



Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

HiSIERRAN

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July/August/September 2026

THE THEME OF THIS HiSIERRAN NEWSLETTER **Our Work Saying No To Off Shore Oil Drilling**

History Has Already Taught Us: California Must Say No to Offshore Oil Drilling

By Mark West, Chapter Director, Sierra Club San Diego

As the federal government once again considers opening more of America's coastline to offshore oil drilling, Californians should remember a painful lesson from our past: the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill.

On January 28, 1969, a blowout at an offshore drilling platform in the Santa Barbara Channel unleashed an estimated three million gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean. The disaster coated beaches with oil, killed thousands of birds and marine animals, and shocked the nation. Images of oil-covered wildlife and blackened shorelines were broadcast into living rooms across America, awakening the public to the environmental consequences of unchecked fossil fuel development.

The spill became a turning point in American history. The public outrage it generated helped launch the modern environmental movement and directly influenced many of the environmental protections we take for granted today. In the months and years that followed, the nation saw the creation of landmark environmental policies, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act. The momentum generated by Santa Barbara also contributed to the establishment of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1970.

Perhaps most significantly, the Santa Barbara oil spill helped inspire the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. More than 20

History Has Already Taught Us: continued on page 5

From Pollution to Protection

Charles Rilli, Deputy Chapter Director

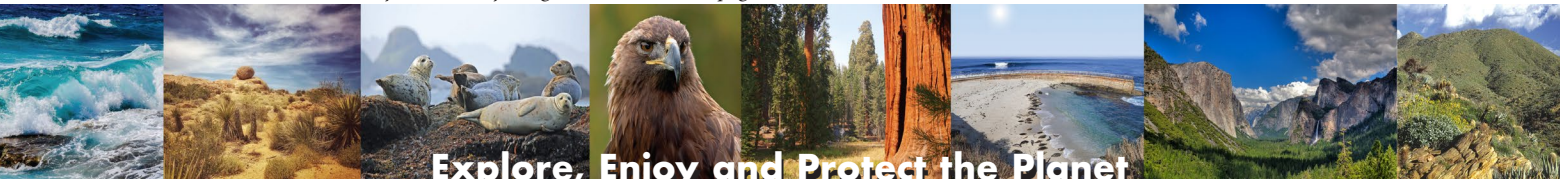
As our South Bay Task Force continues advancing our campaign, *From Pollution to Protection*, the connection between the Tijuana River Pollution Crisis and the ongoing threat of offshore oil drilling in Southern California has become increasingly clear. While these environmental challenges originate from different sources, they share a common consequence: the degradation of our coastal waters, threats to public health, and economic harm to the communities that depend on a clean and thriving coastline.

For decades, the Tijuana River Pollution Crisis has

From Pollution to Protection continued on page 7



Charles Rilli, Michael King and other advocates outside of City Hall with Council President LaCava and Councilmember Elo-Rivera opposing offshore oil drilling



Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

HiSIERRAN

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Thank you.



Lisa Ross

Clairemont Town Square shoppers and Pacific Beach pub crawlers: Look up and look out for billboards served up by the environmental group Wildcoast and Sierra Club displaying a blazing red-meat vision of California's coastal future slathered in crude oil.

lons of oil into the gulf just 16 years ago. It is as unacceptable in the Gulf as it will be in California.

Sierra Club, represented by Earthjustice, is part of a lawsuit brought by Healthy Gulf, Turtle Island Restoration Network,



The billboards, which Sierra Club San Diego normally would call eye pollution, are thus an ironic reminder that the voracious air and water polluting fossil fuel industry is slurping up offshore oil drilling leases in the Gulf of Mexico with California soon on the menu.

Using National Security as a reason to drill for oil off our coastlines, a massive pork barrel giveaway to the polluting oil industry while delivering a death blow to endangered wildlife, the Trump Administration recently gave the brown light to BP Oil to drill in the Gulf of Mexico.

This is the same BP, formerly named British Petroleum Oil, that spilled 200 million gal-

Habitat Recovery Project, and the Center for Biological Diversity seeking to block an alarming precedent that threatens a wealth of sea life, including threatened and endan-



gered wildlife habitats that support Rice's whales in the Gulf, and sea otters, sea turtles and gray whales in California.

View From the Chair: continued on page 7

Zeroing in on Zero Waste - Your Questions Answered

San Diego Sierra Club Zero Waste Subcommittee

In this issue of the HiSierran, we examine how plastic production harms both human health and the environment throughout its lifecycle—from fossil fuel extraction to use and disposal. We also share steps you can take to reduce your exposure to microplastics and chemical additives.

Please email your questions about zero waste and related issues to zerowastesdsc@gmail.com and we will answer them in future issues of the HiSierran. Zero Waste Subcommittee meetings are held the first Monday of the month at 6:30 PM. If you would like to attend or join the subcommittee, please send an email to zerowastesdsc@gmail.com.

Destructive Lifecycle of Plastic

Global plastic production is over 400 million metric tons per year and is expected to double by 2045. Nearly all plastic is derived from fossil fuels, with only 2% from bio-based sources. Oil and petrochemical firms are increasingly pivoting toward plastics to offset declining demand for fossil fuels for transportation and power generation.

Plastic harms human health and the environment over its entire lifecycle:

Fossil fuel extraction

Before a plastic product ever exists, the raw materials must be drilled, fracked, or mined. Communities near extraction sites have become sacrifice zones with elevated risks of respiratory illness, neurological damage, and cancer from airborne benzene, toluene, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Water supplies near fracking operations are frequently contaminated with methane and industrial chemicals. Fossil fuel extraction destroys habitat and generates massive methane leakage (a greenhouse gas roughly 80 times more potent than CO₂ over 20 years). Offshore drilling is subject to catastrophic spills that cause widespread damage and are difficult to cleanup.

Plastic production

Converting crude oil and gas into plastic resin requires high-heat chemical processes that release toxic air pollutants — ethylene oxide, vinyl chloride, styrene — into surrounding communities, which are disproportionately low-income and communities of color. Workers face elevated cancer risk. A global inventory of plastics chemicals published in Nature (634, 349-355, 2025) identified over 16,000 unique chemicals that can be intentionally used or are unintentionally present in plastics. The additives blended into plastic during manufacturing — phthalates, BPA and its substitutes, PFAS, flame retardants, UV stabilizers — don't bond permanently to the polymer matrix, meaning they begin leaching from day one. Production facilities also discharge contaminated wastewater and emit CO₂ at scale; the plastics sector currently accounts for roughly 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, a figure projected to grow significantly.

