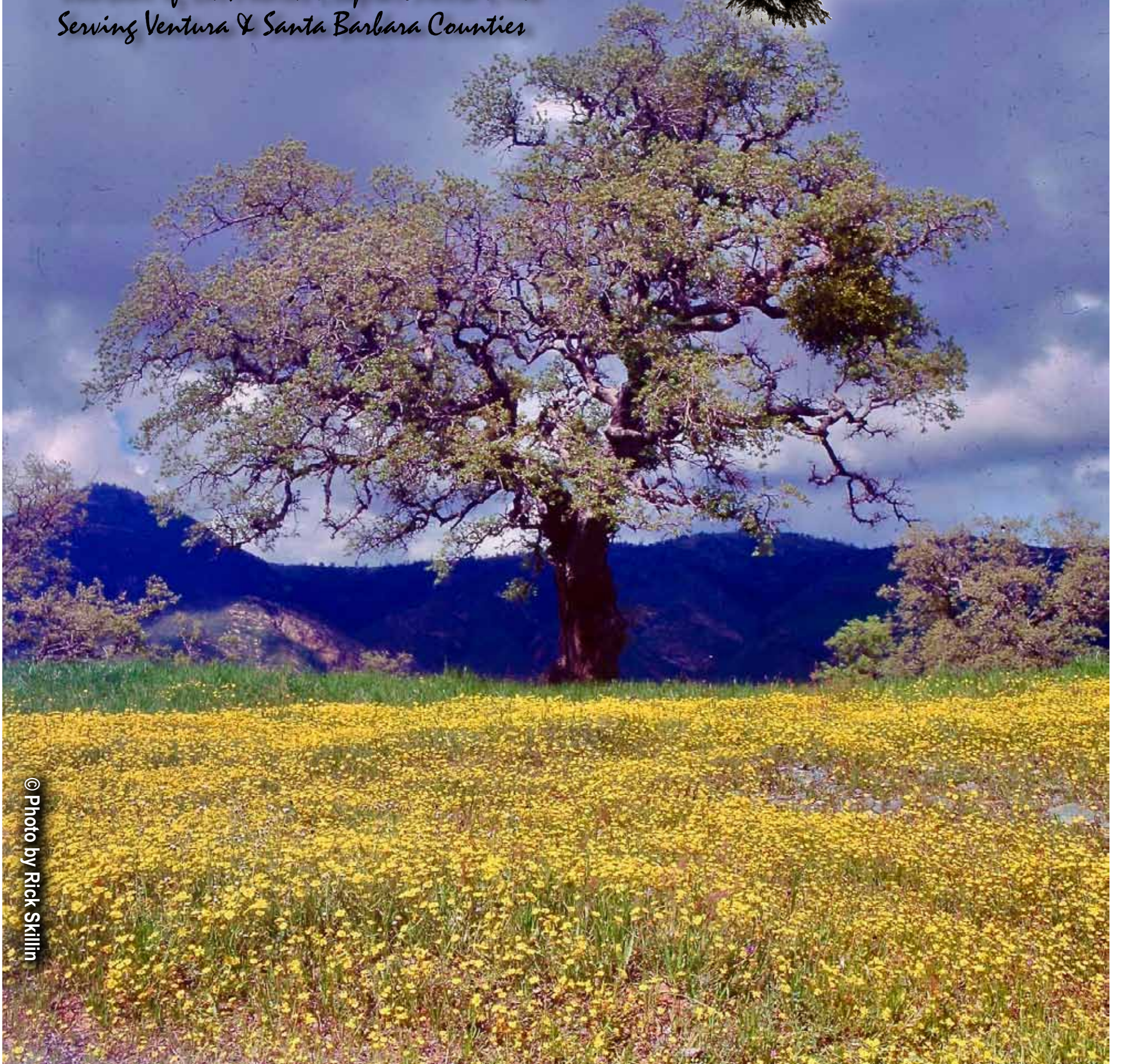


Vol. 22, No. 2 of 6

April - May 2022

# Condor Call

Journal of Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club  
Serving Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties



© Photo by Rick Skillin

Oil wars ...EV-Earth Day ... Saunter ... Wildlife ... Climate

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# Sierra Club's Earth Day

This Earth Day, officially April 22, the Sierra Club -- alongside our partners in the broader movement -- will be rallying in the streets in cities and towns across the country. It's time to make sure our leaders know we are calling on them to deliver bold systems-level change, and to deliver it now.

The theme for Earth Day 2022 is "Invest in our Planet, What would you do?"

In an email sent out to all club members nationwide and otherwise in mid-March, the club is rallying with the cry, "This is the moment to change it all -- the business climate, the political climate, and how we take action on climate. Now is the time for the unstoppable courage to preserve and protect our health, our families, our livelihoods ... together, we must Invest in Our Planet ... Because a green future is a prosperous future."

The club is partnering with Sunrise Movement, the Green New Deal Network, SEIU, and other climate justice, labor, and progressive movement partners to host a nationwide mobilization to crank up the pressure on local and national elected representatives to meet the crises we face by investing

in climate action, care and clean energy jobs, and justice.

The American people elected President Biden and a Democratic majority in Congress on this transformational vision, but special interests have wielded their influence to block progress, steamrolling the will of the people.

Martin Witchger, a senior Online Organizer for the club said, "I see incredible resiliency and generosity of neighbors helping neighbors: Community gardens and child care. Mini food pantries and mutual aid circles. Solar panels added to rooftops of homes and businesses."

"I see courage and determination: Single mothers running for local office, workers unionizing to demand better wages, students pushing their city councils to go 100% renewable."

"All of this gives me hope, even when things feel dark. We know what our communities and our climate need, and there are so many of us working towards that vision. The individual and collective actions we each take are building that healthier, sustainable future."

To get involved, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/ClubMobilizing>



## MEANWHILE

# Big oil didn't get the memo

By Katie Davis  
Chapter Chair

## Big Oil vs. Ventura County

For decades, oil and gas production has threatened the health and safety of those who live, work, learn, and play in Ventura County by exposing communities to harmful air pollution and contributing to the catastrophic effects of climate change.

The County finally acted by closing the permitting loophole that allows oil and gas companies to expand their drilling operations without environmental review. The County also enacted buffers between oil development and homes, which California's Scientific Advisory Panel concluded are needed to protect public health.

Aera Energy wants to reopen the permitting loophole, erase the setbacks and public health protection measures, and try to prevent other counties from enacting similar policies in the future. ExxonMobil owns Aera, which is the largest onshore producer in the County.

With Aera taking a leading role, the oil industry is currently engaged in a multi-pronged attack on the County's fossil fuel policies, which includes eleven lawsuits and two June 2022 ballot measures A and B.

## Big Oil vs. County Vote

The oil industry is pouring millions of dollars into defeating Measures A and B, the showdown on the June ballot.

The industry put them on the ballot after the County acted and closed the 'grandfather' permit loophole that had enabled oil projects to avoid basic environmental review, oversight and mitigation.

Those ancient permits, covering thousands of active and idle wells in Ventura County, were issued without expiration dates or limits on the number of wells that could be drilled.

In November 2020, the Ventura Supervisors closed this loophole by establishing a single, consistent permitting and environmental review process for all new oil and gas development regardless of the age of the original permit.

Now the industry launched a petition drive to put these measures on the June 2022 ballot. By doing so, they succeeded in suspending the rules which otherwise would have gone into effect in December 2020. If Measures A and B pass in June, the rules finally go into effect.

The oil industry is now putting an unprecedented amount of money into defeating Measures A and B so the rules



## EXXON DENIED

# Read the signs of the times

By Jon Ullman

Chapter Director

On March 8, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors ended ExxonMobil's quixotic bid to reactivate three 1980s offshore oil wells and move its oil via trucks.

Exxon's proposal would entail moving the crude onto 24,800 tanker trucks annually, driving the equivalent of a rolling firebomb up CA 101 along the Gaviota Coast past commuters and tourists, across windswept, fire-ridden coastlines, up steep mountain passes, through urban centers, over rivers into aquifers, and nationally protected monuments and forests and up a craggy two-lane Rt. 166 with a 55-mph speed to market.

It took seven years, but local Sierra Club activists, unyielding allies and tested officials defeated one of the largest energy companies in the world. In a split 3-2 vote, Supervisors Joan Hartmann, Gregg Hart and Das Williams commented that the project benefits did not outweigh the risks, while North County Supervisors Steve Lavagnino and Bob Nelson supported the trucking proposal.

But it really took an entire generation of Santa Barbara citizens fighting.



