

Vol. 23, No. 4 of 6

August - September 2023

Condor Call

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



© Photo by Mike Eliason

Winds of change ... Parks ... Media matters ... Yosemite home ... Forest fight

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Beyond pesticides campaign lands here

By Ron Whitehurst, PCA and Jan Dietrick, MPH

Do you want more pesticides in your food? Most don't. So why is the state still registering pesticides that cause cancer and reproductive harm, disrupt sex hormones, irritate the lungs, kill charismatic wildlife, and contain unregulated PFAS chemicals?

Our Sierra Club California Agriculture Committee is working for transformation in California agriculture, and we're excited about a future Agriculture Committee in our chapter that you can join (see below).

Its first public appearance will be at the Ventura County Fair, Aug. 2-13 in the Agriculture building, please stop by.

We can all take actions to eliminate chemical poisons on farms and in gardens and landscapes and create healthy soils for food quality, food security and mitigating biodiversity loss, drought, floods, heat waves, and climate chaos.

Farmers and farmworkers, ranchers and restaurants, school and health professionals, and just folks who love delicious, healthy food can learn and organize under the banner of the Sierra Club to make a difference.

The Agriculture Committee (one of 13 issue committees of the CA Conservation Committee) recently set a singular goal to accelerate pesticide reduction for environmental justice, healthy communities, and biodiversity conservation. The new work plan aims to:

- ~ Create a strategic plan for a California Beyond Pesticides Campaign

- ~ Develop partnership agreements with [Beyond Pesticides](#), [California Certified Organic Farmers \(CCOF\)](#) and [Californians for Pesticide Reform](#)

- ~ Establish agreed principles related to the [USDA National Organic Program](#) and the [Sustainable Pest Management Roadmap](#)

- ~ Find pathways aligned with Sierra Club's [Labor and Economic](#)

[Justice Program](#) and [Beyond Coal and Gas Campaign](#) in a holistic vision of care for impacted people.

- ~ Collaborate with all sectors to build political will for poison-free farming and gardening.

- ~ Connect Sierra Club California with funds for the campaign.

The simplest way to reduce poisons on farms is to increase organic farming, because the USDA organic label is a well-established standard for safe, non-polluting farms and products. Organic is getting millions in federal and state funds.

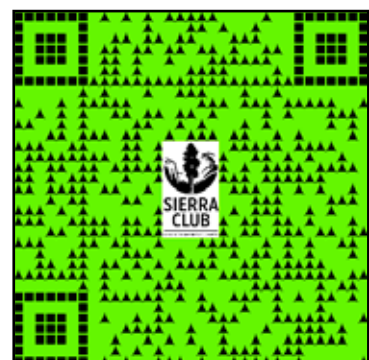
California began certifying a higher soil-building level called Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC), a focus of the Rodale Institute Organic Research Center in Camarillo. Toxic pesticide use by city folks is a bigger challenge. The SPM Roadmap has action the state will take, but we can help spread the word.

While stopping short of envisioning growth in organic *per se*, organic farmers are certainly qualified for the Roadmap's recommended investments and incentives for market access and risk mitigation. Training for farmers and advisors is another powerful "carrot", while tighter regulation and de-registering highly hazardous pesticides are the "stick" which we can wield faster through the potential political influence of the Sierra Club.

The new Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter Agriculture Committee can be an exciting place to learn about farming, gardening, and landscaping issues. We envision informative meetings at a farm, packing shed, kelp or worm farm or composter.

A listserv "email chat room" is coming for information, ideas, and actions to protect farmworkers and all living things and to work on increasing food security for the region. We're planning a drawing at the first meeting for a free copy of [The Farm Bill and For the Love of Soil](#).

To join the SB-VTA AG Committee, email: jdietrick9@gmail.com.



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.



Agriculture Committee members Brett Levin and Ron Whitehurst are analyzing fruits ripening at the 'Bugfarm' in Ventura which offers natural solutions to pesticides. Below the picture is a Green lacewing larva species called "Comanche" that feeds on the Asian Citrus Psyllid pest of citrus in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. To contact them, email: bugnet@rinconvitova.com (Photo by Michael Wright)



Thar she blows! Or will soon as the last of 27 wind turbines are about to be switched on in the hills south of Lompoc. This is a major stride in SB County's push for renewable energy and well-paid green jobs. Follow its status here: www.twitter.com/StraussWind (© Photo Gwendolyn Garcia courtesy of BayWa r.e.)

Wind power welcome

By Katie Davis

Lompoc Launch Looms

The Strauss Wind project near Lompoc is nearly ready to launch, providing enough renewable energy for 45,000 homes, while creating green collar jobs in north Santa Barbara County. We need to rapidly deploy renewable energy projects like this to achieve the County and State's ambitious climate goals.

The project faced delays due to heavy rain and erosion earlier this year but is finally nearing completion. The project includes a state-of-the-art bird detection system *IdentiFlight* that is designed to shut down turbines when birds are detected in the area. Even so, BayWa, the developer, needs to get a "take permit" from Fish and Wildlife in case a Golden Eagle is killed so they can pay into a fund to save other Golden Eagles.

A technicality around procuring this permit threatened to delay the project further as the conditions imposed by the County required a letter from Fish and Wildlife saying that a permit was coming. It turns out Fish and Wildlife will issue no such letter, even though they always issue such permits. As the wait for the permit could be years, BayWa was back in front of the Santa Barbara Planning Commission on July 12 asking for the condition to be changed to permit applied for rather than permit promised. The Planning Commission granted the change, while complaining that BayWa should have applied for the permit earlier.

Once operating, the project will provide additional energy and important resiliency benefits for our grid, particularly during hot summer months when energy demand surges. BayWa CEO Gordon MacDougall says he is, "committed to making Strauss an exemplar of a great Californian wind project."

Ventura Oil Suit Settled

After the precedent-setting Ventura County General Plan was adopted in 2020, the oil industry immediately filed multiple lawsuits challenging the public safety policies included.

For a few years, the County held strong in defense of these policies, with the support of legal intervention from Sierra Club, CFROG, and Voices In Solidarity Against Oil In Neighborhoods. A recent settlement agreement between Ventura County and the oil companies ends these lawsuits and waters down the oil regulations.

The strong oil regulations passed by the Board of Supervisors under the leadership of Steve Bennett and the late Carmen Ramirez have been watered down in several ways.

Loopholes allow the regulations to not be applied in existing oil fields with antiquated permits, meaning that drilling can still happen next to homes, schools and workplaces. The settlement requires "if feasible" to be added to the policies limiting venting and flaring gas, trucking oil, and using electric equipment.

In practice, this means these policies meant to improve air quality and community safety will not be required. In short, the bullying by oil companies to overturn oversight has worked, though the General Plan rules are still better than nothing.

The settlement will be discussed at the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 12, provided

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COVER PHOTO

Our area has been treated to a wide range of weather, but leave it to photographer Mike Eliason to show us our best side, a sunset at Hendry's Beach. Another reason to fight Climate Change. He is the author of a photo book, "Santa Barbara and Beyond," capturing iconic images of disasters too with his work with SB Fire. Catch an interview here: <https://youtu.be/CqkENda1ZpY>

EAVESDROP

"Humans have so profoundly changed the Earth that our soot and our plastics and our radioactive fallout have made it into the very rocks and ice and mud that form our planet."

~ Enter the Age of Humans, proposed by some geologists that the new era began in the 1950s with the nuclear era, a debate that would make it a new geologic Time Period, the Anthropocene. NPR broadcast by Rebecca Hersher.

Toxic algae harming marine life

Santa Barbara and Ventura counties are currently experiencing a harmful algal bloom event that has resulted in hundreds of stranded marine mammals that are currently suffering from domoic acid toxicity.

Should you encounter a marine mammal in distress, please keep your distance (at least 50 feet) and call Channel Islands Marine and Wildlife Institute's Hotline to report the animal and the situation: (805) 567-1505 or complete their rescue form.

Domoic acid is a potent neu-

rotoxin naturally produced in phytoplankton (tiny floating plants); sometimes referred to as "red tide."

Although the production of this neurotoxin occurs naturally, its extreme growth can be harmful. It threatens the health of marine mammals and seabirds and can affect humans through exposure via the food web. When wildlife consumes filter-feeding bivalves or fish that feed on the toxic algae, domoic acid transfers to larger marine creatures up the food web.

