

# PEATDUSTER

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Delta-Sierra Group Newsletter

October - December 2019

Visit us at [www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/delta-sierra](http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/delta-sierra)



Photos - Jim Marsh



## MEETINGS

All Delta-Sierra Group general meetings are open to everyone whether you are a Sierra Club member or not. Meetings are held in the Fireside Room at the Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, across from the University of Pacific Tower.

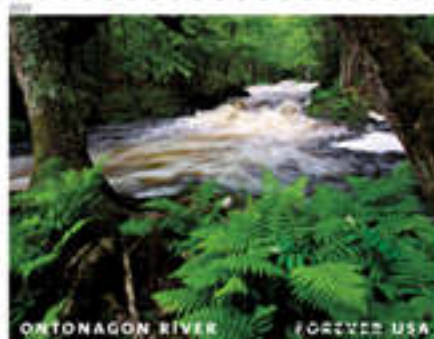
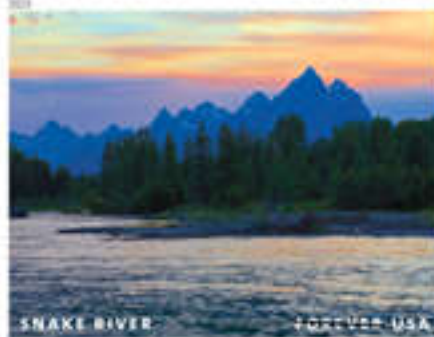
### Monday October 28 at 7 pm 50 Years of Saving Rivers

2018 marked the 50th anniversary of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and a 50-year legacy of protecting free-flowing rivers and streams throughout the state. California has 747 miles of nationally protected rivers and streams, as well as thousands of miles of waterways eligible for federal protection.

Steve Evans will discuss what you can do to be good stewards of rivers currently in the system and how to additionally protect another 6000 miles of rivers and streams. You can visit the California Wilderness Collation at <https://www.calwild.org>

**This is our joint meeting with Audubon and Delta-Sierra Group is the host.**





America's wild and scenic rivers are those deemed remarkable for values including fish and wildlife, geology, recreation and cultural or historical significance. These special streams are allowed to flow freely through natural settings without man-made alterations. A list of river names and the photographer can be found on Page 16.

## Monday, November 25 @ 7pm A Film - *The Human Element*

1869 is considered as the year of discovery of the Periodic System, and Dmitri Mendeleev was a major discoverer. 2019 will be the 150th anniversary of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements and has therefore been proclaimed the "International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements" However, you won't find *The Human Element* in the Periodic Chart of the elements!

In this new documentary film from the producers of *Racing Extinction*, *The Cove* and *Chasing Ice*, environmental photographer James Balog captures the lives of everyday Americans on the front lines of climate change. With rare compassion and heart, *The Human Element* inspires us to reevaluate our relationship with the natural world.

What makes the film special are the time-lapse photos of climate change in action that are merged together by James Balog who plays a major role in this film. It's possible he may have lost a of couple expensive cameras attempting to capture some of his shots. For example, he sends a camera on a balloon up to about 100,000 feet to get a view of our atmospheric layer. Because the pressure outside is less than the pressure inside the ballon, the balloon explodes and the camera falls to earth via a parachute...if it opens! There are 4 key parts to this film: Earth, Water, Air and Fire. We hope you will join us so we can watch this film together and discuss it afterwards.



## Monday, December 9 @ 6:30-8:30pm **Environmental Holiday Gathering**

Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton  
This event is free and open to the public.

Join Delta-Sierra Group for this wonderful event held in a casual setting while avoiding a structured agenda. Mom's Chili Boys will share their repertoire of folk, country, bluegrass and old-time songs plus a few traditional songs of the season. We will show a short video on Yosemite and you will be able to do some holiday shopping for Sierra Club calendars, cards and T-shirts. Of course, there will be light refreshments available.

This will be a good opportunity to meet some of the people who are concerned about our environment and wish to share their ideas, update us on the successes and ongoing actions, and offer a future outlook for our region while enjoying the music.



**HAVE YOU SEEN ME?**



You might find this fellow at the 23rd annual Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival November 1-3 where you will also find the Delta-Sierra Group table. Check out our selection of Sierra Club T-shirts, cards and calendars.



## Central Valley Birding Symposium

In September Karin Brulliard from the Washington Post reported that North America has lost 3 billion birds in 50 years. Here is what she wrote, "Slowly, steadily and almost imperceptibly, North America's bird population is dwindling. The sparrows and finches that visit backyard feeders number fewer each year. The flutelike song of the western meadowlark - the official bird of six U.S. states - is growing more rare.

