



**SIERRA  
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**SAN GORGONIO**

**In this Issue**

**January Chapter Mtg: 1**

**AQMD Electric Lawn Mower  
Program: 2**

**2021: Ready for Change: 3**

**Moreno Valley Group: 4**

**Santa Margarita Group: 6**

**Big Bear Group;  
2021: The Year We Electrify  
Warehouses: 7**

**What Will Your Legacy Be?: 8**

# Palm and Pine

A publication of the San Gorgonio Chapter of the Sierra Club  
*Serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties*

Protect America's Environment *For our Families . . . For our Future*

Volume 51 Number 1 • January-February 2021

## **JOIN US FOR "TRAIL TALK: SNOWSHOEING 101" ON ZOOM, JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>, 7:00 PM**

**T**he beauty of winter is upon us, so what better time to learn about getting outdoors on snowshoes!

Our own Karla Kellems, Sierra Club outings leader and Green Valley Lake resident,

will virtually lead us through the basics of snowshoeing. Whether you're an experienced snowshoe-er or learning for the very first time, Kellems' presentation will have something to offer. Covering the basics of snowshoe technique, equipment, snowshoeing sites in the San Gorgonio



Chapter, and how to snowshoe with children and groups, "Trail Talk: Snowshoeing 101" promises to be a useful and lively presentation in the "Trail Talk" series.

As always, this installment of "Trail Talk" will be on the third Wednesday of the month – in this case, January 20, 2021 – at 7:00 PM. All "Trail Talk" virtual presentations are via Zoom. To RSVP and receive the Zoom link, go to the San Gorgonio Chapter website, [sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org](http://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org), click on "Outings and Events" and RSVP for "Trail Talk: Snowshoeing 101."

If you have any questions, email the "Trail Talk" subcommittee:

Mary Ann Ruiz ([ruizmaryann@gmail.com](mailto:ruizmaryann@gmail.com))  
Karla Kellems ([karlakellems@gmail.com](mailto:karlakellems@gmail.com))  
John St. Clair ([john@stclairs.us](mailto:john@stclairs.us)) or  
Juliann Anderson  
([Juliann.Anderson@gmail.com](mailto:Juliann.Anderson@gmail.com))



*See you on January 20<sup>th</sup>!*

## AQMD Electric Lawn Mower Program

By John St. Clair, Los Serranos Group ExComm and Outings Chair



South Coast AQMD has established a residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program to offset the cost of an electric lawn mower. This program is available to residents within the South Coast AQMD's four-county jurisdiction. Through the Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program, participants can purchase a new electric lawn mower either online or from a manufacturer-authorized retailer or dealer, including hardware and home improvement stores. The program allows residents to turn in their old gasoline lawn mower to an approved dismantler for permanent destruction and receive a rebate based on the purchase price of a new battery-operated electric lawn mower. The program is designed to reduce emissions and clean the air by encouraging people to replace a working gasoline mower with a non-polluting electric mower.

The Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program is implemented on a first-come, first-served basis and provides up to \$250 towards the cost of the battery electric lawn mower. The electric lawn mower purchased must be new, not used or previously owned, or factory reconditioned. It has to be zero-emission electric, battery-powered lawn mower. Corded electric mowers are not eligible. It must also be a push or self-propelled mower specified for residential use and have a minimum one (1) year manufacturer warranty. The link to the program is [www.aqmd.gov/home/programs/community/electric-lawn-mower-rebate-program](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/programs/community/electric-lawn-mower-rebate-program) and it gives you all of the info needed to participate in the program.

I've been reducing our household carbon footprint this year and the latest action was replacing my gas-powered lawn

mower with an electric lawn mower. I did a lot of research on electric lawn mowers and discovered that the most powerful battery-powered lawn mowers were rated badly for mowing a thick turf like St. Augustine grass, which is what I have. The customer ratings on the most powerful corded electric lawn mowers had good reviews on all types of grasses. The reason is simple: The available power coming from a typical 110 volt and 15 or 20 amp electric outlet is more than the 80 volt batteries that are used on the most powerful battery-powered electric mowers. Also, if the motor is too powerful it drains

the battery too soon and you have to recharge before you are done mowing the lawn. The limitation for corded mowers is the length of your extension cord and available outlets.