Kate Mullin, Luz Reyes-Martin, Emily Engel and her children at Exxon rally in front of the County Administration building rallying against its trucking proposal. Photo by Gabriel Vargas

## The lease

The problems began on Feb. 6, 1968, when the Johnson Administration awarded 18 wildcat leases off the Gaviota Coast to what would become ExxonMobil. Among the 72 leases given that day, one within a year would produce the largest offshore oil disaster in US history. The 1969 Santa Barbara Spill from Unocal's Platform A would unleash an environmental movement and a new era of environmental laws. But even that could not stop the drilling.

Four days into the Ford Administration, acting Secretary of the Interior John C. Whitaker gave approval for the first Exxon platform to go in. Despite massive public opposition, Santa Barbara

County Supervisors voted 3-2 the following year to approve an onshore oil and gas refinery in Las Flores Canyon near El Capitan.

## Install

On June 23, 1976, Platform Hondo, an 11-story skyscraper of steel atop the waterline was bolted to the ocean floor five miles from Refugio Beach, site of the Ortega family ranch and the Chumash village of Quasil. Platform Harmony would rise even taller at 12-stories above water in June 1989. A third 11-story tall drilling platform called Heritage joined four months later. Oil was transported by ship and by truck.

Between 1987 and 1994, 130 miles of pipeline were installed between Las Flores Canyon and the Pentland Delivery Point in Kern County. The pipeline also connected to three other platforms, Hidalgo, Harvest and Hermosa owned by a different oil company in federal waters farther north.

## Rupture

Then, on May 19, 2015, at 11:30 a.m. a Plains All-American Pipeline control room operator in Midland, TX,

*continued on page ?*

## COVER PHOTO

This may a reason why Rick Skillin is back in town, a scene he took along Figueroa Mountain. Way back he was our treasured Chapter Chair for a long time, then he left for other pastures. Welcome back Rick.

# Choose our leaders

We hope members will take this opportunity to exercise one of the most important responsibilities of your membership and vote for the Sierra Club Board of Directors. It will take only a few moments of your time, but the impact to our organization, our mission, and our planet will be far reaching.

The deadline for casting your ballot is 9am Pacific Time, April 27.

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the Sierra Club. The Board has the responsibility and authority to oversee all staff and volunteer activities of Sierra Club, to establish Sierra Club's conservation priorities and internal policies, and to adopt and implement our annual budget. The Board of Directors elects Sierra Club's officers, including the President and the rest of the

Executive Committee, and will select Sierra Club's next Executive Director. Their strong leadership and dedication are critical to the ongoing effectiveness of the Sierra Club.

Voting is quick and easy: Go to: <https://vote.escvote.com/sierra>

For more information on candidates and the importance of voting, go to <https://tinyurl.com/VoteClubLeaders>

If you have any questions about voting online, please contact Election Services Co. 1-866-720-4357 or by email at [sierraclub@electionservicescorp.com](mailto:sierraclub@electionservicescorp.com)

Thank you for your continued support of the Sierra Club and for your participation in the 2022 Board of Directors election.

*continued on page 2*

# Big Oil...

*continued from page 1*

Ventura County's commonsense health and safety regulations.

"The 2040 General Plan is a precedent-setting blueprint for a clean energy future — created by and for the people of Ventura County. Aera's opposition to these common-sense public health and environmental protections is a last-ditch attempt to reinstate the 'business-as-usual' processes they previously benefited from," said Shannon Simpson, executive director at CFROG. "We support the court's rejection of Aera's blatant attempts to silence community voices — whose health and wellbeing have come second to oil profits, for far too long."

Sierra Club and our allies are represented by Earthjustice and Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP, nationally recognized law firms that understand the importance of defending local governments' ability to engage in basic land use planning and protect residents' health and safety.

"It is essential for courts to safeguard the authority of state and local governments to protect frontline communities from the harmful health impacts of oil and gas production," said Elizabeth Fisher, senior attorney at Earthjustice. "Ventura County prioritized the health and wellbeing of its residents, and we intend to defend these critical protections in court."

## Compressor Study fails

From March 29 to April 2nd SoCalGas held a series of public forums to share a "Feasibility Study" of options for their planned replacement and expansion of a Ventura Compressor Station that pushes natural gas through their pipe system out to a Santa Barbara County storage field near

UCSB.

The Study was requested by the Public Utilities Commission after intense community opposition to expansion on their existing site next to EP Foster Elementary School on Ventura's Westside where leaks and health impacts have been an on-going problem. The Study evaluated some less-populated alternative locations but dismissed them because of the "uncertainty" and "time to permit and construct" at a new location, making the Study appear to be an empty exercise and simply a justification for SoCalGas' existing plan, albeit with the possible addition of electric compressors along with the gas compressors.

The Study fell far short of traditional environmental review. There was no analysis of whether so much compression is needed given reduced demand from building electrification, and not a single alternative considered fewer compressors or less capacity. Nor did the Study evaluate the explosion and leak risks posed by the Ventura compressors and gas storage facility in Goleta, despite a 2015 disastrous release at a similar storage facility near Porter Ranch.

The Study also did not consider the climate impacts of fracking and piping all that methane gas from Texas when we could be powering our buildings more affordably with locally produced renewable energy. Meanwhile the forecasted cost for the project options ranged from \$421 - \$707 million, more than three times the original forecast of \$133 million.

For that amount of money, we could retrofit every household in Santa Barbara County that wants to go all-electric and eliminate the need for all that gas in the first place.



Marchers gathered at the Crowne Plaza to oppose a SoCalGas plan. It was sponsoring a public meeting on alternatives to upgrade two compressors. It was the sixth meeting the company held in the city of Ventura to air various alternatives. Opponents say it's too dangerous at its current location. across the street from the (Photo by John Brooks of CFROG) Boys and Girls Club and an elementary school.

## Exxon denied...

*continued from page 1*

shut down the line a half-hour after reports from citizens who notified the operators. It was not equipped with an automatic shutdown due to the federal government overriding Santa Barbara County's insistence for such a simple and obvious safety measure.

The Refugio disaster sent about 450,000 gallons of oil onto the coastline and into Santa Barbara Channel resulting in at least 202 dead birds and 99 dead mammals, including at least 46 sea lions and 12 dolphins. Beaches and sea life were covered in crude costing hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up.

## Exxon's "Emergency"

Six days after the pipeline burst, while crews were still cleaning up oil amid the crude covering birds and sea lions, Exxon submitted an "emergency request" to the County to restart drilling with eight tanker trucks an hour on CA 101— 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — each carrying 6,720 gallons.

Hundreds of residents emailed comments against Exxon's request and hundreds more protested and marched in the days before a single decision would be made by Director of Planning Glenn Russell. Exxon's plan was denied four days later, not by Russell, but by Assistant Planning Director Dianne Black. Russell recused himself because he had owned Exxon stock, which he said he had divested himself of a few months earlier.

## The 7-year pitch

Despite the denial, Exxon continued to pursue the truck option and Plains Pipeline, which would eventually be criminally sentenced and ordered to pay \$60 million dollars in restitutions and fines, pursued a new 130-mile pipeline. Exxon filed paid consultant reports, staff held scoping meetings and the planning commission held multiple hearings over several years. Opponents submitted tens of thousands of public comments, held marches and rallies attended by thousands

and fought every step of the way even during the pandemic.

## Many Davids vs. Goliath

The Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter played a leading role in the fight led by Santa Barbara and Arguello Group activists. We received help from neighboring chapters in San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties and backing from the National Sierra Club's CA Dirty Fuels campaign based in Los Angeles.

We worked in concert with a broad coalition of allies (see list). Each group had talents and specialties, but when we came together it was like harmony.

The Exxon offshore trucking plan occurred along

## EAVESDROP

*"We're in a climate crisis . . . this is a small project but there are cumulative effects, and I believe we have to do our part here and now and not kick the can down the road."*

~ Ventura Supervisor Carmen Ramirez who along with Supervisor Linda Parks were on the losing end of a 3-2 vote allowing a 10-year extension for Carbon California Company's three oil wells in Upper Ojai.

with the Cat Canyon onshore expansion, involving another Exxon-owned company, Aera Energy. Juggling two major oil fights might have stressed one's limits, but Sierra Club activists and our allies only fought harder. In the end, thanks to our unrelenting opposition, Cat Canyon never went to a vote and all three applicants withdrew.

Now it was just Exxon.

After a long string of meetings by the Planning Commission in 2021, it voted 3-2 to recommend denial.

## Tiger Beat

On March 8, 2022, Exxon lawyers and lobbyists and business allies sat in the first few rows of the Board of Supervisors hearing room in Santa Maria. They had brought out 200 workers to the final vote filling the hearing room, the lobby and extending out the doors. TV from Los Angeles covered the story. Most of the people opposed to Exxon

trucking testified via zoom not wanting to attend the maskless event.

