

WORDS OF *the* WILD

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Newsletter of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee

Comment on Trump Public Lands Review by Aug. 14

-- by Jackie Feinberg

In June the Department of the Interior began a sweeping "review" of the policies that have long helped ensure our wild public lands are safeguarded for future generations. This review could open the door for industrial development, resource extraction, unsustainable motorized vehicle use, privatization, and other activities that threaten the wild character of these landscapes. Nearly 200 million acres of public lands within national parks, national wildlife refuges, and places overseen by the Bureau of Land Management are at stake. More than 120 million acres of these lands are not protected in our National Wilderness Preservation System. We have until **August 14** to submit comments.

Sierra Club's comment portal to reach ALL the agencies for commenting is at: sc.org/wilderness.

We have also created a [toolkit](#) with more background information, commenting guidance, as well as social media materials and instructions for a photo/video campaign.

Our partners at The Wilderness Society have [created a helpful map](#) of the areas under review. Zoom in to see any areas near you. 

Hands Across the Sand Returns: Californians Unite to Defend Our Coast

-- by Mark West

After a long hiatus, "Hands Across the Sand" will return to California on **September 26, 2026**, as thousands of Californians gather once again along beaches, bays, and shorelines across the state to celebrate our coast, oppose expansion of offshore oil drilling, and reaffirm our commitment to a clean-energy future.

This iconic event comes at a pivotal moment. The Trump administration has renewed efforts to expand offshore oil and gas development while also threatening



California's long-standing ability to manage and protect its own coastline. Most recently, the administration has targeted the California Coastal Commission—an agency that for more than 50 years has protected over 1,100 miles of California coastline—prompting state leaders and conservation organizations to call on communities to make their voices heard in defense of one of the nation's strongest environmental institutions.

For generations, the California Coastal Commission has safeguarded public access to our beaches, protected sensitive marine habitats, and ensured thoughtful stewardship of one of our state's greatest natural treasures. Today, those protections face renewed political pressure just -- continued page 2

Featured in this issue:

Combat Public Lands review	p. 1
Hands Across the Sand	pp. 1-2
Next Wilderness program	p. 2
Memorial for Janet Barth	pp. 3-4
Nevada data centers	p. 4
Eel River dams to go?	p. 5
Book review	pp. 5-6
Diablo Range 2026 Convening	p. 6
Outings	p. 7
ESA Lobby Fly-in	p. 8

Hands across the Sand --from page 1

when they are needed most.

Hands Across the Sand lets Californians respond—with unity not anger

Hands Across the Sand has already shown what a simple act of solidarity can accomplish. The movement began in Florida in 2010, when approximately 10,000 people from more than 60 communities gathered across over 90 beaches to oppose plans for expanded offshore drilling. Following the Deepwater Horizon disaster, it quickly grew into an international movement, with more than 1,000 events organized across all 50 states and dozens of countries. Those gatherings transformed scattered local concerns into a highly visible public demand for coastal protection and clean energy. Hands Across the Sand helps build lasting coalitions, attract worldwide media attention, engage new environmental advocates, and show elected leaders that opposition to offshore drilling crosses geographic, generational, and political lines.

California has learned difficult lessons about offshore oil development. The 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill helped launch the modern environmental movement and ultimately inspired landmark protections, including the California Coastal Act and the creation of the

California Coastal Commission. More recently, the 2015 Refugio State Beach pipeline spill again demonstrated that a single accident can devastate wildlife, fisheries, tourism, recreation, and coastal communities.

California's coastline supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, fuels billions of dollars in economic activ-



Hands across the Sand in 2022

ity, provides critical habitat for marine wildlife, and offers millions of residents and visitors opportunities to connect with nature. These ecological treasures deserve protection.

With climate change accelerating sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and ocean warming, expanding offshore oil drilling represents an ominous step backward. California has shown that conservation, clean energy, and economic prosperity can go hand in hand.

The image of thousands of people joining hands along the shoreline in California is both simple and powerful. It reminds us that protecting our coast is not a partisan issue—it is a shared responsibility that crosses generations, professions, and political viewpoints.

This year's event--on Public Lands Day--also coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the California Coastal Act. As we celebrate one of the nation's landmark environmental laws, we are reminded that we cannot take these protections for granted. Every California generation inherits both the beauty of our coast and the responsibility to defend it.

