

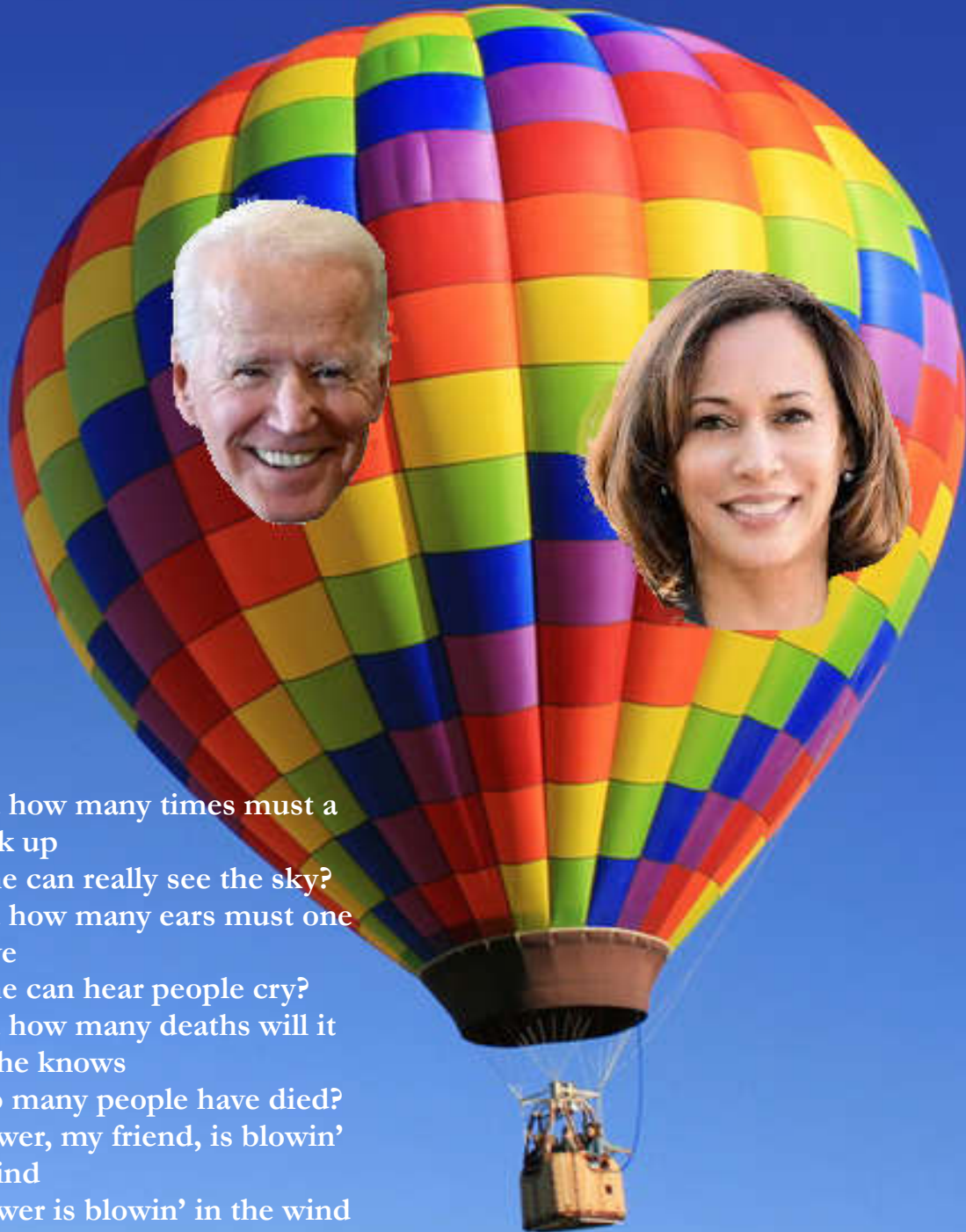
# PEATDUSTER

Volume 5 1-5 Number P-1

Delta-Sierra Group Newsletter

November December 2020

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



Yes, and how many times must a  
man look up  
Before he can really see the sky?  
Yes, and how many ears must one  
man have  
Before he can hear people cry?  
Yes, and how many deaths will it  
take 'til he knows  
That too many people have died?  
The answer, my friend, is blowin'  
in the wind  
The answer is blowin' in the wind

