

Sierra Club YODELER

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER ♦ FALL 2020



INSIDE!
Nov. 3, 2020
endorsements
(pages 4-6)

♦ VOLUNTEER TO GET OUT THE VOTE FOR LOCAL CANDIDATES! ♦
REFINERIES ARE DRYING UP & WORKERS DESERVE A JUST TRANSITION
♦ COORDINATING A REGIONAL RESPONSE TO SEA LEVEL RISE ♦
LAST CALL TO RUN FOR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

When you received the Summer edition of the *Yodeler* in the mail this June it might have felt like a relic of a different world. The issue featured our campaigns against local fossil fuel infrastructure and our efforts to help Bay Area residents spend time outside safely during the Covid-19 pandemic. What was missing was our unwavering support for the Black Lives Matter movement and the protests that had (by the time the paper reached you) filled the streets.



The day we sent our Summer *Yodeler* to print, George Floyd was murdered. His death at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer sparked a national reckoning over the ways our culture systematically devalues, disempowers and destroys Black lives. It's clear by now that this is a movement, not a moment. The recent shootings of Jacob Blake and Trayford Pellerin by police have made painfully clear the distance we still have to travel as a country, and the work that each of us must do to hold our public officials, police departments, and *each other* accountable.

The Sierra Club has joined hundreds of other climate justice and environmental groups in endorsing the Movement for Black Lives and its call for bold change to confront police violence and anti-Black racism. The movement's foundational demands are: 1) Defund the police, and 2) Invest in Black communities.

While the chapter has supported efforts to achieve these goals locally, we are not nearly where we need to be. We have to keep pushing until we see transformative systemic change. We also know we need to do much more internally to be a more equitable and more welcoming organization that represents the needs of everyone in the community.

We occasionally get feedback that environmental groups like the Sierra Club should focus on fighting climate change and leave social justice to others. Let us be clear: there is no way to disentangle these problems. As our Sierra Club colleague Hop Hopkins writes, "You can't have climate change without sacrifice zones, and you can't have sacrifice zones without disposable people, and you can't have disposable people without racism." There can be no climate justice until we have racial justice.

In this issue you will find our November 2020 endorsements to date; an update on our campaigns to keep coal out of Oakland; a report on decommissioning local refineries with a Just Transition for workers; the announcement of a new committee working on sea-level rise impacts; and much more. I encourage you to think about where these issues intersect with racism in our community. Where are the polluting industries located in our communities? Who stands to lose the most to climate change? And what can we learn when we follow the lead of the communities most impacted by pollution, disinvestment, disenfranchisement, and state violence?

Please join us as we work to meet this moment and make real progress in the fight for racial and environmental justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Minda Berbeco'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Minda Berbeco
SENIOR CHAPTER DIRECTOR

Sierra Club YODELER

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FALL 2020 CHAPTER NEWS

**DON'T MISS OUR NOVEMBER ELECTION
ENDORSEMENTS ON PAGES 4 - 6 AND
ONLINE AT SIERRACLUB.ORG/SFBAY/2020**



Sierra Club outings are still on hold – but don't let us hold you back!

To keep our community safe during this ongoing pandemic, Sierra Club outings like hikes and backpacking trips are still on hold — but we hope that doesn't stop you from getting outside safely on your own or with your 'quarantine pod.' Time spent in nature lowers anxiety and helps us cope with stress, and who isn't feeling a little extra stress these days?

We hope to be offering outings again soon. Check sierraclub.org/sfbay/events for updates. Stay safe, and we look forward to joining you on the trails!

Green Friday speaker series online this fall

After a summer break, the chapter's Green Friday programs are back — and now, virtual! This monthly educational series brings you speakers on the most interesting and important environmental issues of our time. Join us the second Friday of each month at 7:00 PM. Read more and register (free) via the calendar listings at sierraclub.org/sfbay/events and we'll send you the information to join via Zoom.

OCT. 9 - Jack Gescheidt: "Why Loving Trees Will Save Our Souls"

NOV. 13 - Extinction Rebellion: "The Coming Extinction and What to Do About It"

DEC. 11 - Hari Lamba: "Brighter Climate Futures"

Join a Sierra Club meeting from your couch

If you're itching to get involved in a local campaign that matters, Sierra Club members are invited to participate in the chapter's issue committees and your regional group.

Issue committees cover topics like energy, water, transportation, waste, parks, and more. Read more online at bit.ly/issuecomms.

Our eight regional groups take on issues within their geographical areas. You can find your group at sierraclub.org/sfbay/local-groups.

All meetings are being held virtually for now, by phone or video conference. Check out our online calendar (sierraclub.org/sfbay/events) for details.

Watch 'In the Know' interview series with chapter chair Olga Bolotina

The weekly In the Know interview series introduces you to the people behind environmental policies and initiatives. What drives them, what keeps them up at night, and what can we learn from and about them that will inspire us in our own life and work? Join Olga Bolotina, chair of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club and a long-time environmental activist, live at Facebook.com/SierraClubSFBayChapter each Friday at noon for a new In the Know conversation with environmental leaders, including Sierra Club volunteers and staff. We also invite you to listen to the past conversations on YouTube at bit.ly/olgaintheknow.

Wanted: Chapter ExCom Secretary

Are you handy with your fingers? The San Francisco Bay Chapter Executive Committee — the chapter's highest leadership body — is looking for a secretary to record minutes from its meetings. ExCom generally meets on the second Monday of each month from 6:30 to 9:00 PM. Meetings are held by Zoom for now. When in-person meetings are again possible they will be held at the Sierra Club's downtown Oakland office.

