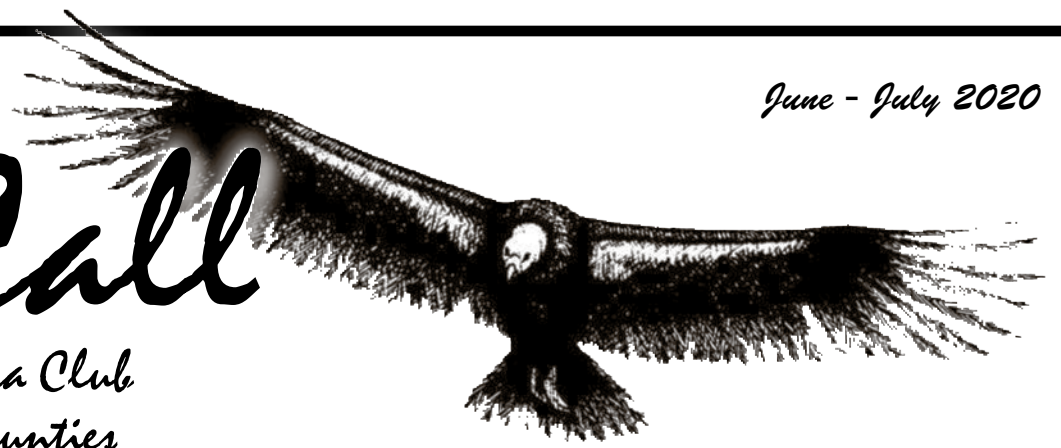


Vol. 20, No. 3 of 6

June - July 2020

Condor Call

Journal of Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club
Serving Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties



© Artwork by Kevin Gleason

Got oil out ... Climate Watch ... Under Covid ... Better normal ... Trail fun

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'A major victory' as Aera pulls plan

May 17, 2020 marks the end of another dirty oil project proposed by Aera Energy, LLC in the Cat Canyon Oil Field in Northern Santa Barbara County, a project that activists have been fighting for many years.

It means hundreds of oil tanker trucks will not flood our local roadways; thousands of native oak trees and threatened wildlife will survive; and our water will not be jeopardized by risky steam injection operations. Our community now celebrates the extraordinary news that our clean air and water will not be put at risk for dirty oil, and in turn we support the community activists and groups who made it happen.

Since 2017, the Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter, our attorneys at the EDC and our many allies throughout the county, have voiced strong opposition to Aera's dangerous project and two other steam injection projects proposed in Cat Canyon, one by PetroRock LLC and the other by TerraCore (formerly ERG), which is still standing but ... (see below).

News that Aera's risky oil project will not go forward comes on the heels of PetroRock recently abandoning its application to drill and operate hundreds of new wells in Cat Canyon. Together, these three oil projects had been considered one of the largest environmental justice threats in our county's history.

While TerraCore's project has yet to be defeated, today's victory is orders of magnitude more important and consequential.

"A major victory! Aera, which is co-owned by Exxon and Shell, recognized that decision-makers would not rubber stamp their dangerous project and would

be taking into account the well-documented impacts to water, air, endangered species and climate, as well as overwhelming community opposition," said Katie Davis, chair of our Chapter.

"The withdrawal of Aera's application to produce more dirty oil in SB County is a major step towards the phasing out of fossil fuels and fostering a clean renewable energy future," said Tara Messing, staff attorney for EDC. "It means one less environmentally-damaging oil project that would have committed our County to decades of fossil fuel energy generation."

EDC's work on defeating the three Cat Canyon projects has involved a complex, multi-level strategy, including a large grassroots outpouring of people and groups in opposition. Nearly 500 pages of information was submitted by EDC pointing out numerous omissions and inconsistencies about the project's impacts from oil spills, fires, greenhouse gas emissions, grading of sensitive habitat, paving, trucking on our local roads, and freshwater usage.

After today, Sierra Club, EDC and our allies now turn the focus to stopping the TerraCore project. EDC and its clients now turn the focus to stopping the TerraCore project.

This remaining threat will add hundreds of new wells to the Field, generate substantial greenhouse gas emissions that severely increase climate risks, may jeopardize drinking water quality in the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, use thousands of gallons of local freshwater for drilling, and threaten public safety by adding hundreds of tanker truck trips to highways and rural roads.



GOO! activists after the 1969 Unocal oil spill in the Santa Barbara Channel. Bud Bottoms, a prescient activist, GOO! Founder, sculptor and Sierra Club member is being honored during a Wildling Museum exhibit; see page 4. (Photo courtesy of Robert Sollen Collection at UCSB)

Meanwhile, cleaner energy advances

By Katie Davis

Swell Addition

What sweet timing that my new home battery arrived for install on Earth Day. The battery will pay for itself by storing excess energy from our solar panels during the day for use in the evening when electric rates are more expensive.



What's more, we have back up power even if the power goes out, such as during a power safety shut off. State rebates and a special incentive for our area bring down the cost.

That extra incentive is because Swell's network of home batteries is part of a larger battery storage effort in our region helping us avoid building another polluting power plant in Oxnard. Defeating the proposed

Puente power plant and getting all these clean energy battery storage projects instead is a major win for renewable energy in our region. You can get a home solar and storage estimate at www.swellenergy.com/sierraclub

Battery Bonanza

Apart from Swell, most of the battery storage going up in our region are large commercial installations. In fact, Strata Solar's 100-megawatt battery storage project slated near Oxnard will be one of the largest in the nation. It will store enough energy to power 80,000 homes and businesses for four hours.

There have also recently been two 10-megawatt battery projects near Carpinteria approved by the SB County Planning Commission and another one recently approved by the Camarillo Planning Commission. All are part of this larger storage effort alternative to a new gas plant that will compensate for the



Cat Canyon, a good place NOT to drill for oil ... we're seeing to that! (Photo by Katie Davis)

Ride on our success Become a volunteer

We need volunteers in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties to help us fight for wildlife and clean energy.

Projects for dirty fuels and moves to takeover public lands are upon us. Want to help? Tell us what skills you have and/or what your interests are. What do you like to do? Anyone and everyone are needed in this fight. We'll find a role for you!

EAVESDROPS

"BLACK LIVES MATTER" Be sure to read the Sierra Club statement on the police murder of George Floyd included in club Executive Director Michael Brune's powerful column about racism:

<https://tinyurl.com/OutrageToJustice>

~ Part of the club's ethic for social justice which has an Equity & Inclusion Department to help unlearn racism.

The Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter (with four groups in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties) needs you. What are your skills? Contact us and we'll find a role for you to help protect the environment. Time commitment 1-4 hours per month. More info here:

<https://tinyurl.com/HelpTheLand>

NOTE: Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, all volunteer positions will be virtual from home until limitations on in-person gatherings can be lifted. Many positions listed as "In-Person" can be done remotely for now; check with the position recruiter if you are interested in a opportunity.