**The Sierra Club - Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet**

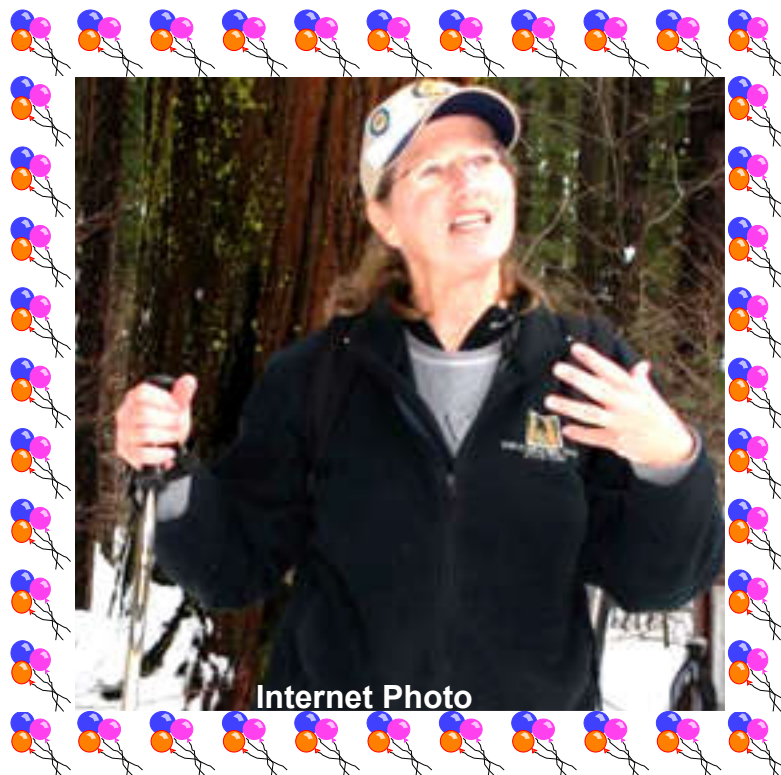
# Water Harvest

**Our First Virtual Joint Meeting with Audubon**

**Tuesday October 13, 2020 7 PM In Your Home**

Join Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Nancy Muleady-Mecham for this insightful presentation on water, its properties, occurrence, use, and power. She will discuss nature, history, location and use our precious resources here in California.

Click on this link to the Meetup Events page, then Attend:  
<https://www.meetup.com/S-M-S-SierraClub/events/>



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

## FROM THE EDITOR - BITS AND PIECES

### SAME OL' SAME OL'

Not much has changed since Bob Dylan wrote *Blowin' In The Wind* released May 1963 on his album *Freewheelin'*.

We were in Vietnam for an inconvenient war and racial tensions were high evidenced by riots in Watts, 1965; police brutality of Rodney King, 1965; the creation of the Black Panther Party, 1966. Then in May 1970 we witnessed the Kent State Massacre. Twenty-eight National Guard soldiers fired approximately 67 rounds over a period of 13 seconds, killing four students and wounding nine others.



The lyrics are the same; only the topics and issues are slightly different. The wars are China trade, COVID 19 with 209K dead USA, 1052K dead worldwide and growing, and continued conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq. Racial tensions are high presented to us via graphic videos. Oh, the planet is dying. Almost forgot that. Please **VOTE EARLY** before November 3rd. The winds of change may bring our balloon to a new place of hope.

