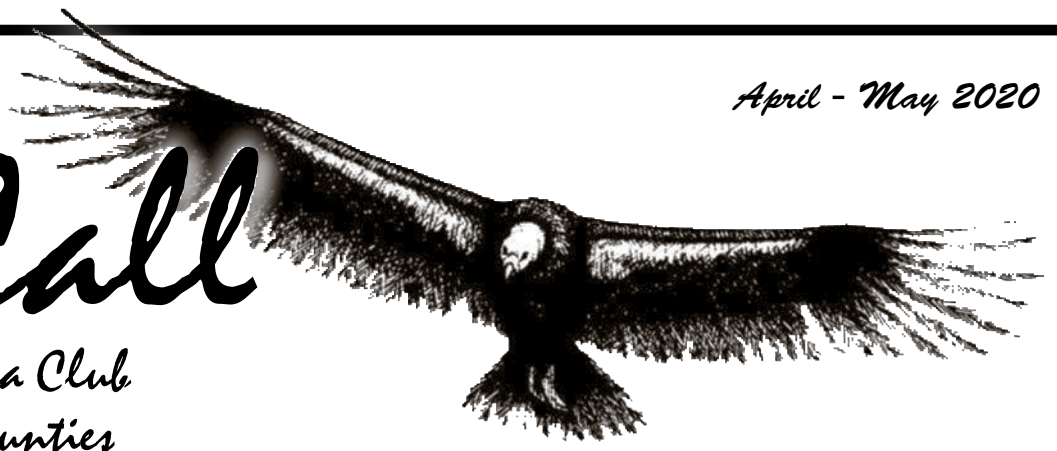


Vol. 20, No. 2 of 6

April - May 2020

Condor Call

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



© Photo by Cara Peden Cody

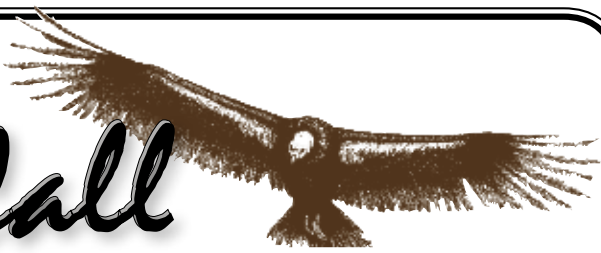
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Condor Call

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Earth Days Postponed

The Sierra Club announced that for this year, it is “setting the stage for a decade of transformative change” around the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. That folds in with the official theme of EarthDay.org of climate change:

“The enormous challenge — but also the vast opportunities — of action on climate change have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary.”

However, the Covid-19 (coronavirus) is cooling the planned events that entailed nationwide and global-wide protests and strikes.

Locally, the flagship Earth Day weekend in Santa Barbara has been postponed to July 10-12 at its usual place at Alameda Park. It has been sponsored by the SB Community Environmental Council for 50 years since 1970 and was itself created by that first Earth Day year. Keep apprised of developments at:

www.SBEarthDay.org

All Earth Days were also cancelled in Ventura County, but some may be rescheduled.

In recognizing the effect of Covid-19 on the economy, the Sierra Club sees “economic stimulus is like fertilizer. Wherever we spread that money, things will grow,” said Executive Director Michael Brune.

“Let’s start by stipulating that any industry requesting stimulus funds should commit to pay family-sustaining wages, follow high labor standards, and ensure fair employment opportunities for all. There’s no reason taxpayers should subsidize the growth of jobs that keep people who work 40 or more hours a week in poverty,” he wrote to club members.

Sierra Club also advocates stimulus packages for the clean energy industry rather than the fossil fuel industry which already is subsidized by about \$20 billion per year.

Even though the official Earth Day events are cancelled for April, the Sierra Club believes and practices that “Every Day is Earth Day.”



Despite some beaches, parks and our organized outings being closed, most of nature is open for your health by pausing to smell the wildflowers, breathe deep the clean forest air and watch the river flow. But while quarantined, “It is still possible to be an effective environmental activist from home,” protecting the outdoors, said Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips, which offers webinars and action options. (Photo by Cara Peden Cody)

Marine sanctuary on the horizon

Editor’s note: Thanks to the Santa Lucia Chapter for passing on this important campaign about creating a new marine sanctuary by Andrew Christie, who is the chapter’s director who also edits its equivalent to Condor Call, the Santa Lucian. The proposed sanctuary is off the shores of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

By Andrew Christie

For some time now the Sierra Club, in concert with environmental groups in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, has been supporting the Chumash in advocating for the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary off the Central Coast.

Per the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), “The primary objective of a sanctuary is to protect its natural and cultural features while allowing people to use and enjoy the ocean in a sustainable way. Sanctuary waters provide a secure habitat for species close to extinction and protect historically significant shipwrecks and artifacts”

“Sanctuaries serve as natural classrooms for schoolchildren and researchers alike to promote understanding and stewardship of our oceans. They often are cherished recreational spots for sport fishing and diving and support commercial

industries such as tourism, fishing, and kelp harvesting.” For more details, go to:

www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/about/faqs

October will mark the fifth anniversary of the date when NOAA placed the nomination into its inventory, declaring that it fully met the qualifications as a national sanctuary and the formal process for review and update was published in the Federal Register last November.

If you’re wondering why a nomination that meets all the criteria for designation has been sitting in inventory for five years, you’re not alone.

In December, Sen. Dianne Feinstein wrote a letter to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to let him know she was “deeply concerned by the NOAA’s recent study on ocean acidification impacts on the California coastline,” urging the secretary “to take immediate action to combat rising carbon levels in our oceans, including by accelerating the designation of the proposed ‘Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.’”

She concluded by asking the secretary to “provide a response detailing why NOAA is not actively evaluating this important proposal.”

I can hazard a guess. When the

continued on page 3

Let’s Get That Sanctuary!

Now is the time to write to Rep. Salud Carbajal to thank him for stepping up to support the sanctuary when our county supervisors did not. Urge him to do everything he can to accelerate the designation of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and ask the same question as Sen. Feinstein: Why isn’t the Department of Commerce actively evaluating this important proposal?

Contact him at 1431 Longworth HOB, Washington, DC, 20515; (202) 225-3601; or email via:

www.carbajal.house.gov/contact

Clear lessons of Covid-19

By Katie Davis

Lessons of Covid-19

The April issue of the Atlantic magazine with the cover story, “How to Destroy a Government” by George Packer, landed in my mailbox just as coronavirus cases first started being reported in the United States. It was subtitled, “The president is winning his war on American institutions”

The spread of the virus and subsequent lockdown shows how critical it is to have competent government planning and science-

based decision-making. The article was about the decline of the Justice and State departments, but the same destruction applies to the Interior

Department and Environmental Protection Agency (run by an oil lobbyist and coal lobbyist respectively). Also, to the White House National Security Council, which had a Global Health Security and Bio-defense team dedicated to pandemic response that was disbanded by the Trump Administration in the spring of 2018.

Thus, the U.S. failed to

quickly roll out widespread testing for Covid-19, prepare properly or take the threat seriously enough early enough. The lesson is clear. We need to listen to science. Plan accordingly. Execute effectively. Save lives.

Real Response

As we face the reality and respond to the virus outbreak, we must push for proper planning going forward. That certainly includes relief for those affected by both the health and economic crisis.

continued on page 2

Public lands at risk

By Jim Hines

America’s national emergency does not apply to everyone.

On March 13th the President declared a national emergency because of the spreading corona virus. While this national emergency applies to you and me and millions of other Americans it does not apply to the U.S. Dept. of the Interior (DOI) where it is business as usual.

DOI is still going ahead with issuing oil and gas leases on millions of acres of your national public lands in the western U.S.

And upcoming public comment periods for a number of projects which have the great potential to destroy fragile ecosystems, kill endangered wildlife and ruin sacred sites so important to native Americans will not be extended to give the American public a chance to comment, says the Secretary of the Interior.

