The purpose of this document is to strengthen the relationship among Sierra Club California, the chapters, and volunteer activists by clarifying roles and processes for working together. If you want definitive details regarding a specific question, please consult the bylaws, charter, standing rules listed under Resources at the end of this document. When I was newly on the Sierra Club California Executive Committee, I was overwhelmed by the complex structure of Sierra Club California and spent many hours studying these same documents and creating a picture of how things work. Through this document, I hope to jumpstart others to a better understanding so we can win more environmental battles together.

Grateful Thanks To

- The authors of the source materials: Sierra Club California Handbook, and What is Sierra Club California? Your Guide to SCC, Its Structure and Process by Margaret Okuzumi
- The editor, Eloise Maki
- The reviewers: Dan Sullivan, Kathryn Phillips, Jim Stewart, Diane Allen, Dale Stocking, Andy Sawyer, Alex Mintzer, Steve Farrell, and Barb Williams
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Note: Underlined subjects link to section in paper.

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1. INTRODUCTION

HOW SIERRA CLUB CALIFORNIA (SCC) CAME TO BE

In most states, the local Sierra Club chapter’s territory encompasses the entire state. Because California is such a large state and the Sierra Club began here, we evolved multiple local chapters. In the early 1980s it became apparent the Club needed a statewide entity in California to facilitate the Club’s influence on state laws and policies. A committee of about 50 volunteers convened in 1983 to develop the framework that became Sierra Club California, and in March 1987 SCC’s bylaws were adopted. The California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee (CNRCC) was created by the national Sierra Club as one of a network of Regional Conservation Committees, which were later dissolved. After the RCC’s were dissolved by national, the CNRCC was then chartered under SCC Executive Committee (CAL ExCom).

SCC PURPOSE

According to its bylaws, “the purposes of the Sierra Club California are to foster the purposes of the Sierra Club within the state of California by coordinating and assisting the efforts of the California chapters of the Sierra Club, by initiating and carrying out additional programs and activities.”

SCC is somewhat analogous to the federal government in its separation of powers between an executive entity and a policy-making entity. The CAL ExCom is primarily responsible for creating and managing the volunteer committees and staff who conduct the state advocacy program. CNRCC is primarily responsible for deciding the overall policies that SCC volunteers and staff advocate on state environmental issues and for creating and maintaining the volunteer issue committees that advise staff and the California Legislative Committee (CLC). Both entities participate in establishing SCC’s position on statewide ballot measures and candidate endorsements.

HOW SCC IMPACTS CHAPTERS

- Takes positions on California legislation
- Manages our relationship with the legislature, executive branch and agencies
- Manages legislative and regulatory advocacy
- Creates Sierra Club conservation policy for two or more chapters or the whole state
- Reviews chapter political endorsements for state and local office
- Reviews and approves or rejects the chapter’s position on local ballot measures
- Makes political endorsements for statewide offices
- Takes positions on statewide ballot measures
- Manages SCC staff and budget
2. **SIMPLIFIED SCC STRUCTURE**

- **California Chapters**
  - Appointed delegates
  - Elected governing committees
  - Appointed working committees

- **Annual California Convention**
  - Legal
  - Awards
  - Fundraising
  - Nominating

- **CAL ExCom**
  - Political
  - Personnel
  - CLC
  - No/So Candidate Review Committees
  - Staff
  - Appointment

- **CNRCC**
  - CNRCC Steering Committee
  - CNRCC Issue Committees
  - Local Ballot Review Committee
3. EXPLANATION OF SCC STRUCTURE

National, SCC, and local chapter entities are involved in making political endorsements, and in developing or implementing conservation policy and legislative positions:

**National Board of Directors** establishes national conservation policy and endorses national political candidates (for U.S. Congress, Senate, and President). National staff and volunteers establish the Club’s position on federal legislation. Chapters may be involved in establishing the Club’s national position on legislation that pertains only to their state.

It has 15 members who are elected by the entire membership for 3-year terms.