Hands Across the Sand is about more than opposing offshore drilling. It is about celebrating the places that define California, honoring those who fought to protect them before us, and inspiring the next generation of

Public Lands Day—September 26

This year Public Lands Day is on September 26, and so for the first time our Hands Across the Sand event takes place on Public Lands Day! What a great opportunity this gives, to highlight and promote our oceans as part of our public land/water domain. Our coastal waters belong to us all, as do our treasured public lands. Our oceans, truly the world's most threatened ecosystem, are too often neglected. They matter--from "sea to shining sea!" Your joining in Hands Across the Sand will help promote the values and needs of our coast and oceans.

Other ways to celebrate Public Lands Day:

⇒ Check with your Chapter to see if outings are scheduled for Public Lands Day. Or simply visit the public lands near you and post a photo of yourself enjoying this unique and proud American tradition.

conservation leaders. Whether your connection to the coast comes from surfing, hiking coastal bluffs, kayaking through estuaries, fishing from a pier, watching whales, or simply enjoying a sunset over the Pacific, this event is an invitation to stand together for something larger than ourselves.

The Sierra Club has always believed that people protect what they love. By gathering once again along California's beaches, Hands Across the Sand lets us demonstrate our shared strong love for the coast.

⇒ WHAT YOU CAN DO:

On September 26, Californians will stand hand in hand with a simple message: "Our coast is not for sale."

To get involved with Hands Across the Sand, contact your local Sierra Club chapter and learn how you can join an event near you.

The strongest protection for our coastline has always been—and always will be—the people who care enough to stand up for it.~

(Mark West is Chapter Director, Sierra Club San Diego)

The next program meeting of the California/Nevada Wilderness Committee will be September 15, 2026 Program -- 5:30 pm Pacific by

**Bob Krumenaker,
Retired NPS Superintendent,
Big Bend National Park**

The Urgency to Keep Big Bend Wild

Bipartisan opposition to imminent construction of massive border infrastructure in Big Bend National Park in Texas has generated national attention. Bob Krumenaker, retired BBNP Superintendent and now Chair of Keep Big Bend Wild, will provide a situational update, highlighting border threats, and share how they are leveraging the current existential battle into a legislative strategy for wilderness legislation in the next Congress.

▷ Email jo_clarke@att.net for the Zoom link.

She danced to her own drummer: Tributes to Janet Barth, 1954-2026

-- compiled by Anne Henny

We recently lost Janet Barth, beloved friend, colleague, sister, aunt, and dedicated environmentalist. I myself struggle for words to explain just how much Janet has meant to us--how much she has done for our California 30x30 campaign since the beginning. She spent countless hours conceptualizing, organizing data, and patiently teaching all of us all what on-the-ground conservation really is. She was absolutely brilliant. Janet was our heart and soul. We love her and we shall miss her terribly. Her legacy lives on.

Below are tributes from a few of the many, many people who were touched and inspired by Janet.

Marie Barth, Janet's sister:

Janet was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1954. As a military family, we moved almost every year so she saw a lot of the U.S. from the back seat of a car. On our nearly annual crisscross of the U.S., our parents took us to national parks and monuments, and I think we all developed a lively appreciation of wild nature. We lived in Japan from 1959 to 1962 when Janet was 8 to 11 and in Canada from 1966 to 1968. She went to high school in Napa where she became involved with environmental groups and was introduced to the Mono Lake region through a teacher, Al Lillieberg. Her love for the Eastern Sierra grew over the years, and she was delighted to land on 131 acres of desert paradise in Benton CA, near Mono Lake, Death Valley and Joshua Tree, her three favorite places.

In Napa, she studied ballet, performed in local theater and eventually taught dance to kids. Janet had a special knack for working with young people and wildlife. She volunteered for Napa Wildlife Rescue, with bird rescues and raptors. She had an owl named Boo (of course) who could not be returned to the wild and used him to teach school kids about owls and nature. She started an owl box program, enlisting high school shop students to build boxes to help vineyards manage rodent problems.

Janet worked as a personal aide for a child who was developmentally challenged, later accompanied special needs kids on school bus rides and became a classroom resource aide for kids who needed help in high school. The list of organizations she volunteered with over the years is long, and she continued to do the same after moving to Benton.