### BALLOT CAPERS

Last month we reported that it was nearly impossible to vote by mail in Texas, unless you had a serious excuse and the risk of getting the virus is not one of them. An article in Mother Jones corrected that. If you are over 65 you can get a mail-in ballot with little hassle. The theory behind that is most of the population over 65 is Republican! Go figure.

We will all get a mail-in ballot with return postage paid. The United States Postal System sent out a postcard notice confirming they will deliver all mail-in ballots. For sure **VOTE EARLY**. San Joaquin County has a phone number you can call (209-468-2890) to check the status of your mail-in ballot. However, you may be able to find out at this link:

<https://www.sjgov.org/departments/rov/vote-by-mail>

As a precaution, I intend to scan the back of my ballot on my flatbed scanner in case a handwriting expert finds my signature a little shaky.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

## CALIFORNIA SIERRA CLUB RECOMMENDS

Joe Biden President with Kamala Harris Vice President



### Congress

House, District 1: Audrey Denney (Democrat)

House, District 4: Brynne Kennedy (Democrat)

House, District 6: Doris Matsui (Democrat Incumbent)

House, District 7: Ami Bera (Democrat Incumbent)

House, District 9: Jerry McNerney (Democrat Incumbent)

House, District 10: Josh Harder (Democrat Incumbent)

### California Legislature

Senate District 3: Bill Dodd (Democrat Incumbent)

Senate District 5: Susan Eggman (Democrat)

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.



## Proposition 15 - The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2020 **YES**

The measure closes commercial property tax loopholes that benefit corporations and wealthy investors and reclaims \$12 billion every year to fund schools and strengthen local economies. This does not affect homeowners or renters property tax. Ever since its passage by voters, Prop 13 has reduced funds for local government services, including schools and parks. This is the first structural and equitable tax reform of Prop 13.

## Proposition 16 - Repeal Proposition 209 Affirmative Action Amendment **YES**

California voters passed Proposition 209 in 1996, which banned affirmative action at state institutions. Proposition 16 will once again allow schools and public agencies to consider race, sex, gender, and ethnicity when making admission, hiring or contracting decisions. It will create real opportunities for all Californians.

Sierra Club embraces efforts to ensure that equity and social justice are incorporated into public policy. Proposition 16 does that and also helps ensure that everyone will have an equitable chance to play a key role in learning about or becoming leaders in environmental policy.

## Proposition 17 - Voting Rights Restoration for Persons on Parole Amendment **YES**

Californians who have completed their prison sentence should not have their voting rights denied. Proposition 17 would amend the state constitution to allow Californians who have completed their prison term to vote. Support for this measure is aligned with the Club's commitment towards Diversity, Justice and Inclusion.



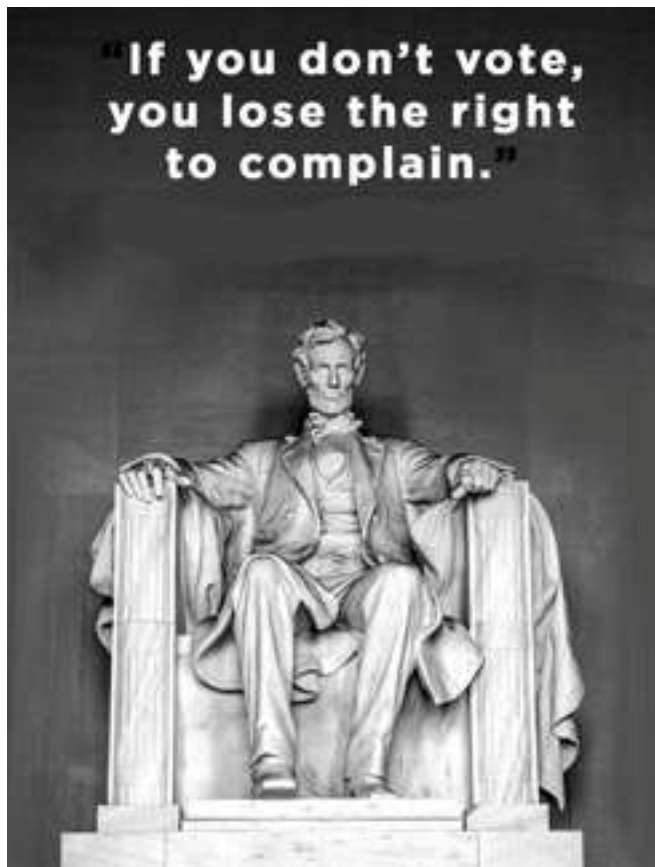
Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