COVER PHOTO

Path to Seven Falls, an oil painting by Kevin Gleason, is one of the features in his new book Highlights and Reflections. While this sold, there's more to see at:

www.KevinGleasonArt.com

Inspiration arrives in our emails

Editor's note: Our vice-chair Jim Hines wears many hats for the local, regional and national Sierra Club. He sends us emails often about the work he and other members are doing. Here's a snapshot of a couple of dozen dispatches in the last few months that inspires us to battle against polluters and pettifoggers.

Stay-at-home orders don't stop me from protecting wildlife and wild places.



Mr. Hines Goes to Washington, but lately by Zoom or phone.

People often ask me why I do this, isn't it like pounding your head against a wall? Well first off, I have a very hard head, but my passion for being the voice for our voiceless wild places and wildlife drives me.

The Sierra Club has been a light of hope during this dark time.

WOW! What a week. I took part in 60 events this week and did not even leave my home. Speaking to groups, met with various elected officials, took part in meetings and spoke at public hearings all via conference calls, Zoom and Webinars.

After Gov. Newsom's plan to order a 60% cross the board cuts to ALL state agencies and programs, I wanted to learn how that would affect CA Dept. of Natural Resources. First off, he ordered that ALL CA climate change programs and actions be halted immediately and funding those important programs would cease.

This morning I took part in a Zoom meeting with our good friend Congressman Adam Schiff to get an update on his Rim of the Valley Corridor Protection Act (affects Ventura and LA counties). The act is awaiting a hearing and vote in the U.S. Senate, but it might not be heard during the quarantine.

The CA Coastal Commission said their meetings would be scaled back and coastal permit enforcement may cease until further notice; this would also apply to the Hollister Ranch Access program. Its grants to local areas have been halted.

Technology is great but I

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A proud owner of a solar panel battery at Katie Davis' house. Want one? Go to: www.swellenergy.com/sierraclub

Inspiration...

continued from page 1

really, really miss meeting and speaking face to face with people.

I will talk with my activist team about massive budget cuts coming to local, state and federal governments.

Several of us in Ventura county have been speaking with county supervisor Linda Parks about including restrictions on pesticide spraying in the upcoming Ventura County Santa Monica Mtns Coastal Zone Amendment.

The Sierra Club has just launched a bold new goal to protect 30% more lands in America. Here is the link to our campaign video: <https://tinyurl.com/SierraClubStewards>

We are winning some victories; we are stalling environmentally harmful projects and we are putting the pressure on those decision makers to act to protect our environment.

A contact I have in National Marine Sanctuaries sent me this Presidential order made by President Trump 3 years ago to remind me about its policies. It's an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy, which is to allow oil drilling in all ocean areas beyond

the 3-mile limit and may reduce sanctuaries. The Secretary of Commerce has allowed the oil industry to dictate the policy of sanctuaries. So Commerce will accept our comments and then bury them never to be heard from again.

Wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, wildlife corridors are on my list for calls with members of the House and Senate staffers this week.

We cannot sit idly by with over 50 different environmental issues within the Los Padres Chapter region going on.

Now is my time to enjoy the great beauty of this weekend out in my garden. Please join me posting good nature photos on Facebook, Jim Hines.

For the wild ...

EAVESDROPS

"There may be a 'saving grace' in all the damage that Trump appointees have done to the Environmental Protection Agency, Interior and others."

~ Jim Clement in *Scientific American*, because of court cases stopping the most odious actions. Read about it here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ScienceSiege>

CLIMATE WATCH

Will emissions rebound?

By Sean Cummings

The year of 2020 may see an eight percent drop in global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the International Energy Agency.

That may look small, but it would be the greatest ever recorded. It would mean 2.6 billion fewer tons of carbon dioxide emitted than last year, returning humanity to 2010's emission levels. And it's happening for a reason none would wish for.

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced the world into lockdown; many nations have seen energy use drop up to 25% from 2019 levels.

The implications for climate change remain uncertain. Low energy demand has given market priority to renewables like solar and wind which are cheap and easy to keep running. Meanwhile, many experts predict the coal industry will not recover from the pandemic's impacts.

Historically however, emissions tend to rebound as governments revive their economies after a crash. Whether this happens in the wake of Covid-19 depends on whether renewable energy investments are part of economic revival efforts.

This choice matters now more than ever, as the latest climate science reminds us of what may lie ahead otherwise. For instance, under business-as-usual, a third of humanity may live in areas

with annual mean temperatures exceeding those humans have historically tolerated. And many of these regions—mostly in the global south—have already experienced a doubling since 1979 of weather events combining extreme heat and humidity, a deadly mix that undermines the body's ability to cool through sweating.

Humans don't face these impacts alone. In April, a study in *Nature* revealed that many species' populations, rather than dwindling gradually, will abruptly collapse once their habitats pass certain temperature thresholds. The study projects 73% of species passing such thresholds before 2100 will do so within a few years of each other, causing rapid breakdowns of entire ecosystems. Oceans, absorbing the bulk of global warming, may experience such catastrophes this decade.

As coastal SoCal is warming twice as fast as the continental U.S. the Los Padres region sits on the frontlines of climate change. Ocean warming has depleted kelp forests around the Channel Islands, reducing our region's ability to sequester carbon (global kelp forests sequester 600 million tons of carbon dioxide annually). The morning marine layer has declined up to 50% in parts of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties since 1970, increasing fire risk. And Ventura

County remains the fastest-warming county in the lower forty-eight at a 2.6 degrees Celsius increase since 1895.

If these trends continue, by 2050, our region can expect four to six degrees Fahrenheit of warming (including a doubling of extremely hot days from present) and five to seven fewer inches of annual rainfall. We can also expect fewer "chill hours," the nighttime temperature drops many crops need for proper fruiting. Heightened wildfire conditions will likely continue; California's 2020 wildfire count has already jumped 60% from this time last year.

Experts aren't sure why our region suffers outsized impacts. But many point to transportation emissions. Urbanization in Los Angeles and Orange counties, combined with a housing shortage and heavy tourism in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, have kept traffic surging, leading some environmentalists to advocate for replacing parking lots with high-density housing.

As the Covid-19 pandemic has locked down labs and strapped research for funding, we thank the scientific community for carrying on as best it can. Climate scientists' insights may hold a key to designing a pandemic recovery that will leave us hopeful for the future of the Earth's climate.



Here's Mr. Hines' office during the quarantine, in his back yard surrounded by magnificent flowers. (Photo by Jim Hines)

Meanwhile...

continued from page 1

unemployment and need.

Oil Glut

More puzzling is the continued push for oil expansion permits in SB County despite a global oil glut and record low oil prices that make new oil production uneconomic in the extreme. Lately oil tankers have been idling off California with excess supply, holding some 20 million barrels of oil along the west coast, or nearly enough to satisfy a fifth of the world's daily oil consumption.

