Trust, Forest Watch, among others. (Photo by Condor John)

Tribal Council, when the CA Coastal Commission gave its blessing to the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary proposal that would encompass between 4,400 and 7,600 square miles of ocean waters and submerged lands off the coast of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. "It's a huge milestone in the 10-year-long campaign and 40-plus years of work by our Central Coast community," said Gianna Patchen from the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter, which is fully supported by our own SB-Ventura Chapter.

Aug 9: **Heal the Ocean** is going

consider certification of the Final EIR and, if the Final EIR is certified, act on the proposed Project at the next scheduled meeting of the CA Coastal Commission.

Sept 6: **NEW Survey Alert!** Ventura has released the latest version of the Land Use Map for our General Plan Update after getting hundreds of public comments. Visit <https://bit.ly/3APZ2kW> to view the map and share your thoughts today! #Ventura #GeneralPlanUpdate #OurVisionOurFuture

Sept 7: A **"renewal story"** for gray wolf: A hunter killed the last gray



On Sept 12, Goleta started developing a new full-service multi-modal train station, next to the existing Amtrak platform on South La Patera Lane. By creating a full-service station, the City hopes to increase train ridership, improve connections to bus transit, accommodate transit service to/from the Santa Barbara Airport and UCSB and add new bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

wolf in California in 1924. Since then, the predator has been absent from the Golden State until 2011 when a young wolf from Oregon crossed state lines. By 2015, a new wolf pack was established. Now, there are 44 gray wolves in the wild, state officials said. Environmentalists call it a success while ranchers are alarmed. (From Bay Area News Group)

Sept 8: **Santa Barbara Bowl** Foundation has completed a 133.33 kW solar system to offset power consumption for concerts and daily operations. The system will create about 75% of the energy consumed by the facilities year-round. Other initiatives include hand-sorting event waste, diverting 75% from landfills, 100% reusable cups, and 85% of concession items sourced organically.

Sept 12: **Groundbreaking** for a new Goleta Trail Depot at 27 S. La Patera Lane. The City aims to increase train ridership, improve connections to bus transit, support transit services to and from the Santa Barbara Airport and UC Santa Barbara, and introduce new bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Mayor Paula Perotte said, "By supporting travel by train, this station will reduce congestion on our crowded highways . . . attract more people who will patronize our visitor services . . . and contribute to Goleta meeting California's climate action goals."

Sept 15: **20th anniversary** for the Los Padres ForestWatch. It was its first-ever "Family Fall Festival." Held at La Patera Stow House in Goleta.

Sept 6: **Climate Action** Workshop in Ojai, sponsored by the Ojai Green Coalition to map out what's happening now, what's missing

and launch an Ojai Climate Collaborative. Check it out: <https://ojaivalleygreencoalition.org/>

Sept 17: **Oil suit settlement** between Plains Pipeline and Venoco was reached after eight years (!) but remains confidential (*Editor's note: That's what should be leaking, not oil*). Venoco sued the pipeline owner for \$12.4 million asserting Plains was negligent in maintaining the pipeline, which failed on May 19, 2015, known as the Refugio Oil spill. Estimated oil that spilled is 142,800 U.S. gallons and settlements were in the range of \$257 million. At least 56,000 barrels of oil reached the ocean where four marine protected areas are located.

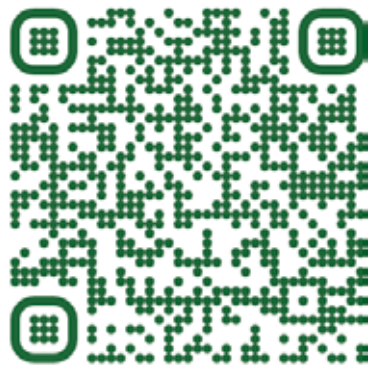
Sept 19: **Gasoline leak** at the Sinclair gas station at 2121 E. Harbor Boulevard, Ventura. The leak was found to have impacted the sewer line along Monmouth Way. Vapors were observed in the sewer line, prompting emergency responses, including evacuation orders and warnings on Sept. 19 and 22. Investigations are ongoing.