Their testimony, given in one-minute allotments over several hours, overwhelmingly outnumbered those in favor.

Supervisors Hartmann, Williams and Hart voted to deny. The two oil supporting Supervisors representing the oil-friendly North County -- Lavagnino and Nelson -- were outnumbered.

Seven years after Assistant Planning Director Diane Black said no to Exxon's emergency request, the county had again closed the door on trucking.

Meanwhile, the class action suit against Plains for the Refugio spill was set for a court jury trial June 2. You can follow that trial here:

[www.plainsoilspill.com](http://www.plainsoilspill.com)

The government's investigation into the pipeline failure is here:

<https://tinyurl.com/PlainsPipelineFailure>

This story apparently has not ended. We also hear that the Plains Pipeline system is now undertaking draft environmental studies that we hear may come to the public after October. But timelines usually stretch while rust steadily accelerates. It would take a long time before a pipeline could be reopened, which I doubt will ever come to pass. The problem is what it's connected to, three rusting platforms, the first of which was installed in 1976.

That was the year *Happy Days* probably should have ended. The next year Fonzi jump the shark. Exxon's jumped the shark, now it's just time to end.

Government report: [https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/docs/PHMSA\\_Failure\\_Investigation\\_Report\\_Plains\\_Pipeline\\_LP\\_Line\\_901\\_Public.pdf](https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/docs/PHMSA_Failure_Investigation_Report_Plains_Pipeline_LP_Line_901_Public.pdf)

Exxon asks for trucks: <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-oil-trucks-rejected-20150609-story.html>

**Condor Call**

[SierraClub.org/Los-Padres](http://SierraClub.org/Los-Padres) ~ All phone numbers 1-805 area code

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**Photos, news, tips always welcome!**

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Typography and production by Dan Fuller

## TOOK A VILLAGE

### Coalition stopped Exxon

It took more than a village, lots of them. Thank you all for this watershed decision that took years of effort. The coalition opposing ExxonMobil's trucking plan included:

350 SB, California Coastal Protection Network, California Wildlife Foundation/California Oaks, CalTrout, Carpinteria

### Ships slowed

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper announced its cruise monitoring program has relaunched as 17 cruise ships are scheduled to visit the local area through April.

"With the exception of one, all of them have grades of D or F for water quality impacts. Three of the visiting ships receive 'F' grades for air pollution. Two of the visiting cruise ship lines committed criminal violations of environmental laws between 2017 to 2021," according to Channelkeeper.

By communicating with captains upon arrival, the monitoring program aims to safeguard the coastal environment and provide accountability through watchful presence.

Cruise ships generate enormous volumes of waste. A typical cruise ship generates 30,000 gallons of sewage, 250,000 gallons of greywater (wastewater from galleys, showers, sinks, and laundry), 5,000 gallons of oily bilge water, 15 gallons of toxic chemicals, and seven tons of solid waste, as well as air pollution equal to that of 12,000 cars—every day.

The City of Santa Barbara asks that captains make a voluntary commitment to refrain from using incinerators and discharging sewage or greywater within 12 miles of Santa Barbara Harbor. However, monitoring compliance with these agreements relies largely on good faith that the captains and crew will abide by these commitments. Channelkeeper's cruise ship monitoring program attempts to address monitoring gaps by providing additional vigilance.

Valley Association, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Oceanic Awareness Research, and Education (COARE), Channel Islands Restoration, Citizens Planning Association, Climate First: Replacing Oil and Gas (CFROG), Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, Coastal Ranches Conservancy, Community Environmental Council, Cuyama Valley Community Association, Eco Vista, Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo, Environmental Defense Center, Explore Ecology, Food & Water Watch, Food and Water Action, Fund for SB, Gaviota Coast Conservancy, Get Oil Out!, Goleta Goodland Coalition, Heal the Bay, Heal the Ocean, League of Women Voters (SB), Los Padres ForestWatch, Northern California Recycling Association, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Plastics Ocean International, SB Audubon, SB Channelkeeper, SB County Action Network, SB Standing Rock Coalition, SB Urban Creeks Council, Save Our Shores, the SB Museum of Natural History & Sea Center, Seventh Generation Advisors, Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter, Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter, Society of Fearless Grandmothers (SB), Surfrider Foundation, Surfrider Foundation SB County Chapter, The 5 Gyres Institute, UCSB Associated Students External Vice President for Statewide Affairs Esmeralda Quintero-Cubillan, UCSB Coastal Fund, UCSB Environmental Affairs Board, UCSB Environmental Justice Alliance, UPSTREAM, WE Watch, Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation, and Zero Waste USA.

Too: Here's a short video giving specifics about the dangers of transporting oil by truck (Directed by @offline.media.account and @nicholas\_weissman):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MFdmlLWW-8w&t=7s>



Greetings Friends, we present Figueroa Mountain at its finest with people celebrating its land, for its blast of spring wildflowers, trails and trees. This year the blooms were down somewhat but always a joy. Photo by [www.flickr.com/photos/denisedewirephotography/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/denisedewirephotography/)

## EVENTS

April 9: **Clean Up** at Santa Clara River hosted by Ventura Sierra Club. "We will take care of 1/3 mi used but abused with trash and dirt bikes because it is not perceived as a natural resource. Soon to become a public bike path! Learn more and register here: <https://tinyurl.com/ClaraCleanUp>

April 9: **Bitter Creek** Condor Refuge tour by Friends of Condors, a rare event since Covid. Space limited to 24. RSVP here: <https://tinyurl.com/CondorTourBC>

April 12: **Audubon Adventure** with Rich Reid specializing in environmental and adventure photography with NatGeo and others, starting career at UCSB. Dual Zoom and in person at Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd. Ventura. More details here: [www.venturaaudubon.org/monthly-speakers](http://www.venturaaudubon.org/monthly-speakers)

April 22: **Ventura Land Trust's** press launch of the Harmon Canyon Campaign on Earth Day, Friday, April 22nd from 10:00 to 11:30 am. More information on VLT here: [www.VenturaLandTrust.org](http://www.VenturaLandTrust.org)

April 23: **Native Plant sale** at the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy's Meadows Preserve Nursery, 9am to noon.

April 22 **Groundbreaking** on Earth Day for the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Overpass over the 101 freeway in the Agoura Hills area. It will be broadcast live and an in-person site is in the works.

### EAVESDROPS

"Russia is a gas station masquerading as a country."

~ Senator John McCain. In a quote years before his death in a rather accurate and prescient thought.



On Ventura's Olive Street, center stage of controversy at SoCal Gas's compressor station that sits across the street from the Boys and Girls club and an elementary school. Residents and friends have rallied there more than once! (Photo contributed)

### EAVESDROPS

"It lasted about five minutes and boom, it changed our reality for the evening, if not for our lifetime."

~ Ted Adams about a mountain lion who crashed through his French doors and grabbed Buddy, a 25-pound dog, in the evening at Painted Cave above Santa Barbara/Goleta. His wife Tracey sprayed the lion's face with bear spray, bought for a Muir Trail trek. The lion ran out and left the dog, now recuperating. Read the Noozhawk story here:

<https://tinyurl.com/lionbreakin>



## GREETINGS FRIENDS

### Celebrate the land

By Jim Hines

It's Spring . . . let's celebrate the beauty of the land. The hills and fields are green, the creeks and rivers are flowing, wildflowers are blooming, and nature is teeming with life.

Whales are migrating, birds are feeding, wildlife is very active and mountain lion paw prints are now seen almost everywhere.

So, pick your favorite Springtime activity and try and spend as much time outdoors as you can to enjoy all which we are blessed with here in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

And don't forget your home garden, so much to plant now and so many roses, annual flowers, perennials and flowering shrubs in bloom now, my own yard is filled with hundreds of flowers, whose beauty keeps me sane

during the challenges we are facing in our world right now.

Yes, Spring heals, nature heals, gives us hope, allows us to renew and now more than ever we need hope and renewal.

Focus on making sure that you are healthy both physically and mentally and what better way than to allow nature to keep you healthy.

Grow your own food, our perfect climate is just right to grow so many different vegetables and fruits, grown organically and fresh to pick as you need.

Life is so positive when we allow more nature into our lives whether it be out in the wild and in our own urban gardens.

