



SIERRA CLUB

SAN GORGONIO

Palm and Pine

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

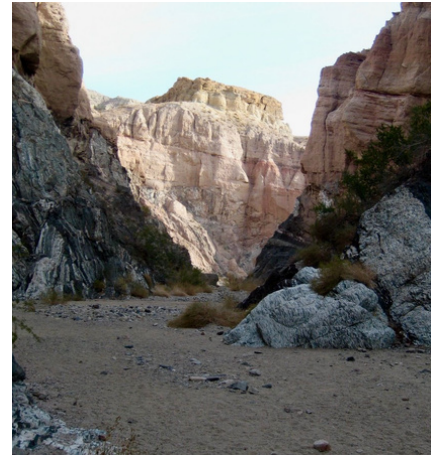
Protect America's Environment For our Families . . . For our Future

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Proposal for New Chuckwalla Desert National Monument

by Vicky Hoover

An exciting new effort is afoot: the Protect California Deserts campaign. Sierra Club and a broad coalition of national and local conservation and community organizations are working to establish a new Chuckwalla National Monument that would border the southern edge of Joshua Tree National Park. This monument would permanently protect about 700,000 acres, providing recreation access, and preserving a critical link between the Sonoran and Mojave Desert ecosystems—vital for native desert flora and fauna to move and adapt in the face of climate change.



Big Painted Canyon by Mary Ann Ruiz

The new Monument would safeguard this rich archaeological district that includes evidence of trade, travel, and interaction among the several cultural groups associated with the area, the Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mojave and Serrano. Trade routes, habitation sites, trail spurs between the primary coastal-interior route, multiple springs and rock art sites in the bordering mountain ranges abound, as well as traditional cultural landscapes. Here also are found 19th century gold mining sites, World War II training areas, and the popular Bradshaw Trail, which follows the ancient indigenous route from spring to life-giving spring across the desert.

The campaign also seeks to expand Joshua Tree National Park to the southeast by about 20,000 acres of present Bureau of Land Management lands, which will link the Park with the proposed new Chuckwalla National Monument and other existing protected areas. The involved BLM lands were once the site of the largest iron ore mine in California which supported the

Korean war effort. Adding these lands to the Park would enable the National Park Service to teach visitors about the history of mining in southern California.

The Monument includes some of the finest intact stands of microphyll woodlands, a scarce habitat in the desert, which hosts some 90 percent of song birds as well as supporting other wildlife such as chuckwalla lizards, desert bighorn sheep, and threatened desert tortoise. Because of its rich habitat and wide-open spaces, the Chuckwalla Bench has been chosen by US Fish and Wildlife service as the re introduction site for endangered Sonoran pronghorn sheep, in an exciting effort to re-establish this iconic species, extirpated from the Sonoran desert in the 1940s. The new Monument would be partly in eastern Riverside County and partly in Imperial County, and would enhance access to nature and

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Joshua Tree National Park for nearby underserved communities. In addition, the campaign proposes there be a study to determine recreational needs in the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains adjacent to the Coachella Valley.

Clearly, the rich cultural resources in this proposal call for collaboration and consultation with Native American interests. Outreach has begun to Tribes in the region, and early in 2023 we hope to secure a legislative champion to permanently protect this unique gem in the California desert.

Outings Leader Training June 3



LTC participants practicing map & compass training, photo credit John St. Clair

Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's San Gorgonio Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.



To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



Julia Curtis • (800) 932-4270 • giftplanning@sierraclub.org • myplan.sierraclub.org

Outings are back! After a COVID hiatus, outings resumed late last year. Now's the time to step up and become a San Gorgonio Chapter Outings Leader. Request an application now for the June 3 training class.

Our Leadership Training Course (LTC) is designed to cover all the leadership skills required by the Sierra Club to lead outings. It will include some online training, the June 3 class covering medical considerations, map and compass as well as the Psychology of Leadership. There is an additional field exercise tentatively scheduled for June 10.

Early enrollment is encouraged to allow time to complete the online section and review the materials which will be mailed to you. For an application please email Ralph Salisbury, LTC Chair at ralphsalisbury99@gmail.com. Alternately you may mail a request to: Ralph Salisbury, 2995 Floral Ave, Riverside CA 92507.



