



Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

HiSIERRAN

Serving San Diego And Imperial Counties

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October/November/December 2025



TOGETHER FOR OUR FUTURE: CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE NOW!

Sierra Club Climate Change Committee

By Dr. Peter Andersen, Chair Climate Action Committee, Sierra Club San Diego

Sierra Club San Diego has no higher priority than combating climate change. Directly or indirectly most of our actions have a focus on climate change.

- Our successful lawsuits over a 15-year period stopped a weak Climate Action Plan (CAP) by the County of San Diego. It would have allowed huge amounts of air pollution and greenhouse gas (ghg) to be released here in San Diego County while using offsets in other countries offsets that may not be real, additional, observable or enforceable. Now all reductions of all ghg must be actually reduced here in San Diego County.
 - Sierra Club endorsed a new County Cap and a Smart Growth plan that was passed last year to make real reductions in GHG, prevent wildfires, and limit growth in the most environmentally sensitive and most fire-prone portions of the County.
 - We filed numerous lawsuits against sprawl developments that product the most GHG and air pollution. We have not lost any of these lawsuits. One of these successful suits led to the actuation of all of Protect Valley which was added to the Jamul Ecological Reserve.
 - Sierra Club San Diego has negotiated numerous lawsuits with developers that required new developments to pay millions
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Turning Climate Plans into Climate Progress

Charles Rilli, Deputy Chapter Director
Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

Here in San Diego, the Sierra Club's Climate Committee is doubling down on the urgent work of turning climate plans into climate progress.

Our summer Intern, Zoë, completed a grueling scan of all 17 municipal Climate Action Plans (CAPs) in San Diego County, along with the County CAP (that our climate committee helped to pass last year!), comparing ambition, implementation status, enforceability, and accountability features. Her analysis shows where cities are making progress—such as in clean electricity procurement and electric vehicle infrastructure—and where they are falling behind, particularly in retrofitting existing buildings, redesigning transportation systems to support walkable cities and reduce vehicle miles traveled, improving water efficiency, and securing sustainable funding for implementation and community engagement. Just as important, Zoë mapped the gaps in monitoring, implementation, and enforcement that too often leave good policy on paper.

Guided by these findings, our strategy is simple and focused: push for stronger, more efficient, and fairer CAP implementation across the county. We're developing clear, public reports for every city to track progress on core measures (renewable energy, zero-emission transportation, building electrification, urban tree canopy, and climate-ready infrastructure). We will meet with city staff and council members to press for enforceable timelines, dedicated budgets, and transparent metrics, and we're aligning with partners so that advocacy is consistent across jurisdictions. Expect us at council hearings with data-driven testimony, publishing comment letters, and hosting community workshops so residents can advocate effectively where they live.

Lucy Terry, our new fall Climate Intern, will be picking up the campaign and expect to see her leading workshops, working with members, and building connections across the county as we move our campaign from research into advocacy.

Our north star is accountability and ensuring we fight for our communities: every CAP should cut emissions at the pace science demands while delivering clean air, clean water, safer streets, a better quality of life, and resilience for communities most impacted by climate and pollution.

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Executive Committee Elections Are Here!

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Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

HiSIERRAN

Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

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Lisa Ross

A Yeti sighting was confirmed by climbers at the base of Annapurna. Nessie was seen flopped down on the shores of the Loch at Inverness. Bigfoot, having appeared to several rangers in the Angeles Forest, will soon replace Smokey the Bear to message "only trees produce more air pollution than cars."

And polar bears are basking in great numbers on their ice sheets, Ariel and Nemo play happily in the world's vast coral reef networks, and glacier skiing on all that hard pack is becoming as popular as pickleball.

In sum, indicators of climate change are a mass delusion caused by craven alarmists obsessively delving into decades of published peer reviewed scientific research, over-indulged by a Leftie army of New York Times and NPR journalists.

Such fantastical proclamations are the stuff of enticing tabloid headlines, which used to be amusing diversions while standing in supermarket lines. That is until they became ubiquitous click-bait on social media feeding an increasingly doubt-filled public.

As predictable as the Weather is not, as opposed to Climate which is, Federal agencies tasked with tracking the desecration of our planet's atmosphere from greenhouse gases recently received White (Wash) House marching orders to join hands in scientific fable-making, notably by slowly dropping Climate data collection capabilities.

Among the NASA programs on the chopping block are the two Orbiting Carbon Observatories designed to provide precise data on greenhouse gasses responsible for global warming.