For the wild, Jim



Catch currents at: [www.sierraclub.org/lospadres](http://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres)

**Most meetings continue online for now**  
*Group News*

The public is welcome to our programs

### CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

~ Meets 4th Thursday 7pm of every month, via internet for now. Email Secretary Gerry Ching for the agenda: [gching@cox.net](mailto:gching@cox.net)

~ Chapter website and blog at: [www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres](http://www.SierraClub.org/LosPadres)

### SANTA BARBARA GROUP

~ We meet 1st Tuesdays, noon to 1:30pm of each month. For details and to follow the South Coast area, contact:

<http://www.sbsierraclub.org>  
<https://www.FACEBOOK.com/SBSierraClub>  
<https://TWITTER.com/SBSierraClub>  
<https://www.INSTAGRAM.com/SierraClubSantaBarbara>  
<https://www.MEETUP.com/SierraClub-SantaBarbara>  
<https://tinyurl.com/SBGGroupBlog>

### ARGUELLO GROUP

Our North County Group will keep you informed on our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/SierraClubArguelloGroup](http://www.facebook.com/SierraClubArguelloGroup) ~Volunteers needed; your talents could make a difference. Call 350-0629 or: [RebeccaAugust@mac.com](mailto:RebeccaAugust@mac.com)

### VENTURA NETWORK

~ For board meeting dates, times and location email: [sierraclubventura@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubventura@gmail.com)

~ Get latest info about the western Ventura County group via Facebook and a blog:

<http://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubFB>  
<https://tinyurl.com/VenturaSierraClubBlog>  
~New MEETUP site for hikes, outings etc:

[www.meetup.com/SierraClubVentura](http://www.meetup.com/SierraClubVentura)

### CONEJO GROUP

~ Events, outings and meetings will be sent to you if you send an email request to:

[ConejoGroupHiking@gmail.com](mailto:ConejoGroupHiking@gmail.com).

Or view the Conejo Group website:

[www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo](http://www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo)  
[www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings](http://www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings)



# You can help the climate

*“The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.”*

That’s from the latest United Nation’s climate change report, just out in late February.

While it’s increasingly clear that the need for climate action is urgent, it can be hard for an individual to know where to start. In this column we are featuring specific actions you can take, written by Deborah Williams, UCSB lecturer in environmental studies,

Individual action includes advancing the use of solar power in our community.

Residential energy use generates about 20% of our nation’s greenhouse gases. These emissions would rank 6th highest in the world, similar to all of Brazil’s emissions, and greater than Germany’s emissions.

As the U.S. Department of

Energy points out, “each kilowatt-hour (kWh) of solar that is generated will substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions like CO<sub>2</sub>, as well as other dangerous pollutants such as sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. Solar also reduces water consumption and withdrawal.”

~ Homeowners (house or condo): Install solar panels or expand your solar panels. (Note: According to California law, condo associations or HOAs cannot prohibit the installation).

Options include working directly with solar panel providers and, depending on the company, obtain solar power through an outright purchase, a loan, monthly lease, or a full lease. To find lists of some solar companies, you can search for installers on yelp, or consumer affairs or

[www.solarreviews.com](http://www.solarreviews.com)

You may also learn about solar plus battery opportunities in our region. It is good to get at least two or three quotes from vendors but here’s a club link:

[www.swellenergy.com/sierraclub](http://www.swellenergy.com/sierraclub)

~ Renters can generate some of your own solar power through a portable solar charger here:

[www.outdoorgearlab.com/](http://www.outdoorgearlab.com/)

Talk with your landlord and urge them to install solar. Find some options and talking points here: <https://tinyurl.com/3ba92s7m>

~ Workplace Advocacy: As an employee, officer, or board member you can encourage your company to install solar on its building. Make a case to the owner to do it. Here are 11 very good reasons to use solar energy

for commercial buildings:

<https://mag.solarfeeds.com/pros-and-cons-of-solar-panels-on-commercial-buildings/>

If you work for a nonprofit working for social good, contact CEC’s Solarize program to find out how you can get an excellent solar energy system, with no upfront costs.

[www.cecsb.org/go-solar/solarize/solarize-nonprofit/](http://www.cecsb.org/go-solar/solarize/solarize-nonprofit/)

Community Advocacy: As a resident, your voice matters. The California Public Utility Commission is considering revising the Net Energy Metering program in a way that would make rooftop solar much more expensive.

You can phone the governor 916-445-2841 (M-F 9 am to 5 pm only) and leave a message telling him to ensure the PUC properly values and support MORE rooftop solar and electric system resiliency. Or go here to leave a written comment to the Governor (subject is ‘Public Utilities Commission’):

<https://govapps.gov.ca.gov/gov40mail/>

At the city, county, state and national levels there are opportunities to support more distributed solar funding, higher community solar goals, additional solar programs, and new or expanded solar installations (such as in our public schools and government buildings). Look out for advocacy opportunities regarding solar – and make your voice heard by writing letters, making comments and/or testifying.

Additional motivational thoughts:

~ Solar panels are a beautiful addition to a home, because they clearly communicate a meaningful commitment to the environment and future generations. They also protect against rising energy costs, increase property values, earn a great rate of return, enhance U.S. energy independence, create local jobs and help our local economy.

~ The average residential solar system eliminates 3 to 4 tons of carbon emissions annually.

~ Across the nation, there are over 2 million solar installations, twice as many as there were only three years ago.

## Pack the PAC

The 2022 election cycle is already underway, and the California Sierra Club Political Action Committee (PAC) is prepared to go all in to support the election of candidates dedicated to the conservation of our natural resources.

Your help is essential to accomplish these goals. Please help elect environmental leaders by donating to the PAC today:

<https://tinyurl.com/CApacDonation>

Redistricting has left some incumbent champions in districts that are new to them. Other incumbents have chosen to step aside from public office and new faces are emerging in the race. Perhaps your state senate and assembly districts have changed, and you do not know the candidates running for these offices.

Candidates endorsed by the Sierra Club are strong supporters of California’s efforts to combat climate change by equitable, inclusive, and just means. They can win their races, but they need our financial support to build name recognition and get out the vote.

## SIGHTINGS

# Good stuff happens

By John Hankins

Here’s the last two months on their way to spring. And it’s really been busy but with some good stuff happening. Check out the links.

Please join our activities and activism; see Group News box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved. We encourage all to go outside on your own or by MeetUp. And check out our outings on pages 6&7.

If you’d like to donate (it helps a lot and the money stays here at home), do not pass go, but go directly to:

[www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000](http://www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000)

**March 31:** Stand up to SoCalGas rally outside the Crowne Plaza



A blue Heron along the Santa Clara River, a site where volunteers are needed. (Photo by Nina Danza)

Hotel where SoCalGas had an event to announce its study on alternative sites for the Ventura Compressor Station. Photo courtesy of Westside Clean Air Coalition.

**March 28: Los Carneros Creek** hearing by the Goleta Planning Commission in which the Environmental Defense Center, Sierra Club and others testified to protect the creek and habitat from Heritage Ridge development. The proposed rentals would have 104 or 332 units available as a below-market price, which is supported. But we asked for a redesign to require a minimum 100-foot buffer from the creek.

**March 18: No appeal** was filed at this deadline for reopening the troubled wastewater treatment plant in Santa Paula, so “Rejoice, there will be an Environmental Impact Report completed which is what the community has requested,” said Ventura Sierra Club president Liz Lamar. See this 2021 article:

<https://tinyurl.com/TroubledTreatment>

**March 16: Bikeway:** Mountains to the Sea event hosted by Friends of the Santa Clara River and Channel Islands Bicycle club, Sierra Club members involved. It’s a vision to keep the river wild yet provide public recreation along its banks. Also ran March 23 and 30.

**March 14: “High-five** to the Sierra Club Los Padres chapter for this victory: Last week, the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors voted to deny an ExxonMobil trucking proposal that would have ramped oil production along the

California Central Coast and sent over 24,000 tankers up and down state highways.” This was posted by the club’s National staff email blast named *Sierra Club Hitched*. Read our story here:

<https://tinyurl.com/OilTruckNO>

**March 8: Exxon Trucking** proposal at the SB Board of Supervisors to pitch its plan to resurrect oil from Platform Hondo and send the crude to refineries via Highways 101 and 166, rejected by our Sierra Club and many other action groups along with the county’s Planning Commission.

**March 5: Water & Weed**, help water native plants the Ventura Sierra Club installed last fall at Kimball Park. Butterfly, bee and pollinator species are taking off, but we need many helping hands to bring water weekly until established. Other dates included March 13, 26 and April 2.

