**What's up in 2024 and are we up to it?**

Editor’s note: At the end of the author’s New Year Priorities for our chapter, he asks: “We have been able to achieve ambitious goals for over the past few years. Are we up to it? You bet we are, we cannot let down our precious wildlife and our great wild places.”

While perusing the list, perhaps you want to help. If so contact our Executive Director: jonathan.allmann@sierachclub.org

We resume with the Jim Hines Chronicles, reflecting the emails by our premier lobbyist on the joy and sorrows of environmental activism. This covers the last two months (Dec-Jan). Jim is vice-chair of our Chapter and Ventura Board Chair. He is available as a speaker.

By Jim Hines

It’s a new year and new are the Chapter’s priorities:

- **Continue advocating for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.** Biden Administration says it will be a reality this Summer but Congress says not so fast.
- Passage of the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act and the Rim of the Valley Corridor Protection Act. Election year politics will make this a tough challenge.
- Expand our campaign to protect more critical lands in the Santa Barbara Mtns.
- **Mountain Lions FOREVER!** You’re gearing up for year 2023, help us think through our habitat designation agreements to protect mountain lions in our region.
- **Help provide a vision for the Sky Valley Preserve in the Simi Hills.**
- Express our opposition to expanded oil and gas drilling next to Hopper Mtn National Wildlife Refuge which endangered CA Condors nest.
- **Work on Biden Administration’s proposal to expand the endangered wildlife refuges to include proposed Ormond Beach National Wildlife Reserve.**
- **Secure protection for the Malibu Springs watershed in southwest Ventura County.**
- Team to ban nylon lines used to secure crab traps to the ocean floor, which can harm whales etc.
- Expand our wildlife overpass campaign.
- We have an ambitious agenda to tackle; are we up to it? You bet we are, we cannot let down our precious wildlife and our great wild places.

Jan 18: A friend of mine sent me the link about a local organization formed to create Mini-Nature Reserves in Oxnard, see story on back page.

Jan 15: I should ask. House Rep. Ted Lieu’s office to amend coastal wetland protection legislation to include Ormond Beach Wetlands in Ventura County and include the fact that it has been proposed as a National Wildlife Refuge. Congressional budget talks have included NO expansion of America’s national wildlife refuge system.

The idea is that Exxon would secure $623M to purchase the oil field and associated assets including pipelines and the Las Flores processing plant on the coast. Sable would merge with blank check company Flame, already listed on the NY stock exchange, to raise more funding. It’s a shame to mention that a sale from Exxon to Sable would have to be approved by Santa Barbara and the California State Lands Commission, both of which will be highly skeptical of Exxon offloading liability for their aging oil operation to a startup that would disappear in the event of a spill or other disaster.

Exxon’s oil platforms were once the major local oil producer responsible for 90% of the offshore oil in the channel, but production had been trending down since peaking in the 1990s. Then in 2015 a pipeline burst spilling 142,800 gallons of oil into one of the richest and most biologically diverse stretches of the Pacific coastline, killing hundreds of animal species and shutting our beaches and fisheries for a time.

The oil operation has been shut down ever since, now almost nine years. Sable’s investor presentation calls this a “pipeline issue” and promises a restart of their entire operation in July 2024. Sable claims that the State Fire Marshal will approve the restart of the pipeline by March. However, that’s unlikely as of January the State Fire Marshal says, “they are not currently considering or reviewing a proposed startup plan.”

The truth is there is no safe route to the market for oil from these platforms.

The spill uncovered the fact that the pipeline was badly corroded and unsafe to use. At the criminal sentencing hearing after Plains was convicted by the State and County District Attorney for negligence in failing to maintain the pipeline and causing an oil spill, the prosecutor tried to prove Plains from restarting or even threatening to restart the pipeline transporting the oil to re-strategize.

On behalf of all of us at the San Barbara - Ventura Chapter Sierra Club, thank you for your incredibly generous donations of time, talent, and treasure throughout 2023.

Together, we are working harder than ever because the path to a cleaner, healthier planet and community is hard, there are many obstacles to success. But we also have fun, such as providing free bikes every week, or planting native plants at our local parks. And enjoying our successes.

We are humbled by your ongoing support. Your volunteer time and donations help protect wilderness, wildlife, waterways, and public access throughout Southern California from the Los Padres’ oil-in-failing to the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Supporting your local Sierra Club chapter is one of the most direct ways to ensure that you have a powerful voice in how our region’s public lands are conserved, protected, and managed. So you go, your family and community can enjoy it.