The Department of Defense, now War, backtracked on an order to no longer share its climate data and use "weather only" instrumentation after it became clear that hurricane prediction capabilities would be severely diminished. Not a good message for reddish Florida, which incidentally is sinking. Put this one on the watch list.

The common policy thread is that weather, the day-to-day fluctuations in atmospheric

conditions, can be bifurcated from climate, which is weather over time. By doing so, a data-averse group of ideologues at the beck and call of the fossil fuel industry believe they can magically turn climate science into nothing more than a fairy tale by defunding and eliminating information gathering.

Along these lines, the Department of Energy, soon to be called the Department of CLOG (Coal, Lithium, Oil, Gas), recently produced a report based on conclusions from five climate skeptics that CO2 emissions, the main source of greenhouse gases causing global warming, are less economically damaging than the previous thousands of peer reviewed studies indicated.

Given the drift wafting through the agencies that should be protecting public and planet health, the reverse alchemy of changing gold into lead pipes will only increase.

This is bad news for our efforts to clean up one of the worst environmental disasters in the Country, exacerbated by climate change effects, the Tijuana River sewage crisis that has closed beaches, compromised residents' health and damaged habitats.

At the same time EPA Director Lee Zeldin provided funds to upgrade the Tijuana River sewage treatment center capacity from 25 million to 35 million gallons per day, he has proposed eliminating the Obama-era endangerment policy that declares pollution generated by climate change a threat to public health.

That policy underpins climate-related regulations that if reversed could undo decades of efforts under the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts with clear implications for areas like the Tijuana River Valley which is already subject to increased flooding, fires and habitat loss.

In Aesop's "Wolf and The Lamb," the lamb offers a series of fact-based reasons to counter the Wolf's rationales for making a meal out of him. Alas, the lamb is doomed. Let's hope the planet fares better in a fact filled world.

Stay Green.

My 1918 House Runs on Sunshine

How I Turned a Century-Old Home Into a Fossil-Free Sanctuary—and Why 360 Million Americans Could Change Everything

Mark West, Chapter Director, Sierra Club of San Diego



When it comes to climate change, it often feels like the people in power are doing everything but facing reality. Governments stall, lobbyists shutdown renewable energy, and even hard-won credits for solar and wind are under attack. For years, I

found myself frustrated—waiting for leadership that never came. Eventually, I realized: I didn't have to wait. I could take action in my own life, in my own home.

And I did.

Turning a 1918 House Into a Fossil-Free Home

My house was built in 1918—over a century ago. When I first looked at it, I saw charm and history, but I also saw outdated systems: drafty windows, poor insulation, and a complete dependence on gas. Rather than settle for “good enough,” I decided to transform it into a model of what's possible when one person refuses to rely on fossil fuels.

I added rooftop solar panels, paired them with batteries, and updated every appliance to electric. The gas lines? I had them capped off. New windows and insulation made the house far more efficient, and EV chargers in the garage sealed the deal: this was no longer an old, drafty home—it was a century-old structure reborn for the 21st century.

Since finishing the remodel in 2020, I haven't paid for gas once. Not for heating, not for cooking, not for hot water, not even for my car. And let me tell you: that freedom feels incredible.

Why Personal Action Matters

It's easy to say, “One person can't make a difference.” But I don't believe that anymore. Every kilowatt I generate from my roof is one less pulled from a fossil-fueled grid. Every electric mile I drive is one less gulp of gasoline. And every choice I make not only lowers my own footprint—it also sets an example for others.

Now imagine this on a larger scale. There are about 360 million people in the United States. If every one of us did our part—whether it's cutting back on meat, switching to an EV, installing solar, or just making homes more efficient—the combined impact would be staggering. Collectively, we'd cut emissions so fast that entire industries would be forced to adapt.

That's the real power of individual action: multiplied, it becomes unstoppable.

Small Steps, Big Ripples

Of course, not everyone can renovate a house top to bottom. But there are countless ways to make meaningful change:

- Bike, walk, or carpool when you can.
- Eat more plant-based meals.
- Repair instead of replace.
- Support local businesses that prioritize sustainability.
- Move your money away from banks funding fossil fuel projects.

These may feel small on their own, but together, they send a message: we are not waiting for permission to build the future we want. ***A Revolution Starts at Home***

Youth Climate Action

Madeleine Adams North County Group Executive Committee

My interest in the climate crisis started young and has evolved to become my life passion as I navigate the world of youth climate action. My name is Madeleine Adams, and I am honored to be the writer of this new Youth Column. I am a senior at Mission Vista High School in North County San Diego, and I am the Youth Engagement Chair for the North County chapter of the Sierra Club.