Sept 26: **Clean Car Future** was the pitch to all of us to join a Community Input Session in Oxnard, hosted by CFROG, Community Environmental Council and CA Air Resources Board. Public input was encouraged as the state is looking at regulation to reduce pollution from Gas Cars and favoring zero-emission vehicles. More details here: info@cfrog.org or cleancars@arb.ca.gov

Oct 2: **Clean Air Pledge**, by Conejo Open Space Foundation, which lists the most common things an individual can do to clear the air. Just takes a minute, check out the pledge at: <https://tinyurl.com/AirPledge>



It all happened at the Heritage Exposition Sept 10-12 at Ventura's Fairgrounds. Did you know our Sierra Club has an Agricultural Committee (left photo)? Yes, and it's all about organic gardening and natural techniques and eats. Meanwhile (middle and right photos) Kyra Rude, General Manager of Rincon-Vitova Insectaries and member of the SClub Ag Committee had fun educating the kids (and adults) with real bugs that are better than pesticides. Get involved by emailing mail bugnet@rinconvitova.com (Photos by Condor John)



HIKE WITH CLUB



WELCOME HIKERS

The public is welcome at all outings listed, unless otherwise specified. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. If you have any questions about a hike, please contact the leader listed. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805, unless otherwise noted.

A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 14.

See updated listing of all outings via the QR code (above) or: <https://www.sierraclub.org/santa-barbara-ventura>

This website also contains links to Group web pages and other resources. Some regional Groups also list their outings on Meetup sites. See Group News on page 3 for links.



HIKE LOS PADRES

CONDITIONS

Campgrounds trails and roads in Los Padres National Forest can be closed, have restrictions due to habitat protection, repair or weather. Before you go into the backcountry ensure you check conditions with rangers. Numbers to call (805 area unless noted) are:

Los Padres Forest Districts

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Headquarters | 865-0416 |
| Ojai-Ventura | 646-4348 |
| Mt Pinos | (661) 245-3731 |
| Santa Barbara | 967-3481 |
| Santa Lucia | 925-9538 |

Other Areas

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Santa Monica Mtns | 370-2301 |
| Conejo Park | 381-2737 |
| Simi Valley | 584-4400 |
| Montecito | 969-3514 |

Forest Information

For updated info, maps, news releases, and other goodies:

<http://FS.USDA.gov/LPNF>

Regional Hike Info

Lots of local info on websites that give you varied info on outings, trail profiles, wildflower alerts, work opportunities and much more.

www.sierraclub.org/santabarbara-ventura

www.LPFforest.org

https://LPFW.org

www.HikeLosPadres.com

www.SBSierraClub.org

www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com

www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com

https://SBTrails.org

www.VenturaCountyTrails.org

http://Hikes.VenturaCountyStar.com



Wilderness Basics Course staff and participants who attended the reunion (story below) are: Left to right (front row): Katie Sheridan, John Johnson, Carl Meinhof, Marc Hertz, Luz Escobar, Carmel Aguilar, Claudia Boyd-Barrett, Jen Tothpal, Kelley Serena, Dinh Thai, Left to right (back row) Pete Chavez, Tom Somers, Sean Cole, Desi (baby), Gina Cole, Patty Peinado.

From our Mountains to the Sea: Where to go?

“Maybe they shouldn’t be called hikes. Maybe that defeats the joy and the purpose. I don’t like either the word [hike] or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains - not ‘hike!’”

It’s a beautiful word and originated away back in the Middle Ages. People used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages asked where they were going, they would reply, ‘A la sainte terre’ (To the Holy Land). And so they became known as ‘sainte-terre-ers’ or saunters.

Given that Sierra Club’s co-founder John Muir was one of history’s greatest saunters, we should not only allow him his grumpiness, but give it profound consideration. And there is no better place than the Ventura - Santa Barbara region to amble in the great outdoors and give anything consideration.

As a wise soul once said, “It’s only in the great open spaces that we find ourselves.”

(Editor’s note: Taken from Visit Ventura website with light editing to include Santa Barbara! Photo:

<https://www.facebook.com/SteveACattanach>

Click to access all hikes

All links are now live!