The clinical signs of domoic acid toxicity in wildlife can include

disorientation, agitation, head bobbing and weaving, swaying body, foaming at the mouth, bulging eyes, muscle spasms, seizures, inability to move out of the water, unresponsiveness, and potentially death.

Signs of acute domoic acid toxicity typically subside after 72 hours as the toxin is eliminated from the body through urine. Some marine mammals can return to the wild and survive.

~ From Santa Barbara ChannelKeeper

SIGHTINGS

Nukes, bikes, strides and such

By John Hankins

It's been hot this summer and not only the weather, but politics and issues of keeping open gas power plants, the oil industry elated over some regulatory success and the fights go on for doable renewables (see front page re: new wind power and June 2 notice below). Check out the stories and links below.

Please join our activities and activism; see **Group News** box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved or enjoy free hikes on page 6-7. We encourage all to go outside on your own or via our free hikes with leaders 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

July 25: **Diablo Nuclear** Power Plant issue to shut down or extend its life: CA Public Utilities Commission holds two virtual hearings. "The Sierra Club remains unequivocally opposed to nuclear energy . . . every dollar spent on nuclear is one less dollar spent on truly safe, affordable and renewable energy sources." Go here:

<https://tinyurl.com/NukeFreeSCLub>

July 25: **Goleta Moratorium** could end. That's according to the Goleta Water District, which informed the City Council that the moratorium on new water hookups may be revised, thanks to winter rains and backup sources that could end the drought. Developers are likely to take advantage of the possibility.

July 20: **Plastic Free** webinar: You didn't miss it because you can

check it after-the-fact via SB Community Environmental Council's website:

<https://cecsb.org/>

July 19: **Call to sign petition** not to allow the Ormond Beach power plant to be extended for another three years, past Dec. 2023. CA Energy Commission is voting on it Aug. 9 and State Water Board voting on Aug. 15. Keep apprised and sign the petition here:

<https://tinyurl.com/OrmondPetition>

<https://causenow.org/>

July 19: **Hot Springs Trailhead** issue is likely to go to the CA Supreme Court, according to three Montecito property owners who SB County believes deliberately placed barriers to parking alongside the road at the popular hiking site. Two lower courts agreed with the property owners to require an environmental impact report, but the Second Appellate District Court ruled on this day that the county has the right to remove the barriers.

July 12: **Rad Waste Alert:** "In an attempt to prevent radioactive waste from the contaminated Santa Susana Field Lab site near Simi Valley to be melted down and recycled in Ventura County for commercial metal use, or dumped in conventional landfills, three activist groups appealed lower court losses to the California Supreme Court," was the lead by Kit Stolz in the *Ojai Valley News*. Read about this dangerous issue here:

https://lnkd.in/gBW2U_Gc
<https://tinyurl.com/VtaNukeWaste>

July 10: **Chumash Casino** Resort received a hard-to-get 'TRUE' certification from Green Business Certification Inc. "As the original stewards of this land, our tribe remains committed to environmental sustainability," said Kenneth Kahn, tribal chair for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. An example: in 2021, the Resort diverted 93% of waste from the landfill, which included leftover food to those in need.

July 6: **Environmental Hub** grand opening by the SB Community Environmental Council. It's the Central Coast's first E-Hub and featured "Return of the Western Monarch Butterfly" exhibition. Designed to be an epicenter for education, activism and art at 1219 State St. See story on back page.

July 1: **End Dependence** on Fossil Fuels, a companion rally in Ventura to Santa Barbara's paddle-out June 29. Happened at the Orchard Drive bike path at 10am to tell Gov. Gavin Newsom we want No New Fossil Fuels. Join the action:

<https://lastchancealliance.org/>

EAVESDROP

"We have been invaded! Troops of foreign plants have marched across local hillsides, and this is the season when they probe the defenses of the gardens on our very doorsteps . . . Some unwitting collaborators serve as fifth columnists, aiding and abetting the invaders by planting invasive exotics in residential landscapes." ~ David Goldstein, in his *Ventura County Reporter* environment column. Read it here: <https://tinyurl.com/Weed-Battle>



Harry's Berries organic farm is an example of the farms in our chapter that use plant and soil biodiversity to help prevent pests and disease. See story on page 1 (Photo courtesy of the Bug Farm)

June 30: **Mt. Pinos Opens** many roads, trails and campsites in time for the busy Fourth of July weekend. Remaining closed are six roads/trails/campsite areas. For details go to:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf>

June 30: **Bike On:** Carpinteria's Santa Claus Lane Bikeway will be open for summer through Labor Day, then closed to complete construction on a permanent barrier rail.

June 28: **Great strides** for the 101-corridor project from SB to Carpinteria that will include car-pool lanes, electric buses, EV charging stations, bike connector routes in Montecito and Summerland and more, thanks to voter-approved SB1, noted the SB County Association of Governments which included an electric Ventura commuter bus. SB1 and Measure A tax has been a game-changer for transportation in SB County investing \$316 million into the U.S. 101 corridor. Lots more detail here:

<http://www.sbroads.com/>

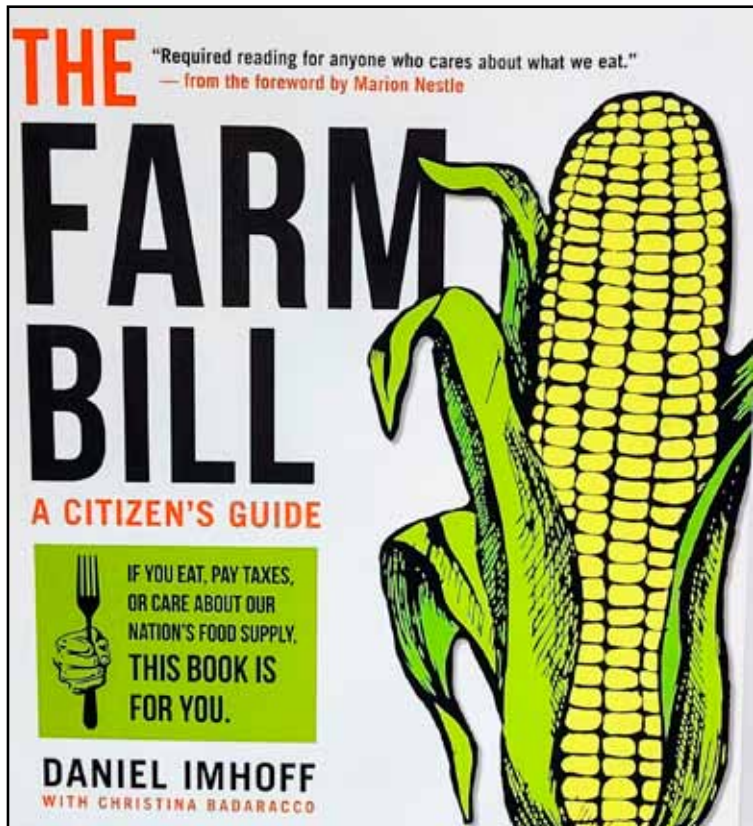
June 27: **Green Business** Program of SB County honored the Montecito Water District as an Innovator Green Business. It is actively recruiting businesses to get certified, offering free technical assistance, advertising and incentives to those who qualify. To apply, contact Kori Nielsen at:

knielsen@environmentalin.com

June 20: **Multi-use Goleta Path** along San Jose Creek from Hollister Ave. to Goleta Beach is expected to cost \$33 million + but Goleta City Council is determined to make it happen. A resolution would allow the city to use eminent domain to acquire certain segments, owned by CalTrans, SB County, the railroad and private parcels.

June 14: **We lost one**, but it may be appealed re the subject of Exxon's pipeline ownership permit amendment. At the SB County Planning Commission, Laura Capps' District 2 appointee to the commission, Laura Bridely, voted for Exxon, and we lost 3-1. Chair John Parke, appointed of

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The Farm Bill will be negotiated this fall in Congress. The Sierra Club Food and Agriculture Team is offering a free copy; if interested email Jan Dietrick jdietrick9@gmail.com

Condor Call

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

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Photos, news, tips always welcome!

