

Sierra Club YODELER

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER ♦ SPRING 2026



- ♦ BLACK ECOLOGIES: THE LEGACY OF NATHAN HARE ♦
- ♦ SMALL CHANGES HAVE HUGE IMPACTS ON SEA LEVEL RISE ♦
- ♦ SFPUC'S INFLATED WATER USE PROJECTIONS THREATEN TUOLUMNE ♦
- ♦ WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK: LOOKING TO THE YODELER'S FUTURE ♦

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Members and Supporters,

One of the first things I did when I began my job as Chapter Director two years ago was spend a morning in the William E Colby Memorial Library. The Colby Library is the official library of the national Sierra Club, a collection rich with the oral histories, articles, books and memorabilia that tell our 130+ history. It was clear from my browsing that a great deal of our organization's history is told through the pages of the *Yodeler*, which the San Francisco Bay Chapter has published continuously under this name since 1939. The publication you're holding (or reading online) is the descendent of a rich history.

I invite you to spend some time browsing the online archives of the *Yodeler* at sierraclub.org/sfbay/yodeler-archives. The archives tell the story of a charming, bold, passionate, and ever-evolving organization. An article from 1948 explains how the name was the winning entry in a naming contest from the first issue, submitted by early editor Charlotte Mauk, and described it favorably as *"short, expressive...cherished in thought by all groups in the Club, and reasonably symbolic of the high mountain ideals of the group... And we're all still yodeling"*.

While the *Yodeler* is timeless, it's also ever-changing. The format, frequency, and focus have evolved over time to adapt to the changing interests and reading habits of our members. As we think about how to best serve the needs of our current members, and how to stay relevant and powerful at a time of great change, we're thinking about what the next chapter of the *Yodeler* might be.

I invite you to be part of that process — see page 3 and learn how you can submit your feedback to help us understand what role the *Yodeler* plays for you today, and your suggestions for what it could look like in the future.

As you read the Spring issue, you'll see stories of long-fought victories such as Golden Gate Fields [page 3] and enduring relationships forged in the outdoors [Sierra Couples, page 5]. The SF Bay Chapter has - and will continue to - be a force for enjoying and protecting our environment and all who rely on it.

Thanks for your interest, engagement, and support, and for being with us as we continue evolving together. After all these decades, we're all still yodeling!



Sarah Ranney
CHAPTER DIRECTOR

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SPRING 2026 CHAPTER NEWS

Calling on YOU, Dear Reader: We Need Yodeler Feedback

The *Yodeler* has changed a great deal over the course of its life. We want to make sure it is still as useful to you as it can possibly be. We've been considering the environmental impact of printing the *Yodeler* and want to hear what you think! It is extremely important to us to make sure our communications are accessible to all – so if you have a preference to print or digital, let us know. Do you love reading the *Yodeler*? Are you concerned about our print material footprint? Do you think print materials are important in the age of AI slop? How do you prefer to get your most up to date Chapter news?

Let us know by filling out this survey at bit.ly/YodelerSurvey. Alternatively, you can email us at yodedit@sfbaysc.org. Or, if you prefer, call us at (510) 848-0800 or send a letter to Yodeler Editor, P.O. Box 2663, Berkeley, CA 94702.

Please consider these questions when emailing, writing, or calling (otherwise, refer to the online survey):

1. How long have you been a Sierra Club member?
2. How active have you been over the course of your Sierra Club membership (on a scale of 1 to 5)?
3. Do you receive a print copy of the SF Bay Yodeler?
4. How often do you read the Yodeler?
5. Do you ever read the digital Yodeler posted on our Sierra Club website?
6. What sections do you find the most valuable in the Yodeler? Why?
7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well does the Yodeler keep you informed about the Chapter's campaigns and advocacy work?

8. Would you be interested in receiving the Yodeler as an emailed publication only?
9. Is there anything you would like to see more or less of in the Yodeler?
10. How do you currently prefer to get your news and updates from the SF Bay Chapter?
11. How do you feel about the print material you receive from the Chapter?
12. How do you feel about the digital communication you receive from the Chapter (emails, social media, etc)?
13. How would you feel if the Chapter used digital material only?
14. Anything else you'd like to share about the Yodeler, its usefulness, print vs. digital, or how you'd like to receive your Chapter news?
15. Please provide your zipcode.

Thank you greatly for your participation! Your input helps us shape our chapter and provide *you* with the materials and communication you need most.



Golden Gate Fields to become Public Park

On March 31, 2026, the Trust for Public Land and the East Bay Regional Park District announced that they would jointly work to acquire Golden Gate Fields in Albany as public parkland. Sierra Club welcomes the acquisition of Golden Gate Fields, a former horse racing track, as new public parkland serving East Bay communities. It is a giant step forward in the Sierra Club's 40-year campaign and Statewide 30x30 Campaign to add this spectacular shoreline site to the East Bay Regional Park District. The next step is to acquire \$175 million for the purchase of the site. Once the site becomes parkland, it will provide recreational facilities and become a restored wetland and marsh habitat, creating a resilient shoreline to defend the Albany hardscape from sea level rise.