Outings Highlight: Coachella Valley Preserve Conservation Walk

Date & Time: Sat, Feb 4, 2023; 8:30 AM

Location: 37955 Washington St, Palm Desert

Rating/Distance: Easy, but with soft sand in the dunes; total distance approx. 2 miles

Hike Leader: David Melton, Tahquitz Group

Naturalist & Guide: Dr. Cameron Barrows

Contact: dmelton61@yahoo.com

Online Registration: [Visit Sierra Club San Gorgonio](http://VisitSierraClubSanGorgonio.org)

Outings and Events: sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to visit one of the last remaining sand dunes on the Coachella Valley National Wildlife Refuge, the home of the endangered Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard and Coachella Valley milk vetch. As we explore the dunes with a local desert ecologist we'll learn about the history of the preserve and how the fringe-toed lizard helped catalyze the first habitat conservation plan in the nation. We will also learn about the amazing plants and animals, some found nowhere else in the world, that inhabit the dunes.

We will start the walk/hike at the sand dunes; if time allows we will also visit the Thousand Palms oasis, which is fed by water seeping up along the San Andreas fault. Dr. Cameron Barrows, emeritus research ecologist from UC Riverside, will be our guide and will share his expertise on the lizard and the sand dune ecosystem, which he has studied for 37 years.

Bring: Ten essentials, layers and sun protection, snack, and 2-liters of water

To participate, visit [Sierra Club San Gorgonio](http://SierraClubSanGorgonio.org)
Outings and Events: sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org



Owlets on the nest, photo credit Gary Gray



Fan Palms, photo credit Gary Gray

Additional Directions: MEET: At the corner of 38th Avenue and Washington Street in Thousand Palms. From the 10, go north on Washington, turn left on 38th Ave BEFORE you get to the fire station. The location address above is actually for the fire station.
Cancellation Policy: Heavy rain cancels.

2022 San Gorgonio Chapter Awards



Joan Taylor, Marjorie and Clark Jones Service Award, Abigail Smith and Dr. Hugh Bialecki, Alice Krueper Service Award, Caren Hansen, Joe Momyer Conservation Award, and Bob Audibert, Ralph Salisbury Outings Award.

Chapter members nominate volunteers who deserve special recognition for their significant contributions in areas that affect our environment and communities.

Now is a good time to be thinking of nominees for 2023!

The Ralph Salisbury award is given for outstanding contributions to our Outings Program. This year, that award is presented to Bob Audibert, Outings Leader for Santa Margarita Group. Pam Nelson, Group Chair Nominated Bob with this : "Bob is one of the earliest members of the Santa Margarita Group. He's been the ever-present hiking leader for over 15 years. Through thick and thin, he's carried on, scouting and offering exciting and interesting hikes for our group. Health problems that he conquered and then the Pandemic didn't stop him. Sadly for us, Bob has moved to the California central coast. We will miss him!"

The Alice Krueper Service Award is given for long-time service to a non-Sierra Club entity in the name of Sierra Club. We have two awardees this year. Dr. Hugh Bialecki, President of the Save Our Forests Association in the San Bernardino Mountains was nominated by Steve Farrell: For over 25 years, Dr Hugh Bialecki, a long-time member of the Sierra Club, balanced a full-time dentistry practice, with a remarkable history of public service, community leadership,



and an impressive record of successful environmental advocacy, education, and protection.

As president of Save Our Forest Association (SOFA), Hugh has inspired us as a leader, activist, collaborator, and spokesperson for the many environmental issues of our San Bernardino National Forest and its embedded communities.

Articulate, respectful, and relentless, he has been instrumental in establishing successful communications with not only our local planners and decision-makers, but with potential developers as well. SOFA, and Hugh, have had a long and positive relationship with the Forest Service, coordinating with the Mtns Group and other activists regarding several key forest preservation projects over the years. With the Sierra Club as ally, Hugh and SOFA have been instrumental in stopping several inadvisable, inappropriate development projects in our mountains. Anyone who has collaborated with Hugh over the years, knows (and relies on) that he will be on his computer (or phone) late into the night (usually past midnight) communicating, coordinating, and commenting on the issues and projects of the day.

We thank Hugh for all he has done!

2022 San Geronio Chapter Awards (cont.)

Alice Krueper Service Award #2

Abby Smith, Esq., was nominated by Mary Ann Ruiz for her work with our chapter challenging harmful warehouse developments. "Abby has been a huge help tracking projects, providing comments and advising us on actions now for several years. Abby's extensive experience with land-use litigation especially in environmental justice cases has been a real benefit to our communities."

