



**SIERRA CLUB**

**SAN GORGONIO**

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All in-person meetings, events, and outings have been cancelled until further notice.

# 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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## Salton Sea Update

*Story and Photos by Gary Gray, Vice Chair of Tahquitz Group*

**A**mid the COVID-19 crisis, it's important to remember there is still a deepening crisis at the Salton Sea. The underserved communities closest to this body of water are already beset with respiratory issues and living conditions which make them even more vulnerable to this pandemic virus. Further degradation of air quality caused by dust from the receding shoreline and exposed playa will be a greater threat to a healthy way of life and a possibility of a higher risk of death for these communities during the current pandemic.

Fortunately, Governor Newsom has not forgotten the social and environmental justice issues as well as the wildlife that depend on the Salton Sea. Newsom has



proposed nearly \$50 million in his budget to advance some very important initiatives at the sea. One of them is to further remediate the pollution of the New River, which is a major water source for the Salton Sea. Another is to fund a pilot project

*Continued on Page 3 >>>*



## CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD PASSES CLEAN TRUCK RULE

### *Why it Matters*

*By Sierra Club Volunteer Justice Sandoval*

**G**rowing up in San Bernardino I've learned that my low income community has an enormous amount of obstacles to jump through in order to survive. One of those obstacles is the dirty air we breathe and the effects it has on our health. I work directly with the youth of my community and there are far too many times where my students have trouble catching their breath, depend

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## Palm and Pine

Clean Truck Rule from Page 1 >>>

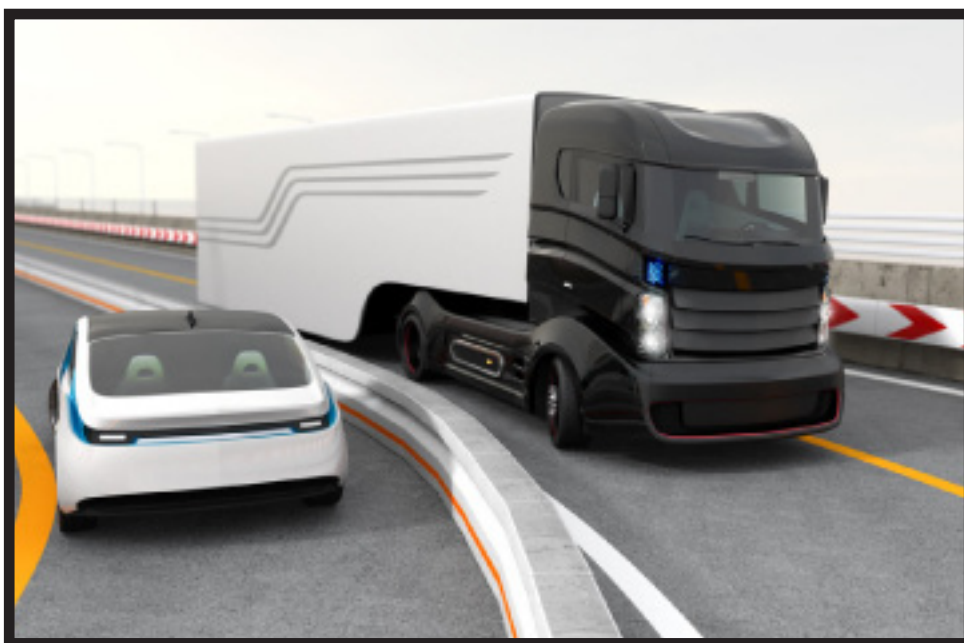
on their inhaler, and experience constant nose bleeds. There are also children of my community younger than the age of 3 who experience asthma, they do not even have the opportunity to experience life with a breath of fresh air. My family and I suffer from severe asthma and allergies which results in my dad and brother depending on their inhaler every day. We have seen delays in our life, late night hospital visits, and too many hospital bills – therefore, I continue to fight and advocate for a green future.

I am privileged to have encountered organizations like the Sierra Club who support my voice in the fight for a clean future. I used my privilege on behalf of my community and gave a testimony on why I believe the ACT rule should be passed.

We see over 2,000 diesel trucks a day going through our home and the ACT rule will guarantee that most of those trucks are green by mandating zero-emission truck sales. Although I know it is impractical to imagine a world without diesel trucks, hearing the ACT rule pass feels like a huge win for the health and future of my community. This is only the beginning of a fight that I am prepared to participate in for as long as I am needed, a green future is not unimaginable and is a future we deserve.