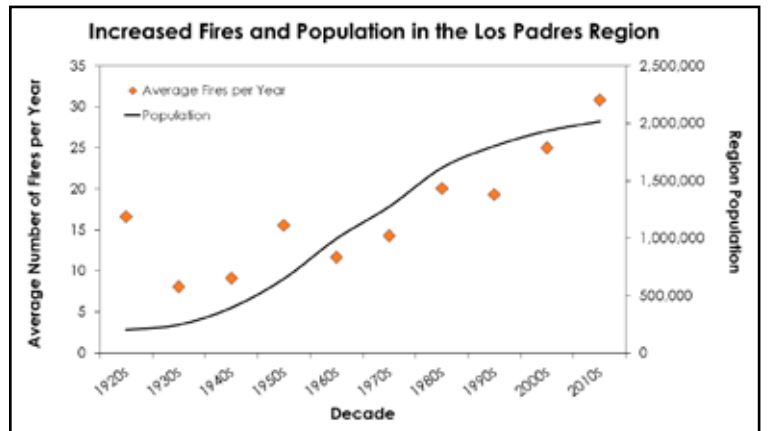
Still, the County is having to process oil project applications. Exxon seeks to restart its oil platforms on the Gaviota coast that have been shut down since the 2015 oil spill. Its application to truck the oil is expected to come up for a decision as soon as July, and this fall the county is expected to issue a draft environmental review of a new oil pipeline proposed by Plains, the same company responsible for causing the spill.

In addition, while two of the three Cat Canyon oil projects near Santa Maria has been withdrawn (see story page 1), the last one is still active seeking to double onshore oil production using extreme cyclic steam and acidizing processes.

EAVESDROPS

"Instead of making a profit, any 'net revenues' of this agency will be given back to the community in the form of rebates (lower rates) and/or incentive programs, such as electric vehicle charging stations, more residential solar, backup battery supplies to increase resiliency, et cetera."

~ Goleta declared during the new year it will get its power from carbon-free sources via Monterey Bay Community Power.



Regrowth after fire

As part of its Earth Day celebration, Los Padres ForestWatch hosted a webinar on the amazing regrowth of native plants in areas that burned during the 2017 Thomas Fire.

A recording of this visual journey led by Bryant Baker, LPFW conservation director, is now available to watch online. <https://lpfw.org/earth-day-fire-ecology-webinar>

The ForestWatch website also has a science-based article on wildfires in our region and gives insights to these questions: Why does our area burn? Is what we are experiencing natural? What is fueling the frequency and intensity of the fires in recent decades? And how do we protect our communities?

The answers may surprise you.

Sanctuary deadline 6-15

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (Office) is requesting written comments to facilitate its review for the nomination for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS), which would cover offshore areas from about Gaviota to Cambria.

The CHNMS is one of the goals of the Los Padres Chapter's Channel Islands WILD! Campaign represented by our vice-chair Jim Hines.

Sierra Club has already stated it "is proud to aid in the effort." See story in April/May issue of Condor Call here: <https://tinyurl.com/2020AprilMayCondorCall>

And for details on the proposal by the Chumash and others, go to: www.ChumashSanctuary.com

The public has until June 15 to submit comments; document number is 2020-09109. The Office conducted a virtual public hearing on May 27. Since that occurred before our deadline you can still find information on the nomination here: <https://nominate.noaa.gov>

Comments should address the relevance of the nomination towards the 11 national significance criteria and any new information, which you can review at the website above.

Particular attention will be given to new scientific information about the national significance of natural and cultural resources and any threats to resources originally proposed for protection, and changes to the management framework of the area.

Condor Call

www.sierraclub.org/lospadres ~ All phone numbers 1-805 area code

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Photos, news, tips always welcome!

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Typography and production by Dan Fuller



Sierra Club volunteers are the bread and butter of activism. We invite you to become a sustaining member, see below. Here's some volunteers during a Santa Barbara event. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

Under Cover of Covid

By Jon Ullman
Chapter Director

Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine" describes how industries exploit a disaster to make sweeping changes. The Coronavirus is no different.

While we are all quarantining, heavy industries are using their muscle to gut protections and programs on the federal and state levels. And it's working. In the past two months, we have seen the Trump and Newsom administrations, at the behest of polluting industry, pull back protections and programs designed to protect our health, safety and climate.

Obviously, the Trump Administration is a gazillion times worse than Newsom's on the environment, fiercely pulling back Environmental Protection Agency protections and rapidly seeking to expand fossil fuel extraction on our public lands and waters. But we have seen Aera (an oil company owned by Shell and Exxon) make inroads with the Newsom Administration too.

Aera's CEO is on Newsom's reopening task force. Dozens of Aera fracking permits were issued during Covid-19 with hundreds more pending. Oil monitoring and climate programs were axed. State oil and water regulation staff are trying to quickly send Cat Canyon cyclic steam aquifer exemptions on to the Trump EPA.

So, what can you do as a member

and supporter of the Sierra Club to stop polluting industries from continuing to exploit the pandemic?



Stay engaged.

My millennial friends would immediately say to me, "What does that look like?" Here's what that looks like, and we have a handy link for all:

www.Bit.ly/lospadreshub

1) Subscribe to our Chapter and Group blogs.

2) Follow our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feeds.

3) Sign up for informative webinars promoted by Sierra Club and our allies on oil, electric buildings, Electric cars, public lands and waters protections and more!

4) Contact policy makers when you receive emails from us.

5) Participate in a government public hearing online (they are still happening) and say you want the environment protected.

6) Sign up to volunteer with Sierra Club.

7) Donate to the Los Padres Chapter.

These are stressful times. It's hard to stay vigilant. Pace yourself. But stay engaged. Our opponents are moving swiftly under the cover of Covid, but we will use every digital tool, with your help, to stop them.

Stay informed and stay safe.

www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres

In May, the Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club web address (URL: Uniform Resource Locator) changed to:

www.sierraclub.org/lospadres

The former website address <https://lospadres2.sierraclub.org> will still work for a while by redirecting you to the new URL.

The new site will be linked to Sierra Club National and it will start

popping up in search engines.

The updated version has a simpler feel. It's the same format used by Santa Barbara, Ventura and Conejo groups and will make it much easier to post content on all sites. Plus, the blog posting features are far better than the old version.

Please, check it out, you'll find lots of good stuff to help Preserve, Protect and Explore the Planet and our own local environment.

LOCAL ACTION

We sustain each other

As we all continue to take care of ourselves and navigate the uncertainties of our time, we can still work as advocates for our precious local wildlands and creatures.

This spring as the days get longer and we all try to get outside responsibly, the Los Padres Chapter continues our critical work.

You are amazing! During this time of pandemic, you have not allowed your passion for protecting wildlife and wild places to stop. You have rallied to our calls for help, have taken actions, and you are making a positive difference.

While taking care of your personal safety, staying home, and staying positive, you have continued to help the Los Padres Chapter:

~ Stop uranium mining plan for our national public lands, notably our Los Padres National Forest.

~ Work to protect whales and other marine mammals from being killed off the coast of southern California (it's working, our efforts have fostered agreements that slow ship speeds).

~ Protect our local mountain lions (also working via support for wildlife corridor and laws).

~ Protect national parks, monuments, forests, and marine

sanctuaries (still at risk, we're working on it).

~ And so much more from clean air to sparkling water.