**CAL ExCom** is responsible for setting priorities for SCC, managing SCC staff, ensuring that the organization is financially sound, by budgeting and helping to fundraise. It appoints standing volunteer committees such as the California Legislative Committee, and takes positions on ballot propositions and statewide candidate endorsements. It also serves as an appellate body for decisions made by the CNRCC and participates in deciding whether SCC should enter into a lawsuit.

It has 11 members. Five are elected by the delegates Annual California Convention each year for 2-year terms. The chapter delegates are appointed by chapter leadership and CNRCC at-large delegates are recommended by the vice chairs and appointed by the CNRCC Steering Committee. The California Conservation Liaison (CNRCC Steering Committee member) is the 11th member.

**Chapter & Group Executive Committees (ExCom), Chapter Conservation Committees (ConsCom), and Conservation Issue Committees** are responsible for policies that affect only their chapter area. They may propose state conservation policy to apply to two or more chapters or the whole state and may request that CLC take a position on a particular bill. They recommend political endorsements for candidates within their chapter.

**California Legislative Committee (CLC)** takes positions on California legislation in consultation with SCC staff advocates and the CNRCC Conservation Issue Committees. The committee determines the prioritization of bills. The members also may decide the position on other matters being considered by the state legislature. See Appointments Committee section below on the process for positions on appointments by the legislature and by the Governor.

The CLC chair and up to 11 members are nominated by SCC chair in consultation with CNRCC chair and confirmed by the CAL ExCom. Term: 2 years beginning January 1 of odd-numbered years. CLC is comprised of lawyers and/or experts in environmental fields.

**CNRCC (California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee)** creates conservation policy for all of California or several chapters by passing resolutions. CNRCC policy forms the basis for CLC’s legislative positions. CNRCC approves positions on statewide propositions and statewide political candidates recommended by the California Political Committee. It also coordinates and implements conservation projects and programs.

Its 58 CNRCC delegates include 26 chapter delegates appointed chapter excom, 24 at-large delegates (recommended by vice chairs and appointed by the CNRCC Steering Committee (usually issue committee chairs), and 8 steering committee members.
**CNRCC Steering Committee** organizes the work of the CNRCC and implements its decisions, and also votes on behalf CNRCC when time-sensitive decision-making is needed before the next CNRCC meeting. To carry out its work, the steering committee may create or remove CNRCC Issue Committees, special committees, and task forces.

It has 8 members, elected to 1-year terms at the spring meeting in San Luis Obispo, including chair, northern vice chair, southern vice chair, Nevada vice chair, northern secretary, southern secretary, liaison to CAL ExCom.

**CNRCC Issue Committees** propose new statewide conservation policy for California that aligns with national policy and other state policies. The Issue Committees also maintain communication and coordination on major conservation issues within the California/Nevada region and are sometimes involved in implementing conservation policy as coordinated with staff.

There are currently 15 Issue Committees (e.g., the Water Committee). The CNRCC Steering Committee appoints the chair for each of the Issue Committees. Members are named by their respective chair. Chapters may appoint a member to an Issue Committee.

**California Political Committee (CAL PolCom)** manages the endorsement process for all California candidates. It develops forms for chapters to use to submit their political candidate endorsement recommendations. It appoints interview teams for statewide candidates.

The chair and members are nominated by the SCC chair and confirmed by the committee for 2-year terms starting on January 1 of odd-numbered years. They may be recalled or replaced by CAL ExCom at any time.

**Local Ballot Review Committee** reviews the chapters’ endorsement positions on local ballot measures. If it does not approve the position, the decision goes to the CNRCC Steering Committee.

It has 3 members and 2 alternates, is appointed by the CNRCC chair and approved by CAL ExCom.

**Northern/Southern Candidate Review Committees** review and approve local political candidate endorsements proposed by chapters.

They each have 3 members and 2 alternates and are appointed by the CAL PolCom chair for a 1-year term.

**Appointment Committee** decides SCC’s position on appointments by the governor and state legislature.

CLC chair appoints the chair and a member from CAL ExCom and another from the CNRCC Steering Committee.

