



SIERRA CLUB

SAN GORGONIO

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Palm and Pine

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Serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

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

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SAN GORGONIO MEETING GOES ONLINE MAY 12, 7:00 PM

Staying connected during this time is important as individuals, and for the work we do as the most influential environmental organization in the country.

Here locally, we stay connected in many ways, but our monthly meetings at the San Bernardino County Museum have been a constant connection for many years. Let's still stay connected though - meeting together apart!

For May, we will move to the second Tuesday of the month, for a bit more time to plan as well as to not interfere with any Cinco de Mayo virtual plans. We are planning a virtual meeting hosted by our volunteer leaders. We hope to accomplish these two things:

First, bring everyone up to date on the latest Sierra Club pandemic response as of May 12. Any new guidance from National regarding meetings, outings and other work will be shared.

To San Gorgonio Chapter Members and Supporters:

Hello friends – I hope this finds you safe and healthy. This crisis affects all of us, bringing new challenges to our daily lives as well as worry, fear and sorrow. During this time, Sierra Club's primary concern is for the safety and well-being of our volunteers and staff. With that in mind, I wanted to bring you up to date on Sierra Club's response, at the National level as well as here in San Gorgonio Chapter, to the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, all in-person meetings, events, and outings have been cancelled through at least June 14. All staff offices are closed, National staff folks who support our work are doing their best working from home, with all staff travel and in-person meetings also cancelled. It has been inspiring to me to see the level of concern for our staff and volunteers from National leadership.

While the way we do our work has changed, the work is still being done. A first priority has been support of hard-hit community members by working with organizations helping those most in need.

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Second, you'll meet some of our volunteer leaders ... Political Chair Bhavin Jindal (and, congratulations to him as newly elected Council Member for City of Loma Linda) will brief us on local political work. Chapter Chair, Mary Ann Ruiz, will cover state advocacy work at the Capitol. Leaders will fill you in on additional ways to get involved with advocacy on climate change, desert protection, Salton Sea issues, local logistics development and clean air.

Sign up here at this link and meeting info will be emailed to you:

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000028bEyAAI&mapLinkHref=>

You can learn more about this work here: <https://www.sierraclub.org/michael-brune/2020/03/covid-19-support-local-frontline-groups>.

At the National level, Sierra Club is also mobilizing around the People's Bailout campaign. Here is what our National Organizing Director says about this work: "We are in unprecedented and deeply challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown our world into crisis. The health of millions is at risk and a recession looms large on the horizon. At the same time, this moment of crisis is also an opportunity for transformation; a turning point where we are faced with the failures of our current system and we can choose to build a better world. A number of groups have come together across labor, environmental justice, big green organizations, and others to talk about what a just and equitable recovery looks like. Together, they have developed five principles to guide the response, under the banner of the People's Bailout campaign. This mobilization will support work on the People's Bailout as well as other ongoing advocacy work on COVID-19."

At the State and Local level, we are monitoring governmental and agency responses to COVID-19 and will keep you updated on what can be done to help. Developers are still planning warehouses, polluters want exemptions

of standards due to the pandemic, and our Salton Sea community is heavily impacted (see related story). Our political program is moving to remote work and still needs your help to elect strong candidates for the environment.

I'll close with this from Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune:

"This pandemic is hitting our society's most vulnerable the hardest, after decades of attacks on our social safety net. As we grieve - for loved ones we've lost and for many others at risk - let's bring to life our values of empathy and solidarity. Let's tap into personal reserves of strength and resiliency. Let's continue to support one another. In the words of the late, great Bill Withers, we all need somebody to lean on.

Thanks for all that you're doing.

Mike"

I also thank you for all you do, and for being there to support our Sierra Club family.



**Mary Ann Ruiz,
Chapter Chair**



SALTON SEA COMMUNITIES NEED HELP ON PANDEMIC AND AIR POLLUTION

By Kim Floyd, Chapter Conservation Chair

It's not news that there is a public health crisis at the Salton Sea. Thanks to the continued evaporation of water, communities living adjacent to the Sea have for years become increasingly exposed to a mixture of pollutants from decades of agricultural runoff as well as dust storms from exposed lakebed. The air quality in the Salton Sea Air Basin does not meet state or federal standards for particulate matter which imbeds in the lungs. The exposure puts more

than 10,000 people living directly around the Sea at increased risks for asthma, respiratory illnesses, nose bleeds and higher mortality, and can impair lung function development in children.