The U.S. Surgeon General announced in March that, “this week it’s going to get bad.” Of course, he was talking about the corona virus, but he could have easily been talking about environmental destruction measures which could be approved.

One example is federal regulators approving an LNG project in Coos Bay 2-1 over the objections of the state, which has (had?) the power to grant three necessary permits. “Backers of the project have been promising locals for 15 years that they would comply with state and

local permits, but Pembina (Pipeline Corp.) is now signaling that it intends to preempt the state,” wrote a reporter from the *Oregonian*.

Despite the governor insisting the project wouldn’t go forward without the state’s permitting, Pembina has appealed the state’s rejection to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, a founder of the International Coal Group and a friend to the oil industry.

The National Park Service is now in the process of closing either partially or fully various national parks in the west to YOU, but not to drilling and mining companies, its work as usual for them. So if you want to spend time outdoors during this national emergency and want to visit a national park just show your drilling or mining permit and you’re in.

During these times we will do what the Sierra Club does best, heading to court as well as meeting with members of Congress and Interior staff, all of this done remotely and safely during this time of national emergency.

We want all lease sales on federal lands postponed and we want all public comment periods extended. Just two simple asks...will our requests be granted?

EAVESDROPS

“Fifty years ago, our region faced an unprecedented environmental disaster, echoed today by the even larger impacts of the climate crisis.”

~ Kathi King, SB Community Environmental Council who noted: “This year’s event aims to harness the energy of that first Earth Day, rallying activists of all ages ...” (The April event has been postponed due to Covid-19)

COVER PHOTO

Despite our Outings being cancelled and developed campgrounds closed, the trails are alive and well with spring blossoms during the Covid-19 quarantine. Going outside is healthy if you practice social distancing, like these hikers along the Aliso Trail. (Photo by Cara Peden Cody)



The emergency here was a Sierra Club protest against new oil projects during the March 4 CalGEM hearing (see story pg. 2), but its new meaning is also the virus affecting us all. (Photo by Jon Ullman)

We urge all to submit comments soon due to April 10 deadline, but the date may be extended. Email to: CalGEMRegulations@conservation.ca.gov



Trucking oil as Exxon wants to do here is the most hazardous way to transport, as evidenced by this March accident of a tanker carrying 6,000 gallons of crude oil that rolled over on Highway 166, spilling its cargo into the Cuyama River. An emergency worker is shown cutting a barbed wire fence to allow access. (Photo courtesy of SB County Fire Department)

Clear lessons...

continued from page 1

The Sierra Club drove 30,000 emails to members of Congress supporting the Covid-19 relief package, which provides sick leave, unemployment benefits, free coronavirus testing, and food and medical aid to people affected by the pandemic.

It also involves determining how to carry out economic stimulus in a way that doesn't bail out oil and gas companies and sneak through regulatory cuts and public land

giveaways, but that protects workers, clean energy and clean transportation jobs, and our democracy, including the important election taking place on November 3.

The Sierra Club has exactly that in mind via its action campaigns, get involved here: <https://addup.sierraclub.org/>

Local Look

Speaking of elections, there was some good news on March 3, as Sierra Club's endorsed candidates for Santa Barbara County Supervisor won outright. (see story, pg.5). We are glad to see them focused now on

local coronavirus response.

In terms of energy and environment, a climate action plan update and solar ordinance are planned, which we support. Exxon's oil trucking plan and Aera's Cat Canyon oil project are also slated for a decision this year, which we oppose.

Looking ahead to 2021, our Congressional representative Salud Carbajal recently sent a letter asking for language prohibiting federal funds from being used to allow for any new oil and gas along the Pacific coast, Atlantic coast, Florida's coast, and the Arctic Ocean in next year's appropriations bill.

Inevitably a spill

On March 21 an oil tanker overturned on Highway 166 and dumped 6,000 gallons of crude oil into the Cuyama River. From there, the oil flowed downstream toward the Twitchell Dam. That road is windy with steep embankments, a particularly dangerous route.

The Twitchell reservoir is designed to recharge the groundwater basin that provides drinking water for north Santa Barbara County. In this case, the trailer came unattached and rolled down the embankment. This comes just two months after an oil tanker shut down Highway 41 the week of January 21 near Kern County. That also involved a tank trailer that went over the side of an embankment, spilling 1,000 gallons of oil.

Statistically, trucking is the least safe way to transport oil. Both roads would see hundreds of additional oil tanker trips every day if pending oil projects in Santa Barbara are approved. Sierra Club, other groups and the public will continue the fight against transporting oil by trucks.

Rightwing Rags

A mysterious group recently purchased the *Santa Maria Times*, *Lompoc Record* and *Santa Ynez Valley News*, along with other inland CA newspapers, including the *Bakersfield Californian*.

Documents filed with the state list Melanie Walsh as chief executive officer. She is the daughter and business associate of rightwing fraudster, David Radler, who helped media baron Conrad Black build a global newspaper empire starting in 1969. Radler was once described as managing to "collect a string of reactionary Republican papers—and make them even more conservative."

In 2007 Radler and Black were both convicted of white-collar crimes. Radler served less than a year of his 29-month sentence for fraud and Black was pardoned by Trump, with whom he had done business. Black published a fawning biography of Trump entitled, "A President Like No Other." He also describes Canadian tar sands oil companies as "heroic" and "ecologically impeccable."

Based on this history, best be wary of the *Santa Maria Times* under their new ownership.

Send an action email

By Jon Ullman

Sierra Club and its allies helped turn out scores of residents in Santa Maria on March 4 to ask a state agency to protect people, water and land from the scourge of oil drilling. Readers are urged to submit their own comments before an April 10 deadline, even though it may be extended.

The oil drilling regulation agency called CalGEM (California Geologic Energy Management Division, formerly DOGGR), planned to hold 10 workshops statewide to gather comments on a proposed new rules to set back oil drilling from homes and institutions and ban certain kinds of enhanced oil drilling responding to a law introduced by our Assembly member Monique Limón. A few workshops, including Oxnard, were later cancelled due to coronavirus.

Environmental and social justice groups and residents gave impassioned speeches asking for a 2,500-foot setbacks and a ban on new oil drilling statewide. They also asked that California not grant an aquifer exemption to allow a tripling of oil drilling in Cat Canyon because of its threat to Santa Maria's water supply, a city of 100,000 mostly Latino residents."

While Gov. Newsom's administration is considering new limitations, they could be less than what environmentalists are asking for and chock full of loopholes that would allow major increases in high-pressure steam and acid drilling across our Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

Opponents of new protections were out in force: Western States Petroleum Association, big oil firms, oil lobby groups and unions. There may be one more meeting on-line before rulemaking begins.

All Sierra Club members are urged to submit comments via email soon to: CalGEMRegulations@conservation.ca.gov

Here are ideas for comments:
~ 2,500 foot buffer between oil-gas operations and homes, workplaces

and schools. The health hazards are proven. This includes agriculture. Oil in Ventura County is too close to farmworkers and food production.

~ No drilling near protected groundwater. The new testing now required by the state has found instances where drinking and agricultural sources have been compromised, such as in Oxnard, and is likely to find more.

~ Monitor and prohibit flaring and venting except for safety purposes. Natural gas (methane) is a byproduct of oil extraction. Releasing or flaring it emits greenhouse gases and other air pollutants like benzene. It should be captured instead. Methane plumes have been documented in the Rincon and Ventura oil fields.

~ No drilling in high fire hazard zones. Wildfire risk is increasingly costly, deadly and hazardous to health and safety due to climate change. Our region has already experienced devastating fires.

~ No new cyclic steaming. This type of drilling poses higher risks to health and safety, and greater greenhouse gas emissions.

~ No drilling that adds tanker truck traffic, as this is the least safe way to transport oil, as shown by the recent spill into the Cuyama River.