**Personnel Committee** oversees the hiring, firing, management and promotion of staff.

It has 4-5 people appointed by CAL ExCom, including representatives of the CAL ExCom, CAL PolCom, CLC, and the CNRCC Steering Committee.

**Staff Advocates** confer with the CLC and CNRCC Issue Committees regarding SCC’s positions on legislation. They recommend positions to the CLC. They determine strategy for advocating for each bill and manage SCC’s relationship with the legislature, governor’s office, and state agencies.

The director is hired and supervised by the Personnel Committee. The director hires and supervises the rest of the staff.
4. WHAT DOES THE SACRAMENTO OFFICE DO?

The Sacramento Office houses the SCC regulatory and legislative advocacy staff, organizers, and support staff. SCC staff advocates represent all thirteen California chapters and members to state legislators, state agencies, and the governor’s office. They monitor environmental legislation and regulation-making and attempt to block bad policy and support good environmental policy. In the process of doing this work, they forge relationships with legislators and regulators as well as allies.

The Sacramento Office periodically issues action alerts on proposed legislation inviting members to contact their legislator. Each year the staff compiles the Legislative Report Card, which reflects how legislators voted on key environmental bills.

The Sacramento Office is comprised of the Director, and regulatory and legislative advocacy, organizing and administrative staff. Together they perform these tasks:

- Advocate for environmental issues;
- Consult and coordinate with CNRCC and chapter conservation issue experts on policy development and implementation;
- Provide up-to-date information to members about state environmental regulations and legislation;
- Mobilize member responses to legislative and regulatory issues;
- Fundraise to support SCC activities.

Staff implements regulatory and legislative policy. In other words, they manage our relationship with the legislature and state departments and commissions. The political endorsements, conservation policy, and legislative positions are determined by Sierra Club volunteer leadership. An overview of how this works is mapped out in the rest of this document.
5. WHO MAKES SIERRA CLUB DECISIONS

Note: The “recommendation” column lists the final decision-maker first and the preliminary recommenders last. Some boxes are blank if there is no relevant entry. In most cases, the “approver” verifies process and other implications and is not as involved as the details of the decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Consultant</th>
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<td>National Political Team</td>
<td>National Political Team, Interview teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>National (Congress)</td>
<td>National Political Team</td>
<td>Chapter ExCom, Chapter PolCom, Interview teams</td>
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<td>California</td>
<td>CAL ExCom; CNRCC/CAL Convention</td>
<td>Interview teams, CAL PolCom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>No/So Candidate Review Comm, CLC (legislative only)</td>
<td>ExCom, PolCom, Interview teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
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<td>Conservation VP, National team</td>
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<td>California</td>
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<td>Chapter</td>
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<td>ConsCom, Group or Chapter Issue Committees</td>
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<tr>
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<td>On certain California issues, CNRCC Issue Committees, Chapters, SCC staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>CLC</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>CNRCC Issue Committees, Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide Initiatives and Ballot Measures</strong></td>
<td>CAL ExCom CNRCC/CAL Convention</td>
<td>Chapter, CNRCC Issue Committees, CAL PolCom</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
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<td>Chapter ExCom, Chapter/Group ConsCom</td>
<td>CNRCC Conservation Issue Committees, Staff</td>
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<td><strong>Local Ballot Measures</strong></td>
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6. POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS

The CAL PolCom oversees political endorsements at both the chapter and state levels. At the chapter level, the chapter political committee, interview team or Group or Chapter ExCom recommend candidate endorsements. At the state level, the CAL PolCom itself appoints interview teams that recommend endorsement of candidates for statewide office (e.g., state treasurer).

6A. CHAPTER ENDORSEMENTS

HOW LOCAL CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS ARE MADE

Depending on the chapter’s internal procedures, the chapter political committee or other relevant committee decides which races merit Club endorsements (e.g., city councils, water districts, county supervisors, harbor district, as well as state legislators). The interview team is appointed to research the candidates, using published/broadcast media accounts, campaign information, legislative incumbents’ voting records, and personal meetings with candidates. Interview teams may make endorsement recommendations, and the chapter’s ExCom must approve any endorsement recommendation by a 2/3 majority. The chapter endorsement must then be approved by either the Northern or Southern Candidate Review Committee. In the case of candidates for state legislature, approval by the CLC or a designated CLC member is also required.