We used to print our Sierra Club Outings here covering a two-month period. But we find that planning that far ahead may change due to weather, Covid restrictions, closures etc.

So, we ask that you now rely on the many Meetups and websites for the chapter and some others. For our chapter Meetups go to Group News box always on page 3, otherwise, here we go: The chapter’s website:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/santa-barbara-ventura>

A very special personal website run by

Diane Soini which includes our chapter hikes, blogs, connections and a dragonfly on the screen:

Visit Ventura has a lot of information about hikes in the county and the Channel Islands. Go here:

<https://visitventuraca.com/biking-hiking/>

Los Padres National Forest is the turf for Los Padres Forest Association and it’s the ‘bible’ for the forest as it shares amazing information gleaned from hikers and others outdoor sites. Here’s its hiking site (see QR code too)

<https://www.hikelospadres.com>

Ojai Valley Land Conservancy has a handy Trailfinder for our phone. Go to:

<http://www.ovlc.org/trailfinder/>

Going a bit more afield, the LA Times has published a trail guide for the So-Cal region here:

<https://tinyurl.com/NearUsLA>

Even more! UCSB’s Deborah Williams created a new and expanded website as part of her “Public Lands and Waters” class. Here’s the link:

<https://50greatpubliclanddestinations.org/>

WBC celebrates its success

By Marc Hertz

Over the weekend of September 21 - 22 the Wilderness Basics Course alumni and staff held a delightful reunion at the Sage Hill Group Campground along the Santa Ynez River with the hope that the class can continue in the near future.

There were 15 people who attended to share their experiences at the class and about their backpacking experiences over the Summer.

For those who don’t know, WBC is an eight weeklong course which teaches students the knowledge and skills necessary to safely enjoy backpacking. It taught about 500 students over its 15-year run until Covid shut it down; then it was revived in 2023 but one of its key founders, Teresa Norris, passed away which caused another shutdown after a smaller version of WBC.

Everyone enjoyed the reunion and, most important, nearly all indicated that they would be interested in helping with the course.

That’s important, as the first WBC class in 2009 had 25 students, and it grew from there. Many of them have joined the staff and even become hike and backpack leaders.

The participants included Dinh Thai, Carl Meinhof, Carmel Aguilar, Claudia Boyd-Barrett, Katherine Sheridan, Kelley Serena, and Luz Escobar. The staff members who attended included Patricia



A WBC classroom shows a wide variety of folks who learned a lot inside and outside. (Photo by Condor John)

Peinado, Pete Chavez, Sean Cole, Jennifer Tothpal, John Johnson, Gabe Valdez, Thomas Somers, and Marc “Roadkill” Hertz.

Many thanks to Dinh Thai, who organized the event and hopes to institute an annual reunion of the staff and students.

EAVESDROPS

“Sierra Club adventures offer tremendous quality at affordable prices. When we schedule a Sierra Club trip, we know we will get an in-depth experience wherever we visit.”

~ Barbara R., a participant. See all trips here:

<https://outings.sierraclub.org/>

EVENTS

Oct 9: **Open House** for your feedback on Goleta’s first-ever Environmental Justice policies. A survey will remain open until Oct. 18. The Open House is at 5:30 pm, Goleta Community Center (5679 Hollister Avenue).

www.CityofGoleta.org/GeneralPlanUpdates

Oct 11-13: **Nature Track Film Festival** at the Camino Real Marketplace and Camino Real Cinemas in Goleta featuring 80 films “To Ignite a Passion for Nature through Film.” Get details here:

[NatureTrack Film Festival | Goleta, CA](http://NatureTrackFilmFestival|Goleta.CA)

Oct 13: **Used Gear Sale**, an annual event by the Los Padres Forest Assn., at Manning Park in Montecito 11am to 1pm. Email VOLUNTEER@LPForest.org to learn how to donate your gear.