~ Greater oversight of idle wells and prompt plugging of non-active wells. Permits should expire if not used, and bond requirements should be much higher given the bankruptcies of limited-liability oil companies that leave dangerous, toxic messes behind.

EAVESDROPS

"The gas industry organized a mass turnout against electrification -- mostly the usual suspects in our area who are paid fossil fuel promoters & lobbyists ... plus the gas labor unions."

~ Katie Davis, Los Padres Chapter Chair, in a report about Cal Public Utilities Commission meeting in Oxnard earlier this year.



On March 6 SB Sierra Club had a table with Stephanie Pruffer talking to visitors before the David Wallace-Wells lecture entitled "The Uninhabitable Earth" which was "moving, disturbing and yet somehow encouraging," said Jim Taylor. "Tons of Condor Calls" were given out during the lecture, part of the UCSB Arts and Lectures series that has now been cancelled due to Covid-19. (Photo by Katie Davis)



Janet Blevins at the CalGEM Santa Maria state oil hearing on March 4. (Photo by Jon Ullman)

Get power from sun

Sierra Club is partnering with SunPower to make it easy for anyone (member or not) to go solar and save money with a proven company backed by the club.

This is especially critical in the Ventura area which has joined the Clean Power Alliance, an advantage for lower prices. Santa Barbara County residents can also save money simply by having solar. Solar will boost the value of your home and it qualifies for a tax credit. Click on the link below for a free estimate.

You'll receive a \$1,000 mail-in rebate while our Los Padres Chapter gets \$1,000 to support its work for clean energy.

Condor John (editor, *Condor Call*) took advantage of the club's deal three years ago. "NextDoor is full of comments today about how residents' bills have risen. But guess what, my bill for a hot summer month was \$0 by selling excess energy to SCE, even after I chose the 100% clean energy tier, and for mid-winter it was around \$25. That's because I have Sierra Club solar. Even with my 10-year loan to buy it, my bill is less than it would be without solar."

Go to the link below to get a free quote and find out how much you can save: <http://tinyurl.com/SClubSolarQuote>

Condor Call

<http://lospadres2.sierraclub.org> ~ 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

RAIL TO TRAIL

Dream bike route advances

By Nina Danza

A new 5-mile non-motorized route between Santa Paula and Ventura may become the latest asset to fight climate change when the Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved submitting a grant application to construct the east-west 'rail-to-trail'.

"Completion of the Santa Paula railroad bike trail between Santa Paula and Ventura has been a dream of bicyclists, runners and trail users for decades," stated Supervisor Steve Bennett. The trail is an excellent candidate for funding under the state Active Transportation Program which intends to increase trips accomplished by biking and walking; increase safety and mobility for non-motorized users, advance efforts to achieve Greenhouse Gas reduction goals, and enhance public health.

The entire rail corridor from Ventura to Piru is owned by the county expressly to produce a long range non-motorized route. The current proposed segment is less complicated than other areas of the rail, as it is fully within county jurisdiction and it is willing to own and operate the trail. In addition, all preparatory studies have been completed including environmental analysis and public comment for a full build-out of a Santa Paula Branch Line trail.

Over past years, the trail has been stymied only by a few farms. Farmer objections include worries of trespassing onto farm property, contamination or theft of produce, and safety at farm vehicle crossings on the trail. All can be mitigated, and similar trails have been successful where routed through agriculture.

Public support for the trail is widespread and local groups including Sierra Club, Friends of the Santa Clara River, BikeVentura and Channel Islands Bike Club, mobilized to make it happen.

The volume of bicycle traffic

Let's talk oil event April 8

Join the SB Environmental Defense Center for a webinar on Wednesday, April 8th at noon, to learn about Aera Energy's dangerous oil and gas project proposed in the Cat Canyon Oil Field near Santa Maria.

The first of three large projects moving through Santa Barbara County's permit process, Aera's dirty proposal threatens our public health and local environment.

EDC staff attorneys will walk you through how this risky project will bring severe impacts to our community's health and our local environment, and how you can help EDC its clients, our Sierra Club and SBCAN..

You can tap into the webinar by PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device Go here to register: <https://tinyurl.com/EDCoilWebinar>

Oil remarks

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is extending the public comment period to May 6 for the Draft Environmental Assessment and General Conservation Plan for oil and gas activities in Santa Barbara County. Send comments here: sbc-oilandgasecp@fws.gov Review the document here: www.fws.gov/ventura

between Santa Paula and Ventura is enormous. "We estimate that there are hundreds of riders making this trip in a typical week. Many are recreational riders certainly, but many are not. We remind the board that hundreds of communities and agricultural areas have found appropriate ways to allow the public to access a truly valuable resource without unduly burdening property owners ... the health, safety and prosperity of the larger community must be the board's overriding priority," said Leslie Ogden, Channel Islands Bike Club president

"As development surges along the 126 all the way to Santa Clarita's Newhall Ranch, the need to provide options other than driving on the 126 will become more urgent," added Joey Juhasz-Lukomski, BikeVentura Executive Director

Too, the bike trail would help

create an urban culture that is not so dependent on cars for travel, reducing congestion and carbon emissions, said Aurelio Ocampo Jr. Oxnard Community Planning Group Board

Ron Dow, a 43-year resident, reminded the board that, "this railroad right-of-way is public land; it belongs to the all of us not to individual ranchers," along with encouraging a healthier lifestyle.

Readers are encouraged to volunteer as an active advocate for this and other similar projects in our area at:

SierraClubVentura@gmail.com

EAVESDROPS

"We can't protect our climate simply by saying 'no' to bad ideas. We must also shout 'yes!' to better ideas."

~ Michael Brune, Sierra Club executive director.



Marine Sanctuary...

continued from page 1

Sanctuary was first proposed, it was met with a dizzying array of objections and wild surmise, often tipping over into slapstick and eagerly embraced by county Supervisors John Peschong, Debbie Arnold and Lynn Compton, who went along with notions like:

~ Marine sanctuary designation would mean a "loss of local control" (something no coastal city or county has ever had over the state and federally regulated waters).

~ It would regulate or ban fishing (confusing national sanctuaries with the marine reserves that are part of the state of California's Marine Protected Areas).

~ It would simply duplicate existing regulations (it wouldn't).

~ It would regulate discharges of water from agricultural operations (it wouldn't).

~ It's part of "Agenda 30" (which, one may assume, is even worse than longtime conspiracy favorite Agenda 21).

~ And the half-racist, half-delirious claim that a sanctuary would mean the Chumash could block everyone from going fishing or swimming, and "we'll have to pay the Chumash to do desal."

Meanwhile, on the

factual side of the ledger, there are multiple peer-reviewed socioeconomic studies on the impact of national marine sanctuaries on local coastal economies.

The video record of a 2016 meeting with marine sanctuary superintendents at the Morro Bay Vets Hall -- a nearly three-hour smackdown of all the anti-marine sanctuary disinformation that whipped through the county five years ago -- is still available online. Go to YouTube and type "NOAA-hosted Marine Sanctuary Information Session."

The facts on the history and operations of such sanctuaries also remain readily available on NOAA's website.

And the SLO County general plan still declares that "significant marine resources will be protected," and that this goal is to be implemented via a policy of making "every effort to secure permanent protection and management of the county's ecologically and economically significant marine resources using the National Marine Sanctuary, National Estuary, or other programs and legislation as vehicles for protection and management."

It would be a good thing if someday the majority of our SLO county supervisors could support our general plan.

Oxnard oil thwarted

A longtime wish for CFROG is to shut down the expansion of drilling in the Vaca Tar Sands between Oxnard and Camarillo. For one operator at least, it's done.

In a firm rebuke to an oil company working the tar sands in the Oxnard Plain, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors has killed the permit on a 5-0 vote because of multiple and serious violations.

PEAK Operator LLC was cited for unpermitted structures and construction wells drilled in unapproved locations and a drill site three times larger than permitted, natural gas flaring in an unapproved area, structures not meeting setbacks (including oil storage tanks), and various Environmental Health Division issues involving potable water and septic tanks.