The continent has lost nearly 3 billion birds representing hundreds of species over the past five decades, in an enormous loss that signals an "overlooked biodiversity crisis," according to a study from top ornithologists and government agencies."

The birds need all the help they can get so you might want to attend the Central Valley Birding Symposium held in Stockton November 21-24 . Please find details at this link:

<http://www.cvbirds.org/events/symposium/>



## Peaceful Holiday Faire

Fellowship Hall, Central United Methodist Church  
3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton.

This year's event will be held on Friday evening December 6 at 4 pm-8:30 pm and on Saturday, December 7 at 10 am-3:30 pm.

Each year the Peaceful Holiday Faire reminds people to celebrate the holiday season, mindful of the need to promote peace, justice and support for our environment both locally and internationally. Our goal is to have items for sale that promote nonviolence, reflect the beauty of nature and sustainable living, the creativity of the spirit, the skill of the hands, and contributes to a more responsible world. Central United Methodist Church is located across from the UOP Tower and there's lots of parking.

## WILD AND SCENIC or EYESORE? - IT'S ALL ABOUT ATTENDING

Attending is being present.

It also implies focusing and reflecting on some particular thing and perhaps changing one's behavior in response. Jim Marsh

Physicists tell us that just observing an experiment or phenomenon has the power to influence outcomes. That is, the observer changes what is observed.

In a spin on this idea I've heard it said, things we pay attention to get bigger. I take that not literally, but as a useful metaphor and encouragement to take action.

For years I have argued that one of the least attended, but finest natural assets in our community is the Calaveras River. Geographically, it perfectly bisects the city, as it carries on largely unnoticed and unknown with any significant sense to many lifelong Stockton residents living along its banks.

Many Stocktonians familiar only with the trash, campsites and derelict shopping carts that are visible from most of the city bridges quickly judge the river to be an eyesore as they pass over in their cars. And they stop paying attention or, just as likely, shift their attention quickly to that insistent pinging from their electronic devices giving the humble Calaveras River any further regard.

Highlighting the intrinsic values of our river, particularly within the city limits, has been one of several long term, ongoing projects for me and a small group now known as The Friends of the Calaveras River (FCR).

*Pictured - Common Green Darners in Wheel*



See the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XKvWI4JT5Q>

FCR has always maintained that ignoring this gift of nature, like ignoring the plight of the homeless residents along the channel whose growing camps further cement the Calaveras' eyesore reputation, is a matter of core values.



Of course our values are a function of what an individual or society chooses to attend to. Values help determine where we cast our collective gaze, where we see value and potential and where we put our energy and resources in efforts to improve our world. Values for better or worse certainly also help us decide which sorts of politicians we elect.



If we find the Calaveras an eyesore, how might refocusing on it influence its future through adjustments in our core values?

If we find our homeless fellow citizens to be a significant part of its eyesore reputation how might refocusing our attention on the root causes of their plight influence their and our community's future through further adjustments in our core beliefs?

And for their part, if those same homeless campers were aided and encouraged to refocus their attention, how might their future prospects be improved if they reexamined and reframe their core beliefs?

But homeless camps and their occupants aren't the only features that impact the Calaveras' checkered reputation. Even mentioning the growing and knotty problem of the chasm separating rich from poor risks distracting from this essay's core intent.

*Pictured - Preying Mantis*

My purpose here is to encourage more residents to take another look at the Calaveras River as well as all the other natural niches tucked away in plain sight here in the heart of our town.

I submit that anyone willing to take a few hours each month to walk the Calaveras River floodplain and not just the bike path, will be able to honestly point out genuinely wild and scenic features right here in the center of the city. Furthermore, those individuals armed with the power of that experience, are more likely to be compelled to take action in aiding and improving conditions on the Calaveras watershed.

As virtually every preservationist and conservationist from Alexander Von Humboldt to John Muir and from Rachel Carson to E.O. Wilson has pointed out at one time or another, we only value things we know intimately and personally. We cannot begin to love a river or other natural place we haven't gotten to know more intimately than just passing over it in a motor vehicle.

On a Friday morning in late July when I began writing this essay, I was sitting on my folding campstool in an area of the Calaveras floodplain adjacent to the DeRosa University Center on the University of the Pacific campus. This secluded and scenic area is within full and unobstructed view from the second floor observation deck. I also reminded myself that for several weeks last winter I had noticed this spot was submerged under 3 feet of water.