Janet is survived by her older sisters Marie, in New Mexico, and Susan, in Florida, as well as two nieces and two nephews, Joseph in Napa, Jennifer in Seattle, and Randy and Stacy in Florida.

Lynn Boulton

Janet trod lightly on this earth. There wasn't a mylar balloon she wouldn't pick up driving along Eastern Sierra roads. She recycled everything she could, minimized her trash, made place mats out of plastic bags, composted, fed her culture of worms, installed solar panels, had a pesticide-free, pollinator garden, built out her camper with



Lynn and Janet at work in the Eastern Sierra

used wood, and more.

She devoted a large part of her life to stewardship of the Earth. She participated in many Sierra Club CA/NV Wilderness outings to build trails, erase illegal trails, and restore habitat. She surveyed the Kingston and Moapa Ranges for wilderness characteristics. She counted monarch butterflies in Saline Valley for the Xerces Society. She researched kiosk designs for Friends of Fish Slough, collected and formatted 30x30 data for the Sierra Club, surveyed speckled dace locations for the Center of Biological Diversity, hiked Conglomerate Mesa multiple times to identify how gold exploration will impact the area, helped survey Joshua trees there



photo: Anne Henny

with Friends of the Inyo, looked for sage grouse and sensitive plants at gold exploration sites in the Bodie Hills and at Hot Creek, explored proposed pumped storage reservoirs in the Haiwee area with the Range of Light Group, helped with Shoshone service projects for Friends of the Amargosa, pulled weeds at South Tufa for the Forest Service. She started the Tangle Free Waters program and removed fishing line from lake shores from her kayak.

Riding in her truck with her opened a world of adventure for me that I will cherish. Her life of service touched many lives. We miss her.

Jennifer Bauer:

I knew Janet through the Sierra Club California 30x30 Task Force. I always enjoyed seeing her virtually at our Zoom meetings and really appreciated her hard work and dedication to our planet. I was in awe and thankful for the organizing tools she provided that kept our conservation work moving forward. I was deeply saddened by her passing. She was a star that will continue to shine. I send my deepest condolences to her family.

Vicky Hoover:

They say, "the world is run by them who show up." Janet showed up. For more than a decade Janet went on almost all the CA/NV Wilderness Committee service trips in the California Desert and in Nevada. She was not only enthusiastic, she was usually the hardest worker. Whether it was putting-up barriers against off-road vehicles or hiding former vehicle routes, Janet was there. For those of us coming to

-- continued page 4

Tributes to Janet Barth

-- from page 3

Nevada from the Bay Area, Benton was almost a halfway point, and she generously invited us to stay at her home overnight. It's hard to imagine one of our outings without her.

Joe Connett:

Janet's loss was very sad. She was my wife's best friend since high school and we spent a week every spring at her place in Benton. There she told me about 30x30. She lived her best life for the last 10 years--in the high desert she loved, exploring as far as she could reach, camping in her pickup truck, doing the environmental work she found so important.

Jenny Binstock:

Janet was an incredibly giving, determined, caring advocate and an inspiration for her devotion to conservation, her tireless work ethic, and her care and kindness towards others. While I am so grateful for the ways I got to learn from her as an activist, I'm most grateful that I got to know her as a person with a fun sense of humor, kind heart, and an amazing spirit. One of my favorite memories was spending time with her in the Eastern Sierra and getting a personal tour of her ground-squirrel truck.

Cameron Mayer, Friends of Amargosa Basin:

JB was a good friend and a passionate advocate of the Amargosa. She went above and beyond to offer support and hands-on stewardship. She is dearly missed here.

Desert Survivors announcement of June 13-14 volunteer stewardship at Mono Lake, removing invasive flora:

The weekend will also celebrate the life of Janet Barth, who unexpectedly passed away in January. Ms. Barth was a powerhouse in protecting wild lands of eastern California and Nevada. She was active in the Sierra Club 30x30 Initiative. She fought proposals for open-pit gold mining in the Bodie Hills, and with Lynn Boulton monitored exploratory drill sites. Many times, Janet pulled weeds at Mono Lake. ♪

Nevada Pauses on Allowing More Data Centers Rep. Titus, Clark and Nye Counties, Boulder City, Reno, all say NO

-- by Nancy J. Olds

How many data centers are too many? With the Colorado River not the mighty river it once was, with Lake Powell and Lake Mead at alarmingly low levels, legislators are signaling a long pause on allowing more data centers in Nevada. Already, Boulder City, in Clark County, Nye County, and Reno in Washoe County, and Humboldt County have issued pauses for more data centers.