## Proposition 22 - App-Based Drivers as Contractors and Labor Policies Initiative **NO**

The initiative would consider app-based drivers to be independent contractors and not employees or agents. If passed Proposition 22 would override Assembly Bill 5, which Sierra Club California supported and the legislature passed in 2019.

Independent contractors are not covered by various state employment laws. Instead, the drivers would be subject to the labor and wage policies specific to the app-based companies.

Proposition 22 would deny drivers the basic rights to earning the minimum wage for all hours worked, social security, reimbursements for their costs, overtime pay, and the right to organize. It would also discourage transportation network companies from taking responsibility for reducing tailpipe emissions from cars used in their network.



George Carlin Quote

## Proposition 25 - Replace Cash Bail with Risk Assessments Referendum **YES**

The initiative would replace cash bail with risk assessments for detained suspects awaiting trials. The cash bail system is inherently discriminatory and antithetical to our values of justice, fairness and racial equity. By charging people non refundable fees for pretrial release, the bail industry makes billions of dollars off of vulnerable individuals in dire circumstances, especially people most affected by racial and economic inequities. This measure upholds SB 10, the original legislation that Sierra Club California supported and the legislature passed in 2018.

## Highway Charging Stations

Interstate 5, the primary north-south highway on the West Coast, will soon be more equipped to provide power to electrified vehicles. Nine West Coast electric utilities, two agencies, and numerous sponsors collaborated to commission a study to support these efforts, titled the *West Coast Clean Transit Corridor Initiative*, which has proposed a roadmap for electrifying 1,300 miles of 1-5 for freight haulers and delivery trucks. Check it out here: <https://www.hdrinc.com/portfolio/west-coast-clean-transit-corridor-initiative>

The initiative recommends the installation of 27 charging sites in 50-mile intervals along the length of the highway. Through 2025, these sites will serve mostly medium-duty trucks, and will later phase into serving heavy duty trucks. Simultaneously, 41 supplementary charging sites will be added to arterial highways that branch off of 1-5.

## Drive Electric Week

The 10th annual National Drive Electric Week was streamed this year as a webinar (a seminar conducted over the Internet) on September 26, 2020. There was discussion about the basics of electric vehicles, environmental benefits, and financial incentives available in San Joaquin Valley. If you missed it, you can view it on your computer at this YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1H05Dmzdm4&feature=youtu.be>

There is also a Meetup dedicated to EV cars. Dave Atherton of Manteca has been a force behind organizing efforts in our area and hosts the MeetUp site where you can see and share what is happening about electric vehicles in the San Joaquin Valley. Ownership and expertise are not required. Here is the link:

<https://www.meetup.com/eaasjv/>



The Electric VW Van

## LET'S PHASE OUT ALL SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

Jim Cooper (Democratic Party) is a member of the California State Assembly, representing District 9. He assumed office on December 1, 2014 and his current term ends on December 6, 2020. He is on the ballot in the general election on November 3, 2020. In the past, Sierra Club supported him. In the state legislative session September 1, Assembly Member Cooper voted NO for Senate Bill 54 which would have phased out single-use plastic packaging in California. The bill failed with 37 Ayes, 18 Noes and 24 NVR (No Vote Recorded).

Sierra Club Director Kathryn Phillips sent out a petition asking us to express our disappointment. These petitions contain boiler plate language, but we could add a comment. I added a comment requesting he respond with his reason(s) for this newsletter. Jim Cooper did not reply.