Plastic nurdles—the lentil-sized pre-production plastic pellets used to manufacture nearly all plastic goods—inflict severe damage on ecosystems by acting as deadly dietary hazards when ingested by wildlife and toxic sponges that absorb and concentrate toxic materials in the environment. Because billions are spilled annually during transport and manufacturing, they have become the second-largest source of primary microplastics in our oceans.

Use and consumer exposure

Heat, abrasion, UV exposure, and simple time cause plastic products to shed microparticles and leach additives into food, drinks, and air. Phthalates and bisphenol compounds are endocrine disruptors linked to reproductive disorders, obesity, diabetes, thyroid dysfunction, and hormone-sensitive cancers. PFAS accumulate in the bloodstream and are associated with immune suppression, elevated cholesterol, and kidney and testicular cancer. Microplastics have now been found in human blood, lungs, placentas, and brain tissue, with emerging evidence linking arterial deposits to higher rates of heart attack and stroke. Synthetic textiles shed millions of microfibers per wash cycle that pass through wastewater treatment and enter rivers and oceans.

Disposal and end of life

Only about 9% of plastic is recycled, the rest is landfilled, incinerated, or simply abandoned. Landfills leach plasticizer chemicals and heavy metals into groundwater over decades. Incinerating plastic releases dioxins and furans — among the



most toxic compounds known — as well as heavy metals and fine particulate matter that damage lungs and cause cancer in nearby populations. Plastic that reaches the environment persists for centuries, breaking into ever-smaller microplastic and nanoplastic fragments rather than decomposing.

Marine ecosystems are severely affected: seabirds, fish, turtles, and marine mammals ingest plastic, suffer internal injuries, and absorb toxic chemical loads that bioaccumulate up the food chain. Ocean plastic also adsorbs other persistent pollutants like PCBs and pesticides, concentrating them onto particles that organisms then ingest.

No individual action will solve a problem embedded this deeply in global manufacturing and waste systems.

Zero Waste: continued on page 11

Sierra Club Bus Trips

Part of the largest grassroots environmental organization in the country, Sierra Club provides environmentally friendly outdoor adventures.

Since 1982 the San Diego Chapter has been offering bus trips to a variety of National and State Parks.

What makes these trips special is that they are organized by a fantastic team of volunteer leaders and nobody pays them for their efforts. They do it out of an appreciation for these special places and a passion for sharing them with you. We look forward to having you join us on a bus trip to explore, enjoy and protect the planet.



Bus Trips Are Back!

CAMPING AND DAY HIKING IN MAMMOTH

September 9-13, 2026

Transportation from San Diego to the Campground and Trail Heads are Included in price.

Three to four hike choices each day.

Distance range 5-13 miles and varied terrain.

Enjoy the Outdoors with your hiking group.

*Cook your meals or enjoy the Mammoth Village eateries.
(On your own).*

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Sign Up:

<https://sandiegosierraclub.org/activities>

Event Calendar:

<https://sandiegosierraclub.org/get-outdoors/hike/outing-calendar/>

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CST2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. Locations and dates are subject to change due to permit availability.

History Has Already Taught Us: continued from page 1

million Americans participated in that historic event, demanding stronger environmental protections and a greater commitment to safeguarding our natural resources. Earth Day remains one of the largest civic observances in the world, and its roots can be traced directly back to the public awakening that followed the Santa Barbara disaster.

More than 50 years later, the lesson remains as relevant as ever. Offshore drilling is not worth the risk.

For me, this issue is both professional and personal. One of my proudest moments in public service came in 2017 while serving on the Imperial Beach City Council. Recognizing the threat offshore drilling posed to our coastal communities, I pushed for the adoption of a city resolution opposing offshore oil drilling and supporting a moratorium on new drilling off California's coast.

At the time, Imperial Beach was among the first cities in California to take a stand against efforts to expand offshore drilling. We understood that waiting until a disaster occurred was not an option. Our community chose to act early, sending a clear message that our coast, our economy, and our environment were worth protecting.

What began with a handful of local governments speaking out soon grew into a statewide movement. Cities, counties, tribal nations, environmental organizations, business leaders, fishermen, and coastal residents joined together in opposition. Today, communities up and down California's coastline continue to stand united in defense of our ocean, proving that when local leaders take action, others follow.

We understood then what remains true today: California's coast is one of our most valuable natural assets. It supports tourism, recreation, fishing, wildlife habitat, and the quality of life that draws people from around the world to our state.

A single oil spill can jeopardize all of it.

Supporters of offshore drilling often promise jobs, economic

growth, and energy security. But history tells us that those promises come with enormous risks. When accidents happen, coastal communities pay the price. Local businesses suffer. Wildlife populations are devastated. Beaches close. Taxpayers and communities are left dealing with the consequences for years, sometimes decades.

The Santa Barbara spill was not the last warning. In 2015, the Refugio oil spill once again fouled the Santa Barbara County coastline, reminding us that even with modern technology, oil infrastructure can and does fail. Pipelines corrode. Equipment breaks. Human error occurs. No amount of industry assurances can eliminate the possibility of another disaster.

That is why Californians must once again raise our voices.

The Trump administration's efforts to expand offshore drilling represent a direct threat to the environmental and economic health of our coast. At a time when we should be accelerating our transition to clean, renewable energy, reopening the door to offshore drilling moves us backward.

California has long been a national leader in environmental protection and climate action. We should not allow decades of progress to be undermined by policies that put oil industry profits ahead of public health, wildlife, and our coastal economy.

The story of the Santa Barbara oil spill is not simply a historical event. It is a warning. It reminds us what is at stake when we gamble with our ocean. It also reminds us of what people can accomplish when they stand together. Out of one of California's darkest environmental moments came a movement that transformed environmental policy, created Earth Day, and strengthened protections for our air, water, wildlife, and public lands.

We know the risks. We know the consequences. And we know there is a better path forward.

Now is the time for Californians to stand together and say, loudly and clearly: no to offshore oil drilling, no to putting our coast at risk, and no to repeating the mistakes of the past.

Our beaches, our wildlife, our communities, and future generations are depending on us



10TH ANNUAL
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SEPT 26TH 2026
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- CAPTAIN'S ROOM
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FOR
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10.01-10.08



ENVIRONMENTAL VOICES

Closed Windows on Leon Avenue

By Stefan Frutiger

In front of his home in Nestor, Steve Egger opens a folder thick with newspaper clippings, engineering studies, maps, and air-quality printouts he has gathered for years. The folder is a record of one of San Diego County's longest-running public-health failures, kept by someone who has lived inside it. Outside his home, the smell is sometimes faint, sometimes unbearable. A lifelong Nestor resident and member of the Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Planning Group, Steve has watched how political campaigns have pushed the Tijuana River sewage crisis back into the immediate spotlight.