During the driest and dustiest of our seasons one can sit on the parched, sandy ground. Most of the silt was washed in during previous winter's flood. You can find it shaded by sand bar willows that are towered over by heavily blossoming gumplant and visited by half a dozen species of native bees, as well as European honey bees. They are also surrounded by native sunflowers and decked out in their best summer finery.



This is an area where horsetail fern thrives along with nightshade, spanish lotus, poppies, jimsonweed and evening primrose. Buckeye butterflies are in the height of their active season along with a dozen other species of butterflies and skippers. All these are watched over by squadrons of industrious, zooming dragonflies. There are at least 6 native species commonly found on the site along with their slacker cousins, the damselflies.

There were piles of fresh otter scat in several nearby "latrines". Otters and possibly raccoons seem to have an affinity for frequenting these communal toilets that are easy to spot in the summer months when the dry grass is flattened to the ground. And does anyone know why there are almost never any flies or maggots to be found in and about these poop piles no matter how fresh or stale?

Eau d'Polecat was in the breeze the entire time I was there that morning. Having crossed paths with a feisty mama skunk earlier in the summer and just a few yards from where I was sitting while writing these notes, I know for a fact there has been, and probably still is, at least one active den or burrow in this immediate area.

I hadn't really appreciated that skunks dig large burrows until I saw one emerge from the hole I just mentioned. The critter was covered in so much dirt I did not recognize it as a skunk. Initially, I thought I'd stumbled on a very large, burnt sienna colored house cat.

In the spring of 2018 a remote trail camera placed in the willow garden and near the river's edge captured engaging nighttime videos of raccoons getting up close and personal with the camera's flood light and lens. It also captured beavers harvesting willow shoots and, yes, of skunks, wandering the well-trodden, hard packed, small mammal highways that criss-cross the floodplain and bankside here.



A green heron flew by headed upstream while coughing out its rasping squawks while I was writing. A kingfisher winged its way purposefully and rapidly downstream like a white torpedo slicing over the tops of the tallest vegetation at top speed. The very highest willows are popular hummingbird roosts. A solitary acorn woodpecker crossed overhead rising and gliding in classic woodpecker form, headed from the UOP campus across to the LDS church property on the northwest side of the levee. Several red tailed hawks were circling as I continued jotting down notes.

It's a rare visit when I do not see one or more hawks or falcons such as red tails, red shouldered, swainson's hawks, and a few white tailed kites and kestrels. This is hardly surprising given that Dr. Ryan Hill and his UOP field biology students have documented more than 80 species of birds on and near the large island just upstream from the UOP footbridge. This would seem like a convenient dining hall for the larger predatory species.

A class is comprised of fourth, fifth and sixth graders from Kohl School make regular visits to the floodplain between the UOP footbridge and the Pershing Avenue bridge documenting their finds in notes, sketches, photographs and collected samples. Some of these young citizen scientists are learning to take water samples and to operate instruments that test for common indicators of the river's health. They collect and archive their current data with that of past classes, a process that spans over a period of almost ten years, and they periodically make presentations around the community detailing their discoveries on "their reach" of the Calaveras. (See note on Page 12.)

(Note: The term "reach" can also refer to an extended portion or stretch of land or water; a straight portion of a stream or river, as from one turn to another.)

During past visits I've been surprised to turn and find myself face to face with a curious and particularly stealthy fox. I've been startled by bounding jackrabbits and I've documented sandhill cranes flying overhead. There's a feral orange tabby cat that's been a bankside resident for several seasons. It periodically darts away from its unseen favored hiding spots I dare to stumble upon. Several humans have left evidence of having similar, secluded resting spots well hidden from prying eyes.

Along with the ever present, invasive red eared pond slider turtles, bluegills, schools of a dozen or more monster carp and occasional shoals of threadfin shad, I've seen and photographed chinook salmon and steelhead in the river. There's a healthy population of gopher snakes and their namesake prey as well as at least 3 other species of terrestrial reptiles.



I'd bet a steak dinner that somewhere in the world of environmental science there's a complicated, challenging and arcane rubric that would help us determine, entirely objectively and without bias, whether this reach of the Calaveras is "wild and scenic". Or perhaps it's something less, if not simply an eyesore.

After spending a few hours each week strolling along and attending to this river for what will be 7 years come February 13, 2020, I'm going with wild and scenic.