If the legislative district includes portions of more than one chapter, the chapter with the most Sierra Club members takes the lead, and consults with the other chapter/s. If the other chapter has 25% or more of the Sierra Club members in the district, a 2/3 vote of the chapter ExCom is also required.

HOW LOCAL BALLOT MEASURE ENDORSEMENTS ARE MADE

Depending on the chapter’s internal procedures, the chapter ConsCom decides which measures to make endorsements on (e.g., an open space measure). It recommends an endorsement to the chapter ExCom. The chapter ExCom must concur with the recommended endorsement by a 2/3 majority. The endorsement must be approved by the Local Ballot Measure Review Committee or the CNRCC Steering Committee.
6B. CHAPTER STRUCTURE:
POLITICAL CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

California Chapters

Annual California Convention

CAL ExCom

CNRCC

CNRCC Steering Committee

Legal
Awards
Fundraising
Nominating

Political
Personnel

CLC (legislative endorsements only)

No/So Candidate Review Committees

Staff

Appointment

Legend:
approver
recommender
consultant

Local Ballot Review Committee
6C. STATEWIDE POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS

HOW STATEWIDE CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS ARE MADE

The CAL PolCom decides which statewide races merit endorsements (e.g., governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, controller, treasurer, attorney general, U.S. senators) and then appoints interview teams for each race. Each team researches and interviews the candidates and makes a recommendation, which must be approved by the CNRCC or Annual California Convention and by CAL ExCom.

Note: Please see the flowchart for statewide candidate endorsements on the next page.

HOW STATEWIDE BALLOT MEASURE ENDORSEMENTS ARE MADE

Depending on the conservation issue involved (e.g., 2014 Proposition 1 Water Bond, 2010 Proposition 23 re AB32), the CAL PolCom, a relevant CNRCC Issue Committee, CLC, or a chapter entity may bring a resolution to the CNRCC, proposing that SCC take a position. The CNRCC or the SCC Annual Convention plus the CAL ExCom must approve the endorsement.

Note: There is no flowchart for statewide ballot measure endorsements.
6D. STATEWIDE STRUCTURE:
POLITICAL CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

California Chapters

Annual California Convention

CNRCC

CAL ExCom

CNRCC Steering Committee

Legend:

- approver
- recommender
- consultant

Legal
Awards
Fundraising
Nominating

Political

Personnel

CLC

No/So Candidate Review Committees

Staff

Appointment

Local Ballot Review Committee

Appointment

Local Ballot Review Committee
7A. SCC CONSERVATION POLICY

HOW SCC CONSERVATION POLICY IS USED

Every conservation position taken by staff or volunteers must comply with Sierra Club environmental policy. The position must be grounded in national Club policy. Situations that are complicated because of their California context must also be covered by a CNRCC position. A situation concerning two or more chapters or more than one CNRCC Issue Committee may also require a CNRCC resolution to ensure that we have only one conservation position for each situation: the One Club policy. (user name = clubhouse, password=explore) (Note the Conservation Policy flowchart on page 13.)

HOW TO DETERMINE WHETHER NEW CONSERVATION POLICY IS NEEDED

Before developing a new conservation position, determine what relevant Sierra Club conservation policy already exists.

1. Research national policy at http://sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/. If there is no applicable national policy and the conservation issue is of national relevance, you may want to pass a CNRCC resolution first, but will also need to work with the Conservation Vice President of the Board of Directors to change Club policy.

2. Find out whether state policy exists by consulting with the current CNRCC Issue Committee chairs and past chairs regarding resolutions and precedent-setting actions. You may also search for resolutions on Cal-Activist list serve (see page 18).

3. Consider whether new policy is really needed. Is this situation really a small extension of past policy or is it a bold next step that really needs a clarifying official position? For example, our opposition to the twin tunnels required a resolution since it is a strong visible Club position even though we have previously taken positions supporting sufficient water flows to maintain habitat.

