

Vol. 23, No. 6 of 6

December 2023 - January 2024

Condor Call

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



© Photo by Adam Ernster

Wins 2023 ... Race to Zero ... Vampires ... Whale Siting ... All EVs

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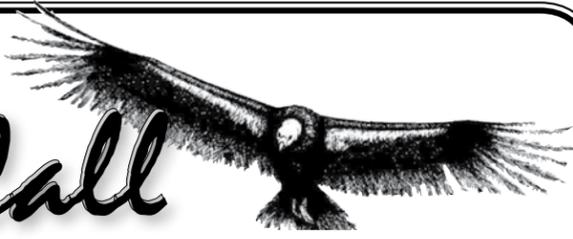
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Condor Call

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

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YEAR 2023

Seeds of change are growing

By Katie Davis

One of my favorite things to do at the end of the year is reflect on the work and successes of Sierra Club and our environmental allies. Of course, it takes a lot of work by volunteers, and donations are always welcome. The money stays here at home doing good work. Please donate here:

www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

This year we successfully:

~ Defeated ExxonMobil multiple times in our efforts to keep their dangerous offshore oil operations from restarting that have been shut down for eight years since the 2015 Refugio oil spill.

~ Represented by the SB Environmental Defense Center, environmental groups intervened in Exxon's lawsuit against Santa Barbara County for denying their dangerous oil trucking project. We won! Plus, in October Exxon withdrew their "Line 901/903 Pipeline Replacement Project."

~ Held off new onshore oil projects in Santa Barbara County. The Cat Canyon aquifer exemption that would allow drilling through the Santa Maria drinking water aquifer has been successfully delayed to study pathways of contamination.

~ Made progress in getting abandoned oil infrastructure cleaned up, and in April California allocated \$34 million to plug 171 abandoned wells in Cat Canyon

~ The 30 oil wells on Platform Holly are plugged and its Ellwood Onshore Facility was safely shut down. UCSB started a project to demolish and remove the oil storage tanks on the Ellwood bluffs.

~ Two more of the ancient and leaking wells (Treadwell) in the ocean off Summerland Beach were abandoned for a total of six to date.

~ Formed the local version of Sierra Club California's Agricultural Committee, which notably aims to go beyond chemical pesticides. Even better, it is headed locally by the Rincon-Vitova "Bug Farm" in Ventura. To join, email:

JDietrick9@gmail.com

~ Joined lots of fun events this year: A 'paddle out' off Santa Barbara to urge Gov. Newsom to "End Dependence on Fossil Fuels." We joined "chalk-tivists" for Climate Justice in Ventura. We did Electric Car Shows, Earth Day events, World Ocean Day and more.

~ Inside, we showed up at meetings and hearings to call for climate action. Our premier lobbyist, Jim Hines, has a national network of elected officials and staff that he calls (see his Chronicles column on page 5).

In June we succeeded when SB County upheld a goal of 50% GHG reduction by 2030 in its Climate Action Plan. We also asked them to include emissions from oil and gas production. We submitted comments on the city of Ventura's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) and others.

~ Saw progress in our campaign to move away from methane gas. Goleta and Carpinteria passed Building Electrification ordinances for new construction and Santa Barbara County voted to draft one as well. Also, 3C Energy launched a program called "Electrify Your Home" to encourage installing heat pumps for water and space heating. See a list of programs and incentives at:

www.3c-ren.org

~ We supported the Ventura Westside Clean Air Coalition's demands for environmental review of SoCalGas' gas compressor station expansion located near a school. After succeeding in getting the CPUC to pull the Ventura Compressor out of

the General Rate Case, SoCalGas applied for an application in August. We continue to make the case that we can decrease gas demand rather than build out more gas infrastructure.

~ Advocated for renewable energy and saw new projects come online, notably the Strauss Wind Energy Project near Lompoc was finally

continued on page 2

COVER PHOTO

In celebration of the newly branded Whale Heritage Site designation off the Ventura - Santa Barbara shores, we bring you the awesome sight of two Blue whales breaching offshore Santa Barbara's mesa while travelling our "Whale Superhighway". It was a great catch by wildlife photographer Adam Ernster who's been filming marine wildlife here and elsewhere, helping to add information for the designation application. Visit his website:

www.adamernsterwildlife.com

See full story on page 5.



Happy Warriors walk practically on air off the stage, celebrating our area becoming a Whale Heritage Site, one of only nine in the world! The local WHS 'team' leaders are (from left): Jean-Michel Cousteau (Ocean Futures Society), Hiroko Benko (Condor Express) and Holly Lohius (Marine Biologist). Held Nov. 28 at SB Natural History Museum. (Photo by John Hankins)

See full story pg. 5

Green Republicans do exist

By Jon Ullman

On a hot July day in Miami in 2007 Florida Republican Governor Charlie Crist announced that the Sunshine State would adopt California Clean Car standards.

This meant Floridian's cars would go farther on a gallon of gas than those in most of the nation. Crist and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger celebrated the announcement by holding up paintings of melting polar ice caps. The great-grandson of Teddy Roosevelt was there too, representing Republicans' green legacy. "We have proven that Republicans can, in fact, protect the environment," said a beaming Schwarzenegger.

I went to Tallahassee to support the rule change for Sierra Club. Anti-environment powerhouses, the Florida Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Florida were mum. This could pass, I thought.

Then, Toyota, maker of the newly released Prius hatchback -- the car that would save the world from climate change -- objected. Within days, it was dead.

By now you know what happened to Florida. The moderate Republicans were rooted out. The far-right took power. And things went crazy.

But what must be said is that Florida was a place where green Re-

publicans existed. They were an indispensable part of a coalition of Democrats and Independents that protected the Everglades and made offshore oil drilling non-existent. It even passed a constitutional amendment in 2018 that banned off-shore drilling in Florida's state waters.

They believed in nature. They believed in climate change. They were card-carrying Sierra Club members. Today, many think they are an endangered species.

California too has felt the hard-right shift.

In Ventura County, a Republican pro-oil majority now controls the government.

Santa Barbara County will join Ventura in this shift if a swing-vote incumbent loses this March.

Don't expect Democrats alone to save the environment either. In the California legislature, except for standout environmentalists like Greg Hart, Monica Limon and Steve Bennett, the majority of Democrats vote for oil and gas. They set far off goals, but fail to take real carbon-cutting action.

Often seen as the foil to the climate denying Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Gov. Gavin Newsom received a C-grade

from Sierra Club California while his appointees at the Public Utilities Commission effectively kneecapped rooftop solar. Inexplicably, DeSantis vetoed anti-rooftop legislation.

A few weeks ago, the so-called "moderate" presidential candidate Nikki Haley accused DeSantis of being an environmentalist, a now top

crime in Republican-land. He immediately denied it. Again, he's not an environmentalist, but he's done some things that environmentalists wanted that happened to align with things he wanted.

The point of all this is to say, the Republican party has successfully branded itself as anti-environmental even though a good chunk of Republican voters care about the environment. Remember those Florida green Republicans I talked about. They didn't go anywhere. They've just been conditioned by the polarization of party politics. They still support clean air and water for humans, plants and critters. That desire has been repressed, internalized, defused.

We can bring them back! In fact, we must bring them back. As long as there are two parties, there MUST be Republican environmental supporters. We cannot win with Democrat support alone, and even that is not where it should be.

But can't we just ignore the Republicans or lure the moderates to the Democratic side. That would not only doom the environment, but it would also doom democracy. The Sierra Club and other environmental groups should reach out to moderate Republicans and Independents.

We should tap into the love of the environment -- a value Americans share. This value didn't go away but has been overshadowed by partisan politics. We need to find commonalities. In the past, 20 percent of Sierra Club members were Republicans. It was a minority, but an important one. We can't win without them.

Help lead our chapter

Three *at-large* seats on the Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter Executive Committee are available for 2024-2025 (2-year term).

As a member, you are at the center of one of the most effective environmental groups upholding the National Club's motto of "Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet."

The ExCom governs the SB -Ventura Chapter and consists of five at-large, elected seats, and an appointed representative from each regional Group.

You must be a member of the Sierra Club and be able to attend monthly meetings of the ExCom, which are currently held online.

Selection by the ExCom for the at-large seats is done at the January 2025 meeting. If you are interested, please contact any member of the Nominating Committee listed below. Gerry Ching - gching@cox.net
David Gold - davidgold4@aol.com
Katie Davis - kdavis2468@gmail.com

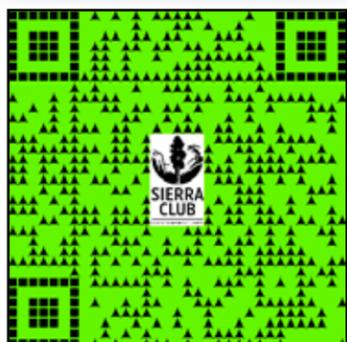


Sometimes we've got to get dirty to clean up the environment. Chapter Chair Katie Davis shows how during Earth Day's Bean Bag Toss at oil companies. (Photo by Jim Taylor).