## GOOD INTENTIONS

It is difficult to read, but this plastic bag was made in California from plastic collected on our ocean beaches. It came as a very dark grey in color, but it was lightened up in Photoshop for this report. The important text says,

*“Ocean Plastic Reduce Ocean Pollution. Saving our ocean by recycling plastic collected off the beaches before it goes into the ocean. That’s why this bag is grey. Turn the Tide on ocean pollution and poverty.”*

The company behind it is Crown Poly located in Huntington Park, California which is just south of Las Angeles. They have a website you can visit:

<https://www.crownpoly.com>

For the record this is just another plastic bag that could wind up in the ocean again! A recent study revealed that a plastic bag, like the kind given away at grocery stores, is now the deepest known piece of plastic trash, found at a depth of 10,975 meters (36,000 feet) inside the Mariana Trench.





## NEW RECORD - WANT TO BREAK IT?

Susan Alcorn who once spoke at one our meetings, has written a few books such as *Camino Chronicle: Walking to Santiago* and *Patagonia Chronicle: On Foot in Torres del Paine* available at Amazon.com and she also produces an Interesting newsletter. In her Backpacking & Hiking Tales and Tips, #255 September 2020, she mentions the email she received from George Graybill about the John Muir Trail record.

“Hello Susan, I believe you need to update your oldest person to hike the John Muir Trail record. I’m 80 years old and I just completed the trail North to South in 20 and 1/2 days. I left Happy Isles at noon on 7/29/2020 and arrived at Whitney Portal at 5:30 p.m. on 8/18/2020. That is 20 days 5 hours and 30 minutes, which included one rest day at Vermillion Valley Resort and the side trip to Whitney summit. My exact age at the finish was 80 years and 32 days. Hate to brag, but it just wasn't all that hard. The picture is of my son, Dan, and I on the summit. (He is the tall one.) ...and, no, he did not carry any of my gear or food. Cheers, George Graybill”



Internet Photo

The John Muir Trail begins in Yosemite National Park and travels 210 miles along the High Sierra mountain range through the Ansel Adams Wilderness, John Muir Wilderness, Sequoia National Park, and Kings Canyon National Park, culminating at the highest peak in continental United States, Mount Whitney.

Elevation at Happy Isles is about 4000 feet and the elevation at Mount Whitney Portal is 8360 feet. Before you conclude this was an easy stroll you should know the trail crosses six mountain passes over 11,000 feet from north to south. They are Donohue Pass, Muir Pass, Mather Pass, Pinchot Pass, Glen Pass, and Forester Pass. At 13,117 feet, Forester Pass is also the highest point along the Pacific Crest Trail.