The secretary serves as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee. Basic knowledge of the San Francisco Bay Chapter's structure and operations is a plus, but not a necessity. Please email minda.berbeco@sierraclub.org if you are interested or have any questions.

NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ENDORSEMENTS



The following are the Sierra Club's endorsements for voters in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, and San Francisco Counties. NOTE: This list is not complete! Endorsements will be added to our website at www.sierraclub.org/sfbay/2020 as they are finalized, so check there for updates before you fill out your ballot.

Presidential Ticket:

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris

US House of Representatives:

Jared Huffman, District 2
Mike Thompson, District 5
Jerry McNerney, District 9
Mark DeSaulnier, District 11
Nancy Pelosi, District 12
Barbara Lee, District 13
Jackie Speier, District 14
Eric Swalwell, District 15
Rohit Khanna, District 17

State Ballot Measures:

Yes on Prop 15: The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2020

Yes on Prop 25: Replace Cash Bail with Risk Assessments

State Assembly:

Buffy Wicks, District 15
Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, District 16
David Chiu, District 17
Rob Bonta, District 18
Phil Ting, District 19
Alex Lee, District 25

State Senate:

Nancy Skinner, District 9

County Races:

ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Vinnie Bacon, District 1

MARIN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dennis Rodoni, District 4

City Races:

ALAMEDA BALLOT MEASURE

YES on Z: Repeal Ban on Multi-Family Housing

ALAMEDA CITY COUNCIL

Malia Vella
Jim Oddie

ALBANY CITY COUNCIL

Ge'Nell Gary
Preston Jordan
Aaron Tiedemann

BERKELEY MAYOR

Jesse Arreguín

BERKELEY CITY COUNCIL

Ben Bartlett, District 3
Sophie Hahn, District 5
Susan Wengraf, District 6

BERKELEY BALLOT MEASURES

YES on GG: Tax on Transportation Network Company Trips

YES on HH: Utility Users Tax

YES on II: Police Accountability Charter Amendment

YES on MM: Rent Stabilization Ordinance

DUBLIN MAYOR

Arun Goel

DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

Dawn Plants

EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL

Tessa Rudnick

Lisa Motoyama

Paul Fadelli

EMERYVILLE CITY COUNCIL

John Bauters

Ally Medina

Christian Patz

FAIRFAX TOWN COUNCIL

Barbara Coler

John Reed

FREMONT CITY COUNCIL

Raj Salwan, District 5

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

Dan Kalb, District 1

Noel Gallo, District 5

Treva Reid, District 7

Rebecca Kaplan, At-Large

OAKLAND CITY ATTORNEY

Barbara Parker

PINOLE CITY COUNCIL

Maureen Toms

PLEASANTON MAYOR

Karla Brown

PLEASANTON CITY COUNCIL

Valerie Arkin

Nancy Allen

RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL

Melvin Willis, District 1

Gayle McLaughlin, District 5

Claudia Jimenez, District 6

SAN ANSELMO TOWN COUNCIL

Alexis Fineman

SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Connie Chan, District 1

Aaron Peskin, District 3

Dean Preston, District 5

Vilaska Nguyen, District 7 - *First Choice*

Myrna Melgar, District 7 - *Second Choice*

Hillary Ronen, District 9

John Avalos, District 11

SAN FRANCISCO BALLOT MEASURES

YES on Prop. A - Health and Recovery Bond

YES on Prop. I - Rent Relief & Affordable Housing

YES on Prop. J - Support SF Schools

YES on Prop. K - Social Housing Act

YES on Prop. RR - Reduce Pollution, Relieve Traffic, Rescue Caltrain

Endorsements continued on the following page ⇨



NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ENDORSEMENTS

Continued from previous page

CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Tom Temprano
Shanell Williams
Alan Wong
Han Zou

SAN LEANDRO CITY COUNCIL

Ed Hernandez, District 2
Fred Simon, District 4

SAN LEANDRO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Diana Prola, Area 5

SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL

Greg Knell, District 4

SAUSALITO CITY COUNCIL

Melissa Blaustein
Janelle Kellman

SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD

Lisa Bennett
Alena Maunder

TIBURON TOWN COUNCIL

Holly Thier

Special Districts:

AC TRANSIT

Chris Peebles, At-Large
Joe Wallace, Ward 1
Jean Walsh, Ward 2

BART BOARD

Rebecca Saltzman, District 3
Lateefah Simon, District 7
Bevan Dufty, District 9

COLLEGE OF MARIN BOARD

Stephanie O'Neill
Paul DeSilva

DIABLO WATER DISTRICT BOARD

Marilyn Tiernan
Joe Kovalock

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK BOARD

Norman La Force, Ward 1

EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES DISTRICT BOARD

Lesa McIntosh, Ward 1
Doug Linney, Ward 5

LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

Judy Schriebman

MARIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT BOARD

Monty Schmitt, Division 2

WEST COUNTY WASTEWATER DISTRICT BOARD

Cesar Zepeda, District 1
Sherry Stanley, District 2
Harry Weiner, District 4

NOTE: This list is not complete! Endorsements will be added to our website at sierraclub.org/sfbay/2020 as they are finalized, so check there for updates before you fill out your ballot.

Be counted!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION:

All California voters will be sent a vote-by-mail ballot with a prepaid postage return envelope for the November 3, 2020 election. To make sure you get your ballot, double-check your voter registration at voterstatus.sos.ca.gov.