"The San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club is grateful to the Trust for Public Lands for their service through action. We look forward to elevating and supporting the vision for the future of this site around the voices of today's youth and those who have been historically disempowered by land use decisions in the East Bay." - Chapter Chair John Bauters

2025 Sierra Club SF Bay Chapter Election Results:

All votes were counted and verified by the 2025 SF Bay Chapter Elections Committee. Votes are published here based off of data provided by the Chapter Elections Committee and approved by Chapter ExCom. Dual memberships voting on a single paper ballot were counted as one ballot on "Total Ballots Cast." Questions or comments can be sent to elections@sfbaysc.org.

SF BAY CHAPTER EX COM (Top 5 are elected)	
Candidate	# of Votes
John J. Bauters	1024
Chava Kronenburg Bear	987
Brian Quan	890
Kate Blumberg	870
Prodan Statev	858
Paul Seger	525
Mark Van Landuyt	520
Matthew Morrison	505
Patrisha Piras	481
Total Ballots Cast	1261

DELTA GROUP	
There were no candidates	

MARIN GROUP EX COM (Top 5 are elected)	
Candidate	# of Votes
Thomas Tunny	63
Jennifer Silva	61
Jack Noble	58
Sam Ruben	55
Matthew Rossiter	47
Total Ballots Cast	70

MOUNT DIABLO GROUP (Top 2 are elected)	
Candidate	# of Votes
Beth Bittle	80
Mark Van Landuyt	60
Total Ballots Cast	83

NORTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY GROUP (First 5 receive full terms, *6th place receives a one-year half-term)	
Candidate	# of Votes
Jacob Dadmun	485
Andy Katz	467
Terry Taplin	422
Maxwell Davis	419
Phyllis Orrick	415
Kera Binns	377*
Total Ballots Cast	548

SAN FRANCISCO GROUP EX COM (Top 5 are elected)	
Candidate	# of Votes
Sarah Boudreau	304
Garen Checkley	300
Joanna Gubman	284
Kendal Peirce	270
Howard Strassner	260
John Crabtree	72
Total Ballots Cast	319

SOUTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY GROUP EX COM (Top 3 are elected)	
Candidate	# of Votes
Kelly Abreu	34
William Yragui	34
Mark Evanoff	28
Gary Wolff	25
Total Ballots Cast	38

TRI-VALLEY GROUP EX COM (Top 3 are elected)	
Candidate	# of Votes
Lynn Seppala	38
Erik Sommargren	38
Donna Cabanne	36
Total Ballots Cast	34

WEST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GROUP EX COM (Top 3 are elected)	
Candidate	# of Votes
Lisa Park	94
Norman LaForce	94
Cesar Zepeda	92
Total Ballots Cast	164



Photo courtesy of Bill Gilbert.

Passing The Torch

BILL GILBERT

After a run of 42 years as the Bay Chapter, Sierra Couples Section is moving on. At our most recent meeting, we voted to abandon our name and our official standing, as an Activities Section of the Bay Chapter. We hope that this encourages young Bay Chapter couples and families to create a new Young Sierra Couples Section, and incorporate our Section name, or at least our concept.

None of our current members are the young adventurers we once were. That was not the case in 1984 when, as recent “graduates” of Sierra Singles, we started Sierra Couples, a new Bay Chapter Section for pair and family activities. We have had a great run, and formed many life-long friendships.

Our annual activities have included day hikes and ed-

ucational events, as well as car camps to State Parks and other camping venues. One of our favorite sites was Lake Solano, where we hiked up the Stebbins Trail to an old abandoned homestead, canoed on the lake, and retreated into nearby Winters for wine and cheese tasting after a day of roughing it. We shared most of these events with our growing families.

But, alas, time passes, kids grow up and have families of their own, and tiring legs find it ever harder to negotiate the Stebbins Trail. But we remember the fun times we had, and how valuable our activities were in introducing our growing families to the great outdoors. Now, we want to encourage a new generation of young people to band together and form their own Sierra Club Section. If passing on our Section name and concept helps them to do it, then this will be gratifying to us old guys and gals, who are ready to pass on the torch.

Bill Gilbert is a member of the former Sierra Couples Activities section.

ABOUT THIS CALENDAR

Activities listed here are abbreviated. For full listings, registration, and waivers visit: sierraclub.org/sfbay/activities. The online calendar will also include changes, cancellations, and outings submitted after the print deadline.

Hike and backpack ratings

Hike ratings are based on distance and elevation gain (the sum of all gains in elevation per day):

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. up to 6 miles | A. under 1,000 feet |
| 2. 6 - 10 miles | B. 1,000 - 2,000 feet |
| 3. 10 - 15 miles | C. 2,000 - 3,000 feet |
| 4. 15 - 20 miles | D. over 3,000 feet |
| 5. over 20 miles | E. over 3,500 feet |

Backpack ratings include a third digit for travel:

- T. trail
1. limited/easy crosscountry
 2. moderate crosscountry
 3. strenuous/difficult crosscountry

What to bring

For day hikes, always bring lunch and enough water. Consider layered clothing, sunscreen, good hiking boots with treads, and hiking poles. Non-service dogs are allowed only if specified in the listing; canine hikers should bring leashes, litter bags, and water for their dogs.