Whether it's the Calaveras River or a valley oak tree in some nearby park or your neighbor's yard, I encourage you to attend to all the natural landscapes in Stockton's neighborhoods.



## COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

The Delta-Sierra Group, together with the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton, hosted Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 21 on the Calaveras River at Brookside and Pacific Avenue in Stockton.

We had 30 volunteers who participated. They collected about 953 pounds of trash along 2 miles of river front. Have you ever wondered how we know exactly how much trash is collected? Well Dick Abood filled out a form that looked this and sent it to the Ocean Conservancy.



The two men pushing the grocery carts are Dave Fries and Tom Romonda. They are not homeless.

APPENDIX E  
SITE CAPTAIN SUMMARY SHEET

\*\*\*\*\* Please In Data to Eruby by 1:30 p.m. \*\*\*\*\* (209) 663-1693

Your information is critical to the success of Coastal Cleanup Day. After the cleanup, please fill out this summary sheet and return it to your County Coordinator along with the liability waiver forms and data cards. Please return all these forms promptly at the end of the Cleanup.

SITE INFORMATION

Cleanup Location: Site #4 Sierra Club / Parklands

Site Captain's Name: Richard ABOOD

Captain's Phone Number: 209.663.1693 Captain's Email: raabod@pacnet.net

Check One: Coastal Cleanup  National Cleanup

At this site, did volunteers clean up (check all that apply):

On Land  On the Water (in a kayak, canoe, etc.)  Underwater (in this cleanup)

It also did not do an air-water cleanup. (Approx. 1000 yards north of this site, etc.)

STATISTICS

Total number of Cleanup Volunteers: 39

Total mileage, area cleaned by participants: 2 miles

How much trash and recycling did you collect?

WASTE TYPE (approx.)	WEIGHT	RECORDING
MISCELL.	<u>953 lbs</u>	<u>18162</u>

\*You may weigh a typical random sample and multiply the average weight per bag to get the total, or actually weigh all the bags. Please include how you got your total.

Substantial weight  Measured weight

Total number of bags used (if known): 2014 73 per

Number of volunteers who brought their own reusable cleanup supplies: 18

What unusual items found:

aluminum, party popper, English, My car

Please report any events, cleanup parties, concerns, or other unusual circumstances that happened at your cleanup:

Excellent coordination with homeless person

After posting to your web site, please return this summary sheet, the liability waiver, and data cards to your County Coordinator.

Thank you for participating in the 9th Annual Coastal Cleanup Day!



## FROM THE EDITOR



Because this October Steve Evans will speak about America's Wild and Scenic Rivers, Margo asked Jim Marsh to write an article about our own local Calaveras River. Jim has a unique writing style that makes you think you are trailing behind him, and you almost stepped on that snake! In addition to the article, we receive a bonus: some of his great photographs. Thank you Jim.



By email Jim and I wondered how many undammed rivers remain in California? The answer came from a conversation produced by Don Clyde and Lisa Pickoff-White.

"It depends on whom you ask. After speaking to several experts, we came up with a short list, including the Smith, the Clavey, the South Fork of the Trinity and the Mattole". According to Ron Stork, senior policy advocate for Friends of the River, only one river in the state is undammed from its source to the ocean: the Smith River tucked up in the northwest corner of California near the Oregon border.

But the Smith isn't the only answer we got. "The Cosumnes is the only major river that I know of that does not have a major dam on it," said Eli Ilano, deputy forest supervisor for the Tahoe National Forest, raising the question of what is considered a major river. "There is a small dam on the Cosumnes," Steve Rothert, the California Director at American Rivers pointed out. "I think it's now sort of defunct, but it does have a dam on it." Instead, Rothert pointed to a small tributary of the Tuolumne River. "Many people consider there to be one river that's not dammed in California and that's the Clavey River."

Others suggested the Mattole in the Lost Coast and the South Fork of the heavily dammed and diverted Trinity River. "It all depends what your definition of dam is", said Jeanine Jones, interstate resources manager for the California Department of Water Resources. "There are some rivers that people conventionally speak of as being undammed, but in fact have some small diversion dams on them." It also depends on what your definition of river is.

So there you have it. They all agree - IT DEPENDS!