REGISTER TO VOTE:

You can still register to vote online at registertovote.ca.gov, or, to request a paper voter registration application be mailed to you, call (800) 345-VOTE(8683). Your registration must be postmarked or submitted electronically no later than October 19, 2020. If you miss that deadline, you can complete the same-day voter registration process and vote at your county elections office or polling place.

GET UPDATES ON YOUR BALLOT:

Sign up at wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov to receive notifications on the status of your vote-by-mail ballot, including alerts if there are any issues with your ballot and instructions for how to correct them to make sure your vote is counted.

VOTING BY MAIL:

Vote-by-mail ballots that are mailed must be postmarked on or before Election Day — but don't take any chances: If you are not sure your vote-by-mail ballot will arrive in time if mailed, bring it to any polling place or ballot drop box in your county by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

VOTING IN PERSON:

If you prefer to vote in person, you should know that some counties offer early voting at a few locations *before* Election Day. Learn more from your county elections office:

- Alameda: acvote.org or (510)272-6973
- Contra Costa: cocovote.us or (925)335-7800
- Marin: marincounty.org/depts/rv or (415)473-6456
- San Francisco: sfelections.sfgov.org or (415)554-4375

If you prefer to vote at the polls on Election Day, you can find your polling place:

- By calling (800)345-VOTE (8683)
- Online at sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place
- By texting Vote to GOVOTE (468683)

Please be safe and wear a mask if you vote in person.

Help us win big in November

VOLUNTEER TO GET OUT THE VOTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT!

In this most unusual of election years, the success of our electoral campaigns will hinge on remote tactics like emailing, texting, letter-writing, phone calls, and social media outreach. (There's no door-knocking in a pandemic!) Although our tactics have shifted, our goals are the same as ever: elect local environmental champions and win our ballot measure campaigns. We do that by:

1. Endorsing the best candidates and measures (*done!*);
2. Sharing our endorsements widely and educating voters about the local candidates and issues; and
3. Investing in a get-out-the-vote effort to increase turnout among our constituents.

Nationwide, much attention is rightly focused on removing Trump from office. But here at the chapter we're laser focused on winning the local races that matter. Lasting change

often starts at the local level, and what we do here can provide a roadmap for the rest of the state and the nation.

VOLUNTEER – WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

In order to elect environmental champions to office, we will need a strong local volunteer corps. We're asking for phonebanking and letter-writing volunteers. It will be work you can do from your home, in short increments and on a flexible schedule. And it makes a big difference.

To sign up, visit bit.ly/ChapterElectionTeam2020 (note that the capital letters in the URL matter).



Local refineries are cutting the flow of oil – so why aren't we celebrating?

JACOB KLEIN

Months after the Marathon Refinery in Martinez idled due to the pandemic, production has now come to a permanent stop. While in many ways this may seem like a victory to us environmentalists (one less refinery polluting the local air) we must also take into consideration the impact on workers. Hundreds of people are now out of work — workers whose livelihoods depended on the jobs this refinery provided.

Soon after, the Phillips 66 refinery in Rodeo announced that they plan to switch to renewable biodiesel production and stop petroleum refining by 2024. Rebranded as “Renewed Rodeo,” much still remains to be seen about impacts on workers and the adjacent communities.

Just as the refineries give only lip service to caring for the environment and environmental justice, so too is their commitment to their workers insincere. As shareholders continue to rake in money, the workers lose their jobs and receive no support. Perhaps there will be other jobs. Maybe another fossil fuel company will take over the Marathon refinery and re-employ many of the former workers. However, between now and then, many families and communities will suffer from lack of income.

This is why we need Just Transitions. We know that the fossil fuel industry will not support labor once the profits are gone. Therefore it's up to us to work together and find ways to support the economic well-being of others. We know that despite their desperate attempts to hold on, fossil fuels will be depleted and the companies profiteering off their use will close up. Before that happens, we need a plan to make sure the workers are able to find other good-paying, union jobs and are adequately supported until that happens.

Just Transitions include things like supplemental benefits (making up the pay that was lost with the job, for the time it realistically takes to find another job or to be retrained), job retraining, supporting labor

and union power and reach, and switching over to an economy based on non-polluting energy sources.

It can seem big and scary. How do we make this happen? How much will this cost? Where will that money come from? Fortunately, we have examples and support in envisioning this. Colorado passed a Just Transitions bill last year with the joint advocacy of leading environmental and labor groups. They are in the process of setting up their plan and have already set up an office dedicated to Just Transitions. Helpful to launching this, Robert Pollin wrote a report on what it could look like in Colorado.

Fortuitously enough, Pollin has published a brief on *A Fair and Sustainable Economic Recovery Program for California* and is currently developing a more in-depth version. At the same time, there are leaders locally and across the state working on similar projects. A Bay Area Green New Deal document is in the works. Assemblymember Rob Bonta led the charge on a California Green New Deal legislation that wasn't able to move forward this year, but has begun an important conversation. Many activists and leaders are starting to sit down and have these conversations. What can this look like? What do people need? How can we make this happen? How can we work together?

We as environmentalists must make sure to protect the Earth, yes, but we must remember the people impacted too. We have to center labor, whose livelihoods will be on the line. And we have to center Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities who already experience the brunt of the climate crisis. Only then will the transition be truly just.

Jacob Klein is the regional coal organizer for the Sierra Club's SF Bay, Redwood, and Mother Lode Chapters.