Also, 10 of the new oil wells were sited within a 100-year floodplain without approval by Public Works.

The violations were found by county staff, following a request by PEAK to drill 55 more wells.

This is the same general area where U.S. Geological Survey scientists found petroleum-related

gases in the Fox Canyon Aquifer, prompting the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to issue a moratorium on new cyclic steam oil drilling there.

"Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG) applauds the proactive work by the county to identify the multiple problems at this site and protect the health and safety of residents. We are very concerned when an operator who doesn't follow the rules is drilling in the shallow tar sands near our aquifer," the group said in a statement.

EAVESDROPS

"A tremendous waste of a natural resource ... we can't afford for this to continue unabated."

~ Referring to the common practice of flaring and venting gas by oil companies, noted Riccardo Puliti, Energy Director for the World Bank which estimates flaring emissions are equivalent to the pollution emitted by 75 million vehicles. **Local note:** the flare along Hwy 101 near the Rincon has finally been shut down!



The rail-to-trail proposal is a straight shot from Ventura to Santa Paula. Please support it.

All physical meetings suspended - we're online

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
~ Chapter website and blog at: www.sierraclub.org/los-padres

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

~ We meet 1st Tuesdays, noon to 1:30pm of each month. For details and to follow the South Coast area, contact: SantaBarbaraGroup@SierraClub.org
<https://www.FACEBOOK.com/SBSierraclub>
<https://TWITTER.com/SBSierraClub>
<https://www.INSTAGRAM.com/SierraClubSantaBarbara>
<https://www.MEETUP.com/SierraClub-SantaBarbara>
<https://tinyurl.com/SBGroupBlog>

ARGUELLO GROUP

Our North County Group will keep you informed on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SierraClubArguelloGroup ~Volunteers needed; your talents could make a difference. Call 350-0629 or: RebeccaAugust@mac.com

VENTURA NETWORK

~ For board meeting dates, times and location email: 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

CONEJO GROUP

~ Events, outings and meetings will be sent to you if you sign up at ConejoGroup@gmail.com
Otherwise, get all information on this eastern Ventura County Group from Hugh Warren, 341-6295 mail@hkwarren.net
www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo
www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings



Here's a handy sampling of California wildflowers that you can identify on the trail and/or grow in your own back yard. (Collage by Fish and Wildlife Service)

Grow wild at home

Editor's note: The SB Museum of Natural History is closed but has created a 'virtual museum' where you can explore how to connect with the natural world from your home. It's here:

<https://tinyurl.com/VirtualOutdoors>

**By Jim Hines
Greetings Friends!**

Go native, California native plants, that is.

With the lovely rains in March, many wildflowers are starting to bloom or are already out, so this is a great time to be out enjoying the beauty of nature in all of her glory ... but practice social distancing and other methods to halt the spread of Covid-19!

When you are out walking in wild areas keep an eye out for various native plants, take a photo and then ask your local garden center to order them if it does not have the plants in stock.

That way, you can create a beautiful yard that is low in water use during the long months when it doesn't rain.

If the trails are still open, some places to explore may be the Ventura Botanic Garden, drive up to Carrizo Plain National Monument, hike up to Gaviota peak, enjoy the wildflowers of Figueroa Mountain or Mount Pinos or just take a wildflower stroll at Point Mugu State Park.

We have so many wonderful and easy to grow natives ranging from large shade tree species to flowering shrubs, groundcovers and flowering native bulbs. They are naturally adapted to our region so take little maintenance when they are established.

Need a blooming focal point? Plant a lovely cerise flowering native Redbud. Want to create shade from the hot summer sun? Then you will be planting native Sycamores or native Alder trees.

Allow Spring in your yard to be filled with blooming native shrubs such as California lilac (Ceanothus species) noted for its blue or white blossoms in abundance. There are groundcover varieties available or medium size and large growing shrub varieties available too.

Have a shady spot in your yard? No problem ... use flowering current

and gooseberry shrubs as well as red flowered sage.

One of the real standouts in my garden is the native Matilija poppy, a large shrub (growing 6' x 6') with giant "fried egg" colored flowers.

Gardening with California native plants is enjoyable and adds richness and beauty to any garden setting.

Check out this excellent source on practical applications for natives: www.waterwisesb.org/gardenwise_wwsb

Good votes in Ventura

The Ventura City Council took the first steps on Feb. 24 to ban plastics and Styrofoam use in the city by asking staff to draft an ordinance.

When Sierra Club member Mike Stubblefield heard the news, he said "I'd like to lobby the Oxnard City Council to do the same thing."

The city of Ventura will prohibit restaurants from using plastic foam cups and containers and may extend the ban to coolers and other products sold in stores.

The Council voted 6-0 in favor of the ban. Santa Barbara also has a ban on polystyrene foam (Styrofoam) and plastics, preferring containers should be recyclable or biodegradable.

At the county level, County Supervisors approved a resolution to further protect the mountain lions in Ventura County. Resolution was introduced by Supervisor Linda Parks; notably ending 'depredation permits' for cats which attack livestock and/or other animals.

Both issues were actively supported by the Sierra Club and members and friends testified and wrote emails to ensure public support.

Our Vice-chair Jim Hines and other members of our Sierra Club Mountain Lions FOREVER! team spoke to the board before the vote. "We got a great email response also to the board from our action alert on this item, Hines said adding, "a thank you to our friends and partners at Patagonia Corp who have joined our Mountain Lions Forever! campaign and got emails of support."

Teens tell adults you're exhausting

By John Hankins

When Amelia Beving was searching around for a project that has a lasting impact on the world, it appeared like smoke right in front of her.

As she walked outside the Cabrillo Middle School to be picked up, she "noticed the cars idling and smelled the cars which are poisoning our lungs." Amelia said some parents sit idling in their gasoline cars for 10, 15, 20 minutes or more.

What started out as her project to gain the coveted Girl Scouts Silver Award has now become reality at Cabrillo. And while the schools are closed now due to Covid-19 virus, the signs are still up, and the parents' pledges are locked in when they reopen. Amelia's efforts have resulted in a website that has information and links that other schools can use: www.NoIdlingProject.com

The project includes banners at parking lot entrances, a parental pledge sheet, information that goes home with all students, and flyers handed out by the students to parents still choosing to idle.

But one day after Amelia installed the first "No Idling" banner at her school, "some jerk cut down one of the banners at Amelia's school in defiance and shredded it," said Gene Rubin, a parent and EV Advocates member who helped Amelia purchase the



A metal sign has replaced the original No Idling banner at Cabrillo Middle School, which was ripped off by a smog-breathing creature from the Black Lung Lagoon. Note the sponsors are EV Advocates of Ventura County and the Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club. (Photo by Gene Rubin)

signs. The Los Padres Sierra Club also contributed to the purchase. Rubin has since acquired metal signs bolted into place and not so easy to destroy.

"The good news is that I roamed the pickup lines and parking lot at the end of the school day and people en-masse were not idling but had their windows open instead. Many parents have signed and returned the pledge sheets already," Amelia said.

Cabrillo principal Lorelle Dawes was ecstatic over the project and hoped "it could migrate to other schools." She believes "the education piece of it is valuable, especially when a student takes ownership of a project." Dawes said the Girl Scout project is under the ASB club's Teen Voice which is a partnership with the city.

Others who helped were some 20 Teen Voice members and her friend Natalie S., and Amelia's mom Jayne Turcotte.

"At first it was a lot of research, and in October I was handing out informative flyers to parents after school," Amelia said.

Her research found that the Environmental Protection Agency had a Healthy Schools toolkit on its website, which includes downloadable pdfs on idling and pledge sheets. Other websites which have excellent information are:

www.SustainableAmerica.org
www.Iturnitoff.com

Parents are welcoming the project with many signing the pledge. "I now turn off my engine every time I am waiting in the pickup line for my daughter. Thank you!" said Lori D.