The Joe Momyer Conservation Award is given for outstanding contributions to the conservation effort over a number of years. Pam Nelson had this to say about awardee Caren Hansen: "Non-stop enthusiasm and persistence have made Caren a force that cannot be ignored. Her methods to fight climate change and bring nature to our communities have been recognized by her friends and officials. She started encouraging individual native plant gardens with a photo contest, then working with cities on gardens in their parks and now to the State legislature suggesting a bill for native plants in housing development requirements. Thank You, Caren!

Joan Taylor, Winner of the "Marjorie & Clark Jones Service Award", given for outstanding contributions in any and all other chapter activities over a number of years

by Kim Floyd, Chapter Conservation Chair

Joan has been active with Sierra Club working on desert issues for the past 40-plus years. I have known and worked with Joan for the past 20-plus years. The skills that Joan brings to environmental activism can be described in a number of ways including insightful, articulate, strategic, tenacious, far sighted. Joan has the ability to write effective and articulate articles for the

Desert Committee's Desert Report as well as writing official Sierra Club public comments on a variety of environmental topics.

Joan's work in the desert dates back to before the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan MOU of 1995-96.

This MOU resulted in one of the first such habitat protection plans implemented in California to protect sensitive lands from development while allowing managed development. This plan is still in place and Joan and the Tahquitz Group keeps an eye out for possible encroachments.

Over the years Joan has been a key leader on several other very important environmental issues of the desert including: California Desert Protection Act of 1994; Designation of the San Jacinto National Monument; Designation of the Sand to Snow National Monument; the valiant effort to protect Ivanpah Valley; development and adoption by the BLM of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan; and the list goes on. Each of these efforts require hours of detailed work to understand the competing views and articulate the values of the environmental community leading to workable solutions. Many of us would say that those efforts are enough but while working on the listed projects, Joan has been the Chair of the Tahquitz Group, Litigation Committee Chair for the Chapter and a member of the Chapter ExCom. Recently Joan took on additional responsibilities as Vice Chair (South) of the Sierra Club California Conservation Committee and Chair of the Sierra Club California Conservation Committee Desert Committee. Having worked with Joan over the years, I am confident that she knows where and when each of these responsibilities require focused attention and she will deliver that attention in an exemplary way.

2022/23 Chapter & Group Elections

Each year, our members elect leaders for the Chapter Executive Committee. This committee is made up of 9 at-large, elected members, who serve 2-year terms. Each group has one representative appointed by the group as a voting member, for a 16-member board.

The Executive Committee is the representative leadership team for the chapter, and is responsible for four key outcomes:

- Advance the Club's Mission
- Provide service to members, supporters and the public
- Build Local Resources
- Exercise Effective Governance and Fiduciary Oversight.

The ExComm makes decisions regarding chapter priorities - where do we direct our energy and resources. Running for ExComm is an excellent way to share your skills, knowledge and commitment to Sierra Club and our communities here in Riverside and San Bernardino County. Next year, consider running for a seat at this table!

Candidate statements are published here along with the ballots. Be sure to Vote!

Two Ways to Vote:

Mail in voting: Vote by cutting out the ballot for ExComm and for your group, and choosing no more than the number listed on each ballot. Joint members each have a ballot. Mail your ballot to Sierra Club San Gorgonio Chapter, PO Box 5425, Riverside, CA 92517

OnLine voting: Visit our website at:

<https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/forms/chapter-wide-elections-excoms-2022-23> into your browser.

Have your member number ready - you can find it on your Palm and Pine address label, your Sierra Magazine address label, or your membership card.

If you can't find your member number, email ruizmaryann@gmail.com or danialderamon@sierraclub.org and we'll help you find it.

Chapter and Group Election Ballot

All Chapter members are eligible to vote in the Chapter Executive Committee election. Group elections are limited to members in the group geography: if you are unsure about your group call the office at 951-684-6203 and leave a message

Do I have a Single or Joint membership? The mailing label on this newsletter will indicate whether your household has a single ("SNGL") or joint ("JNT") membership. This will be found above your name and before your 8-digit membership number. Examples: JNT 12345678 = Joint membership, Membership number (8-digits). SNGL 12345678 = Single membership, Membership number (8-digits).