This spring is the perfect opportunity to become a Sustaining Member of the Los Padres Chapter. All it takes is pledging \$20 a month or more to support our local chapter.

By becoming a member of our Sustaining Member Circle, you are directly supporting the local work our chapter is doing on the ground in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Your commitment allows our chapter to be nimble, to respond where we are needed, when we are needed – from advocating at the county level in support of the Strauss Wind Project to advocating nationally for federal legislation protecting our natural resources such as the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act and Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary.

The steady flow of income provided by the Sustaining Member Circle keeps the chapter's focus on this advocacy, outreach and growth because we know our monthly expenses

will be covered by your recurring contributions.

It's easy to join, when you go to the link below, select "make my gift monthly at \$20 or more per month". You will be automatically enrolled in the special Sustaining Member Circle, and more information will be sent to you by email.

www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

Sustaining Members receive advance notice of events, regular updates on local environmental advocacy, a subscription to *Condor Call*, an invitation to an exclusive annual outing, and a gift.

Every dollar you donate stays here in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties to help us transition away from fossil fuels and to protect rivers, forests, and wildlife that depend on us during these critical times.

Your continued support is vital for our collective efforts. You care! You help! You make a difference!

Thank you for your work and willingness to support our local chapter. Questions? Contact Emily Engel:

emilyaengel@gmail.com

'Amazing' Luz honored

Luz Reyes-Martin will be honored by the SB Chapter of the Association for Women in Communications at the 2020 Women of Achievement luncheon presented by Women Connect4Good.

Luz is the Executive Director of Public Affairs and Communications at Santa Barbara City College, and a member of the SB Sierra Club Executive Committee.

"She is an amazing volunteer, thoughtful, principled and organized. She's played an important role in gathering support for some of our campaigns, such as getting Metropolitan Transit District to set a goal for 100% electric buses by 2030. She's someone who does the real work behind the scenes, such as campaigning for our endorsed candidates, that makes all the difference in our success," commented Katie Davis, Chair of the Los Padres Chapter.

Also honored will be Barbara Ben-Horin, CEO of Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara. While the honorees were announced in April, the event was cancelled due to the quarantine and is rescheduled for Oct. 23.

Luz said her work entails communicating with different

audiences, and "the essential ingredients are always authenticity, honesty, integrity and respect."

Luz also serves on the Goleta Unified School District Board, and is president of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee, a non-partisan organization that endorses candidates who support a feminist agenda that includes action opposing discrimination based on gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, age or ability. Those are the same ethics that the Sierra Club holds dear.



Take permits harm critters

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released a "General Conservation Plan for Oil and Gas Activities" in Santa Barbara County, which would fast-track "take" permits for oil and gas companies whose projects would harm or kill three species protected under the Endangered Species Act.

But oil and endangered species don't mix, says the SB Environmental Defense Center.

The three species are the California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, and the Lompoc Yerba Santa, an evergreen shrub that sports a lavender flower. They are currently under threat from two proposed cyclic steam injection oil projects slated for Cat Canyon Oil Field in northern SB County.

Take a minute to read a blog by Environmental Defense Center's Tara Messing, addressing this flawed "conservation" plan that relies on the goodwill of the oil companies to decide if they will avoid impacts to threatened and endangered species. It is entitled "Oil and Endangered species Don't Mix:

<https://tinyurl.com/OilTakePermits>

All physical meetings suspended - we're online

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/LosPadres

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

~ We meet 1st Tuesdays, noon to 1:30pm of each month. For details and to follow the South Coast area, contact:

SantaBarbaraGroup@SierraClub.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 sign up at ConejoGroup@gmail.com

Otherwise, get all information on this eastern Ventura County Group from Hugh Warren, 341-6295 mail@hkwarren.net

www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo

www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings

SIGHTINGS

Homebound? Doesn't stop our work!

By John Hankins

Well, our "Sightings" are not face-to-face lately but beamed via Zoom and other online meetups during the quarantine. This has led to a background of dogs barking, cats crawling on the keyboard, kids playing, reading the titles of books seen behind the participants who may still be in jammies or non-collared shirts.

But the Sierra Club does not lie idle. It's just migrated more to internet meetings, action posts and lobbying by email.

Please join us; see Group News box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved. While we are not now conducting our free outings, we encourage all to go outside on your own. If you'd like to donate (it helps a lot and the

money stays here at home), do not pass go, but go directly to:

www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

June 4: **EV Webinar** on electric cars by Community Environmental Council in partnership with our Sierra Club. Focused on which 100+ electric vehicles or plug-in hybrid may be best for you. Watch it on the web:

www.CECSB.org

May 27: **Marks the end** of another dirty oil project proposed by Aera Energy, LLC in the Cat Canyon Oil Field in Northern Santa Barbara County, a project that we've been fighting for many years. See story on page 1.

May 20: **Oil Regulation** hearing by CALGEM for remote comments on a process to update public health and safety protections. Our club members participated, with 10 key talking points, ranging from no cyclic steaming, no drilling through drinking water aquifers and monitoring of numerous effects. Comments end June 10, voice your opinion here:

CALGEMRegulations@conservation.ca.gov

May 19: **Moving Beyond** oil webinar (También está disponible en español) hosted by Los Padres ForestWatch found numerous Sierra club members tuning in. An English and Spanish version was offered entitled "Oil 101 Moving Beyond Platforms, Pipelines and Pollution in SB County." You can still view it at:

<https://tinyurl.com/Oil101webinar>

May 5: **Surfrider Foundation** of Ventura had a ZOOM meeting that had our vice-chair Jim Hines speaking to them and answering many questions about the club's work locally and nationally.

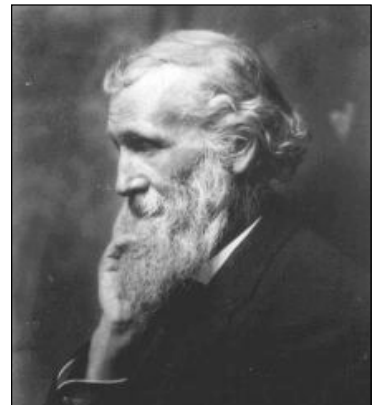
May 4: **Marine Sanctuary** office received a nomination to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. It will now receive comments by June 15, and of course our Los Padres Chapter will submit its reasons why it should be created. For details see story on page ?

April 22: **Earth Day Online!** Our Executive Director Jon Ullman wrote and posted "reflections from Earth Day Past and Present with photos. A great read, it's here: <https://tinyurl.com/EDayPhotoStory>

April 21: **Climate Crisis** article in EdHat by Robert Bernstein, hike leader and SB Group officer. Connected to the next day's 50th Earth Day, Robert writes that the climate crisis is not given the same attention as the Covid-19 crisis. Read the full article here:

<https://tinyurl.com/TwoCrises>

April 20: **The Blob**, "The End ... Or Is It?" is a blog by our



April 21, 1838: John Muir's birthday in Scotland. "Studies in the Sierra" began in 1874, and his efforts to halt the destruction of Yosemite led to the creation of the National Park in 1880. That led to founding the Sierra Club in May 28, 1892 to "do something for wildness and make the mountains glad." He was our first president until his death in 1914.

chapter Executive Director Jon Ullman, posted on the SB Group's website. It's about the ominous and ongoing fight by oil companies to expand production while the Trump Administration is suspending federal protections. Read it in all its horror here:

<https://tinyurl.com/BlobOfOil>

April 16: **Cougars protected**, at least for a year as CA Fish & Game voted unanimously to give mountain lion protection in our SoCal region under the Endangered Species Act.

