



**SIERRA CLUB**

**SAN GORGONIO**

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**OUTINGS  
COMING BACK  
SOON!**

# 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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## **WHY WE SHOULD ALL CARE ABOUT THE SALTON SEA**

*By Kim Floyd; John Pick; Jenny Binstock, Senior Campaign Representative, Lands Water Wildlife Campaign; and Brandon Dawson, Director, Sierra Club California*

**T**he conditions at the Salton Sea, California's largest lake, are deteriorating at an alarming rate – and it's a problem all Californians need to care about. As the lake bed dries up, it's generating harmful dust that is driving a public health crisis for nearby residents. The Sea is also an important global stopover for migratory birds, who are rapidly losing habitat. In fact, the status of the Salton Sea has major impacts on the environment of the entire Southwest.

the public health, environmental, social and political issues surrounding the future of the Salton Sea, and we'll host a question



*Photo credit: Steven Kriemadis*

**What:**  
*Why All of California  
Should Care About the  
Salton Sea*

**When:**  
Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>  
12 noon - 1:15 pm PT

Right now, the state of California is working on addressing these issues, and the public has the chance to shape the solutions. Join the Sierra Club on July 14<sup>th</sup>, noon to 1:15 pm PT for a Salton Sea webinar. We will discuss the challenges at the Salton Sea, as well as what all Californians can do to support solutions! A panel of experts will share more about

and answer session for all participants.

Even if you can't make the time slot, if you sign up to attend, we'll send you a recording of the webinar once it's done.

The presenters include:

- Dr. William Porter – Professor of Physics, UC Riverside Department of Environmental Science
- Dr. Ryan Sinclair - Professor of Microbiology, Loma Linda University School of Public Health
- Andrea Jones - Director of Bird Conservation, California Audubon Society
- Miguel Hernandez - Community Advocate and Communications Director, Comite Civico del Valle
- Joan Taylor - Chair, Tahquitz Group, San Gorgonio Chapter and Energy Chair, California Sierra Club Desert Committee

**The future of the Sea isn't just a local issue – it matters for all of California.**

**Hope to see you there!**



## Trail Talks Set For July and August 2021

If you register for these events, the Zoom link will be emailed to you. Registration is done in the Outings section of the San Geronio Chapter website <<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000011VDKAA2&mapLinkHref=>>>. You need to have Zoom installed on your computer to access these events. Trail Talk is on the third Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM.

### Trail Talk: Favorite Day Hikes in Yosemite July 21 • 7:00 PM

**J**ohn St. Clair will present his favorite day hikes in Yosemite National Park complete with photos of beautiful Yosemite scenery and vistas gathered from over 20 years of camping and hiking in the park. John is a Sierra Club Outings Leader and serves as the Los Serranos Outings Chair. He is part of the committee that plans and presents the Trail Talk Zoom presentations.



*This photo shows John St. Clair standing on North Dome with Half Dome in the background.*

### Trail Talk: Hikes in Southern California August 18 • 7:00 PM

**J**oin us via Zoom as we welcome special guest presenter David Money Harris to discuss some of the area's best hiking trails. David will present information on some well-known and lesser-known trails worth exploring, and will also offer insight on some recent wildfires and how they're related to Southern California's changing ecosystem. A Q&A session will follow the presentation.

David is the author of the most recent editions of several celebrated hiking guidebooks published by Wilderness Press, including *101 Hikes in Southern California*, *Afoot and Afield: Orange County*, *Afoot and Afield: Inland Empire* and the Southern California volume of *Day and Section Hikes: Pacific Crest Trail*. He is also a professor of engineering at Harvey Mudd College.

*If you aren't free to watch these Zoom events live, all Trail Talk Zoom sessions are recorded and posted on the San Geronio Chapter Youtube channel at:  
<<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyAdZHRkjo1USymvwtrEmEA/videos>>*



**SIERRA CLUB**  
CALIFORNIA

# California's Largest Grassroots Environmental Advocacy Organization Names New Director

*By Molly Culton, Conservation Organizer, Sierra Club California*

**S**ACRAMENTO— Today the executive committee of Sierra Club California announced that it has appointed Brandon Dawson as the organization's new director. Dawson has been interim director since the retirement from Sierra Club of longtime director Kathryn Phillips in April 2021.