Vote online or mail your ballot **no later than Feb 15th.**

Online: <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/forms/chapter-wide-elections-excoms-2023-24>

BY MAIL: You must write your membership number on the outside of your mailing envelope (below your return address is a good place). Your membership number is required to verify voting eligibility. Your membership number is the eight (8) digit number on your mailing label on this publication.

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San Gorgonio Chapter Executive Committee

Vote for 5 or fewer

<input type="checkbox"/> David Marrett	<input type="checkbox"/> Bobbi Jo Chavarria
<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Farrell	<input type="checkbox"/> Bhavin Jindal
	<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Sianna

(first ballot)

<input type="checkbox"/> David Marrett	<input type="checkbox"/> Bobbi Jo Chavarria
<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Farrell	<input type="checkbox"/> Bhavin Jindal
	<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Sianna

(second ballot - joint member)

Mail your ballot to Sierra Club San Gorgonio Chapter, PO Box 5425, Riverside, CA 92517

Candidate Statements

David Marrett

David J. Marrett, PhD, is a second generation lifelong conservationist with three degrees in Natural Resource Conservation and Forest Soils from the University of Montana and the University of Washington. He taught high level courses at U. of Washington, U. of Oregon, Oregon State U. and Murrieta Valley High School. He also worked for UCR, UCSB, SDSU and U. of Alaska as a researcher. From 1999 to 2019 he was a Science Teacher at Murrieta Valley HS, teaching mostly Earth Science, Chemistry and Environmental Science. He advised the Earth Club, led numerous field trips, started a school garden, and worked on recycling, as well as water and energy conservation work with the Murrieta USD.

In addition to work with the Sierra Club, Santa Margarita Group, he is active in the Climate Reality Project, 350 Riverside, the Santa Rosa Plateau Nature Education Foundation, the Environmental Education Collaborative, CCL, Third Act and other groups. He is currently a Co-Chair of the Riverside County Chapter of Climate Climate Reality Project (CRP) and Chapter Liaison for the LA Chapter of CRP.

David's current goals include improving coordination among the Sierra Club volunteer groups and SC staffers, and between the whole SC and two specific ally organizations: The Climate Reality Project and 350.org.

Incumbents

- **Bobbi Jo Chavarria**, currently serving as Vice-Chair on Excom and running for Los Serranos Group ExCom. Bobbi Jo lives in Fontana, has been an ExCom member for 6 years, and is active in several other local community-based organizations including Progressive Alliance of the Inland Empire and Green Fontana, as well as staying involved with local politics.
- **Bhavin Jindal** is the Chapter's Political Chair, and lives in Loma Linda where he is an elected member of the City Council. Bhavin has been on the Executive Committee since being appointed to a partial term in 2019.
- **Brian Sianna** is running for a second term on the Chapter ExCom. Brian is a professor at UC Riverside, lives in Riverside and has been active in climate change issues and sustainability in the area.
- **Steve Farrell** has served on ExCom for several terms and in many capacities, as well as many years of involvement with the California Conservation Committee. Steve also chairs the Mountains Group. Steve is our website manager

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Santa Margarita Group Executive Committee

Vote for 3 or fewer

Margaret Meyncke Cathy Peterson
 David Marrett

(first ballot)

Margaret Meyncke Cathy Peterson
 David Marrett

(second ballot - joint member)

Mail your ballot to Sierra Club San Gorgonio Chapter, PO Box 5425, Riverside, CA 92517

David Marrett

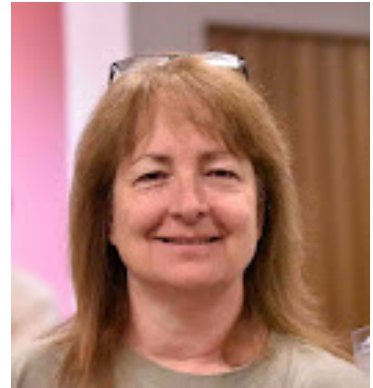
See candidate statement on page 7.

Margaret Meyncke

I am a local resident of Temecula and involved in the Sierra Club - SMG for about ten years. I currently hold the position of Chair of Education and Outreach. I also help write articles for the Palm and Pine, our Chapter Newsletter.

In addition, I maintain the Facebook Page and represent Sierra Club at different events and tabling opportunities.

I am happy to be on the Executive Committee and part of the decision making process. Thank you for supporting our efforts!