But now Henderson has gone backward. On July 21, the City of Henderson's Mayor Michelle Romero and council members reversed their original decision to take a 180-day pause. Despite demands by members of the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club and strong urging of Henderson residents who attended the July 21 public meeting, the city council opted for data center development agreements.

"Today's decision is a missed opportunity," said Cullen McGinnis, volunteer organizer with the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter. "Residents asked for a pause so Henderson could put strong guardrails in place before approving additional data centers. Instead, the city chose to continue accepting proposals without first adopting comprehensive standards that protect Henderson residents, taxpayers, nature, and public health."

In Clark County, the County Commissioners held two public hearings, June 17 and July 7. Several Southern Nevada Group members, including Minja Yan, Vinny Spotleson, and Aaron Harris, spoke against approving further data centers in Clark County. The second hearing paused any new data centers.

The Commissioners now plan to work on the "Herculean" task of furnishing uniform standards for future projects.



photo: Anne Henny

A star that will continue to shine



photo: Cullen McGinnis

Sierra Club members pose in front of Henderson City Hall after opposing data centers at City Council meeting.

In Boulder City, officials were furious that the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) offered 80 acres of federal land to Houston-based Skylar Capital Management, for a data center that Boulder City officials recently turned down. This Townsite Center was the first approved on public lands. City officials were not contacted ahead of the approval. Although Boulder City has little say in a project on federal land, the city can pass zoning regulations and ordinances related to noise, design and setbacks for the land. Boulder City is appealing the federal approval.

U.S. Representative Dina Titus (D-NV -1), whose district includes Boulder City, pledged to fight the BLM approval. "Decisions about how to manage our public lands should always be made in a transparent manner and include opportunities for the public to weigh in," Congresswoman Titus wrote.

So, why should we oppose data centers and their impact on our Nevada communities?

Proposed data centers will hinder environmental and sustainable goals and objectives. They will impede Nevada's ability to meet clean energy goals on time as many new centers are expected in the near future. A single AI data center can use as much power as 100,000 homes; larger ones now being built could use up to twenty times that amount.

Not only in Nevada, but nationwide, opposing data centers has become a bipartisan issue. Most notable is the reaction from regular citizens. Across the country, in local town

halls and community meetings, concerned residents are protesting these projects --and even winning. The website Heatmap <https://heatmap.news/> said at least 20 proposed data centers were canceled following local opposition in the first quarter of 2026. ♪

FLASH! On July 27, the Toiyabe Chapter joined Center for Biological Diversity and several Boulder City residents in filing an administrative appeal challenging federal approval of the Townsite Data Center in Boulder City.

Eel River and status of defunct dams

-- by Neil Hancock

The upper Eel River is moving closer to flowing freely for the first time in over 110 years. Currently, the defunct Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project stands with two dams – Cape Horn Dam (forming Van Arsdale Reservoir) and Scott Dam (forming Lake Pillsbury). It turns out dams have a lifespan—they require maintenance, fill with sediment, and lose water storage capacity over time. (See Wow, Dec 2025)

In the 1910s and 1920s, these two dams were built—one to store water from winter storms and a second to transfer water over a bluff for hydroelectric generation. This water was released into the Russian River basin, flowing into Lake Mendocino, and past Ukiah. It was a terrible choice for the upper Eel River; as some years all of the summer flow was diverted from the Eel to the Russian River basin for power generation. It was also a poor location to build dams: Scott Dam was built on an earthquake fault, and builders realized mid-construction that it lacked proper foundations.

For more than a century, those downstream of the hydroelectric powerhouse had abundant water flow—some farmers in the hot, dry Mediterranean climate had all the water they could use. Downstream in the lower Russian River, a much larger reservoir, Lake Sonoma (completed in 1984), provides water supply resilience for urban centers in Sonoma and Marin counties.

Starting in 2019, PG&E, owner of the dams, faced a license renewal decision and determined it wasn't economical for its ratepayers to continue operating the Potter Valley Project hydroelectric facility: wind and solar power are much cheaper.