EAVESDROPS

"Our individual actions really start to matter when they're combined with thousands of other people."

~ Holly Bender on why write comment letters. She is a Sierra Club director for Energy Campaigns and gave the example of the EPA passing better rules for Clean Cars due to 200,000 club-generated letters.



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



You're welcome to attend any of our EV live shows in SB and Ventura in 2024; you'll learn a lot from the EV owners. Here's one of our shows on July 4, 2023, in Ventura with Kathleen and her Kona. See back page for EV resources. (Photo by Condor John)



In June the state completed removal of oil piers 421 on Haskell's beach in Goleta which were the last remaining oil wells on any beach in the state. (Photo by Katie Davis)

Seeds of change... *continued from page 1*

completed, It's the first wind project on the CA coast, generating enough energy to power approximately 36,000 homes.

~ In December GridStor completed a utility-scale battery storage facility in Goleta.

~ SB County is moving steadily toward meeting its goal of operating government facilities on 100% renewable energy by 2030. Major projects this year included the microgrid at the county building in Santa Maria, and solar and batteries at several other buildings.

It also finally started work on the "Utility-Scale Solar Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance Amendments" that would open up the county to

large solar projects.

~ In August several solar projects were approved by Goleta School District and it got a grant to purchase two electric buses.

~ Our local CCAs (Community Choice Aggregation) are procuring new renewable energy projects on our behalf.

~ Supported alternative transportation, including better and safer bike paths. Examples include the Modoc Path design which will close a 3/4-mile gap in a 20+ mile multi-use path network, easements for the San Jose Creek Multipurpose Path that will close a gap in the Goleta bike path network from Old Town Hollister Ave. to Goleta Beach.

Meanwhile, SB city will keep the State Street Promenade closed to vehicles at least through 2026.

Also, Carpinteria approved the Rincon Trail and SB County secured funding for pedestrian/bike path connections in Summerland and Montecito.

In Ventura, the Sierra Club funded interpretive signs for the Cabrillo Bike Path.

~ We saw progress on our goal of 100% electric buses. In October, SB MTD's got its first 40-foot all battery-electric bus and celebrated the installation of 14 new heavy-duty EV chargers. The Guadalupe also got an electric bus in September.

~ Celebrated the draft designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary that would stretch along 134 miles of coastline and encompass more than 5,600 square miles of water off of the Central California coast. We are urging its passage by the federal government to adhere to the Chumash tribes preference.

~ Pleased that construction began on the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Overpass over the 101 freeway in Agoura.

~ Intervened to defend Ventura oil regulations and setbacks in the General Plan. When Ventura County settled with oil companies, we rallied to oppose weakening the regulations. Sierra Club has also endorsed cavsbi-goil.com which is the effort to defend statewide setbacks between oil drilling and homes and schools that will be on the ballot in 2024.

~ Saw some legislative victories, notably passing AB 421 which makes much-needed reforms in the referendum process to curb widespread fraud and abuse. It makes it clear to voters what they are voting for and who funded the anti-setbacks campaign. This is a huge win for the labor and environmental communities.

SB Group party - 17th



You're invited to the Sierra Club Holiday Potluck Party on Sunday, Dec. 17, an annual event where we socialize, celebrate successes of the past year, learn about exciting new campaigns, and meet some of our endorsed candidates for 2024. The invitation is for you and other Sierra Club members, friends and allies to come together. Please bring food and beverages for yourself and to share. It will be held in Jefferson Hall, Unitarian Society, 1535 Santa Barbara St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101 from 6-8pm. RSVP and more information on [our website](#) and [Facebook](#).

Environment donors on brink of extinction

By Chris Chaleunrath,
Development Director

As we receive more frequent exposure to bad news on the environmental front -- from record-breaking temperatures to soaring pollution -- one would think that charitable support to environmental causes would also be record breaking!

Sadly, it is the opposite.

You support the environment? Then you are also an endangered species.

At a time when our planet is facing unprecedented environmental challenges, from climate change to biodiversity loss, 2023 statistics have charitable donations to the environment near the bottom of the sector at 3% of all giving².

Moreover, the 2022 Giving USA report has cast a spotlight on a concerning trend: a decline in donations to environmental and animal-focused organizations. Giving to this crucial sector decreased by 1.6 percent between 2021 and 2022. When adjusted for inflation, the decline becomes even more alarming, standing at 8.9 percent³.

While the national statistics reflect a troubling trend, it's equally

vital to emphasize the impact of supporting local environmental groups, such as the Ventura Land Trust (VLT) and the SB/Ventura Chapter of the Sierra Club. Local organizations are the unsung heroes working tirelessly to protect and enhance the natural beauty of our communities.

Giving to local groups ensures that conservation efforts are tailored to the unique needs and challenges of a specific region. Ventura Land Trust, for example, plays a crucial role in preserving and restoring the landscapes of Ventura County. By supporting such local entities, donors can witness firsthand the positive changes in their communities. Local organizations are deeply rooted in the areas they serve, fostering a sense of connection and shared responsibility among community members.

The donations have a direct and immediate impact on the quality of life for residents. VLT and the Sierra Club focus on improving public access to open spaces, enhancing recreational opportunities, promoting environmental education and real-world improvements, such as a cleaner more natural watershed, reducing pollution, nurturing native plants and enhancing the outdoors for wildlife.

These initiatives not only contribute to the well-being of the community but also create a sense of pride and ownership in the natural treasures of the region.

In conclusion, as we recognize the urgency for increased donations to environmental causes overall, let's not overlook the critical role of supporting our local environmental groups.

National trends may highlight the decline in overall funding, but directing resources to organizations embedded in our communities ensures a more personalized and impactful approach to environmental conservation.

By supporting both national and local initiatives, we can collectively contribute to the global and local well-being of our planet.

It's not just a donation; it's an investment in the resilience and vitality of our home, Earth, and the communities we call our own. [https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/events/US/1980-2023?disasters\[\]=all-disasters](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/events/US/1980-2023?disasters[]=all-disasters) <https://nonprofitsource.com/online-giving-statistics/> <https://givingusa.org/>

~ Chris Chaleunrath is Development Director of the Ventura Land Trust.



Rally against Exxon insisting on producing more oil via an impaired pipeline system or trucks. Appears we are winning after so many actions for cleaner energy, such as the new Wind Energy Project in SB County... see photo below. (Photo by Katie Davis)

Condor Call

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

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DEADLINES FOR ALL ISSUES:

Copy Deadline: 20th — Advertising Deadline: 22nd of month preceding publication.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE:

February/March, April/May, June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov, Dec/Jan

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Free to members

Non-members, \$15 per year. Contact Editor John Hankins

Photos, news, tips always welcome!

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Typography and production by Dan Fuller



Any day now... the first wind project on California's Coast is right here, a few miles southwest of Lompoc. Called the Strauss Wind Energy Project, it will generate enough renewable energy to power approximately 36,000 homes. It is poised to turn on its 27 turbines by year's end, but not yet at press-time! (© Photo courtesy of Mike Eliason)

Anemic 'Least' Sales

Reflecting America's rapid and accelerating shift to clean energy, Interior Department Announced the fewest offshore oil and gas lease sales in history in proposed final program for 2024-2029.

Call it "Least Sales"!

Proposed program includes zero oil and gas lease sales in the Atlantic, Pacific and Alaskan waters and it phases down leasing in the Gulf of Mexico, which will enable offshore wind programs to grow rapidly.

The reduction to a maximum of three potential lease sales in the Gulf will bring the Federal program in line with the Biden-Harris adminis-

tration's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 and meet the Inflation Reduction Act requirements for future offshore renewable energy leasing.

Plan documents, as well as the economic analysis underlying them, are available for public inspection in the [Federal Register](#) or on [BOEM's website](#).

Meanwhile, our local Rep. Salud Carbajal is sponsoring a bill to impose a fee of \$15 per metric ton on all fossil fuels extracted in the United States with a premium on imports. While this Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend was submitted three times before, it never made it out of the House committee.

SB Ex Com Candidates

EARTH JUSTICE

Are zero emissions possible?

Olivia Craig

Osiyo! ('Hello' in Cherokee) I am a third-year Environmental Studies student at the UC-Santa Barbara and being a student is just one of my many hats. My passion for advocacy sits at the center of numerous campus and community involvements.

