



SIERRA CLUB

SAN GORGONIO

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Palm and Pine

A publication of the San Gorgonio Chapter of the Sierra Club
Serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

Protect America's Environment *For our Families . . . For our Future*

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JOIN US FOR “LIVING WITH THE SALTON SEA” A NEW ZOOM PRESENTATION ON TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 7:00 PM

Did you know the Salton Sea is a threat to the health of those living nearby? Impacts from harmful air quality threaten our Eastern Coachella Valley neighbors today – and will spread throughout the region as the sea continues to recede. Join us at our March 2nd Chapter meeting to learn about “Living with the Salton Sea.”



At this meeting, you will ...

- Hear a brief background on the Salton Sea by our own Coachella Valley activists,
- Enjoy a short video to hear from people who live by the Sea,
- Learn about the activity and promises of politics related to the Sea, and ...

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CALIFORNIA ESCAPES TRUMP’S LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO UNRAVEL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS IN CALIFORNIA’S DESERTS

By Moises Cisneros, Sierra Club Organizer

As the Trump administration prepared to exit the White House, it devised ways to leave a final destructive imprint on the California desert by attempting to unravel the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP).



On February 17th, the Biden administration announced its decision to allow the DRECP to stand unscathed by reversing the Trump administration’s decision and in

Continued on Page 2 >>>

Living With Salton Sea ...from Page 1

- Listen to our Guest Speaker, Dr. William C. Porter, Ph.d, Department of Environmental Sciences at UC Riverside.

Through Will's work as part of UCR's BREATHE center, his team is helping to characterize the composition and transport patterns of dust in the region. This work will help identify threats to local residents, and possible mitigation strategies to improve human health.

- **Take Action:** Each of us can do something! You will be given concrete steps to take to help make the Salton Sea a place that no longer threatens human health.

Zoom in on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 7:00 pm. We look forward to seeing you then! Sign up here on our website at the Outings/Events tab:

<https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/node/3>



GET INVOLVED WITH POLCOM!

By Bhavin Jindal - Chair, San Gorgonio Political Committee

After thousands of hours volunteered throughout the country for hundreds of political races, Sierra Club committees are debriefing, enjoying their success, and learning from opportunities.

The San Gorgonio Political Committee is greasing its wheels and getting ready for an early start for the 2021-2022 activities including planned visits to our elected officials and upcoming elections. The committee is busy identifying priorities, strategizing our involvement in various races, and preparing to meet with our local elected officials. There are over 100 elected offices that are up for election and our goal is to meet with all our federal and state elected officials to convey our concerns and appreciation for fighting for our environment. Needless to say, the committee will be busy in the upcoming months and will need a large team. A team which may include you!

To get involved in local action with the political committees please contact your group chairs or the political chair. Please see contacts at <https://sangorgonio2>.



California Escapes ...from Page 1

doing so allow for a streamlined and responsible approach to renewable energy development, recreational areas and conservation safeguards in public lands.

The DRECP covers approximately 10 million acres of public lands in various California jurisdictions including San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial, Los Angeles, Inyo and Kern Counties.

Additionally, the DRECP in its current state:

1. Allows for developers to have a predictable, streamlined process for renewable energy projects.
2. Plays a critical role for the climate, capturing and storing carbon (CO2) in its soil and plant root systems, which otherwise would accelerate greenhouse emissions and the climate change crisis
3. Is home to unique plant and endangered wildlife species, and holds important cultural and sacred burial sites, key to tribal heritage
4. Protects recreational areas such as trailhead areas for hikers, bird watchers, rockhounds, night sky observers, mountain bikers and off-road vehicle enthusiasts – critical for the range of health benefits from accessing nature that millions of visitors and families enjoy every year
5. Provides access to natural habitat and clean air to nearby minority communities who have suffered disproportionately by the environmental crisis and Covid-19
6. Generates billions a year in economic impact thru desert tourism and travel (\$7.6 billion in 2018) producing 73,000 jobs and \$609 million in tax revenue for local and state government