Cathy Peterson

Nature has always captured my attention and heart more than just about anything for a long as I can remember. I am a retired public school elementary teacher who often peppered my instruction with tidbits from the natural world. I'm an avid Hiker and also enjoy backpacking. Since retiring, I've joined the Sierra Club and attend all SCSMG meetings, including ex-com meetings, and am an active member of the SCSMG hiking committee. I also am a member of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness, am a founding member of the Temecula Valley Native Plant Network, attend weekly meetings of Friends of SJWA, volunteer at the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, and did some trailwork for three different areas. I do what I can to help protect our environment, which is why I wish to become a Sierra Club Santa Margarita Group Excom member.



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Tahquitz Group Executive Committee

Vote for 3 or fewer

Gary Gray
 Noel Ragsdale

Joan Taylor

Gary Gray
 Noel Ragsdale

Joan Taylor

(first ballot)

(second ballot - joint member)

Mail your ballot to Sierra Club San Geronimo Chapter, PO Box 5425, Riverside, CA 92517

Noel Ragsdale

I moved to the Coachella Valley in 2010 after 25 years as a law professor at the University of Southern California. As a desert resident, I have delighted in exploring the Coachella Valley, the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountain ranges, Joshua Tree, the Salton Sea and the surrounding areas through hiking, horseback riding, kayaking and camping. My understanding and enjoyment of these areas have been significantly enhanced by courses at the College of the Desert: local plants/trees/shrubs, local and migratory birds, reptiles, and insects. There are many threats to all elements of this ecosystem from commercial and residential developments, reckless recreational activity (particularly OHVs), light pollution, and the many implications of climate change. The Sierra Club has played a major role in working to protect and conserve all of our natural resources. I have been a longtime supporter of the Club and I look forward to intensifying my role through membership on the Tahquitz Group Executive Committee.



Joan Taylor

I've devoted most of my adult life to desert land conservation, currently serving as Chair of the Tahquitz Group, Legal Chair for Chapter, and Chair of Sierra Club's Desert Committee. I also serve as a board member of various land trusts and conservancies. Through the years, I've spearheaded Wilderness and National Monument campaigns and been an appointed stakeholder in various large habitat conservation planning efforts. With your help, I will continue to work on the many challenges facing our region: poorly sited or configured solar projects; the threat of a new city proposed in a designated Conservation Area; and a rapidly declining Salton Sea.



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Joan Taylor (cont.)

We also need to save iconic Joshua Trees threatened with extinction because of climate change and huge solar projects gobbling up habitat. Solar should go on rooftops and parking lots! I ask for your vote to help me continue this work.

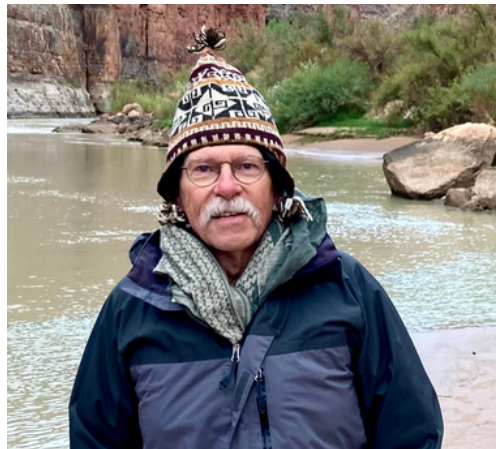
Thank you.

Gary Gray

I would greatly appreciate your vote so I can continue the environmental and social justice work in the Coachella Valley. A little about my background:

Conservation involvement:

- Past Conservation Chair and current Vice Chair of Tahquitz Group
- Chapter lead on successful campaign to defeat a new city proposed next to Joshua Tree National Park Wilderness
- Environmental Justice Co Chair for Tahquitz Group, working on Salton Sea, potable water and other east Coachella Valley issues
- Member of the Tahquitz Group Political Committee
- Founder and Chair of Friends of the Indian Canyons
- Former State Senate representative on the board of The Coachella Mountains Conservancy
- Former Riverside County Parks and Open Space Commissioner



Avocations:

- Magazine and Freelance Photographer
- Taught both Photography and Nature Observation and Tracking at the Living Desert
- Environmental Consultant
- Created and taught an Environmental Studies Classes to high school students



Tahquitz Group

Stretching from the San Geronio Pass to the Colorado River -- and including the northern half of the Salton Sea as well as Joshua Tree National Park and the entire Morongo Basin -- the Tahquitz Group area is rich with glorious natural assets! For over five decades our activists have been working to protect them. We invite you to play a role in this effort, to whatever degree you wish—be it clicking on an action alert to a local elected official, making a phone call, attending a meeting (virtually these days), or simply informing your family and friends about a critical conservation issue.