I currently sit on the Isla Vista Community Services District's Board of Directors as the youngest elected official in Santa Barbara County – aiming to drive environmental change by improving sustainable transportation solutions in and out of IV and working closely with the IV Compost Collective. I also work as a Global Food Fellow for UCSB Sustainability, incorporating regenerative agriculture and traditional ecological knowledge practices in our campus gardens.

While I am newer to the Sierra Club, it is a community I am eager to get to know better and work with to create tangible environmental solutions aimed at addressing the global climate crisis.

Wendy Santamaria

Wendy is a community organizer based in Santa Barbara where her work focuses on the intersection between affordable housing, environmental protections, and workers' rights. She graduated from UC Santa Bárbara and currently works as the Labor Organizer for AFSCME 3299 at UCSB.

In her spare time, Wendy works closely with the City of Santa Barbara to address the ongoing housing crisis and find ways to enact better protections for tenants and promote affordable housing.

She currently serves on the Santa Barbara ExCom and wants to continue with a focus toward supporting our ongoing work by bringing workers and community members together to improve public transportation, mitigate the dangers of climate change and to preserve public lands to ensure adequate nature accessibility for all.

Bill Woodbridge

Bill graduated from UCSB in Combined Social Sciences and is now retired, living in Goleta.

"I spend about 3 hours a day responding to at least 80 emails from as many organizations asking for petitions to be signed, letters to be written and politicians to be called, regarding environmental concerns, wildlife safety and well-being, endangered species, clean air and water, stopping oil/ gas drilling, promoting forests and sea life, banning assault weapons, etc."

He has been attending the SB Group ExCom meetings and volunteering for nearly 3 years. He also volunteers for the SB Environmental Defense Center and does wildlife rescues and transport for the SB Wildlife Care Network.

"I give keynote presentations to high school/college classes, and other groups, regarding climate change and global warming, on behalf of the Climate Reality Project. I attend and speak up at SB County Planning and Supervisor public meetings regarding environmental issues, such as the recent Exxon pipeline and oil trucking permit requests."

Emily Engel

Emily Engel is an independent scholar, educator, activist, and philanthropist whose work focuses on the intersection of culture and environment to mitigate the ongoing challenges of climate change.

She works as an activist through the Sierra Club, the League of Women Voters, Rachel's Network, and the PSI Maverick Collective. She received her PHD from UC-Santa Barbara and attended Tulane University as an undergraduate.

Emily is currently the Secretary of the Santa Barbara Group and she looks forward to supporting all the great work our chapter leaders and volunteers do every single day.

By Steven Colomé

In early November fifty activists, policymakers and influencers gathered at the hilltop Ojai Retreat to hear Earthjustice attorney Adrian Martinez address the question – 'Are Zero Emissions Possible?'

The meeting was an introduction to the current legal and policy efforts of Earthjustice, and of their programs and plans under the 'Right to Zero' campaign.

The campaign not only targets important mitigation programs to fight the climate crisis – it is about reducing exposure to harmful air pollution. When we eliminate the combustion of fossil fuels, we also eliminate the principal sources of harmful air pollutants that cause smog.

The path to zero is through the elimination of fossil fuel production and consumption, to be replaced with clean renewable energy sources in transportation, the power and industrial sectors, and buildings.

Unlike carbon control programs such as *Cap and Trade*, that allow polluters to pay-to-play while continuing to pollute and use fossil fuels, the *Right to Zero* campaign aims to reduce fossil emissions where they occur. The reason this is so important is that many of the most polluting sources are centered in disadvantaged communities and continue to release harmful pollutants in these neighborhoods. Clean air combined with climate mitigation, that is the Earthjustice *Right to Zero* campaign.

A major focus of the Earthjustice program in California has been to replace fossil-burning buses with electric vehicles. To that end, attorneys with Earthjustice were instrumental in developing the nation's first clean transit rule with California promising to convert 100% of all transit buses to zero-emission. Joining a coalition of labor, environmental and public transportation advocates, they were able to get LA Metro to commit to a fully electric fleet by 2030. Each bus converted from using methane or diesel reduces 170,000 pounds of carbon pollution annually.

The organization was also central in lobbying to override Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's minimalist commitment to electrification of the local postal delivery fleet. Now, the USPS has committed to an all-electric delivery fleet.

A unique feature of Earthjustice is that its 500+ clients are represented free of charge. There are over 200 lawyers in the organization's 15 offices across the US engaged in over 600 legal fights against deep pocket interests. The organization lives by the motto "We're here because the earth needs a good lawyer."

The origins of Earthjustice will be of interest to Sierra Club history buffs. Started in 1971 as the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the organization has a long string of significant legal and policy victories in its 50+ year history. The organization was co-founded by powerful San Francisco attorney and Sierra Club leader Phil Berry who served for over thirty years on the Sierra Club Board and twice as President. His first term as President was during

EAVESDROP

"To make a significant dent in plastic waste – and certainly to "end plastic pollution" – will probably require not just substitution, but elimination."

~ Conclusion from a New Yorker article: How Plastics are Poisoning Us. It also remarks how hard it will be as oil companies make billions off of plastics. Article available here:

www.rsn.org/001/how-plastics-are-poisoning-us.html



Earthjustice attorney Adrian Martinez is describing legal battles and policy accomplishments of the group in front of about 50 attendees curious about the question: 'Are Zero Emissions Possible?'

Below, he joined the panel for a Q&A. They are (from left): landscape architect Kathy Nolan, Martinez and our own Ventura ExCom member Steve Colomé. (Photos by Erin Taylor)

the turbulent and environmentally significant period from 1969-1971.

I had the honor of knowing Phil Berry during the late 1970s while serving as the Club's representative for the New England Chapter (chapter boundaries were larger then). The name change occurred in 1997 to reflect the broader representation of environmental clients beyond the Sierra Club.

As Club members we can take pride in this organization that is bringing legal strength to courts, Capitol Hill, and statehouses across our country in the good fight.

The Ojai Retreat event was hosted by Caryn Bosson, with co-hosts Rain Perry, Dulanie Ellis-La

Bare, Michelle Ellison, Steven Colomé and

www.ElectrifyOjai.Org

Read our blog



Most meetings continue online for now Group News

The public is welcome to our programs

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

~ Meets 4th Thursday 7pm of every month, via internet for now. Email Secretary Gerry Ching for the agenda: gching@cox.net

~ Chapter website and blog at: www.SierraClub.org/SantaBarbara-Ventura

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

~ We meet 1st Tuesdays, 11-12pm of each month. For details and to follow the South Coast area, contact:

- <http://www.sbsierraclub.org>
- <https://www.FACEBOOK.com/SBSierraClub>
- <https://TWITTER.com/SBSierraClub>
- <https://www.INSTAGRAM.com/SierraClubSantaBarbara>
- <https://www.MEETUP.com/SierraClub-SantaBarbara>
- <https://tinyurl.com/SBGroupBlog>

ARGUELLO GROUP

Our North County Group will keep you informed on our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/SierraClubArguelloGroup ~Volunteers needed; your talents could make a difference. Call 350-0629 or: RebeccaAugust@mac.com

VENTURA NETWORK

~ For board meeting dates, times and location email: sierraclubventura@gmail.com

~ Get latest info about the western Ventura County group via Facebook and a blog:

- <http://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubFB>
- <https://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubBlog>

~New MEETUP site for hikes, outings etc: www.meetup.com/SierraClubVentura

CONEJO GROUP

~ Events, outings and meetings will be sent to you if you send an email request to:

ConejoGroupHiking@gmail.com.

Or view the Conejo Group website:

- www.sierraclub.org/SantaBarbara-Ventura
- www.sierraclub.org/SantaBarbara-Ventura/outings

SANTA BARBARA GROUP EXCOM BALLOT

Option to vote via internet:
<https://Tinyurl.Com/sbXCOM>

NOTE: Only members of the Santa Barbara Group may vote for the candidates below. A second box is provided for households with dual membership who only get one *Condor Call*. You can copy or cut this ballot.

Mail ballot by Dec. 31 to: Santa Barbara Group
Sierra Club, PO Box 31241, Santa Barbara CA 93130

(The Executive Committee is a 7-member body that coordinates Sierra Club activities in Santa Barbara County. Members serve 2-year terms.)

Vote for up to 4 candidates

- | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|
| Olivia Craig | [] | [] |
| Emily Engel | [] | [] |
| Wendy Santamaria | [] | [] |
| Bill Woodbridge | [] | [] |

Write-in _____

Enter your Sierra Club member ID: _____
(Find it on your Condor Call label)

Climate Watch

By Deborah Williams and Rance Wall

Editor's note: Rance is Deborah's in-house energy vampire slayer and engineer; and did most of the research and testing for this article.