A close review of recent engineering, programmatic, and binational studies reveals that solving this crisis requires fighting through a dense, thorny patch of jurisdiction, infrastructure decay, and complex environmental regulations.

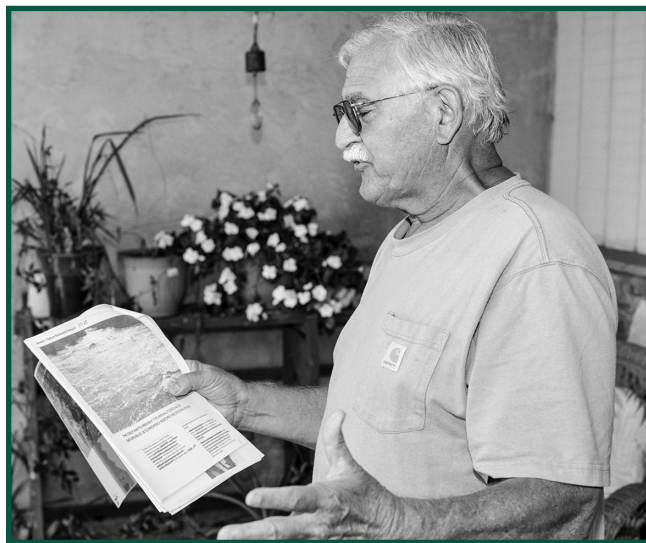
Half a mile from Steve Egger's home, the depth of the dilemma is starkly visible: Where Saturn Boulevard crosses the river's North Channel, cascading untreated wastewater plunges from elevated culvert pipes into a scoured downstream pool. This steep vertical drop forms an agitated waterfall, whipping up thick blankets of toxic foam and aerosolizing noxious hydrogen sulfide gas directly into residential air.

According to a January 2026 Dudek feasibility study commissioned by the County, the simplest short-term fix, a temporary band aid extending these culverts with plastic HDPE pipes to submerge the discharge point underwater, would cost between \$2.5 million and \$4.4 million. Yet, even this minor workaround can take up to 1.5 years to implement.

Why? Because the project sits inside a highly restricted, tidally influenced environmental zone. Squeezing a project through a gauntlet of overlapping agencies requires navigating an intricate regulatory maze overseen by the California Coastal Commission: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers demands Clean Water Act Section 404 permits for discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. The Regional Water Quality Control Board mandates

strict Section 401 water certifications. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requires Section 7 consultations to ensure heavy equipment won't disrupt endangered birds like the Least Bell's Vireo nesting in the dense riparian willow canopies.

A long-term infrastructure solution involves cutting off the



Steve Egger showing scientific documents at his home in Nestor. May 9, 2026, Stefan Frutiger



North Channel and dredging open the long-blocked, pre-1993 flood South Channel/Pilot Channel to steer dry-weather flows - and the smell - away from neighborhoods. Dudek estimates this undertaking will cost between \$80 million and \$110 million over a 10- to 15-year timeline.

For dedicated residents like Steve Egger, the message hidden within the scientific material is frustratingly clear: on the border, environmental progress moves as slow as molasses. Most of this architecture exists for sound reasons and has prevented genuinely bad projects across California. But the same architecture now slows the simplest relief in a community that is overwhelmingly Latino, working-class, and has been breathing hydrogen sulfide for years.

Steve closes the folder. His personal preference is clear: by permanently moving the Tijuana River back into the South Channel/Pilot Channel, the air quality in the Nestor neighborhood would increase significantly.

No band aids needed. Last night, the air quality monitor on Leon Avenue alerted the neighbors: between 9pm and 3am the hydrogen sulfide concentration surged to over 2,700 parts per billion (ppb) - 90 times California's ambient air quality standard for a 1-hour average.

Air purifiers do not work as promised. When the toxic cloud from the Saturn Boulevard hot spot reaches the houses, residents can not escape the nasty smell. Tonight, Steve and his neighbors will keep their windows closed - just as they have for the past three years.

View From the Chair: continued from page 2

California has suffered its share of offshore oil disasters from the massive 1969 Union Oil blow-out off Santa Barbara that spilled millions of gallons for months to a pipeline rupture from a ship mishap in San Pedro that seeped 25,000 gallons into the bay.

Big or small, oil slicks kill ocean habitats. Eleven years ago, the Refugio spill from leaks in the corroded Sable pipeline, now owned by Exxon Mobil, carrying crude from oil platforms off the Gaviota Coast took out wildlife in four marine protected areas.

And as predicted, citing oil shortages due to the Iran War, U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright, a fossil fuel Chef de Partie by trade, allowed Sable to restart the pipeline in March 2026 under the Defense Production Act, essentially skirting California environmental law.

Sable started transporting oil through the pipeline from the Santa Ynez platform to already oil sated Kern County soon after the directive was issued despite lawsuits from California

Parks and Recreation, California Attorney General Bonta and the Environmental Defense Center.

While not immediately under threat in San Diego, the Trump administration has included tracts off La Jolla, Point Loma and Chula Vista coastlines among others to be served up by 2027.

In response, the San Diego City Council unanimously passed a resolution rejecting the Trump administration's proposal to initiate oil and gas exploration off the entire coast of San Diego County and the rest of the state.

To our legislators like Rep Mike Levin, State Senator Catherine Blakespear and Assemblymember Tasha Boerner, to our Attorney General Bob Bonta, to our wildlife and coastal protection agencies, we at Sierra Club are at the ready to mobilize our members and supporters to stand with you and behind you to stop any expansion of off-shore oil drilling along California's coastline.

Just as Sierra Club is fighting in the Gulf, we will fight the fossil fuel industrial complex in California to protect our coastal communities and marine protected areas against cooked up rationales for expanding offshore oil drilling.

From Pollution to Protection continued from page 1

devastated local economies throughout the South Bay. Millions of gallons of untreated sewage, industrial waste, and toxic pollutants have flowed across the border into the Tijuana River Valley and Pacific Ocean, forcing repeated beach closures, harming wildlife habitat, damaging tourism, and creating serious health concerns for residents, military personnel, and visitors alike. Businesses that rely on clean beaches and outdoor recreation have suffered significant losses as contamination has repeatedly rendered some of San Diego County's most treasured coastal resources unusable.