**March 3: Port o’ Call** for a zoom meeting to urge the Port of Hueneme to incorporate “meaningful electrification.” Our Chapter’s Executive Director Jon Ullman called the Draft EIR a hypocrisy. Learn more about this “Fight for a Zero Emissions Port” here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ZeroPort>

**Feb 24: Tree Alliance** of Ventura gets a contribution from our Ventura Sierra Club for a native plant project.

**Feb 18: Full page interview** in the *New York Times* with the club’s board president, Ramón Cruz, who tells of the Sierra Club “focusing on Race, Gender and the Environment, too.” Interesting that it’s in the Business section.

**Feb 10: Port Hueneme** comment letter insisting on an environmental impact report for a car lot expansion plan of up to 5,000 luxury cars, stored on former agriculture land next to a coastal restoration project. Our ExCom unanimously signed onto the letter along with other eco-groups in time for a hearing by the Oxnard Planning Commission.

**Feb 10: Compression Session** of the CA PUC taking public comment about SoCalGas trying to expand its compressor station located on Ventura’s Westside across from a school and after-school club. in the middle of their neighborhood. Info here:

<https://tinyurl.com/StopVtaGasPlan>

**Feb 6: Water and Weed** a newly planted Native Area at Kimbell Parks, every Saturday and Sunday in February. Volunteers brought their own buckets of water! Organized by Nina Danza, Ventura Sierra Club.

**Jan 27: Chapter officers approved** signing on to a letter on scoping for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. It also agreed to be a co-sponsor for intervention in the lawsuits to help defend Ventura County’s General Plan and oil regulations. Work will be done pro bono by lawyers recruited by Earthjustice. For Ventura, the chapter signed on to a coalition letter critical of Port Hueneme expansion and supported endorsement of Measures A and B, the Ventura County Oil initiative (see story pg 2)



Solar on the roof, electric car in the driveway, just plug in for cheap ‘gas’. (Photo by Kent Bullard)

# Earth Day events have future in mind

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**  
Community Environmental Council's Earth Day this year will be a one-day event at the Arlington Theatre with the theme of Climate Leadership. It will honor musician and activist Kenny Loggins and CEC's UC-Climate Stewards Graduates with the 2022 Environmental Hero Award.

The awards ceremony will take place on Saturday, April 23 at 2:30 p.m. at the Theatre.

Loggins' song *Conviction of the Heart* was dubbed "the unofficial anthem of the environmental movement" by Vice President Al Gore and he performed the song on Earth Day at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. for a crowd of 500,000. A Grammy Award-winning singer and songwriter with over 25 million albums sold worldwide, Loggins is a deeply committed environmentalist with a long history of advocating for the planet.

"I'm honored to receive this year's Environmental Hero award from CEC," said Loggins. "I believe that supporting efforts toward renewable energy, sustainable farming, and environmental equity are critical to our future. I believe that each of us must step up and work together to create the change needed not only to survive, but to thrive."

Loggins' generous support of countless local organizations has made a lasting impact on the causes

that are close to his heart.

In 2021, CEC became the only Central Coast nonprofit to offer a UC Climate Stewards course. The 40-hour certification course includes climate curriculum and discussion, field trips, and a Capstone project, giving participants a deeper understanding of the psychology and science behind climate change while providing skills necessary for climate action. The more than 40 certified Stewards to date are being honored this year for their shared commitment to engage in transformative local solutions to promote community and ecosystem resilience in a changing climate. For more information visit:

[www.climatestewards.cecsb.org](http://www.climatestewards.cecsb.org)

Meanwhile, the full day event will feature a welcome at 10am, and a Chumash blessing. Following are short films, recycled fashion show, Climate Leadership summit, display tables featuring ways to get involved (including the Sierra Club), Electric Vehicles show in the rear parking lot and evening concerts beginning at 7:30pm featuring local favorites. A ticket concert will also be held.

For details and up-to-the-minute information go here:

[www.SBEarthDay.org](http://www.SBEarthDay.org)

## VENTURA COUNTY

Electric vehicles will get special attention during Earth Day events in Ventura on April



22, thanks to the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance.

"EVs reflect the global event's 'Invest in our Planet' theme this year, noted David Goldstein who writes the 'Eye on the Environmental' column for the *Ventura County Reporter*.

"It is an investment, not just a purchase," said Kent Bullard, the alliance's Electric Vehicle Technical Coach and the Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter's Transportation Chair. He cited financial incentives and a study showing that driving on electricity is like using gasoline at 98 cents per gallon.

Models will be displayed at many events scheduled during Earth Day.

"These events are presented by a collaborative of local organizations including Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition, Electric Drive 805, Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance, Community Environmental Council, Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club, SLO Climate Coalition, EV Advocates of Ventura County and Plug-In-America," Bullard noted.

See adjacent story for all the EV events.

April 9: "Earth Day Starts Now" headline for the Ventura Sierra Club's Santa Clara River Cleanup, 9am to noon. More details here:

<https://tinyurl.com/CleanSCRiver>

## Thousand Oaks:

April 9, Saturday 9am – 1pm Arbor and Earth Day Celebration combined: Thousand Oaks Community Center (next to T.O. High School 2525 N. Moorpark Rd., Thousand Oaks).

The City's annual Arbor Earth Day celebration returns after a two-year hiatus. This year's event will include an electric vehicle display area where the public can see and ask questions about various EV models, educational workshops on healthy soils, electric vehicles, bicycle safety course & helmet giveaway, bicycle donation/collection, drought tolerant gardening, kids activities, compost and plant giveaways, raffles, and more!

Updated info at:

<https://tinyurl.com/TOaksEnAdays>

# Electric vs gas cars

Gas Prices Too High? Here's How to Save \$ with an Electric Car!

<https://driveclean.ca.gov/search-incentives>

## By Katie Davis

Want to pay a few bucks to refuel your car, rather than hundreds of dollars every month? With gas prices high, now is a great time to consider an EV.

The cost for electricity is much cheaper than gasoline. Maintenance costs are also lower. Used electric cars are now available, and new ones have longer range, with more public charging infrastructure, which opens up long-distance travel. California offers grants and generous rebates for lower income people. Utilities like SCE and PG&E offer additional rebates. See what you qualify for here:

<https://driveclean.ca.gov/search-incentives>

Here are some useful resources for choosing and driving an electric vehicle (EV):

~ Electric Vehicles 101: We partnered with the Community Environmental Council on a webinar overview and Q&A. You can watch the recording, view the slides or join an EV Facebook group here:

<https://www.cecsb.org/ev-101/>

~ New cars: There are over 50 different EV options, whether your price range is \$20,000 or \$200,000. PG&E has a nice list showing costs and ranges for vehicles:

<https://ev.pge.com>

~ You can track the latest news on electric cars at:

[www.greencarreports.com](http://www.greencarreports.com)

~ Leased cars: A good option given the continuous improvement in EVs. This site lists specific lease offers at dealerships, with many in the \$100-\$300 a month range. The rebates should help cover the upfront costs:

<http://ev-vin.blogspot.com/2016/07/current-lease-offers-for-selected-evs.html>

~ Used cars: As an example, a used Nissan Leaf can be found for \$4000 - \$9000. Use the "advanced search" feature on AutoTrader, and select, fuel type "electric."

~ Rebates: The federal tax credit is applied when you buy or lease an EV. You must apply for state and utility rebates which range from \$750-\$10,000 depending on eligibility. Be sure to research rebates whether you are buying new, used or leasing. Here are some specific local programs:

• California: Residents of California can find information and incentives here:

• City of Santa Barbara: Customers of SB Clean Energy can get discounts at local dealerships for cars and electric bikes.

<https://www.sbcleanenergy.com/programs-incentives>

• Counties of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz and cities including Goleta, Carpinteria, Santa Maria: Customers of Central Coast Community Energy can get \$1000-\$4000 rebates on EVs, chargers, e-bikes and more.

<https://3cenergy.org/energy-programs/>

Home Charging: If you can park near an outlet, you can plug in and charge an EV. It's faster if you can install a home charging station. They cost \$300-\$800 plus an electrician's time. Look into rebates for this too.

Public Charging: Download the plugshare app on your phone to find places to charge when you're on the road, and sign up for ChargePoint, Blink, and EVgo, which are the most common charging networks. Note that Teslas has its own network, and your magic car will point you to them.

Still have questions? Email us if you have questions or to share your EV experience.