Sierra Club California is the state arm of the national Sierra Club, representing California's 13 local Sierra Club chapters and more than half a million members and supporters statewide at the state capitol and state regulatory agencies in Sacramento. It is a volunteer-driven organization and the boldest voice for the environment on state-level issues.

Dawson joined Sierra Club California as a Policy Advocate in 2018. He has advocated on issues relating to water, parks, wildlife, agriculture, public lands, land use, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). He has led the state-level advocacy for the organization's work to protect the San Francisco Bay-Delta, restore and revitalize the Salton Sea and surrounding communities, preserve California's unique biodiversity and wildlands, and defend against harmful rollbacks to CEQA in the state legislature.

"Brandon has demonstrated a commitment to Sierra Club's mission and goals and has put that commitment into effective action since joining Sierra Club California. He understands how important the grassroots voice is in moving policies that not only advance traditional environmental issues, but that also advance equity so that all Californians can live in a state with clean air, clean water, protected wildlands and wildlife." said Eric Parfrey, chair of the Sierra Club California Executive Committee. "Brandon is also a member of a generation that will live with and witness the worst effects of climate change if we don't act more aggressively to stop climate pollution. As a volunteer-driven organization, we are committed to

ensuring more aggressive action on climate change and a strong commitment to ensure our staff, volunteer leadership and membership reflect the diversity of the state."

Before joining Sierra Club California, Dawson worked on environmental and natural resource litigation for the U.S. Department of Justice Environment and Natural Resources Division in Washington D.C. During law school he interned for both Earthjustice and the Environmental Defense Fund. He received his B.A. from Texas A&M University and J.D. from the Indiana University - Bloomington Maurer School of Law.

"I am proud to be the first Black man to lead Sierra Club California," Dawson said. "As the state experiences the increasingly severe impacts of the climate crisis, I am excited to fight for the needs of California communities and the environment, hold our public officials accountable, and build on the great work of my predecessors."

Sierra Club California was established in 1986 to ensure that Sierra Club members spoke with one voice in the state Capitol and at regulatory agencies. Since then the organization and its volunteers have been involved in shaping and passing nearly every significant environmental policy produced by the legislature and agencies.

###

*Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory arm of Sierra Club's 13 local chapters in California, representing nearly half a million members and supporters.*





## Palm and Pine

# Big Bear Group

By Ellen Kesler, Chairwoman

The members of our Xeriscape Garden committee are putting on wonderful, informative Xeriscape Virtual Walkabout Garden Tours for July 17<sup>th</sup> and August 14<sup>th</sup>, noon to 1:00 pm. The first one in June was very successful. They will be on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/groups/BigBearXeriscapeGardenTour](http://www.facebook.com/groups/BigBearXeriscapeGardenTour). Not only will you be “walking” in gardens of the committee members, but they will be giving mini-workshops on making rain barrels, creating drip irrigation systems, harvesting lilacs, collecting seeds and much, more. You can also check out the details on their website, [www.BigBearGardenTour.weebly.com](http://www.BigBearGardenTour.weebly.com). The tour will include posts on how to create beautiful, drought-tolerant and fire-wise landscapes by experienced Sierra Club members. If you post your own Xeriscape plant/landscape photos, you will be entered into the photo contest for a chance to win a prize!

In the meantime, the ExCom is working on creating

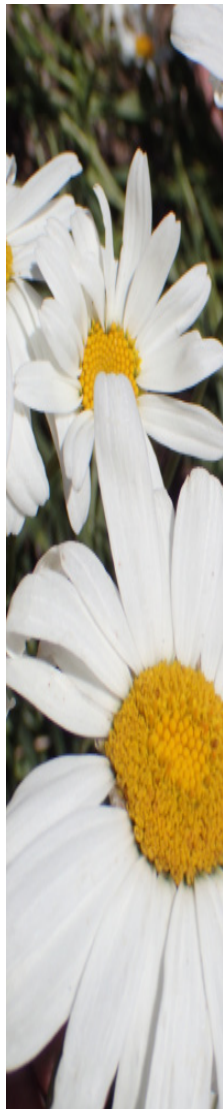
General Meeting programs although the Discovery Center is still not available at this time and probably won't be until the end of the year. We are looking for a temporary location. Notifications will be sent out via emails, so make sure you have been receiving the monthly emails from me. If not, go to the San Geronimo Chapter website and sign-up again to receive them. If you registered as a member and chose not to receive emails, you will not be receiving the *Palm and Pine* newsletter or monthly emails from our Group without signing up on the website.