All but a handful of people are paid because the Sierra Club has always been a volunteer organization.

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**Help lead our chapter**

Chapter leadership uses your contributions wisely and strategically to defend the sanctity of our region’s public lands for the benefit of our communities, climate, and future generations.

We’ll continue to reach out over the coming year with volunteer opportunities and updates.

Opportunities such as becoming a hike leader, using your voice at public meetings, helping with our outreach efforts, spreading the Sierra Club’s message, Enjoy and Protect the Planet.

Please get involved. Join our activities and activism, see Group News box on page 3 for contacts and links where you can get involved or enjoy our free bikes via links on page 5, including via MeetUp and internet lists.

Donations help a lot, and the money stays here at home doing good stuff. Donate here: www.sierraclub.org/donate/1000.

In the meantime, reach out to Jonathan Allmann, chapter director if you have any questions about how you can support the chapter in 2024. For the wild: jonathan.allmann@sierachclub.org

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**EAVESDROP**

“Instead of saving the environment, we’re destroying it... Forty-nine percent of our emissions come from vehicle traffic, and it is going up.” -- SB County Board Chair Dos Williams during a state of the county meeting Sept 8. He noted the county is on track to meet carbon emissions in half by 2030, mostly because of high priced gases that encourage commuting from lower-priced housing areas.

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**COVER PHOTO**

Adventure awaits past the Baron Ranch Gate, via a new trail opening in the property called “a significant milestone” high above the Gaviota Coast. Read the feature story on page 6. (Photo courtesy of SB County Trails Council)

**Oily deal doomed to fail**

Sable Investors Beware Offshore Oil Plan Doomed to Fail

A December 2023 investor presentation by startup energy company Sable promises a quick restart of Exxon’s threatened offshore oil platforms off the Gaviota coast and a long and lucrative payoff to would-be investors. As is the case when something seems too good to be true, they left a lot out.

The idea is that Exxon would loan Sable $623M to purchase the oil field and associated assets including pipelines and the Las Flores processing plant on the coast. Sable would merge with blank check company Flame, already listed on the NY stock exchange, to raise more funding.

It’s a shame to mention that a sale from Exxon to Sable would have to be approved by Santa Barbara and the California State Lands Commission, both of which will be highly skeptical of Exxon offloading liability to their aging oil operation to a startup that would disappear in the event of a spill or other disaster.

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Jan 11: Sespe Creek is wild and pristine, filled with fish, bird life abounds, plant life is lush, deer graze along its banks and mountain lion and bear prowl the area – a biological wonder but one important natural element is missing, beavers. It has been absent of beavers since the last beavers I saw in the 1990s. They belong here and we need to bring them back. To that avail, I have asked the CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to reintroduce beavers back into the aquatic ecosystem of Sespe Creek.

Jan 7: Great news to start off 2024. The non-profit Trust for Public Land has a contract to purchase the 5500-acre Rancho Canada Larga, expiring in Spring 2024. You will see a major fundraising campaign for the purchase of this crown jewel of a property to help connect the central portion of the Ventura River and the hills above Ventura with the Los Padres National Forest in Upper Ojai.

Sierra Club is a major supporter of preserving this wild and beautiful property. Once the purchase is finalized, the TPL will transfer the property to a local conservancy, such as the Ventura Land Trust and/or the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy.

Jan 3: No stopping us, we are off and running. Two of our team members have traveled to Washington, D.C. to support a program to slow down vessel travel in Puget Sound region to prevent vessel collisions between ships and Orcas. We are headed to Colorado to assist in gathering voter signatures for a ballot to ban the killing of mountain lions. We were on the signature of the Governor of New York to ban wolf killing contests and now onto other states to ban wildlife killing contests. We are also heading to southern Utah to protect the great wild places of the Colorado River plateau.

Dec 28: Good Morning Ventura Network Team. Will we in 2024 be able to protect the Malibu Springs watershed in southeastern Ventura County, gain endangered species status for Burrowing Owls, permanently use the nyleon line to secure crab traps that can entangle and kill marine mammals and wildllife status for Superior Ridge north of Lake Caistas?

Dec 27: I am happy to see the Sierra Club California (SCC) finally placing a top priority on connecting California’s dwindling wetlands by creating a new conservation committee called SCC Wetlands Committee.