Oct 13: **Inviting all enviros** to a bimonthly kid’s bike fix & clean days at Ventura Bike HUB, 490 N. Ventura Ave. We have bikes that need cleaning and light mechanical work. During the year and particularly at the end of the year these bikes are donated to needy families. This is the perfect way to fight climate change, get kids outdoors with a healthy lifestyle. RSVP for this date and others:

<https://tinyurl.com/BikeFixit>

Oct 16: **Elemental: Reimagine Wildfire** film At Cinemark Century Ventura Downtown 6-8:30pm. Tix here: <https://tinyurl.com/FireFilmVentura> November

9-10: **Art Comes Alive 12-4 pm** at the Channel Islands Maritime Museum for this annual event, where history and creativity merge. Volunteers and actors will bring to life characters from the Museum’s renowned maritime art collection allowing visitors of all ages to engage with historical figures, both real and imagined. Tickets are available online or at the door, with discounts for members, seniors and military families.

<https://www.cimmvc.org/>



Dr. Nature prescribes Manzanita Wilderness

Editor's note: This article was first published by Noozhawk and is reprinted here with permission.

By Dan McCaslin

Day hiking or backpacking Creek in our beloved San Rafael Wilderness is Dr. Nature's strongest prescription against the cosmic city blues.

One can read Charles Taylor's Cosmic Connections as I often do, but the stronger drug lies out yonder, up the hill and over dale to the broiled and brown backcountry. When I can't get out there (or Rattlesnake Canyon) three times a week I begin to experience early onset ASBD [Amerikan Slow Brain Death]. Of course, it's my metaphor so there isn't any such neurological condition called ASBD, yet many sources think humans today suffer endless distractions and drown in screen-time and the entire digital nightmare (Jaron Lanier and Jonathan Haidt critiques).

Although much of our pristine local backcountry was re-opened by the USFS in late August after the (Santa Barbara) Lake Fire ended, many folks were prevented from heading back there due to the known presence of ash on the ground, summer's fierce heat everywhere, as well as some very high temperatures in early September.

When wild Pete and I pulled into Davy Brown Camp at 6:50 a.m. on Sept. 16th we hadn't been in or near the San Rafael Wilderness for a couple of months, and of course the rapacious Lake Fire, which began July 5th, had forced the long government shutdown in the first place. (The Lake Fire burned almost 40,000 acres.)

Fire names are strangely con-

cocted: I think of this summer fire "back there" as the second Zaca Lake Fire, and much of the burn area was around Los Olivos, including about half of UCSB's important Sedgewick Reserve on Figueroa Mountain.

We all owe gratitude to the fire fighters and the Los Padres National Forest people for saving Davy Brown Camp despite a very heavy fire and in July's furnace. Fire fighters with chain saws and heavy equipment had cut down chaparral on one side of Sunset Valley Road. This action, and pulling the debris away, meant "one side of the valley" would resist burning while the other side was quickly singed and flames whipped through. However, we can clearly see how these California chaparral wildfires jump around and sometimes singe large areas of the grasses and small bushes; however oaks and sycamores will often survive.

Out of the eight good campsites at Davy Brown, only one was occupied, so we moved quietly to check out beautiful Fir Canyon since we knew it was likely within the Lake Fire's burn area. Alas, large and clear signage by USFS stated that the Davy Brown Trail in Fir Canyon had been closed for safety reasons, and in fact all the local trails here on Figueroa Mountain remain closed for hiking.

We peeked into Fir Canyon at the bottom of Davy Brown Camp and could see that the fire damage is heavy. There are heavy piles of white ash everywhere, a lunar landscape in places, and you can smell ash in the air.

We hopped in the truck and drove the final mile on Sunset Valley Road to Nira Camp, the gateway to



the San Rafael. Near Nira we noticed three horse-trailers and four vehicles, so a pack group had gone down the Lower Manzanita Creek Trail and almost certainly to Manzanita Schoolhouse Camp (9.5 miles). Note: the three campsites en route are closed: Potrero Canyon, Coldwater, and Horseshoe Bend.

Accurate signage by the USFS led us to aim for the Upper Manzanita Creek Trail toward fabulous Manzanita Narrows Camp (7 miles). Fish Camp is three miles further along, while gorgeous Lost Valley Camp is just a mile upstream. But my hiking goal was more modest: to walk along the rushing creek with the merry Wassermusik and audacious bird cries, sauntering about until I feel like stopping.

I held a simple focus on making each step deliberately, with full consciousness, searching for cosmic clues or some kind of omen. The terrain is bad in places, including some creek crossings, so progress was slow.