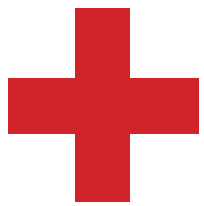
I got involved with the Sierra Club through Joe Houde, who I met as a student representative at one of my school district's Climate Action Committee meetings. I had heard of one of the nation's oldest and most prominent environmental groups, but I had no idea about the Sierra Club's proximity to me or that I could even get involved. The appeal doesn't only draw from the organization's relevance to my concerns about the environment, but also the vast network of people connected by shared passion for our environment. From all different

backgrounds, the Sierra Club brings people together over the most important issue facing our world today: the climate crisis.

The generational gap that existed between me and the rest of the Executive Board of the North County Chapter of the Sierra Club was evident from my very first meeting. My generation will be the most affected by the consequences of anthropogenic climate change, and yet our voices remain unheard at the organizations that fight for our future. As the Youth Engagement Chair for my chapter, I have brought Sierra Club guest speakers to my school to raise awareness about the urgency of the climate crisis and encourage the pursuit of green careers. The members of the environmental club I founded and lead at my school have the opportunities to learn about and pursue climate action. However, other youth are stuck with minimal sub-par climate education, which makes my mission of bridging climate awareness to youth all the more important.

With my environmental club at my school, I have translated climate anxiety into tangible action. To list a few of our achievements, my club manages the paper recycling on campus and

Youth Climate Action continued on page 12



American Red Cross

Wilderness and Remote First Aid by Simple Continuing Education

Must attend both part 1 and 2 to complete the course

Part 1

(Zoom online – link will be emailed upon paid registration)

Saturday, November 1st 2025. 9am-5pm

Part 2

(in Briar Crest Park 9001 Wakarusa Rd. La Mesa, CA 91941)

Sunday, November 2nd 2025. 9am-5pm

What you will learn/practice:

When Help is Delayed: - Emergency Action Steps
- Emergency Moves and Prioritizing Care
Physical Exam and Report Record Transfers
and Evacuations

Preventing Disease Transmission & Use of Tourniquets

Preventing Infections - Head and Spinal Injuries

Chest and Abdominal Injuries - Burns and Shock

-Hypothermia - Major Bites and Stings

This option combining virtual classroom and in person skills and scenarios is recognized by the American Red Cross as long as participant attend all sessions.

Participants must ...

- Have a current adult CPR prior to attending (BLS CPR meets this requirement)
- Be capable of performing strenuous activities (such as bending, lifting, kneeling, etc.)

As a result of the course, participants will ...

Earn a 2-year Wilderness Remote First Aid card from the American Red Cross

Be prepared for:

- Minor Emergencies • Scouting
 - Hiking • Backpacking
- Living or Working in Rural Areas • Sierra Club Treks
 - Disasters



**Cost: \$250 for 2-day Wilderness
Remote First Aid Course**
(due before the first class)

***\$175 (discounted rate) for
Sharp employees, Sierra Club and
Scouting members.***

\$35 for Adult CPR w/AED
(offered before the course for this additional fee)

To meet CPR requirement, do one of
the following:

1) Complete Adult CPR w/AED through American Red Cross, American Heart Association or other OSHA approved provider.

2) Attend online instruction with our instructor on
Thursday October 23 at 6 PM from 6-8pm online via
Zoom AND demonstrate skills on
Sunday, November 2, 2025 during class.

To register (or ask questions),

1) Call or email Kevin Opheim
(619) 300-4219
(24 hours a day)

2) Send payment, due by **October 15, 2025.**

With Venmo, use email or phone number

KevinO@MySimpleCE.com

Continuing Education: Provider approved by the
California Board of Registered Nursing,

Provider Number #16990 for
4.0 contact hours (\$20 additional fee)

Wilderness Basics Course 2026

**"Experience the beauty of the wilderness
with knowledge and confidence!"**

WBC Starting Dates:

Escondido - January 6th

San Diego - January 13th

This comprehensive course consists of weekly Tuesday night classes and four weekend trips to the local deserts and mountains. The weekend trips include car camping, navigation, backpacking and even snow camping (you'll love it). Choose from outings that range from easy to extremely challenging. The Wilderness Basics Course is only offered once a year. It is open to both members and non-members of the Sierra Club.