Another issue is the problem associated with the production

and disposal of rechargeable batteries. I wanted to buy the most environmentally friendly lawn mower and I have a small area of lawn on one side of our house that is fenced in for our dogs. So I bought a 13 amp corded electric mower and a 50 foot 15 amp extension cord for half the cost of the most powerful battery-powered mower with batteries and charger. I was disappointed that the corded mower that I bought was not eligible for a rebate, but I hoped that at least I could take my gas-powered mower to the dismantler. The dismantler closest to me wouldn't take my mower. So I decided to complain and I sent emails to all of the South Coast AQMD Board members as well as the SCAQMD staff person in charge of the dismantling of the gas mowers complaining about the exclusion of the corded mowers from the rebate program and the difficulty I now faced in safely disposing of my gas mower. I didn't get any replies from the SCAQMD Board members or their staff, but I did get an email reply from the SCAQMD person in charge of the whole mowers exchange program. He was very accommodating and explained that the





## Palm and Pine

Lawn Mower on Page 2 > > >

program would be reviewed soon and he would bring up my concerns. He also arranged for me to have my gas-powered mower accepted by the dismantler so I could dispose of it in an environmentally safe way.

In my opinion it doesn't make sense to exclude corded mowers from the Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program since they are more environmentally friendly than the battery-powered mowers. If you agree with me, here is the link on

how to contact the SCAQMD Board of Directors: [www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/governing-board/gb-bamail-public.pdf](http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/governing-board/gb-bamail-public.pdf) and I would suggest you send an email requesting that the Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program be revised to include corded electric lawn mowers. The main arguments are that corded mowers are more environmentally friendly and cost less so that rebates could cover more gas-powered mowers being converted to non-polluting electric mowers.



### 2021-Ready for Change!

**J**oin us at our first General Membership meeting of the new year, and find your space for making a difference in 2021. Sierra Club volunteers made a huge difference influencing the outcome of the most important election of our time. So many of you made phone calls, wrote letters, and sent texts to get out the vote at this critical point in the fight against climate change. Undoing the damage of four years of climate denial at the highest levels will require much work. With your help, we can continue to push for change at the local level.

This is your opportunity to hear from our local staff and volunteers about the exciting work going on in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. We'll present a broad overview of our organization and priorities, break it down into three main categories, and provide a more detailed look at the issues based on your interest.

[Register for the meeting here](#)

and you will receive the zoom link, as well as a followup email with a volunteer interest form. During the meeting, you will be able to choose from 3 options:

- Air Quality/Climate Crisis
- Lands, Water and Wildlife
- Political Action for 2021 and 2022

We will have an in-depth breakout on each so you can learn how to best bring your talents and skills to the issues most important to you. If time permits and there is interest, we will do a second round for you to check out more than one of the three broad topics. At

the end we will ask you to fill in your volunteer intake form and you will be contacted for follow up. We also welcome anyone to come listen and learn about our work, and consider your space within Sierra Club. Signing up for our email alerts, and taking online actions through them, is another way to support local, state and national efforts.

***We look forward to meeting you  
Tuesday, Jan 12 at 7:00 PM***

## Moreno Valley Group

By Ann Turner McKibben, Secretary

We have mentioned this before but here is another reminder—due to Covid-19 all in-person group activities for the San Geronio Chapter and Moreno Valley Group have been cancelled through February 28, 2021. We recommend checking the San Geronio Chapter web page <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/> for updated information.

Here is some updated information on projects we are following:

**Moreno Valley Trade Center (MVTC):** This proposed massive warehouse project site is located south of Eucalyptus Avenue, west of Redlands Boulevard, and north of Encelia Avenue and includes Hall Nursery and the vacant land south of the Aldi warehouse. This project is for a light industrial high cube warehouse with 1,332,380 square feet and many daily diesel truck trips. The preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has begun and is due by the end of January. The project site is across the street from an existing neighborhood of many homes and on land zoned for future homes.

The project requires a General Plan Amendment and a Change of Zone from “Residential: Max 2 du/ac (R2)” to “Business Park/Light Industrial (BP)” to allow it to be built across the street from existing homes. Please take time to get involved by taking part in the review of the Draft Environmental Impact Review (DEIR), providing comments to the city regarding the project and its impacts. Please contact Gabriel Diaz, Associate Planner, at (951) 413-3226 or email: [Gabrield@moval.org](mailto:Gabrield@moval.org) and ask to be put on the list to receive notices about this project. Also, contact your City Councilmember and let them know that

our city has enough warehouses and that it is a mistake to destroy land designated for housing with animal keeping allowances. The Moreno Valley Group of the Sierra Club made comments during the Notice of Preparation for the DEIR on this massive warehouse. Instead of another warehouse, this land needs to remain zoned for homes or at the least be zoned for transitional uses between existing family homes and warehouses to separate them from operational noises, smell, traffic, and its many diesel polluting truck trips.