What's next:

As we take a moment to celebrate this win, we also look forward to working with the Biden administration, the State and local communities to develop the 30x30 campaign, a vision for protecting 30 percent of our lands and water by the year 2030 in order to stave off the worst effects of climate change and protect the health of current and future generations. There are abundant opportunities in CA deserts to advance a 30x30 agenda. A big part of this will be fighting for more permanent protections for desert public lands. To get involved in volunteer led, Sierra Club 30x30 efforts, please contact Conservation Chair Kim Floyd at kimffloyd@fastmail.com. You can also tell us how you'd like to help by filling out this interest survey: sc.org/CA30x30survey

You can find Sierra Club's Press Statement here: <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2021/02/biden-administration-moves-keep-long-fought-desert-clean-energy-plan>

STOPPING WAREHOUSE POLLUTION IS POSSIBLE

By Yassi Kavezade - Lead organizer for the My Generation Campaign

Southern California is home to a rich variety of wildlife – from our everyday neighborhood walks to the pristine high desert landscape in the Mojave. Sierra Club’s motto is to Explore, Enjoy and Protect our land. If we must develop our open spaces, we advocate for it to be done sustainably or not at all.

The unfortunate circumstance of exacerbated poor air quality many communities in urban areas face in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties has been caused by multinational corporate mega-scale warehousing that has historically displaced people, especially those of lower income, off their land. The result has been jobs that do not provide a living wage, and cause harmful air pollution. The warehouse industry has proliferated its footprint in communities like Moreno Valley, Fontana, and San Bernardino, causing harm to our neighbors who live nearby, and impacting all of us. The operators and owners of these sites may promise pledges of sustainability, but they have little regulation to hold them to a higher standard in order to operate from a place of zero emissions and away from fossil fuels.

We cannot keep practicing a whack-a-mole strategy to nail every single facility with a notice to clean up. Instead, we have advocated for years for a regional policy to promote a clean-powered future with promised obligation of regulation at the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD). For years the My Generation campaign has been advocating for a strong indirect source rule to uphold a standard away

from gas and diesel emissions both on-site at facilities and with truck trips that service the warehouses. Now as we enter this spring, the rule is up for a vote at the AQMD board in April. This rule needs to stay as strong as possible to require operators to comply. COVID 19 has not shut down the goods movement industry – in fact, warehouse operators are enjoying record profits from shopping online and remote access to goods. Warehouse workers are considered essential and deserve protection too.

Your voice is needed at public comment! Attend the March 5th and April 2nd board meetings (meetings begin at 9:00 am) on zoom to advocate for a strong rule to stop pollution by warehouse operations. You can join live via zoom at both the March and April board meetings for public comment here: www.bit.ly/boardaqmd. Once online you click the button that says Raise Hand and your name will be called. You can also email your testimony to Clerk of the Board, clerkofboard@aqmd.gov Wayne Nastri, w nastri@aqmd.gov Sarah Reese, SRees@aqmd.gov Ian Macmillan imacmillan@aqmd.gov.

If you have questions or would like to learn more, feel free to email me at yassi.kavezade@sierraclub.org. The Air District is not hearing enough from community members who care about our planet and want to see a future towards cleaner air and good jobs.

Your voice can make a difference, and we thank you for supporting this chapter!



Moreno Valley Group

By Ann Turner McKibben, Secretary

The results of the Moreno Valley Group fall election are in and Tom Thornsley and George Hague were elected to the Group Executive Committee. Our excom members for 2021 are: Tom Thornsley, Group Chair; George Hague, Conservation Chair; Manya Jiannino, Treasurer; Christina Torres, Outings Chair; Ann McKibben, Secretary. Please contact us at: movalleygroup@yahoo.com if you have any questions about our group, conservation and/or planning issues in our Moreno Valley area.

Due to Covid-19 all in-person group activities for the San Geronio Chapter including the Moreno Valley Group have been canceled through July 4, 2021. We recommend checking the San Geronio Chapter web page (<https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/>) for updated information.

Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA): Please check the LPSRA web page (http://parks.ca.gov/?page_id=651) for detailed information regarding visiting Lake Perris

as they balance recreation opportunities and maintaining social distancing and protecting the public from COVID-19. February 2021 is a very good time to buy your annual limited use Golden Bear Pass (\$20.00) for those 62 years or older. It is valid until December 31 except Memorial Day through Labor Day. It can be purchased at the LPSRA campground kiosk or the state's website: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23800 The pass can also be used at most other state parks and is good for everyone in your car.

Here is some updated information on projects we are following:

Moreno Valley Business Park (MVBP): A recent project, Moreno Valley Business Park (MVBP), was considered by the Planning Commission and then approved by the City Council on February 2, 2021. The MVBP is not a business park but a single 220,390 sq. ft. warehouse on approximately 10 acres at the southeast corner of Heacock Street and Ironwood Avenue.

In 2018 the Moreno Valley Festival Specific Plan was amended to allow alternative uses upon the undeveloped acreage behind the exiting Festival Shopping Center that includes IHOP and Floor & Décor and other shops. The amendment added and

designated Business Park uses for the undeveloped land but did not include the 10-acre MVBP site. Subsequently, the developer chose to build four small warehouses totaling more than 400,000 sq. ft. When that project processed through its approval process the titled "Business Park" designation mislead the surrounding property owners and others who thought the proposal would include commercial business, service centers, and offices. Unfortunately, the city permitted the development of a cluster of small warehouses in a prime commercial and residential area.



*Winter View at the SJWA.
Photographer Ann Turner McKibben*

The Moreno Valley Group (MVG) of the Sierra Club became aware of the MVBP warehouse once it was noticed for hearing by the City Council and submitted comments of concern over the project. With only a short review period, four comment letters were prepared by various groups (MVG included) and submitted to the city objecting to the project on the grounds that the Initial

Study and supporting environmental documents were ill prepared and that the analyzing studies failed to address the MVBP warehouse project and the impacts that it will have on the environment and the surrounding commercial as well as residential properties. It was very clear that the studies provided in support of the MVBP project were prepared for the four warehouses' project and never included a review of the 10 acres of property for the MVBP, nor did they address this project's impacts on Traffic, Greenhouse Gases, Air Quality, Biological Impacts, or Jurisdictional Delineation. The MVG requested to see copies of all the studies used by the City Planning Department in the preparation of the Initial Study on the off chance the studies included in the City Council Agenda were not the studies that should have been provided. The MVG was directed to file a formal Public Records Request with the city clerk that gives the city 10 days to produce the document with the option for another 14 days to complete the request. Sadly, these delays should not be necessary.

At the time of this writing the City Clerk's Office exercised the option for an additional 14 day extension. Due to the incomplete environmental record, this project should be litigated so all the missing environmental impacts can be

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addressed to protect the environment and the residents of our community.

Moreno Valley Trade Center (MVTC): This proposed massive warehouse project site is located south of Eucalyptus Avenue, west of Redlands Boulevard, and north of Encelia Avenue and includes Hall Nursery and the vacant land south of the Aldi warehouse. This project is for a light industrial high cube warehouse with 1,332,380 square feet and many daily diesel truck trips. The preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has begun and the city believes it will soon be released but has not offered a timeline. The project site is across the street from an existing neighborhood of many homes and on land zoned for future homes. The developer recently sent out promotional material to residents in the area soliciting responses using a return postcard that only includes positive support options. Members of the community should send in letters of objection to the city (see below) for the public record.