The City of Imperial Beach has been on the frontlines of this crisis for years. During his time on the Imperial Beach City Council, Sierra Club San Diego Chapter Director Mark West passed one of the first municipal resolutions in San Diego County opposing offshore oil drilling. City leaders understood then what remains true today: communities already burdened by pollution should not be forced to bear additional environmental risks.

Now, eight years later, that threat has re-emerged. The Trump administration has announced plans for a "Massive Expansion of Offshore Drilling in Public Waters," targeting protected waters off California, the Eastern Gulf, and Alaska. The proposal would open California's coastline to offshore oil and gas lease sales for the first time since 1984, with six lease auctions proposed between 2027 and 2030.

For San Diego County, this proposal represents a dangerous step backward. At a time when South Bay communities are fighting for clean water, healthy beaches, and environmental restoration, expanding offshore oil drilling would introduce yet another source of pollution and risk to our coastal environment. Even routine offshore drilling operations release pollutants into the ocean, while oil spills—whether large or small—can have devastating consequences for marine ecosystems, fisheries, tourism, and local businesses.

The City of San Diego started this year with their own resolution opposing offshore oil drilling, followed by the County of San Diego. You can see Michael King and I pictured at the press conference opposing offshore oil drilling outside of City Hall.

The lessons of the Tijuana River pollution crisis are clear. Once pollution enters our waterways and coastal ecosystems, the damage can persist for decades and require billions of dollars in public investment to address. South Bay residents know firsthand the economic and public health costs of environmental neglect. We should not repeat those mistakes by exposing California's coastline to new risks of offshore drilling.

The same beaches affected by sewage contamination are also vulnerable to oil pollution. Both crises threaten coastal tourism, recreation, fisheries, wildlife habitat, and the quality of life that makes San Diego County unique. Communities from Imperial Beach to Coronado and along the whole coast depend on a healthy ocean economy that generates jobs, supports small businesses, and attracts visitors from around the world.

Rather than expanding offshore drilling, federal and state leaders should prioritize investments in pollution prevention, environmental restoration, clean energy, and climate resilience. The path forward is not more fossil fuel extraction—it is protecting our coast, restoring damaged ecosystems, and ensuring future generations inherit clean water, healthy beaches, and thriving coastal communities.

Through our *From Pollution to Protection* campaign, Sierra Club San Diego's South Bay Task Force is working to address the root causes of pollution and advocate for long-term solutions that safeguard public health, advance environmental justice, and support our coastal economy. The fight to clean up the Tijuana River and the fight to stop offshore drilling are part of the same vision: a future where our coast is protected, our communities are healthy, and our natural resources are preserved for generations to come.

Seal Society & Microsoft AI Model To Count Seals & Sea Lions Quickly and Accurately

Robyn Davidoff
Sierra Club Seal Society Chair

La Jolla Cove was recently voted the #1 beach in the United States, celebrated for its natural wonders, birds, and resident marine mammals. California sea lions and seals call La Jolla home year-round, with colonies becoming especially vibrant during their baby seasons—February for harbor seals and June for sea lions.



With the incredible sights comes our responsibility for maintaining their habitat under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. We can safely explore the beach's wonders while also ensuring they are undisturbed. This is especially important in their rookeries where newborns are raised. On shore, babies, also called pups nurse until they learn to fish; for sea lions, this period lasts up to a year. Both seal and sea lion pups are prone to abandonment, which can be exacerbated by human contact or disturbance. Just getting too close or scaring them into the water could cause the mom to abandon her pup leading to the pup's death.

To address these challenges, reserved areas for the sea lions have been established. The majority of sea lion pups are born and raised at La Jolla Point, reserved for them year-round given their long developmental time. Children's Pool is reserved part of the year for seal pups, which are weaned relatively quicker than their earlobed cousins. This is just one example along the CA coast reserved for marine mammals, similar to the San Simeon reserve for giant elephant seals which draws over a million visitors annually.

An important task thus arises to measure and monitor population levels in these areas. Our sea lion colony has held steady at 250–300 over the last decade, but we must monitor what parts of the beach they use throughout the year, especially to tell how their babies are faring. As for seals, during the pupping and mating season starting in February, one may find a population of 100–150. Challenges like food scarcity, domoic acid poisoning from toxic algae blooms, and changing temperatures are just some of the variables motivating this dedicated survey.

The San Diego Seal Society has been performing image-based counts of our pinnipeds for 3 years. A volunteer licensed and permitted drone operator flies along the shoreline, over the water and far above the hearing range of our flippers friends, where high-definition zoom photos allow us to count them without disturbance.

Achieving what can be at times multiple hand-counted surveys a week can be challenging. Taking usually over a dozen photos per survey to capture the hundreds of sea lions, the volunteer hours can add up quickly. This is where the Microsoft AI for Good Lab comes in - in the last few months, we joined in collaboration with a team led by Dr.

Caleb Robinson, a deep learning expert working on topics ranging from energy consumption to medical scans, and population estimation via satellite imagery.

Typically, when implementing an AI model for such a novel application, one envisions a computationally intensive training. In the Seal Society's case, a model trained from scratch would require far more data than our counted photo sets offer, as well as extensive labeling of the sea lions in the photos for the image analysis. Instead, Dr. Robinson's team was able to adapt an off-the shelf model - Meta's SAM3 is already trained to handle different species and can be fed data directly.

This did not come without challenges - false positives can arise due to large birds (especially pelicans and seagulls) and even rocks. Through careful adjustment of tolerances, Dr Robinson's team was able to provide the Seal Society with a high-fidelity tool for counting pinnipeds.

Now we have a much faster routine. Instead of hand-counting each photo, our volunteers can select the images from the drone output for the analysis. In the event that many sea lions are sleeping next to each other and overlap between photos, we draw lines to mark regions to include in the tallies and avoid double counting.

Feeding these images to the SAM3 model

we obtain a tally, along with an image output with color coded sea lions labeled. The color coding makes it easier to recognize any misses or false positives, which we account for.

Altogether, due to the high fidelity of the model, photo segmenting plus analysis of the SAM3 output provides a much faster counting approach as opposed to hand counts. This versatile approach may be adapted to pinnipeds and different species along the California coast.

The San Diego Seal Society is grateful to the Microsoft AI for Good Lab for this valuable collaboration, which will enable us to devote more time to tracking and analyzing sea lion and harbor seal behavior and population trends.