IMAGE CREDIT: Rodeo San Francisco Refinery by Thomas Hawk via Flickr Creative Commons, flickr.com/photos/thomashawk

Report lays out plan for "Decommissioning California Refineries"

Earlier this summer, environmental justice group Communities for a Better Environment released a new report, "Decommissioning California Refineries: Climate and Health Paths in an Oil State" by Greg Karras. The report answers the question: What is the least-impact, most socially just, most feasible path to climate and health protection in California? It lays out a plan for breaking free from our toxic relationship with oil before it takes us over a cliff.

In July, the Sierra Club joined 102 organizations in sending a letter to Governor Newsom, citing this report's recommendations and calling on the State to start reducing refinery production now. An abridged version of that letter is reprinted here:

In order to meet California's climate goals and protect communities from further unnecessary pollution, California must immediately begin a process of gradually cutting production from our oil refineries. The report "Decommissioning California Refineries" makes a clear case for the need for government leadership to align the reduction of California's refinery throughputs with state climate policies.

The recent examples of the unplanned shutdowns of the Marathon refinery in Martinez and the PES refinery in Philadelphia further emphasize the need for policy leadership that protects communities, provides for a just transition for petroleum industry workers, and avoids the economic disruption of a rapid, unplanned shutdown of refineries.

To avoid the worst impacts of a chaotic transition, you must lead on key elements of the transition. California must:

- **Implement local just transition planning.** Refinery cities like Richmond will suffer severe local community justice impacts without a planned transition.

- **Start these processes immediately.** The Air Resources Board has the authority to act and can begin today on the recommendations below.

- **Implement a moratorium on expansions.** You can and should prevent permitting of all refinery expansions, including the Phillips 66 Rodeo refinery expansion proposal.

With this letter, our organizations also support immediate action on the conclusions drawn from the report, including the following:

1. All paths to a *livable climate* involve refining much less oil. California's official climate goals call for cutting carbon emissions drastically by 2050. There's no way to meet this goal without steep cuts in petroleum production and use: the petroleum industry produces about two-thirds of all the carbon emitted from all activities in California.

2. Steep reductions in petroleum also are necessary to meet our *health goals*. One study estimated that just the particulate matter from extracting, refining, and burning oil refined in California over five years killed 8,000 people. Whether through Emission Reduction Credits or other mechanisms, refinery ramp downs and eventual decommissioning must ensure no increases of pollution source in environmental justice and disadvantaged communities.

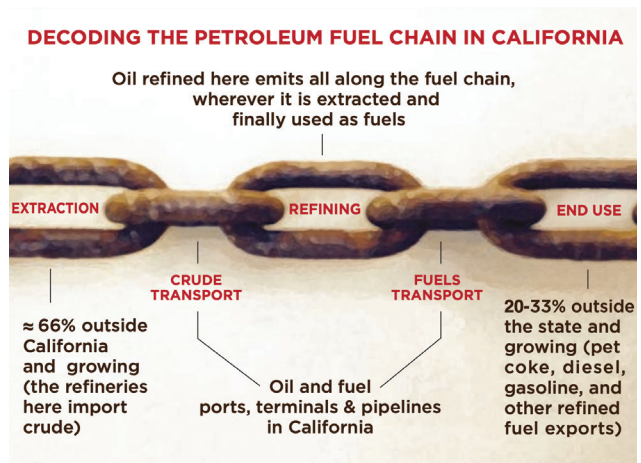
3. *Early action* to decommission refining capacity is a critical component of the least-impact, most socially just, most feasible path to climate stabilization in California. If we start now setting limits on output for each refinery, we can reduce refinery production gradually.

4. This planned, gradual phase-down gives us time to develop sustainable alternatives for the *workers and communities* now economically dependent on oil.

5. California refineries are a key link in the global fuel chain. Actions that limit refining here can *cut emissions across the petroleum fuel chain*. As California oil fields dry up and in-state demand for petroleum fuels declines, California refineries have been importing more of the crude oil they process—now about two-thirds—and exporting more of their product (20–33%). Refineries must not be allowed to replace domestic consumption decline with increasing exports.

6. We must pair gradual reduction of refinery output with aggressive measures to *ensure clean mobility for all*.

You can download the full report at energy-re-source.com. Read the full version of the letter reprinted above, including the full list of signatories, at bit.ly/KarrasLetter.



To restore the Farallones, invasive mice need to go. Are contraceptives the solution?

NANCY OKADA

Could contraceptives be the solution to exterminating non-native mice on the Farallon Islands and eliminate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's plan to drop poison on the South Farallon Islands?

The California Coastal Commission will be asked to decide this issue when Commissioners are tentatively scheduled to vote on a "consistency determination" at their November meeting.

The current federal proposal would employ helicopters to disperse 1.5 tons of poison-laced cereal bait pellets on the southeast Farallon Island.

The poison, Brodifacoum, is among the most dangerous of the controversial second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides, banned by local agencies from Malibu to Canada, due to its food-chain damage to non-target wildlife.

Retail sale of Brodifacoum has long been prohibited in California. AB 1788, which at the time of printing had passed the State legislature and is expected to be signed into law, will preclude its use anywhere in the state except under very specific emergency situations. The poison has caused documented damage to mountain lions, bobcats, raptors, owls, and the Pacific fisher, in addition to accidental poisonings of pets and children.

The danger of using rodenticides is now forcing society to find more focused and humane ways to address pest control in tune with the Sierra Club's pesticide policy, which you can read online at sierraclub.org/policy/agriculture/pest-management.