Our Outings Chairs are all receiving information at this time from National Sierra Club as to how we can return to our outdoor activities. Stay tuned!

... Our Big Bear Group now has an email address –

[BBSierraExCom21@gmail.com](mailto:BBSierraExCom21@gmail.com)

*We would love to hear from you!*



## 2021 Xeriscape Garden Tours



# KEEP CALM AND GARDEN ON

### Virtual Walkabout Garden Tours

June 12, July 17 and August 14  
Noon to 1 pm

Join us on Facebook for these and so much more!  
[www.facebook.com/groups/  
BigBearXeriscapeGardenTour](http://www.facebook.com/groups/BigBearXeriscapeGardenTour)

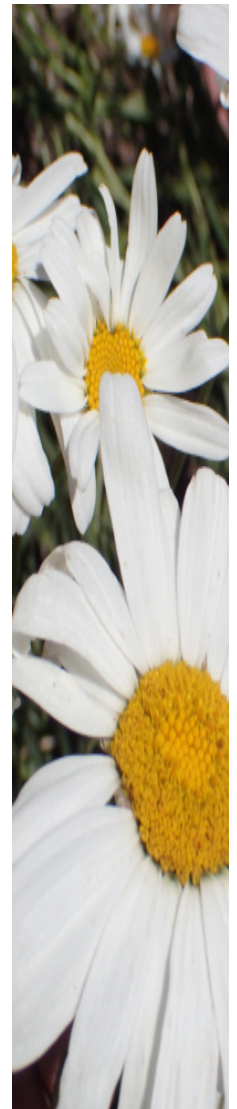
Created by the Sierra  
Club Big Bear Group



Join our Facebook Group to participate in a May through August series of live virtual garden tours and mini-workshops, plus read helpful posts on how to create a beautiful, drought-tolerant and fire-wise landscape.  
Post your own Xeriscape plant/landscape photos and be entered into our photo contest for a chance to win a prize!

[www.BigBearGardenTour.weebly.com](http://www.BigBearGardenTour.weebly.com)





## Santa Margarita Group

By Margaret Meyncke and Pam Nelson

During one of our lively Ex-Com discussions on Climate Change, we discussed ideas about how individuals could make a difference. Caren Hanson and Gordon Pratt jumped at the challenge and created the following projects:

**Caren's project:** Community Parks native plant project. Caren has contacted several City staff members about her idea of incorporating native plants into established city parks. This project has multiple benefits: reducing the lawn size, promoting native plants, using less water, and helping pollinators. She insists on an educational element with signage to accompany appropriate plants featuring the need for pollinators.

Her pilot project is at Spirit Park, Menifee. She found an enthusiastic City staffer that is supporting her idea. Volunteer consultants, such as Dr. Gordon Pratt (butterfly expert), Janice Rosner (Master Gardener), and Ana Weimer (native plant enthusiast) have made this project a professional endeavor and team effort. Hooray for Caren Hanson!

**Gordon's project:** WeR4Butterflies is focused on restoring native plants in previously burned local forests. He contacted the U.S. Forest Service and found a supportive staffer that is allowing him to use sites near Lake Hemet. He's had three work parties to remove invasive plants and one hike collecting local seeds.

Accompanying Gordon on these field trip workdays is always a treat. His knowledge and love of plants and butterflies is contagious. The work atmosphere couldn't be better, being surrounded by great companions and sweeping vistas. All volunteers are welcome. Contact Dr. Gordon Pratt to get involved.