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Typography and production by Dan Fuller



July 2: Eating Our Way to Extinction, a documentary film narrated by Kate Winslet with a town hall flavor. Watch the whole film here:

<https://youtu.be/LaPge01NQTQ>

Wind...

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ing an opportunity for the public to comment.

Exxon Drags On

Meanwhile, Sierra Club and partners are also intervening to defend Santa Barbara County from Exxon which is suing over the decision not to approve their plan to restart their offshore oil platforms, which were shut down since a 2015 oil spill and truck the oil over windy roads from Gaviota. They are still seeking ways to truck oil on our roads.

If that doesn't work, Exxon has also put forward an even more "diabolical plan" (as described by SFGATE) which is to restart the corroded and damaged pipeline and then finance the sale of their operation to a new company, Sable, that will limit Exxon's liability in the event of another spill.

On April 26, the SB County Planning Commission denied Exxon's request to do work on the old pipeline that would lead to restart. Exxon appealed and it will go to the SB Board of Supervisors on August

22. Ask our Supervisors to deny Exxon's project in an email:

sbcob@countyofsb.org

End Dependence on Gas

In July around Independence Day, groups across California gathered to demand that Gov. Newsom plug leaking oil wells, stop approving fossil fuel projects, and end neighborhood drilling next to homes and schools.

In Santa Barbara there was a paddle-out to offshore oil wells. A wide variety of organizations demanded that we end dependence on fossil fuels. Photos of the event were taken on the beach and from kayaks in the water. I spoke on behalf of the Sierra Club and provided some cautionary tales of oil companies and the pollution they leave behind.

In Ventura "chalktivists" shared the health and climate dangers of oil drilling and celebrated what our neighborhoods could look like without pollution.

Join the statewide movement here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ResistOil>

Sierra Club action link:

<https://tinyurl.com/NoToOilGas>

GREETING FRIENDS

Park day and Birthday

By Jim Hines

Greetings Friends:

August is National Park Month, what a great institution to celebrate. The National Park Service was officially created on August 25, 1916. I love being able to advocate and lobby for protection of America's national parks. I guess it is in my genes for my birthday is August 25th as well.

As far back as I can remember my parents and I would celebrate my birthday in one of America's great national park units.

I have so many memories like my first view of Grand Canyon Na-

tional Park, being amazed in Everglades National Park, marveling at the natural wonders of Denali National Park, being awed at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and feeling a sense of peace in Grand Teton National Park.

And right here in my own backyard we have Channel Islands National Park and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

While America's national parks are truly amazing and offer all of us a sense of wonder, great outdoor recreation, wildlife viewing and learning about our history (there are many national historical parks in the system),



Certainly, Yosemite is a prime candidate to celebrate August's National Park Month and our own local parks. This photo shows how Condor John 'commuted' from the campsite to Curry Village, Peet's Coffee and the club's Heritage Center where he volunteered for a week. (See feature on page 5)

EAVESDROPS

"Public lands need our support now. Submit a public comment today and help put conservation back in the conversation ..."

~ Pitch by Patagonia Action Works (and supported by Sierra Club) asserting, "For nearly 40 years, the Bureau of Land Management has prioritized resource extraction over conservation, recreation and wildlife." **GOP is fighting the change, so send comments here:**

<https://tinyurl.com/BLMbattle>

they are under more threats now than ever.

Threats from the impacts of climate change, threats from increased visitor use and the greatest threat of all, political threats. So many members of the House and Senate who I meet with are openly hostile to the National Park Service and YOUR national parks.

Several years ago for the first time in my life I had a member of congress tell me I was un-American for supporting the "federal land grab" of lands which make up our precious national parks.

I have had friends of who are park employees in such hostile-to-national-park states as Utah, Montana and Alaska tell me they have been verbally harassed and damage done to park vehicles.

Congressional members are seeking ways to defund national park units such as those which teach Americans about African American and native American history. In the upcoming months many of us will be busy not only visiting national parks but advocating before congressional members about the importance of all units of America's national park system for all Americans and we will be requesting full funding for America's national parks. This will be a challenge.

August 25th is an important date and I will celebrate advocating for our national parks.

Happy Birthday National Park Service and Happy Birthday to me.

Buckettrips

What destinations are on your bucket list?

Do you aspire to hike in the Dolomites of Northern Italy, backpack through Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks, go on safari in Africa, or see the abundant wildlife of remote Alaska?

Whatever you are dreaming of, the Sierra Club makes it easy by planning your trip and leading you along the way.

Give back to local communities on one of many volunteer vacations across the states, run through rushing rapids on a variety of raft trips, venture into stunning backcountry vistas on a rugged backpack trip, or join us for a cultural exploration in your choice of domestic and international destinations.

Sign up for your next adventure while there's still room!

In addition to our usual lineup, we've got a wide array of trips for adults under 50 on a budget, including backpack journeys, volunteer vacations, and more. Many are shorter in duration, timed to coincide with holidays, or easily accessible by plane or public transportation. Looking for something else?

If you're 18 to 35, you're eligible for \$300 off any of our all-ages trips. Space is limited, so don't delay!

Call now 415-977-5522 or visit us online to search for trips, learn about our volunteer leaders, or request your free catalog. See all of it here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2023SCLubTrips>

Adopt reach codes to continue climate

The city of Ventura's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) was tentatively approved on July 24, but because of a mountain of suggestions, it has been continued to Monday Sept. 11 and may include some revisions.

Meanwhile, our Ventura Sierra Club has been in the thick of it, and member Joe Connett (PE, MSCE, MSSM) has compiled a list that would improve upon it. In a letter to the council, he said "I carefully watched the CARP discussions during your recent meeting and want to express my admiration for the attention you paid to the critical issue at hand. I agree with the observations made, both by council members and speakers, that the CARP we saw, at best, serves as a starting point requiring additional work."

He urged the City to implement an "improved CARP, or if more prudent, supplementary documents that list the specific, measurable, and budgeted actions that the City will take now and, in the future, to address climate change."

He continued with suggestions: "As a Professional Engineer dedicated to mitigating climate change throughout my career as a civilian with the US Navy, I earnestly implore you to embrace Reach Codes. Please don't let us fall behind our sister cities across the state, who have taken proactive steps with Reach Codes to address the crisis."

"To move forward, I recommend the adoption of the following Reach Codes:"

~ All-Electric Building Code: Would mandate all new buildings to be all-electric, reducing emissions from fossil fuel usage for heating and cooking by eliminating gas service to new constructions.

~ Energy Efficiency Code: By

requiring new buildings to be designed with a strong focus on energy efficiency, we can significantly reduce energy demands for heating and cooling, effectively lowering emissions.

~ Low Carbon Materials: Encourage or mandate the use of low-carbon or carbon-neutral building materials.

~ Solar Panel Requirement: Embracing renewable energy, this code would make it mandatory for new buildings to be equipped with solar panels.

~ Water Efficiency Code: To ensure responsible use of water resources, this code promotes designs that prioritize water efficiency in new constructions.

~ Electric Vehicle Ready Code: Encouraging a greener future, this code ensures new buildings are pre-wired for electric vehicle charging, promoting the adoption of electric vehicles.

~ District Energy Code: Taking a holistic approach, this code focuses on reducing energy consumption and emissions at the district level, offering more efficient heating and cooling solutions, and integrating renewable energy sources.

Read our blog



Nukes & such...

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District 3 was the only no vote. This was a surprise break by Bridely, who had voted against Exxon in our 3-2 defeat of the Exxon trucking plan and the valve upgrade, in its attempts to restart Gaviota Coast offshore oil drilling.