The Covid-19 pandemic adds a new level of urgency to the fight to protect public health for Salton Sea communities. New research has confirmed a connection between increased exposure to air pollution and greater mortality rates for

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Covid-19 patients. Now consider the reality that many communities living in the rural areas around the Sea already experience: higher levels of poverty and unemployment, substandard housing and public infrastructure, lack of access to health care, and exposure to environmental hazards. If there is a large surge of Covid-19 cases for our neighbors around the Salton Sea, they will be pushed up even harder than ever against the already tremendous barriers to health and well-being that they already face.

We have an opportunity to seize the moment, and stand for environmental justice for the people living around the Salton Sea. The Newsom administration is rightfully turning its attention to address the immediate public health crisis across the state, and just this week has announced new aid to support undocumented

*Toxic dust from the exposed playa endangers local residents.
Photographer David Bacon*



immigrant workers, which will provide critical assistance to Coachella Valley farmworkers who remain working in polluted air during this crisis. But in efforts to address this

pandemic, the Newsom administration cannot forget that the Salton Sea is part of the equation. The state continues to lag behind in its efforts to complete projects on the ground that will address longstanding public health concerns, such as dust suppression projects. In the coming weeks the Sierra Club will maintain pressure on the State to make sure they keep their foot on the accelerator to remediate the Salton Sea. For now, we are working with our partners in the East Coachella Valley to make it clear to all that Covid-19 is not the “great equalizer” that some have suggested. The Covid-19 pandemic adds terrible health risks to communities already struggling from the results of decades of inaction on addressing the public health crisis at the Sea.



Dust obscures the mountains in the distance as migratory birds stop at the Sea. Photographer David Bacon



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Nearby Nature

Nature, and being outdoors, are crucial to our mental health and well-being. Finding nature is complicated right now, especially in our urban areas. With National and State Parks, County parks, city parks and most trails closed, taking a walk around town may be the only opportunity to get outside. If you live within walking distance of a park, in most cases it is ok to walk through the park. Even if it is just a walk around the block, or down the street, getting outside and moving helps with cabin fever.

If taking a walk, hike or bike ride be sure to plan ahead – restrooms at most parks are closed, and open businesses are few and far between. Carry water in your reusable bottle and take the opportunity to learn more about your neighborhood. Keep this reminder from the National Recreation and Parks Association in mind.



This writer walked to the vacant lot down the street, and among the foxtails, weeds and dirt found this little bit of nature. "Someone" seed-bombed the lot last fall, and though most of the weeds were plowed under, this little patch of poppies survived.



2020 Excom Election Update

By Dave Barrie

We have started the ExCom election process (Chapter and Groups) for 2020 and will be providing updates in the *Palm and Pine* as the year progresses.

This issue of the *Palm and Pine* contains a comprehensive table showing the schedule dates and election criteria for the Chapter as well as for all of the Groups. (See the table on next page.)

Our bylaws and the Sierra Club's election rules require that we publish this information for all of our members.

Behind the scenes, our Chapter and Group Nominating Committees (NomComs) will be asking ExCom members whose two-year terms are complete at the end of this year if they want to run for re-election for another two-year term.

Every so often someone resigns or an incumbent chooses not to run for re-election, leaving us with openings to fill. And that's where you come in. Run! Let us know that you are interested. Having enough candidates to fill out the ballot is good. Having more than enough candidates is even better!

The Chapter and Group ExCom members are overworked and underpaid (no pay) and an open spot just means more work for those that are serving. Offering to be included on the ballot for ExCom election is a very clear method of communicating your willingness to be involved. Win or lose, someone will talk to you about how you would like to be involved and who can help you get started.

For the Chapter NomCom – if you would like to be considered to be included on the ballot for the Chapter ExCom please contact Dave Barrie (barriemail@mac.com).

For Group members that would like to be considered for your Group's ballot or if you want to nominate someone else (who is willing) here's who to contact:

For the Los Serranos Group ExCom you can contact Mark Rush (markrushart@gmail.com).

For the Tahquitz Group ExCom you can contact Rob Taylor (junipertree00@mac.com).

For the Mountains Group ExCom you can contact Sue Walker (svwalker@gmail.com).

For the Mojave Group ExCom you can contact Carol Wiley (desertlily1@verizon.net).

For the Moreno Valley Group ExCom you can contact Manya Jiannino (jianderosa@aol.com).

For the Big Bear Group ExCom you can contact Sherry Noone (etarre@gmail.com).

For the Santa Margarita Group ExCom you can contact Pam Nelson (pamela05n@yahoo.com).

Our Groups will be asking for candidates in a variety of ways, so be sure to look at Group articles in the *Palm and Pine* or on your Group's website. You might hear about the election at a monthly Group meeting or receive an e-mail asking for help.