Photo - REE

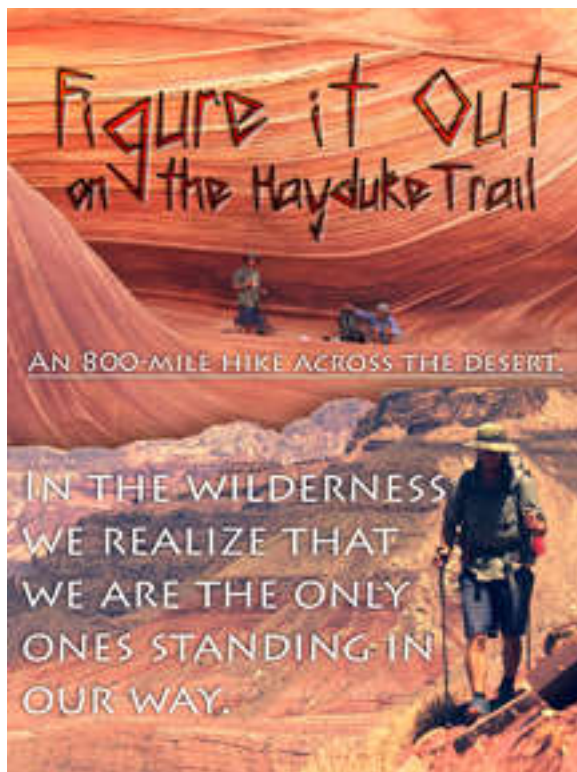
## OTHER TRAILS

The Pacific Crest Trail is 2,653 miles long and ranges in elevation from just above sea level at the Oregon - Washington border to 13,153 at Forester Pass in the Sierra Nevada. It passes through 25 national forests and 7 national parks. Its midpoint is near Chester, California and you pass over the trail as you enter Lassen National Park driving from Chester.

The trail's southern terminus is just south of Campo, California by the U.S. border with Mexico, and its northern terminus is on the Canada - US border on the edge of Manning Park in British Columbia. Timing is everything and it is important to pass through the southern desert before it gets too hot, yet not too soon that the snow hasn't melted in the high mountains.

Some extreme hikers have made the trip north and returned in four months. However, they moved so fast they didn't see Bigfoot.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail as it is officially called is about 2,200 miles as some sections may be slightly altered. Some 2 million people are said to take a hike on part of the trail at least once each year (before COVID 19). It starts at Springer Mountain and ends at Mount Katahdin in Maine. It passes through 14 states: Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.



You may not have heard of the Hayduke Trail. It is about 812 miles long, but could be 900 miles and it is not always a trail. Sometimes it is a dirt road, a jeep road, a paved road or a walk in the Escalante River. Most of the time it is a strenuous cross country backpack with dangerous access up and down canyons. More accurately, it is a series of specific points on a map that constitute the trail.

It begins north of Arches National Park near Moab, Utah, before heading through the Needles district of Canyonlands National Park, Capitol Reef National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, the Grand Canyon National Park and ending in Zion

National Park. Some of those points you want to find represent the only water source for miles around. Amazon Prime is showing a wonderful extended version of the documentary covering a trip made by Alex Maier. However, you can view a shorter 50 minute YouTube video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWqK7LMW-5U>





Other famous American trails include the Continental Divide Trail, 3100 miles with a journey through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana; the Long Trail in Vermont at 272 miles; the 770 mile Grand Enchantment Trail in Arizona and New Mexico; the 210 mile long Ozark Highlands Trail in Arkansas; the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin which is 1200 miles long; and the Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota being 296 miles long. You may have noticed that the Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail is not mentioned. It's not finished, but may become a famous hiking/floating trail because parts of it require you float down the Mokelumne River from Camanche Reservoir through Lodi to the Delta.

### CALL THE PLUMBER

Several U.S. pipeline projects were blocked or stopped this July according to an article in *Mother Earth News*. The construction and expansion of all of these pipelines have faced Indigenous-led criticism and resistance for years because of the danger they pose to human and ecological health.

Dominion Energy and Duke Energy canceled construction of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which would've stretched through West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina, across the Appalachian Trail. These companies cited legal uncertainty and rising costs as factors behind their decision. That uncertainty partially stems from ongoing litigation brought against large scale, fossil-fueled infrastructures such as these pipelines.

A day after this decision, a federal judge ordered the Dakota Access Pipeline which runs from North Dakota to southern Illinois and carries oil below both the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, to be emptied because of insufficient environmental assessments. The plaintiffs in the case included the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, which have resisted this pipeline since 2016. You might recall several high profile demonstrations that were met with military equipment. However, the court ordered shutdown was later challenged in an appeals court, which issued a temporary stay on the decision, allowing the pipeline to keep flowing oil as of mid August.



The U.S Supreme Court voted to maintain a lower-court ruling that blocked a key permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, prohibiting construction across waterways and delaying the project, Keystone XL runs from Alberta, Canada, to refineries in Illinois and Texas, and its construction has also been met with widespread criticism because of its intrusion through critical water supplies and wetland ecosystems including the Sandhills, a region in Sheridan County, Nebraska.