However, Fish & Wildlife still favors rodenticide use to fully eradicate non-native house mice on the Farallones.

In the Farallones the mice enjoy a population boom each fall, attracting up to eight individual burrowing owls from the mainland. After they eat the mice, owls stay around to eat the eggs and chicks of a little seabird, the ashy storm-petrel,

harming the new fledgling population of this protected species. According to Fish and Wildlife, half the world's populations of ashy storm-petrels breed in small rock crevices on the South Farallones. Fish and Wildlife wants to eradicate the invasive mice to restore natural ecosystem processes on the islands to benefit other native seabirds, as well as the rare and endemic Farallon arboreal salamander, Farallon camel cricket, and plants like the maritime goldfield.

The protected Farallones is a wilderness area of both land and sea. Today it provides an essential rookery and nursery habitat for at least 350,000 seabirds, in addition to being a critical haul-out and birthing ground for countless marine mammals.

In August, the Sierra Club SF Bay Chapter's Federal Parks Committee recognized this issue and submitted a letter urging the Coastal Commission to ask the Service to do a supplemental Environmental Impact Report before voting on the poison drop.

The letter asked the agency to conduct a study of rodent contraceptives as an alternative.

The Federal Parks Committee referred to recent advances in the biochemistry of fertility control measures, and the timely permitting of contraceptive baits.

Current contraceptive baits are organic, do not damage non-target species, don't biomagnify

in the food chain, are presently approved for use by California Certified Organic Farmers, and are now being utilized throughout the rice and poultry industries to control rats.

While contraceptive baits have to date proven effective only in population suppression, rather than eradication, commercial adaptation of similar contraceptive baits for mice is progressing rapidly, offering Fish and Wildlife a unique opportunity to refocus their efforts and pose no harm to non-target species.

Detailed information about the planned poison drop is available in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the "Invasive House Mouse Eradication Project," online at bit.ly/HouseMouseEradication.

The public can email their comments directly to the Coastal Commission at FarallonIslands@coastal.ca.gov.

Nancy Okada is co-chair of the Sierra Club California Coastal Committee.

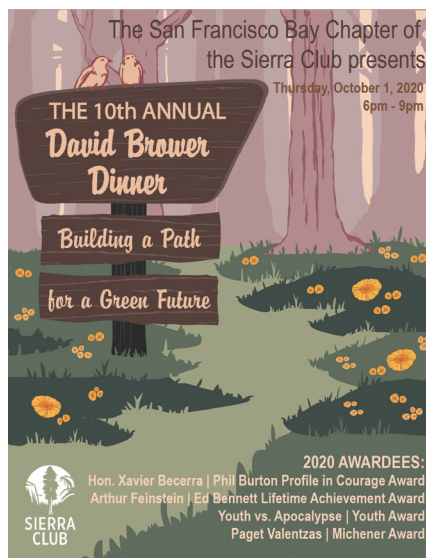


10th annual David Brower Dinner goes online – October 1, 2020

LAURIE EARP

Our 10th annual David Brower Dinner is scheduled to go online on Thursday, October 1st at 6:00 PM. We are grateful to the many people and organizations who have already stepped up and become sponsors or purchased their tickets. There is still room for many more of our friends to join us, and we want you there for this historical gathering.

As with many other fundraising events this year, we will take ours online. Because we know we want to catch up with one other, we are adding a half-hour pre-event Zoom Mingle.



There is no time like the present to safeguard our environment and our children's future. This year's honorees are leaders of all ages (listed on the art to the left) who have committed themselves to our event theme: Building a Path for a Green Future. They deserve to get a big shout out from all of us.

Log-in information will be sent out to all registrants one week prior to the event. Should you have any questions, please contact our event planner, Laurie Earp, at 510-418-2354 (voice or text) or laurie@earpevents.com. And remember to please tell a friend!

Please do not delay. Renew your commitment to our chapter and to Building a Path for a Green Future by purchasing your tickets and/or sponsorships online today at:

davidbrowerdinner2020.com

brownpapertickets.com

Utah activists prevent public dollars from funding Oakland coal export terminal – for now

JACOB KLEIN

A group of Utah activists and organizations successfully blocked \$20 million in public dollars from going to Insight Terminal Solutions (ITS), the company attempting to export coal through Oakland. Coal proponents in Utah attempted to use a special session of the state legislature to send funds to the company, which is facing bankruptcy, even as the state is facing a budget shortfall due to Covid-19.

Utah's Community Impact Board originally set aside \$53 million to support infrastructure in communities impacted by fossil fuel usage. However, Utah coal advocates have been pushing for that money to be directed towards California to maintain a coal export terminal. There were concerns that these coal advocates would use a special session on August 20th to push \$20 million of that pot towards bailing out ITS, a misuse of funds.

Utah Clean Infrastructure Coalition rallied together and worked with legislators to reject this possibility and succeeded

in doing so. Rep. Brian King led the charge in a motion to reallocate the \$53 million to rural communities. Unfortunately, that motion did not pass, but at least the funds haven't been fast-tracked towards ITS — and Oakland.

The Utah Clean Infrastructure Coalition is composed of several groups, former electeds, and activists from Salt Lake City and rural regions. It includes the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club Utah, Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy, Westside Coalition, Stop the Polluting Port, Elders Rising, Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment, HEAL Utah, Alliance for a Better Utah, and more. These leaders are committed to ensuring the just use of funds to support the people of Utah and end the subsidization of projects that benefit the fossil fuel industry.