June 11: **Green and Blue** yearly event for the Environmental Defense Center had more than 500 guests at Stowe House. It celebrated more than 45 years of environmental preservation and to honor its 2023 Environmental Hero, Patagonia, Inc. Highlight was an interview with Patagonia's CEO Ryan Gellert with UCSB professor Leah Stokes. Worth it to hear:

<https://tinyurl.com/EDCsInterview>

June 10: **World Ocean Day** at Harbor Cove beach Ventura, with a Sierra Club booth erected and staffed by Steve Colomé, Kent Bullard, Marie Martin and our Ventura Network Chair Julie Henszey. Shout-out to Sierra Club member Rocio Lozano-Knowlton whose Merito Foundation was a primary organization of this event. Learn more here:

www.meritofoundation.org

June 9: **Creekside property** acquired by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, in between its Confluence and San Antonio Creek preserves. The creek is the Ventura River's principal tributary. For more detail and to donate to the cause, go to:

<https://ovlc.org>

June 7: **Toxic pit** that was covered up in 1974 by Union Oil (Chevron subsidiary) and sold to Kevin Wright in 1985 where he unknowingly built his home has been awarded \$63 million by a Santa Barbara jury. Wright was diagnosed with multiple myeloma 30 years later; he is now in remission, but Chevron isn't, it intends to appeal the verdict.

June 5: **Offshore fracking** can't be done without an environmental analysis, according to last year's decision by the US Circuit Court

of Appeals. But the oil industry disagreed so it asked the Supreme Court to intervene which declined to even consider the lower court's ruling.

June 4: **Change the name** of Los Padres National Forest, an op-ed in SB's *Noozhawk* and repeated June 21 in *Edhat*. It corresponds to our own Chapter vice-chair Jim Hines who's been lobbying for the same thing for years and who was primarily responsible for our chapter changing its name from Los Padres Chapter to the Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter. Brian Sarvis writes that Los Padres Forest "is not the homeland of the Spanish padres and none of our missions are in the national forest." Instead, he opts for Condor National Forest, a name that would please Condor John.

June 2: **Battery storage** system by Gridstor is helping Santa Barbara's clean energy transition with cranes installing 44 emission-free batteries at the company's new 25,000-square foot facility on a 2.6-acre lot on Cortona Drive in Goleta. Once online, it will be the biggest in the County, capable of powering over 30,000 households.

June 2: **Disaster Declaration** by federal government for the February and March storms given to Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties, but not to Ventura County which is between the two.

June 1: **GHG Proposals** from the Ventura County Climate Emergency Council requesting that the Board of Supervisors create a policy to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from new and existing County-owned buildings and create a program to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing residential and nonresidential buildings.

May 31: **Fascinating webinar** on "How Science Can Help Protect Birds and Their Habitat" presented by Channel Islands Restoration. Available to view after-the-fact here:

<https://cirweb.org/>



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, noon to 1:30pm 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/SBGGroupBlog>

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

Climate Watch

OUR CLIMATE MOMENT
— FROM ACTS TO ACTION —

IRA TAX CREDITS FOR HOUSEHOLDS

Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, 30% of the cost of the following items can be deducted from your federal tax bill, subject to the limitations listed below. These tax credits apply to purchases made in 2023 through 2032.

PRODUCT	FEDERAL TAX CREDIT
CREDITS WITH NO CAP:	
HOME CLEAN ELECTRICITY PRODUCTS:	
Solar panels	30% of cost. NO CAP.
Fuel cells	30% of cost. NO CAP.
Wind Turbine	30% of cost. NO CAP.
Battery Storage (capacity of at least 3kWh)	30% of cost. NO CAP.
HEATING, COOLING, AND WATER HEATING:	
Geothermal heat pumps	30% of cost. NO CAP.
Solar (water heating)	30% of cost. NO CAP.
CREDITS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO \$2,000 CAP PER YEAR: (For the items below in GREEN, the combined credit cannot exceed \$2,000 per year.)	
Heat Pumps	30% of cost, up to a combined maximum of \$2,000 per year.
Heat Pump water heaters	30% of cost, up to a combined maximum of \$2,000 per year.
Biomass Stoves	30% of cost, up to a combined maximum of \$2,000 per year.
CREDITS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO A \$1,200 CAP PER YEAR: (For the items below in BLUE, the combined credit cannot exceed \$1,200 per year.)	
Efficient air conditioners	30% of cost, up to \$600.*
Efficient heating equipment	30% of cost, up to \$600.*
Efficient water heating equipment	30% of cost, up to \$600.*
OTHER ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES:	
Electric panel or circuit upgrades for new electric equipment (load capacity must be 200 amps or greater)	30% of cost, up to \$600.*
Insulation Materials	30% of cost.*
Windows, including skylights	30% of cost, up to \$600.*
Exterior Doors	30% of cost, up to \$250 each, with a maximum of \$500.*
Home Energy Audits	30% of cost, up to \$150.*
OTHER CREDITS: (limited to one-high income households)	
EV Tax Credits**	Up to \$7,500 (new); Up to \$4,000 (used)
Home Electric Vehicle Charger	30% of cost, up to \$1,000. IRS to publish details. Intended for residents in non-urban or low-income communities (pending further guidance from the IRS).

Table 1: Household IRA Tax Credits
Based on: https://www.energy.gov/eere/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-credits-2022. The webpage includes details how to claim the credit. Check your receipts and use IRS Form 5695. Make sure that your household will use enough federal income tax to cover the amount of the credit you plan to claim. Also note that the products you purchase must meet the tax credit's eligibility and product standards. Some of these requirements are listed in the FISC at the bottom of the webpage listed above. For instructions to learn about the current state of this information, please visit the website: https://www.irs.gov/efile/energy-efficiency-credits-2022. **For vehicle credits visit: https://www.irs.gov/efile/energy-efficiency-credits-2022. For more information visit: https://www.irs.gov/efile/energy-efficiency-credits-2022.

Past reporters blazed the way

By John Hankins

I have no enjoyment in hearing that the *Santa Barbara News-Press* has died via mismanagement and finally bankruptcy on July 21, I had only hoped that owner Wendy McCaw would sell it to professionals to carry on its amazing legacy of providing local coverage since 1868 (as the weekly *SB Post*).

BW (Before Wendy) it had a solid reputation and, indeed, became an excellent source of environmental news, a new topic in the 1960's.

The determined Dick Smith would disappear for days into the backcountry and suddenly appear with an in-depth feature about the forest that got little attention elsewhere. For his efforts, the Dick Smith Wilderness was named after

EAVESDROPS

"The whales are unionizing in the east, pythons are migrating north, and out west a sea otter is terrorizing surfers. I don't know about y'all, but if the monkeys start talking, I'm going off the grid. I've seen that movie, and it does not turn out well for us ..."

~ @LZGranderson writing in the *LA Times* headlined: *The Earth is mad. Just ask orcas and otters.* He cites an otter harassing surfers off Santa Cruz, an elephant stomping a woman to death at a funeral, huge Burmese pythons decimating wildlife in the Everglades and more antics by animals.

him.

Then there was Robert Sollen, who was first to report on the 1969 oil spill from Platform A in the Santa Barbara Channel, eventually writing the best book about it entitled *An Ocean of Oil: A Century of Political Struggle over Petroleum Off the California Coast*. Sollen and his wife Tomika were proud Sierra Club members and for their efforts they were honored by us, the Environmental Defense Center, and Community Environmental Council.

When Sollen retired in 1985, he was invited to create an environmental journalism course in the UCSB Environmental Studies Program.

The *News-Press* called me up Before Wendy when I was let go from a Goleta daily taken over by the *Ventura County Star* which wanted its own reporters and editors, but it went defunct. The *News-Press* was a great place to work, and I focused on environmental issues and was still able to publish the *Condor Call*.

"Before she (Wendy McCaw) got there and began to destroy it, it was the best place I ever worked, and I'm forever grateful for what I learned and created there," said Starshine Roshell who went on to write for the *Independent*. Her comment was perfect: "It's simply the inevitable period at the end of an artless, run-on sentence."

I left the *News-Press* BW to buy what I called the *County News Service* (and creating a companion news clipping service), which cov-

ered a dozen newspapers across the Tri-Counties, and still put out the *Condor Call*!

Brandi Rivera, publisher of the *Independent*, wrote: "No matter your perspective, the death of the *Santa Barbara News-Press* is a tragedy — a tragedy for a community that once supported and relied on the printed daily paper as a source of information. It is also a tragedy for democracy, which depends on the free flow of ideas provided by honest news organizations."

Taking up the slack now is *Independent.com*, an on-line and social media outlet that creates stories beyond the weekly printed edition. Others include *SB Voice*, *Montecito Journal* and two internet news outlets, *Noozhawk* and *Edhat*.