With local agencies agreeing on a Two-Basin Memorandum of Understanding on how to proceed, PG&E irrevocably surrendered its Potter Valley Project hydroelectric license in mid- 2025. Then, with planning for removal of both dams well underway, the Trump administration decided to meddle and summoned of two Southern California water districts leaders to Washington, D.C. What was said is unknown, but directors and water managers flew to Ukiah to submit comments on dam removal and post-dam restoration.

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One of these Southern California water districts, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD), is attempting to gain late legal standing in the project—a move that could allow them to launch a lawsuit later over future decisions. Among other arguments, EVMWD outrageously claims to be acting “to protect significant Native American and Tribal communities.” The Round Valley Indian Tribes have filed response documents backed by real facts against EVMWD’s hollow claims, explaining why EVMWD should not be granted a role in the Potter Valley Project process.

Meanwhile, the other water district, San Geronimo Pass Water Agency, states it has no official position on the Potter Valley Project but claims there are only California water supply challenges (i.e. justification for a Southern California water grab).

Dedicated advocates—led by Friends of the Eel River, CalTrout, members of Tribes, and Sierra Club Redwood Chapter Water Committee—show up to agency meetings and comment on plans. We advocate for ecological integrity of the Eel River, full recognition of the Round Valley Tribes’ water rights, and strict environmental protections for any future water transfers to the Russian River Basin.

Neil Hancock serves on the Redwood Chapter Executive Committee: contact him for more info: neilh2323@sonic.net

FLASH!

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has just refused the EVMWD's bid to be able to sue on any decision on the project; there is a 30-day appeal period.

Book review

Exploring the Berryessa Snow

Mountain National Monument Region

by Marc Hoshovsky, Peter Schiffman, Bob Schneider and Tim Messick

-- reviewed by Sandra Schubert

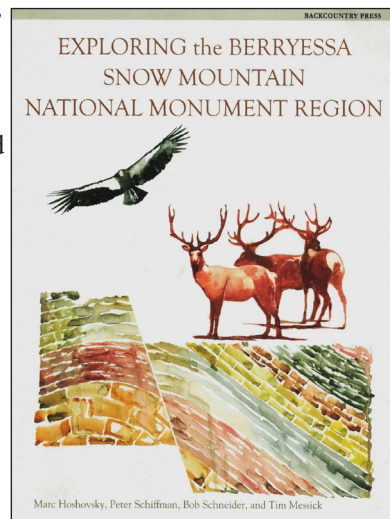
This is a book about the love of place, of joy in the outdoors, at wonder of nature and cultural traditions, steeped in deep respect for history and traditions. It is a tour book, a history book, an atlas, a photography book and a natural history. It's a trail and travel guide, offering mile by mile stops, views and adventures.

The authors take you into the heart of the Northern Inner Coastal Ranges and Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. While the Monument's 344,476 acres are federal public lands that anchor the region, it also contains a mosaic of state and local lands, land trusts, nonprofits, and private landowners--and many microclimates. Here, one can experience oak woodlands and chaparral forests, vernal pools, wetlands, lakes and streams: From the Introduction:

“In the Inner Coast Ranges west of Sacramento, California, and within easy driving distance from San Francisco, lies a wild place of steep-sided canyons, mountainous terrain, and fields of wildflowers. Bald and golden eagles soar overhead, sedimentary rock layers stand on end, and numerous unique plant species abound. While renowned for its world class geological features, the area is also culturally rich and a biodiversity hot spot.”

The authors tell us a tale of geologic history through plants, as the wildflowers speak to us of millennia of geologic history that formed the very soils on which they survive. They also tell us of the area's troubled history, a history that reflects California. Indigenous people have inhabited this region for thousands of years. It is one of the most linguistically rich areas in North America with at least 13 Indigenous languages spoken.

During the 19th century, the Indigenous Peoples and cultures were decimated by Europeans, Mexicans and Americans claiming the region's lands and resources. The authors give an unvarnished view of the history of mining and hot springs resorts--requiring us to take pause, remember and respect the first nations that continue to inhabit these lands. They tell of the community effort that established and then expanded Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, calling out -- continued page 6 bottom



The Second Annual Diablo Range Convening For California's Next Great Conservation Story

-- by JoAnne Clarke

On June 4, 2026, there was a full house—some 150 people—at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center for the Second Annual Diablo Range Convening—a gathering of individuals and organizations interested in conserving central California's entire 2-million-acre Diablo Range. In attendance were members from close to 70 organizations, agencies, Tribes and partner groups. Sierra Club's contingent of 14 included representatives from the Tehipite, San Francisco Bay, and Loma Prieta Chapters.