Liabilities

To participate in a Sierra Club outing, you will need to sign a liability waiver. To read a copy of the waiver form, call (415) 977-5630.

COVID-19 Protocol

Masks are optional for adults in outdoor areas but required in indoor close quarters such as vehicles, public transport, restaurants, or visitor centers. Vaccinations are not required, so please be aware you may be on trips with unvaccinated individuals. Masks are required at all times for unvaccinated minors. If you are experiencing any possible COVID-19 symptoms, do not attend the outing and contact the outing leader. Report any positive COVID-19 tests after an outing to the outing leader.

Carpooling

Carpooling helps the environment and allows people without cars to participate. You can arrange carpools on our Meetup group: meetup.com/sanfranciscobay. Outings will be listed there 2 - 3 weeks prior to the event. Masks are required in carpools.

SPRING 2026
OUTINGS
CALENDAR

WEEKLY • TUES

Lake Chabot Reservoir 1A Hike. Scenic weekly 3-mile hike. Park free on street, \$5 in lot, or annual pass from East Bay Regional Park District. MEET: 4:00 pm at boathouse/cafe. LEADER: Dolores Gruenewald, (510) 798-7897 or doloresgru@aol.com. (Solo Sierrans)

WEEKLY • WEDS

Lafayette Reservoir 1A Hike. Enjoy the lovely weather while walking around the beautiful reservoir. We have both faster and slower walkers, or you can walk at your own pace. COST: 5 quarters for 1hr, 15 minutes of parking. MEET: 3:30 pm at the west end of the parking area near the picnic tables and permanent bathrooms. LEADER: William Gilbert, wmglbrt@gmail.com. (Solo Sierrans)

SECOND SUNDAYS AND FOURTH SATURDAYS

JUN 14 • SUN | JUN 27 • SAT | JUL 12 • SUN | JUL 25 • SAT | AUG 22 • SAT

Let in the Wow: Luxurious Walking in Delight Zen Mindfulness is a slow walking practice designed to relax and balance yourself resulting in deepening connection to your inner nature. It is often accompanied with an experience of delight. Attendees report a change in awareness and some report their heart opening. We walk in luxurious awareness and share during check ins. Led by author of *Walking Into Enlightenment* out April 27th. Please sign up online. Limit 12 people. BRING: Clothes for weather changes in your area. MEET: 11:00 am at 1853 Solano Ave, Berkeley, in the parklet nestled between Pegasus Book Store and Zachary's Pizza. ENDS: 12:30 pm. LEADER: Halley, sierragreenforest@gmail.com. (Walking)

MAY 27 • WED

Lafayette Reservoir 1A Hike. NOTE CHANGE IN TIME. Enjoy the lovely weather while walking around the beautiful reservoir. We have both faster and slower walkers, or you can walk at your own pace. Participants are generally over 50 years of age, and most do not walk during bad weather, when temperatures in Lafayette are above ~85 degrees, or when there is heavy rain. COST: 5 quarters for 1hr, 15 minutes of parking. MEET: 4:00 pm at the west end of the parking area near the picnic tables and permanent bathrooms. LEADER: William Gilbert, wmglbrt@gmail.com. (Solo Sierrans)

MAY 28 – MAY 30 • THU– SAT

Lost Coast Backpack. The Lost Coast is northern California's most spectacular meeting of land and sea, where mountains thrust straight out of the surf, rising to 4,000' to King Peak only 3-miles from the ocean. Too rugged for Highway 1 to be built along the coast, the area took on

the name Lost Coast, and today it is protected as the King Range National Conservation Area. We will be hiking 26-mile northern section of the Lost Coast Trail. COST: Participants will be asked to pay their share of the trip costs incurred by the leaders, such as the cost of the wilderness permit, pre-trip campground, and satellite phone support. BRING: The trip is individual commissary, which means you bring all your own equipment and food. MEET: May 28, 6:30 am at Shelter Cove (Directions to the pre-trip campsite will be provided once you are accepted. If you are not willing or able to participate in the car shuttle, you should not apply for the trip.) ENDS: May 30, 2:00 pm. LEADER: Thomas Meissner (707) 479-4465 meissner.thomas2011@gmail.com. (Backpacking)

MAY 29 • FRI

Pole Walking Training Session for Balance/Mobility + Picnic: Concord Vet Center. COST: Free for Veterans and their family members. MEET: 12:15 pm at Concord Vet Center, 1333 Willow Pass Rd Suite #106, Concord. ENDS: 2:45 pm. LEADER: Jayah Paley (415) 699-3333 or jayah@adventurebuddies.net. (Educational)

JUNE 12 • FRI

Canopy Camping at Stampede Reservoir. 3 day camping trip with Teen Urban Foresters youth from Canopy. MEET: 8:00 am at FVG5+F9 Truckee, Ca. ENDS: 5:00 pm. LEADER: Ann Brown aewbrown@gmail.com. (Car Camping)