4. Does this situation involve two or more CNRCC Issue Committees or two or more chapters? If they can’t agree on a position or the situation is unique, new policy is needed.

When in doubt as to whether new policy is needed, please consult the CNRCC chair or vice chairs.

HOW SCC POLICY IS DEVELOPED

If you need to develop new state conservation policy, you will need to create a CNRCC resolution. A resolution has a particular format, which prompts the author to include everything that the membership will need to make a decision.
A resolution can be brought to the CNRCC by a CNRCC Issue Committee or a chapter. If a chapter wants to bring a resolution to the CNRCC, the resolution must be passed by the chapter ExCom.

Resolutions must be submitted to the CNRCC chair and vice chairs about six weeks before the meeting. There are four CNRCC meetings per year where resolutions are voted on. If your resolution is time sensitive, the CNRCC Steering Committee may be able to vote on it at one of its monthly meetings.
7B. SCC STRUCTURE: CONSERVATION POLICY

California Chapters

Annual California Convention

CNRCC

CNRCC Steering Committee

CAL ExCom

Legal
Awards
Fundraising
Nominating

Political
Personnel
CLC

No/So Candidate Review Committees

Staff
Appointment

CNRCC Issue Committees

Local Ballot Review Committee

Legend:
- approver
- recommender
8A. SCC LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

HOW LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS ARE DEVELOPED

The California Legislative Committee (CLC) is responsible for deciding the SCC position on proposed legislation. Every March SCC staff create a list of environmental bills introduced in the current legislative session. Staff confers with involved chapters and CNRCC Issue Committees. Staff may recommend a position and priority for a particular bill. The CLC meets with staff to discuss priorities and recommended positions and makes the final decision on our position: support (S), oppose (O), or watch (W) for further developments. The CLC continues to meet via teleconference and over email throughout the legislative session to confirm or revise our positions as bills are amended. (Note the Legislative Positions flowchart on the next page.)

When making a decision, the CLC considers national environmental policy, CNRCC resolutions, advice from CNRCC Issue Committees, and positions taken on prior bills. The CLC can also consider positions taken by allies, how much SCC can influence the bill’s outcome, and the impact of our position on key legislators and the author.

CLC also prioritizes the position as 1 (high), 2 (medium), or 3 (low). For example, S1 are key bills for staff to lobby for, and O3 bills to oppose without much use of staff time.

You can find priority bills (with public positions) at http://california2.sierraclub.org/activisttools/legislature#.U1leJPldUTV. Note that SCC positions sometimes are confidential for strategic reasons. To find out our position on a particular bill, email the staff advocate at Edward.Moreno@sierraclub.org. If the SCC doesn’t have a position on your bill, let Eddie Moreno that you would like the SCC to take a position on your bill and why.

HOW LEGISLATION IS LOBBIED

Staff is responsible for presenting oral and written statements about pending legislation to legislators and legislative committees on behalf of the thirteen California chapters. Staff decides whom to talk to and what to say.

Staff manages both SCC lobbying tactics and SCC relationships with legislators. Sierra Club members may make oral or written statements about pending legislation to legislators and legislative committees or run phone banks on behalf of chapters and CNRCC Issue Committees. However, first they must confer with staff to ensure alignment of legislative position, talking points and lobbying tactics.
9. REWARDS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND LIMITATIONS OF BEING A SIERRA CLUB ACTIVIST

Rewards

- Changing public policy
- Access to public officials
- Creating Sierra Club policy
- Growing through conservation education, new skills, and new experiences
- Hanging out with like-minded people
- Helping to create a better world

Responsibilities

- Speaking as “One Club” - Promoting only official Sierra Club positions
- “Disagreeing without being disagreeable” - Being respectful to staff and volunteers
- Using Club resources to do Club work only
  (Resources = meetings, conference lines, leadership positions, list serves)
- Following Sierra Club procedures
- As a Club leader, making sure other members follow Sierra Club rules and procedures.