*California Air Resources Board made history Thursday when it passed the world's first clean trucks rule on 6/25. The Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) Regulation will require that more than half of the trucks sold be zero emission by 2035 and 100% by 2045.*



## Palm and Pine

Salton Sea from Page 1 > > >

at the north end of the Salton Sea and another is to fund local staffing to do the many, many tasks necessary to bring the State's projects to fruition.

It's also important not to forget that the Salton Sea is a critical stopover for migratory birds on the vast Pacific Flyway which links South America with Alaska. There are over 400 recorded species that rely on the Salton Sea, some while migrating and others for their permanent home. The State's project at the south end of the Salton Sea is designed to provide shallow wading habitat for shorebirds, while the proposed "North Lake" project would provide a deep-water fishery for the 200 species of fish-eating birds that also depend on the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea could also provide a much needed economic resource from recreation, camping, hunting and bird watching activities.



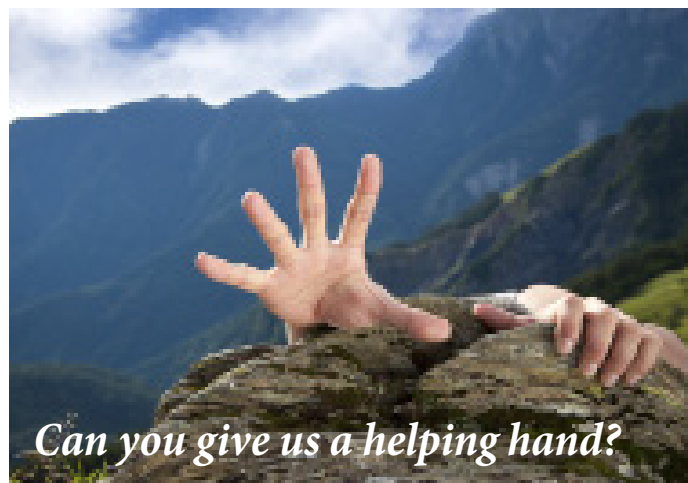
The Salton Sea can also be a stunningly beautiful place to visit! I love camping there to soak up the quiet and serenity with the added potential excitement of observing rare birds who frequent this unique water resource in the middle of a vast desert.



### CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NEEDS HELP!

**T**he Chapter Executive Committee (the ExCom) is short two members (only 7 instead of the required 9) and no one (except incumbents) has answered the call for volunteers to run in this year's election.

We have four incumbents whose terms end this November and two open spots. That means that we need at least 6 candidates (or more) so that we can get the ExCom back up to full strength. We currently have three volunteers committed to running.



The search for candidates will continue until mid-August (the 18<sup>th</sup>) and if you want to be considered to be included on the ballot for the Chapter ExCom election (or have some questions) you can contact Dave Barrie by e-mail at [barriemail@mac.com](mailto:barriemail@mac.com)

In addition to the Chapter election, all of our Groups have elections as well. It is possible that your Group needs candidates too, so if you would like to help out at the Group level you can contact your Group's Nominating Committee.

**LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!**

# 2020: THE YEAR TO GET INVOLVED WITH POLITICS!



*By Mary Ann Ruiz  
Chair, San Gorgonio Chapter*

**A** pandemic crisis, growing awareness of the disaster of systemic racism, and climate change impacts – leading to opportunity for change. That’s what 2020 has brought us – a year for change at the highest levels. Ignoring science, ignoring basic humanity, this administration is a disaster. Sierra Club’s top national priority this year is to remove the Trump administration. Here in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, we also need to work on our political leadership at the state, county, city and local agency levels.

## Ready to get involved?

Sign up to receive more information by email, and join an optional video call. If you can't actually be on the call, that’s OK – we’ll get you the information you need to make an impact. There are many ways to help – from writing letters to swing states in the National elections, to working on your local city council elections, working on candidate endorsements, and helping local campaigns. You will receive an email from the leader with more details at registration.

## Just go to...

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001asPfAAI&mapLinkHref=>



## Advice From A Tree

Stand tall and proud - Sink your roots deep into the earth - Be content with your natural beauty - Go out on a limb - Drink plenty of water - Remember your roots - Enjoy the view!



## Advice From A Squirrel

Look both ways when you cross the road.. Plan ahead.. Stay active.. Eat plenty of fiber.. Spend time in the woods.. Go out on a limb.. It’s OK to be a little nuts!



## Advice From A Mountain

Reach for new heights. Rise above it all. There is beauty as far as the eye can see. Be uplifting. Patience, patience, patience. Get to the point. Enjoy the view!