JSTOR is a subscription website that provides access to more than 12 million academic journal articles, books, and primary sources in 75 disciplines. Having access to it, I searched for Sierra Club articles and found a few that might be of interest. You can find the JSTOR site at: <https://about.jstor.org>



"A Narrow Escape for the Willys" was taken during a 1923 automobile camping trip to Zion National Park, the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, southern Nevada, and eastern California. In addition to documenting the state of roads, campgrounds and national parks, ghost towns from the mining era, and native Indian life in the region, this and other photos illustrate the hazards of early automobile camping. Although the club would later become critical of the damage caused by auto use in wilderness areas, in the early days some Sierra Club people welcomed the cars for increasing accessibility and visitor use. Source: Sierra Club Pictorial Collections, Bancroft Library.



**We started recording weather temperatures in 1880.  
In 149 years, July 2019 was the hottest month on the planet.**

## RESTORE THE DELTA

Our friends at Restore The Delta have issued a massive 73 page report called *Climate Equity and Seismic Resilience for the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary*. You can download it here at this long active link:

[https://www.restorethedelta.org/wp-content/uploads/RTD\\_Climate\\_Equity\\_Report\\_2019\\_Final.pdf](https://www.restorethedelta.org/wp-content/uploads/RTD_Climate_Equity_Report_2019_Final.pdf)

At the very least you should read the Executive Summary at the beginning on pages v and vi.



## RIVER NAMES ON THE STAMPS PAGE 3 HOW MANY HAVE YOU SEEN?

First row, left to right: Merced River, Owyhee River, and Koyukuk River (Michael Melford, photographer).

Second row, left to right: Niobrara River (Michael Melford, photographer), Snake River and Flathead River (Tim Palmer, photographer).

Third row, left to right: Missouri River (Bob Wick, staff photographer for Bureau of Land Management), Skagit River (Tim Palmer, photographer), Deschutes River (Bob Wick, photographer).

Fourth row, left to right: Tlikakila River (Michael Melford, photographer), Ontonagon River (Tim Palmer, photographer), Clarion River (Bob Wick, photographer).



## AD HOC POLITICAL COMMITTEE

We are forming an ad hoc political committee to focus on 2020 election endorsements for State Assembly and State Senate in our area. If you are interested in working on this committee, contact Margo Praus at this email address: [margopraus@msn.com](mailto:margopraus@msn.com)



# Job Announcement

## Stockton/San Joaquin County Community Outreach Specialist

The Climate Center seeks a qualified individual interested in serving as a part-time "Community Outreach Specialist" to advance Community Choice Energy in the City of Stockton as part of its statewide Clean Power Exchange (CPX) program.

### Program Description

The program goal is to establish a Community Choice Energy agency (CCA) to serve Stockton business and residential customers. The CPX program marries two critical issues, climate protection and social justice, and emphasizes information sharing via the CPX website. More program information can be found at:

<https://cleanpowerexchange.org/central-valley/>

### Required Qualifications

Bachelor's degree and/or five or more years of relevant experience

Preferred Qualifications:

Reside within the city of Stockton

Well-connected in the community, including Stockton elected leaders and city staff

Strong written and verbal communications skills

Bilingual English/Spanish

Experience in community organizing or public policy advocacy

Experience and/or demonstrated knowledge of energy policy

Key roles and activities

Working closely with Climate Center staff,

Track activities in Stockton related to Community Choice Energy

Represent the Center and the CPX program to local elected officials and government staff

Note your association with the Center/CPX on matters related to CCA

Attend city council meetings and make presentations, as appropriate

Write articles/blogs on a regular basis on topics related to CCA and recruit other community members to do the same

Use social media to build support for Community Choice Energy

Provide updates to Center staff at least weekly about relevant developments including news articles, Stockton city council agendas and/or minutes, business communications, etc.

### Desired Qualities

Inspiring communicator - able to make the case for establishing Community Choice Energy in a constructive, positive, non-partisan, non-political way  
Well-networked with a wide spectrum of community leaders and organizations  
Savvy in social media and willing to tap personal social network in Stockton to support the effort  
Politically attuned, credible, responsible, upbeat, well-organized, and emotionally intelligent  
Communicative and responsive with the Center's CPX team  
Able and willing to make a commitment to the work through June 2020  
Willing to become knowledgeable about Community Choice Energy.  
Location: Employee will be expected to work from their location in the Stockton community to have their own resources in place, including personal transportation.