[santabarbara.group@sierraclub.org](mailto:santabarbara.group@sierraclub.org)

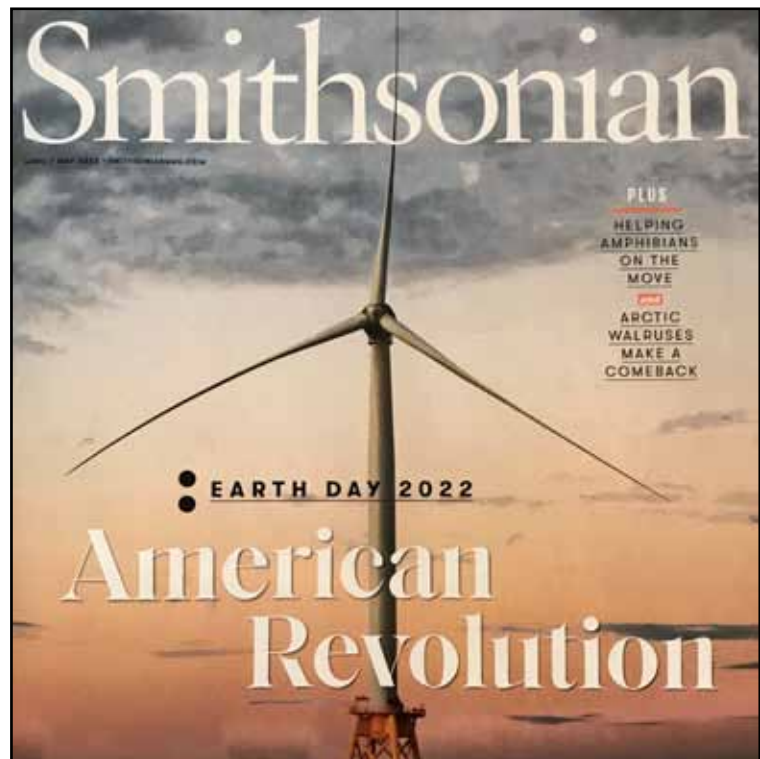
Personally, having driven electric cars for a decade, I will never buy a gas car again. I would not give up the quiet, fume-free driving experience, the convenience of charging at home, the freedom from gas stations and oil changes, and the peace of mind that comes from kicking the addiction to oil.

My family has gone through several different kinds of electric cars, and my whole extended family now drives only electric. My college-age son, who has had his driver's license for several years, has never even driven a gas car.

Of course, driving less or not at all is the most sustainable option and we encourage biking, walking and public transportation. However, if you must drive, by going electric, you will help increase the demand and supply of EVs and help hasten our transition away from gas-guzzling, polluting vehicles, and influence those around you to do so as well.

Lastly, if you make the switch and want to donate your old, used car to the Sierra Club, you can do so here:

<https://scfch.careasy.org/index.html>



# See and learn about EVs at many locations

## By Kent Bullard

Have you noticed the price of gasoline hovering around \$6 per gallon lately?

My electric car is gas free, but I do have a casual interest as I see the costs affecting our local economy and the lives of my fellow citizens.

"What's shorter, the line at the Costco gas station or at an In-N-Out?"

More and more of us are ditching the pump and driving electric at about 1/4 of the cost per mile compared to gasoline. Others (like me) save even more by driving on sunshine as we recharge off our residential solar system.

In the tri-counties there are programs now underway to greatly increase the number of electric vehicle charging stations. New stations are regularly coming online, in Ventura County there are now over 800 places to get a charge. And that's not counting

the 85% of EV drivers like me that have an electric fuel station at our home.

One obstacle to use of more electric vehicles is related to the shortage of Electric Vehicles available for sale at local dealers due to the supply chain. Many Electric Vehicles have long order backlogs and are often sold long before the reach the showroom.

To find out more about your electric vehicle options and to get first person experience with EV drivers there will be several "Drive Electric Earth Day" and Earth Day events in our region:

## Santa Barbara County

Sat, Apr 23 at 10:00 am - 5:00 pm Santa Barbara Earth Day and Green Car Show at the rear of the Arlington Theatre.

It's part of the 2022 Santa Barbara Earth Day Celebration at the historic Arlington Theatre. It includes a Green Car Show and

Ride & Drive featuring a wide variety of EVs and bikes from local dealers and community organizations. Several EV owners will also be on hand to answer your questions and talk about the joys of driving and riding electric!

More info and to register @ <https://driveelectricearthday.org/event?eventid=3237>

## Ventura

In April there will be several Drive Electric Earth Day Events in the County. EV owners are encouraged to participate and share your EV experience with attendees.

If you will bring and show your vehicle, use the "Participate" button, or to just attend use the "RSVP" button at the websites below.

~ April 22nd, Sustainability Fair, Pacific View Mall, Ventura. 11am-2pm. More info and to register @ <https://driveelectricearthday.org/event?eventid=3178>

~ April 22nd, Ventura County Government Center, GSA Earth Day walking Tour exploring sustainable practices at the center, 12- 1pm. More info and to register @

<https://driveelectricearthday.org/event?eventid=3157>

~April 23rd, EV Showcase and EV Advocates Monthly Meeting,

Next month rather than a Tuesday evening meeting we have decided to gather on Saturday afternoon and have a showcase of electric vehicles, educate visitors on our vehicles and charging opportunities at the Electrify America chargers and the Superchargers at Boku Superfoods, Ojai. Support the Boku Café by getting some great eats and drinks and wrap in our monthly meeting as well (4pm).

More info and to register @ <https://driveelectricearthday.org/event?eventid=3177>

## Thousand Oaks

~ April 9, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Thousand Oaks Community Center (next to T.O. High School 2525 N. Moorpark Rd.) is a combination with Arbor Day.

## San Luis Obispo County

Sat, Apr 23 at 11:00 am - 4:00 pm EV Showcase

Laguna Park, San Luis Obispo, CA

Check out a wide variety of electric cars and bikes from local dealers. Several EV owners will also be on hand to answer your questions and talk about the joys of driving and riding electric.

More info and to register @ <https://driveelectricearthday.org/event?eventid=3046>

In sum, Drive Electric and benefit from lower costs, cleaner air and a more robust local economy.



Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein

# Take a Hike!

## LOS PADRES CHAPTER

UPDATES: [www.sierraclub.org/los-padres](http://www.sierraclub.org/los-padres)

## SB OUTINGS

### WELCOME HIKERS

The public is welcome at all outings listed, unless otherwise specified. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. If you have any questions about a hike, please contact the leader listed. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805, unless otherwise noted.

A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 14.

A frequently updated on-line listing of all outings can be viewed at:

<http://www.SierraClub.org/los-padres>

This website also contains links to Group web pages and other resources. Some regional Groups also list their outings on Meetup sites. See Group News on page 3 for links.

#### Fire Danger

Due to drought and heat, fire danger is extremely high so do not build any fires or smoke except in official campsites that have fire rings. For latest information on this and other aspects of the forest, go to:

[www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf)



### HIKE LOS PADRES

#### CONDITIONS

Campgrounds trails and roads in Los Padres National Forest can be closed, have restrictions due to habitat protection, repair or weather. Before you go into the backcountry ensure you check conditions with rangers. Numbers to call (805 area unless noted) are:

#### Los Padres Forest Districts

Headquarters	865-0416
Ojai-Ventura	646-4348
Mt Pinos	(661) 245-3731
Santa Barbara	967-3481
Santa Lucia	925-9538

#### Other Areas

Santa Monica Mtns	370-2301
Conejo Park	381-2737
Simi Valley	584-4400
Montecito	969-3514

#### Forest Information

For updated info, maps, news releases, and other goodies:

<http://FS.USDA.gov/LPNF>

#### Regional Hike Info

Lots of local info on websites that give you varied info on outings, trail profiles, wildflower alerts, work opportunities and much more.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/lospadres>

[www.LPFForest.org](http://www.LPFForest.org)

<https://LPFW.org>

[www.HikeLosPadres.com](http://www.HikeLosPadres.com)

[www.SBSierraClub.org](http://www.SBSierraClub.org)

[www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com](http://www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com)

[www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com](http://www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com)

<https://SBTrails.org>

[www.VenturaCountyTrails.org](http://www.VenturaCountyTrails.org)

<http://Hikes.VenturaCountyStar.com>



### From our Mountains to the Sea where to go?

"Maybe they shouldn't be called hikes. Maybe that defeats the joy and the purpose. I don't like either the word [hike] or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains - not 'hike!'"

It's a beautiful word and originated away back in the Middle Ages. People used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages asked where they were going, they would reply, 'A la sainte terre' (To the Holy Land). And so they became known as 'sainte-terre-ers' or saunters.

Given that Sierra Club's co-founder John Muir was one of history's greatest saunters, we should not only allow him his grumpiness, but give it profound consideration. And there is no better place than the Ventura - Santa Barbara region to amble in the great outdoors and give anything consideration.

As a wise soul once said, "It's only in the great open spaces that we find ourselves."