# In Remembrance of Jono Hildner

**Mary Ann Ruiz :**

*Sierra Club lost one of our most active, effective and well-loved leaders in May. Jono Hildner passed away at home with his family nearby, from complications of lung cancer. Jono worked tirelessly for many years in our chapter - his goal was to Turn the Inland Empire Green! As San Gorgonio Political Chair, he recruited and trained many new volunteers to work on candidate endorsements and election campaigns. He also served on the National and State Political*

*especially dedicated to engaging new youth leadership. At the state level, Jono pushed for the addition of a statewide “Emerging Leader” award, which is renamed the Jono Hildner Award. At the local level, we are establishing a fund for gift memberships for youth in Jono’s name. If you*



*would like to help with this fund, send your check to Sierra Club San Gorgonio Chapter, PO Box 5425, Riverside, CA 92517, and note “Jono Hildner membership fund.”*

*Jono’s son Ben told me the family all “just want the Sierra Club Community to know how much you all meant to him” (a lot!!!)*



*We feel the same way about Jono.*

*Committees, the Sierra Club California , San Gorgonio Chapter, and Tahquitz Group Executive Committees.*

*I remember my first Political Committee report from Jono when he became our local Chair. He had been working to save Chino Canyon in the Palm Springs area from a sprawling development. It was that moment when I learned the real importance of Sierra Club’s political work. Jono was emphatic – instead of fighting these battles, suing for what is right – let’s elect leaders who make good environmental decisions! That was a turning point for me – after that I could not turn down a request from Jono to work on a political issue!*

*We miss Jono’s wisdom, knowledge and his kindness, encouragement and upbeat good humor. Jono was*

**Kathryn Phillip, Director, Sierra Club California:**

*Jono most recently served on the executive committee of Sierra Club California, the Sierra Club California political committee, the national Sierra Club’s political committee, and was a leader in the San Gorgonio Chapter and served until 2018 as that chapter’s political committee chair for many years. He probably wouldn’t have declared that he loved politics, but rather that he loved getting good candidates elected.*

*Jono was a retiree who lived in the desert, but before moving to California, made his home for many years in Oregon where, as he described it, he served as a bureaucrat. He was a big man with a generous personality who was more often cheerful than not and did nothing*

*Continued on Page 10 >>>*

## Santa Margarita Group

Submitted By Margaret Meyncke • Written By Pam Nelson

Can-**C**ancelling our community general meetings has been a real loss. Getting to know our members and their interests has been a real plus at our face-to-face monthly encounters. For our last general community “meeting” of the season (we normally go dark in July and August), we offered a YouTube session from our partner representative



from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Cara Lacey. In it, she describes the work we are doing on the local wildlife crossing system along I-15. We are so happy to have support from TNC, the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve and all the Coalition members we have gathered for quarterly meetings.

We continue to watch over our watershed and have reviewed and are reviewing several local developments and projects. The city of Murrieta has released the draft Environmental Report for the Murrieta Hills development east of Greer Ranch along the I-215. It’s a large residential and commercial development. If you are interested contact me (pamela05n@yahoo.com).



Our hiking committee has its outings on hold but will be meeting via Zoom to discuss future hikes. Leader, Bob Audibert, would like to offer a diverse set of hikes when we can get together safely. If you would like to join the hiking committee, contact me, Pam Nelson.



## Big Bear Group

By Ellen Kesler, Chair

Our little ExCom gathered on the wonderful porch at Marv Cira’s log home, keeping our safe distancing to decide on the Big Bear High School scholarship winner this year. The essays were better written than previous applications and it was a difficult decision. So we decided to give two scholarships this year. One recipient has already been accepted to the University of California at Davis with the direction of becoming a veterinarian. The other recipient is hoping to be going to the University of Montana desiring to become an athletic trainer with a sports medicine emphasis. We are so glad to be able to do this.

We are looking forward to when we can safely meet in a General Meeting.



# Moreno Valley Group

By Ann Turner McKibben, Secretary

**B**ecause of Covid-19 and summer heat there are no scheduled outings for the Moreno Valley Group. Once again we recommend checking the San Gorgonio Chapter web page <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/> and our Moreno Valley Group web page [https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/groups/moreno\\_valley](https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/groups/moreno_valley) for updated information. You can also email the Moreno Valley Group at [movalleygroup@yahoo.com](mailto:movalleygroup@yahoo.com) if you have questions.