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San Bernardino Mountains Group Executive Committee

Vote for 4 or fewer

Steve Farrell
 Bob Sherman
 Marianne Gomes
 Karla Kellems

(first ballot)

Steve Farrell
 Bob Sherman
 Marianne Gomes
 Karla Kellems

(second ballot - joint member)

Mail your ballot to Sierra Club Mountains Group Elections PO Box 651, Blue Jay, CA 92317

Los Serranos Group Executive Committee

Vote for 3 or fewer

John St. Clair
 Bobbi Jo Chavarria
 Mary Ann Ruiz

(first ballot)

John St. Clair
 Bobbi Jo Chavarria
 Mary Ann Ruiz

(second ballot - joint member)

Mail your ballot to Sierra Club San Gorgonio Chapter, PO Box 5425, Riverside, CA 92517

Big Bear Group Executive Committee

Vote for 3 or fewer

Judy Atkinson
 Ed Wallace
 Ellen Kesler

(first ballot)

Judy Atkinson
 Ed Wallace
 Ellen Kesler

(second ballot - joint member)

Mail to: Sierra Club Big Bear Group, PO Box 3048
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

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Moreno Valley Group News

By Christina Torres, Outings Chair and George Hague, Conservation Chair

Group Outings

The Moreno Valley Group conducted six official hikes from October through December of 2022 in the Yucaipa and Moreno Valley areas culminating in a lovely pre-Christmas hike in the wonderful desert canyon of Whitewater Preserve. We had great weather and view conditions on all these hikes. With all the recent rains our nature should be well refreshed with growing flora and fauna as we continue our outings.

I had to make a couple of hike location changes (the dates stayed the same) which are now reflected in current status on the San Geronio website (<https://sangoronio2.sierraclub.org/outings-activities>). I hope to see some new and returning hikers on any of our upcoming hikes which are at the Coachella Valley Preserve, Lake Perris (this one is canine friendly), and Tahquitz Canyon. One of my favorites, La Quinta Cove to Lake Cahuilla, will be at the end of February.

Special thanks to Joe Amador from the Big Bear Group for helping occasionally with our MoVal group hikes! Incidentally, we will be co-leading an upcoming car camp in March to be posted soon!

Happy Trails, Christina Torres, Moreno Valley Group Outings Chair

Conservation Efforts

Please consider making a donation to our local Sierra Club (P.O. Box 1325, Moreno Valley, CA 92556-1325) to challenge these unhealthy warehouse projects being built near people's homes. Thank you to all of you who have already donated to help us make them less harmful to Moreno Valley residents, especially children.

Moreno Valley Business Park Warehouse (MVBW):

The Moreno Valley Business Park warehouse is proposed at the southeast corner of Ironwood Avenue and Heacock Street, in the same shopping center as the new Sprouts. The warehouse's diesel trucks will significantly impact not only family homes as they travel on adjacent roads, but also the SR-60/Heacock interchange as well as the entrance to the shopping center. The administrative record needed for litigation is complete and our attorney is beginning to prepare the brief.



Moreno Valley Business Center (MVBC) Warehouse: This poorly located warehouse would be located at the SE corner of Alessandro Blvd and Day St. On the east side of the project, homes are **adjacent** to the site; north are a few homes across a narrow two-lane road; and to the west a few homes are across a narrow two-lane road. The census tract containing this project site shows its residents are in about the **worst 1% of areas in all of California for air pollution and other socioeconomic impacts**. The project site is owned by the city. Both the Sierra Club and CCAEJ filed appeals on July 25, 2022. We were not given extra time as normal to present our appeal during the Dec 6th council meeting, but instead our out-going mayor Gutierrez allowed us only two minutes each and would not accept our request for a continuance. **Council members Edward Delgado, Elena Baca-Santa Cruz and Mayor Gutierrez (elected our new Supervisor in November 2022) voted in favor while council members David Marquez and Ulises Cabrera (our new mayor in November 2022) voted against it. On Thursday Jan 5, 2023 our Sierra Club attorney submitted case for filing a lawsuit on this poorly placed warehouse.**

MoVal 2040—Moreno Valley General Plan Update (GPU) & Climate Action Plan (CAP): On July 15, 2021 our Sierra Club filed a lawsuit against the city of Moreno Valley on their approval of the GPU and CAP. The big part of the litigation is pointing out the need to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts on the health of people—especially children and the elderly—as well as the environment. Hopefully litigation will correct and/or improve the environment for Moreno Valley residents.