Example drone photo taken on May 2, 2025.



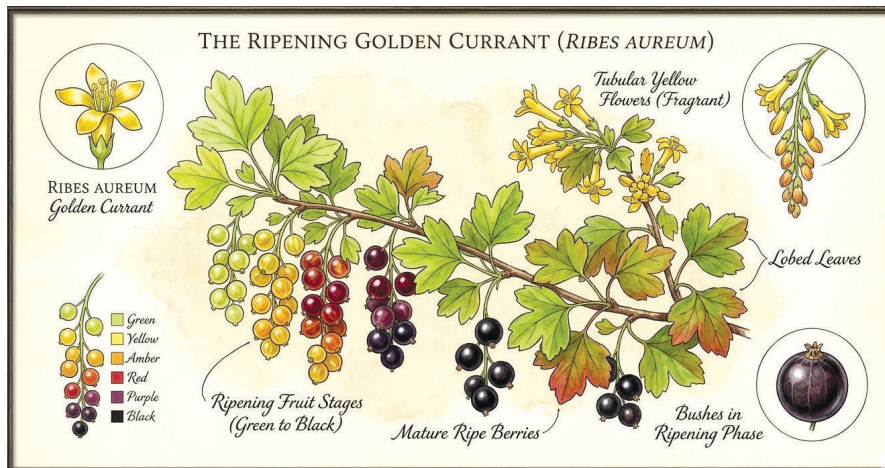
SAM3 analysis photo output, counting 38 sea lions.

Food For Thought And Action

WORTH KNOWING

Even without a catastrophic oil spill, routine offshore drilling operations produce many toxic wastes and other forms of pollution. An average oil well spews roughly 50 tons of nitrogen oxides, 13 tons of carbon monoxide, 6 tons of sulfur oxides, and 5 tons of volatile organic chemicals. Drilling muds contain toxic metals such as mercury, lead, and cadmium. "Produced water" that is brought up from a well along with oil and gas, contains its own toxic brew of benzene, arsenic, lead, and toluene. These toxins are absorbed by marine organisms and bioaccumulate and biomagnify in the marine food chain, directly threatening seafood safety

(<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/offshore.pdf>).



WORTH SEEING

Scientists are finding that for each human now on earth, there is a ton of plastic waste. <https://www.sciencealert.com/there-s-literally-a-ton-of-plastic-garbage-for-every-person-on-earth>. Scientists have seen that plastics are toxins themselves, and that other toxins including pesticides and heavy metals can hitch a ride on plastics.

A newly released hour and a half movie on Netflix worth seeing and sharing is "The Plastic Detox".

It is narrated by a published scientist who suggests how to lesson you and your loved ones' food and bodies' toxic plastic load.

WORTH READING

BeyondPesticides.org cites studies that pesticides deemed safe individually, actually look to cause cancer in combinations with each other, and in combination with climate change.

FOR ORGANIC FOOD FORESTS, GARDENS, LANDSCAPING

My tiny food forest has reached the point that I only have room to add plants which produce food in part or almost total shade.

If you want to produce some food in shade from plants native to San Diego County, here are 3 suggestions, as well as a plant that naturalizes here.

Golden Current (Ribes aurium) In part shade, it has beautiful golden flowers, followed by small but incredibly tasty currants. It

likes our native soil, organic compost, and watering to keep soil moist. It can be bought from the California Native Plant Society. Fruit is ripe when black and soft.

Santa Catalina Island Currant (Ribes viburifolium) This is a relatively rare evergreen plant native to San Diego, and to Santa Catalina Island. It loves a great deal of shade. It can be purchased from Walter Anderson's Nursery, Sports Arena location, in their native plant section. They said that birds love its fruit, and this nursery says that the fruit is edible to humans.

Mache (Valeriana locusta) is a tasty salad green which may naturalize by self-seeding in San Diego. You can buy Big Seeded Simpson Mache at Botanical Interests seed company's websites.

Miners' Lettuce (Claytonia perfoliata), native in San Diego, is delicious and nutritious. Gold rush miners were taught to eat it by Native Americans it for its vitamin C to prevent scurvy. You can buy non gmo open pollinated Miner's lettuce seeds from Strictly Medicinal Seeds <https://strictlymedicinal-seeds.com/product/lettuce-miners-claytonia-perfoliata-packet-of-50-seeds/>

Or, you can buy seeds from Territorial Seeds <https://territorialseed.com/products/miners-lettuce-miners?variant=12786105581667>. Like spinach it is eaten raw or boiled; and grows well in some shade and in cool damp soil. Wikipedia says to eat Miners Lettuce in moderation, as leaves can develop oxalic acid, as can spinach.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claytonia_perfoliata

WE NEED YOU TO HELP IMPROVE OUR FOOD SYSTEM

Let me know:

If you and/or those you know wish to educate by phone calls &/ or by signing and sending canned letters as is, or personalized, to politicians, manufacturers, neighbors, or others,

If you have media contacts,

If you have zoom skills to help with zoom meetings,

If you would like to teach others with a tour of your organic food forest or garden,

If you would like to make friends with like-minded people who eat organic,

If you'd like to meet in person or virtually with others who landscape or garden organically and regeneratively or would like to learn how to,

If you know of venues such as stores, restaurants, cafes, cooks, caterers who serve food that is all organic and fresh,

If you have questions, knowledge or skills to share

I'd love to hear from you. If no one is near to answer my phone, please leave your name, phone number, and when you are best reached.

Pat Holland, 858 455-1033 land line

Offshore Drilling: The Last Thing Our Coastal Wildlife Needs

by Elena Tillman

Offshore drilling is often debated in terms of economics and energy policy, but for California's coastal wildlife, the stakes are far more immediate. Along the La Jolla coastline, pinnipeds—including California sea lions and harbor seals—are already facing a growing list of human-caused challenges.

Climate change is warming ocean waters and altering the upwelling patterns that fuel Southern California's productive marine ecosystem. These changes affect the distribution and abundance of prey species that seals and sea lions depend upon. At the same time, recurring toxic algal blooms are producing domoic acid, a neurotoxin that has caused repeated mass strandings, illness, and deaths among marine mammals. Decades after DDT was discharged into Southern California waters, its legacy continues through elevated cancer rates and reproductive impacts in sea lions. Commercial fishing adds further pressure through competition for forage fish and risks of entanglement.