**MoVal 2040--Moreno Valley General Plan Update (GPU) & Climate Action Plan (CAP):** The city quickly hosted three meetings in November to establish goals for the community with no other publicized meetings or workshops at this time. MoVal 2040 is being fast-tracked for approval by the spring of 2021, and will very likely dramatically change the current policies and land uses allowed by our city. We encourage everyone to pay attention and be involved with the General Plan Update. The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) is comprised of seven individuals with two being local developers and three current planning commissioners. Therefore, it is extremely likely they will recommend that the city council change the land uses for a large portion of the vacant land on the east end as well as vacant land elsewhere within the city. If you care about the future direction of development near

your neighborhood and throughout Moreno Valley, please take time to follow the progress of the GPU. Attend meetings (which are video conference type meetings for now) that will allow you to listen and/or speak from the comfort of your home. Speak up about what you want for our future. This is a 20-year plan so don't miss your chance to comment. Please email senior planner Chris



2020 November 27 Lake Perris SRA George H 6.jpg  
Lake Perris State Recreation Area • Photographer, George Hague

Moreno Valley Group ...from Page 4

Ormsby at [chrismo@moval.org](mailto:chrismo@moval.org) or call (951) 413-3229 and ask to be put on their email list for future meetings and documents. The city's GPU website with updates to participate can be found at the following link: <http://www.moval.org/cdd/documents/general-plan-home.html> Along with the GPU the city is also doing a Climate Action Plan (CAP) intended to make our city and planet less polluted—especially cutting carbon pollution which will help keep our air and water cleaner and protect our children's health. Your input is needed and can make a difference.

**Gilman Springs Road (GSR):** Gilman Springs Road is on the eastern edge of the city of Moreno Valley and connects our city to the San Jacinto/Hemet area. Riverside County is currently spending major amounts of money to upgrade GSR and make it safer. While traveling along the GSR you can enjoy driving next to portions of the 10,000 acre San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) and Mystic Lake (which make up the Davis Unit) and just east of CA Highway 79 is the 9,500 acre Potrero Unit. Both units have threatened/endangered species as well as other species of concern. The wildlife needs access to the land in both units and the ability to safely cross GSR. Previous discussions with the county have focused on the need to install and maintain wildlife corridors under GSR from the northwest side to the southeast side and to limit open crossings of the roadway which are deadly. It is the hope of the environmental groups that the county will review all possible improvements as a whole and prepare a comprehensive environmental assessment that analyzes all impacts and assigns mitigation measures to protect the traveling public and wildlife. At this time we are awaiting the results of the county's evaluation of our concerns.

**World Logistics Center (WLC):** On May 1, 2020, while previous litigations were still in court, the developers for the 40.6 million square foot World Logistics Center (WLC) warehouses project put forth a massive new environmental document and sought new approvals on basically the same project. The Moreno Valley Planning Commission approved the project after midnight on May 15, 2020. The environmental group Earthjustice, who represents the Sierra Club and four other groups, filed an appeal on May 26, 2020, challenging the environmental findings and conclusions in the new document. After the city council's denial of our appeal and their approval of the WLC's Recirculated Revised Final EIR in June, Earthjustice filed another lawsuit on behalf of our coalition. A couple of months ago the Court of Appeal ruled the environmental groups were the prevailing party on the previous litigations, but as mentioned above, the WLC has gained city approvals on new environmental documents which we continue to pursue in court.

**Villages of Lakeview (VOL):** This master planned community with its 8,725 dwelling units on the south edge of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, was approved by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors in early 2019. A coalition of environmental groups represented by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) has challenged this project and its environmental findings. The judge ruled against us in December 2019, but the CBD has filed an appeal of that decision.

**San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) Land Management Plan (LMP):** The LMP is what the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has worked on since 2008 to plan for the future of the SJWA. Several environmental groups wrote excellent comments on the Draft Environment Impact Report (DEIR) which we hoped would be incorporated into the Final LMP. But we saw very little of our suggestions included in this final report. Most Final EIRs are released to the public with time to make additional comments prior to approval, but the DFW denied the public this opportunity.