Amanda is in good company with her campaign. Recently a *New York Times* headline blared "Idol, with a Rebel Yell, Headlines Campaign Against Idling Vehicles". That would be the singer Billy Idol, who publicly and with music blaring supported New York city's ongoing campaign to reduce idling that has a fine attached.

"I need my lungs to breathe and sing," Idol told the crowd. The campaign has a catchy name: "Billy Never Idles. Neither Should You."

There's also a documentary with a lot of humor entitled "Idle Threat" by George Pakenham, a "Man on Emission."

He's a New York attorney who "walked the streets of New York for over five years, courteously confronting over 3,000 motorists to explain idling's impact and the law prohibiting running a parked vehicle for more than a short time." It features Click and Clack from NPR's Car Talk and is available on YouTube; just type in "Idle Threat the movie" and a short and long (1 hour) video pops up.



Amelia Beving holds a flyer entitled "Car Idling Negatively Impacts Kids' Health." (Photo by Gene Rubin)

EV cars charging ahead

In January, we hit a major milestone: there are now over 1,000 public EV charging ports in Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

Combined with thousands of private home charging stations, the Central Coast is making big strides toward clean transportation. In fact, over 7% of new vehicle sales have been electric in our region over the last two years.

Expanded public charging infrastructure and longer ranges mean that all-electric cars work for longer drives and for driving around town. If you switch to an electric vehicle, you'll love the cost-savings and convenience of never having to go to a gas station or get an oil change. It is even better to install a home solar system and know you are running on sunshine.

You can help drive this shift too, and it's more affordable than ever.

~ There are over 40 different models of EVs available today, and rebates of \$3,500 to over \$11,000 can make them even more affordable than comparable gas cars.

~ Used EVs can now be purchased for as little as \$5,000, and SCE offers their customers an additional rebate for new or used

cars of \$1,000.

~ Low- to moderate-income Californians (under \$100,400 for a family of four) can also qualify for a supplemental \$5,000 grant toward a new or used EV.

"Throughout the Los Padres region, drivers are making the personal commitment to utilize sustainable transportation. For personal and business use, the switch to electric vehicles is now a reality we can live with," said Kent Bullard the chapter's Transportation Chair.

"No more are we tied to a carbon intensive transportation fuel that often has a negative energy balance. Grid power in our region is becoming less reliant on unsustainable sources as we continue to switch to clean renewable resources of wind and solar. We can, must and will reduce our carbon footprint through use of electric vehicles."

A good example happened in February as the SB Board of Supervisors began the transition of replacing its fleet of vehicles with electric vehicles by purchasing 56 Chevy Bolt cars from a local dealership and installing 71 charging stations around the South Coast. At least as many more vehicles will be switched to electric in the coming years and in the North County.



Well, at least the Wilderness Basics Course was able to get in a conditioning hike and a car camp before the Covid-19 virus closed the 8-week course down at the halfway mark. (Photos by Brett Sutherland and Barbara Hynes)

Virus closes WBC

By Jane Montague

The 2020 Wilderness Basics Course has been canceled for this year.

This year's class, the eleventh since the Los Padres Chapter created the class, kicked off on February 19 to begin an eight week series, but by direction of the Sierra Club, the WBC Board voted to cancel halfway through, after the fourth class.

WBC had a full enrollment of 45 students with ages ranging between 20 and 70 with a wide range of outdoor knowledge and experience. Several couples were enrolled, and many new friendships were formed as camaraderie grew through each class and outing. The course involves 2.5 hours per week for a total of 20 hours of instruction. The course included four outings, two of which were completed.

The conditioning hike, which took place in the Santa Monica Mountains and car camp, which took place in the Santa Inez Mountains, were enjoyed by many. Unfortunately, the class ended before the two backpacking outings could be held.

WBC is offered each year in the spring, which is a wonderful time to be outdoors and in the backcountry of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. The outings take advantage of the season's bountiful streams, spring growth including wildflowers and emerging fauna. Post-fire backcountry re-growth shows the resilience of nature through new tree growth on oaks, sycamores and toyons, native shrubs like California lilac, sumac, and manzanita, and wildflowers like Maricopa lily and poodle dog bush.

These places serve as outdoor classrooms for WBC students to learn concepts, principles and hiking etiquette such as "Leave No Trace" and practice using maps and essential

gear.

Preparation for the annual course starts months before the course begins, during which time a curriculum is built, guest speakers are booked, and gear is assembled. Staff members share knowledge from their extensive experience and class handouts are carefully edited and developed.

In addition, WBC staff undergoes an annual re-training in map and compass skills. Favorite backpacking recipes are shared as well for inclusion in the curriculum. A variety of guest speakers bring additional expertise to the course in the areas of conditioning, weather, flora and fauna, technology, safety and first aid.

Students enrolled in the 2020 WBC class can enroll in next year's course for free or receive a refund for half of this year's course. Any others interested in the 2021 course should be on the lookout for announcements starting in January 2021.

Much appreciation is due to the Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter WBC co-founder, Teresa Norris. Teresa has devoted countless hours over the past eleven years resulting in a premier course. Those efforts by a growing number of staff and expert presentations have expanded knowledge of the outdoors and appreciation for nature for hundreds of people.

Due to WBC, hundreds have had outdoor encounters which have led them to truly be stewards of our amazing natural lands.

To get a taste of this excellent experience, go to: www.LosPadresWBC.org

~ Jane Montague is a student of WBC and is now part of the staff, which is typically how the course has grown. She is also a trustee with the Ventura Land Trust.

SIGHTINGS

Out of sight, not the fight

By John Hankins

You may notice instantly that there's fewer-than-normal Sightings from mid-March onward, due to many scheduled events that were cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus safety advice.

But the Sierra Club does not lie idle. It's just migrated more to internet meetings, action posts and lobbying by email. No way will we stop our effective actions to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the planet – only it's six-feet apart for the time being.

Please join us; see Group News box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved. While we are not now conducting our free outings, we encourage all to go outside on your own. 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

March 17: **Granada Garage** solar array was approved by the SB City Council with strong support from the SB Group, which included a waiver on height limitations. Part of the letter of support noted it would save about \$1 million in utility savings for the city and help it meet its goal of achieve the city's goal of being a 100% renewable community by 2030.

March 10: **Venture(a) Out** speaker event hosted by Rachel Enevoldsen featured "The Comeback of the California Condor, a True Conservation Success." Sponsored by Ventura Sierra Club for free at Foster Library.

March 8: **Anacapa Island** day trip sponsored by Ventura Sierra Club was sold out with over two dozen participants; unfortunately, due to tides they were not able to land on the island, so the boat treated them to a cruise around the island instead.

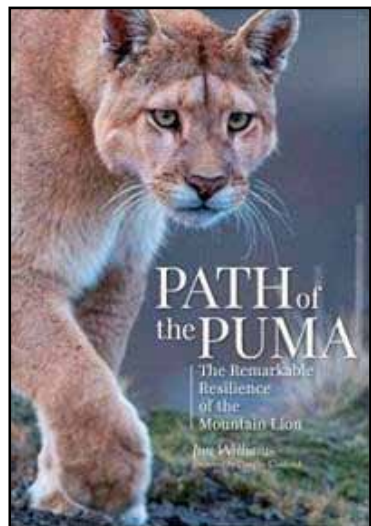
Feb 26: **SB County planners** approved a Carpinteria battery storage project strongly supported by Sierra Club to store clean energy.

Feb 25 & 27: **We conducted** a press conference on the 25th supporting Supervisor Joan Hartmann and on the 27th for Supervisor Das Williams as well as walking precincts and phone calls for others and issues for the March 3 election.

Feb 22 **Dirty Fuels** money was the subject of an Oxnard press conference in decrying the large sums coming from the industry which is targeting our endorsed candidates for Ventura supervisors, Carmen Ramirez and Kim Stephenson. Three of our members (Jim Hines, Liz

Lamar and Mike Stubblefield) represented the environmental side.