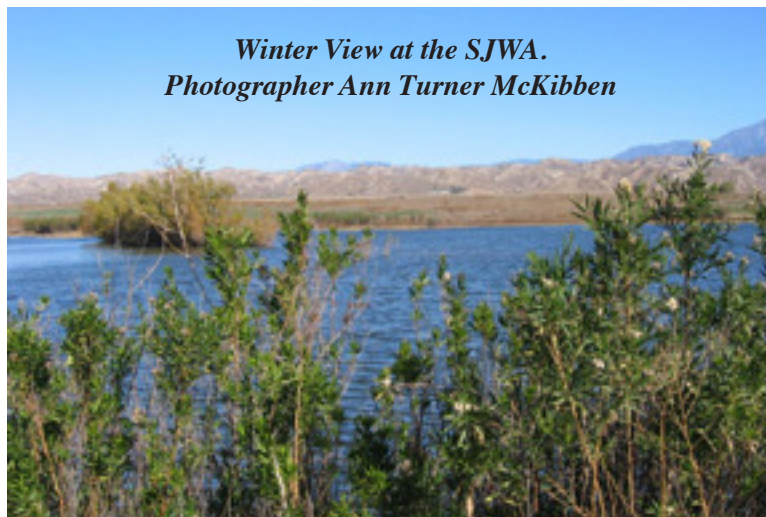
The project requires a General Plan Amendment and a Change of Zone from “Residential: Max 2 du/ac (R2)” to “Business Park/ Light Industrial (BP)” to allow it to be built across the street from existing homes. Please take time to get involved by taking part in the review of the Draft Environmental Impact

Review (DEIR), providing comments to the city regarding the project and its impacts. Please contact Gabriel Diaz, Associate Planner, at (951) 413-3226 or email: Gabrield@moval.org and ask to be put on the list to receive notices about this project. Also, contact your City Councilmember and let them know that our city has enough warehouses and that it is a mistake to destroy land designated for housing with animal keeping allowances. The Moreno Valley Group of the Sierra Club made comments during the Notice of Preparation for the DEIR on this massive warehouse. Instead of another warehouse, this land needs to remain zoned for homes or at the least be zoned for transitional uses between existing family homes and warehouses to separate them from operational noises, smell, traffic, and its many diesel polluting truck trips.

MoVal 2040 – Moreno Valley General Plan Update (GPU) & Climate Action Plan (CAP): The draft environmental

impact report (DEIR) may be released in the second half of March. Please use the information found below to contact planner Chris Ormsby to be put on their mailing list. The city quickly hosted three meetings in November to establish goals for the community with no other publicized meetings or workshops at this time. MoVal 2040 is being fast-tracked for approval by the spring of 2021, and will very likely dramatically change the current policies and land uses allowed by our city. We encourage everyone to pay attention and be involved with the General Plan Update. The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) is comprised of seven individuals with two being local developers and three current planning commissioners. Therefore, it is extremely likely they will recommend that the city council change the land uses for a large portion of the vacant land on the east end as well as vacant land elsewhere within the city. If you care about the future direction of development near your neighborhood and

throughout Moreno Valley, please take time to follow the progress of the GPU. Attend meetings (which are video conference type meetings for now) that will allow you to listen and/or speak from the comfort of your home. Speak up about what you want for our future. This is a 20-year plan so don't miss your chance to comment. Please email senior planner Chris Ormsby at chriso@moval.org or call (951) 413-3229



*Winter View at the SJWA.
Photographer Ann Turner McKibben*

and ask to be put on their email list for future meetings and documents. The city's GPU website with updates to participate can be found at the following link: <http://www.moval.org/cdd/documents/general-plan-home.html> Along with the GPU the city is also doing a Climate Action Plan (CAP) intended to make our city and planet less polluted—especially cutting carbon pollution which will help keep our air and water cleaner and protect our children's health. Your input is needed and can make a difference.

World Logistics Center (WLC): On May 1, 2020, while previous litigations were still in court, the developers for the 40.6 million square foot World Logistics Center (WLC) warehouses project put forth a massive new environmental document and sought new approvals on basically the same project. The Moreno Valley Planning Commission approved the project after midnight on May 15, 2020. The environmental group Earthjustice, who represents the Sierra

MorenoValley Group... from Page 5

Club and four other groups, filed an appeal on May 26, 2020, challenging the environmental findings and conclusions in the new document. After the city council’s denial of our appeal and their approval of the WLC’s Recirculated Revised Final EIR in June, Earthjustice filed another lawsuit on behalf of our coalition. A couple of months ago the Court of Appeal ruled the environmental groups were the prevailing party on the previous litigations, but as mentioned above, the WLC has gained city approvals on new environmental documents which we continue to pursue in court.