(Editor's note: Taken from Visit Ventura website with light editing to include Santa Barbara! Photo:

<https://www.facebook.com/SteveACattanach>

## Click to access all hikes

Most of the many free Sierra Club Outings are usually listed here for a two-month period. However, we have found that planning that far ahead may change due to weather, Covid restrictions, closures etc.

So, we ask that you now rely on the many Meetups and websites for the chapter and some others. For our chapter Meetups go to Group News box

always on page 3, otherwise, here we go:

The chapter's website:

<http://lospadres2.SierraClub.org>

A very special personal website run by Diane Soini which includes our chapter hikes; also blogs, connections and a dragonfly on the screen:

[www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com](http://www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com)

Visit Ventura has a lot of information about hikes in the

county and the Channel Islands. Go here:

<https://visitventuraca.com/biking-hiking/>

Los Padres National Forest is the turf for Los Padres Forest Association and it's the 'bible' for the forest as it shares amazing information gleaned from hikers and others outdoor sites. Here's its hiking site (see QR code too) [www.HikeLosPadres.com](http://www.HikeLosPadres.com)

## Popular forest camps reopen

Recovery of the rare steelhead trout in the Los Padres Forest creeks and downstream habitats were given a boost by new construction of bridges allowing for water access.

The work along Davy Brown Creek - a hugely popular access to the Forest to the campground of the same name - was completed in March.

The anadromous Southern California steelhead received Endangered Species status in 1997

due to declining populations. Stream conditions and steelhead critical habitat were further degraded by the massive Zaca Fire in 2007 that denuded landscapes and contributed to greater sediment deposition downstream, affecting steelhead access to traditional spawning grounds.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Los Padres National Forest (LPNF) staff sought to develop ways to enhance steelhead habitat within the Lower Manzanera Creek watershed and its tributaries. However, costs associated were more than the LPNF could afford. Thirty years later the price tag had grown substantially, and there were concerns that the project was too expensive given the lack of funding for construction.

But a fire restoration settlement reached in 2011 for the Zaca Fire and the smaller 2003 Piru Fire

eventually returned more than \$10 million to the Forest and a partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in 2015 leveraged additional funds. A primary focus of the NFWF partnership aims to improve ecological outcomes for the watersheds and ecosystems directly affected by the Zaca and Piru Fires.

Another partnership with South Coast Habitat Restoration (SCHR) removed a low-water concrete crossing that was impaired and impeded steelhead migration to these primary spawning and rearing grounds. Other funding of nearly \$2 million came from CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, CA Coastal Conservancy, CA Fish Passage Forum, SB County's Coastal Resources Enhancement Fund and CalTrout.

Planning began in 2018, work

#### Covid Precautions

We will be observing any state/county rules effective at the time of the outing. Each participant should observe these rules and take any additional precautions that they deem necessary to protect their health. In addition, the following rules will be observed on Sierra Club outings.

- \* If you feel sick, please do not attend the outing
- \* Each participant will fill-out a sign-in sheet with clear contact information.
- \* Masks will be required for any indoor activity such as carpooling.
- \* Masks are optional outdoors.
- \* Group size will be limited, depending on the type of outing.

Please note that in going on a Sierra Club outing you are potentially on a trip with individuals vaccinated and unvaccinated. It is your choice to attend the outing knowing this information.



Sunset Valley Road has reopened after an 8-month closure along with the popular Davy Brown and Nira Campgrounds and driving access to a stunning network of trails and opening over three miles of steelhead habitat. Here's one of two bridges under construction (left) and now finished. At right, the Munch Creek Crossing will remain in a natural state with the removal of the low-water concrete crossing. (Photo courtesy LPNF)

April 10  
WEST FORK COLD SPRINGS TO WATER SOURCE: Hike along the West Fork of Cold Springs then follow a trail that leads to a stunning lookout point above Tangerine Falls. Continue up the creek to find the water source. Moderate 6 miles round trip, 2000 ft elevation gain, with steep sections. Several creek crossings and shoes will likely get wet. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ALEJANDRO 805-451-1239 (SB)

April 23  
BUENA VISTA - OLD PUEBLO LOOP WITH SMALL SURPRISE. Hike begins at Buena Vista Trailhead on Park Lane. Ascends to Edison Road summit where we will have a bit of bush whacking to a beautiful overlook. We will return via San Ysidro Trail and Old Pueblo Trail. About 4 mile loop with about 1000 feet gain. Very steep in places. A walking stick or pole can help. Bring water and snack or lunch. Meet behind B of A, 3790 State St at Hope Ave at 9am. ROBERT 805-685-1283 [event@swt.org](mailto:event@swt.org) (SB)

May 14  
GAVIOTA CAVES: Hike up about 500 feet from Gaviota beach and explore the caves and wind tunnels in the ridges above and proceed to overlook. Some rock scrambling and agility required. Light colored long pants are recommended. Moderate 5 miles round trip. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A, 3790 State St at Hope Ave at 9am. ROBERT 805-685-1283 [event@swt.org](mailto:event@swt.org) (SB)

May 22  
ROCKY PINE RIDGE / ROCK GARDEN - HARD ROUTE: From Rattlesnake trail we will follow the connector to Tunnel trail then branch off on a primitive, steep trail to the Rock Garden. We'll explore the wonderful pines & boulders ridge and have lunch before returning via the same route. Difficult 6.8 miles round trip, 2700 feet elevation gain. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ALEJANDRO 805-451-1239 (SB)

began in 2020 and included the removal of the low-water concrete crossing on Munch Creek below the Davy Brown Campground. Two low-water crossings on Davy Brown Creek were replaced with two free-span bridges that will pass 100-year flood events.

**HINES CHRONICLES**

# A bit of a break, broken

*Editor's note: We continue with the Jim Hines Chronicles, which reflects the emails by our premier lobbyist on the ins and outs of environmental activism and is chock-full of information. This covers the last two months, starting the first week of February. Jim is our chapter vice-chair and conservation director who belongs to many wildlife groups.*

Feb 16: **Several western Senators** are pushing for a massive reduction in the lands to be protected via the Rim of the Valley proposal to be a National Park Service managed swath of land from the western San Gabriel Mtns across into eastern Ventura County to include the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mtns and into the Santa Monica Mtns. about 300,000 acres in total to be protected for passage outdoor recreation and a protected wildlife corridor. We will keep pushing and hope that common sense and community support will prevail.

Feb 18: **CA Fish and Game** put off a decision to list the southern steelhead population ( from SLO county to San Diego county) as endangered. The endangered status is supported by Sierra Club and numerous conservation groups, but opposed by most local water districts.

Feb 20: **First a federal judge** just hours ago reinstated protections for wolves. Then a little while ago another judge left in place the

landmark Ventura County Wildlife Corridor Protection ordinance. What a great day.

Feb 20: **Great work** by Ventura County District Attorney, Erik Nasarenko. The DA's Office presented the Santa Monica Mountains Fund with a \$100,000 check to help observe & protect mountain lions in the National Recreation Area. The funds came from a settlement negotiated with an agricultural retail company that sold pesticides unlawfully.

March 15: **I was in a Zoom** meeting held by Western States Petroleum Association as they discussed more intense plans to stop Ventura County Measures A and B on the June ballot. In addition to providing funding (over \$6 million so far) they will also use the excuse that oil and gas drilling should remain (less) unregulated because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

March 17: **Wow.** former President Obama is narrating a Netflix series on national parks.

March 24: **We lost another** beautiful mountain lion; the location was Pacific Coast Highway in the Malibu area just across the Ventura county line.

March 25: **Finally, after years** of planning and fundraising, construction will finally start on the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Overpass

over the 101 freeway in the Agoura Hills area. Groundbreaking is on April 22 (Earth Day).

March 27: **Paid canvassers** were in my neighborhood in east Ventura for NO on Measures A and B. (Sierra Club says YES.)

April 1: **Los Padres Chapter** ExCom officers voted to approve my motion to change the name of our Los Padres Chapter to Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter. Name change has been submitted to National Staff.



Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing will break ground on Earth Day, April 22. This is a Virtual-Image of how it will look. There will be on- or near-site viewing and live streamed video. Purpose is to provide a safe and sustainable passage for wildlife (and drivers) across US-101 in the City of Agoura Hills and allows for exchange of genetic material. It is a public-private partnership that has leveraged the expertise and leadership of dozens of organizations and institutions.

## Join Women in Conservation event

Ventura Land Trust will host the next installment of its Environmental Speaker Series, *Women in Conservation*, on Thursday, April 14th from 7-9 pm at the Museum of Ventura County (100 E Main Street, Ventura).

A panel discussion moderated by VLT Executive Director Melissa Baffa will feature Kristine McDivitt Tompkins, Kate Larramendy, and Michelle I. Sevilla, three individuals who are shaping the modern conservation movement in the United States and abroad. A Q&A session follows.