The daily *Ventura County Star* still exists in print and online. Recently, the *Ojai Valley News* began expanding its coverage to Ventura and Oxnard on its website, offering news beyond Ojai but not in its print edition.

When the "News-Press Mess" happened in 2006 after McCaw's lapses of journalistic ethics, many employees quit in protest, fostering drawn-out legal problems and it's likely the millions she owes them will never be seen.

This article is not about that, but about how reporting is essential to inform us all.

All that needs to be said is the Columbia School of Journalism now uses the News-Press Mess on what not to do in the profession.

River has friends

By Jim Hines

Welcome to the Ventura River Parkway, a 17-mile National Park Service designated national recreation trail (one of only two national recreation trails in Ventura County). The trail is used by walkers and bicyclists is paved and runs from the Pacific Ocean in Ventura to downtown Ojai.

The Sierra Club has had a long involvement in protecting the Ventura River and its Watershed since our initial lawsuit 25 years ago to remove stream crossings which impeded fish passage in the Upper Ventura river basin within the Los Padres National Forest.

The Sierra Club now works with Friends of the Ventura River which is governed by the 7-member Board of Ventura Citizens for Hillside Preservation (VCHP). I represent the Sierra Club on the board.

Land restoration projects along the Ventura River and in the Watershed are managed by two local land trusts. The river from Foster County Park to the Pacific Ocean is being restored by the Ventura Land Trust and Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is doing the same from Foster County Park to the National Forest.

Sierra Club is also part of the Matilija Coalition led by Surfrider Foundation whose major goal is the removal of the deadbeat Matilija Dam which should come down in 2035. Learn more at Surfrider's website here: www.sbck.org/our-work/advocacy/ventura-river/

The dam constructed in the 1920s is silted up and no longer functions and impedes fish passage in Matilija Creek, a major tributary to the Ventura River. The Sierra Club is lobbying congress to have lower Matilija Creek designated as a national wild and scenic river in our congressional legislation via the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act.

"When Matilija Dam comes down, those resident rainbow trout that

are up there now will slowly start to show that anadromous, steelhead life-history," said Scott Lewis, fisheries biologist with Casitas Municipal Water District, which operates the Robles Fish Passage Facility on the Ventura River. That quote is from Perry Van Houten's article in *The Steelhead Story*, written in 2021 in Ojai Magazine, available online.

The Sierra Club has regular meetings with the CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife staff supporting proposed state endangered species act protections for steelhead trout in southern California rivers, creeks and streams, which would protect critical fish habitat in the Ventura River, among others. My father would often speak of steelhead trout swimming upstream in the Ventura River to spawn and you could not see the bottom of the river because there were so many fish.

Recently the Sierra Club supported a successful request by the city of Ventura for a CalTrans grant of \$5 million to re-pave, plant trees and install other amenities along the city of Ventura portion of the parkway.

At Friends of the Ventura River, we are paying \$5,000 for new interpretive signage for the parkway in the city of Ventura and are working with the local designer of the project Pacific Coast Land Design on wording and photos for the signage which should be installed this Fall.

We have also met with CalTrans staff who are designing a new on/off ramp interchange on Highway 33 at Stanley Avenue in west Ventura. We are requesting a pedestrian overpass over the 33 freeway so that residents of west Ventura can safely access the Ventura River.

To keep apprised of events, register for project updates: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/fyh7ylu>

The Ventura River is an important part of the Sierra Club Wild Ventura County campaign.



The Ventura River flows past Big Rock, a part of the Ventura Land Trust's holdings. It's a good place to see fish, coots or simply watch the river go by. The January storms washed out plantings at Big Rock and volunteers are needed. Contact the trust at: Volunteer Opportunities - Ventura Land Trust

New media for area

Ventura County Sun

To shore up gaps in professional news reporting in Ventura, Oxnard and Port Hueneme, the *Ojai Valley News* has begun expanding its reporting as the *Ventura County Sun* - a digital news outlet serving west Ventura County.

This umbrella brand will grow with the OVN to expand its coverage area tenfold, providing area specific reporting content with a unique brand. A home page for *Ventura County Sun* is within the OVN's website, (VCSUN) on the main menu.)

You can access it at www.vc-sun.news, Instagram @vcsun.news and Twitter (X) @vcsun.news.

"We have the infrastructure, experience and business plan to provide excellent news coverage to an area of 300,000 people," according to publisher/owner Laura Rearwin Ward. Funds for reporting staff to cover these cities are needed to enable this kind of expansion.

For those living in Ventura or Oxnard and not interested as much in Ojai news, going to www.vcsun.news will land them on a page with its own identity, with news curated more to their area," Ward said.

Recent articles included "How California and U.S. taxpayer money will cover the cost of properly abandoning tens of thousands of orphaned oil and gas wells in California," "Nearly 100,000 property owners sued, must defend water rights," and "Comment period ending on federal plan to protect forest and grasslands."

<https://www.ojaivalleynews.com/vcsun/>

Animal ways

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on a proposed ordinance that would establish setbacks from 16 wildlife crossing structures in the northern portion of Ventura County.

The meeting will occur on Sept. 12, and the ordinance would require setbacks if landowners wanted certain development to occur.

The proposed ordinance follows a habitat passed by the Board of Supervisors in March 2019. It was sued by the Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (CoLAB) as a “land grab” that year but upheld in court in 2022. However, CoLAB has appealed, and a judgement awaits a trial.

According to the County’s Resource Management Dept. “A common misunderstanding about the Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor Ordinance is that it prohibits people from developing their property. This is not the case. Landowners can develop new homes, conduct agricultural and other industrial activities, build additions to existing homes and accessory structures. However, some new regulations apply.”

Those exemptions, maps and more are at:

<https://tinyurl.com/VtaCorridors>

CIR service

Explore our great outdoors, camp with friends, and help restore the environment when you join fall camping-conservation trips with Channel Islands Restoration.

These free multi-day excursions are located within the Los Padres National Forest and involve an exploration of the Santa Barbara backcountry to remove non-native Tamarisk plants that are damaging sensitive watersheds.

Dates include Sept. 5-9, Oct. 5-9, Nov. 16-20.

With food and gear support from the Los Padres Outfitters, you’ll traverse stunning terrain with friends while getting the opportunity to discover a rare area of untouched wilderness.

If you’d like to support our mission but are unable to commit to a multi-day conservation trip, consider sponsoring a trip through an in-kind or subsidized contribution.

Get more information and register at:

<https://cirweb.org/fall-2023-camping-trips>

VOLUNTEERING

Welcome to Sierra Club’s home in Yosemite

Editor’s note, comments in parentheses () are taken from the Yosemite Daily Report email for staff and volunteers.

By John Hankins

“Welcome to Sierra Club’s home in Yosemite.”

That was often our greeting as valley visitors came curiously into the Yosemite Conservation Heritage Center.

I was there as a volunteer the first week of June (“the waters are raging . . .”) representing the club at its iconic home, built in Curry Village in 1903. There were three other volunteers on our half-day shifts: Deanna, Lisa and Randy all corralled by Curator Connor McIntosh.

It started with a press release for club members to the *Condor Call*: “Volunteers needed in Yosemite Valley 2023,” free entry, free camping and two days off (“anticipate construction activity . . .”).

As I formatted it for our printer, I heard the call of the wild over the clack of my keyboard: “The mountains are calling, and I should go,” John Muir wrote.

I should and did and you too can volunteer in Yosemite or other National Parks (see below).

The home was the first permanent visitor center in Yosemite Valley; the first structure? A chapel, no doubt for the “thank god we’re

here” exhilaration. It was originally built with Merced River stone and redwood from outside the park.

You learn a lot from inside the building and you can’t help but look up – the architect’s vision of the mountains. You’ll also find the history of the club and Yosemite via storyboards, including member Rachel Carson of “*Silent Spring*” fame and the President Roosevelt visit with John Muir that led to Yosemite as a National Park. Books about climbing and conservation and iconic photos in front of a hefty fireplace are yours to browse. Kids can create a drawing, sign it and it goes into a yearly date folder so they can always find it as they grow up and return.

Volunteers have time off. One day all four of us trekked up to Mariposa Grove at 6,000 feet (“Fire crews will be burning piles . . .”) where I rested my feet. We met a deer, then fawns peeked out and we just enjoyed them at full silent stop. Other times we’d go anywhere on our own or in pairs.