Here is some updated information on projects we are following:

### Moreno Valley General Plan Update (MVGPU):

The General Plan Advisory Committee was presented with several land use options in several locations around the city at their May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. They provided some recommendations which were included in a presentation made to the Planning Commission the following week on May 28<sup>th</sup>, and a presentation will be made to the City Council on June 9<sup>th</sup>. Concepts for a Town Center and Corridor (Sunnymead, Perris, and Alessandro Boulevards) revitalization seemed to get the most interest. It is highly recommended that you participate in the June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting via the Zoom platform or watch it on MVT Channel 3 starting at 6:00 pm. Consistent with the Governor’s Executive Order, members of the public will not be able to attend the meeting in person but will be able to attend remotely and make public comments via the Zoom platform

The City’s new MVGPU update, MoVal 2040, is being fast-tracked for approval by the spring of 2021, and will very likely dramatically change the current land uses and policies decisions of the city. There are seven members on General Plan Advisory Committee, three of which are planning commissioners and two are developers (Iddo Benzeevi & Nelson Chung) who each have large land holdings/interests in the city. These are the same two who have contributed heavily to the campaigns for a majority of our current council

members. If this is not a conflict, then what is it?

We would like to encourage everyone in the community to pay attention and get involved with the General Plan Update. It is extremely likely that the city council will be changing the land uses for a large portion of the vacant land on the east end and elsewhere in the city that will make way for more warehouses and high density housing. If you care about the future direction of development in Moreno Valley, please take time to follow the progress of the GPU. Attend meetings. 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 Ormsby at [chriso@moval.org](mailto:chriso@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) which is meant 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. Please take time to email all of our city’s council members with your

thoughts on the CAP and GPU. It is better to send each councilmember their own email with their name:

- Councilmember Victoria Baca at: [victoriab@moval.org](mailto:victoriab@moval.org)
- Councilmember Dr. Carla Thornton at: [carlat@moval.org](mailto:carlat@moval.org)
- Councilmember David Marquez at: [davidma@moval.org](mailto:davidma@moval.org)
- Councilmember Ulises Cabrera at: [ulises@moval.org](mailto:ulises@moval.org)
- Mayor Dr. Yxstian Guierrez at: [yxstiang@moval.org](mailto:yxstiang@moval.org)

### Moreno Valley Mayor and Council Election this

**November:** It is never too late to be thinking about who holds office in Moreno Valley. This year the seats for two council members and the mayor will be up for re-election. Mayor Yxstian Gutierrez and Council

*If you care about the future direction of development in Moreno Valley, please take time to follow the progress of the GPU.*

*Attend meetings. Speak up about what you want for our future.*

*This is a 20-year plan so don't miss your chance to comment.*

Moreno Valley from Page 7 > > >

Member Victory Baca (District 1) received heavy financial backing from developers during all previous elections into office and have supported anything the developers' desire, most prominently the World Logistics Center. Council Member David Marquez (District 3) has secured his support from his constituents and does not support warehouses where they don't belong. He is not beholding to any developers.

All too often we have seen multiple individuals run campaigns to try and eliminate the strangle hold of those supported by special interests. When multiple candidates run they divide up all the votes and the special interest candidates prevail. Please follow this election cycle, which should have begun by March, and let us know who you believe would make for a good candidate or who is worthy of our support.

**World Logistics Center (WLC):** The 40.6 million square foot World Logistic Center (WLC) warehouses project would cover 2,610 acres; an area larger than 26 Disneylands is still proceeding. In June 2018 the Superior Court ruled in our favor on several issues and we lost on some others including Greenhouse Gas emission. This was appealed in May of 2018 and the developer Highland Fairview filed a cross appeal. Since then the state Attorney General's Office and the California Air Resources Board wrote a letter to the courts supporting our position saying the city ignored environmental law when it approved the project.

Recently – on May 1, 2020 – while the above cases were still in court, the WLC produced massive new environmental documents and was seeking new approvals on basically the same project. The city planning commission approved the project after midnight on Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. EarthJustice, representing the Sierra Club and four other groups, filed an appeal on May 26, 2020, challenging the environmental findings and conclusions. The City Council is scheduled to consider the WLC Development Agreement at the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and it is likely they will also consider the recently filed appeal. Please respond to the City Council with your concerns over the impacts this project will have on not only Moreno Valley but



Lake Perris, March 2020 • Photographer George Hague

the region as a whole. You can send your comments to Julia Descoteaux, Associate Planner, at [juliad@moval.org](mailto:juliad@moval.org). Due to assembly restrictions you will not be able to attend this meeting in person but will be able to attend remotely and make public comments via the Zoom platform or watch it on MVTV Channel 3.