Led by Save Mount Diablo, the program opened with a blessing and invocation by the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, followed by a keynote address from Dr. Jennifer Norris, Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board, <https://wcb.ca.gov/About>.)

Jen Norris** titled her talk, "Diablo

Range as a 30 x 30 Priority." It is a California statewide goal—as well as a worldwide environmental movement to protect 30 percent of the planet's lands and oceans by the year 2030. California's 30x30 program was first led by Dr. Norris. According to Dr. Norris, there are 8.7 million other kinds of organisms besides humans. "Nature is not a luxury; it is a necessity," she emphasized. "We need to preserve intact ecosystems, large connected landscapes, habitat with high species diversity, and endemic species."

Vishal Subramanian, a 22-year-old award-winning wildlife conservation photographer and National Geographic Young Explorer, gave a beautiful photographic presentation on the wildlife of the Diablo Range. His patience and persistence have allowed him to capture some incredible wildlife photographs.

A panel discussion led by Gordon Clark; President, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) addressed Connecting Landscapes & People. POST recently purchased southern Santa Clara County's 6,100-acre Pescadero Ranch and Sargent Ranch that now provide wildlife connectivity between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo/Gabilan Ranges.

We learned about the East Bay Wildlife Connectivity Project, an initiative led by the Alameda County Resource Conservation District to design safe

passageways for animals across busy East Bay highways, reducing collisions and maintaining regional biodiversity. The goal is to identify and engineer three to four highway wildlife crossings to restore habitat connectivity.

"Protecting land through Advocacy, Policy & Planning" was a panel discussion led by Elias Funez, founding member of Save Del Puerto Canyon, and including Steven dePaschalis and Juan Pablo Galvan Martinez, of Save Mount Diablo, and Zachary Ormsby, Central Coast Field Manager for Bureau of Land Management. The Diablo Range's Del Puerto Canyon is Stanislaus County's most diverse natural environment—with grasslands along the western valley floor leading to chaparral, blue oak woodland, and pines. There is evidence here of Indigenous Yokuts habitation for thousands of years. These resources are threatened by dam and reservoir proposals. (See WOW, April 2026) The San Joaquin Fault Line lies under the proposed dam. Zachary Ormsby, BLM, then discussed the sell-off of Diablo Range lands to oil and gas drilling.

Following a catered organic lunch by Sunrise Catering and hosted by Save Mount Diablo, we began our afternoon sessions with a panel on Working Lands Perspectives led by Celeste Garamendi--rancher, conservationist, Community activist—who began with a regenerative ag perspective on working lands. Then Mt. Diablo Trail Riders Association explained how they promote conservation on private lands.

Finally, we joined peer breakout sessions which gave us all a chance to meet other participants and discuss our ideas around the following topics: Land Use & Advocacy, Working Lands, Parks & Open Space, and Legislation & Funding. Notes from the sessions were shared before the mid-afternoon closing remarks by Save Mount Diablo executive director Ted Clement and consultant Matt Freeman.

The 200 mile long, 4-million-acre Diablo Range--now a 30x30 priority. 🌿

**From 2021 through 2023 Sierra Club's California 30x30 task force worked with Jen Norris in her then role as California Natural Resource Agency's first Deputy Director for Biodiversity and Habitat. Under her leadership, 30x30 got well underway.



Sierra Club contingent at the 2026 Diablo Range Convening with Ted Clement, Save Mt Diablo ED. Left to Right--standing Ted Clement, JoAnne Clarke, Anne Henny, James Eggers, Lisa Barboza, Shruti Chandrasekhar, Carol Silva, Mike Painter, Michele Perrault, Bruce Hamilton; seated, Stacy Goss, Vicky Hoover. Not in photo: Chance Cutrano, Norman LaForce, Bill Fjelbo.

Book review: Berryessa Snow Mountain Region -- from page 5

Tuleyome's leadership, including author Bob Schneider, on these monumental efforts.