JOIN US FOR TRAIL TALK: “BIRDING IN THE INLAND EMPIRE”



Spring migration is beginning in Southern California, so join us on Wednesday, March 17 at 7:00 PM for “Trail Talk: Birding in the IE.” Our own outings leader and Audubon board member Brian Elliott will walk us through the basics of birding, with emphasis on birds of the Inland Empire / San Gorgonio Chapter.

Brian Elliott has travelled nationally and internationally in search of unusual birds. Join us for his guidance regarding basics of bird identification, how to find and see birds effectively, equipment, and helpful guidebooks and apps. He will also inform us about resources local to the IE and San Gorgonio Chapter (“Backyard Birds of the Inland Empire” users take note!).

One of the pandemic’s silver linings has been a heightened interest in birding. Brian Elliott’s “Trail Talk” presentation will increase our skills in our own backyards as well as when we hike through the San Gorgonio Chapter. To join us for “Trail Talk: Birding in the IE,” go to the Chapter website (sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org), click on “Outings and Events,” and RSVP at “Trail Talk.” The Zoom link for the March 17 presentation will be sent to you.”



**Next Month’s Trail Talk: “Spring Wildflowers”
Wednesday, April 21 at 7:00 pm.**

**Mark your calendar for 7:00 pm.
Every third Wednesday of the month!**

Big Bear Group

By Ellen Kesler, Group Chairwoman

February has found our famous Bald Eagle couple, “Jackie” and “Shadow” laying another egg! You can watch these parents on the Big Bear Eagle Webcam. Let’s hold good, strong thoughts that they can protect this egg and keep the ravens away from this one. It’s been a tearful year for those two losing the previous eggs.

As the chairwoman, I am staying active with our San Gorgonio Chapter’s activities to keep informed both locally and nationally. Locally, our Chapter and Group have donated money to Friends of Bear Valley for the litigation against the development of Moon Camp. This area is directly in the Bald Eagle Habitat on North Shore. The impact of more homes, more people, more cars, would also directly affect Highway 38 traffic, going through little Fawnskin, and the water aquifers on which we all depend. No one has ever done any research to see how much water we have “down there.” Think of the added people on a two-lane road trying to evacuate in a fire, too.

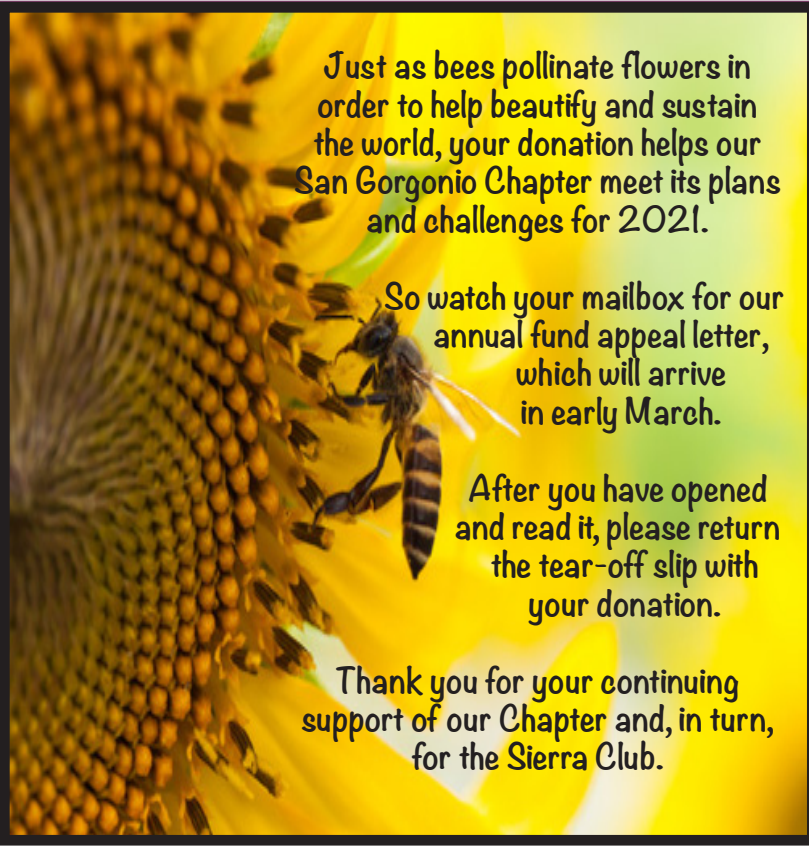
In the meantime, our Xeriscape Committee, under the leadership of Lisa Patterson, are Zooming to create a summer Xeriscape Tour, probably virtually. I am looking forward to hearing their creative ideas. As soon as I know more about how this will occur, I will put notice in our *Palm and Pine* newsletter and my monthly Group emails.