Energy vampires are real!

Also known as idle load, energy vampires consume power when devices and appliances are plugged into outlets, even though the devices and appliances are in the off mode. This wastes energy and money and contributes to climate change.

Idle loads account for nearly \$200 per American households per year or approximately \$26 billion. In California, energy vampires can consume up to 23% of an average household's annual electricity use.

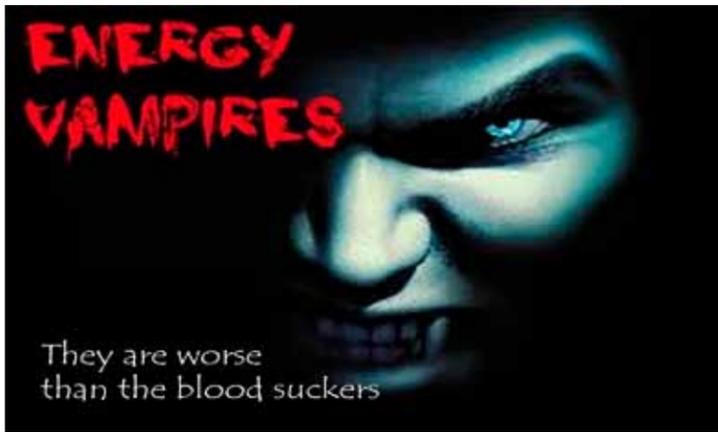
Fortunately, there are many effective ways to help slay energy vampires.

A great way to start is to do a quick inventory of our major energy vampires. These six are among the worst offenders and can be reduced through simple, DIY changes:

Refrigerators/freezers in garages or basements (not kitchens); TV and amps; TV related boxes (Cable/DVR); Gaming consoles; Computers and their peripherals (monitors, printers, external hard drives, speakers, etc.) and Electronics (phone, tablet, etc.) power adapters, and USB hubs.

Then it is easy, relatively inexpensive and effective to make some simple changes.

To begin with, go ahead and unplug devices that you no longer use or use very rarely such as a TV or TV box in a guest bedroom, or a second refrigerator/freezer in the garage that is not used very often (once you empty it of perishable items!). Also, before you leave your house for extended



periods of time such as a vacation it makes sense to unplug all of the six electronic devices listed above (unless you will be using any of them remotely).

Another cost-free strategy is to change the computer power settings. Computers allow you to determine how long the monitor(s) and the computer stay active after you stop using it. You can set the monitor(s) to turn off and the computer to go into the power saving "sleep" mode.

A good next step is to install basic on/off power switches or use a simple power strip that can be turned off with one switch. This is a good option for TVs, speaker bars and other TV accessories.

Alternatively, install smart power switches. This type of low-cost power strip can remotely turn off all items associated with a TV, computer or a game console (monitors & controls).

There's more! Consider opting for a cloud-based DVR service. All the TVs in your house can access this system and some households can get rid of multiple DVR boxes, which are big energy vampires.

While all these strategies might not be practical for you and your family, we are all able to adopt at least a few, which will reduce our carbon

footprint and save money.

Finally, we know that vampires do not like the sun, so you can avoid energy vampires altogether by using solar powered lights and cameras outside. Reasonably priced, solar powered lights and cameras last for years and do not add any additional costs to your electricity bills. Solar powered outdoor holiday lights are another way to save money on your electricity bill.

For a deeper dive, the California Energy Commission has issued a detailed report that highlights two excellent tools to help you reduce energy vampires. The first is the Dr. Power App, which is available on the web and on your smart phone with iOS or Android. This app allows each of us to inventory our home, identify every device plugged into an outlet and estimate the amount of electricity being drained by energy vampires.

You will likely be very surprised by how much energy is being consumed this way.

The second tool is the informational web portal, AskDrPower.com, which provides additional information on how to save energy, and allows you to pose questions to energy experts.

The bottom line is this: slaying energy vampires can be fun and rewarding for our pocketbooks and the planet.

Food for thought Thoughtful food

Editor's note: Making thoughtful food choices is a way to protect our land, water, air and resources, support our local farmers and improve our health. While a more plant-based diet is healthier and better for the environment, there are more and less sustainable meat options as well. Local dietician and food educator, Gerri French, provides a rundown of local resources. Find links to all these resources and how to join the Santa Barbara-Ventura Agriculture committee at: <https://tinyurl.com/GoodAgGroup>

By Gerry French

Edible Santa Barbara and Edible Ventura County are magazines that promote local food resources. Santa Barbara and Ventura farmers markets are great places to buy local, organic produce. Santa Barbara Permaculture is a great resource as well. Also, check out "Santa Barbara Food and Farm Adventures" on Meetup for farm and food outings. Below are other great resources.

Community Supported Agriculture

~ Farm Cart Organics - This farm in Carpinteria buys from a variety of sources; it delivers in north and south Santa Barbara and Ventura County and has specialty food items.

~ Plow to Porch - Buys from a variety of farms and delivers in SB County.

~ Something Good Organics - Farm in Santa Ynez that delivers to SB County; has add-on specialty food.

~ Dare 2 Dream Farms - Farm and stand in Lompoc that delivers to North SB County; has add-on specialty food.

~ Local Harvest Delivery - Buys from a variety of farms that delivers in South SB County; has add-on specialty food.

~ Sunrise Organic Farm - Farms at seven different locations with Farm stand in Goleta; pickup and delivery.

~ Sow a Heart Farm in Agoura - Various sized boxes with food and flowers from their Regenerative Farm and Farm Stand with added products.

~ Underwood Family Farms in Moorpark; farm and farm stand.

~ Farmer and the Cook in Ojai - farm; farm stand and restaurant.

~ Rodale Institute in Camarillo

- (formerly McGrath Family Farm) farm stand and monthly farm tours, leaders in Regenerative Organic Farming.

Local Meat

~ Rancho San Julian - grain and grass-fed beef; options for grass fed exclusively and monthly purchase.

~ Motley Crew Ranch - small animal farm in Lompoc.

~ Casitas Valley Pastures - small farm in Ventura.

~ Old Creek Ranch - Grass fed and finished beef and lamb in Cayucos.

~ Hearst Ranch - Grass fed and finished beef.

~ Morris Ranch - Grass fed and finished at San Juan Bautista.

~ Ventura Meat Company - Food from family farms: grass-fed beef, organic poultry and pasture-raised pork.

~ Farmer and the Cook Store and Ojai Community Farmers Market in Ojai.

Local Seafood

~ Kanaloa market, Santa Barbara fish market and Community Supported Fishery. Example: Get Hooked, a women-owned Community Supported Fishery (CSF) that offers its members responsibly sourced, hyper-fresh seafood from local fishermen.

National Resources

~ Foodprint.org - food choices for environment, people and animals.

~ Environmental Working Group - climate change and the environment; creators of the Dirty Dozen.

~ Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch - sustainable seafood info.

~ Vrg.org - vegetarian recipes and resources.

~ Eatwellguide.com - links to national CSA, farms, restaurants.

~ Slow Food USA - good, clean, fair and sustainable food for all

~ Civil Eats - food and environment policy and farm information

~ Collaborative for Health & Environment - science dialogue on environmental factors impacting human health

~ Grist.org - climate justice information

SIGHTINGS

Golden shovels and solar steal

By John Hankins

We're closing out 2023 with some success, but of course our work is never done in our fight to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the planet (Sierra Club's motto). Check out the stories and links below and throughout this issue as we look back and forward.

*Want to get involved? Please join our activities and activism; see **Group News** box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved or enjoy our free hikes via links on page 6, including via MeetUp and internet lists.*

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

www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000

Nov 30: **Ventura Compressor Modernization Project** update sent by SoCal Gas on this highly controversial project, opposed by the Sierra Club and other eco-groups. The update is in its latest newsletter which can be found here: www.socalgas.com/Ventura

Nov 29: **Water Resources** Division of SB County pleaded guilty to

criminal charges and agreed to pay \$750,000 in civil penalties related to oil spills from the its Toro Canyon oil-water-separator system that happened in the first half of 2021. It is costing nearly \$4 million to replace the system in 2024.

Nov 27: **Whales Ho!** Celebration of our area becoming only the ninth Whale Heritage Site on earth, a major accomplishment. See story pg 5

Nov 29: **Meeting Challenges** of the climate crisis, an interactive webinar featuring the Sierra Club's national director, Ben Jealous, chief energy officer Holly Bender and Sierra Magazine editor Jason Mark.