These are new Group projects, but the outings associated with the projects are not official Sierra Club outings. We hope that the Sierra Club will allow us to have outings soon, but not yet.

These members have found friends that want to make a difference, too, and are willing to act to promote biodiversity and impact climate change.



*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*



## Moreno Valley Group

By Ann Turner McKibben, Secretary

Please check the San Geronio Chapter web page for updated information on Sierra Club activities: <https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/> COVID-19 restrictions are in the process of changing and more information will be forthcoming as to what activities the Sierra Club will be sponsoring.

**Moreno Valley City Council Elections:** Almost 50,000 residents of Moreno Valley's District 2 (which is mainly the entire city north of SR-60) have been without city council representation due to the untimely passing of their city councilmember in January 2021. During this time the city has forged ahead making critical decisions on a variety of land use projects and the updating of the city's General Plan and Climate Action Plan.

At this time five District 2 residents have filed paperwork with the City Clerk allowing them to begin collecting campaign contributions in advance of formally filing to run for office. The filing period opens in July. You can keep track of those in pursuit of the District 2 council seat on the city's website: [http://www.moval.org/city\\_hall/departments/cityclerk/election-2021.shtml](http://www.moval.org/city_hall/departments/cityclerk/election-2021.shtml)

**Your Help Can Make A Big Difference:** If you are willing to help with selecting the candidate we endorse and/or help with their campaign, please contact the Moreno Valley Group at [movalleygroup@yahoo.com](mailto:movalleygroup@yahoo.com) Your help can help make a big difference with our city council and government.

Here is some updated information on projects we are following:

**Moreno Valley Business Park (MVBP):** Thanks to your donations we are moving forward with litigation on the approval of this project because our settlement talks to resolve issues/concerns regarding the project did not produce any meaningful results to protect nearby residents and the environment.

The Moreno Valley Business Park (MVBP) was considered

by the Planning Commission and then approved by the City Council on February 2, 2021. The MVBP is not a business park but a single 220,390 sq.ft. warehouse on approximately 10 acres at the southeast corner of Heacock Street and Ironwood Avenue. In 2018 the Moreno Valley Festival Specific Plan was amended to allow alternative uses upon the undeveloped acreage behind the exiting Festival Shopping Center. This amendment added and designated Business Park uses for the undeveloped land but did not include the 10-acre MVBP site. When the 2018 amendment processed through its approval process, the titled "Business Park" designation misled the surrounding property owners and others who thought



Lake Perris State Recreation Area • Photo by Christina Torres

the proposal would include commercial business, service centers, and offices. Subsequently, the developer chose to propose building four small warehouses totaling more than 400,000 sq. ft. Unfortunately, the city administratively approved the development of this cluster of small warehouses in a prime commercial and residential area.

At the time of the MVBP hearing the Moreno Valley Group submitted comments objecting to the project on the grounds that the Initial Study and supporting environmental documents were ill prepared and that the analyzing studies failed to address the MVBP warehouse project and the impacts that it will have on the environment and the surrounding commercial as well as residential properties. An attorney for the Sierra Club and one for a neighborhood group started the litigation process on May 17. At that time the developer's attorney was made aware of the environmental shortcomings that need to be addressed.

**Moreno Valley Trade Center (MVTC):** The location of this proposed massive 1,321,380 sq.ft. warehouse is west of Redlands Boulevard, south of Eucalyptus Avenue, and north of Encelia Avenue and includes Hall Nursery and the vacant land south of the Aldi warehouse. It appears that this warehouse will be an e-commerce distribution center making hundreds

*Moreno Valley Group ... from Page 6*

of deliveries from this facility and is expected to operate 27/7 generating hundreds of daily passenger vehicles and diesel truck trips. The project site is across the street from an existing neighborhood of many homes. The proposal considers a building up to 100 feet tall and a site plan putting all employee/visitor parking and distribution/delivery vehicle staging on the south side of the warehouse where all vehicles must take access onto Encelia Avenue behind the adjacent neighborhood. This project site is currently designated for single family homes and will require a general plan amendment and zone change to permit industrial uses. Making this change from residential to industrial seems to contradict the city's recent general plan stance that the city is in need of more housing.