JUN 12 – JUN 15 • FRI – MON

Yosemite BP: North Rim (El Capitan, Yosemite Falls, North Dome) Camp on top of El Capitan. Go to the top of Eagle Peak, Yosemite Falls, North Dome, and Indian Arch. The trip is limited to 6 people at this campsite. COST: \$70. BRING: Food is an individual commissary. You will need backpacking gear, a tent, sleeping bag, stove, and food. There is an \$8 fee for the Backpackers campsite. MEET: June 12, 8:00 am at South Fork of the Tuolumne Trailhead. We will meet at the North Pines Backpackers Camp the night before or the morning. ENDS: June 15, 1:00 pm. LEADER: Diane Appel 925 360-2249 diane_appel@yahoo.com. (Backpacking)

JUN 18 – JUN 21 • THU – SUN

Hetch Hetchy, Ranceria Falls and Vernon Lake. Loop from O'Shaughnessy Dam to exciting Rancheria Falls to beautiful Lake Vernon. Leader approval required for participating. COST: \$75. BRING: Individual commissary. Participants bring their own food and cooking equipment. Participants need to furnish their own overnight backpack gear. MEET: 8:00 am at Hetch Hetchy Backpackers Campground. ENDS: June 21, 1:00 pm. LEADER: Bob Waltenspiel 707-338-1033 forestplay@gmail.com. (Backpacking)

JUN 26 – JUL 2 • FRI – THU

Glacier Point, Clark Range and Red Peak Pass Trail. Starting a loop from Glacier Point to Illilouette Valley, over Merced Pass, Fernandez Pass, Post Peak Pass, Washburn and Merced Lakes. This is a long challenging hike through some of the lesser traveled areas of Yosemite Wilderness. Leader approval required for participating. COST: \$75. BRING: Individual commissary. Participants bring their own food and cooking equipment. Participants need to furnish their own overnight backpack gear.

MEET: June 26, 8:00 am at Glacier Point, Yosemite Valley. ENDS: July 2, 1:00 pm. LEADER: Bob Waltenspiel 707-338-1033 forestplay@gmail.com (Backpacking)

JUN 26 – JUN 28 • FRI – SUN

Lassen Volcanic National Park. Butte to Snag Lake via Cinder Cone. Leader approval required for participating. Graduates of the annual Beginners Backpack Class are welcome. BRING: Individual commissary. Participants bring their own food and cooking equipment. Participants need to furnish their own overnight backpack gear. Bear canisters are required. MEET: June 26, 8:00 am at CFP8+CC Mineral, Ca. ENDS: June 28, 3:00 pm. LEADER: Thomas Meissner (707) 479-4465 meissner.thomas2011@gmail.com. (Backpacking)

BECOME AN OUTINGS LEADER

If you enjoy exploring wild lands, meeting new people, and leading adventures for them, you could make a great Sierra Club outings leader!

The Sierra Club's outdoor activities aim to connect all people with the natural world and with the Club. As an outings leader with the San Francisco Bay Chapter, you can join others in exploring wild lands, grappling with conservation issues, and even changing perceptions. Because trips are often specialized around a unique theme or activity, you could be hiking, backpacking, kayaking, bicycling, or doing service work – it's up to you to choose, because you ultimately design and lead your very own trip.

To be an outings leader, you must be a current Sierra Club member, at least 18 years of age, and have completed First Aid training and the Sierra Club Outings Leader Training. You then must choose a current outing leader to act as your mentor and lead your provisional outing with them in attendance. Following the outing, the mentor leader will provide feedback. After a positive evaluation, you will be a full-fledged outings leader and able to lead outings on your own. And then, Happy Trails!

You can choose what type of outing you would like to lead and which activity section you would like to affiliate with. You can find a list and descriptions of our activity sections online at sierraclub.org/sfbay/activities.

For more information on requirements, trainings, mentors, and more, head to sierraclub.org/sfbay/how-become-outings-leader.

SPRING 2026 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Pole Walking & Hiking Classes for Veterans

Sierra Club's Military Outdoors program offers free classes to Veterans and their family members all around the Bay Area. Learn life-long skills to enhance your outdoor experiences and improve endurance, strength, and spine function. For more information, go to sierraclub.org/loma-prieta/military-outdoors.



The Water We Don't Need: Why SFPUC's Inflated Demand Projections Threaten the Tuolumne and Your Wallet

MARK SHAHINIAN

San Franciscans and their Bay Area neighbors have done something remarkable over the past quarter century: they've cut their water use by 30 percent. They've ripped out ornamental lawns, installed low-flow fixtures, and adapted their habits all while experiencing drought after drought. It's a genuine conservation success story.

So why is the agency that supplies their water—the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission—planning for a future in which demand goes up?

In a letter sent to SFPUC Commissioners this February, the Sierra Club argues that the draft 2025 Urban Wa-

ter Management Plan—available for public review until April 16—paints an unrealistically high picture of future water demand, with serious consequences for ratepayers and the Tuolumne River ecosystem.

The SFPUC has overestimated water demand by 45 to 50 percent on a 15-year horizon in Urban Water Management Plans going back to 2000. Even the 2020 plan overshot 2025 water use by 13 percent just four years after it was issued. The new draft projections appear to continue this pattern, forecasting ever-increasing demand despite decades of evidence pointing the other way.