Dec 27: Happy New Year – what a year 2024 will be. We will be advancing and expanding our campaigns to protect all that is wild! Examples include tackling the squid fishery offshore of Channel Islands National Park and lobbying Congress to pass wildland and wildwater designations for the islands. We are suing the state of California over management of the Balona Wetlands Wildlife Preserve and filing appeals of BLM plans in western states for failure to protect precious natural resources.

too, we are asking the new leadership in Congress not to cut funding for national parks, marine sanctuaries, forest and wildlife refuges.

~ Edited by John Hankins
We’ll miss Teresa Norris

“I’m with sadness that the family of our incredibly loving Teresa Helenkim Norris announces her peaceful passing at home with members at her side, on Jan 3, 2024.”

That was the lead to her official obituary by her husband Tom Sommers, who was attracted to her by “her intelligence, cheerful smile, and easy ways.”

We at the Sierra Club also feel a great loss for Teresa, who was the prime creator of our very successful Wilderness Basics Course. The WBC led hundreds of students, young and older, tenderfeet and experts on great adventures over its 15 years.

Unfortunately, COVID stopped it and we tried to bring it back last year with fewer students and now we don’t know if it will ever be offered again without her incredible leadership.

The Chapter Executive Committee had a moment of silence at its recent January meeting, sparked by Jim Hines and followed by John Hanks, both WBC board members.

“It’s heartbreaking,” said Ex-Com member David Gold, “Teresa made an enormous contribution to the love for, and appreciation of, the wilderness on behalf of the Sierra Club.” Others gave similar statements.

One of her closest WBC pals was Maureen Hernandez, the Ventura Network’s hike leader.

“She was my inspiration for joining the Sierra Club and becoming a hike leader. She was not only a great outdoorswoman but she was also an advocate for environmental preservation. She welcomed anyone interested in her world. . . that’s why, to me, she deserved a memorial stone with her name.”

Maureen was speaking of the memorial stone at Wheeler Gorge Visitor’s Center (Hwy 33) that she helped find and got CalTrans to transport it to the Center. On it, Teresa wanted John Muir’s words:

“Going to the mountains is going home.”

“Condor” John Hanks, editor of the newsletter, was strongly moved by her passing. He had, for years, tried to convince members to start WBC, but it wasn’t until Teresa came (from the San Diego Chapter) that it happened.

A memorial to this amazing woman will be held March 23 at Barddale Methodist Church in Fillmore and Club members are thinking about a memorial meeting at the Rock of Teresa the next day. We’ll let you know via social media.

Teresa’s Farewell Benediction: “I believe in an afterlife and I’m going to be there, and forgive each other.”

It’s the ‘Rock of Teresa’ (or Teresa rocks!) with the most deserving person ever, enjoying the Rock of Teresa the next day. We’ll let you know if it will ever be offered again without her incredible leadership.


decembercall~www.meetup.com/SierraClubVentura

January storms and high surf wreaked havoc on the Ventura Pier, which remains closed probably until year’s end. However, the part of the pier closest to the shore, including where restaurants are located, remains open. (Photo by Condor John)
How to save money and resources

By Deborah Williams

Although the US has just a little more than 4% of the world’s population, it consumes approximately 25% of the world’s resources. While doing so, we throw out an average of 44 pounds of trash per person every day.

Creating new products requires a significant amount of energy and raw materials and generates a lot of greenhouse gases. Throwing products away also generates many additional problems including land, water, and air pollution.

There are two very straightforward personal strategies we can all use to help address the adverse impacts of overconsumption. As the EPA states, “Reduction and reuse are the most effective ways you can save natural resources, protect the environment and save money.” Specifically, before buying anything new or throwing away anything of value, here are many positive options for consideration.

Reducing

Prior to making a purchase, it’s important to honestly ask ourselves: Do we really need it? For example, for an inoperable used item, could it be borrowed, rented or shared? Or can an existing item we already own be repaired? For repair tips, check out the website fixed, whose slogan is: “Never throw broken for an answer.” There are also local people who can repair most items.

Buying Pre-Owned

When ever possible, buy it re-used. Online and in-person shopping for used items are becoming increasingly popular, and for good reason. By shopping second-hand, we can get great deals, while minimizing our carbon and other pollution footprint. There are many ways to do it.