**Moreno Valley Trade Center:** The warehouse project site is located south of Eucalyptus Avenue, west of Redlands Boulevard, and north of Encelia Avenue (includes Hall Nursery and is south of the Aldi warehouse). The project for a light industrial warehouse with 1,332,380 square feet has begun the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) which is likely to be completed later this year. The project is across the street from many existing homes and land zoned for future homes. We hope members of the community will get involved with the DEIR review and/or provide comments to the city regarding their concerns with this project. Please contact Gabriel Diaz, Associate Planner, at (951) 413-3226 or email him at: [Gabrield@moval.org](mailto:Gabrield@moval.org) and asked to be put on the list to receive notices about this project.

The project will require a General Plan Amendment and a Change of Zone from “Residential: Max 2 du/ac (R2)” to “Business Park/Light Industrial (BP).” It will have loading docks on the north side of the building

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## Palm and Pine

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Lake Perris SRA, June 2020 • Photographer Margie Breitkreuz

and 120 loading docks on the south side of the building for diesel trucks. The Moreno Valley Group of the Sierra Club made comments on this massive warehouse which would be across the street from family homes as we have on almost every warehouse proposed in our city during the past 10 years. These lands need to be zoned for transitional uses between family homes and warehouse and warehouses with their many diesel truck trips. We will continue to follow it and make comments.

**Gilman Springs Road (GSR):** This roadway is on our city's eastern edge, connecting Moreno Valley to the San Jacinto/Hemet area. Riverside County is currently spending major money to upgrade GSR and make it safer. While traveling GSR you can enjoy driving through portions of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA), along Mystic Lake (the 10,000 acre Davis Unit) and further east is the disjointed 9,500 acre Potrero Unit. They both have threatened/endangered species as well as other species of concern. The wildlife needs to access both units and to be able to safely cross GSR.

Discussions also focused on the need to install and maintain wildlife corridors from the north to the south 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 of the 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.

### **Villages of Lakeview (VOL):**

This master plan-ned community with its 8,725 dwelling units development on the south edge of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, was approved by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors early last year. A coalition of environmental groups represented by the Center for Biological Diversity has challenged this project and its environmental findings. The judge ruled against us in December, but the CBD has filed an appeal of that

decision. They are representing the Sierra Club and thanks to your donations the Moreno Valley Group is helping to pay the cost of the appeal.

**Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA)** is currently open "to active recreation with restrictions in place to encourage social distancing and reduce group gatherings." Please view their web page and Facebook page for detailed information and guidelines regarding visiting the park: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=651](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=651) & <https://www.facebook.com/Lakeperris/>

**Donations Needed:** Your donations are essential to our litigation against the World Logistics Center as well as providing professional input into Moreno Valley's general plan update process. Please make checks payable to "Sierra Club" with a notation for WLC and/or undesignated. Please send to: Sierra Club—Moreno Valley Group, P.O. Box 1325, Moreno Valley, CA 92556-1325. We sincerely appreciate and thank all of you who have taken time to donate to the litigation fund! We appreciate your generous donations.

The Moreno Valley Group attends a variety of public events throughout the year handing out information about our local conservation work. If you would like to help us host an information table at one of these events, please take time to contact us at [movalleygroup@yahoo.com](mailto:movalleygroup@yahoo.com)

## Contact Us . . .

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

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call our office at (951) 684-6203

*Jono Hildner from Page 5 > > >*

*halfway. He threw himself into everything with enthusiasm. He was an avid rafter and snow skier through much of his life. In more recent years, he played serious poker tournaments, wearing a Sierra Club cap to shade his eyes from the glaring lights.*

*I suspect that, if asked what he was most proud of in his Sierra Club work, Jono would probably point to the efforts he made to bring younger people into the environmental movement and mentor them to be leaders. Those younger leaders are his legacy.*

**Eloise Reyes, California Assembly District 47**

*Meeting Jono Hildner about 7 years ago was an eye-opening experience. He was serious about working for the benefit of the community. He wanted disadvantaged community members to be AT the table. He was hands-on when it came to the work. He was a dear friend and someone I could always count on.*

**Yassi Kavezade, Sierra Club Organizer:**

*We met when I was a rough 22 year old full of rage about the world. Instead of telling me to calm down, he uplifted me to be true to myself and mentored me. He supported young people at the Sierra Club San Gorgonio Chapter and enlightened all of us about the need for equity and justice*

*in the environmental movement. I will miss our check-ins, our tough conversations, and the overwhelming work we constantly talked about that needed to get done. I vow to continue to rage in your honor!*

**Gaby Cruz:**

*There are people in life whose impact completely changes the course of your life. Jono had such an impact on my life. He saw potential in young people and developed them with patience and compassion, time and time again.*

**Allison Chin:**

*I have held such deep regard for Jono, from the get go. There was such power in his self-reflection, humility, quality of relationship... and infectious smile!*

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