In-person Outings are still paused by our National Sierra Club. HOWEVER, on the third Wednesday of each month, Chapter Outings Chairs have been offering WONDERFUL “Trail Talks” on Zoom. I have attended all of them and have learned of new trails in our counties (including necessary things to know about each trail and parking), the star constellations to see in the sky over us, and how to snowshoe! March’s talk on March 17th, will be nearby birding (including the Salton Sea). Go to <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org> – to the right column under “Coming Up” and sign-up! They will send you an email with the Zoom link just before the meeting.

Everyone continue to stay safe; mask and distance! Hope to see you in a Zoom!



Photo by Friends of Big Bear Valley



Just as bees pollinate flowers in order to help beautify and sustain the world, your donation helps our San Gorgonio Chapter meet its plans and challenges for 2021.

So watch your mailbox for our annual fund appeal letter, which will arrive in early March.

After you have opened and read it, please return the tear-off slip with your donation.

Thank you for your continuing support of our Chapter and, in turn, for the Sierra Club.

National Sierra Club Elections are Underway - VOTE!

A Democratic Sierra Club Demands Grassroots Participation
The annual election for Sierra Club's Board of Directors is now underway.

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive in the mail (or by email if you chose the electronic delivery option) your national Sierra Club ballot in early March 2021. This will include information on candidates and where you can find additional information on Sierra Club's website.

Your participation is critical for a strong Sierra Club!

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization at all levels and requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Sierra Club levels is a right of membership and your voice matters. In a typical year less than 10% of eligible members vote in the Board elections. A minimum of 5% is required for the elections to be valid. Our grassroots structure is strengthened when our participation is high. That means your participation is needed in the voting process.

How can I learn about the candidates? Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more.

Each candidate provides a statement about themselves and their views on the official election ballot. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members. Also, [click here](#) to visit the Sierra Club's election website for additional information about candidates.

Voting Online is quick and easy! Even if you receive your election materials in the mail, we encourage you to use the user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and postage. If sending via ground mail, please note: your ballots must be received by no later than noon Eastern time on Election Day, April 28, 2021.



Contact Us . . .

San Gorgonio Chapter Website:
<http://sangorgonio.sierraclub.org>

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San Gorgonio Chapter
PO Box 5425, Riverside, CA 92517-5425
(951) 684-6203

Member Change of Address:
Call San Gorgonio Chapter Office: (951) 684-6203
or go to: <https://www.sierraclub.org/contact-us>

Editor, Jo Ann Fischer
PO Box 3164, Running Springs, CA 92382
(909) 939-0332 • e-mail: mywwuni@charter.net
Webmaster, Steve Farrell
e-mail: StevenFarrell@sangorgonio.sierraclub.org
<http://sangorgonio.sierraclub.org>

For Chapter and Group Leader contacts
visit our website at
<https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/contactalt>

For a printed Membership Application,
call our office at (951) 684-6203