For online purchases of gently used items, consider these options: “9 of the Best Places to Buy Used Goods Online” and The Mods, or “Walter’s LA Memos.” Recommendations. There are also lots of options to buy pre-owned items in person, for example, “The Best Thrift Shops in San Antonio,” as well as “7 Thrift Shops in Ventura.” Furthermore, check-out Craigslist, Nextdoor, OfferUp, Facebook Market, and garage sales for excellent re-use deals. Patagonia has pre-owned items at discounts (link is on its website).

You will find that the savings are amazing. It is a lot of fun, and you often meet very interesting people.

Avoiding

Throwing items away.

Before throwing away anything of value, choose to reuse it, sell it, or donate it. First, as noted previously, consider repairing the item and reusing it, if it is not repairable, consider selling it online or in person. You know the saying, one person’s trash is another person’s treasure – and it really is satisfying to help others discover and acquire treasures.

For great online site options and sales tips, check out the 11 best websites to sell stuff online and The Get Ridder’s 14 websites and apps.

To sell in person, use garage sales, Craigslist, Nextdoor, and OfferUp. It’s fun and profitable. Or donate the item(s) (Goodwill, Alpha Resource Center, and more). Through sales and donations of your items, you can make money and do good.

Fundamentally, there are so many great reasons to buy pre-owned items. As Resilience points out: “Used products are less expensive, don’t require new resources, don’t generate pollution, don’t require energy to create, and don’t have packaging. Buying used supports good causes and the local economy.”

What’s more, you can get high quality products, often with character, for a lower price, eliminate the carbon and other pollution footprint. “8 of the Best Places to Buy Thoroughly Used Items” and The Modest’s “The 11 Best Online, and Local Options for Pre-Owned, or Second Hand.”

Buying new isn’t always better than buying used. For example, buying new items for your home would involve sourcing raw materials and generating a lot of waste. While buying new can be important, it is always good to consider the carbon footprint and other environmental impacts of your purchase.

Buying second-hand also has many environmental benefits: it helps others discover and acquire treasures, helps reduce landfills, and reduces the need for new products, which results in less raw materials and energy used.

By buying second-hand, we really can get a lot more for less, and we can save the environment and save money.” Specifically, before buying anything new or throwing away anything of value, here are many positive options for consideration.

It’s literally delicious to cook great meals on an electric barbecue and the food comes out “first rate and easy,” said Jim Taylor. His moniker include a cool dish (left) and a Beyond Burger. The chef took his own pictures.

Surprise...Electric BBQs work!

By Jim Taylor

Members of the Sierra Club are aware how important it is for society to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to cleaner forms of energy. Many of us have tried to do this in our personal lives, by driving electric cars, insulating basements, installing solar panels, and replacing gas ranges with induction cook-tops, for example.

But you might be surprised by another way to electrify your life— an electric barbecue. Yes, there is such a thing, and it’s a great way to cook. We have a Weber Q1400 that costs $250, and I have been using it a few times a week for more than a year. I cook vegetables, fish, chicken, shrimp, sausage, beef & Beyond burgers, etc. and the results are first rate, plus it is super easy to use.

Electric barbecues are primarily sold to condo dwellers whose rules prohibit open flames on their balconies, but in my suburban yard the electric unit sits next to a charcoal kamado grill and a stainless steel natural gas grill. I still use the gas grill for roasting time to time, it is easier and faster to just flip a switch on the electric job.

The Q1400 and its slightly bigger brother look like regular tangle charcoal barbecues, but just under the grate you will find a resistance heating element not unlike an electric oven or range. It takes a little while to get red hot, maybe 15 minutes, so you turn it on about the time you start making the salad.

It is intended to cook with the lid closed, and once it has warmed up, cooking time is really about the same as any other barbecue, and it produces very little smoke. Of course, an electric barbecue has its sweet spot. You’re no longer going to smoke a rack of ribs or a brisket of beef on one of these little units, and a gas grill can sear a New York steak to perfection, but as far as the years of budget increases on the project would continue. Councilmember Campos joined me in voting no, but at 5-2. When a couple months later, the budget increased from $375 to $550 million, I was angry and disappointed, but I wasn’t surprised.”

The project was announced last September, and the ocean outfall component is currently under construction. The project is expected to finish this year and provide up to 20 percent of the city’s water supply.