We are concerned with the state's plans to enter into a new contract with Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) to provide reclaimed water for the SJWA. Reclaimed water is the lifeblood of the SJWA. It is used to recreate wetlands and habitat for plants and wildlife at the SJWA. EMWD wants to reduce the amount of reclaimed water that was in their previous contract because they can make much more money selling it to developers. The DFW has indicated they want to save money by buying less water. This could significantly impact the wildlife habitat at the SJWA. (The SJWA was originally created as partial mitigation for the loss of wildlife habitat due to the construction of the State Water Project.) Additionally, the SJWA is one of the primary reserves in Riverside County's Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). The county put this plan in place to protect endangered and threatened species, our natural heritage, throughout Riverside County in perpetuity for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

The Sierra Club is also concerned that lands that should be set aside and managed for threatened/endangered species as well as species of concern have been designated for other uses. The SJWA is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife facility and all state-owned wildlife areas allow seasonal hunting (mainly waterfowl and upland game). Following the approval of the LMP the DFW will likely begin charging those without a hunting or a fishing license an entrance fee.

According to current information posted on the state's official SJWA web page (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/San-Jacinto-WA>), a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Lands Pass is required when you visit



MorenoValley Group... from Page 5

the SJWA unless you have a valid hunting or fishing permit or you may pay for each day you visit. Please check their page for more information regarding a daily use fee and/or the Wildlife Lands Pass. Also be aware that the Davis Road and/or the Auto Tour Road may be closed during the rainy season because of dangerous, muddy road conditions. Please call the SJWA headquarters at (951) 928-0580 before your visit to verify the road conditions.

The latest word is that the environmental group Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley has filed a lawsuit to stop or significantly change this LMP approval by DFW.

**Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA):** Please check the LPSRA web page ([http://parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=651](http://parks.ca.gov/?page_id=651)) for detailed information regarding visiting Lake Perris as they balance recreation opportunities and maintaining social distancing and protecting the public from COVID-19. January 2021 is the best time of buy your annual limited use Golden Bear Pass (\$20.00) for those 62 years or older. It is valid until December 31 except Memorial Day through Labor Day. It can be purchased at Lake Perris and can also be used at most other state parks. It is good for everyone in your car.



## Santa Margarita Group

Submitted By Margaret Meyncke and Pam Nelson

**T**he Santa Margarita Group is off to a great start in this new year 2021. We took time to look back at our accomplishments and set some goals for the future.

Top three projects:

**1) Wildlife Connectivity.** We continued developing the Santa Ana to Palomar Alliance (S2P), working with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve (SMER) to expand our steering committee and build our coalition. Our most recent Alliance meeting was a great success with over 30 agencies and nonprofits participating! Our goal is to create on-the-ground teams that will help move our wildlife across barriers, starting with the I-15 and connect/create wildlife corridors. TNC started their work on a grant to enhance the Temecula Creek undercrossing. UC Davis completed a wildlife study using cameras. Caltrans is placing wildlife fencing from Temecula to the San Diego/Riverside Co. line on the I-15. This active conservation effort for wildlife connectivity will continue into 2021.

**2) Santa Margarita Watershed.** We have been commenting on watershed-disrupting developments such as those in Morgan Valley (Temecula) where residents alerted us about the extreme erosion caused by previous housing developments. We commented on the new plans for the Nicholas Road expansion, as well.

The non-profit, "Take Back Anza" asked for our support to ban industrial hemp from Anza due to the lack of groundwater studies and possible water shortage. We commented to the County and the new hemp ordinance allows industrial, but not in the Santa Margarita watershed.

Teri Biancardi, our Vice Chair, is on top of water quality in SW Riverside county. She helped us convey our wishes for

a healthy Santa Margarita River Watershed in our comment on the new Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) being set-up by Riverside County Flood Control.

**3) Altair Lawsuit.** The *big news* was our successful settlement with the City of Temecula and the developer for the proposed Altair housing development! We now have a 55-acre buffer for wildlife to traverse when using the I-15 Temecula Creek underpass. This settlement also provides land to the west of I-15 for an overpass to the south.