As coal companies and their allies try to prop up the dying coal industry, they've been working closely with ITS to try to prevent the company from going bankrupt and being acquired by hedge fund Autumn Wind, which might not continue to pursue the Oakland coal export terminal.

Today, the \$53 million remains untouched and could still be directed to support a coal port in the Bay Area. Thanks to the Utahns of UCIC who continue to work to prevent this, ensuring the public health of the Bay Area and pushing for reinvestment in Utah communities.

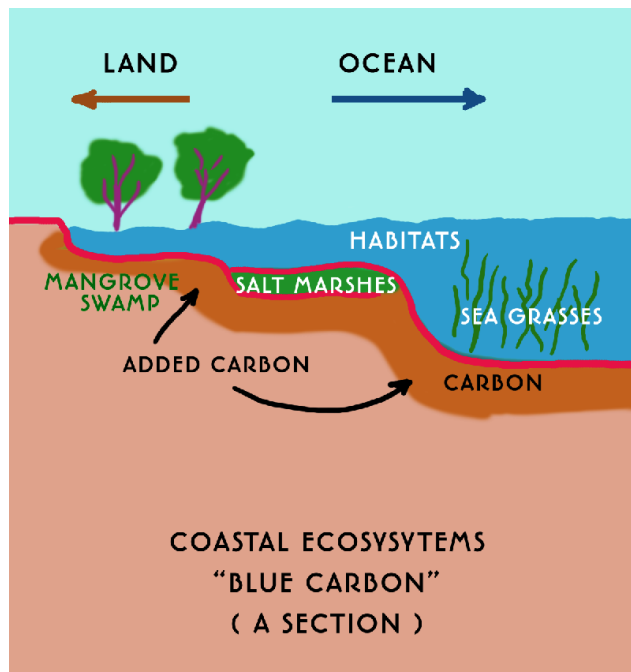
Jacob Klein is the regional coal organizer for the Sierra Club's SF Bay, Redwood, and Mother Lode Chapters.

Take another look at the many benefits of coastal ecosystems

HARI LAMBA

The surprising fact is that coastal ecosystems can absorb more carbon per area than even mature rainforests. So much so that people have begun to call it “Blue Carbon”, as compared to the “Green Carbon” of forests. In terms of total quantity, next to land based forests, coastal ecosystems provide the next greatest potential for absorbing carbon. They also support the fisheries and ocean life as they provide crucial habitats and spawning locations that enable many of these species to flourish. Besides overfishing, damaging shoreline development, and the growth of fish and shrimp farms along the coasts of the world, their loss is a major cause of the global collapse of fisheries and the extinctions of ocean species. It turns out that the underwater plants and soils are important parts of these ecosystems.

The San Francisco Bay, which is the largest estuary on the Pacific coast of North America, has lost more than 90% of its original wetlands due to urban development, agriculture and salt production. To understand all this, let us take a step back and look at coastal ecosystems. Let us look at the schematic of a section of some ocean ecosystems, such as mangrove forests (or swamps), salt tidal marshes and sea grasses that exist at different depths.



While there are no mangrove forests in the Bay Area, there certainly are sea grasses and salt marshes. At Point Molate in the Richmond area, the eelgrass, which is a long flat bladed grass, has an area of over 50 acres and is home to many species, including the beautiful Taylor’s sea hare. Besides that, for an average depth of about 13 feet or 4 meters, the soil underneath the eelgrass is rich in carbon, which is shown as the dark brown area under all of the ecosystems shown in the schematic. Besides that the eelgrass protects shorelines by slowing down the energy of waves, and the eelgrass at this location is superior and hence a good source of donor plants for restoration projects elsewhere. Currently, the City of Richmond is proposing to build a luxury housing development at Point Molate. Sediment runoff from constructing that development, as well as increased pollution from thousands of residents, their cars, and stormwater runoff, could severely damage or destroy Point Molate’s offshore eelgrass beds.

The other major ecosystems that came to my attention were the tidal salt marshes of the South Bay Area. Since development occurred over the last couple of centuries, this area had been converted to salt ponds for salt production and were most recently owned by Cargill. What is most probably little known is that in 2009, the Obama administration had funded 50 coastal ecosystem restoration projects along the entire US coast, as part of ARRA (the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act). One of the projects that got funded was the South San Francisco Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project restoration on an area of about 2,700 acres. A detailed evaluation showed that an investment of about \$8 million in the oyster reef and eelgrass restoration project was estimated to provide a lifetime benefit of over \$69 million.

In view of all of these benefits for climate change-related carbon absorption, habitat restoration and local economies, in my book* I have proposed not only the restoration, but a massive expansion of coastal ecosystems globally along the entire non-ice coastline, and along the coastlines of the US — Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf. As sea level rise continues to occur (the magnitude of which will depend on global average temperature rise) planning for newly submerged areas should include the planting of new coastal ecosystems, and areas where the depth of water is increasing can be transitioned from one type to another, like say from salt marshes to eelgrass. Please support the many local, state, national and global efforts to restore and expand these coastal ecosystems.

The author Dr. Hari Lamba serves on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club's West Contra Costa County Group. He is the author of a recently published book* titled *Brighter Climate Futures - A Global Energy, Climate and Ecosystem Transformation*. Find Hari at www.brighterclimatefutures.com.

We're not ready for sea-level rise

JULIA FOOTE

It's no secret that the Bay Area is already experiencing the impacts of the climate crisis. While wildfires feel like the most immediate threat encroaching upon our communities today, sea level rise is anticipated to overwhelm our region in the coming years. And yet our collective failure to respond to warnings from the scientific community have left the San Francisco Bay Area woefully unprepared to combat this unprecedented challenge.