Marine birds are also suffering. Along much of the California coast, pelagic seabirds have experienced severe starvation events linked to shifting ocean conditions and reduced food availability. Wildlife rehabilitation centers continue to respond to unprecedented numbers of emaciated birds and marine mammals.

These animals are already navigating a gauntlet of environmental stressors. An oil spill would not occur in isolation: it would compound existing threats, contaminating habitat, poisoning wildlife, damaging food webs, and undermining decades of conservation progress. From seabirds coated in oil to marine mammals exposed to toxic hydrocarbons, the impacts can persist long after headlines fade.

California's coast is a globally significant ecosystem facing mounting pressures from climate change, pollution, and habitat disturbance. Adding offshore drilling to that equation is a risk wildlife cannot afford. Protecting our oceans means reducing, not increasing, the threats facing the species that depend on them. Offshore drilling remains a danger that California's marine life simply does not need.

Save the Date:

September 19, 2026

**9 am - 12 pm I Love A Clean San Diego Coastal
Clean-up Team Captains at Scripps Park/La Jolla
and Children's Pool**

October 3, 2026

**8 am - 4 pm Walter Monk Day, Kellogg Park at
La Jolla Shores - come visit us at our tent!**

December 14, 2026

**9 am - beach Clean up at Children's Pool, the day
before the 5 month closure**

Your City Council Could be the Last Defense Against Offshore Drilling

by Michael King

Conservation Organizer, Sierra Club San Diego

When we think about how offshore oil drilling becomes a reality, we generally think of Washington DC officials in back rooms with Oil Executives hashing out how to make the biggest profit possible. Offshore leasing is entirely controlled by the federal government, and it is easy to feel hopeless in the face of federal power and corporate greed but the reality is that offshore drilling does not stay offshore for very long.

This is where local governments enter the picture.

Oil brought out of the ocean has to be transported, processed, stored, and eventually delivered to market. That means pipelines, roads, storage facilities, maintenance yards, and other infrastructure must be built somewhere. Generally speaking, that "somewhere" is in the coastal communities closest to the drilling itself.

For decades, communities along the California coast have recognized that while they may not control federal leasing decisions, they do control the places where offshore oil projects come ashore. During the 1980s, dozens of California communities worked together to oppose the construction of facilities needed to support expanded offshore drilling. The effort became known as the "Blue Wall" and demonstrated that local governments still have an important role to play in decisions that affect their coastlines.

More recently, Santa Barbara County provided another example. In 2024, county officials rejected a proposal that would have restarted production from several offshore platforms by transporting crude oil through the county on thousands of tanker truck trips each year. While the drilling itself would have occurred offshore, county leaders concluded that the impacts would be felt by local communities.

Other jurisdictions have taken a different approach. In Santa Cruz County, voters approved Measure A, requiring voter approval for certain facilities associated with offshore oil development. The measure reflected a belief that communities should have a direct voice in major decisions affecting their coast.

All of this points to the same conclusion: offshore drilling is not just an ocean issue. It is also a land-use issue.

When counties evaluate pipelines, transportation routes, processing facilities, and other infrastructure, they are making decisions about public safety, habitat protection, air quality, and the future of their communities. Many of these regulatory levers are embedded within the General Plans and Climate Action Plans of cities and counties making these often routinized plans essential for long-term opposition to oil infrastructure. These decisions may not receive the same attention as federal lease sales, but they can have a significant impact on whether offshore projects move forward.

As debates over offshore drilling continue, it is important to remember that local government is not simply where national decisions are implemented. It is often where those decisions are tested, challenged, and reshaped. The future of California's coastline will not be decided only in federal offices. It will also be influenced by the communities, such as ours, that call that coastline home.

Meaningful progress requires stronger chemical regulations, extended producer responsibility for plastic waste, and investment in genuinely biodegradable material alternatives.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Microplastics Exposure

Although plastics are everywhere, you can take steps to reduce your exposure to microplastics and chemical additives. A recent study by a multidisciplinary team at The University of Western Australia investigated plastic chemical exposure in over 200 Western Australians. After one week of a strict low-plastic life-style, participants' levels of plastic chemicals, including BPA, BPS and phthalates, were reduced by up to half (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-026-04324-7>).

- 1) Food Choices - Avoid ultra-processed foods which have significantly higher levels of microplastics.
- 2) Food Containers - Instead of canned foods, which are often lined with BPA or BPA-substitute resins, choose fresh, frozen, or glass-jarred alternatives where possible. Avoid plastic packaging. Store foods in glass or stainless steel containers.

3) Water Bottles - People who drink from plastic water bottles daily are ingesting significantly higher amounts of microplastics compared to those who don't. Choose a reusable stainless steel or glass water bottle instead. Purifying tap water with a quality carbon black filter or reverse osmosis removes many microplastics and PFAS compounds.

4) Microwaving - Avoid heating food in plastic containers or covering food with plastic wrap in the microwave — heat dramatically accelerates chemical leaching. Transfer food to glass or ceramic dishes before cooking or reheating.

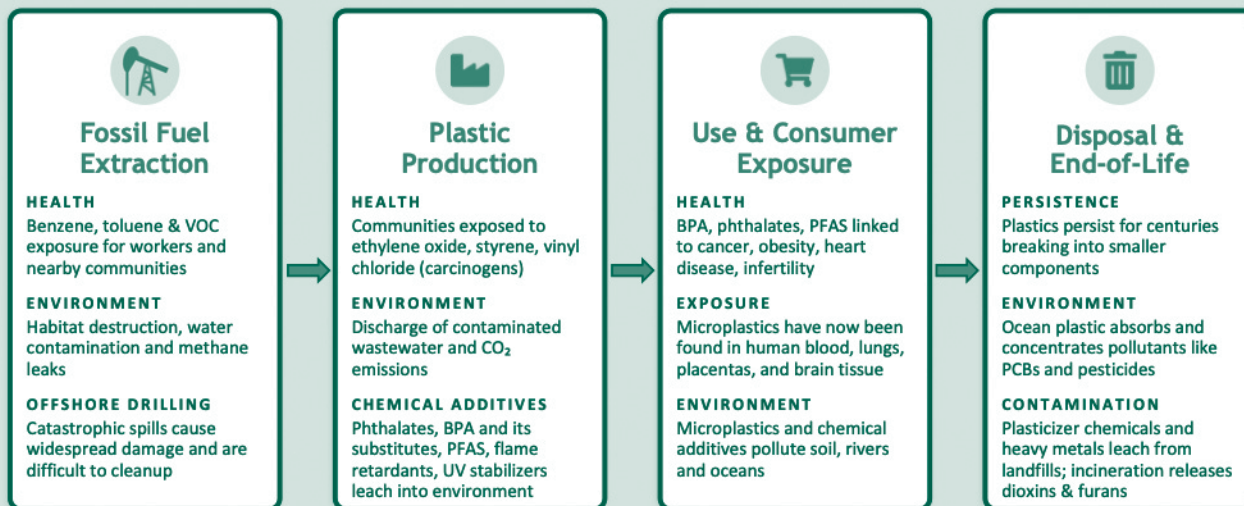
5) Cookware - Plastic and nonstick cookware release microplastics; use cast iron, titanium, stainless steel or ceramic cookware instead.