Nov. 13: **Last Day** to comment on expanding the Tajiguas landfill along the Gaviota Coast by 14 acres and increasing its life to 2038. Details of the project are in SB County's draft EIR which conducted a public hearing on Oct. 26. Details and comment portal is here: <https://tinyurl.com/TajiguasComment>

Our Sierra Club Chapter has not yet weighed in on the matter, but the Gaviota Coast Conservancy has major objections. See why here: <https://tinyurl.com/TajiguasExpansion>

Nov 12: **Bike Clean & Fix It Day** hosted by Nina Danza of our Ventura Sierra Club network. Volunteers came to the Bike Hub in Ventura



Bike clubs came from all over SB and Ventura counties to be the first to ride the Bikeway. (Photo by Condor John)



Nov 8: Santa Claus Bikeway completion. Event on the southbound Carpinteria Ave. offramp. It provides a direct coastal route between the Santa Claus Lane commercial area, beaches and Carpinteria Avenue. It will also be a route connected along the 101 freeway to Ventura. (Photo by Condor John) More information on this and other 101 projects are here: www.SBROADS.com

to spiff up kids bikes that are earmarked to give away to needy local families. This happens throughout the year, but it's particularly valuable during the Christmas season. To be on the list, go to Ventura Sierra Club's MeetUp site.

Nov 9: **Brink of Extinction:** Two Channel Islands plants were removed from the endangered species list after 26 years of federal protection; they are the Island Bedstraw and Santa Cruz Island Dudleya. They exist only on two of the northern Channel Islands.

Nov 8: **Outpouring of Support** for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

was clear after a public comment period ended Oct. 25. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) logged in 98,721 comments supporting the proposal. "This campaign has been a textbook example of what can be done when a community steps up together," said Andrew Christie, of our neighboring Santa Lucia Chapter. "It's also a validation of NOAA's decision a decade ago to revive the process . . . and invite nominations from the public demonstrating broad support. I'd say that requirement has been met."

Nov 7: **Zero Emissions** event by Earth Justice's "Right to Zero"

continued next page

HINES CHRONICLES

Renewed and recharged

Editor's note: We resume with the Jim Hines Chronicles, which reflect the emails by our premier lobbyist on the joy and sorrows of environmental activism. This covers the last two months (Oct-Nov). Jim is vice-chair of our Chapter and Ventura Network. He is a conservation leader who belongs to many wildlife groups and is active with the Ventura Land Trust's Advisory Council. He is available as a speaker.

By Jim Hines

Nov 27: **For the new year**, we are renewed, recharged and ready to go on with our newest campaigns to protect all that is wild!

Examples include tackling the squid fishery offshore of Channel Islands National Park and lobbying Congress to pass wilderness land designations for the islands.

We are suing the state of California over management of the Ballona Wetlands Wildlife Preserve and filing appeals of Bureau of Land Management Plans in several western states for failing to protect precious natural resources.

Too, we are asking the new leadership in Congress not to cut funding for national parks, marine sanctuaries, forest and wildlife refuges.

Nov 14: **I want to truly thank** each of you this Harvest season, a season of thanks for all your efforts and support. It has been a challenging year so far. We danced with wolves, engaged our adversaries, protected national public lands and challenged those who opposed our work to save Mother Earth and her wild creatures.

Our successes could not have been done without your passion, emotional strength and commitment.

Nov 7: **Paid killers were hired** by the Idaho Board of Wildlife to hunt down and shoot wolves from helicopters in the state. I will now join with several other wolf advocates to file an official complaint and file an appeal to the Governor.

Idaho is one of four states (Alaska, Wyoming and Montana) which were granted an exemption by the federal court in my case against the Biden Administration to relist wolves as protected under the

federal endangered species act.

However, on Nov. 3 I wrote that the Biden Administration finally agreed to follow a court order and officially relisted wolves as endangered, and placed wolves under federal protections in 45 states.

We now must work hard to make sure to add the remaining five states to the protection list.

Nov 7: **Forest carbon capture** has been approved for national forest lands across the western U.S. This is a new proposal by the Biden Administration as part of the it's efforts to tackle climate change and could be used in our Los Padres National Forest.

I am still learning about carbon capture storage and its impact upon the land environment.

Nov 2: **Where have all the environmentalists gone** in Ventura County?

I spoke to Moms for Liberty Ventura County Chapter, and I observed that there were more people there than I have ever seen at any local environmental meeting. The same is true when I have attended Make America Great Again (MAGA) events.

Over 400 people signed up from Ventura county to drive two hours to Bakersfield to protest the protection of wolves in Giant Sequoia National Monument while only 40 people drove across Ventura county to speak against oil drilling regulations..

There is something terribly wrong with this picture when more Ventura County people want to protect wolves in Tulare County than to stop oil wells in Ventura county.

We need a bold plan.

We worked hard to save 1200 acres on the south coast of Ventura County and at the same time we lost 20,000 acres of valuable farmland and open space to land development. The single city exception is the environmentally friendly city of Ojai.

Citizens of Ventura County are increasingly voting to elect anti-environmental people to office.

Oct 31: **Protections are dead in DC.** In my lobbying work, I have met on several occasions with Rep. Mike Johnson's (R-LA, now House

continued to page 7

Golden Shovels...

continued from page 4

campaign, held at the Ojai Retreat. Features an EJ attorney and Ojai-based experts. Learn more about it at:

www.earthjustice.org

Nov 5: **Carmen Ramirez** Progress Awards event, hosted by the Ventura County Democratic Party honoring the late woman who was an inspiration and activist during her work as a Ventura County Supervisor, attorney and activist. Its focus is to overturn the current 3-2 anti-environment majority of the county Supervisors, which tipped the wrong way after Carmen was hit by a truck and did not recover.

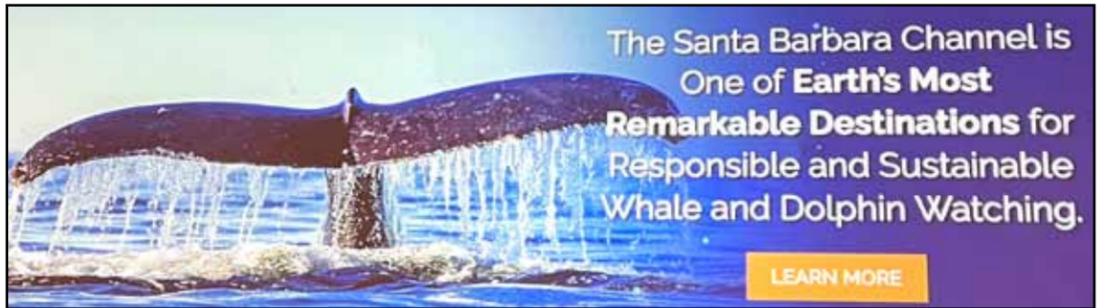
Nov 4: **Farm Day** in Ventura County, which also occurred earlier in Santa Barbara County. Mary Maranville, a proud farmer's daughter, is the founder and CEO of Students for Eco-Education and Agriculture (SEEAG), the charity that puts on Farm Day. Its mission is to educate

students about the farm origins of their food from field-to-table while connecting them to the farmland in their own backyards. Learn more and support them here:

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

Nov3: **In Memoriam** – Remembering Clyde Kirkpatrick, a founding SB Maritime Museum board director who originated the idea of opening such a museum along with Bob Kieding, “and the rest, as they say, is history,” said SBMM Executive Director Greg Gorga.

Nov 2: **Solar Steal:** Utilities are working to block rooftop solar for California renters, schools, and farmers. “With this vote, the CPUC is denying schools, small businesses, apartment buildings and farms the ability to use the solar energy they produce on-site, and instead forcing them to buy their own solar back from the utility at full retail prices,” said a statement from the California Solar & Storage Association.



The “Learn More” tab is here: www.sbwhaleheritage.org/

We're a whale Heritage Site!

By John Hankins

How perfect to be welcomed by a huge Blue whale – albeit a skeleton -- in front of the SB Museum of Natural History at a celebration of our area becoming a Whale Heritage Site (WHS), now only the ninth so accepted across the globe.

Whale Ho!

It's a big deal for marine life, as it is for the region. It covers 70 miles east to west off the Ventura and Santa Barbara County coasts up to six miles offshore, including the Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary.

“The WHS aims to achieve an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable balance between the natural environment, visitor expectations, and local business and community needs... It has proven to attract millions more (dollars) into the designated sites” according to its website, at:

www.sbwhaleheritage.org/

Often called a ‘whale super-highway’, hundreds of whales and thousands of dolphins ply the Channel on either side of the islands. The whales swim thousands of miles from the North Pacific down to Baja Mexico, passing along our shores and eating krill along the way.