At 252 pages, plus appendices, glossaries and such, the book is a comprehensive guide to this magical place. An update of their first book, *Exploring the Berryessa Region*, the authors greatly expand upon it, diving deeper into all that makes this region special--cultural resources, geology, wildlife, botanical wonders, recreation, and history.

More than informative, the book is a work of art. Its maps are gorgeous and provide a context that prose alone could not. The photos take you into the place, giving you a taste of the beauty and majesty. The inserts are gems of knowledge that give you

history and factual nuggets as interesting as the main text. They also contain side hikes and trips not to be missed.

You can dive into this book in numerous ways: all will leave you wanting more. Be traditional: start at the front and go through to the end. Or, find your favorite topic--geology or botany or cultural diversity and history--then go from there. If you don't know where to start, just open it up to any page and dive in--to the book and the place!

Available at Backcountry Press, 2025, in print and ebook, <https://backcountrypress.com/book/exploring-the-berryessa-region/>. 🌿

(Sandra Schubert is executive director of Tuleyome. www.tuleyome.org)



Outings

Support Wilderness the Sierra Club way: From Outings to Advocacy



Outing Notices

Southern Nevada Group Spring Mountains Adopted Highway Cleanup, Sunday, August 16

Toiyabe Chapter's Southern Nevada Group has adopted a portion (between mile markers 11 and 13) of Nevada Highway 157 (aka Kyle Canyon Rd), which winds up from the northern edge of the Las Vegas Valley towards Mt. Charleston, and is used by our members frequently as we head up to the mountains to hike, camp, and escape the summer heat. The trash that is discarded by careless drivers spreads through public lands and can harm wildlife. Our annual cleanup will be **9 to 11:30 a.m.** prior to our annual Group picnic at the nearby Spring Mountains Gateway Visitors Center Group Picnic Area. (We will start the cleanup around 9 am to avoid the worst of the heat). Any Sierra Clubbers and/or their friends in the Las Vegas Area are welcome to join us for the picnic and/or the highway cleanup! Lunch will be served at 11:30 or so.

Wilderness Committee Fall outing *Hiding in Plain Sight: Explore the Diablo Range* Fri - Mon - October 16-19

We've been talking a lot about conservation for the entire Diablo Range. Are you curious WHAT it is? Where is this mysterious Central California place that's hiding in plain sight?

Join our mid-October car camping trip, three nights in the BLM's Clear Creek campground, along the Los Gatos Creek Road. Contact leader Anne Henny at anneth16@sbcglobal.net to be on the list for details soon to become available. Note--the Range is too big to get acquainted with it all on one trip--but we'll see a typical part of the central section. Daily hikes. Optional central commissary. Carpooling recommended. High-clearance vehicles desirable, but not essential. We will meet around noon, on Friday the 16th--location to be determined.

Outing Reports

Point Sal Central Coast outing

-- by Jennifer Bauer

The Santa Lucia Chapter is working diligently on California's 30x30 initiative. Santa Lucia Chapter's 30x30 task force members, Jennifer and Lindi, are visiting the chapter's 30x30 conservation areas for a hands-on perspective. (See WOW, April 2026)

In early July, they hiked the Point Sal Trail to the Point Sal lookout to get a sweeping view of the region. This area has been nominated for Marine Protected Area (MPA) status. The MPA aims to protect approximately 9.2 square miles of coastal waters rich in biodiversity, including vital rocky reefs, kelp forests, and tide pools that support diverse marine life. The area is culturally significant and lies within the ancestral territory of the Chumash people. The proposal is co-sponsored by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and is intended to enhance tribal co-stewardship. A final decision on the MPA proposal is expected in October. We have our fingers crossed. 🌿

"Hey, are we doing this right?" Our Southern Nevada Group, Toiyabe Chapter trip participants asked this often on Saturday, June 20, as we worked due to an unusual request compared to our routine cleanups or trail markings. The Forest Service needed volunteers to remove woolly mullein, *verbascum thapsus*, also known as common mullein, velvet dock, flannel leaf, witches' taper, and more. This flowering invasive alien plant has no business thriving on Mt. Charleston, much less Mary Jane Falls. It was introduced for its purported medicinal use and as an herbal tea.