For More Info and To Register:

San Diego

wildernessbasics.org

Escondido

wbcncg.thinkific.com



Outdoor Confidence Boost: The Wilderness Basics Course (WBC)

By Emily Spath

If you're looking for a way to level up your backpacking game, explore some incredible local-ish places, and meet people who love the outdoors as much as you do, then WBC is perfect. I grew up in the Rocky Mountains, where backpacking trips with friends and family were just normal weekend activities. Despite that experience, I struggled to find others in San Diego who enjoyed waking up at 5 a.m., driving a couple of hours, tackling a tough hike, and still thinking the view from the top made it all worth it. I was also intimidated by the idea of adventuring alone on overnight trips in the beautiful desert surrounding San Diego. A quick Google search on my phone one evening led me to both discover and sign up for WBC.

I went in expecting to learn some basic skills and hopefully meet a few new hiking buddies, but over 10 classes and 4 backpacking trips, I took away so much more. The 3 months passed quickly, and I discovered landscapes around SoCal that I never knew existed. I loved learning about the history of Anza-Borrego, spotting

local plants (desert lavender is my favorite), and swapping gear tips with other participants.

My work schedule is heavy on travel, and I honestly wasn't sure I could finish the course, but with the support of the leaders and my fellow classmates, I made it through and graduated. Along the way, I learned how to set up my tent in 60 mph winds, navigate through a whiteout snowstorm,

and even repair broken tent poles. While these might sound like crazy experiences, I felt safe and supported at all times. These were the moments that really stuck with me, the ones that made me realize I was capable of so much more than I thought.

The best part is that I never would've pushed myself into those situations on my own. WBC showed me how to handle the challenges of the trail while actually having fun doing it. I enjoyed the program and the leaders I met so much that I've kept exploring with the Sierra Club, joining trips listed on the outings page and completing my COL I training.

Look for me as an assistant leader on trips in 2026! Beyond that, I also planned a group backpacking trip across Catalina last April and have my first backpacking trip in Yosemite this fall. Through WBC, I've gained friends, skills, and the confidence to keep saying yes to the next adventure.



Executive Committee Statements

San Diego Chapter



Susan Baldwin

AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners)

I am pleased to run for a second term on the Executive Committee of the San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club. I am a long time member of the club and have been an active member of the Conservation Committee for two years

from 2020 to the present, and also serve on the Legal Committee (2023 to present), and Climate Committee (2024 to present). I have a B.A. in American Studies (1975) from the University of Colorado, Boulder and did graduate work in City Planning at San Diego State University. I am a long-standing member of the American Planning Association (APA) and American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

I believe my 40 years of professional experience as a city/regional planner (City of Boulder, City of La Mesa, City of San Diego, and the San Diego Association of Governments) and eight years of advocacy since my retirement have made me an effective Executive Committee member during my first term. I have provided the Chapter an important perspective on many environmental and planning issues facing the San Diego region and would like to continue to do so in a second term.

I have a deep commitment to both environmental and social justice issues as evidenced by my career as a planner and my volunteer activities in support of planning, affordable housing and parks, and fighting sprawl development, a few of which are listed below:

- *San Diegans for Managed Growth - Board Member, Board President (2018 to 2022)*
- *Measure A / Save Our San Diego Countryside (March 3, 2020 Primary Election) - Campaign Manager, Volunteer Signature Gathering Coordinator (2018-2020)*
- *Parks and Recreation Coalition (PARC), Co-chair, 2020 to 2022 (advocacy related to City of San Diego Parks Master Plan)*

I hope to serve a second term on the Executive Committee to continue to contribute to the preservation and protection of the San Diego region's unique environment — both natural and built, and to the social justice and climate issues it faces.

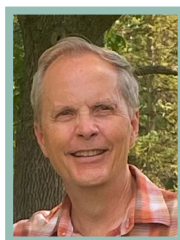


William Morse

I've been fortunate to spend most of my life in San Diego, enjoying the ocean and the natural beauty that surrounds us. My goal is to be a champion for the environment so that everyone can continue to benefit from our city's breathtaking scenery. I have been politically active for as long as I can remember, and my

commitment to protecting the environment runs just as deep.

If elected, I will fight for a cleaner climate for all and look forward to building partnerships that strengthen our shared mission. I am excited to help usher the Sierra Club into a new era while honoring the values that have made it a leader in environmental advocacy.