### How to Apply:

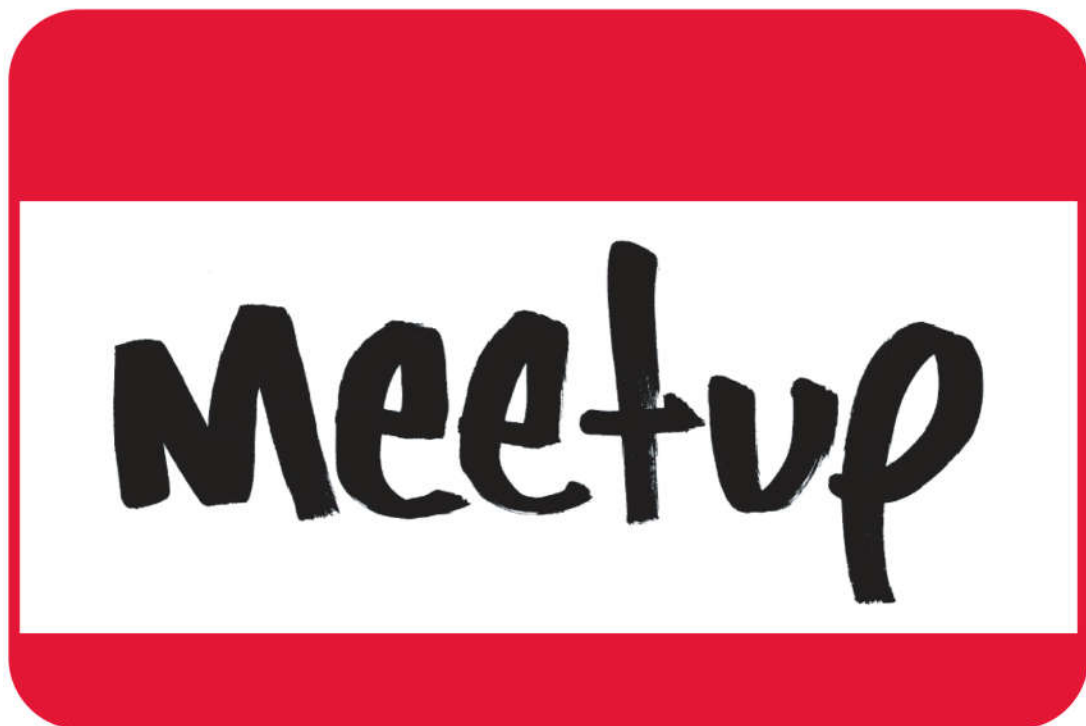
To apply for Stockton Community Outreach Specialist, please send a cover letter and resume to this email address: [info@cleanpowerexchange.org](mailto:info@cleanpowerexchange.org)  
The Climate Center mission: Deliver speed and scale greenhouse gas reductions, starting in California.



Photo - Pete Sanders

**Stockton, Modesto & Sonora Sierra Club Groups**  
**Find us at this active link:**

<https://www.meetup.com/S-M-S-SierraClub/members/28813452/>



**We have been meeting since October 2011 and now have 1862 members. You can find many of our local Sierra Club activities posted here.**



## Executive Committee and Email Addresses

You must copy and paste an email address into your email program.

Chair: Margo Praus  
[margopraus@msn.com](mailto:margopraus@msn.com)

Vice Chair & Membership Chair: Paul Plathe  
[gorgescramble@comcast.net](mailto:gorgescramble@comcast.net)

Treasurer & Chapter Delegate: Richard Abood  
[rabood@pacific.edu](mailto:rabood@pacific.edu)

Secretary & Alternate Chapter Delegate: Steve Harvath  
[harvath.steve@gmail.com](mailto:harvath.steve@gmail.com)

Conservation Chair & Web Master: Mary Elizabeth  
[mebeth@outlook.com](mailto:mebeth@outlook.com)

Program Chair: Margo Praus  
[margopraus@msn.com](mailto:margopraus@msn.com)

Executive Member: Knute Momberg  
[knutemomberg@att.net](mailto:knutemomberg@att.net)

Newsletter: Robert Evans  
[reevans101@gmail.com](mailto:reevans101@gmail.com)





**SIERRA  
CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

DELTA-SIERRA GROUP  
P.O. BOX 9258  
STOCKTON, CA 95208

**THE LAST PAGE**



**Please recycle  
the Peatduster  
by sending an  
email copy to  
your friends.**



**“If you wait, at the right moment, the sun’s rays hit the Earth where you’re actually able to see the thickness of the atmosphere. I became an instant tree-hugger. I became an instant environmentalist. I saw the atmosphere was scary thin. It looked so thin, so fragile, that I immediately told myself, The environmentalists are right.”**

**Jose Hernandez, Astronaut, Stockton, California**

**Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.**