Zurich Insurance, the biggest insurer of the Trans Mountain Pipeline announced that it would not renew its insurance policy after expiration. Pipelines require insurance to legally transport oil, so the removal of a major insurer's financial backing has big implications for a pipeline's success.

### BIRD DEATH REDUCED

As reported by Ars Technica, according to a study conducted at a wind farm on the Norwegian archipelago of Smøla, changing the color of a single blade on a turbine from white to black resulted in a 70 percent drop in the number of bird deaths. At the Smøla wind farm, regular checks of four particular wind turbines, each 70 meters (230 feet) tall with three 40 meter-long (131 feet) blades, found six white-tailed eagle carcasses between 2006 and 2013. In total, the four turbines killed 18 birds that flew into the blades over those six years, along with five willow ptarmigans that are known to collide with the turbine towers rather than the blades. Another four turbines selected as a control group were responsible for seven bird deaths, excluding willow ptarmigans, over the same timeframe.



Wind turbines kill between 214,000 and 368,000 birds annually, compared with the 6.8 million fatalities from collisions with cell and radio towers and the 1.4 billion to 3.7 billion deaths from cats according to a study from [www.treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com)

## COMMUNITY CHOICE ENERGY

In the last issue of the Peatduster which you can find at on our website, we started the conversation about providing an alternate energy source. Another step was taken when Margo Praus, representing Delta-Sierra Group and 8 other influential organizations signed a letter to San Joaquin County Supervisors urging them to consider establishing a Community Choice Energy program to address blackouts, air pollution and recession. We are providing the full text of that letter dated September 14, 2020.

Dear San Joaquin County Supervisors:

PG&E's latest rolling blackouts highlight more than ever the need for Stockton and San Joaquin County to join the movement around the state to form a local Community Choice Energy program. Community Choice Energy allows local governments to buy energy for their residents and businesses while keeping costs similar to or lower than the existing utilities in their service areas. Over time, the millions of dollars they earn in power generation revenues can be reinvested into the community for specific needs. This is precisely the kind of economic innovation San Joaquin County should be pursuing in its post-COVID roadmap.

In mid-August, hundreds of thousands of residents had their power shut off in a record-breaking heatwave. This is especially disconcerting for vulnerable, elderly individuals surviving on breathing machines and lower-income households having to pay more to replace the frozen and refrigerated foods they lost to the sweltering heat.

We're already facing a myriad of compounding challenges with the COVID- 19 pandemic and dangerously poor air quality due to a number of polluting sources in the county. In South Stockton, in particular, a toxic cocktail of wildfire smoke, heavy truck traffic on the Interstate 5 and Crosstown Freeway, ships entering the port, and other pollutants have ongoing serious health impacts. County asthma rates are 7% higher than the state average. These local challenges have united a group of residents to monitor local air quality in South Stockton, with funding from State Assembly Bill 617, developing data that could be used to inform policy solutions.

Although PG&E would still be in charge of delivering the electricity on their transmission lines for the Community Choice agency, we could make enormous progress in building capacity in the energy arena allowing us to create a more resilient future for San Joaquin County that doesn't involve cutting power off in triple-digit weather. Many of the state's 21 Community Choice agencies have invested millions of dollars into solar and battery-backup storage systems to help prevent the impacts of mass power outages.

They've also launched programs to help their customers pay for electric vehicles and install charging stations. Transportation is a large source of air pollution in San Joaquin County, and this would certainly be something a local Community Choice agency could address.

While we're encouraged that the City of Stockton is stepping up to look into the benefits of Community Choice Energy, we need leadership at the county level to take a hard look at how launching this program could best serve county residents going forward. For one, it could make sure we're doing everything we can to provide backup power during heatwaves and address local air quality concerns using the data residents will be collecting with new air quality monitors as a part of AB 617.

Please consider establishing a Community Choice Energy program for the future generations of San Joaquin County. A first step would be to place consideration of pursuing an evaluation of Community Choice Energy on a future Board of Supervisors meeting agenda as an informational item.