Feb 21 **Save Mountain Lions** campaign officially begins for Sierra Club, the date when Fish and Game received report to list SoCal and Central Coast lion populations as endangered; our own vice-chair Jim Hines is a key player.



Wild Cats may roar with contentment over the Ventura County supervisors' decision Feb. 25 approving a resolution to further protect the mountain lions in Ventura and LA counties, notably ending depredation permits which is actively supported by the Sierra Club. The book is an excellent primer on the wild-urban interface.

Feb 20 **Independent Voices** featured our own Chapter and SB Chair, Katie Davis, writing that it's "High Stakes for the Environment on March 3." She honed in on supervisorial races, notably against the oil-backed Bruce Porter and the Trump plans to open a million acres of land in our region for oil. (A similar op-ed by Katie was run in the *Santa Maria Sun*.) Read the editorial here: <https://tinyurl.com/KatiesOpEd>

Feb 20 **Car storage proposal** on the former PetroChem refinery

site along the Ventura River will not happen as the applicant has withdrawn. The Sierra Club was one of the appellants against the project and is now looking for a land trust to buy the land, along with Friends of the Ventura River and others.

Feb 20 **Beach access** event by the Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program honed in on proper way to access Hollister Ranch including concerns of property owners. Sierra Club participated at the Goleta Valley Community Center.

Feb 18 **Trump visits** Bakersfield and Los Angeles to large protest crowds, notably Sierra Club activists.


Feb 12 **Good News** for the Sierra Club backed bills that just passed the House of Representatives; now onto the Senate to protect 380,000 acres affecting Los Padres National Forest, Carrizo Plain and wildlife corridor and open space affecting eastern Ventura and western LA counties. They are Central Coast Heritage Protection Act and Rim of the Valley Corridor Protection Act.

Feb 11 **Welcome new** backpack leaders for our club: Victoria Vohland and Vicki Wilson.

Feb 7 **Patagonia support** promised for the Sierra Club's Mountain Lions Forever Campaign, headed by our own vice-chair Jim Hines. CA Fish & Game will have maps that show possible protected areas during its online April 15 meeting that affect our region. Fish and Game has placed the lions under temporary protections with a decision expected April 15.

Feb 1 **Restore and protective** work at the Hedrick Ranch Nature Preserve along the Santa Clara River hosted by the Ventura Sierra Club.

CAR IDLING NEGATIVELY IMPACTS YOUR HEALTH



Idling your vehicle is harmful to kids' health, your health, the environment, and your wallet. If you plan to be waiting in your car for more than 10 seconds, turn your key and be idle free!

Air Quality: Idling your car for even 5 minutes each day dumps 260 pounds of carbon dioxide into the air each year. (fcgov.com/breatheeasy)
Effects on Children: 6.2 million children nationally suffer from asthma. A car idling for 1 minute produces more carbon monoxide than the smoke from 3 packs of cigarettes. (enginesoff.com)
Health Problems: The International Center for Technology Advancement says Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Carbon Monoxide (CO) levels are higher inside cars, even with the windows rolled up. Be especially concerned if you have small children with you when idling. VOCs have been proven to increase risk of decreased lung function, cardiac disease, cancer, and other serious health problems.
Waste of Money: If you idle your car for 15 minutes a day, you'll be wasting \$4 per week on gas. This adds up to over \$200 per year!
Consider Going Electric: An electric car is a great alternative. Electricity is *much* cheaper than gas, you can easily recharge at home or on the go, and they save the environment. Go emission-free, drive an EV!
For more information, go to sustainableamerica.org and check out their EnginesOff movement

Shown is the flyer students at Cabrillo Middle School handed out as part of the No Idling campaign, see story on page 4. Sierra Club has also addressed the dangers of car idling in its Green Life features.

Election results good

By David Gold and Alex Pujo

The March 3 election was a really big night for us, with most of our Sierra Club endorsed candidates moving to a re-match in November or winning outright.

The reelection of Joan Hartmann to the Board of Supervisors was a big sigh of relief in Santa Barbara County. This was a crucial vote in a perennial 3-2 split with North County over oil development, and Joan won decisively.

The reelection of Supervisor Das Williams was reassuring. The race was a divisive primary between two environmentalists: an accomplished incumbent and a popular challenger. The campaign got very ugly at the end splitting the Democratic party and diverting resources from other campaigns. We urge all environmentalists to reunite behind our endorsed candidate, Supervisor Williams.

In Ventura County, our endorsed candidate for Supervisor, Matt LaVere, won outright, but endorsee Carmen Ramirez will run against another Democrat, Tim Flynn, in November.

The big disappointment of the night was that Supervisor Kelly Long, backed by more than \$500,000 of outside oil money, defeated our endorsed challenger Kim Stephenson. We will continue to fight Long's anti-environmental efforts.

In the Assembly races, Steve Bennett beat a crowded Democratic field in AD 37 and will face Republican Charles Cole in

November. In District 44, incumbent Jacqui Irwin will face Denise Pedrow and in District 35 Dawn Addis will challenge incumbent Jordan Cunningham.

Sierra Club-endorsed candidate Christy Smith prevailed in the special election to fill the 25th Congressional seat vacated by Katie Hill. Smith holds the seat for the remainder of the term and will be on the ballot again in the fall for the subsequent term. The district includes portions of Ventura County and Los Angeles County.

NOVEMBER RUNOFFS
Following are the primary election results in which the top two finishers continue to general election in November.

US House of Representatives:
24th Salud Carbajal (D-endorsed) vs Andy Caldwell (R).
25th Christy Smith (D-endorsed) vs Mike Garcia (R)
26th Julia Brownley (D-endorsed) vs Ronda Baldwin-Kennedy (R).

30th Brad Sherman (D-endorsed) vs Mark Reed (R).

California State Senate:
19th Monique Limón (D-endorsed) vs Gary Michaels (R)
27th Henry Stern (D-endorsed) vs Houman Salem (R)

California Assembly:
35th Dawn Addis (D-endorsed) vs Jordan Cunningham
37th Steve Bennett (D-endorsed) vs Charles Cole (R)

44th Jacqui Irwin (D-endorsed) vs Denise Pedrow (R)
Ventura Supervisor:
5th Carmen Ramirez (D-endorsed) vs Tim Flynn (D)



Take a Hike!

LOS PADRES CHAPTER

UPDATES: <http://lospadres.sierraclub.org>

Panorama above Goleta by Robert Bernstein



Is this far enough apart? Tents spaced generously during the Wilderness Basics Course car camp at Live Oak maybe because of loud snoring or boisterous sounds of joy. Photo by Phuong Tran was taken before the Covid-19 virus quarantine shut down the course, but it could now be construed as social distance camping. (Photo by Phuong Tran)

SOME CAMPS CLOSED

Hike online for forest services

Los Padres National Forest has closed all its offices, visitor centers and stations to public in-person visits but will serve the public via the internet and phone.

It has also closed all developed recreation sites across the forest, such as car campgrounds and designated day-use sites.

It is limiting public access to its offices and implementing virtual services to protect the health and safety of employees and members of the public during the Covid-19 outbreak. However, trails, dispersed camping and backcountry camping remain open.

Customers needing information, permits and maps are encouraged to call the Supervisor's Office or Ranger District Offices during regular business hours for

prompt customer service (list is below), or for updates visit Forest website at:

www.fs.usda.gov/main/lpnf

"As we work through an unpredictable and rapidly changing situation, health and safety is our number one priority," said Los Padres National Forest Supervisor Kevin Elliott. "We

are committed to continuing to support our communities and fulfill our mission as we all work together to minimize the impacts and spread of COVID-19."

These actions have been taken based on the best available medical advice to limit gatherings of large numbers of people and to promote social distancing.