April 15: **Electrification 101** was a statewide webinar by the Sierra Club on how to switch over from gas to all electric buildings. This is a campaign that our chapter is working on for SB and Ventura counties.

April 8: **Words of the Wild** (aka WOW), the newsletter of the club's Cal/Neva Wilderness Committee reprinted Jim Hines' article under the headline "War on the Environment." It appeared in *Condor Call's* April/May issue under the headline: "Public Lands at Risk."

Channel Islands
Marine & Wildlife INSTITUTE
CIMWI
Rescue Hotline 805.567.1505
info@CIMWI.org
805.567.1506
PO Box 4250
Santa Barbara, CA 93140
www.CIMWI.org

CIMWI is dedicated to positively impacting conservation through marine mammal rescue, rehabilitation, research and education to promote ocean and human health.

How to help a stranded marine mammal:

- 1 Do Not Touch!**
Do not touch, feed, harass, cover, pour water on, allow dogs near or coax animal into the water.
- 2 Observe Animal**
Observe animal from a distance of 50 feet. Note physical characteristics and condition.
- 3 Determine Location**
Determine exact location of animal and note any landmarks.
- 4 Call Hotline**
Call CIMWI's Rescue Hotline and provide name, phone number and specific information about animal and its location.

Rescue Hotline 805.567.1505

Huge thanks to our donors

By Emily Engel

The Los Padres Chapter thanks all the generous donors who contributed to our Spring Fundraising Campaign.

During these challenging times, it is important that we continue to support and find ways to stay connected to each other and the natural world. In times like these, our public lands need more protection and more people like you acting in your own ways and within your own means.

Your contributions provide critical support as our chapter works to ensure the protection and preservation of our local wildlands and precious natural resources. From protecting mountain lions to continuing the fight against big oil, the Los Padres Chapter remains an active force in our community. More now than ever, we must continue to protect and defend our environment against local, state, and federal threats.

From \$5 to \$500, every dollar donated to the Los Padres Chapter helps propel our mission forward. Please consider a monthly amount to join our Sustaining Member Circle; see story on page 3 entitled "We sustain each other."

Again, thank you to all our donors. Questions? Contact me at:

emilyaengel@gmail.com

It's never too late to make your contribution today. You can join this wonderful list of supporters from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties here:

www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

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Bud Bottoms exhibit

Opening concurrently with "20/20: A Retrospective" is the Wildling Museum's inaugural Tower Gallery exhibition featuring "Remembering Bud Bottoms: A Legacy of Art and Activism" which is on view throughout the summer. While the museum is currently closed due to the Covid quarantine, it offers a virtual tour of its exhibits here:

<https://wildlingmuseum.org/virtual-visit>

The exhibit features sea life sculpture works by the Santa Barbara artist locally renowned for his iconic Dolphin Family at the base of Stearns Wharf.

James "Bud" Bottoms (1928 - 2018) was an internationally known sculptor, artist, environmental activist and a friend to the Sierra Club. He worked for many years as an art director for General Electric's think tank, TEMPO. However, in 1978 after a powerful dream featuring a woman embracing a dolphin, he was inspired to sculpt and began committing significant time and effort to marine mammal awareness and protection.

Prior to his inspiring dream,

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"A world without waste sounds impossible. But the vision of a circular economy ... is inspiring ..."

~ National Geographic's March 2020 feature on "The End of Trash." Read it here:

<https://tinyurl.com/NatGeoTrash>



Bud Bottoms at work in his studio. (Personal photo courtesy Carole Ann Bottoms)

Bottoms became a committed environmental activist in 1969 after the Union Oil blowout that polluted the ocean and devastated local beaches, killing sea birds and marine life.

He helped establish the small, but influential group, Get Oil Out! (GOO!) following the tragic spill. In the 1980s, Bud created the iconic Dolphin Family sculpture and created many other works at locations across the globe, including a similar dolphin fountain in the Sister City of Puerto Vallarta Mexico.

The Wildling presented Bud Bottoms with its Wilderness Spirit Award in 2015 to honor his incredible legacy of art and environmental advocacy. He was a friend to the local indigenous Chumash tribes, as well as a voice for the marvelous creatures of the sea.

Pandemic thoughts spoiled by oil

Editor's note: You can act by emailing the Interior Department to stop future oil leasing plans, which affect our region. You have the Sierra Club behind you at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/BanOilLeasing>

By Katie Davis

It was five years ago, May 19, 2015. I was sitting in the SB County Board of Supervisors meeting having a fight with oil companies over climate change. We were arguing that new sources of pollution from oil production was significant. They were blaming China and claiming that nothing we do matters in the global scheme of things. We were winning.

Suddenly our phones lit up with news there was an oil spill on the Gaviota Coast. The pipeline was badly corroded and there was no automatic shut off. It spilled 142,000 gallons of oil down a culvert onto Refugio



Workers cleaning up the Gaviota oil spill of 2015. (Photo by Shaw Leonard)

State Beach and into the ocean before shut down.

Our beaches in Goleta were closed that summer. Our economy took a hit. White-suited hazmat workers cleaned miles of beaches.

You can't completely clean up an offshore oil spill. The oil sinks into the marine environment, damaging fragile underwater ecosystems, killing or contaminating fish and smaller organisms that are essential links in the food chain, including the food we eat. The environmental damage can last for decades.

More than 300 dolphins, seals, sea lions, pelicans and other birds and animals washed up dead. Many others were found alive and suffering. Oil clogs the blow holes of whales and dolphins, affecting their ability to breathe and communicate. It coats the fur of seals and birds impairing their ability to float, fly, and regulate temperatures. They die of hypothermia or toxicity or starvation. They go blind or develop birth defects or tumors.

Plains All American Pipeline was eventually convicted of a felony for its negligence in causing the spill, but while the prosecutors suggested a fine of \$1 billion, the company was fined only \$3.3 million. (Assembly member Monique Limón introduced a bill this session that would increase those maximum fines.)

Since that day five years ago, Exxon's offshore platforms have been shut down, as have their polluting onshore

processing facilities, which had been the largest facility source of greenhouse-gas emissions in the county. Exxon wants to restart those offshore platforms. Given the unusable pipeline, they have proposed trucking the oil along the 101, an even less safe way to transport oil. This, in the midst of a pandemic and a global glut of oil.