In June 2022 the California state attorney general, Rob Bonta, joined our litigation. He issued a press release in which he stated, “We’re intervening today so that those communities do not continue to bear the brunt of poor land use decisions that site warehouses outside their doors.” Your Moreno Valley Sierra Club volunteers and our attorney, the city, as well as the attorney general’s office are currently in settlement talks. As you read this, we have a new mayor and council member which could change the direction of our settlement talks — perhaps for the better.

Compass Danbe Centerpointe Warehouse: The Sierra Club filed our lawsuit on this project on February 17, 2022.

The 389,603 square foot project site is located south of Alessandro Boulevard between Frederick Street and Graham Street. The warehouse is across the street from a charter school, apartments and homes. The project’s Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) indicates that trucks accessing or

exiting the project site may also use the city-designated truck routes along Frederick Street, Heacock Street and Alessandro Boulevard to travel to and from State Route 60. Nine schools are located within 1/4 mile of City-Designated truck routes that could/would be used by the proposed project. We continue our settlement talks to try to make the project have less impacts on people and the environment, but if we are not successful, we will be in court.

Please take time to check out the Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA) Facebook page where they post information on events they sponsor. In December they had their first bald eagle count of the season. They also post information about interesting presentations at the Ya’i Heki’ Regional Indian Museum which is located at Lake Perris.

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

Contact us: San Gorgonio Chapter Website: <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org>

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Member services (address or info changes or questions: contact.member.care@sierraclub.org or call our office at 951-684-06203

Not a member? Join online through our website : <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org> or call our office and we'll mail you a membership form.

For all other inquiries, check our website or email chair@sangorgonio.sierraclub.org.

Mojave Group News

By Bryan Baker, Chair



If you live in the Mojave/High Desert area and are a Sierra Club member, please vote in our Mojave Group election for our Executive Committee! You'll find the ballot nearby in the Palm & Pine. Please follow the directions for signing and mailing your ballot, including your membership number. We need your voice in our election. We're also looking for an additional member of Ex Comm—speak with or email any of our Ex Comm if you're willing to serve!

We also need outings leaders to lead hikes and other outdoor activities. If you're an avid hiker or otherwise like getting outdoors, you're a candidate to lead activities. Let us know! Outings leader training is planned for June 3 - see article on page 2!

We continue to monitor developments in the Mojave area. Solar 'farms' are of course a big concern in our desert, as they consume large areas of habitat and impact the visual landscape. While new proposals for major warehouses or other developments have not been common recently in our area, with the recent building boom we can expect more proposals in the future.

I was honored this month to have been chosen to assume the position of Chair of our Mojave Group. Our previous chair, Susan Steuber, unfortunately passed away recently, leaving a considerable gap in our group. I hope I can contribute worthily in her place to our group, of course with your help.



Explore, Enjoy and Protect

For 130 years, Sierra Club members and supporters have been exploring, enjoying and protecting our home here on Earth. As we begin the next decade, it seems a good time for a reminder of our entire mission statement:

Sierra Club Mission Statement

To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth;

To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources;

To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

Local Butterfly Gardens Lead to Statewide Conservation Proposal

By Caren Hanson

Many of us are alarmed at the rapid decline in biodiversity on our planet. The headlines are frightening:

The Insect Apocalypse is here! Massive insect decline threatens collapse of nature! North America has lost 3 billion birds in the last 50 years.

As a member of the local Sierra Club Santa Margarita Group, it's disturbing not knowing what to do. I decided to focus on initiating local butterfly gardens, hoping to help save the endangered Monarch Butterfly by planting more milkweeds, the host plant for this lovely butterfly. Working with local city parks, our group's first butterfly garden was a small area of four 17-inch circles in Menifee's Spirit Park. The second was much larger in Winchester Creek Park in Temecula measuring about 100 ft by 60 ft. Both were successful, and you can see butterflies flitting in the sunlight.