“Santa Barbara Channel has unique topography and the whales come through with their calves” after breeding southward, said Adam Ernster, a filmmaker-photographer specializing in whales and marine life.

“Nowhere has inspired me more than the Santa Barbara Channel,” the UCSB graduate added. (That's his photo on our front page!)

He was speaking at the SB Museum of Natural History during a celebration of success Nov. 30 hosted by the SB Maritime Museum and the now-famous “team” that are instrumental in bringing this about. They are:

~ Hiroko Benko, President, Condor Express,

~ Jean-Michel Cousteau, founder of Ocean Futures Society,

~ Holly Lohius, marine biologist and educator, who has been part of Cousteau's expedition team for over 20 years,

~ Greg Gorda, Executive Director, SB Maritime Museum, which acted as the fiscal agent for the effort.

Hiroko has a particular role in this history. In 1973, she and her husband Fred Benko (now deceased) started the first whale watching operation here. He went to New Zealand in 2011 to build the Condor Express, a special boat to be around marine wildlife as it has no propeller.

“We finally dignified these incredible animals for the ecological role they play in enhancing ocean productivity. The more whales, the healthier the ocean is,” she told an audience at a prior celebration at the Bacara Nov. 11, especially honoring Cousteau with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Holly too has a history; starting in 1992 at UCSB investigating the number of whales being killed or injured here and elsewhere.

Speaking of which, *National Geographic* found that “though the stark population declines from hunting have largely stopped, several whale species are threatened or endangered—including the Blue whale, Right whale, and Fin whale—by a combination of fishing net entanglements and being struck by ships.”

That problem is being addressed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). A representative told the audience it's been trying for 15 years to get international shipping to slow down, reducing the chances of strik-

ing marine life and “it's wonderful for our air quality too.” Apparently, cooperation has risen from 60 to 80 percent partly due to incentives.

Notably, the SB Channel is a special place in the world, and the only Heritage Site so far to encompass a marine sanctuary.

Its relatively remote position at the confluence of two major ocean currents supports remarkable biodiversity and productivity, according to the site's application. It is also special to the Chumash culture, along with shipwrecks, artifacts and endangered species. On land there is a thriving commercial and recreation activity, ranging from fishing to tourism.

“Whales have become newly symbolic of real values in a world environment of which man is newly aware. Whales live in families, they play in the moonlight, they talk to one another, and they care for one another in distress. They are awesome and mysterious. In their cold, wet, and forbidding world they are complete and successful. They deserve to be saved, not as potential meatballs, but as a source of encouragement to mankind.”

~ Victor Blanchard Scheffer, biologist and author of natural history books, notably the 1969 prize-winning classic, *“The Year of the Whale.”*



The now-familiar skeleton of whales at the SB Museum of Natural History. This 72-foot specimen is a composite of four different Blue whales. The most are from one stranded at VAFB in 1980, two different Blue whales which were stranded off Ventura in 2007 donated the skull and mandibles, while a fourth were tail bones replicated from an LA museum. No wonder we got accepted as a Whale Heritage Site! (Photo by Condor John)

continue.”

However, Exxon has an ill-considered wish to “repair” the corroded pipeline responsible for the 2015 leak spilling over 140,000 gallons of oil along the Gaviota Coast, effectively stopping three offshore oil platforms from producing. Ullman asserted it “can’t be repaired.”

Oct 25: **Coastal Access Update** for the Hollister Ranch area. The state agency team is preparing factors for an environmental impact report not expected until 2024. Chumash are now involved in protecting cultural resources if public access is granted off the private Ranch area. To keep apprised of this sensitive issue, send an email to:

hrcapstakeholders@gmail.com

Oct 20: **Golden shovels** broke ground at Gaviota Overlook to celebrate the success of the Land Trust of Santa Barbara County's \$3 million fundraising campaign to purchase the land and protect it from development. It comprises 48 acres

of rolling grassland neighboring the Arroyo Hondo nature preserve's 782 acres. Expect to see more trails leading into it from Arroyo Hondo and public access for the first time in 20 years. You can visit Arroyo Hondo and learn more about Gaviota Overlook at:

www.sblandtrust.org

Oct 14: **Conservation Platform:** A wonderful article in the *LA Times* about our Gaviota Coast. “We're transforming much of Point Conception into a platform for conservation, research and ecological recovery projects,” said Mark Reynolds, a lead scientist for the Nature Conservancy, which in 2017 purchased 24,329 acres of land between VAFB and Jalama Beach to protect it from development. “Our findings will provide glimpses into California's coastal future.” It's now known as the Jack and Laura Dangermond Preserve. The couple donated \$165 million to buy it. Learn more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/Dangermond-Preserve>



Nov. 2: **A year of victories** for the environment in the state legislature, according to Sierra Club California in releasing its annual legislative analysis. Out of the 51 bills SCC opposed this year, only one managed to reach the Governor's desk, “a testament to the robust strength of our movement.” Also, 46 legislators received perfect scores (voting in line with the Sierra Club position 100% of scored bills), an uptick from the 40 in 2022.

Oct 31: **Well said** by our chapter Executive Director Jon Ullman, quoted in the *LA Times* about Exxon scraping a proposal to build a new pipeline. “This [pipeline] replacement has been hanging over the community's head for five years now,” he told the Times. “I was very happy to hear this news; it felt like their withdrawal signified that the writing was on the wall that they could not

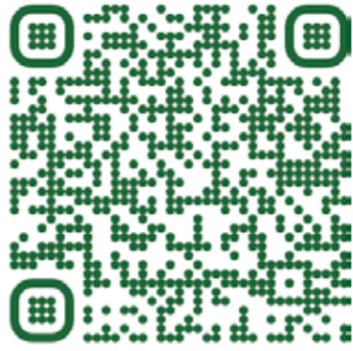


Take a Hike!

SANTA BARBARA-VENTURA CHAPTER

Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein

UPDATES: www.sierraclub.org/santa-barbara-ventura



HIKE WITH CLUB



WELCOME HIKERS

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

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

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

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



HIKE LOS PADRES

CONDITIONS

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

Los Padres Forest Districts

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

Other Areas

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

Forest Information

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

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

Regional Hike Info

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

- www.sierraclub.org/santabarbara-ventura
- www.LPFforest.org
- <https://LPFW.org>
- www.HikeLosPadres.com
- www.SBSierraClub.org
- www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com
- www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com
- <https://SBTrails.org>
- www.VenturaCountyTrails.org
- <http://Hikes.VenturaCountyStar.com>



Our Sierra Club hikes are free and easy, moderate and difficult. Check out our Meetup and website for hikes for all levels. Here, a group enjoyed a trip to Gaviota Wind Caves, courtesy of hike leader and photographer, Robert Bernstein.

From our Mountains to the Sea: Where to go?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Click to access all hikes

All links are now live!

We used to print our Sierra Club Outings here covering a two-month period. But we find that planning that far ahead may change due to weather, Covid restrictions, closures etc. So, we ask that you now rely on the many Meetups and websites for the chapter and some others. For our chapter Meetups go to Group News box always on page 3, otherwise, here we go:

The chapter's website:

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

A very special personal website run by Diane Soini which includes our chapter hikes, blogs, connections and a dragonfly on the screen: Visit Ventura has a lot of information about hikes in the county and the Channel Islands. Go here:

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

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

<https://www.hikelospadres.com>

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

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

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

<https://tinyurl.com/NearUsLA>

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

<https://50greatpubliclanddestinations.org/>

Some trails still closed

Highway 33, which is the primary road used to access the Ventura backcountry, has been closed since January due to storm damage.

It's used to visit many special places including Pine Mountain, Matilija, Rose Valley, Piedra Blanca and large portions of the Sespe Wilderness. The latest update from CalTrans is that Hwy 33 is expected to reopen sometime around the end of the year - that will be great, we can't wait!

Unfortunately, so many of the trails accessed from Hwy 33 remain in very bad shape. Not only are there trail-gobbling landslides, washouts and sinkholes resulting from the winter rains, but the plants have also been growing like crazy, exploding with regrowth over the trails. Most of them need a lot of work clearing slides, brushing back the scrub oak and helping to once again define where the trail should go.

Volunteers are sorely needed to help the Los Padres Forest Assn. and Forest Service to reopen these trails. Many opportunities exist to volunteer and/or to donate essential funds to hire professionals and equipment; go to:

<https://lpforest.org/>

The Association has started with some of the trail restoration work and have led trail projects this year on the Sespe, Piedra Blanca, Matilija, Chorro Grande, Reyes Peak, Boulder Canyon and Alder Creek Trails but

it's just scratched the surface of what is truly needed for this amazing network of trails.