Ron Askeland

I'm passionate about preserving our planet for future generations and enjoy spending time outdoors. I've been a Sierra Club member since 1984, serve as Conservation Chair and lead our chapter's Zero Waste Subcommittee. I'm ExCom Vice Chair and serve on the California SC Conservation Committee. I serve as a board member/secretary of the PQ-NE Action

Group and co-lead the Rancho Peñasquitos Fire Safe Council. I also coauthor the Zeroing in on Zero Waste articles in the Hi Sierran. During my 35 years of working at Hewlett Packard, I led multiple international R&D teams, including 4 years living in Barcelona. Having a PhD in Chemistry helps me understand the scientific aspects of environmental issues and gives me greater credibility when I provide public testimony at state and local meetings. Two of my main priorities for our Chapter are establishing a South County Group and improving our social media outreach



Alan Geraci

I grew up on Long Island, New York, graduating cum laude from State University of New York at Albany in 1978, with a B.A. in Sociology. After moving to San Diego, I went to law school, graduating in 1982 from California Western School of Law, serving as the Head Notes and Comments Editor of the law school's Law Journal. I was also awarded California Western School

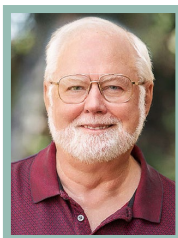
of Law 1981 Faculty Award for Consumer Protection Law.

After graduating from law school, I was employed as Deputy City Attorney for the City of San Diego for five years, holding posts as a Supervising Trial and Appellate Attorney and Civil Litigation Counsel, where I fought developers for open space in the City of San Diego, including the Mission Trails Regional Park.

I am a life member of Sierra Club and believe in its mission and I am active in the local chapter, serving as the North County Group ExCom as its Vice Chair and I am on the Executive Committee for both the North County Group and the San Diego Chapter as well as serving on the Legal Committee.

I remain in private practice, operating as CARE Law Group PC, now focusing my practice on Estate Planning and offering a pro-active alternative to the destructive nature of probate and litigation. In addition to membership to the California State Bar, I hold a real estate broker's license. I am Past President of the San Marcos Rotary Club, Past President of San Marcos Democratic Club, former Executive Board member of San Marcos Youth Baseball, and a past delegate to the California Democratic Party. I am pleased to ask for your vote for another term on the San Diego Sierra Club.

North County Inland



Joe Houde

I am passionate about resolving our climate crisis. I chair the North County Group ExCom and am a member of the chapter ExCom as well as the CAP Committee. I am also President of North County Climate Change Alliance and a member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee of Clean Energy Alliance. Further, I am a member of the United Nations Association,

Orange County Chapter, where we work to help the UN reach the 17 SDGs. I am also a Climate Reality Leader.

In these various roles I make frequent oral and written comments to various government agencies and boards. I have delivered an award winning 6-hour, multi-part presentation on Planetary Boundaries. I am certified to facilitate Climate Fresks, Planetary Boundary Fresks and workshops using the EnRoads model from Climate Interactive and MIT.

ExCom statements continued on page 7

ExCom statements continued from page 6

As a long-time Sierra Club member, I have enjoyed trips to the Grand Canyon, the Adirondacks, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, the Atchafalaya Swamp and more. As a member of Outward Bound, I have enjoyed mountaineering in the Rockies, hiking and climbing in Joshua Tree, rafting thru Cataract Canyon and sailing in the Florida Keys. I have also trekked to the base camp at Mount Everest, through the Okavango Delta and rafted on the Zambesi near Victoria Falls. I love being out in nature. I live in Vista and ask for your vote to continue with ExCom for the North County Group.



Rochelle Hancock

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Executive Committee of the North County Group of Sierra Club San Diego for this past term. I have also served as the Group's secretary and treasurer. The Group is made up of individuals who are dedicated to addressing environmental concerns holistically, including local issues, national concerns, and

planetary boundaries. It has been a rewarding experience to work with this group, and I am seeking another term as a North County Group Executive Committee member. As a long time member of Sierra Club, I believe this organization has the resources and ability to make a real difference in our world.

North County Coasters



Amelie Catheline

As environmental challenges intensify—from climate change to biodiversity loss—I remain committed to translating passion into meaningful action across both personal and professional spheres. Since joining the Sierra Club in 2017, I have been an active contributor to the North County Coastal Group and have served on the Executive

Committee, where I help bridge connections between coastal communities and local organizations to advance our mission of environmental protection.