Here's the pattern the SFPUC is missing: Every significant drought over the past two decades has produced large, lasting demand reductions. Post-drought, consumption doesn't bounce back to prior levels. Droughts trigger behavioral changes—people replace lawns, fix leaks, rethink landscaping—and policy changes, like California's ban on watering ornamental turf with potable water. The net effect is a downward ratchet.

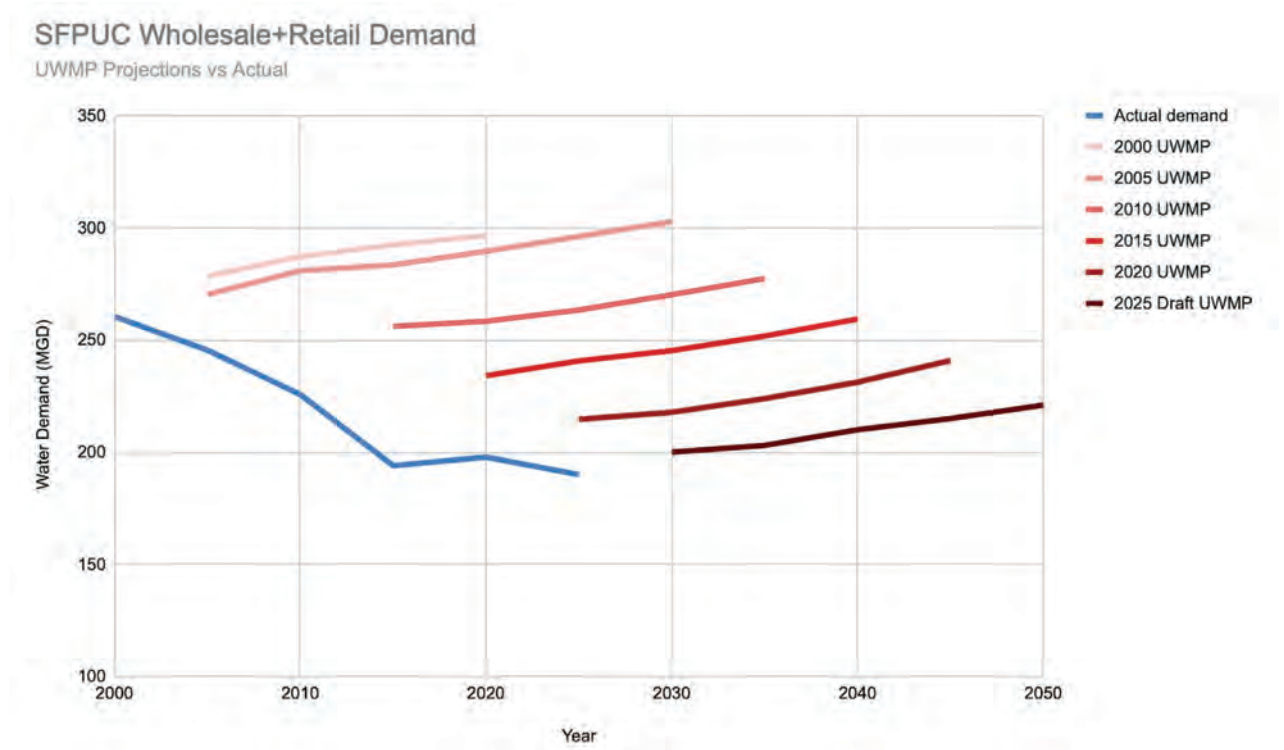
Using a statistical model built on the drought index,

population data, and nearly fifty years of water use history, the Sierra Club projects 2050 demand at roughly 147 million gallons per day—compared to the 222 MGD the SFPUC is projecting.

These inflated SFPUC projections have real environmental consequences. The SFPUC and the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA, which represents other cities in the Bay Area who buy Tuolumne River water from the SFPUC) have used them to argue vigorously against the Bay Delta Plan—the state’s framework for restoring flows to Northern California rivers

pening: the SFPUC’s proposed wholesale rate increases for the next two years jumped from 1 percent to more than 7 percent per year between May 2025 and January 2026. The SFPUC is projecting retail rate increases of more than 6.5 percent annually for seven years starting in 2027—meaning water rates will be at least 70 percent higher in eight years. Based on the agency’s own numbers, combined water and sewer bills will become unaffordable for typical San Francisco households within about a decade.

The Sierra Club is asking the SFPUC to create a working group to develop realistic demand scenarios with full



Every SFPUC Urban Water Management Plan has projected rising demand (red lines). Actual demand (blue) has steadily declined.

and one of the Sierra Club of California’s top priorities. Salmon populations in the Tuolumne River, which feeds the SFPUC’s water system, have declined precipitously. Meanwhile, the water agencies base their case against the Bay Delta Plan on inflated demand numbers and a design drought that by one analysis is likely to occur only once every 8,000 years.

The affordability picture is just as troubling. Inflated demand projections justify expensive capital projects; when that demand fails to materialize, the costs get spread over fewer gallons sold, driving up rates. This is already hap-

pening: the SFPUC’s proposed wholesale rate increases for the next two years jumped from 1 percent to more than 7 percent per year between May 2025 and January 2026. The SFPUC is projecting retail rate increases of more than 6.5 percent annually for seven years starting in 2027—meaning water rates will be at least 70 percent higher in eight years. Based on the agency’s own numbers, combined water and sewer bills will become unaffordable for typical San Francisco households within about a decade.