The San Francisco Bay is one of California's most important ecological habitats and home to critically important native species. Human activities, expanding infrastructure, and sea level rise all pose a threat to the very ecosystems that are needed to bolster our resilience to the impacts of climate change. According to the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's recently-released report "Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area," in the coming decades we can expect to see the loss of nearly 70,000 acres of habitat, including the direct loss of 20,000 acres of Bay wetlands. Without the natural barrier provided by the wetlands and marshes of a natural shoreline, the region will be at even greater risk from sea level rise and storm surge, and communities will be more susceptible to flooding.

More than one million residents could be directly impacted by sea level rise and associated storm surge alone, and threats will not be spread evenly among Bay Area residents. Sea level rise in our region over the coming decades threatens to flood over 80,000 homes; relocate over 100,000 existing jobs, along with 85,000 planned new jobs; cause daily flooding for nearly 28,000 already socially vulnerable residents; and potentially inundate nearly 100 contaminated sites, including Superfund sites. Working class communities, particularly communities of color near the shoreline, will face disproportionate impacts and harm as many are located near these toxic sites and polluting facilities that present the greatest threats to Bay health as well as human health. No significant requirements currently exist to force the owners of these facilities to plan for protecting themselves, the environment, and surrounding communities from the inevitable inundation — adding significant burden on top of the decades of environmental injustice communities have already faced as a result of historical red-lining practic-

es and other municipal decisions that placed toxic sites and communities of color next to each other.

It will take bold, intentional, and coordinated action to mitigate the worst impacts of sea level rise on our region and adapt our most vulnerable ecosystems and communities to new risks. That is why the Sierra Club's three Bay Area chapters (SF Bay, Redwood, and Loma Prieta) have joined forces to form the Three-Chapter Sea Level Rise Committee to meet this challenge. The Sierra Club alone cannot create the change needed to address the threats that sea level rise poses to our ecosystems, communities, and economy, so this committee hopes to partner with and support regional efforts among the wider community of environmental and social equity advocates, as well as influence important regional agencies and government entities to spur the San Francisco Bay Area to take action that meets the scale of the crisis.

The Sierra Club seeks to foster a Bay that is ecologically healthy with restored ecosystem function; that has open space sufficient to provide for recreation for people, natural habitat for wildlife, and natural buffers to sea level rise and storm surge; that has industries and commerce not based on fossil fuels or linked to significant risks of pollution; and that has planned for and activated policies to ensure that adaptation to sea level rise is effective and equitable. Achieving this vision for the Bay will require years of active work. Today our Three-Chapter Committee is laying the groundwork to embark on that mission.

Julia Foote is a Community Organizer for the Sierra Club's SF Bay Chapter. If you're interested in getting in touch with the Sea Level Rise Committee, email her at julia.foote@sierraclub.org.



Member testimonials

STEVEN DECAPRIO

In March, the chapter's Associate Development Director Steven DeCaprio began making "discovery calls" to our members to find out how they're coping during the pandemic, how they got interested in the environment, what motivates them to be part of the Sierra Club, and where they think our chapter should focus its attention.

The following excerpts are taken from Steven's call notes. We wanted to share them with you because we've been so impressed with the wisdom and diversity of perspectives among our members. Steven will soon be leaving us soon to become Director of the Sierra Club's Alabama Chapter (Congrats, Steven!), but you can still schedule a discovery call with our development department by emailing steven.decaprio@sierraclub.org.

BRUCE FROM PLEASANTON is a biologist who has been working with his city government to increase the native plants along streets and in parks. He and his wife took out their lawn and pool and replaced them with native plants, which has brought more birds and wildlife to their yard. He was a child of the '60s and his mother was the first environmentalist he knew. His mother had grown up in England during the depression and World War II and when she moved to the US she was stunned by how wasteful the culture was. They were the first family on the block to bundle newspapers and recycle cans and bottles. He wonders if we can find common ground with people who are more politically conservative. "Who doesn't want clean water? Who doesn't want to take their child fishing and have fish that are suitable to eat?"

KIM FROM BERKELEY believes that Covid-19 will be an environmental wake-up call because the people most impacted are also the people most impacted by environmental degradation. Environmental justice has to be front and center in our work, she says. She believes we need to build a broader coalition of people advocating for civil rights and social justice.

THOMAS FROM OAKLAND joined the Audubon Society when he was seven years old and learned that birds are an important indicator species of environmental health. The U.S needs a new social contract that

includes nature, he says. "The SF Bay Chapter could start the revolution from our San Pablo Avenue office. We have to have some trust that the balance will come back and that we will be a part of it. Hard times are the opportunities for us to make a difference." He believes that his membership makes a difference.

NOAH FROM OAKLAND grew up going to protests with his mother. He now works five days a week for the Sierra Club's national political team and spends the rest of his time volunteering for the Sunrise Movement. "We have a very rare and narrow window to build a better future," he says.

MEI FROM SAN FRANCISCO supports a number of non-profit groups that help the elderly and promote science. She doubled her donations when Covid-19 hit. She has always volunteered and served on boards, but has recently decided to step back to create space for the younger generation. "We all live in one world and it is going down the drain more and more," she says. She doesn't trust her grandchildren will have a healthy world to live in.

