Jose Montoya grew up in a mid-sized farming town in Eastern, WA. Fueled by his experience growing up in poverty, Jose studied Political Philosophy at Eastern Washington University, becoming a McNair Scholar and a heavily active member of Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@ de Aztlan (MEChA), where he held many leadership positions. While active in MEChA, Jose traveled the states and organized different campaigns in the implementation of Chican@ studies in Schools and Universities using direct action as a tool.

When I went to open a Golden One account to divest from Bank of America for investing in oil, I talked to Jose and his interest in the environment and the inequities in our communities made me confidently give him a nudge to become our chapter’s treasurer. After 15 years in Retail Banking and Wealth Management, Jose walked away from the banking world and pursued his passion to organize communities to fight back against a system that is broken and rigged against the most vulnerable populations. Jose, besides being our treasurer, now works for the California Health Collaborative in the Gold Country Rural Initiative as a Young Adult Coordinator fighting big tobacco and the new poisons that they are selling us.

Jose has spent many hours and trips to meet with other Sierra Club treasurers for help and advice. He’s been willing to learn and invest his time in our chapter, which has allowed us to be in good standing and continue to fight those worthy fights. Above all, he has continued to learn, organize, and inspire our community.

Meritorious Service Award

Jose Montoya