I attempted to slow it all down by roaming creekside, checking out spiderwebs and butterflies, enjoying the fingerling fish in the fertile water, noticing that the jet flying high above supplied the only machine noise around.

After crossing the Manzanita there at the Nira Trailhead you can amble along, and soon make sure to take the "high" route — we used to say the horse route — since at least one section of the lower trail route has become impassable. Uh, impassable at least for a creaky 76-year-old, although I knew it was an easy jump and quite possible ... still, caution and valor and that rot!

With one-pointed focus on the physical path itself, the boulders and rivulets, resurgent foliage, poison oak, lizards ... despite the fire's de-



Regenerating chaparral plants near Davy Brown camp and below, damage from the rapacious Lake Fire which began July 5 and forced the long government shutdown. It burned about 40,000 acres around Zaca Lake, Los Olivos and about half of UCSB's important Sedgewick Reserve on Figueroa Mountain. Photos by Dan McCaslin.

struction I detected new life springing up, even when Fall hasn't begun. We observed fresh growth of the sweet and succulent wild cherry back here: holly-leaved cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) out of which the Indigenous peoples made the islay dish, made from the dried pits of the cherry plant.

I strongly recommend hiking east, upstream from Nira Camp, on the Upper Manzanita Creek Trail: this side was not burned in the Lake Fire, unlike some of the Lower Manzanita Creek Trail. Even the burned side has huge islands of unburnt chaparral, and I observed sycamore, oak, and even some gray pine tree survivors within the burn area.

This fire ecology system will spring back within three to five years.

*** Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor cogently argues that we lost our easy avenues to a cosmic con-

nection once the machine age took over, around 1750, and this loss has obviously been intensified by the digital and now AI revolutions.

Just go listen to Jonathan Haidt's talk on February 20th at the Arlington — humans, especially young western humans, feel alienated, isolated, and stressed. Busting out onto nature's free trails is one easy "avenue" to slowing down, tuning into a cosmic connection, focusing on very concrete and simple things, literally placing one foot before the other, step, repeat, walk more and worry less.

Haidt, in *The Anxious Generation* argues that children, especially girls, suffer greatly from so much screen-time and virtual play, and he writes: "If parents don't replace screentime with real-world experiences involving friends and opportunities for independent activity, then banning devices will feel like pure deprivation, not like a world of opportunities opening up."



Atop what's now known as Mariano Rancho you can see downtown Ventura, ocean and the islands. Recently Boy Scout Troup 111 gussied up the concrete 'V' symbol nearby. What name would you give to this amazing piece of land? (Photo by Condor John)

Rename Rancho Mariano

You may have heard that Ventura Land Trust is conducting a campaign to solicit community input in renaming Mariano Rancho preserve.

The VLT Board of Trustees, excited by the opportunity to provide public access to an additional 1,645 acres in Ventura, approved the plan for renaming the preserve with a unanimous vote. VLT Board President Mark Watkins explained, "The hillsides above the downtown are an integral part of the community, and we think that involving the public in the naming of this preserve will result in even greater pride, ownership, and care of this wonderful new public asset."

Patterned after a similar recent effort conducted by another California-based land trust, the renaming campaign is being conducted in phases.

During the first phase, which

runs through October, community members will submit potential names through an online portal. The Board of Trustees will review the list and identify the top names to move forward to the final round of voting, to be conducted during the month of December. The final decision will be revealed in February, to coincide with Ventura Land Trust's "birthday."

"We believe that the name of VLT's new preserve should be culturally and historically relevant, inclusive, and deserving of a place in perpetuity," VLT's Executive Director Melissa Baffa explained. "Perhaps the community feels that 'Mariano' is that name. But we want to take this opportunity, being that we are talking about a name that will be spoken in this community forever, to give our friends and neighbors a chance to weigh in on it."

EAVESDROPS

"The battle for conservation must go on endlessly. It is part of the universal warfare between right and wrong."

~ John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club on March 28, 1892.

To participate in the renaming process, visit the Ventura Land Trust website at www.venturalandtrust.org/marianoranchopreserve/renaming

Individuals will be able to submit one single nomination form each through the end of October, and one vote each for their favorite name during December.