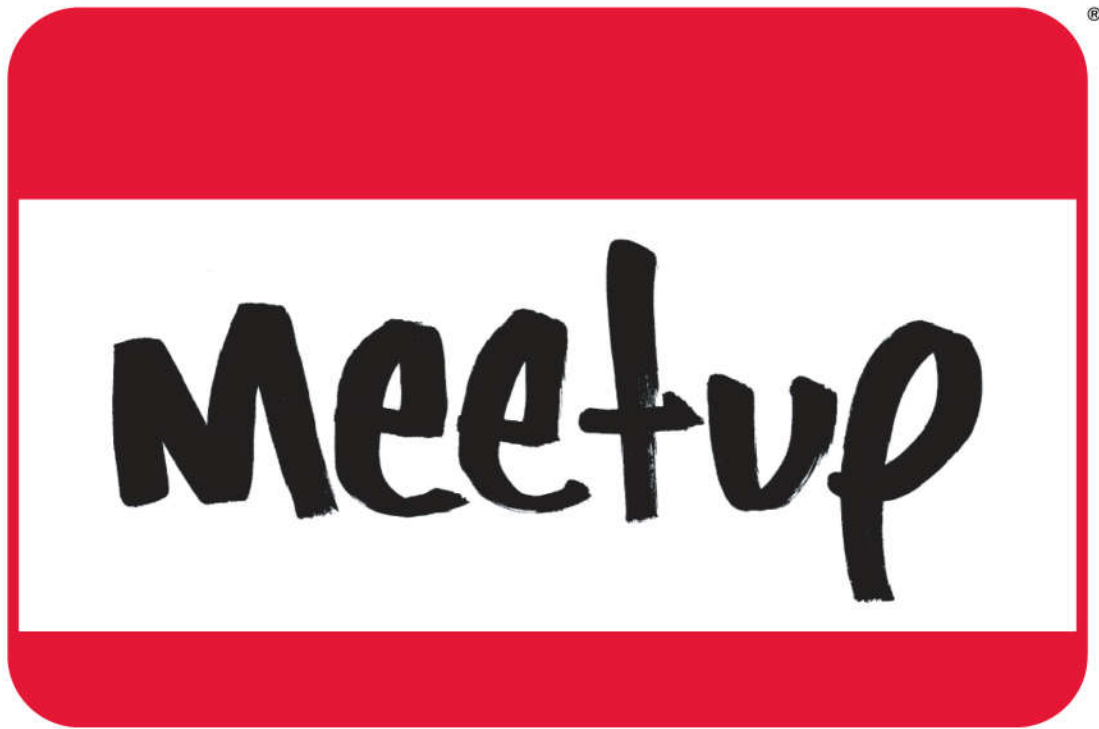
Sincerely,

Margo Praus, Chair Delta-Sierra Group; Kenda Templeton, Executive Director - PUENTES; Jasmine Leek, Managing Director Third City Coalition; Harold Goldstein, DrPH, Executive Director Public Health Advocates; Dillon Delvo, Executive Director Little Manila Rising; Dave Atherton, Chapter President Electric Auto Association San Joaquin Valley; Pastor Curtis Smith, Regional Director of Clergy Formation Faith in the Valley; Jonathan Pruitt, Environmental Justice Program Coordinator Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton; Katelyn Roedner Sutter, Lodi resident and Environmental Justice advocate.

Photo: Knute Momberg

**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 in operation since October 2011 and now have 2007 members. You can find many of our local Sierra Club activities posted there.**



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



## 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)



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.



**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.**



*“I don't think whole populations are villainous, but Americans are just extraordinarily unaware of all kinds of things. If you live in the middle of that vast continent, with apparently everything your heart could wish for just because you were born there, then why worry? If people lose knowledge, sympathy and understanding of the natural world, they're going to mistreat it and will not ask their politicians to care for it.”*

*David Attenborough*

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