The center also has talks and events in the evening. We had a special show about the first female smokejumper (our volunteer, Deanna) and detailed photos of responders with her in the thick of it. The audience was amazed at the risks they had to take carrying



On our way down from 6,000 feet to the Mariposa Grove, we were welcomed by a deer, then her fawns appeared peeking through leaves. Sensing no peril, they went on their way. (Photo by Condor John)

heavyweight packs, especially on a smaller Deanna. She was a trail-blazer, earning the respect of a usually male team.

Volunteers come from many walks of life: Lisa a teacher, Randy a nurse, Smokejumper Deanna and Condor John a writer.

A large part of volunteering was meeting the public (“thunderstorms may occur . . .”) some of whom came in from the rain or the cold.

Many said, “it’s the first time I’ve been here.” We’d have a dialogue and answer questions (the bathroom is across the road . . .). They come from all over the nation and foreign countries.

Long-time visitors especially had tales well told. One had family ties to Yosemite’s Postmaster of 30 years whose family members still reside here. Another mentioned the fishing skills of the indigenous peoples.

The most fun became Joe Gutierrez, eager to tell us about a song he wrote and recorded about Yosemite entitled: *Ahwahnee*. After he sent it to us, we all gathered around and were blown away (“gusts to around 40 mph . . .”). His response?

“That this song brought you joy brings ME so much joy! I now know we are kin . . . made my eyes well up . . . you made my day, my week, my month...oh heck, you

made my whole dang year!” And he’ll be back Oct. 7; here’s the song:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIwnwSf2iFE>

Volunteers at Sierra Club’s Heritage home must be members; there may even be slots for members left through September, or for next year; contact Curator Connor at:

connor.mcintosh@sierraclub.org

Membership not required at Yosemite Conservation:

<https://yosemite.org/experience/volunteer/>

Or for any federal gig at www.volunteer.gov

This was Connor’s first year at Heritage with over a decade’s worth of work in environmental and outdoor education; on the ground too, completing both the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails. She also biked 2,000 miles across the US and got married along the way!

Connor replaced the legendary curator for the last 22 years, Dr. Bonnie Gisel. Learn more about how the Sierra Club was instrumental in making Yosemite a National Park here:

<https://tinyurl.com/MuirYosemite>



Volunteers at Yosemite Conservation Heritage Center the first week of June are from left: Condor John, Deanne, Curator Connor McIntosh, Lisa and Randy. (Photo by a tourist)

Popular Hot Springs trail closure can be prevented

By Mark Wilkinson

Editor’s note: Mark is the Executive Director of the Trails Council You may reach him at: mwilkinson@sbtrails.org

It’s come to my attention that another trail may be closed to the public for an extended time.

With all the fire and weather events impacting our trails—and many still in the queue to be repaired from our spring rains—it is hard to imagine a popular and historic front-country pathway being closed to the public for an unknown number of months

And unlike fire and weather events that are out of our control, this trail closure can be prevented.

I recently attended the monthly County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee meeting, a local institution that has been meeting for over 40 years and is more widely known by its acronym: CRAHTAC. It is a standing committee appointed by the SB County Board of Supervisors to advocate for recreational trails and advise on recreational trail issues.

CRAHTAC is typically composed of 3-4 members from each supervisorial district. One of its re-

sponsibilities is reviewing projects affecting trails, proposing trail conditions and mitigation measures.

One of the topics that caught my attention at the meeting was a brief discussion about the proposed Goerner residential development project in Montecito. I asked the SB County Planning staff to provide the environmental documents, because I believe any change in the area can potentially cause severe impacts to a scenic section of the Hot Springs Trail.

I learned that the proposed development would pave over several hundred feet of a picturesque trail segment, converting this natural dirt trail into a wide paved road or driveway and forcing hikers to walk along a newly paved road.

I later learned that it is in the planning phase, and not ready for public review.

I have long enjoyed hiking to the Hot Springs, and the change caused by the Thomas Fire was enough for one lifetime. I am concerned that the proposed transformation will urbanize a scenic riparian pathway if the final plans include a wide paved road, a bridge across the creek, and retaining walls to shore

up the road. It does not take much imagination to realize that a new wide paved access road will damage or take out many mature sycamore and oak trees along the trail, forever changing the aesthetic character of a section of the historic trail.

It is unknown whether the Hot Springs Trail’s high usage and popularity are enough to rule out closure during a six to twelve-month construction cycle. We already suffer from recent trail closures due to heavy rainfall, natural disasters, and other construction projects. Trails are well-established infrastructure, and closing the Hot Springs Trail for a residential construction project would seriously disrupt a cherished community recreational resource.

After a decade of working with the Santa Barbara County Trails Council, I have learned that it is hazardous not to monitor projects early on and before the general public knows the pending impacts. Fortunately, several community trail organizations are also monitoring the project and have requested notice of the upcoming environmental document, which will attempt to address these concerns.

If you want to monitor develop-

ment in the Hot Springs Trail corridor, here are a few options.

On Aug. 14 at 2pm at 1 Lake Cachuma Drive Clubhouse at 1 Lake Cachuma Drive CRAHTAC will consider this topic. You can also attend the meeting via Zoom.

Contact Eva Camarena at ecamarena@countyofsb.org to request a copy of the CRAHTAC meeting agenda. For those interested in reviewing the planned environmental document, you can call the Planning

Department at (805) 568-2000 to request notification of the release of the pending Goerner Project environmental document.

Lately, I have been humming a Joni Mitchel tune made famous 50 years ago as a call to action to prevent the damage we are doing to the environment. The song reminds us that we need to be careful not to take things for granted and to find a way to balance progress with preserving nature.



Hot Springs Trail “Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone . . .” (Photo by Mark Wilkinson)



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.LPForest.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>



Sierra Club's free hikes bring you to places you might not know and connect you with other like-minded people while enjoying nature. Here, a group is heading for the Gaviota Caves, led by Robert Bernstein, who also took the photo. Join our free outings below.

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

Most of the many free Sierra Club Outings are usually listed here for a two-month period. However, we have found 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: www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com

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) www.HikeLosPadres.com

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

www.ovlc.org/trailfinder

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

<https://tinyurl.com/NearUsGuide>

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/>

Judge allows forest plan

The Reyes Peak (aka Pine Mountain) Forest Health Project on Los Padres National Forest's Ojai and Mt. Pinos Ranger Districts was cleared to proceed on July 19 after U.S. District Court Judge John Walter ruled against lawsuits brought by Los Padres ForestWatch and other parties.

The court affirmed that the proposed thinning and fuels reduction work is consistent with law and Forest Service regulation and issued a decision in favor of the Forest.

"We are in a wildfire crisis and must take immediate action to protect our forests in Southern California," said Los Padres Forest Supervisor Chris Stubbs. "Let me be clear

— this is not a commercial logging project. We are trying to save the remaining trees on Reyes Peak from the devastating effects of a stand-replacing wildfire."

To the contrary "We believe this ruling is incorrect and are working with our legal team to determine next steps," said Jeff Kuyper, Executive Director of Los Padres ForestWatch. "We will explore all of our options for protecting Pine Mountain from a misguided and potentially damaging project."

ForestWatch notes that "the ruling comes nearly two years after the project was approved despite the opposition of Indigenous groups, conservation organizations, scientists,

businesses, local governments, and members of the public who submitted a collective 16,000 comments (claiming 'over 99% of the comments opposed the project') to the Forest Service."

Other plaintiffs include Keep Sespe Wild Committee, Earth Island Institute, and American Alpine Club, collectively represented by the Environmental Defense Center and the Center for Biological Diversity, which also represented CA Chaparral Institute, and Patagonia Works.

According to the Los Padres Forest Service, its plan will protect an area that is at risk due to overstocking and the devastating impacts of disease and insect infestation over the next 15 years. The primary goal of the project is to reduce tree densities and promote forest resilience to insects and disease, persistent drought, and wildfire.

To address these threats, professional Forest managers will selectively thin specific areas across 755 acres that extend along Pine Mountain between state Highway 33 and Reyes Peak in Ventura County.