Limitations

- Not handling frustrations or differences through insults or rude comments
- Not expressing your personal opinion when representing the Club publicly
- Not implying in testimony that you are representing the Club and its position when you are not (simply noting that you are a Sierra Club member suggests that you are representing the Club)
- Not encouraging other members to act contrary to Sierra Club policy or positions
- Not signing an ally’s official document in the name of the Club when their position doesn’t match the Club’s exactly

See Standards of Conduct for more information about what is expected of Sierra Club activists.
10. RESOURCES

WEBSITES

National Policy

Sierra Club national conservation policies - http://sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/

Sierra Club Political Team Compliance Guidelines - http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/politics/compliance/scpcguidelines/

Sierra Club Standards of Conduct policy -
http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/administration/policies/personnel/standards-of-conduct.pdf (user name =clubhouse, password=explore)

Sierra Club One Club policy -
http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/administration/policies/institutional/one-club-policy.aspx (user name =clubhouse, password=explore)

Sierra Club Grassroots Network - http://content.sierraclub.org/grassrootsnetwork/

Chapter Support Map: Contacts and Resources
https://docs.google.com/document/d/16-8UtLiXzNEJLZxNFSSpF1uGlnN0x01dJN1dv1exQA/edit

Sierra Club California, CNRCC, California Chapters

Sierra Club CA chapters - http://www.sierraclub.org/ca/

Sierra Club California - http://www.sierraclub.org/california

CNRCC website - http://www.sierraclub.org/california/conservation-committee-cnrcc

Sierra Club California Bylaws, Standing Rules, and Basic Management Policy

Finding People

Sierra Club staff - http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/default.aspx
Find staff phone numbers, trainings, policy, grassroots network site and more. (user name=clubhouse, password=explore)
Sierra Club Leaders - https://tioga.sierraclub.org/Wild/
Find contact information for Sierra Club leaders, including members of Sierra Club California committees (ask SCC operations staff for user name and password)

Legislation and Legislators
Sierra Club California priority bills -

California law and legislation, and legislature – http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov

Find your state legislator - http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/

LIST SERVES

1. How to create committee list serve
To create your own Sierra Club list serve, go to
http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/communications/email/listserv/list-creation-steps.aspx and follow the instructions. You will need to get permission from overseeing chair.

You can also find more information at http://www.sierraclub.org/lists

2. How to sign up for CAL-Activist to keep informed about Sierra Club California and CNRCC
Go to http://lists.sierraclub.org/SCRIPTS/WA.EXE?INDEX
Click on [BOD-CAS]
Click on CAL-ACTIVISTS
Click on Subscribe and fill in your information.

3. How to search a Sierra Club list serve
Go to http://lists.sierraclub.org/
Find the list serve you want to search
Click on the list serve you want to search
Under OPTIONS, click on SEARCH ARCHIVES
On SEARCH ARCHIVES page, fill in search argument, check subfolders, and click on Search.
STAFF and VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

STAFF

Director: Kathryn Phillips, kathryn.phillips@sierraclub.org, 916-557-1100 x102
Policy Advocate: Kyle Jones, kyle.jones@sierraclub.org, 916-557-1100 x107
Policy Advocate: Edward Moreno, edward.moreno@sierraclub.org, 916-557-1100 x109
Operations Coord: Meg Johnson, meg.johnson@sierraclub.org, 916-557-1100 x110
Admin Assistant: Geraldine Villanueva, geraldine.villanueva@sierraclub.org, 916-557-1100 x101

2017-18 CNRCC STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair: Karen Maki, karenmaki@comcast.net, 650-346-0467
Northern Vice Chair: Arthur Feinstein, arthurfeinstein@earthlink.net, 415-282-5937
Southern Vice Chair: Sandra Cattell, sumcatt@yahoo.com, 661-259-0433
Nevada Vice Chair: Richard Cook, richard_cook99@yahoo.com, 775-304-2043
Northern Secretary: Gary Bailey, tigergary@earthlink.net, 408-732-5499
Southern Secretary: George Courser, gcourser@hotmail.com, 858-231-0156
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2016-17 CAL ExCom

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## CNRCC Conservation Committees, Subcommittees, Task Forces, Campaigns

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