During my educational journey, I have contacted many experts, including Dr. Gordon Pratt, a local expert on butterflies, individuals from the Master Gardeners, Audubon, Xerces Society, California Native Plant Society, Douglas Tallamy and Homegrown National Park, and others. From this, I learned how to use the tools provided by www.Calscape.org and the National Wildlife Federation, www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/. This inspired me to write our own local 65+ page guide, which can be found at: <https://www.sierraclub.org/san-gorgonio/santa-margarita/butterfly-garden-guide>

While visiting a demonstration pollinator-friendly garden set up by the Eastern Municipal Water District in Perris, I learned that new housing developments did use drought-tolerant landscape: A great start! But they were not choosing native plants in their designs. That was a shock, as we know that local insects require local native plants to survive.

I also discovered that each city's own Planning Departments oversee a list of acceptable plants to use in their landscape. Several of us visited five of our local cities, gave them a copy of our guide, and requested they emphasize using native plants. Each city was amenable to this suggestion. But that is as far as it went.

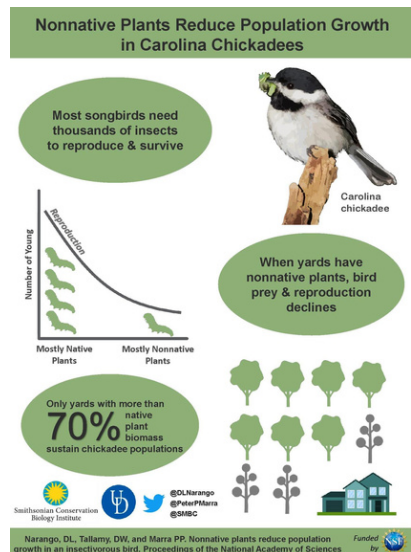
Soon afterwards I came across a study that dealt directly with the success rate of baby chickadees

correlated to the number of native plants available to adult birds during their breeding season. They concluded that in order to MAINTAIN the chickadee bird population at the CURRENT LEVEL at least 70% of the landscape had to be native plants. This was a GAME CHANGER. We now had a formula to ensure the success of breeding birds and butterflies in our gardens - 70% natives.

Since 96% of terrestrial birds use caterpillars as their primary food source for their nestlings, and butterflies create caterpillars, it stands to reason that we should plant butterfly-friendly native gardens for the birds and other pollinators. It doesn't cost any more to plant natives and there are now lots of native plant nurseries throughout California. We have the tools, and now we have the science.

In November I submitted a bill proposal to my state legislators mandating 70% native plants as part of all new housing development landscaping. My proposal landed in Senator Ochoa Bogh's office. They will keep me informed about the bill's potential. California leads in conservation efforts so if passed it will set a good precedent for other states.

I look forward to the day when I drive down the road past shopping centers, housing developments, city and industrial parks and see colorful flowers dancing in the breeze from local butterfly gardens. I can always dream. (Contact the author at carenhansonb17@gmail.com for updates.)





February 2023 Trail Talk Winter Hikes in the San Gabriel Mountains

**Wed, Feb 15, 2023
7:00 PM**

Looking for safe places to hike in the winter months? Weds. February 15th join us to hear from Outings Leader John St. Clair about low elevation winter and early spring hikes in the San Gabriel Mountains. High elevation hikes in the winter are dangerous due to snow and ice on narrow trails. There are many hikes below 6,000 ft. that are beautiful, safe and good exercise. John will highlight the winter and early spring hikes he will be leading in the San Gabriel Mountains. With all the winter storms and rain so far this year, the early spring will be particularly beautiful with spring flowers and full waterfalls. Hiking at low elevation during the winter and spring keeps you ready makes to transition to the more strenuous high elevation hikes in the summer.

John St. Clair is the Outings Chair for the Los Serranos Group and has been leading Sierra Club hikes since 2011. He also is a member of the Trail Talk Committee that plans and presents the Trail Talk series as well as a San Gorgonio Chapter Leadership Training trainer.

Trail Talk presentations are held virtually on Zoom the third Wednesday of each month. The Zoom presentations are recorded and posted on the San Gorgonio Chapter YouTube channel so you can refer back to our many subjects.

RSVP on our events page at <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/outings-activities>