The beginning of the project occurred in 2011 when the Ventura City Council voted on a settlement agreement with Heal the Bay and the Wish- tayo Foundation-Ventura Coordinator to preserve the Santa Clara River’s natural habitat. “The consent decree also requires a beneficial reuse of the water to align with the City’s long-term sustainability goals and commitment to responsible water management,” Schroeder said.

The Environmental Protection Agency agreed to a $173 million loan while the Bureau of Reclamation provided an $18 million grant. More funds and grants may be coming soon.

The Ventura City Council approved the project by a unanimous vote.

More information and to keep tabs on the project, go to: www.cityofventura.ca.gov/Ocean-Outfall

By John Hankins

EAVEDROP

“Heat Records Are Broken Across the Globe as Earth Warms, Fast”

Headline in the New York Times, with this explanation: “The spike comes as forecasters warn that the Earth could be entering a multiyear period of exceptional warmth driven by natural and human-induced emissions of heat-trapping gases, mainly caused by humans burning oil, gas and coal and the return of El Niño, a cyclical weather pattern.” To find out more:

https://tinyurl.com/Climate-Answers

Water Pure Ventura project

Construction of a new ocean outfall has begun for the “Ventura/Water-Pure” project, designed to provide purified recycled water that will recover, treat and reuse water that is currently discharged into the Santa Clara River Estuary.

It was important enough to draw Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to Marina Park on Dec. 15, along with Mike Brain, her Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, our local Rep. Salud Carbajal, Ventura City Mayor Joe Schroeder and councilmember Dr. Jeannette Sanchez-Palacios.

“Water is life. It powers our economies, sustains our environment, and so much more. We will take all of us working together to address the significant drought impacts that we see across the West,” Haaland told reporters.

This project will divert treated water from the city of Ventura’s wastewater treatment facility to a new Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF), where the water will be treated to drinking water standards and then injected into a local groundwater basin for storage, and later extracted and delivered to customers.

The project is expected to finish this year and provide up to 20 percent of the city’s water supply.

The Ventura Water-Pure project will allow the City to meet legal and regulatory requirements, improve water quality, and secure a new local source of drinking water that is drought resilient.

However, there is not unanimous applause for the project, as council members Mike Johnson and Liz Campos voted no on accepting federal loans. Johnson has protested that “we haven’t explored the alternatives, and that years of budget increases on the project would continue. Councilmember Campos joined me in voting no, but at 5-2. When a couple months later, the budget increased from $375 to $550 million, I was angry and disappointed, but I wasn’t surprised.”

EAVEDROPS

“A fully charged battery in an existing, affordable EV is enough to get 87 percent of American drivers where they need to go throughout the day.” - Nature International Journal of Science.

Enjoyed this story? Please consider a donation to support our reporting. Your contributions make our work possible. Thank you. - Chuck Graham
As winter turned to spring in 2023, we were fortunate to gain extraordinary help from Gerry Ching, who single-handedly funded the new well and has run our boots-on-the-ground "Trail Team G" operations as Volunteer Trail Manager ever since.

Trail Team G consists of regularly rotating volunteers who share our commitment to enhancing the outdoor experience for everyone in Santa Barbara County.

The primary goal of our trail maintenance program has been to transform these trails into accessible and sustainable paths for hikers, naturalists, birders, educators, and outdoor enthusiasts, while alleviating off-trail pressure and use. This means stable footing, clearly marked trails, and an overall improved hiking experience for the public while protecting the integrity of off-trail areas and wildlife.

Restoration started in November of last year which provided the ideal conditions for trail maintenance, which include the advantage of the soft ground and cooler temperatures. Trail Team G made most of their efforts by surveying trails, clearing brush, and creating water bars.

Each month, Gerry and the staff at CIR organized events to help maintain the Footpaths, while keeping activities light and fun for volunteers.

Our community members only work during the cool morning hours to minimize efforts during the hot part of the day, when the sun is at its zenith.

Gerry reflects that, "The team has accomplished a lot this year and volunteers have been critical for helping the cross-connect trails, which were once overgrown with grass. These trails serve as a vital link between the west side trail and the east main trail. They offer a quick route across the West Mesa for everyone who utilizes the Preserve."

Recently, the San Marcos Foot- paths West Mesa came under new management thanks to incredible support from the County of Santa Barbara.

CIR has worked closely with the County during the transition period, and our team continues to conduct ongoing research as well as restoration to help protect the native plants and animals on the entire San Marcos Foothills Preserve.

This creates a safe space for continued public enjoyment and recreation. We have also worked closely with independent Channel Islands people to seek their advice and encourage participation in our ongoing projects.