The Sierra Club is asking the SFPUC to create a working group to develop realistic demand scenarios with full data transparency, to reassess how supply needs are conceived in light of affordability and ecological concerns, and to budget for a collaborative review of its approach to the Bay Delta Plan. The environment and affordability are on the same side here—and that’s a rare and valuable thing. Read the full letter at bit.ly/SFPUCLetter.

If you have thoughts or questions, contact the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter’s Water Committee at water@sfbaysc.org.

Mark Shahinian is an SF Bay Chapter Water Committee member.

Remembering Nathan Hare: Black Ecologies

ASHIA AJANI

The history of Black environmentalisms in the Western world is one of ingenuity, a hybrid of place-based knowledge born from traditions preserved during our trafficking from West Africa and cultivated in the Americas. Interrogation of local ecologies, land, environment and society are key elements of Black environmentalisms, and it is this interrogation that created the genius that was Nathan Hare.

Nathan Hare, often dubbed the “Father of Black Studies,” was born on a sharecroppers farm in Oklahoma during the middle of the Great Depression. After his mother and father divorced, Hare’s family migrated to San Diego during World War II. They were part of what is known as the Second Great Migration, the period between 1940-1970 when a dramatic exodus of Black people from the South came to the Midwest and West Coast looking for work, usually in shipyards, auto industry and factory work. After his mother was laid off from her janitorial position with the Navy air station, she relocated her family back to Oklahoma, where Hare finished his education. Hare attended segregated primary schools named after the Haitian revolutionary Toussaint L’Ouverture, and attended Langston University, which, at the time, was the only college in Oklahoma to admit Black students. The town of Langston, Oklahoma was founded by Black nationalists who hoped to make the entire state an all-Black haven.*

I rehash the formative years of Hare’s life to demonstrate how his family’s migrations and experiences informed the rest of his life. As part of a landless peasant class, not far removed from enslavement, he witnessed the consequences of his mother’s disposability, and was surrounded by revolutionary images, individuals and communities which gave way to his political acumen.

Hare started his academic career teaching at Howard University (1961-1967) but was dismissed after being frequently involved in the Black Power movement on campus and supporting student-faculty protests. In 1968, he joined the faculty of San Francisco State University and later went on to found the first “Black Studies” program in the United States. Hare, the Black Student Union, the local chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, and the Third World Liberation Front facilitated a five month strike to usher in the department. Hare was later dismissed as chairman of the

department in retaliation for his foundational participation in the strikes.

When I was teaching “Introduction to 20th and 21st Century Black Environmental Literature” at UC Berkeley, one of the first texts we read together to ground ourselves in Black environmentalisms was “Black Ecology” (1970) by Nathan Hare. Hare was a fierce opponent of the Vietnam War, understanding it as not only a form of imperialism but an environmental disaster, and his anti-war sentiments are made very clear in this essay. In “Black Ecology,” Hare lays out the stark difference between Black ecological concerns and white (middle-class) ecological concerns:

“The ‘ecology crises’ arose when the white bourgeoisie, who have seemed to regard the presence of blacks as a kind of pollution, discovered that a sample of what they and their rules had done to the ghetto would follow them to the suburb.”

In this essay Hare got to the root of ongoing environmental issues, understanding that many were manifestations of anti-Black racism, that environmental destruction could not be solved without critiquing and dismantling white supremacy and the inherent extractive nature of capitalism, born from the plantation economy.

“But the ecological ordeal of the black race does not have to wait for a nuclear attack; present conditions are deadly enough. The environmental crisis of whites (in both its physical and social aspects) already pales in comparison to that of blacks.”

Hare published this nearly twelve years before environmental justice entered into common parlance, when a Black town in North Carolina sparked national protests rallying against a landfill that was being built in their community. Whether in the city or the countryside, Black enclaves that were often self-sufficient (usually out of forced necessity) became dumping grounds, factories and, refineries, transformed into sacrifice zones.

Black ecology is not just about trees and bees. It is about how legacies of enslavement, extraction, pollution and forced removal inform our contemporary environment. It is about how the contributions of Black people to constructing communities urban and rural often go unnoticed or are explicitly maligned. Hare understood this probably more than most. His clarity of vision should be a model for us all.

*This desire often created friction between Native communities such as the Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw, who had been ethnically cleansed from the South and relocated to Oklahoma, and were already dealing with land grabs and eminent domain from the U.S. government.

Ashia Ajani is the Organizing Manager of the SF Bay Chapter.

75% of all pollution produced by automobiles comes from cars over 13 years old

!!!

YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS A CLEAN PLANET.

Recycling your vehicle can lead to a 76% reduction in water pollution and 86% reduction in air pollution.

Automotive recycling estimates 24 million gallons of motor oil is reused and not wasted.

DID YOU KNOW..

86% of a vehicle can be reused.

AND

6 recycled cars can build a 6,000 square foot home with steel framing.