First on the trail priority list would be repairing the Kerr Spring slide along the Sespe River Trail where over a hundred yards of trail was buried by a landslide of rock and mud.

Other priorities include continuing work on the Matilija Trail, clearing Lion Canyon again, working the trail up towards Pine Mtn Lodge and hacking away at both Potrero John and lower Chorro.

Your support today goes a long way to helping repair the trails across the Ventura backcountry.



Believe it or not, that is the trail now dubbed the Kerr Spring Slide. Los Padres Forest Association is in the process of opening it and many others, notably when Highway 33 becomes open, hopefully by Jan. 1. (Photo Sonia Connors, courtesy of Los Padres Forest Assn. which would love your help via volunteer work or donations. Go here: lpforest.org)

EVENTS

Dec 7: **How to participate** in Government meetings, sponsored by the Community Environmental Council as part of its Climate Activist Training program. In person and via Zoom, register or see details here:

<https://fb.me/e/3295C9xqg>

Dec 14: **Trail Talks**, an open mic night featuring tall tales and small stories by local hikers and outdoor lovers. Experience it at the Santa Barbara Public Library at 6:30pm, hosted by James Wapotich, outdoor writer and hike leader. Presenters will have up to 8 minutes (about 20 slides) to share their stories and pictures. Find out more here:

<https://tinyurl.com/LibraryTrailTalks>

Dec 14: **Sierra Club Forum** at 3pm for a Zoom conversation with the Sierra Club on addressing the extinction crises and how you can be a part of the solution. Features ED Ben Jealous, top managers and hosted by Jason Mark, Sierra's editor-in-chief. Register and submit questions here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SClubRegister>

Dec 17: **Potluck Holiday Party** back in person. We invite Sierra Club members, friends and allies to come together for a fun evening from 6-8pm at the Unitarian Society's Jefferson Hall, 1535 Santa Barbara St.

Jan 13: **Electrify Your Home** or Business, hosted by Ventura County Chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby. Bring your utility and fuel bills and come learn about the surprising number of benefits and financial savings possible from electrifying your life. It's FREE, details and RSVP here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ElecEvent>

Rangers open zoo station

There's a Ranger Station now open at the Santa Barbara Zoo.

It's designed to foster a deeper connection to nature by offering activities that allow visitors to immerse themselves in the outdoors. Interactive encounters flourish, such as exploring mini trails, and spotting local animals and plant life.

"It represents our commitment to environmental education and fostering a love for nature," said JJ McLeod, Director of Education. "We believe that by providing these immersive experiences, we can inspire a new generation of conservationists and create lasting connections between people and wildlife."

Guests can learn about National Parks, outdoor spaces, camping etiquette, and the importance of "leaving no trace" to preserve nature for future generations.

Rotating activities include building birdhouses and learning how to set up tents and store food, and understanding how far away you should stay from animals to keep them safe. It provides opportunities for visitors of all abilities to deepen their understanding of the natural world.

HINES CHRONICLES... continued from page 5

speaker) staff. I can tell you firsthand Speaker Johnson is NO friend of the environment, national public lands, wildlife and denies climate change.

I called one staffer I know last Friday, and she told me there will be no national public lands bills advanced if Johnson is speaker. So, for those of us working on advancing local public lands such as the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, Rim of the Valley Corridor Protection Act and Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, it will be more difficult to accomplish. He is also likely to allow major funding cuts (like 40%) to the national park service budget.

Oct 27: **Marine mammal** activists from my Sierra Club California Wildlife Committee have been able to get the CA Dept of Fish and Game to delay the opening of the commercial crab fishery season due to the high rate of whale entanglements in crab fishing gear. The delay will last one month allowing further study on whale movements.

Editor's note: See page 5 for the important action of designating our area as a Whale Heritage Site, which increases protection.

Oct 20: **It's been a very busy** and exhausting week for all of you in your great work to protect all that is wild. But the weekend has now arrived and it's Autumn, the season of pumpkins, apple cider, persimmons, colorful Fall foliage and cool nights.

So let's all get out in our gardens and enjoy her beauty and plant all that says Autumn, such as fall bulbs for colorful Ranunculus, fragrant hyacinths, delightful daffodils, crocus, tulips, freesias, sparaxis and Dutch iris.

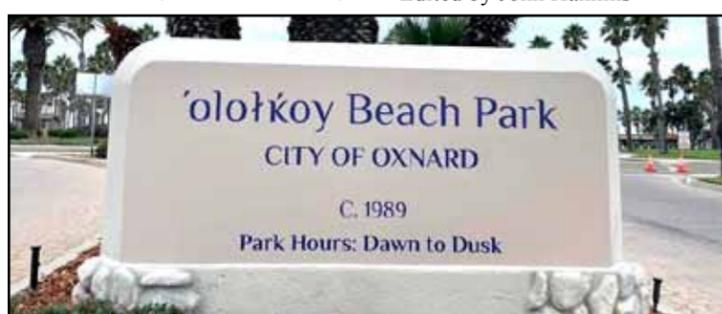
In the flower beds go colorful Iceland poppies, stately snapdragons, fragrant stock, bright calendula, primroses, cyclamen and sweet peas. For vegetable gardeners, cool season veggies go in now such as cabbage, lettuce, kale, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts and edible peas.

If you have room, plant several trees such as Liquidamber or Raywood Ash whose fall colors will dazzle your eyes each Autumn.

Oct 19: **Mountain Lions** Forever Team has good news to report: CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife staff said that tens of thousands of acres of open space and wildlands in the southern California will soon be recommended for state protections as critical habitat for endangered mountain lions.

We still have a way to go once state plans are released to the public. It requires public hearings before final adoption.

Oct 17: **Down the rabbit hole** we go, deep into a dark abyss. No this is not some fairytale but the reality



New sign with the renaming of Oxnard Beach Park to 'olokoy Beach Park, honoring the indigenous peoples on whose land the park sits. The word 'olokoy means dolphin in the Chumash language. Progress is slowly being made in honoring those who came before us with Chumash names, such as Satiwa site in Santa Monica Mtns National Park, and Sky Valley Preserve for the Santa Susana Field Lab property. Nationally the Sierra Club works closely with local indigenous groups on many national public lands campaigns. (Photo contributed by Jim Hines)

of what many of us face as environmental activists. We are true Warriors of the Rainbow but we are not always welcomed as champions of Mother Earth.

Our planet is filled with greed, by people and companies who make billions of dollars by destroying the planet, for money to them is far more important than a future of clean air and water, national parks, protected wildlife and renewable energy.

We lobby, we meet, we engage with the adversaries of Mother Earth and we are ridiculed, spoken to in negative terms, disrespected and called un-American, among other things. At a public meeting to protect Bears Ears National Monument in southern Utah, a land which is sacred to ancient peoples, you'll see people opposed sitting next to us waving confederate flags and wearing pistols.

So now you know why I always talk about the importance of spending quiet time outdoors or in my cottage garden surrounded by the beauty of blooming flowers. The beauty of life heals us and recharges the strength within to carry on.

Oct 10: **Several members** of my Sierra Club California Wildlife Committee are meeting with Gov. Newsom to ask him to put a stop to state policies which encourage kids to "safely kill wildlife." There is no minimum age in California to get a state issued hunting license. You can't legally drive a car until you are 18, but you can kill wildlife at 5 years old.

Oct 9: **Well, well, well** guess who I received a speaking invitation from today? None other than the person who calls himself "Donald Trump's Pastor" -- Rob McCoy of Godspoke Calvary Church in Thousand Oaks. I have received some interesting speaking invitations this year, but I think this tops them all.

I have been invited to speak not on my work to Protect Wildlife and Wild Places but on my philosophy of positive living.

At first, I thought the invite was a joke by one of my friends, so I called the church and learned the invite was real; I said I need to think about it.

Well, maybe he and his audience do need some positive thinking philosophy. If so I am happy to supply it.

Oct 4: **Our Mountain Lions** FOREVER Team has been busy across the state this week. It includes meeting with Caltrans staff regarding our "Safe Passages for Lions" endeavor across the state. Locally we are working on safe lion crossing protection under the 101 freeway in the Gaviota Coast region, two over crossing projects on the 101 freeway in Ventura County and improving an existing safe crossing project under Highway 118 in Ventura County.

~ Edited by John Hankins

Ojai Ranger District reopens

Editor's note: Reprinted by permission from the Ojai Valley News (www.ojavalleynews.com) which has recently expanded to include West Ventura News.