It's seal pup season

By Robert Bernstein

We had 21 people for our Carpinteria Seals and Salt Marsh Sierra Club Hike on March 15.

To minimize risk, we suggested that people not carpool for the first time ever. And we suggested that people practice "social distancing" as much as possible during the hike.

We were very fortunate with the weather as the forecast called for on and off showers, but it didn't rain until after the hike was finished.

We were also fortunate to see quite a few newly born seal pups, and to have a volunteer docent on duty to explain what we were seeing.

The docent explained that these harbor seals are very different than the elephant seals in their mating habits. These seals mate whenever they feel like it. The males do not have to fight each other for a female which can mate with whoever they feel like and they do not pair up.

Most interesting is that the females can delay the gestation of the fertilized eggs! The females synchronize this gestation so that they all give birth around the same time. No doubt this offers some safety in numbers when it comes to predation by sharks.

The mothers nurse their young for about six weeks and then the seal pups are on their own, eating fish and crustaceans like the adults. We did not see any pups nursing, but we did see quite a few pups alongside their mothers on the shore and swimming in the water. The pups grow quickly, so they were almost as long as their mothers.

After we got a good view of the seals some of the group signed out

to do their own thing. But most of us continued another mile and a half to the Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Thanks to Anthony for showing us the best route!

And thanks to Ana for sending me some of her photos which were excellent.

Here are my many photos, with Ana's photos tagged on at the bottom:

<http://swt.org/hikesierra/carpinteria-2020-0315>

Nature is Open

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
~ Robert Frost

By Jon Ullman, director
Los Padres Chapter

Robert Frost would make a great epidemiologist. Now is time to take the less-traveled road physically and metaphorically.

The Sierra Club, government officials and organizations across the globe said in order to stop the virus, we must stop doing what comes naturally and what, to a large part, drives our economy. Now all Sierra Club business must be conducted on-line or via phone only. My intern can no longer meet in person. I can no longer meet with volunteers. Sierra Club gatherings are on hold. It's all shut down. And that is a good thing to stop the virus.

Fortunately, the Sierra Club has long had a prescription for those who are able: Go outside, a lot and daily.

This could be your garden, your porch or terrace, a walk around the block or two (or more). This could be a drive to a regional park (if authorities say it's open.) This could be on a hike by yourself or with a housemate at six feet distance (if they are open to the public and people know where to find you if you become lost or incapacitated.)

Do not go outside where you are likely to be within six feet of others or where the government has ordered you can't go. But do go outside and do it every day if possible.

Personally, I have felt anxious and worried checking Facebook and Twitter. My blood boils when I watch the President promote racism and mislead during the daily briefings. I tense up every time I see another positive case show up in my news feed. But I always feel better when I go outside, when I exercise by walking, when I'm away from a screen.

Astronaut Scott Kelly wrote in the *New York Times*: "One of the things I missed most while living in space was being able to go outside and experience nature. After being confined to a small space for months, I actually started to crave nature: the color green, the smell of fresh dirt, and the feel of warm sun on my face."

The more time you are outside daily, the better you will ride out this storm. The better you will physically and mentally feel.

Take the Robert Frost approach. The road less traveled.

Nature is open.

I hope everyone is safe and has a safety net. Keep in touch with friends and loved ones, especially if they are alone. If you want to contact me, my email is:

jonathan.ullman@sierraclub.org

P.S. You may have noticed the Sierra Club has refocused public communication on our issues online. We want to be mindful of the primacy of this emergency and meet people where they are at. But as Trump and his allies push ahead harder over the next 10 months to decimate our public lands, aquifers and waterways with drilling and mining, we will respond. We'll need you to sign up for webinars online. We'll need you to read and forward alerts and send emails to policy makers. We ask that you stay active online because our opponents work electronically, and they will not press pause.



A group of seals on land is called a colony, and a group of seals in the water is called a raft but to further confuse us all, they are also sometimes referred to as a pod or bob, also harem and herd. Okay, how about just a bunch of seals shown here which use this haul-out space every year, just east of the Carpinteria Pier and Carpinteria State Park. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

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	968-6640
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

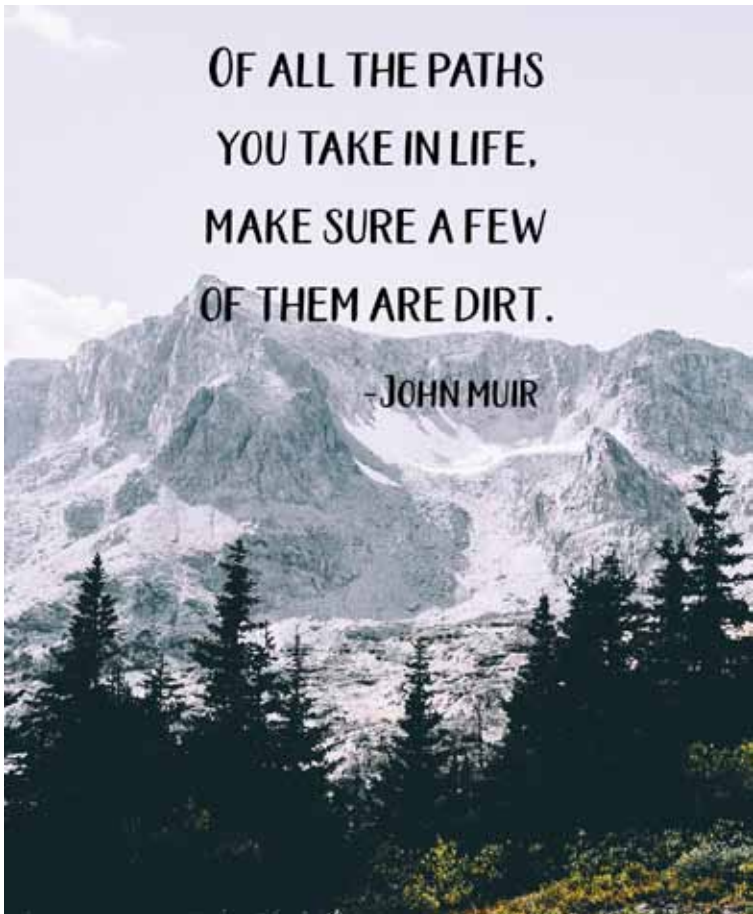
Forest Information

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://lospadres2.sierraclub.org>
- www.LPForest.org
- <https://LPFW.org>
- www.HikeLosPadres.com
- www.SBSierraClub.org
- www.SantaBarbaraTrailGuide.com
- www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com
- <https://SBTrails.org>
- www.VenturaCountyTrails.org
- <http://Hikes.VenturaCountyStar.com>



OF ALL THE PATHS
YOU TAKE IN LIFE,
MAKE SURE A FEW
OF THEM ARE DIRT.

- JOHN MUIR

Parks face cutbacks

By Jim Hines

Trouble is coming to a national park near you, thanks to the Trump Administration's proposed 2020-2021 federal budget which, among other cutbacks, contains a 17 percent reduction in the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, the federal agency which manages YOUR national public lands, this is on top of already major cuts to the agency.

Planning an upcoming trip to one of YOUR national parks, national wildlife refuges, national monuments or national conservation

EAVESDROPS

"This is a community that voraciously defends its natural environment and we will not stand for this type of assault on our environment and animal life."

~ Ventura Mayor Matt LaVere told CNN regarding the release of hundreds of balloons by Scientology during an opening celebration in February. Scientology has apologized and is conducting beach cleanups while the city council declared it will draft an ordinance prohibiting balloon releases. (It has also passed a ban on Styrofoam.)

Know thy adversary

So many people ask me why -- when I go to Washington DC to advocate (lobby) for America's national public lands -- I spend so much time meeting with my adversaries on national public lands issues.

Well, our adversaries control two thirds of the U.S. Government, they control the U.S. Senate and the White House and are major players in dismantling America's national public land units across the west. Meeting with them gains me much insight on what they are up to, gains me valuable information and I build rapport with various staffers who actually happen to be on our side.