You can join Gerry and Trail Team G to explore the trail work. CIR would like to thank all our Trail Team G volunteers for their dedication to the trails we cherish.

For those who want to pick up a shovel and join the fun, we are searching for passionate naturalists, hiking enthusiasts, and members of the community who share our enthusiasm for trail maintenance to help enhance the outdoors for everyone who visits the San Marcos Foothills Preserve.

Our Chapter Secretary and computer maven Gerry Ching gets out from his desk to not only lead hikes (for many years) but also to volunteer for the environment. Here's him taking a short break working with Channel Islands Restoration non-profit. Its work is both on the mainland and islands, get involved here: https://cirweb.org/
HIKE WITH CLUB

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.

See updated listing of all outings via the QR code (above) or: https://www.sierrclub.org/santa-barbara-ventura

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.

The Grand Opening of the breathtaking new public Arroyo Quemado Trail is set for Feb. 16 at Baron Ranch, guided with hikes by experienced naturalists.

The fun continues Saturday, Feb. 17, with guided hikes, including a 12-mile hike to Camino Cielo, a Bird walk, a 6.5-mile hike that takes in the Loop Trail, and a Baron Ranch History hike.

The trail will be open to all users on Sunday, Feb. 18, while trail runners will be moving through the scenic wilderness in the morning, vying for a personal best in distances ranging from 2-12 miles.

After working in partnership with Santa Barbara County for over a decade, the SB County Trails Council is honored to host the grand opening of this highly anticipated new trail.

The Trail represents a significant milestone in our commitment to providing accessible outdoor recreation for all, said County Supervisor Joan Hartmann. “This project exemplifies our dedication to outdoor recreation, stewardship and public access, offering a gateway to explore Gaviota’s ecologi- cal treasures while fostering a deeper appreciation of our natural world.”

The trail represents a collaborative effort between the SB County Community Service, Parks, Public Works, Resource Recovery and Stewardship Management divisions. Also, the U.S. Forest Service, SB County Trails Council, Los Padres National Forest Association, and dedicated community volunteers.

The Trails Council acknowledges that the Baron Ranch is the traditional land of the Chumash Native Americans. Indigenous Peoples have stewarded this land for thousands of years, and we give thanks for the opportunity to live, work, and learn in their traditional homeland.

For more information, contact Mark Wilkinson at: eowilks@attmail.com

Walk with Trail Talks

The Santa Barbara Public Library will be featuring two new talks in February and March as part of its Trail Talks monthly series. The free talks are in the Faulkner Gallery at the downtown Library from 6:30-7:30pm.

Join James Wapotich as he shares images and stories from his treks and wanders through this unique area of our local backcountry. James is a trail guide. Volunteer Wilderness Ranger with Los Padres National Forest, and author of the hiking column, Trail Quest. He leads classes on backcountry, wilderness awareness skills, and mindfulness in nature.

The first will be on Thursday, Feb. 15. Tending the Earth: Exploring Ethnobotany and Land Etiquette

Sollange Aguilar will be sharing some practical uses of native plants, gathering tips, and why it’s important to know where you are, who the people of the land are, and different ways on how to be a better relative to both the land and the people who have taken care of the land since time immemorial.

In 2022, their zines “Alternativa to White Sage, Pulu Santa Co- day, Sweetgrass, and Copal” and “Moden: The Ultimate Indigenous Road Trip Guide” were both selected to be included in Harvard Library’s zine collection. In 2023, their poem “4th-Universal”, along with their artwork entitled “Decolonial Dream 84” was published in the same zine as “Hiking with Burrito Ranch”.

Hiking and Backpacking in the San Rafael Wilderness occurs on Thursday, March 2.

Created in 1968, the San Rafael Wilderness encompasses 197,380 acres of wild lands within Los Padres National Forest. This talk will highlight the hiking and backcountry opportunities in the Upper Sisquoc River, Upper Manzanita Creek, and Upper Santa Cruz Creek drainages, as well as some of the natural history of the area.
SIGHTINGS...continued from page 5

Barbara Resource Guide, designed as including our Sierra Club in its Santa Barbara County’s landscape—the beauty of rugged peaks, sun-drenched canyons, and endless ocean vistas. But nestled within this beauty lies a challenge that calls to see the beauty each of us: the Five Peaks Challenge.

