

Chapter Chair Chat

2021 in Review and a Look to 2022

By Carole Mintzer, Chapter Chair

Like many people, I like to take a little time at the start of a new year to reflect on the accomplishments of the past 12 months and think about what the next 12 might bring. Despite restrictions due to the pandemic, the Santa Lucia Chapter had many accomplishments of which we all can be proud.



It's not your imagination that you heard from us more often by email in 2021. Several of our volunteers mastered the Sierra Club's email program to send a total of 51 emails with action alerts, event announcements, and our bi-monthly newsletter. We made sure you knew when and how to effectively advocate for the countywide polystyrene ban, stopping off-highway vehicles at Oceano Dunes, designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and land preservation. We invited you to our Zoom fundraiser and general meetings. Seven emails went only to members because they provided information about political endorsements – information that will be even more important in 2022. If you're not a member or need to renew your membership, click on the join or renew buttons on our home page [here](#).

Our Outings program returned in July after more than a year on hiatus because of the pandemic. Eight outings were offered in the last six months of the year and more are planned for 2022. Our hike leaders complete a leadership training class, as well as CPR and First Aid classes. Hikes cover a range of skill levels from easy to challenging. You can learn more about our Outings [here](#).

Our Conservation and Political Committees continued to meet regularly throughout 2021. Participating in these committees is a great way to learn about and engage in local conservation issues and make sure political office holders are informed of Sierra Club priorities when they make decisions that affect our environment. Members of the Conservation Committee write letters and speak at public meetings to advocate for clean energy, air and water and wildlife protection. Our Political Committee met with a number of elected office holders to share our concerns about the environment and local threats to our democratic values.

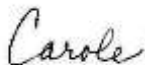
I know we say this often, but truly, none of this work could be done without the support of our donors. Last year, we benefited from more than 430 individual donors who contributed over 60% of our annual budget. Of these, 58 were monthly donors who provide ongoing support to chapter operations. Donations to the Santa Lucia Chapter stay here in San Luis Obispo County and help us pay for our staff, office space, and operating costs. Even though we are a volunteer-led grassroots organization, I can attest to the value paid staff adds to the effectiveness of our chapter – your donations are critical to our effectiveness.

In 2021, we also were the beneficiaries of a generous and unexpected bequest from the estate of Hans R. Signer. We're not sure what prompted Mr. Signer to include us in his trust, but we are very grateful. This supplemented the contributions of our many donors and helped us rebuild our reserves to a more sustainable level. When you are creating or updating your will or trust or designating beneficiaries of your retirement account, I hope you will join me in making the Santa Lucia Chapter a beneficiary. As I tell people, I plan to be around for a long time, but just in case, I want to make sure causes and organizations I care about are supported as part of my legacy.

What's ahead for 2022? We will continue to monitor and engage on local conservation issues, such as Oceano Dunes and the decommissioning of Diablo Canyon. We will advocate for environmental justice and good government. We will be doing all we can to support the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Our Political Committee will be working on endorsements of candidates running for elected offices. More outings are planned along with training more outings leaders. Our communications team will continue to let you know about events that may interest you and when there are opportunities for you to advocate for the environment in San Luis Obispo County. If you're a Sierra Club member, we'll also keep you informed on our political endorsements.

This seems like a light once-over of all we accomplished in 2021 and our plans for 2022 – and it is. But rest assured, none of this could be done without you. Your participation as an advocate, a volunteer, a donor is what makes Sierra Club and the Santa Lucia Chapter successful. We are Powerful Together.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carole".