Chapter and Group volunteers are responsible for our accomplishments and the work that we do to protect the environment. This is one of the important ways you can help make a difference.

Santa Margarita Group

Submitted By Margaret Meyncke • Written By Pam Nelson

Work continues on the wildlife crossing system for I-15 in the SW Riverside and N. San Diego counties. With our partners, The Nature Conservancy and the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve, we have an active steering committee that is directing our newly-formed Coalition to create this system. On April 3rd we had over 30 agencies, non-profits, and government

with regional wildlife crossing data. UC Davis has collected valuable data that is available to the public for use in finding possible wildlife crossings in S. California.

We received good news about protecting our local wildlife and I-15 crossing with a final decision of the Supreme Court Judge Danial Ottolia in the lawsuit with our partners, the Center for Biological Diversity, Mountain Lion Foundation and Cougar Connection against the City of Temecula. The Center for Biological Diversity attorney, JP Rose, made a convincing case that described the need for protecting the parcels next to the confluence that makes the Santa Margarita River, and for compliance with the Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan.

Finally, we celebrate the forward progress on getting mountain lions approved as candidates for the California Endangered Species Act. Thank you to the Center for Biological Diversity and the Mountain Lion Foundation for continuing this work.

We continue to plan (via Zoom) our events and outings in preparation for a time when we can get outside and about. We decided our first order of "business," according to

entities meet via Zoom to discuss strategic communication, land protection and science and planning. Progress is being made with grants received by TNC and UC Davis to install wildlife fencing, make the Temecula Creek underpass more functional, and design under and over-passes. On April 15th the regional Tri-County agency featured this project along

member, Michael Momeni, will be to have a group walk and lunch!



Big Bear Group

By Ellen Kesler, Chair

No General Meeting is planned for May, but if we get to have one in June, it will be June 18th with a video from the Population Connection discussing the impact of the world's population on Earth. The meeting will be held at 6:30pm in the Bear Valley Center for Spiritual Enrichment, which is where we plan to meet until the Discovery Center is finished being remodeled. Free refreshments are always served.

Despite the cancellation of the Big Bear High School Senior Awards Ceremony, the scholarships will be given to the winning seniors. Our Big Bear Group gives a \$1000 scholarship each year to a senior who is selected by our ExCom based on meeting certain criteria.

Until boozing activities resume at various events, our ExCom remains "on hold." We are all anxious to get back hiking and sharing smiles with others.

Our temporary location: Bear Valley Center for Spiritual Enrichment, 578 Bonanza Trail, Big Bear Lake

Moreno Valley Group

By Ann Turner McKibben, Secretary

All chapter and group events (meetings, outings) have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At this point in time it is hard to estimate when future events might be scheduled. Please take time to check the San Geronio Chapter web page <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/> and our Moreno Valley Group web page https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/groups/moreno_valley for updated information. You can also email the Moreno Valley Group at movalleygroup@yahoo.com if you have questions.

As of early April, Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA) is closed to all vehicle traffic. The following information was posted on their web page: "In an effort to protect public health and the safety of our visitors, volunteers and staff as the state responds to the continued threat of COVID-19 Lake Perris will be closed until further notice to all vehicle traffic per the Governor's latest directive. The entrance gates will be locked at Lake Perris Dr., Moreno Beach Dr. and Bernasconi Dr. Community residents near the park still may walk or bicycle in. Many other State Parks are impacted by this order." Please check the LPSRA web page and Facebook page for updated information regarding their closure: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=651 & <https://www.facebook.com/Lakeperris/>

Lake Perris State Recreation Area: Once the LPSRA reopens, please keep in mind that you can buy a Limited Use Golden Bear Pass (\$20.00) which is good during much of the entire year (except between Memorial Day and Labor Day) for most state parks for those 62 years or older. It can be purchased at Lake Perris and is good for everyone in your car. The state also has passes for those with permanent disabilities, Disabled Discount Pass, and a Distinguished Veterans Pass. For more information check this web page: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1049 The park offers many opportunities for hiking, nature walks and more; for more information on their events and yearly passes: <https://www.facebook.com/Lakeperris> http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=651

Here is some updated information on projects we are following:

Moreno Valley General Plan Update (MVGPU): Changing Land Uses & Policies: Our city has begun the process of updating its current general plan and land use map. The last update, approved in 2006, took five years for it to be



*Mission Creek Preserve Hike, Moreno Valley Group, January 2020,
Photographer Christina Torres*

completed. Soon after it was approved the City Council started making changes (approving Skechers project) then the economy and development tanked. Since about 2008 the entire Inland Empire went wild for warehouses as Moreno Valley did when it approved the World Logistic Center.