ALLYSON FROM BERKELEY is a child of the '50s and '60s — the "Silent Spring generation." Her father was a Native American, and she was always interested in understanding plants and their uses and how to live on the land. The movement is good at activating and mobilizing people who already identify as environmentalists, she says, but isn't as good at connecting the dots to ensure that we broaden our message to include people such as inner-city kids, farmers, and others less inclined to hike in the mountains. We have to do the work to explain why a city kid should care about "the salmon."

NOAH FROM BERKELEY says you have to get involved to protect the things you like. He is a bike enthusiast, so for him, that means advocating for slow streets. He worries that our country's individualistic culture and capitalism make environmental advocacy very challenging.

RUS FROM SAN RAFAEL grew up hiking with his brothers and the Boy Scouts. He is concerned about environmental racism and plastic pollution. He is impressed with what the Sierra Club has shown up for in the last few years. He urges us not to back down. If you look at the history of the environmental movement, he says, no one gets shamed for fighting and losing, but groups that make compromises are not perceived well in hindsight.

Normal is not sustainable: Be a Sierra Club leader for change

LUCY CLAIRE CURRAN

We are certainly living in very strange and difficult times! Some people say: "I just can't wait to get back to normal." But with the pandemic, the ongoing struggle with systemic racism, political polarization, and all of this on top of the ever-present climate crisis, many of us are taking a moment to pause, take stock, and examine our priorities.

Might this be a moment for a new generation of Bay Chapter leaders to join those who have been doing so much good work for so long? Is this the moment for YOU to lean into the conversation? Is your voice needed as part of the discussion? (Here's a hint: We think so!)

We here at the SF Bay Chapter Nominations Committee believe that the grassroots leadership structure of the Sierra Club is worth investing in. Furthermore, we believe that

a robust and fully functioning grassroots leadership structure requires member engagement. This means two things:

1. We need members to run for leadership positions.
2. We need members to turn out to vote for the best leaders.

Here's your opportunity to learn more about elections in our chapter. All the information you need is on our website at: sierraclub.org/sfbay/run-for-2020-chapter-elections.

As the Sierra Club and the environmental movement as a whole digs deep and takes a hard look at inequities and injustices, let's re-commit ourselves to our mission in new ways. Let's be honest and courageous and keep our dialogue nuanced and thoughtful, and let's make sure we are welcoming and elevating a wider range of voices at the table. Head to the elections webpage today.

The deadline for nomination by committee has passed, but the deadline for petition candidates is September 28. Feel free to contact us at elections@sfbaysc.org or call committee chair Peggy da Silva at 415-305-7897. We are happy to answer any questions.

Public pressure yields environmental review of Contra Costa oil and gas wells proposal

JACOB KLEIN

Earlier this year, Contra Costa County was poised to approve new oil and gas wells near neighborhoods in Brentwood. The proposed drilling sites would be less than 1,000 feet away from homes with families and children. When the public found out, there was an incredible outcry, the result of which will be a more open and thorough consideration of the proposal's impacts on the environment and public health.

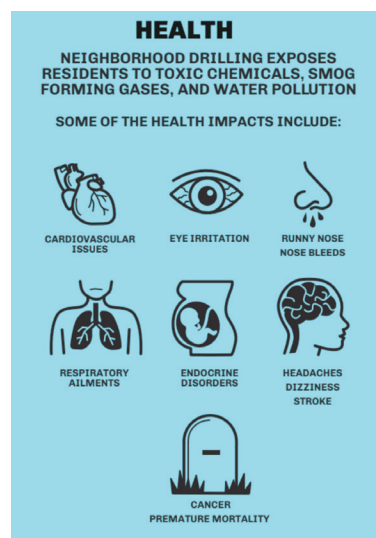
Leading environmental organizations like Sunflower Alliance, 350 Bay Area, SF Baykeeper, Center for Biological Diversity and more worked with a new and powerful group of local activists calling themselves No Drilling in Brentwood. These community members kicked off a grassroots movement to oppose the County's plan to issue a "negative declaration" for the project that would have allowed it to move forward without studying its possible consequences. Public outrage was channeled into a campaign to submit public comments to the Contra Costa County Planning De-

partment asking for a thorough environmental review of the proposal.

Thanks to public pressure, the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development has decided to undertake greater environmental review to see what possible impacts could come from this project. We already know that oil and gas extraction produces toxic air pollution, with health impacts on local communities that include asthma, cancer, respiratory illness, and more. Other risks include water contamination, spills of toxic chemicals, and explosions.

As the environmental review process moves forward, we'll have opportunities later this year to let our voices be heard to support the health of our communities.

Jacob Klein is the regional coal organizer for the Sierra Club's SF Bay, Redwood, and Mother Lode Chapters.





#SierraSnapshots | Mycena mushroom photographed by Jennifer Bartholomew in Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Marin County. For a chance to see your snapshot to be featured in the next issue of the Yodeler, share pictures on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook with hashtag #SierraSnapshots, or email photos to yodedit@sfbayc.org. Please tell us where and when it was taken and include the names of anyone in the photo.

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SIERRACLUB.ORG/SFBAY

Our website is home to helpful information and resources including:

- Our blog, updated regularly
- Our full events and activities calendar (all events are virtual for now)
- Group information and leadership roster

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- November 3, 2020 endorsements (p. 4-6)
- Sheltering at home? There are lots of ways to get involved in Sierra Club campaigns from the comfort of your couch (p. 3)
- Consider running for your local Sierra Club Executive Committee (p. 15)
- The 10th annual David Brower Dinner is going online October 1st (p. 11)

EMAIL

Visit sierraclub.org/sfbay/email to sign up for Bay Chapter emails, including monthly