Chapter members: Let’s take up the challenge, after all the Sierra Club was formed by hiking mountains. Do it by your self, friends or a Sierra Club team that you are trying to form. Condor John will buy you a Serra Club hat if you do!

As of press time, our sign-ups are on the Ventura MeetUp site which our SB members can certainly use. Go here: www.meetup.com/sierrachoiceVentura

Tide pool magic at Gaviota

Gaviota Coast Conservancy gathered on Jan. 13 for a mi-

March. More detail and sign-ups are here:

For the Challenge, we have se-

March 17:

To verify each climb, partici-

To help our beaches recover from

The tide pool magic that this

When the Gaviota Coast Conservancy saw a 2-miles bike ride was going to happen on Jan. 13, it sprang into action for this fun event. You can’t get paid for the ride (above) to get to the beach below Hollister Ranch. But the intrepid Hikers were rewarded with a stunning array of tide pools that are totally unique. (Photo by Janet Kost)

Dave 29: Giant Waves sloshed along our coast, warning of "sagittal damage" to the Ventura Pier, closure of Emma Wood State Beach (and washing out some campsites), and reaching into 65 homes in the Pierpont nei-

The biggest waves last year came in late December, following a period of high pressure, says Tom Miller, who has been taking wave measurements for 30 years. After a period of calm, the pressure system moved offshore and the wind started blowing. The result was a series of huge waves that broke along the coast.

Despite the damage, Miller says that the waves are not unusual for this time of year. "We have seen similar conditions before, and they usually pass through quickly," he says. "But this year, the waves lasted for several days, which is unusual." He predicts that the coast will continue to experience strong winds and rough seas in the coming weeks.

Dec 29: Killer Whales (aka orcas) were spotted by Island Packers crew during their night watch. This is unusual to have three different popu-

In the past year, the California Killer Whale Project, a joint venture between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of California, Santa Barbara, has tracked and studied killer whales in the area.

"It is amazing to see how these whales interact with each other, and how they use the environment to find food," says project leader Mike Schroeder. "We are learning more about their behavior and ecology every day, and it is exciting to watch as they go about their daily lives."
MiniNature is a big deal in Oxnard

By Diego J. Magaña
President, MiniNature

Our mission is to restore and preserve nature in urban environments through landscape projects that engage, educate, and empower the local community.

We do this by helping low-income communities create what we call “MiniNature Reserves” and “Community Nurseries.” A MiniNature Reserve is a native garden in a public park, school, parkway, neighborhood, or small business storefront. A Community Nursery grows the native plants for these gardens and sells them at pop-up plant sales or special events to help fund our work. Community Nurseries also double as a green space and free education centers. We also host “Tending” events during which we gather food, materials, seeds and perform basic maintenance on our MNRs. We host cooking classes led by Indigenous Educators, so people learn how to incorporate native plants into their cooking. There’s also no shortage of special events such as our annual Celebration of Community - a collaboration with Oxnard Young Ecologists where people make wreaths with native plants and donate toys, food, and clothes to families of Farmworkers.

So far, the group has created seven reserves, planted over 500 native plants and flowers, while recovering over 8700 square feet for the preserves.

We also have a robust School Garden and Educational Visits Program. We currently prioritize in-person visits at low-income and migrant schools in the Ventura County area. However, if your school does not fit these criteria, please still feel free to reach out to us.

We offer schools the opportunity to choose from our themed lesson plans. Please browse our lesson plans, terms, conditions, and partnership agreements. In addition, we also assist schools with the installation of native plant gardens. Fill out the form at the website below to learn more, volunteer or donate.

www.mininature.org

Even with all the rain that day, these volunteers still came out to the latest MiniNature Reserve installation in front of La Botanica Guadalupana in Oxnard (shown), finding a new home for native plants, including white sage, which is a plant found in most botanicas. (Photo by Miranda Magaña)

MiniNature’s first event of OAKtober 2023 kicked off with a Pan y Plantas workshop about cold stratification! Attendees kept warm by sipping on champurrado and pan dulce supplied by Panaderia La Mexicana. (Photo by Kayla Anna Gerardo)

Oxnard Young Ecologists where people make wreaths with native plants and donate toys, food, and clothes to families of Farmworkers.

At our first event of 2024, 15 volunteers planted over 150 native plants, including buckwheat, yucca, sage, and tidy tips, in front of Panaderia Vanessa in Oxnard. (Photo by MiniNature)