The City's new MVGPU update, MoVal 2040, is being fast-tracked for approval by the spring of 2021, and will very likely dramatically change the current land uses and policies decisions of the city. There are seven members on General Plan Advisory Committee, three of which are planning commissioners and two are developers (Iddo Benzeevi & Nelson Chung) who each have large land holdings/interests in the city. These are the same two who have contributed heavily to the campaigns for a majority of our current council

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members. If this is not a conflict, then what is it?

We would like to encourage everyone in the community to pay attention and get involved with the General Plan Update. It is extremely likely that the city council will be changing the land uses for a large portion of the vacant land on the east end and elsewhere in the city that will make way for more warehouses and high density housing. If you care about the future direction of development in Moreno Valley, please take time to follow the progress of the GPU. Attend meetings. Speak up about what you want for our future. This is a 20-year plan so don't miss your chance to comment. For details about meetings and workshops, subscribe to the 2040 General Plan interest list by emailing chriso@moval.org or call (951) 413-3229. Follow the short notice posts of Pop-Up Events at <http://www.moval.org/cdd/documents/general-plan-home.html>

General Plan Advisory Committee Zoom Meetings on Thursday April 16 and Thursday April 30th 5:30 pm to 7 pm: The previously postponed General Plan Advisory Committee meeting that was originally scheduled for March 19 has been rescheduled to Thursday, April 16 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Consistent with the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, executed by the Governor of California on March 17, 2020, as a response to mitigation of the spread of coronavirus, members of the public will not be able to attend the meeting in person but will be able to attend remotely as well as make public comments via the Zoom platform. More details regarding how to participate in the meeting will be provided along with the General Plan Advisory Committee meeting agenda.

In addition, a second General Plan Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled on Thursday, April 30 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Consistent with the Governor's Executive Order, members of the public will not be able to attend the meeting in person but will be able to attend remotely and make public comments via the Zoom platform.

Moreno Valley Trade Center: This is a new project application for a light industrial building (warehouse) with 1,332,380 square feet across the street from many existing homes and land zoned for future homes. It will have loading docks on the north side of the building and 120 loading docks on the south side of the building for diesel trucks. The Project site is located south of Eucalyptus Avenue, west of Redlands Boulevard, and north of Encelia Avenue (south of the Aldi warehouse). The project will require a General Plan

*Mission Creek Preserve Hike, Moreno Valley Group, January 2020,
Photographer Christina Torres*



Amendment and a Change of Zone from “Residential: Max 2 du/ac (R2)” to “Business Park/Light Industrial (BP)” and “Residential Agriculture, 2 du/ac (RA2)” and “Primary Animal Keeping Overlay Zone (PAKO)” to “Light Industrial (LI)” respectively. The City has issued the Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide responsible agencies and other interested parties with information describing the proposed project and its potential environmental effects with an opportunity to provide comments on the preparation of an Environment Impact Report by April 14, 2020.

Rancho del Prado Specific Plan (RDPSP): Although this project is located in Reche Canyon/Colton, it is worthy to note that if the project is approved, it would put 350 houses on property between the city of Colton and the city of Loma Linda. Though the property is part of Loma Linda, a recent newspaper article states that Colton may decide to annex the property. The issues involved are: increased traffic and congestion on Reche Canyon Road currently a main thoroughfare between the San Bernardino valley and the cities of Moreno Valley and commuters traveling to Hemet and beyond; loss of acreage that is protected as ‘restricted development’ by the city of Loma Linda. Here is the link to a newspaper article: <https://www.pe.com/2020/02/05/350-homes-proposed-for-protected-loma-linda-hills-near-reche-canyon/>

Link to proposed plan: <http://www.rehecanyon411.dolphingroup.org/rancho-del-prado/> For more information you can contact the city of Colton: Mark Tomich, Planning Director, City of Colton: mtomich@coltonca.gov planning@ci.colton.ca.us cityclerkoffice@coltonca.gov

Gilman Springs Road (GSR): This roadway, on our city's eastern edge, connects Moreno Valley to the San

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Jacinto/Hemet area and Riverside County is currently spending major money to upgrade GSR and make it safer. While traveling GSR you can enjoy driving through portions of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA), along Mystic Lake (the 10,000 acre Davis Unit) and further east is the disjointed 9,500 acre Potrero Unit. They both have threatened/endangered species as well as other species of concern. The wildlife needs to access both units and to be able to safely cross GSR.

The Sierra Club and other environmental groups met with the Riverside County Transportation Agency to discuss concerns about the piecemeal environmental assessments. It was pointed out that they know of all the likely improvements they could make if funding was readily available and it appears they are trying to avoid the cumulative impacts of the total project and instead only analyzing each segment separately.