Our mission: remove it before it overwhelms the native flora on the mountain. We had about twenty participants from our Group! The Mary Jane Falls area suffered immense damage from tropical storm Hillary in 2023, with wind gusts reaching more than 82 mph over the Spring Mountains.

Natalie Shannon, Forestry Technician for the U.S. Forest Service certified woolly mullein expert, brought us to an open field overrun with woolly mullein, varying from six to eight-inch plants to nearly four and a half feet. Shannon showed us several techniques to completely disable this plant. One option is to take the plants out by the root and rip off the cone. A mature woolly mullein forms a large spike full of seeds, which have to be carefully clipped and thrown in a large trash bag to

prevent spreading. Native wildlife will not consume the plant. The hairs on the leaves can irritate, so we wore gloves as we worked.

We spread out into small groups for three hours in increasing heat and sun intensity. The very large plants were



photo: Nancy J. Olds

Proud we removed all that mullein

challenging to pull up—hard gripping and tugging needed. We took small breaks and fortified ourselves with water and snacks.

We did clear out the woolly mullein at Mary Jane Falls! We felt jubilant, posing in front of a pile of garbage bags containing the vegetation culprits. Natalie Shannon coordinated our defeat of the woolly mullein with great skill and humor. This erasable alien plant will find its invasion just a memory. 🌿

photo: Jennifer Bauer



Looking out to where the Point Sal MPA is to be

Defending the Endangered Species Act in Washington DC

-- by JoAnne Clarke

With the Endangered Species Act (ESA) facing intense, sustained attacks from lawmakers, industry, and administration giving in under pressure from corporate polluters, Sierra Club and partner organizations brought wildlife activists to Washington, DC on April 20-23, 2026 for a Lobby Fly-In.

I joined because my Congressman, Adam Gray, (D-CA13) was a primary target for lobby. He is mostly supported by big ag and local farmers and was expected to vote in favor of H.R. 1897.

Our primary concern was this bill--the ESA Amendments Act (the Westerman Bill), which would make it much harder to list at-risk species and

much easier to delist species. The House of Representatives planned to vote on this bill on April 22 so we had our work cut out for us.



JoAnne Clarke at her Congressman's office

My first lobby appointment was with Sophia Garcia, Congressman Gray's Senior Policy Advisor. Sierra Club staffer Ben Greuel, Sierra Club's National Wildlife Campaign manager and two lobby participants from Wyoming and Montana joined me at the meeting. Sophia heard us in a friendly manner but confessed that Congressman Gray was in support of H.R. 1897.

Shruti Bhatnagar, Sierra Club's Vice President for Conservation, and Hardy Kern, of the American Bird Conservancy, joined our group on the following three appointments which were much more encouraging. They were with staffs of Congresswoman Lateefah Simon (D-CA12), Senator Alex Padilla, and Senator Adam Schiff. All assured us of a no vote.

The vote was to take place at 3:30 that afternoon so we got gallery passes to watch the voting--although I was disappointed that it was my congressman who would vote in favor of the bill. In the meantime, our group met at the



Meeting with Senator Adam Schiff's Legislative Assistant; l. to r. Nick Gevock, Sierra Club staff; Michelle Shaffer, Sen. Schiff's staff; Ryan Kemp and Chris Kassir, lobby volunteers from Wyoming; Shruti Bhatnagar, Sierra Club vice president for Conservation.

Capitol steps for a group photo.

While we assembled for the photo, it was announced that due to the overwhelming lobbying done, especially by the Florida lobbyists, the bill was pulled from consideration. Since this was the second time the bill had been pulled, we are confident that the bill is dead. Hooray!!!! What a celebration we enjoyed that evening.

Still, there are other upcoming bills that would threaten the Endangered Species Act including H.R. 281, delisting the Grizzly Bear and H.R. 4255, delisting the Mexican Gray Wolf (Lobo). ♻️

(photos above from JoAnne Clarke)

The Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee, an issue committee of the CA/NV Regional Conservation Committee, advocates for preservation of unroaded, undeveloped public lands in a wild state, through legislation and appropriate management, and sponsors stewardship and wilderness study outings.

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OPEN--San Francisco Bay, Kern Kaweah, Santa Lucia Chapter coordinators sought. Join us!.



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photo: Neil Hancock

Eel River's Cape Horn Dam--see p. 5