The Board will have the final determination.

For those wishing to learn more about plans for the new preserve, visit the VLT website, where you can peruse some Frequently Asked Questions and access recordings of several of the community meetings VLT has conducted as a part of its community-based information-gathering process. This can be found at www.venturalandtrust.org/marianoranchopreserve



SIERRA CLUB

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Our SB Group is 75 years young!

By Jon Ullman

Chapter Executive Director

Santa Barbara Sierra Club marks its 75th Anniversary this year, thanks to Kathleen Goddard Jones.

After a decade living in India, Burma, Iran, Washington and New York City, Kathleen was glad to return to her “beloved land,” the central coast of California.

It was a place she knew well from childhood, hiking and camping with her parents and her Santa Barbara church’s “Camp-fire Girls.”

Years later while studying at Mills College, a shared interest in the outdoors led to a relationship with music professor, violinist and wildlife photographer Cedrick Wright. Wright introduced her to his best friend and mentee, Ansel Adams.

She would later marry Persian and American aviator Ali Shirazi Parvaz and work for NBC Radio until the end of World War II. In 1945, she remarried to Santa Barbaran Duncan Jackson and the couple adopted six children. She made time for walks in nature with other outdoor enthusiasts.

She had also maintained



Kathleen Goddard Jones was glad to return to her “beloved land,” the central coast of California and in 1949, she became a Sierra Club member and joined other Santa Barbara outdoors advocates and enthusiasts like Pearl Chase, where they started the first Santa Barbara Group!

her correspondence with the now married photographer Cedrick Wright.

“Now you can join the Sierra Club,” he had said when she returned to California.

Photographers Wright and Ansel Adams were now part of a who’s who of mid-century outdoor artists and writers, who like John Muir before them, would bring the Sierra Nevada landscapes to coffee tables in magazine articles and books.

Kathleen wanted to get back to that world and reconnect with her “mentors,” on excursions.

Birth of our Chapter

In 1949, Kathleen became a Sierra Club member and joined other outdoor advocates and enthusiasts like Pearl Chase, at a meeting at the Montecito School for Girls. There they voted to formally petition for a new Santa Barbara group of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter and elected Preston Webster as its first chair.

“At last, I could pick up the

threads of something that had been sleeping in my heart all those years,” said Kathleen about the Sierra Club.

Later that year, Kathleen and her husband Duncan would attend the two-week Sierra Nevada “High Trip” led by mountaineer, writer and soon-to-be the first Executive Director of the Sierra Club, David Brower.

Before the High Trip, they were invited to dinner with the Superintendent of Sequoia National Park at a large cottage owned by Sierra Club President Francis Farquhar.

For the next two weeks they hiked, shared meals and campfires with Sierra Club leaders. David Brower played accordion. Wright took landscape photos with a heavy camera that he carried on a horse.

After returning home, Santa Barbara Chair Preston Webster asked Kathleen if she’d lead the Santa Barbara group. She agreed, and soon she’d also establish a new Los Padres Chapter to in-

clude Ventura, Santa Barbara Counties and San Luis Obispo counties.

Kathleen was the first editor of the “Chapter Bulletin.” She held a contest for a new name, which resident Nancy Serr won with “Condor Call.”

The first thing the Los Padres Chapter did was join the rest of the Sierra Club in successfully halting the construction of Echo Dam in Dinosaur National Monument.

Kathleen met Sierra Club leader Ed Wayburn who had just established a Council of Club Leaders (CCL) to oversee regional work so that national board could focus on larger issues. In 1956, Kathleen became its chair.

Kathleen and her family moved to Paso Robles where she founded the San Luis Obispo Group in 1961 and the Santa Lucia Chapter for the whole county in 1968.

While Kathleen made her mark in the region creating and leading Chapters and Groups in Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, she would go down in history as the “Defender of the Dunes” and become a leading figure in U.S. environmental history.

A small at first innocuous ad in a local newspaper announcing Pacific Gas and Electric had purchased land in local dunes would lead her to one of the most significant environmental battles in U.S. history, a fight that would divide the Sierra Club and become an issue still with us today: The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant.