Discussions also focused on the need to install and maintain wildlife corridors from the north to the south and to limit open crossings of the roadway which are deadly. It is the hope of the environmental groups that the County will review all of the possible improvements as a whole and prepare a comprehensive environmental assessment that analyzes all impacts and assigns mitigation measures to protect the traveling public and wildlife.

World Logistics Center (WLC): The 40.6 million square foot World Logistic Center (WLC) warehouses project would cover 2,610 acres, an area larger than 26 Disneylands. The Superior Court ruled in the environmental community's favor in June 2018 on several issues, but we lost on the very important Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions issue. On May 20, 2019, Earthjustice who is representing the Sierra Club and four other groups filed an appeal on the faulty GHG analysis. The city and the project developer, Highland Fairview, have filed a cross-appeal. Recently, the state Attorney General's Office and the California Air Resources Board wrote a letter to the courts supporting our position saying the city ignored environmental law when it approved the project. For *Press-Enterprise* subscribers: <https://www.pe.com/2020/01/10/moreno-valley-ignored-environmental-law-when-it-okd-world-logistics-center-california-attorney-general-says/>

Villages of Lakeview (VOL): This master planned community with its 8,725 dwelling units development on the south edge of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, was approved by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors this past spring. A coalition of environmental groups represented by the Center for Biological Diversity has challenged this project



Lake Perris, March 8, 2020 • Photographer George Hague

and its environmental findings. The judge ruled against us in December.

Moreno Valley Mayor and Council Election this November: It is never too late to be thinking about who holds office in Moreno Valley. This year two council members and the mayor will be up for re-election. Mayor Yxstian Gutierrez and Council Member Victory Baca (District 1) received heavy financial backing from developers during all of their elections into office and have supported anything the developers' desire, most prominently the World Logistics Center. Council Member David Marquez (District 3) has secured his support from his constituents and does not support warehouses where they don't belong. He is not beholden to any developers.

All too often we have seen multiple individuals run campaigns to try and eliminate the strangle hold of those supported by special interests. When multiple candidates run they divide up all the votes and the special interest candidates prevail. Please follow this election cycle, which should begin by March, and let us know who would make a good candidate or who is worthy of our support.

Donations Needed: Your donations are essential to our litigation against the World Logistics Center as well as providing professional input into Moreno Valley's general plan update process. Please make checks payable to "Sierra Club" with a notation for WLC and/or undesignated. Please send to: Sierra Club—Moreno Valley Group, P.O. Box 1325, Moreno Valley, CA 92556-1325. We sincerely appreciate and thank all of you who have taken time to donate to the litigation fund! We appreciate your generous donations.

The Moreno Valley Group attends a variety of public events throughout the year handing out information about our local conservation work. If you would like to help us host an information table at one of these events, please take time to contact us at movalleygroup@yahoo.com

Contact Us . . .

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

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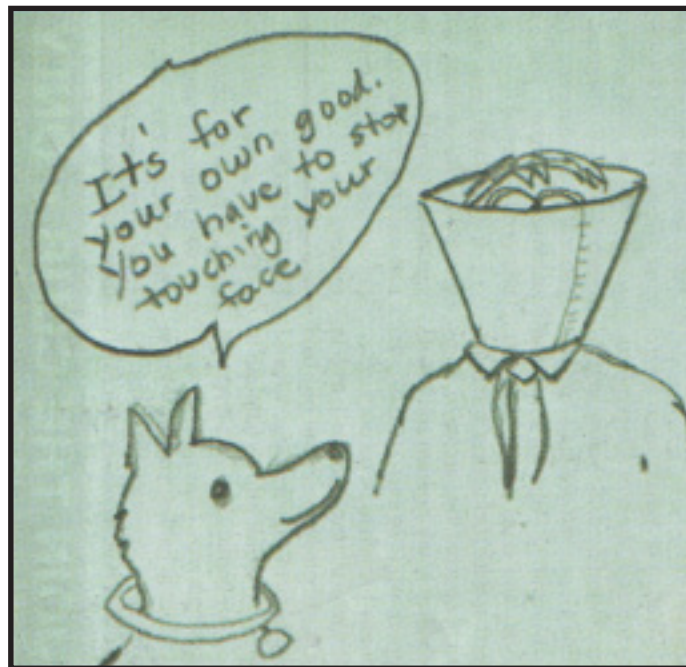
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Even in these tough times, a little levity goes a long way!

*Source: Condor Call, Journal of Los Padres Chapter,
Sierra Club.*