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Matt's Corner Spring 2026

MATT BIELBY

Spring is here, and planning is on a lot of people's minds. I wanted to make sure you know that as a Sierra Club supporter, you can make a will for free online through Giving Docs. Giving Docs is a set of easy-to-use online tools that you can use to create (or update) your will and other important estate planning documents. You can make an account and take a look here:



If including the SF Bay Chapter in your estate planning is something you've ever considered, these online tools make it easy, and a gift of even 1% can make a big impact on our ability to continue advancing environment and conservation goals in the Bay Area. But absolutely no gift is required to make use of Giving Docs. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to matt.bielby@sierraclub.org or call (510) 848-0800 ext 321.

Matt Bielby is the Development Director for the SF Bay Chapter.

Want to Keep In Touch? Join Our Email List!

The SF Bay Chapter sends monthly email bulletins that include up-to-date information on events and campaigns around the Bay Area with a special focus on things specific to your region or group. We also send petitions and action alerts on the Bay's most pressing issues, so you can make a difference from the comfort of your own home. When you sign up for our email list, you'll be in the know about everything from shoreline clean-ups and public comment turn-outs to picnics and social hours where you can meet fellow activists. Don't miss out! Sign up online today at sierraclub.org/sfbay/email.

The Power of Bay Advocacy

JENNIFER HETTERLY

In our most recent article we focused on adaptations to and preparation for sea level rise. Now, we're going to focus on the power of advocacy for San Francisco Bay.

Even Small Wins Create Big Change

If you ever wonder whether your voice can make a difference, San Francisco Bay's history has a clear answer: absolutely yes! The Bay we all depend on exists today because generations of residents refused to accept the idea that our shoreline was disposable. That same persistence is exactly what is reshaping how the Region responds to sea level rise.

Today, San Francisco Bay is undergoing one of the most important planning shifts since the creation of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) in 1965. That transformation is happening because countless small acts of advocacy have built upon each other, year after year.

From a Narrow Shipping Channel to a Beloved Natural Treasure

Only a few decades ago, the Bay was seen primarily as a working waterway, valued for moving goods, not for supporting life. Industrial pollution, wetlands destruction, and massive fill projects progressed for decades. At one point, engineers even seriously studied damming the Golden Gate and turning the Bay into a narrow canal.

Then in 1960, three women, Sylvia McLaughlin, Kay Kerr, and Esther Gulick, met for tea to discuss a shocking Army Corps map showing a future Bay nearly filled by 2020. Their outrage and grassroots organizing sparked a regional movement that transformed public attitudes and political will.

Within a decade, activism stopped the fill, protected what wetlands remained, and created BCDC, the nation's first coastal management agency. For 60 years, that shift in public mindset has made restoration possible, creating thousands of acres of new marshes and opening miles of shoreline to the public.

All of that began with a handful of people deciding that the San Francisco Bay is important.

A New Era of Rising Tides Brings a New Wave of Advocacy

Fast-forward to today. Sea level rise is accelerating, groundwater is rising with it, and shoreline communities — especially socially vulnerable neighborhoods — and the Bay's own wetland habitats, face mounting threats. Once again, the Bay is at risk and needs persistent, informed, unrelenting advocates; and once again, small acts are adding up to create a public movement with momentum.

How Two Small Words Transformed Bay Planning

When regional leaders were developing the Bay Adapt Joint Platform (a consensus-based strategy to guide the region's response to sea level rise), Sierra Club volunteers and many others pushed hard to ensure the Joint Platform embodied three core principles: the importance of having a living bay, the value of utilizing nature itself to improve our resilience, and the need to make environmental equity central to every decision. Nature and equity. Two words. Easy to overlook. Easy to underestimate.

But those words became leverage.

Because they appeared in the Joint Platform, those words gave shoreline advocates a foothold to insist they also appear in the 2023 legislation that required all shoreline jurisdictions to develop sea level rise adaptation plans. That law tasked BCDC with developing planning guidance, and gave it authority to approve local plans based on consistency with those guidelines. Explicit references to nature and equity in the legislative text may have seemed vague and modest at the time. Yet those "hooks" gave us what we needed to press for real, enforceable nature-based and equity standards in BCDC's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) Guidelines.

And it worked.

In December 2024, BCDC adopted the RSAP, the Bay Area's first-ever regional standards for sea level rise planning. Until now, the region relied on a patchwork of local efforts, voluntary frameworks, few consistent standards, and limited BCDC oversight.

The RSAP changes that. It sets consistent, regional expectations to:

- Prioritize nature-based solutions wherever possible
- Require meaningful engagement of socially vulnerable communities

The Road to BCDC's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan Adoption



- Address groundwater rise and related contamination threats
- Coordinate adaptation across jurisdictional boundaries

This marks a profound shift from a fragmented sea level rise planning approach that was biased toward hardened, engineered infrastructure, to a holistic, resilient, equitable approach grounded in nature, community needs, and regional collaboration. Persistent Bay advocacy successfully transformed BCDC's approach to the RSAP. What began as a concept of a regional plan that valued the Bay primarily for its aesthetic and recreational benefits, ultimately became a Plan that recognizes, prioritizes, and seeks to preserve the many essential roles Bay ecosystems play in the region's long-term resilience.