**It looks like this year already has momentum!**

**Let's work together to**

**Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the planet.**



## Big Bear Group

By Ellen Kesler, Group Chairwoman

**H**appy New Year! We are looking for so many GOOD changes in 2021! Some of the Big Bear Group ExCom have kept active and involved in the “Covid Year”; still giving our annual scholarship (this year it was two) to a local high school student; participating in the letter writing campaigns against Trump and the Georgia Run-off; supporting the groups up here who are now in litigation to fight the Moon Camp Development, both financially and physically; and in various webinars pertaining to National Sierra Club business. Now we look forward to the changes with possible re-structuring of the National Sierra Club leadership format, as well as, the nation’s presidential changes. We must support the repairing of the damages that have been done by the Trump Administration to our lands, protected

animals, and environment, and continue our fight for a greener world, especially in our local areas.

Our Chapter has started a wonderful virtual program which I encourage everyone to enjoy: virtual outings. Every third Wednesday of the month, Outings Chairs are taking us virtually to wonderful places we can access. I attended the first one and I am eager to explore places I’ve never know existed in our Chapter. We are given valuable information about them that we would need to know, like essential things to take with us, fees, the map, if they’re dog-friendly, etc. Check in this *Palm and Pine* for more information and how to register. Just Zoom in! It will be well worth your time and it certainly beats the TV!

*Here’s to a great 2021!*



## 2021: THE YEAR WE ELECTRIFY WAREHOUSES

**T**he South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) is currently working on rules that would regulate the air quality around indirect sources of pollution. The Indirect Source Rule has the potential to push for more significant investments in clean transportation, like zero emissions and battery electrification. Regulating warehouse emissions is the first part of the rule, which is scheduled for a board vote in April.

At the My Generation Campaign, we have been advocating at various agencies for policy to stop fossil fuels from forming smog and accelerating climate change by regulating business as usual to move towards renewable energy and zero emissions. You can watch a compilation of MyGen community volunteers comments at a recent board meeting [here](#):

The Indirect Source Rule is a critical step towards achieving a just transition, preparing a future for clean air

**TAKE ACTION**

By making your voice heard at the South Coast Air Quality Management District

**OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE SUFFERED FROM DIRTY AIR FOR DECADES**

Join the fight to demand a **STRONGER** Indirect Source Rule to electrify the goods movement industry in Southern California **NOW** and put an end to polluting fossil fuels!

Contact Sierra Club Organizer Yassi Kavezade  
yassi.kavezade@sierraclub.org, (949) 697-0494

and good green jobs especially for the Inland Empire. It has been years in the making, and we still need community voices to be heard at SCAQMD in order to pass such a rule.

We need your voice at the next Air District board demanding this rule be passed, and community voices must be at the table to ensure its implementation with a special meeting. Board members of the SCAQMD and lobbyists have prolonged the rulemaking process to protect their profits over us, the people. We will demand local, clean, zero-emission, new jobs for our region.

For more information email [yassi.kavezade@sierraclub.org](mailto:yassi.kavezade@sierraclub.org) and if you would like to write a comment regarding your support for the warehouse indirect source rule, email the clerk of the board here: [clerkofboard@aqmd.gov](mailto:clerkofboard@aqmd.gov) need email address here.

Participants in My Generation campaign.



**WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?**



Ensure your environmental legacy by naming Sierra Club or your favorite Sierra Club Chapter in your will or trust. These gifts cost you nothing now. You can hold on to your assets for as long as you need them and you can change your beneficiaries at any time.

*If you have named Sierra Club or your Chapter as a beneficiary or would like to discuss doing so, please contact us today*

**LORI SULLIVAN**  
 Director of Gift Planning  
 2101 Webster St, Suite 1300  
 Oakland, CA 94612

(800) 932-4270  
 gift.planning@sierraclub.org  
 myplan.sierraclub.org




## Contact Us . . .

**San Gorgonio Chapter Website: <http://sangorgonio.sierraclub.org>**

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San Gorgonio Chapter  
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(951) 684-6203

Member Change of Address:  
Call San Gorgonio Chapter Office: (951) 684-6203

or go to:  
<https://www.sierraclub.org/contact-us>

Editor, Jo Ann Fischer  
PO Box 3164, Running Springs, CA 92382  
(909) 939-0332  
e-mail: [mywwuni@charter.net](mailto:mywwuni@charter.net)

Webmaster, Steve Farrell  
e-mail: [StevenFarrell@sangorgonio.sierraclub.org](mailto:StevenFarrell@sangorgonio.sierraclub.org)  
<http://sangorgonio.sierraclub.org>  
For Chapter and Group Leader contacts  
visit our website at  
<https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/contactalt>

For a printed Membership Application,  
call our office at (951) 684-6203