At the first hearing of this trucking proposal in July 2018, I was feeling emotional. I hadn't slept for three days after my house almost burned down in the Holiday Fire the prior week. My neighborhood was a smoky wasteland. An expert said there is a 99 percent likelihood that climate change increased the severity of the heatwave that created the freaky tinderbox in which that fire erupted a half mile from my house.

As protesters gathered in opposition to Exxon's trucking proposal, I reminded them that as early as 1977, scientists at Exxon warned the company that, "use of fossil fuels ... should not be encouraged" because of the risk they posed, but Exxon went on to undermine climate science, delay political action and post record profits. They knew heatwaves would cause

the kind of climate disasters I had just experienced, and they didn't care.

We live in a world of commingled crises. The coronavirus poses an immediate danger, particularly for those already afflicted by air pollution. And we live in a slower moving but more permanent climate crisis that is fueling mass extinctions, weather disasters, droughts, conflict and disease, and projected to cost us trillions.

As another fire season approaches, turbocharged by global warming, I fear having to evacuate when we are supposed to be socially distancing. I fear power losses when patients are in need. And I fear that oil companies are making the situation worse by seeking to loosen environmental regulations and waive-record keeping, and in our area, pursuing approval of oil projects that will lead to more oil spills and more climate change.

This year Exxon's trucking proposal is up for a decision. The tone-deaf timing in the midst of a pandemic when oil is the last thing we need is yet one more strike against them – as if we need any more reasons to say no to Exxon.

Let's work on a better 'normal'

Editor's note: The author is right on target with Executive Director of the Sierra Club, Michael Brune, who wrote in an April post to members under the headline We Need a Better Normal: "We are all anxious for a return to a post-pandemic normal. But what is happening in communities around this country is a reminder that normal isn't good enough. We shouldn't be rebuilding the inequitable economy we used to have, but the just, sustainable, and fair economy that we need."

By Robert Bernstein

Do we really want a return to "normal"?

Is it "normal" that millions of Americans have no access to health care and/or are homeless? That 11 million American children do not know where their next meal is coming from?

Is it "normal" that humans are disrupting the climate in a catastrophic manner and that we go about business as usual?

At age 15, climate activist Greta Thunberg said, "I think in many ways we autistic are the normal ones and the rest of the people are pretty strange – especially when it comes to the sustainability crisis."

In some way, it is not our fault. Our perceptual systems are mostly set up only to detect change. We are largely blind to what is unchanging in our environment.

The corporate media accentuates this effect on a grand scale. Single tragedies are magnified while gross ongoing injustices receive no coverage.

A few years ago, I attended a small conference in Santa Barbara where top news editors explained how they cover the news. I pointed out that news coverage is "event driven" rather than driven by what is important. I asked if that could change.

A top *New York Times* editor replied. Someone at a staff meeting offered this solution: A monthly feature called "Still True". To cover a problem that is large but creates no specific events. For example, "Still True That Three Million Americans

Are Homeless."

Once a month is not much, but still better than nothing. Then he snapped back, "I killed it. It was a dumb idea." Wow. A top *New York Times* editor thinks it is a dumb idea to cover what is important.

Bernie Sanders first ran for president on a 12-point platform of issues that all poll at more than 60% across the political spectrum. Including true universal healthcare. The pundits declared his views as out of the mainstream. Yet one debate moderator looked at his policy positions. He said, "You call yourself

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"Scientific data and satellites reinforce that COVID-19 has had a positive environmental impact ..."

~ Brooke Russell in *The Independent* noting that "this global pause has served as proof that we do, in fact, have the capacity to halt industries and disastrous environmental practices," and that going back to 'normal' "is unsustainable at every level."



Jack and his partner, Jenya, are running a sheep operation that is well aligned with sustainable agricultural goals of Gaviota Coast Conservancy. Go to their website and learn about how they support integrated crop management, ecological restoration, production of ethical food and fiber: www.CuyamaLamb.com

Sheep grazing coast

By Janet Koed

Gaviota Coast Conservancy

If your mind is taking you to dark places as you drift off to sleep, try counting sheep!

Recently, I took a break from making fabric masks for my daughter and her coworkers in a local health care facility. I heard about the sheep grazing up on Elings Hill and decided I would go look.

It was easy to keep my distance from families who were marveling at these woolly wonders. There were moms, dads and baby sheep, about 275

of them including newborns, gnawing on green vegetation and helping the neighborhood with fire prevention. The scene was idyllic, and I felt transported to the French countryside. I've been up there about every day since.

On my solo vacation up to Elings Sheep Hill, I met some of the folks who are running Cuyama Lamb. Jack, the shepherd, told me that about 400 sheep are currently residing at Orella Ranch on the Gaviota Coast between weed abatement gigs. I work for Gaviota Coast Conservancy so Jack, his dog Ada and I had an immediate bond. I went home to discover that Jack and his partner, Jenya, are running an operation that is well aligned with sustainable agricultural goals of Gaviota Coast Conservancy.

I encourage you to go to their website and learn about how they support integrated crop management, ecological restoration, production of ethical food and fiber at:

www.CuyamaLamb.com

Next, I did some Facebook research to find that Cynthia Whalen had some great video of the "Gaviota" sheep being herded back and forth on Calle Real by Orella Ranch. After seeing that, I had to call Jack at Cuyama Lamb and find out where the sheep might be going next. They will soon be leaving Elings in search of greener pastures at Arroyo Hondo. Last I heard, Arroyo Hondo was encouraging self-guided hikes (reservations are required) on the first and third full weekends (mornings and afternoons) and on Mondays and Wednesdays (mornings). Call them at 966-4520 for updates on trail access during these unusual times or go to the website:

www.SBLandTrust.org

Be well and make sure your outings are solo or in responsible groups. Those sheep are a reminder that life goes on during challenging times and that spring is in the air! There is an abundance of beauty out there.



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Take a Hike!

LOS PADRES CHAPTER

UPDATES: <https://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres>

Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein

DAY USE FEES ARE NOT REQUIRED



For roadside parking outside of developed Campgrounds or Day Use Areas

Restoring Murietta trail for 'nice' multi-use loop

By Perry Van Houten

A coalition of local trail groups is working to restore an important trail in Matilija Canyon.

Work began in March on the 1.67-mile-long Murietta Trail, which was badly damaged by the Thomas Fire in 2017 and subsequent heavy rains.

The restoration project is being spearheaded by the Thomas Fire Trail Fund, a group consisting of Los Padres Forest Association, The C.R.E.W., REI, the Santa Barbara County Trails Council and the Sage Trail Alliance.

"It's been, historically, probably the least-visited trail in Matilija Canyon," said Bryan Conant, executive director with LPFA.

From the main road in the canyon, the trail heads to the southwest through an oak-shaded campground, before connecting with the service road that leads past Murietta Divide and into Santa Barbara County.

"It provides a nice, natural loop that's about five miles long for people to enjoy," Conant said.

Being outside the wilderness, the trail is multi-use, open to hikers, backpackers, mountain bikers and equestrians. The trail camp is only two miles from the parking area, making it a good destination for families with children.

But the fire, and torrential rains in January of 2018, rendered the landscape nearly unrecognizable. "The trail was just annihilated," Conant said. "Beyond the campground was just completely gone."