Perry Van Houten
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The rebuilding of the Ojai Ranger District is underway with the U.S. Forest Service's hiring of four recreation staff and the reopening of the front desk at 1190 E. Ojai Ave.

Since the pandemic, the district office had been closed to the public and staffed only by fire personnel, but incoming Ojai District Ranger Tim Short revealed plans to bring the office up to previous staffing levels.

Short has brought on Recreation Officer Steve Yamshon, Assistant Recreation Officer Andrew Jilani, Recreation Forestry Technician Maria Rosario and Recreation Technician Rosemary Sepulveda.

Their positions had been unfilled due to past funding reductions, attrition and retirements, Short said.

The pandemic and the untimely passing of front desk staffer Mike Porter further limited the district's ability to serve the public, but with the reopening of the front desk Thursdays through Saturdays from 9am to 2pm Short hopes the ORD can re-engage with the community.

"To us this is a really important step in reconnecting with the community," Short said, "to help them better

experience and appreciate their district that we help manage."

Assistant Recreation Officer Andrew Jilani replaces Diane Cross, who retired in 2021. Jilani came to Ojai from

Cambodia, where he was working on an international project. He joined the ORD staff in May. "It's a lovely

place," he said of his new home. "Every weekend I go hiking, getting to know the trails. Slowly getting to know the community."

For the past few months, Jilani has been helping with an inventory of district recreation sites and getting trained on the National Environmental Policy Act.

Rosario grew up camping,



Recreation staff at the Ojai Ranger District, from left, Ojai District Ranger Tim Short, Recreation Forestry Technician Maria Rosario, Recreation Officer Steve Yamshon, Assistant Recreation Officer Andrew Jilani and Recreation Technician Rosemary Sepulveda. (Courtesy Ojai Valley News photo by Perry Van Houten)

hiking and fishing in the National Forest. "For me, this is just a homecoming, because I grew up in the area, born and raised in Santa Barbara," said Rosario, who gained plenty of experience working at large national parks, "where I helped manage some of the largest volunteer programs in the country."

The reopening of the front desk has brought an enthusiastic response from the public. "It's been a long time coming and it's really great to be here and give back to our community," said Rosario.

Many areas in the Ojai District remain closed while repairs are being made to trails and recreation areas hammered by powerful winter storms. "That work continues as we try to get things back into the condition we need them to be," Short said.

Another issue is Maricopa Highway through the Los Padres, much of which may remain closed into 2024, according to the CA Dept. of Transportation. "Depending on how that unfolds we'll be prepared to reopen facilities as we're able," Short said. "Highway 33 access is a core part of the Ojai District and some real popular recreation facilities."

Short encouraged the public to stop by the office and become reacquainted with their National Forest. "We hope it will be like one-stop shopping for folks who are interested in learning about the district and about all the resources and opportunities here," he said.

Recruiting volunteers to help staff the office is underway.

Short thanked the Los Padres Forest Association for its help with volunteer staffing. "And, of course, the strong volunteer network here in this community is just amazing in everything they're doing to help us continue the work we've been doing post-storm," he added.

The hiring of new recreation staff has placed the district in "a sunrise posture," according to Short. "Every one of them represents a lot of diversity and a variety of experiences that are blending in a way that's making a really dynamic team," he said. "I'm excited about all the great work they're getting done to help serve the local public."

If you're interested in volunteer opportunities with the district, email Maria.Rosario@usda.gov

With your support, we can protect our health and our environment to create a better future for all.

There is so much on the line on California's Central Coast — from stopping the oil and gas industry from continuing to damage our local environment to stopping climate change through large-scale renewable energy projects from solar panels on schools to wind farms in northern Santa Barbara County. Our volunteers work tirelessly to protect vulnerable wildlife like dolphins and mountain lions by supporting the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing.

Please Support Your Chapter Today:
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No more horses, we've got EV resources

By Katie Davis

The future is here. Around a quarter of all new cars sold in California are now electric. In some counties 40% of new cars are EVs. That's an exponential increase, up from 5-10% just a few years ago.

There are many benefits to driving electric:

~ **Kick the addiction** to oil and help solve the climate crisis: An EV can be powered by renewable energy and they are quiet, fume-free, and accelerate quickly.

~ **No more gas stations:** Electricity is much cheaper than gasoline, and charging at home or work is more convenient.

~ **Lower maintenance costs:** There's no oil to change and fewer repairs are needed.

~ **More options available:** Used electric cars are now available, and new ones have longer range. More public chargers pen up long-distance travel.

~ **Carpool lane access:** Clean cars can apply for an HOV decal for annual access to the carpool lane.

USEFUL RESOURCES

EV Advocates of Ventura extends into Santa Barbara and is particularly close to our Sierra Club Chapter via Kent Bullard, our Transportation Chair. It creates our EV car shows and the car owners are willing to answer all questions. Check them out on Facebook and MeetUp or contact Kent at: KentBullard@gmail.com

New cars: There are now over 130 different EV options, whether your price range is \$20,000 or \$200,000. PG&E has a nice list showing costs and ranges for vehicles. Its site – <https://ev.pge.com> -- also lets you compare vehicles and find incentives.

You can track the latest news on electric cars at Green Car Reports. Review sites are increasingly covering EVs as well, such as Edmunds, US News, Motor Trend, and Car and Driver.

Leased cars: Higher recent interest rates mean higher lease prices, but leasing is still a good option given the continuous improve-

ment in EVs. This site lists specific lease offers at dealerships, many in the \$200-\$400 a month range. [Electric Vehicle Lease Guide \(electrek.co\)](#)

Used cars: Search on AutoTrader and select used cars and fuel type "electric." Examples include a used Nissan Leaf, Fiat 500e, VW Golf, Chevy Bolt, Kia Soul EV can all be found for \$5000 - \$14,000. Older, cheaper EVs have more limited ranges, but are perfect for around-town driving. There are now rebates available for used EVs as well.

Rebates: The [driveclean.ca.gov](#) site has a great incentive search tool. Here are some specific local programs:

~ **City of Santa Barbara:** Customers of *SB Clean Energy* can get discounts on home solar and batteries to power your EV as well as a 20% discount on electric bike share membership. [See Programs.](#)

~ **Counties of Santa Barbara,** San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz and cities including Goleta, Carpinteria, Santa Maria (See full [list here](#)) who are customers of *Central Coast Community Energy* can get [\\$1000-\\$4000 rebates on new or used EVs](#), plus up to \$700 for a EV charger and up to \$4000 for EV Readiness intended to reimburse the majority of costs associated with electrical work. [See Programs.](#)

~ **Utilities:** [SCE](#) is offering [\\$1000-\\$4000 for a used EV](#), as does [PG&E](#). PG&E also offering [free home chargers.](#)

~ **Home Charging:** If you can park near an outlet, you can plug in and charge an EV, though a 110 volt outlet is pretty slow (about 4 miles per hour). It's faster if you install a home charging station, which is called "level 2" (240 volt). [They cost \\$200-\\$600](#) plus an electrician's time, but you can get free or

discounted charging installation through the utilities mentioned above or some car manufacturers. There is also a [\\$1000 federal "Alternative Fuel" tax credit](#) for buying qualified residential fueling equipment.

~ **Public Charging:** Download the [plugshare](#) app on your phone to find places to charge when you're on the road, and plan your trip. PG&E also has a nice [route planner](#) that shows you charging stations along your route. You can also check out [Electrify America](#), [ChargePoint](#), [Blink](#), and [EVgo](#), which are some of the most common charging networks.

Note that [Teslas have their own network](#), and your Tesla will point you to them. You can find public level 2 charging that works for any EV or fast charging, which allows you to quickly refuel on the road. There are three different connectors for fast chargers:

CHADEMO fast charge connector which is being phased out.

CCS/SAE which is used by most other EVs, aside from Tesla.

NACS which is the Tesla connector. Tesla has the best charging infrastructure and is [opening up to other cars](#). Some other manufacturers are adopting NACS.

Electric Vehicles 101: The SB Community Environmental Council offers local [EV webinars, resources and O&A.](#)

Lastly, if you make the switch and want to donate your old car, search for the Sierra Club Vehicle Donation Program. [you can do so here.](#)

Note: If your old car is pre-1997, the [Santa Barbara APCD](#) or [Ventura APCD](#) will give you \$1000 for it. Or, if your old car fails a smog check and needs to be retired, California's "Consumer Assistance Program Vehicle Retirement program" will give you [\\$1000-\\$1500 to retire it.](#)



Fill 'er up with the sun. That's what Katie Davis and her family do, saving it up from the orb and in a battery that charges all their electric vehicles.