6) Teabags - Replace teabags with loose leaf tea. Studies show that plastic teabags release microplastics and/or nanoplastics during a typical steeping process. A 2019 study showed that steeping a single plastic teabag at brewing temperature (95 °C) releases approximately 11.6 billion microplastics and 3.1 billion nanoplastics into a single cup of the beverage (<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.est.9b02540>).

7) Synthetic Turf - Avoid exposure to microplastics, PFAS, and other toxic chemicals by not installing synthetic turf and not playing on synthetic turf fields.

The Plastic Lifecycle

How plastic harms human health and the environment at every stage



Give Your Vehicle a New Purpose.

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Help Support the San Diego Chapter

It's never a bad time to donate your car/boat/motorcycle and you may qualify for a tax deduction!

Call the Chapter Office for more info: (858) 569-6005

SIERRA CLUB PHOTO SECTION

Don't forget, San Diego's Sierra Club has an active Photo Section! Our Club has been a gathering place for San Diego area photographers and enthusiasts for decades.

Our members, who are also Sierra Club members, include a variety of skill levels and photographic interests. We have members who have been photographers their entire lives, as well as members who enjoy using their smartphone camera and want to learn more about the art of photography.

We meet by Zoom once per month (or in-person once per quarter) from January through November. Our meetings feature accomplished photographers from across the world giving presentations on camera techniques, photographic software, or topics such as composition, exposure and post-production editing. In addition, at each meeting we have a MemberShare presentation for our members to share their own photos with the group. We meet, in-person, for a photographic activity every month in a variety of local attractions and outdoor spaces.



Mike Sauder

Niall Fritz

Also, each month, members are invited and challenged to submit an image based on the monthly Photo Quest topic.

Annually, the Photo Section hosts a catered summer get together in a local park. Lastly, our annual Photo Contest judged by professional photographers, is held in December.

The San Diego Sierra Club's Photo Section has been a mainstay in the local photographic community.

We invite you to join us!



Kevin Byrne

Please visit our website at:

<https://sdphotoclub.com/>

View our club calendar at:

<https://sdphotoclub.com/2026-photo-section-calendar/>

Join our club today, at:

<https://sdphotoclub.com/join-san-diego-photo-club/>

Inspiring Connections Outdoors



"Will You Take Me Hiking?"

by Bill Tayler

It started during recess one day in early April with a simple question from a first-grade girl: "Will you take me hiking?" I could have told her that we start taking kids hiking in second grade (which is true), but her enthusiasm and initiative were hard to resist, so instead I responded with a question: "Will your mom let you go?" The very next day, she found me, told me that her mom had said yes, and asked when she could go. The next week, she went on her first hike (to Laguna Meadows) and had an amazing time. After that, the word was out in first grade, and the list of eager aspiring young hikers grew rapidly. In late April we took a group of first graders to Oakoasis Preserve, in May to Oak Canyon in Mission Trails, and in June to Laguna Meadows, with each hike bringing new kids into the fold. I have been extremely impressed with their energy, endurance and resilience, and being able to introduce them to everything nature has to offer has been pure joy. Next up: taking them snorkeling!



The One Who Started it All



Laguna Meadows



Oakoasis Preserve



Laguna Meadows



Oakoasis Preserve



Oak Canyon

Inspiring Connections Outdoors is a Sierra Club outreach program that provides free outdoor experiences to under-served youth, to help them exploring the outdoors, develop the skills to do it safely, and nurture a desire to protect natural spaces. Please visit our website at www.sandiegosierraclub.org

Volunteering With ICO – For information about volunteering with ICO, please contact Greg Shadoan (gregshadoan@yahoo.com).

How to Donate – We appreciate your support helping us to provide exciting, safe adventures free of charge. To receive a tax credit for your donation, please make your check payable to "Sierra Club Foundation/San Diego ICO" and send to:

San Diego ICO
c/o Mike Gilligan,
3446 N. Mountain View Drive,
San Diego, CA 92116

Don't Take the Ocean for Granted

Peter Andersen, Vice Chair

Conservation Committee, Sierra Club San Diego

The amazing Pacific Ocean is always right beside us here in San Diego. We don't always think about it but it is the Pacific that makes San Diego unique. The Pacific makes us the unAr-izona; it acts like a giant air conditioner all year, every day to provide us with the best climate in the world.

The Pacific is the playground for San Diegans. Go to the beach and you will see swimmers, sailors, surfers, boat-ers, fishermen and women, runners, wind surfers, whale watchers, beach combers, sun-bathers, tidepool explor-ers, Frisbie players, picnickers, snorkelers and dozens of other beach activities. It is the hub of recreation in San Diego.

The Pacific is also a huge economic Engine for San Diego. Our beaches are a worldwide tourist destination providing billions for the San Diego economy. It is the driver of tourism and pro-vides thousand of jobs for San Diegans.

We do not always take great care of the Pacific. Pollution from the Tijuana River continuously fouls our beaches in the south. Urban runoff after rains pollutes the ocean and closes our beaches. Plastic pollution streams into to the Pacific and can now be found inside of living things including humans. Radioactive water from the closed San Onofre nuclear plant is

released month into the ocean. We are told not to worry: "dilution is the solution." Sea level rise from climate change may inundate all of our beaches unless we work with other states and counties to reduce carbon in the atmosphere.

Sierra Club is active in efforts to stop each of these threats to the Pacific. We are working to stop the pollution in the Tijuana River; striving to stop non-point pollution from urban runoff; banning unnecessary plastic that pollutes the ocean: trying to get hundreds of tons of nuclear waste off the beach at San Onofre, fighting end-

lessly to reduce climate warming greenhouse gas from every city in San Diego County. We hope you join us in these efforts.