Work started March 31, just trying to define the trail as far as the camp. Crews spent an entire day clearing downed trees on the lower section of trail leading to the camp.

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"Our generation has been given this incredible resource by past generations, and our job is to be good stewards of it."

~ Mark Wilkinson of SB County Trails Council.

The second phase of the project required two trips to the work site in early April and involved flagging the upper part of the trail. Fallen trees and fast-growing grasses and chaparral had made the route impossible to follow.

The C.R.E.W. then worked the trail from the top down to the upper creek crossing. The next step is to continue brushing the lower part of the trail, to the camp, and then connecting with the portion of the trail cleared by The C.R.E.W. That portion should be completed by June.

Volunteer work to restore the trail is on hold due to Covid-19, Conant said. More tread work will be scheduled this summer or fall, weather permitting, possibly stretching into next year.

Looking across the landscape of the Thomas Fire, the Murietta Trail seemed like a natural fit for a restoration project. "Logistically, it's pretty easy to get into and work," Conant said. "We do have other trails we'd like to work on, but we're trying to focus on the trails that haven't seen any work and, without this, might disappear."

The project, expected to cost around \$20,000, was funded by a grant from the Thomas Fire Trail Fund. "It's been great for these trail groups that have historically worked in their own little bubble to all come together and work on a common goal," Conant said.

The Trail Fund is trying to raise a total of \$200,000 for trail work in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. So far, it has raised more than \$50,000, Conant said.

Mark Wilkinson, executive director of the Santa Barbara County Trails Council, said the Murietta Trail provides an important link between the two counties. "The forest connects county after county, and when a trail is taken out of commission, that link is lost," he said.

There's no guarantee, Wilkinson said, that the trails will always be available.

"Our generation has been given this incredible resource by past generations, and our job is to be good stewards of it," he said. "We can't fall down on the job, because they gave us so much."

To learn more about volunteering for trail work or donating to the Murietta Trail restoration project, visit:

www.ThomasFireTrailFund.org

~ Editor's note: This article first appeared in the Ojai Valley News and is reprinted by permission. Contact the author here:

pvh@ojaivalleynews.com

Club outings paused

Sierra Club Local Outings

All Sierra Club local outings have been cancelled through the end of July. Check the Los Padres Chapter website for updates to this policy at:

www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres

Recreation Area Re-opens

Many of the campgrounds, day use areas and trailheads in the Lower Santa Ynez Recreation area of the Los Padres National Forest have been difficult to get to since the first crossing was closed due to high water levels. It is now open, and the campgrounds that were closed may be open now. These developed areas are subject to a user fee, but if you

are not using a developed area, a fee cannot be collected. A new sign posted at the first kiosk makes this clear, but you must use an existing roadside turn-out and be completely off the pavement.

Please Be Safe

Please observe social spacing. And if an area is too crowded, pick another. And be careful with fire as we have had the first fire of the season near Red Rock.

Day Use Fees

Day use fees are not required for roadside parking outside of developed campgrounds or day use areas.

Some camps reopening

Dating back to March, the Forest Service combated Covid-19 by closing all Developed Recreation Sites across the forest, but some may reopen in June.

While the Service has been renewing the closure orders every two weeks, the latest order was set to expire June 1, so all the developed campgrounds across the Los Padres National Forest that are managed by Parks Management Co. (PMC) may be reopening on that date. Check before you go, a list is here:

<https://tinyurl.com/CampsClosedOpen>

There are also some campgrounds that remain under the management of the Los Padres NF. These campgrounds have also been closed but are set to reopen June 19. Again, check before you go:

<https://tinyurl.com/ForestCampsStatus>

Many of the day-use areas across the forest may also reopen in addition to the Paradise Road area along the Lower Santa Ynez.

Editor's note: Thanks to Los Padres ForestWatch for much of this information.



The C.R.E.W.'s (from left) Madrona Quinn, Brian Campbell and James Cobb work to restore the Murietta Trail. Below is the trail map route. (Photo courtesy Thomas Fire Trail Fund)

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

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If you have named Sierra Club or your Chapter as a beneficiary or would like to discuss doing so, please contact us today

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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	968-6640
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.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres>
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>



Lessons from Half Dome hike

By Kristi KirkPatrick

“Hike your own hike” has never been more relevant than when contemplating a trek to Half Dome in Yosemite National Park.

Every year about 50,000 people get permits to hike Half Dome, one of the ten most dangerous hikes in the world, and the danger in summiting the Dome is no joke.

The hike is a minimum of 16 miles round trip, with an elevation gain of 4700’ from the valley floor, and the last 400 feet is practically vertical, at an angle of 60° in some places. Being a strong hiker counts to get you to the base of the dome, but it will not be enough to get you to the summit.

Hand and upper body strength are an absolute must if you are going to tug yourself up the slippery granite rock using the two steel cables for handholds.

My hike started at about 5:30 a.m. when I joined a sporadic line of headlamps bouncing up the trail in the dark. As we gradually ascended the Mist trail

to Vernal Falls the sun rose, and the headlamps went out. We lost track of one another as we each found our pace and fanned out across the trail.

The 8-mile trek up to the base of the dome is stunning and well worth the effort for strong hikers. The Sub-dome, too, is an amazing climb up giant granite steps and along short switchbacks with breathtaking views all around.

I was advised by friends to wear my stickiest shoes and bring rubber coated gloves for better grip on the cables but was told not to worry too much because there is always a pile of discarded gloves at the base of the dome. As far as tying in with a lanyard, some sneered at the idea and indicated this was total overkill.

What I saw as I ascended Half Dome were people without gloves, people without a harness/lanyard setup (me included), and even one guy without shoes. Rated only as a class 3, Half Dome is still very steep, with extreme exposure and the potential for long deadly falls.



Kristi Kirkpatrick hiked the 8-mile Cable Route then took selfie before going up the final 400-foot steep ascent. A permit is needed (\$5k fine!).

Doing it without the proper gear is downright ... unprepared. Plus the danger of being with so many other people doing the same thing!

As I clung to the cables, I watched as someone’s open folding knife hurtled past the crowd and away, down the side of the rock.

Aside from mountaineers and the sure footed among us, contemplating this hike should entail a serious meditation about your limits and abilities, never about forcing a summit with a hard-won permit or risking your life based on the casual advice of friends.

Always do your own research about the hike you are planning, consider carefully what you will need to be comfortable and safe, and prepare for your journey accordingly because, after all, it is your hike.

~ Editor’s note: Kristi is our Chapter’s Outings Chair. While the outings are on hiatus due to quarantine, she and other hike leaders are safely scouting out trails and adventures for the public ... for free. Check our website occasionally to find off if we’ve resumed:

www.sierraclub.org/lospadres

GREETINGS FRIENDS

Hope is here in nature

By Jim Hines

Times are challenging for all of us right now. Discouraging news daily, anger rages throughout our society and Americans are torn between feeding their families and staying safe.

So, let’s all head out into the garden to get some much-needed pandemic relief, which is exactly what I do on a daily basis.