A more detailed list of pros and cons are on the respective websites: www.fs.usda.gov/main/lpnf <https://lpfw.org/>

For those who want to read the project's details: <https://tinyurl.com/LPForestproject>



View from Tumamait Trail in the Chumash Wilderness, which is set for the Sept. 21 Trail Talks at the SB Library, and for the Pine Mountain-San Rafael Wilderness on Aug. 17. Read page 7 for details (Photo by James Wapotich).

EVENTS

Aug 17: "Sinkable: The Mysterious World of Shipwrecks and the Titanic" with author Daniel Stone. At Santa Barbara Maritime Museum, 7pm. Details at: <https://sbmm.org/>

Aug. 19: **Honeybee Day** 11am – 2pm at The Agriculture Museum in Santa Paula, 926 Railroad Ave. Family-friendly event offers an interactive bee demo, beeswax products, tasting, crafts, pollinator info and more.

Aug 26: **Wild & Scenic** film festival from 5-10pm, an annual affair for the Ventura Land Trust featuring exciting and important films that inspire environmental activism and love for nature. Shown outdoors on the expansive lawn of Ventura County Credit Union, 2575 Vista Del Mar Drive. A must-see event here: www.venturalandtrust.org/events

Sept 8: **TGIF series** with Environmental Defense Center on this date and Oct. 13 from 5:30-7:30pm. A couple hundred guests will fill its courtyard for live music, beverages, and local food vendors. Each event highlights non-profit sponsors. Details here: www.environmentaldefensecenter.org

Sept 10: **Paddle Out Party** hosted by SB Maritime Museum, a celebration of the connections we all share with our oceans and the underwater world, 9am- 1pm at Leadbetter Beach. Details here: <https://tinyurl.com/LedbetterPaddle>

Sept 15: **Under the Open Sky** is a locally sourced farm-to-table dinner and a collection of films for the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy at the Ventura River Steelhead Preserve. Details at: <https://ovlc.org>

Sept 16: **Mountain Film** on tour, a selection of adventures and storytelling from the Telluride Festival. It's a fundraiser for the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy at Ojai Valley School, 723 El Paseo Rd. Ojai. Festivities, food, fun start at 5pm, films at 7:15pm. Details and fix at: <https://ovlc.org>

Oct 6-8, 14: **Nature Track** Film Festival, now in its 5th year, featuring Wild Waters documentary about a female kayaker and much more. Venues include Fairview Theater and an opening night affair Oct. 6 at the Bacara. All details are here: <https://naturetrackfilmfestival.org>

EAVESDROPS

"I came to the Sierra Club to do big things. And right now, our planet is crying out for bigger changes from all of us."

~ Sierra Club's new Director Ben Jealous, asking everyone to chip in to fight, noting "House Republicans just released a flurry of legislation that would bind our nation to dated, toxic fossil fuels." Chip in here: <https://tinyurl.com/FundOur-Work>

HINES CHRONICLES

Facing reality with MAGA

Editor's note: We continue with the Jim Hines Chronicles, which reflect the emails by our premier lobbyist on the ins and outs of environmental activism and its opponents. This covers the last two months (June-July). Jim is our Chapter and Ventura Network vice-chair and a conservation leader who belongs to many wildlife groups and is available as a speaker.

By Jim Hines

July 26: **Underwater cities** inundated from sea level rise in 2050 include those in our chapter areas of Isla Vista, city of Carpinteria and Pt Mugu Naval Base. Data from *The Hill*, complete with an interactive map. Check it out here:

<https://tinyurl.com/AreasFlooded2050>

July 25: **At my weekly phone** meeting with a senior staffer of Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), I voiced my concerns over his policies regarding national forest management. Manchin opposes new Biden Administration rules which consider the impact of climate change on national forests and seeks to reduce manmade and mechanical methods to manage our national forest lands and instead allow natural processes to occur.

Our Los Padres National Forest is planning massive forest thinning and brushing projects which I believe would destroy much of the natural vegetation which controls erosion, protects the life-giving community watersheds and critical habitat for endangered species.

July 20: **After years of chasing** famed U2 rock guitarist David Evan (aka The Edge) from coastal commission meetings and then finally our successful lawsuit in Los Angeles court, Edge has now indicated that he will consider selling the property to the state. We urge the Governor to use voter approved state conservation bonds monies to acquire the massive 450 acre "Leaves in the Wind" property above Malibu Lagoon.

July 14: **Breaking News** . . . House Republicans have just approved their version of the budget for the Dept of the Interior, and it includes a 35% cut in funding, including cuts to America's national parks. Increased

oil and gas drilling on public lands in ocean waters are possible. There is also language prohibiting the flying of any native American flags or symbols on federal lands.

July 13: **The FBI budget** is on the chopping block for several political reasons and oil companies and toxic waste companies see an opening with friendly members of Congress willing to cut out environment investigations. I have a meeting next week with an FBI environmental investigator to learn more.

July 13: **I am sure** all of you have heard about the news this past Monday giving approval allowing the oil industry in Ventura county vast new policies in the county general plan to continue to drill, flare and haul oil by trucks through our county. I took part in the Western Oil and Gas Association-Ventura County discussion yesterday and I can tell you the oil industry is elated by the court action on Monday. The county Board of Supervisors which is pro-oil industry by its 3-2 votes scheduled adoption of the court action into the county general plan for Tuesday July 25.

June 29: **Mountain Lions Forever** campaign is rolling along this week by working with our Sierra Club California office staff to gain state legislative support for AB 1322 (Friedman) which would limit the sale and use of the deadly rodenticide Dopaquinone. Also meeting with staff of CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife regarding upcoming state endangered species act protection for mountain lions and their habitats.

Great success here, but not so good elsewhere. In July I will meet with staff of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, where, sadly, lion killing is a state sport. You only must be 12 years old, get a license for a hunting season 365 days a year.

June 19: **Why do I meet** with so many appointed and elected officials who oppose environmental protections . . . our adversaries in the world of environmental protection? The Biden Administration has been lukewarm in environmental protection, so I still meet with various officials to remind them that

they pledged but have not followed up on environmental protections.

While it is important to meet with our elected friends, the political world I live and work in is mostly dominated by those who oppose protection of the environment. Case in point: The 3-2 majority of the Ventura Board of Supervisors are no friends of the environment, so I must face that reality and still meet with MAGA elected officials here. I also come to their offices to build a rapport with their staff and that always works. It is important for me to meet with friends and foes in my efforts to protect all that is wild.

June 18: **For the first time** I have been invited to speak to a law enforcement organization in Ventura County. Usually, law enforcement is not friendly to the environment with such actions as endorsing candidates of that mindset. This will be interesting as I venture into this new world.

June 17: **It was a beautiful** late Spring day as people gathered to celebrate a lost heritage: Confederate flags were flying as speakers spoke of the return of the good ole days and a new future to come. What a day it is to be in rural Alabama!

But I wasn't in Alabama, I was in rural Somis in Ventura County. I attended part of the patriotic celebration of a local MAGA coalition as they spoke about the upcoming 2024 elections. This was held after the federal indictments of Donald Trump, and his people were super charged up.

So, the rest of this beautiful weekend I will spend in my beautiful gardens in all their blooming glory . . . recharging myself for a challenging week ahead for campaigns to Protect Wildlife and Wild Places.

June 12: **Count the votes** . . . well not quite yet; instead count the money. With new laws which allow unlimited monies to flow into Ventura county campaign war chests, we are already seeing the spigots turned wide open. Brace yourself.

June 5: **OK. I got the** microgrid funding request figured out: Does our chapter support this grant request? Responses: Yes. Request for \$1,000 was by FoodShare of Ventura sent to U.S. Senators Feinstein and Padilla.

Trail Talks MT Pinos, San Rafael Wilderness

Santa Barbara Public Library is hosting two free presentations on our local backcountry in August and September as part of its *Trail Talks* series, held in the Faulkner Gallery. They are:

Thursday, Aug. 17, 6:30pm

The Natural and Political History of the San Rafael Wilderness with Jeff Kuyper and Bryant Baker.

San Rafael Wilderness was established in 1968, the first of its kind in the region. Home to the Hurricane Deck, Big Pine Mountain, and the Sisquoc River, the San Rafael Wilderness is both ecologically and geographically diverse.