A community group was organized several months ago but their progress at challenging this project seems to be diminishing as many feel their voice won't be heard. It is hoped that donations can be made to aid them in their challenge.

Please take time to submit comments by July 8, 2021. The environmental documents can be found at the following link: <http://www.moval.org/cdd/documents/about-projects.html> You can submit your comments via email to the project planner Gabriel Diaz, Associate Planner at [Gabrield@moval.org](mailto:Gabrield@moval.org). Or you can mail a hard copy of your comments to Gabriel Diaz, Associate Planner, Community Development Department, City of Moreno Valley, 14177 Frederick Street, Moreno Valley, CA 92553. Please take time to get involved by taking part in the review of the DEIR. You can also be asked to be put on the contact list for this project.

**MoVal 2040—Moreno Valley General Plan Update (GPU) & Climate Action Plan (CAP):** The city council adopted the entire General Plan package of documents at their June 15,

2021, meeting. The draft environmental impact report (DEIR) comment period ended on May 17 and the final programmatic Environmental Impact Report (F-PEIR) was released a few days later and scheduled for consideration by the Planning



*Lake Perris State Recreation Area, Osprey • Photo by Christina Torres*

Commission on May 27, 2021. This meeting failed to occur due to a lack of a quorum and was immediately rescheduled, that evening, for the next day, Friday at 7:30 p.m., the start of Memorial Day weekend. Again, a quorum of commissioners could not participate and another rescheduled meeting was finally conducted

on June 1. Only one commissioner found the environmental document to be weak and voted against it, while all others voted for approval of the F-PEIR and the rest of the General Plan Update (GPU). Prior to this vote, city staff issued the Notice of Public Hearing for the City Council meeting to consider the GPU on June 15. Few members of the public participated in this meeting, which was likely due to this being the first in-person meeting held by the city in over 14 months. Public speakers pointed out their concerns with land use changes, weak environmental mitigations, and the lack of a District 2 council member representing them in the decision-making process. Little consideration was given to any of those concerns and the council voted 3-1 to approve the General Plan Update. **Only Councilmember Marquez voted against approval. We are thankful to those of you who were able to provide comments during this process.**

**World Logistics Center (WLC):** The long process to deal with the World Logistics Center (WLC) came to an end on April 29 when the WLC lawsuit was settled between



Moreno Valley Group ...from Page 7

environment groups and the developer. According to the press release from the Center for Biological Diversity, “Environmental and community groups reached a landmark settlement today with the developer of the World Logistics Center Project in Moreno Valley, California to invest approximately \$47 million in electric vehicles and equipment, rooftop solar, EV changing infrastructure, and other solutions to electrify the facility and reduce harms to the local air quality, wildlife and the climate.” You can read complete information about the settlement at: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/southern-california-mega-warehouse-will-heavily-electrify-operations-per-landmark-agreement-worth-47-million-2021-04-29/>

Some of the settlement points include providing grants to help truckers buy Class 8 heavy-duty electric trucks, keep trucks at least 350 feet away from the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA); buildings must be 450 feet away from the SJWA; pay for 90% of the cost for in-home air filtration systems for eligible residents/homeowners. The settlement will not be implemented until the WLC resolves their ongoing litigation with the Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley.

**Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA):** Most COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted at state parks, but please take time to review their new updates at the LPSRA web page: [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=651](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=651) The page also has information about camping (limited to 8 persons per site) and more. Although the park is extremely busy on weekends, week days are an excellent time to enjoy outdoor activities. Now is a good time to 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 the LPSRA campground kiosk or the state’s website: [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=23800](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23800) The pass can also be used at most other state parks and is good for everyone in your car.



## OUTINGS COMING BACK SOON!

Keep an eye on our Chapter Calendar of Outings and Events here on our website:

<https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/node/3>

We will be starting up our Outings Program over the next few months, hoping to be up and running in September. You may see a few events listed here soon, as we work to make sure all our leaders are up to date with training and first aid requirements. We are all excited to get back outside to explore and enjoy our natural spaces. Stay tuned to your Sierra Club emails and our Chapter Calendar so you don’t miss any opportunities.