But perhaps the greatest immi- nent threat to the Pacific is the Trump administration's callous efforts to drill for oil off the San Diego Coast. This could be an environmental disaster. Where there is oil, there are oil spills. From Prince William Sound in Alaska to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Persian Gulf to the French Coastline, from the

Russian arctic to the nearby Santa Barbara Coastline oil drilling means oil spills.

Recently, the Sierra Club was joined at an anti-drilling rally with our friends Wild Coast. It included other environmentalists and brave political officials at all levels of government including Joe Lacava from the San Diego City Council, Catherine Blakespear from the California State Senate, and Mike Levin from the US con- gress. Contact these officials and thank them. These officials and Sierra Club will use every means possible to stop offshore drilling. Most importantly, join the Sierra Club to continue the fight against the imminent threat of offshore drilling.



Classified Ads

Classified Ad Rates and Information:

Sierra Club Members (up to 25 words)

Private party \$10 + \$.50 per additional word.

Business- \$15 + \$.50 per additional word.

Non-Members (up to 25 words)

Private party-\$15 + \$.50 per additional word.

Business-\$20 + \$.50 per additional word

Payment must be made at time of submission by check to:

Sierra Club San Diego

4241 Jutland Drive, Ste. #303

San Diego, CA 92117

Send ad to:

info@thomascreative.com

Save Trees-Opt Out

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Paper Edition

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If you would like to get the HiSierran online, contact the Chapter office :

858-569-6005 or scoffice@sierrasd.org

Submission Deadlines for HiSierran Newsletter:

If you would like to submit an advertise- ment, story or article please remember these important deadlines:

Upcoming Issues:

October/November/December 2026

Deadline September 1, 2026.

To submit by email, please email to both:

thomascreative2@cox.net
scoffice@sierrasd.org.

Submissions are subject to approval for content and subject matter.

Committees & Contact Information

Some meetings still offer the option of attending on-line. Please check our Activities Calendar (<http://sandiegosierraclub.org/news/activities-calendar/>) on how you can participate.

CHAPTER STAFF

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858-569-6005
mark.west@sierraclub.org

Deputy Chapter Director:
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charles.rilli@sierraclub.org

Community Organizer:
Michael King
858-569-6005, ext 2
michael.king@sierraclub.org

Chapter & Communications Coordinator
Abra Landau
(619) 357-6548
abra.landau@sierraclub.org

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meets 2nd Wednesday 6:30 pm
Chapter office
Contact Chair or check website for location

Chair: Lisa Ross (2026)
lisasierraclub@gmail.com

Vice-Chair: Alan Geraci (2028)
alan@alangeraci.com

Secretary: Pam Heatherington (2027)
pheatherington@gmail.com

Treasurer: Rochelle Hancock (2027)
Rae_1024@yahoo.com

North County Group Rep:
Joe Houde (2028)
joe@ecinstitute.com

North County Coastal Group Rep:
Sally Prendergast (2026)
sallyp123@mac.com

Ron Askeland (2028)
ron.askeland@gmail.com

Susan Baldwin (2028)
susanbaldwin@aol.com

Alan Geraci (2028)
alan@alangeraci.com

William Morse (2028)
williamdavidmorse@gmail.com

NORTH COUNTY COASTAL GROUP (COASTERS)

Contact Chair or check website for meeting information.

Chair: Sally Prendergast
sallyp123@mac.com

NORTH COUNTY GROUP (INLAND)

Meets 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 pm currently
via Zoom <https://sierraclubncg.org>

Chair: Joe Houde
joe@ecinstitute.com

SOUTH COUNTY TASK FORCE

Meets every other Wednesday at 4pm
via zoom. Reach out to
Charles.rilli@sierraclub.org to join

COMMITTEES

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Meets 2nd Monday at 6:30pm

Chair: Ron Askeland
ron.askeland@gmail.com

Zero-Waste

Meets 1st Monday at 6:30 pm
Contact the Committee at
zerowastesdsc@gmail.com

SEAL SOCIETY

For meeting and docent information:
email: ssealsociety@gmail.com

OUTINGS COMMITTEE

Meets quarterly, contact Chair for date
and location.

Chair: Kris Watkin
sdoutchair@gmail.com

Leadership Review & Safety Committee

Chair: Lynn Nebus
sd.lrsc@gmail.com

Chapter Outings Leadership Training (COL)

Stefanie Maio
sd.col.training@gmail.com

North County Group Outings Leadership Training (COL)

Kelly Conrad
neg.col.training@gmail.com

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Meets 4th Wednesday at 6pm

Chair: Kathryn Burton
kathrynsburton@gmail.com

WATER COMMITTEE

Meets 3rd Tuesday at 6pm
Chair: Stefan Frutiger
stefan.frutiger@outlook.com

WILDERNESS BASICS COURSE (WBC)

Held annually beginning in January

San Diego

Bryan Pray
info@wildernessbasics.com
www.wildernessbasics.com

Escondido

Dj Strong
hikerdjstrong@gmail.com
www.wbc.sierraclubncg.org

SECTIONS & SOCIAL COMMITTEES

PHOTOGRAPHY

Chair: Chris Gaines
info@sdphotoclub.com
<https://sdphotoclub.com>

INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS (ICO)

Check website for meeting information.
www.sandiegosierraclub.org

Chair: Bill Tayler,
btayler@taylorlaw.com

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Hi Sierran Newsletter

Managing Editor: Judy Thomas
thomascreative2@cox.net



Ensure your environmental legacy by naming Sierra Club or your favorite Sierra Club Chapter in your will or trust. These gifts cost you nothing now. You can hold on to your assets for as long as you need them and you can change your beneficiaries at any time.

If you have named Sierra Club or your Chapter as a beneficiary or would like to discuss doing so, please contact us today

LORI SULLIVAN

Director of Gift Planning
2101 Webster St, Suite 1300
Oakland, CA 94612

(800) 932-4270
gift.planning@sierraclub.org
myplan.sierraclub.org





San Diego Chapter

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

Phone: 858-569-6005

www.sandiegosierraclub.org

HANDS ACROSS THE SAND



Say No To Offshore Oil Drilling In San Diego

Save The Date!

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the California Coast Act with a demonstration and beach cleanup to say no to offshore oil drilling in our city. Join your community at one of the many beautiful beaches in San Diego for Hands Across The Sand:

Date: Saturday, September 26th

Time: 11:00 AM - 1 PM

Where: At beaches throughout San Diego

- IMPERIAL BEACH
- OCEAN BEACH
- LA JOLLA SHORES
- OCEANSIDE PIER