Since 1968 it has become a premier destination for hikers and equestrians looking to explore the remote backcountry. Learn from local public land experts from Los Padres ForestWatch: Jeff Kuyper, executive director and Bryant Baker, Director of Conservation and Research. They'll present the unique flora, fauna, and geology of this remarkable area and the political road to its designation.

Thursday, Sept. 21, 6:30pm

Exploring Mount Pinos and the Chumash Wilderness with James Wapotich

With an elevation of 8,847 feet, Mount Pinos is the highest mountain in our local area, and is the easternmost summit in a series of four mountains. Created in 1992, the surrounding Chumash Wilderness encompasses 38,150 acres.

At the lower elevations on San Emigdio Mesa and the surrounding Cuyama Badlands is pinyon-juniper woodland, that transitions to mixed conifers at the higher elevations, giving the mountains a distinctly Sky Island feel. Snow-covered in the winter, these mountains provide year-round recreation opportunities.

Join local author James Wapotich as he provides an overview of the natural history of this unique area, and shares images and stories about its hiking, backpacking, and camping opportunities.

James is a trail guide, Volunteer Wilderness Ranger with Los Padres National Forest, and author of a hiking column, *Trail Quest*. He also leads classes on backpacking and wilderness skills.



A perfect collaboration between our Sierra Club and the EV Advocates of SB-Ventura with Kent Bullard receiving guests and freely offering hands-on information on solar and EVs at the July 4 event in Ventura. Bullard is our chapter's Transportation Chair and helps manage the Advocates. (Photo by Condor John)

EV events on your mark

By Kent Bullard

Upcoming Electric Vehicle events are charged up for the next few months and car owners are urged to participate along with anyone who wants to know about EVs from the drivers. Please put them on your calendar.

All of these are joint efforts by the Sierra Club and EV Advocates of Ventura County, except the club is not involved in the Port Hueneme banana fest.

Aug. 19 & 20, Wings over Camarillo

We will have an educational booth and two showcase vehicles at the STEM Pavilion. We need to have two cars each day and volunteers to staff the booth. You will be able to attend the airshow as a side benefit of volunteering.

Register to attend or volunteer with our booth: <https://driveelectricweek.org/3946> <https://wingsovercamarillo.com>

Sept. 22, Santa Maria

A great community event downtown from 5:30 – 8:30pm, partnering with SB APCD, the C5 Clean Cities Program, Sierra Club and the Community Environmental Council. We need a

couple of volunteers and vehicles to go north to spread the word.

Register to attend or volunteer with our booth:

<https://driveelectricweek.org/3938> <https://www.dfsantamaria.com>

Sept. 30 Port Hueneme

We will have an educational booth and some vehicles at this Banana Festival, 10am to 6pm.

In addition to volunteering, you will be able to taste a variety of banana treats and learn about how the port is electrifying their operations. Please sign up to represent us with your vehicle and or to provide booth staffing: <https://driveelectricweek.org/3936> <https://bananaportfest.com>

Oct. 1: Ventura Harbor

This is our annual big show, celebrating National Drive Electric Week. This Sunday show was wonderful last year for our first time at Ventura Harbor. We already have 15 vehicles and 67 people signed up. But the more the merrier, so register now to attend and/or volunteer to make this event even better than last year's, if that's possible!

<https://driveelectricweek.org/3582>

Let's get wild and scenic

Ventura Land Trust's annual benefit, the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, returns on Saturday, Aug. 26th to the expansive lawn of the Ventura County Credit Union headquarters.

Now in its 14th year, the film festival features nearly two hours of environmental and activism films along with music, food trucks, and local beer, wine and spirits.

Beyond being the Trust's signature event to raise funds for the environment, it shares an urgent call to action, encouraging participants to learn more about what they can do to save our threatened planet.

A family-friendly event, participants are encouraged to spread out on the Ventura County Credit Union lawn (2575 Vista Del Mar Drive, Ventura) with chairs and blankets.

Doors open at 5 pm, and films begin just before 8 pm as the sky darkens. Tickets and details, including sponsorship opportunities, are available here: <http://www.venturalandtrust.org/wsf2023>

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, Ventura Land Trust has permanently conserved over 3,800 acres of land in the Ventura region, including the 2,100-acre Harmon Canyon Preserve and Mariano Rancho, 1,645 acres sprawling across the hills north of

Ventura.

"We're excited to celebrate this milestone at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival," said Ventura Land Trust Executive Director Melissa Baffa. "The event raises funds that are crucial to our operations and stewardship of the lands in our care."

"In honor of our 20th anniversary, we encourage people to donate an extra \$20 this year or to become sustaining donors at \$20 a month. Funds will help to carry Trust into its next 20 years."

Live reggae music from Jacob Marquez and the Good Vibes will kick

off the festivities. An online silent auction will complement the event's traditional onsite raffle. In the Ventura Vibe VIP Lounge, small bites from Aloha Steakhouse, Ubatuba Açaí, and others will be paired with wine, beer, and a signature cocktail by Ventura Spirits.

Find more information about vendors, sponsors, and films program via the ticket link above. A general admission ticket is \$40, \$5 children and \$10 for teens (13-17). VIP tickets, which include special gift items and admission to the Ventura Vibe VIP Lounge, are \$125.

SIERRA CLUB

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Enthusiasm reigns at CEC's Climate Hub

The Community Environmental Council's Climate Hub that opened July 6 marks over 50 years of environmental action that was sparked by the 1969 Platform A blowout in the SB Channel.

It's a physical representation at Santa Barbara's downtown (1219 State St.) of how a community can come together for a cleaner future, spawning not only CEC but the Environmental Defense Center, Get Oil Out! and Earth Day. Our SB-Ventura Sierra Club was active starting in the 1950s and has shifted focus with the times in concert with them.

"It's a monument, a trophy for us all," said Oscar Gutierrez, city council member. Executive Director since 2015, Sigrid Wright believes the Hub "will be on the front line of Climate Change" in Santa Barbara, Ventura and beyond.

Change often happens locally, Wright believes, and the Hub will provide a nexus of commu-

nity involvement that runs from day-to-day workspaces, video showing and production, meetings, celebrations, brainstorming and more. To check out all details, go to:

www.envirohubsb.org

Its inaugural installation during the opening and in place through August is Elizabeth Weber's "Return of the Western Monarch Butterfly: A Photographic Exhibit and Scientific Roadmap for Protecting this Endangered Species." A panel on Aug. 9, at 6pm is set to learn how you can help protect the species.

Another event is a screening and panel featuring Holly Becker's documentary film, "Earth Scientist" on Thursday, Aug. 24 from 6:30-8:30pm.

CEC became a non-profit on April 18, 1970, just over a year since the oil blowout. Many of the founders have passed away but their legacy certainly lives on.

In 1970, it was a pioneer



Opening of the CEC Climate Hub brought hundreds of people to celebrate this important event across the street from the Granada Building, including Sierra Club Chapter Chair Katie Davis and our ED Jon Ullman, among others, with Debbie Kort providing the welcoming smile. (Photo by Condor John)

in the fledgling environmental movement and focused on practical ideas such as recycling centers, hazardous waste and education. About 15 years ago it shifted its focus to threats of climate change and the Hub reflects that.

The 10,000 feet of Hub space was fully designed with cutting edge technology and recyclable materials to be a zero net energy building. Welcoming all is a Ficus tree planted indoors that not only brings a living touch of nature, but also absorbs carbon.

Hundreds of people attended the opening, with a ribbon cutting by the Mayor and speakers welcoming all to come use the facility. In sum "it's definitely the realization of a dream," Wright said, notably because of its very visible location and welcoming

the community with new ideas and solutions.

The potential of such a Hub is timely because we are still beholden to fossil fuels, pesticides, plastics, air pollution and polluted water here, there and everywhere.

EAVESDROPS

"Sierra Club is the most enduring and influential grassroots environmental organization in the U.S. We amplify the power of our members and supporters to defend everyone's right to a healthy world."

~ Join us now to strengthen our voices locally and nationally. Go to:

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



The Climate Hub has a Ficus tree as you walk in, not only to connect with nature but also to absorb carbon. (Photo by Sarita Relis Photography via CEC)