Because of these new standards, sea level rise planning across the region must consider strategies beyond concrete barriers and hardened edges. Nature-based solutions, like wetlands restoration, horizontal levees, habitat migration corridors, and community-centered adaptation must be prioritized, not treated as "nice-to-haves," but as expected regional practice.

All of that momentum started with two small words, added by persistent volunteers who refused to give up.

Big Advocacy Wins Don't Happen Overnight. They Build Incrementally

The Bay's progress has come from years of steady steps, each one enabling the next. Consider how we got here:

(See chart above.)

These key steps built necessary momentum to achieve a strong, coordinated sea level rise response. (See below for

more detail about each step.)

This is how advocacy works. Not in one big win, but in dozens of smaller ones, each opening the door to the next.

Why Your Voice Matters Now More Than Ever

For the first time, BCDC can set standards beyond the 100-foot shoreline band and help shape how cities plan their future. Developers, urban planners, and decision-makers can no longer shrug off sea level rise with an "I'll be gone by then" mindset. The region is moving from reactive, piecemeal defenses to a coordinated system of resilient, nature-based adaptation.

But this shift is new and fragile. It only happened because local residents kept showing up: writing letters, speaking at hearings, reviewing documents, joining coalitions, and asking uncomfortable questions.

We're not done.

The RSAP sets the standards, but cities still need to implement them. And while all cities must create a plan, they will suffer no repercussions from the State if they then ignore it. This is a huge gap that must be corrected. As it is, hundreds of projects, levee upgrades, and shoreline plans will unfold in the coming years. Without watchdogging, education, and public pressure, old habits could easily creep back in. Although local flexibility is necessary, we can't let it be used as an excuse for sidestepping the values underlying the RSAP standards.

Take Your Place in History

By joining the Sierra Club's Bay Alive Campaign, you become part of a remarkable lineage of people who refused

Continued on next page

Continued from last page

to let the Bay be diminished, ignored, or sacrificed.

Your voice can help:

- Keep equity and nature at the center of every shoreline plan
- Ensure that cities choose wetlands over walls
- Protect communities from groundwater rise and contamination
- Champion nature-based solutions that grow stronger over time
- Hold agencies accountable to the standards we fought so hard to secure

Every letter. Every survey comment. Every public meeting. Every person who tells a friend why we need to keep the Bay alive.

It all adds up, just like it always has.

This is the power of Bay advocacy.

This is how change happens.

And this is your invitation to help shape the Bay's future.

Join us. Bay Area scientists are providing the research and tools that advocates need to support the restoration and expansion of wetlands, the protection of existing shoreline habitats, and the implementation of environmental justice policies.

Be the next link in this long, inspiring chain of Bay champions.

Key Steps in the March Toward Holistic, Equitable Sea Level Rise Resilience

BCDC BAY PLAN CLIMATE CHANGE AMENDMENTS (2011):

Advocates successfully pushed BCDC to recognize the urgency of sea level rise and the essential role of tidal habitats in climate resilience. Unfortunately, while these amendments established a philosophical foundation for integrating sea level rise adaptation into regional shoreline policy and affirmed the need to protect and sustain tidal wetlands as part of long-term community resilience they had no teeth and provided BCDC with no legal authority to insist that these goals be met.

ADAPTING TO RISING TIDES (2011):

BCDC, partnering with local, regional, state, and federal agencies, launched one of the Bay Area's first comprehensive efforts to evaluate how current and future flooding

could affect communities, infrastructure, ecosystems, and the regional economy. The project built vital technical capacity across the region and provided the tools needed for informed, science-based sea level rise planning.

BCDC BAY PLAN AMENDMENTS (2019):

Responding to strong community and environmental advocacy, BCDC adopted landmark amendments recognizing the Bay Area's environmental justice history and requiring more meaningful public engagement in shoreline planning. These changes also enabled greater use of beneficial Bay fill for habitat restoration, laying important groundwork for large-scale, nature-based resilience projects.

BAY ADAPT (2020-2021):

Through sustained public engagement, advocates ensured that the Bay Adapt Guiding Principles, and the resulting Joint Platform, explicitly prioritized working with nature (it is here that "put nature first" was first recognized as an important goal in addressing sea level rise adaptation) and addressing inequities. This regional consensus process became a key policy bridge between earlier voluntary frameworks and the mandatory regional standards to come.

SB 272 (2022-2023):

Building on those principles, advocates helped secure the inclusion of nature and equity in SB 272, the legislation requiring every Bay shoreline jurisdiction to develop a sea level rise adaptation plan. SB 272 also charged BCDC with creating regional guidelines and granted the agency approval authority, making these values part of the law.

RSAP ADOPTION (2024):

After years of public comments, expert input, community organizing, and inter-agency collaboration, BCDC adopted the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP) — the Bay Area's first-ever regional sea level rise standards. The RSAP establishes strong, science-based, equity-centered guidelines for shoreline planning that protect both communities and ecosystems, and it provides a unified framework to guide local action through 2034 and beyond.

Jennifer Hetterly is the Bay Alive Campaign Coordinator for the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter.

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- Our blog, updated regularly
- The full events and activities calendar
- Group information and leadership roster

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- Passing the torch for Sierra Couples (p. 5)
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