Here at home where I live in SoCal, I belong to several pro land development organizations where I gain very useful info to help me in my anti-public land development campaigns.

To win battles, you must know what your adversaries are doing.

~ For the planet, Jim Hines

areas? Well you had better hurry if these cuts go through.

But have no fear if you want to drill for oil and gas, destroy rivers and stream with fracking fluids, cut timber, mine for underground resources at little or no cost. This would be a budget you will like.

Cut the on the ground ranger staffs at national parks ... what the heck, who needs park rangers protecting YOUR most spectacular lands. Want to loot ancient native American historic sites? Have at it as the budget will cut back on enforcement. Need backcountry medical assistance in Canyonlands National Park? No worries just use your cell phone to call your friends back home and ask them to come and help you.

Pay a massive increase in national park entrance fees while no fee livestock grazing is allowed on national public lands ... so you can visit for free if you have a herd of cattle, everyone else pays at the park entrance.

I can go on and on but today's discussions with Interior staffers was not a discourse of a positive future for YOUR national public lands, they were instead a vision the Trump Administration has for America's national public lands which is something out of the movie 'Apocalypse Now'.

Oh by the way, if you are a foreign owned company you get priority for use of America's national public lands: lithium mining by an Australian firm, coal mining by a Chinese firm, uranium mining by a Canadian firm on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Discussions will officially begin soon on the proposed budget and whether or not Congress should adopt such a destructive plan to destroy YOUR national parks, national monuments, national wildlife refuges and national conservation areas.

I will keep you updated as discussions move along with more specific information on individual national parks and other national public lands units proposed for massive cuts.

EAVESDROPS

"The oil is there for the taking; we just have to take it."

~ Donald Trump quoted by the Wilderness Society in a fundraising letter.

Huge thanks to our donors

Members should have received our annual March Appeal letter that started out: "2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, which took place in the wake of the first massive oil spill in Santa Barbara (and) comes after the hottest decade on record"

We hope you can show your support with a one-time gift, a legacy pledge or by becoming a member of our Sustaining Member Circle today, which entails only a monthly donation of at least \$20. If you lost your letter, you could always donate anytime here:

www.SierraClub.org/donate/1000

Contributors to the Sustaining Member Circle is best as it allows us to plan our actions over the year. You will receive advance notice of events, regular updates on local environmental advocacy, a subscription to *Condor Call*, an invitation to an exclusive annual outing, and a gift.

By joining our Sustaining Member Circle, you are directly supporting the local work our chapter is doing on the ground in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The steady flow of income keeps the chapter's focus on this advocacy, outreach and growth because we know our monthly expenses will be covered.

Every dollar you donate stays here in our Los Padres Chapter region to help us transition away from fossil fuels and to protect rivers, forests, and wildlife that depend on us. Please feel free to contact Emily with any questions at:

emilyaengel@gmail.com

Your steady commitment makes it possible for the Los Padres Chapter to be nimble and respond where we are needed, when we are needed -- from advocating for renewables like the Strauss Wind Project to advocating nationally for the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act.

Special thanks go to our initial Sustaining Members, which so far includes:

Valerie Bentz	Alex Greenlee
Irving Beiman	'Condor' John Hankins
Connie Ford	Laura Lindsay
	Patricia Pagaling



We have also received many one-time gifts from year-end donors and we also thank them heartily. They are:

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Sespe trails work continues

The trails across the Ventura backcountry have been neglected over the past decade probably more than anywhere else across the Los Padres, according to the Los Padres Forest Association, which is rectifying that with volunteers and a campaign for the community to help out.

"Enough is enough, it's time for that to change," LPFA stated.

In 2019 the LPFA was awarded a grant from REI to lead a series of volunteer projects across the Sespe Wilderness. It started in January 2020 working the Sespe River Trail from Piedra Blanca to Willett and followed that with a February 2020

project working the Red Reef Trail up from Sespe Creek.

The next scheduled project is a week-long Working Vacation in April 2020 on the Gene Marshall - Piedra Blanca (GMPB) Trail working up from Beartrap Camp, which has not been cancelled as of press time.

"The work we've done so far has been incredible, with great volunteer turnout and everyone we've met along the trail has been so supportive and happy to see these trails getting worked once again. The response has been so positive that we want to keep the momentum going and continue

our progress working trails in the Sespe," said Bryan Conant LPFA director.

With that in mind, the LPFA is launching a fundraiser for the Sespe trails with the hopes of raising \$15,000 to put towards future trail projects in the Sespe.

Many of the Sespe trails are some of the most spectacular trails across the Los Padres, but they are in bad shape now. LPFA hopes the trail community can help by raising some funds for the Sespe trails. For more information and a short video about the proposal, go to:

<https://lpforest.org/sespe-wilderness-campaign/>

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COVID QUOTES

You got to laugh, cry, hibernate, commiserate, procrastinate, Facetime, downtime or get outdoors during the Covid-19 quarantine. Here's a compilation of what folks are saying and doing.

"Flattening the curve, fattening my curves." A submission to comedian Jimmy Fallon.

"People feel overwhelmed, sadness abounds, hope is hanging in the balance and we as a nation face an unknown future. My garden is my place of sanctuary, a place of calm peace and renewal and self-connection." Jim Hines, Los Padres Chapter conservation director and vice-chair.

"They're trying to scare everybody, from meetings, cancel the meetings, close the schools - you know, destroy the country. And that's okay, as long as we

can win the election." Mr. Trump speaking at his Mar-a-Lago resort in mid-March.

"I would have got to your email yesterday; had I not been working in our garden all day!" Mike Stubblefield, chapter air quality chair.

"I just got off the phone with my parents ... I interrupted their card game with their friends. I literally yelled at my mom: you are not supposed to mix households!!!! They're like ... oh ... the fake media is blowing this out of proportion." Lori Lee on Facebook.

"These are certainly scary times but being in the forest, away from large groups of people might be the least scary place at the moment and for the time being we want to keep those opportunities open." Los Padres

Forest Association Director Bryan Conant.

"Art Time: mostly just putting stickers on the dog." Part of a new Pandemic Bingo home-schooling game by Kimberly Harrington.

"Hiking trails were filled Friday with cabin fever sufferers who stayed the requisite six feet apart and smiled a lot more than normal, grateful to be anywhere but home." LA Times article on 'State Residents Navigate the Shutdown with Ease, Day 1'.

"He sat on a stone ledge and watched a robin land on a tree. He listened to the flow of water near his feet and said, 'It's better than it usually is because I've actually stopped and looked'." News report of a man in his 60s who visited a park after being cloistered inside his home for a week.

"Great news! Our city (Ventura) parks are OPEN. Now that County Public Health has provided additional clarification, we will be keeping our parks open for you to enjoy." NextDoor post on March 21.

"Tell your senator: Coronavirus aid should support people, not oil corporations. Polluters are already putting themselves before people ... the White House has already floated multiple plans to bailout failing oil corporations." Sierra RISE call for action.

"While maintaining a good 6 feet distance a walk along the beach is a great way to avoid cabin fever and get fresh air." An Edhat reader.

"Maybe this down time will



change the average lifestyle a little and increase the support for a county or local open space-parks bond." Nina Danza, Ventura Sierra Club on Facebook post about Ventura's Botanic Garden and parks open for hiking.

"So peaceful listening to the birds and walking among nature. A reminder of all the beauty around us. Good for the soul in these challenging times." Cheryl Heitmann, Ventura City Council member after taking a walk in the Ventura Botanic Gardens.

"Expelled my kid from home school," another submission to comedian Jimmy Fallon.

~ Compiled by Condor John

EAVESDROPS

"I am social distancing in the beauty of my yard where after some early heat and now much needed rains, there are literally hundreds of flowers in bloom, I am in heaven. And indoors I have plenty of great books to read."

~ Jim Hines, our chapter's vice-chair and animal activist.