Baffa herself is a biologist and educator who was selected as a 2015 Science Communication Fellow with the Ocean Exploration Trust and explored the deep sea as part of Dr. Robert Ballard's Corps of Exploration

in 2015, 2016, and 2018.

"Our panelists have such a wide range of experience and influence," says Baffa. "They are examples of women who have navigated barriers to build connections among scientists, environmental advocates, policymakers, and communities, and they've made significant contributions to the field of conservation. Because of their work, others who identify as women can follow in their footsteps."

Panelists include:  
~ Kristine McDivitt Tompkins has worked to protect wild beauty and biodiversity with the conservation of 15 million acres of parklands in Chile and Argentina as president and cofounder of Tompkins Conservation.

~ Kate Larramendy is past Director of Design and Sustainability

for Toad & Co and trustee of The Conservation Alliance.

~ Michelle I. Sevilla, an immigrant from the Philippines who works on local environmental issues and policy in the California State Legislature. Sevilla is the first Network Manager of the Central Coast Climate Justice Network.

Now in its seventh year, VLT's quarterly Environmental Speaker Series educates the public about important local and global environmental issues.

The Speaker Series events are free and open to the public, but donations are encouraged. Guests are encouraged to RSVP for Women in Conservation at:

[www.venturalandtrust.org/womeninconservation](http://www.venturalandtrust.org/womeninconservation)



Wildlife camera saw cougar on a late night roam. VLT's cameras set up by Mike Watling, tracker. [www.VenturaLandTrust.org](http://www.VenturaLandTrust.org)

## Canyon camera catches wildlife

An attentive hiker flagged down a Ventura Land Trust staff member. "Can you take a look at this track I spotted? I think it's a bear."

The staff member was skeptical, thinking of the flexible, toed running shoes that some trail runners prefer – those tracks can be deceptively similar. But the photograph on the hiker's phone clearly depicted a bear track.

Shortly thereafter, a cyclist reached out to Ventura Land Trust with a story of a late-afternoon long-distance spotting, captured in video footage. The animal in the clip sure looked and moved like a bear. A camera trap deployed by wildlife tracker Mike Watling clinched it: a large bear had wandered through Harmon Canyon Preserve.

Who would have thought that this parcel, adjacent to a SoCal city with a population of over 100,000 people, could harbor such a beast?

Part of what makes Harmon Canyon Preserve special is its wildness, coupled with that urban proximity. The creatures that call Harmon home, or that pass through on their way to adjacent open space, include other large predators:

coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats. Mule deer, raccoon, foxes, skunks, kangaroo rats, and badgers have been spotted as well. Birds and reptiles of many species abound.

When Ventura Land Trust acquired Harmon Canyon and opened it to the public in June 2020, it made a promise to current and future generations of Ventura County residents that this land would be protected in perpetuity. That's a big commitment - "perpetuity" is long, long time.

The price tag for that commitment is \$11.6 million, and Ventura Land Trust is now only \$1 million away from achieving that goal.

On Earth Day, April 22, Ventura Land Trust will launch the final, public phase of the capital campaign for Harmon Canyon Preserve. Funds raised will enable to VLT to add more amenities to the preserve, such as trails and benches, and to maintain the property. Members of the public are invited to join VLT in stewarding Harmon Canyon Preserve for the benefit of the wildlife and the people who need and enjoy open spaces. Gifts of all sizes are welcome, and many

naming opportunities are available. To learn more and support the campaign, please visit:

[www.venturalandtrust.org/harmoncanyoncampaign](http://www.venturalandtrust.org/harmoncanyoncampaign)

VLT'S FIRST EVER  
**GEAR GARAGE SALE**  
SECONDHAND OUTDOOR GEAR SALE

SATURDAY, APRIL 30TH  
TOPA TOPA BREWING COMPANY (COLT ST.)

## Become a Member

As a Ventura Land Trust member, you'll join a community of people who love nature and support VLT's efforts to conserve open space, restore habitat, and offer environmental education programs that inspire the next generation of land stewards. **Goodness is growing - join today!**

- EXPLORE** Experience protected lands on members-only guided outings.
- LEARN** Members receive the *Outlook* newsletter twice a year.
- PROTECT** VLT preserves are protected forever and open daily at no charge because of support from members like you.

**\$45 | \$100 | \$250**  
**GIVE MONTHLY**

JOIN TODAY AT  
[WWW.VENTURALANDTRUST.ORG](http://WWW.VENTURALANDTRUST.ORG)

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## Whales and climate connection event

We know climate change is affecting whales, but we may not think about how they affect the climate.

The Santa Barbara Maritime Museum (SBMM) has just the event planned for that: "*Santa Barbara Channel's Whales and Their Climate Connection*," a free Zoom webinar with Holly Lohuis.

As a local marine biologist, marine educator, and naturalist in the Santa Barbara area, Holly will share what she has learned about research on whales and their influence on the ecology of our oceans and the Santa Barbara Channel.

It takes place on Thursday, April 21 at 7pm. The webinar is free -- sponsored by Marie L. Morrisroe -- but registration is required, and donations are welcome. Register at:

<https://sbmm.org/santa-barbara-event/>

By increasing public awareness of the pressing challenges facing the health of whale populations, Holly hopes to help enhance our connection to and relationship with these captivating animals and their ocean home. "Whales have the power to inspire millions of people to care about our oceans; let's dive in together and learn more about our local whales."

To that end Holly is also helping to spearhead the effort to create a whale heritage site in the Santa Barbara Channel, under the World Cetacean Alliance and with support from the Ocean Futures Society, Santa Barbara

Maritime Museum, Condor Express and Island Packers.

She is working with a group of local whale enthusiasts including whale watch tour operators, naturalists, biologists, fishers, educators, resource managers, artists, and local marine conservation NGOs. Recently our Sierra Club chapter has joined the effort.

Her hope for the future is that the Santa Barbara Channel will be part of the growing network of Whale Heritage Sites where whales are celebrated for their ecological role in enhancing ocean productivity; where whales have an economic value through responsible tourism; where conservation and research is a priority in reducing the impacts on their longevity; and where we can continue to learn and appreciate the rich complex lives of whales and dolphins.

Learn more about the Whale Heritage Sites initiative at:

<https://whaleheritagesites.org/>  
<https://sbcwh21.wpengine.com/>

Holly's 28-year career has taken her around the world with Jean-Michel Cousteau and his Ocean Futures Society's expedition team and she appeared in many of Jean-Michel's documentaries including his PBS series. Locally she's part of SBMM's Ocean Connections and Island Packers' Floating Classroom.

For more events and new exhibits at the Museum, call (805) 962-8404 or:

[www.sbmm.org](http://www.sbmm.org)



Whale jumping in the SB Maritime Museum (on the wall!).  
By Robert Schwemmer

## Whales astound us

In November and December 2021, Santa Barbara Maritime Museum staff worked with students from Laguna Blanca Middle School, Peabody Charter, Santa Barbara Charter, and Santa Ynez Elementary School to teach them about the importance of whales to the environment and to create whale-inspired artwork to coincide with the museum's newest exhibit, *Whales Are Superheroes!*

The result of those efforts is on display in SBMM's new student art exhibit, *Whales are Superheroes! Saving the Planet One CO2 Molecule at a Time*, opening on April 14 and on display through July 31, 2022.

Marine biologist Holly Lohuis led interactive lessons in the schools about whales, their ecological role in mitigating climate change, and the high diversity of species we have here in the Santa Barbara Channel. Those sessions were followed by a mixed-media art lesson and instruction with art educator and founder of Lost Art of Love Letters, Sondra Weiss.

The students, in both elementary and middle school classrooms, were encouraged to create art that illustrates the significance of these amazing creatures. Their paintings

and drawings help raise awareness of our rapidly warming climate, how it will affect future generations, and the important role whales play in the process.

Although the students' work from those winter classes is being shown in this exhibit, the educational program is one that SBMM offers to schools throughout the year.

Whales help maintain the stability, productivity, and health of the ocean and minimize some of the worst impacts of climate change. As they dive down to feed, surface to breathe, and migrate throughout the oceans, whales serve as nutrient pumps, moving nutrients that stimulate the growth of phytoplankton and converting large amount of carbon dioxide to oxygen. When they die and sink to the ocean floor, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that whales have the potential to capture 1.7 billion tons of CO2 annually, if we allow them to restore to their pre-whaling numbers.

Research has shown that whales are a true nature-based solution to reducing the impacts of climate change, all of which is presented in SBMM's newest permanent exhibit on whales.