My Sierra Club work load is huge during this time of national pandemic, working to prevent doomsday budgets from harming our environment, attempting to stop uranium mines from opening across the west (including one here in the Los Padres Chapter region), working to protect wildlife and wild places are still my daily goals.

My meetings (safely from home) daily with local, state and federal elected officials and decision makers is endless, so much happening which is harmful to our environment it can easily get discouraging.

But I take time to recharge, reconnect and renew out in my yard filled with hundreds of plants in bloom. I cannot tell you how



Gas stoves pollute

A new report “Gas Stoves: Health and Air Quality Impacts and Solutions” summarizes two decades of evidence about the harm to our health from cooking with gas.

Guidelines for local governments and households point the way to transition from gas use. Since the report does not cover the features of solar cooking, the 350 Ventura County Climate Hub and the Ventura Sierra Club co-sponsored “Saving the World with Solar Cooking One Meal at a Time”, an online meeting held June 4.

Sierra Club California is campaigning for Building Decarbonization because the methane gas burned in buildings creates more than a quarter of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions leading to health problems, especially for children. The gas industry’s ‘astroturf’ coalition (meaning an artificial grassroots front group) is aggressively misleading people about so-called “renewable gas” that

is still a potent climate pollutant.

Pro-methane fuel advocates are lobbying state, county and city governments and threaten public officials who are trying to get bans on gas connections in new construction. The Ventura Sierra Club is alerting people to the false narrative from SoCal Gas Company.

Read the Gas Stoves report here: <https://tinyurl.com/StovePollution>

~ By Jan Dietrick

EAVESDROPS

“Production, promotion and marketing of fossil fuel products, simultaneous concealment of the known hazards of those products and their championing or anti-science campaigns” harmed the city, which “is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise.”

~ Excerpt from a state lawsuit against numerous multinational energy companies by the city of Baltimore. Oil lawyers want such cases to instead go to federal courts (from a NY Times article).

Walking the Sisquoc

By Kristi KirkPatrick

I could see Alcove Falls as I started up the switchbacks from Manzanita Creek, heading toward Hurricane Deck.

My friends Diane and Nancy and I were just about 8 miles in to an amazing 45-mile backcountry trek in the San Rafael Wilderness. The Sisquoc Loop encircles Hurricane Deck and loosely follows the Manzanita and Sisquoc rivers through some of the most beautiful portions of the Los Padres National Forest.

There are primitive campsites along the way, within easy walking distance from one another, and the well-kept South Fork ranger station, attentively stocked and cared for by all who pass, where everyone is welcome to stay. White Ledge camp is probably the most beautifully situated among the smooth rocks and pools at the eastern end of the Deck and Mormon camp is clean and welcoming.

The availability of water and the high temperatures in late spring and summer is a serious consideration when doing this hike. The backcountry can be scorching hot and, even with water, one can easily become overwhelmed by the temperatures. In this case, a March storm made our journey a huge treat as we climbed in and out of deep green swimming holes

throughout each day. We swam at whim, we filtered water whenever we needed it, and we never had to carry more than necessary.

Navigating the trail can be challenging (read bushwhacking) if you cannot find the high trails that run along the mountainsides and frequently dip down to cross the river. We used the carefully placed cairns and ribbons to find our way and rarely did we have to retrace our steps. Lovingly groomed by Los Padres Forest Association, this trail grows in so quickly as to need yearly maintenance. Unfortunately, the budget doesn’t stretch that far so, in off years, only feet on the ground manage to keep the way visible.

We saw so much along the way ... amazing canyon views, grassy plateaus, flowers and waterfalls and wild critters (yes, and snakes, too). We even found the ruins of several old homesteading cabins and visited the Manzanita Schoolhouse located at the confluence of the rivers. We speculated about a man rumored to have lived out here not too long ago and wondered what he thought about as he sat high on a ledge above the wilderness.

What I thought, though, was how lucky I am to have this astonishing place to visit right here in our local forest.



San Rafael Wilderness grassy area by Kristi Kirkpatrick.



This “Eight-legged Snowy plover” by Elliot Lowndes won a second-place award in the Wildling’s 2018 contest. Check out new contest “Critters of the Tri-County Region” now accepting submissions from photographers of all ages at: www.WildlingMuseum.org

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Ocean adventures revving up again

By John Hankins

While boat trips to the Channel Islands and whale watching excursions are temporarily cancelled due to the Covid-19 quarantine, the Sierra Club managed to squeeze in a trip to Anacapa Island just before the closure.

As bad luck would have it, a Sierra Club-sponsored trip with Island Packers was not able to land on East Anacapa due to high tides, but it did get a tour around the island. Just a week before, I was able to get on the island with a boat-full of guests, so I can give you a taste of what's there.

Sea gulls, lots of sea gulls, many of whom fly bits of food from onshore dumps, evidenced by the chicken bones etc. It's their island, shared by seven species of marine birds who nest on the island and include cormorants, brown pelicans and pigeons who host other birds on migration. It's also home to sea lions and harbor seals

who haul out on the narrow, rocky seashore (there is not a beach, except at Frenchy's Cove on West Anacapa).

There's also unique plant species, notably the coreopsis, and gum plant, needlegrass, buckwheat and more, all protected by a figure 8 trail system and a few picnic areas.

The most notable features are the lighthouse and the much-photographed Arch Rock extending below the lighthouse

The island itself is in three above-ocean pieces: East, Middle and West Anacapa, best seen from East's Inspiration Point.

Structures include a residence, restrooms, visitor's center, office and a water house, in which water from ashore is transported by boat.

Anacapa's history goes back to the 1800s when sheep were raised there, ending in 1938 when the National Park Service became its steward. It



Carol Chase is one of many volunteers who guide visitors to Anacapa Island, remarking on its history (it has Chumash ruins), rare species of flora and fauna, and its importance as a mammal and bird nursery. Water, gasoline and supplies must be brought from shore for conservation workers.



Liz Audet and her husband Les Hankins came all the way from Vermont to visit California and take a trip to the islands, among other sights. The trip was in February, just before the quarantine shut down the island trips. (Photos by John Hankins)

was also used by the Chumash, in fact there are 28 archeological sites which mark their presence going back at least 5,000 years.

For those of us on land, Anacapa is not always seen and sometimes looks like a mirage. In fact, its name comes from the Chumash word 'Anyapakh' which means 'mirage' or 'ever-changing'.

It is real, a fascinating look into an isolated and ancient land mass that is now protected; and you can go, when the boats are allowed.

EAVESDROPS

"After a two-month cleanup blitz, volunteers completely transformed Ormond Beach from a derelict wasteland to a respected wetland. The goal was to finish the cleanups by March 1st to prepare for the western snowy plover and California least tern breeding season and volunteers did it!"

~ Christina in Friends of Ormond Beach newsletter.
Let's all help, contact:
SaveOrmondBeach@gmail.com



The famed lighthouse first built in 1912 got a modern upgrade in 1932 and still guides sailors through the SB Channel.