My environmental leadership extends beyond the Sierra Club. I have served on the board of the Solana Beach Eco Rotary Club since 2019, focusing on water conservation, food waste reduction, and zero waste initiatives. Over the past two years, I have expanded my involvement to include pollinator conservation and education, native plant restoration projects, and volunteer work with San Diego County Parks and Recreation—efforts that directly support biodiversity and ecosystem health in our region.

With a scientific background, my experience spans from local grass-roots initiatives to broader conservation projects, always with the goal of fostering a greener, healthier world for our coastal communities and beyond.

I am eager to continue serving on the NCCG Executive Committee, where I can leverage my scientific background, community connections, and hands-on environmental experience to advance our critical work of education, advocacy, and environmental protection. Thank you for your consideration.



Barbara Collins

It's never been more important to actively protect and defend the environment than it is now. The current national administration is taking a sledgehammer to any agency or policy that protects clean air and water or that addresses the climate crisis. Public land, no matter how precious or fragile, is

also up for grabs to the special interests that want to drill, mine or develop on it.

The Sierra Club has been front and center nationally with other environmental organizations in fighting back to protect the environment using lawsuits to challenge illegal actions and effective, vocal advocacy. The San Diego Chapter is doing the same on a local level, our members are more active than ever and the chapter is protecting and defending our environment. Working together as grass-roots volunteers, we will continue to be effective and successful.

I've been a member of the Sierra Club since 1993 because I believe in its vision and principles: to enjoy, preserve and protect the planet. I've been honored to serve on the Coasters Executive Committee since 2021. I've also served on the Coasters Political Endorsements Committee since 2018 and co-chaired the Sierra Club Oceanside Team for four years. I would be honored to continue to serve on the Coasters ExCom and work for local North Coastal communities that are sustainable and resilient. Thank you for your consideration.



Paige DeCino

For the last 10 years I have been working with the local Carlsbad Sierra Club team to promote clean energy in our area. We helped educate our residents of the benefits of community choice energy and generated hundreds of letters of support for what is

now the Clean Energy Alliance. I serve on its Community Advisory Committee. Our team is currently working to promote building electrification, better transportation and mobility choices and improving our Climate Action Plan.

On the conservation front, I manage Preserve Calavera's water quality monitoring program covering Carlsbad's watersheds with a team of about 20 volunteers. We do standard chemical, physical and biological analysis of the water and have expanded to test for eDNA and microfibers. I also work on wildlife movement surveys, grunion monitoring and whatever other citizen science projects crop up. In 2016 I co-founded the only California Naturalist certification class in San Diego county. We just graduated our 7th group of naturalists.

I am up for reelection to the Coaster's Executive Committee and seek your vote.

All ballots must be received

by 3 p.m., Tuesday,

November 11, 2025.

**Paper ballots should be mailed or hand
delivered to:**

**Elections-San Diego Chapter Sierra Club,
4241 Jutland Dr., Ste 303,
San Diego, CA 92117**



Sierra Club Seal Society

by Robyn Davidoff, Sierra Club
Seal Society Chair

Summer Recap

The Sierra Club Seal Society (SCSS) has been very active this past summer and has many events planned for fall.

Sea lion pupping season ran from May through June, followed by mating season in July and August. During this time, large males weighing up to 800 pounds returned to fight for territory and mating privileges. Loud barking echoed almost constantly as males announced their arrival and challenged rivals.

Most of the 52 sea lion pups born this year were delivered on the rocks at Pt. La Jolla, a closed area just west of La Jolla Cove. Unfortunately, 8 pups were born on the public beach at La Jolla Cove without protections from tourists—and most did not survive due to human interference.

After a 9-month gestation, sea lion moms give birth to a single pup weighing 13–18 pounds. Newborns are highly vulnerable in their first months. Unable to swim at birth, pups are often left alone while their mothers fish, relying on vocalizations and nose-to-nose scent verification to reunite. Mothers only nurse their own pup, making scent recognition critical. At a few weeks old, sea lion pups find the little tide pools in the rocks at Pt. La Jolla and practice their swimming, learn to hold their breath, and build stamina and coordination. At 2 months old, they can swim in shallow waters, and by 4 months they are strong, confident swimmers.

Chaos at La Jolla Cove

For the past two years, SCSS has advocated for the city to better manage La Jolla Cove to ensure public safety and prevent sea lion harassment. This means: no selfies, no throwing rocks or sand, and definitely no feeding or petting.



Large male sea lion, photo Robyn Davidoff

Although the California Coastal Commission approved the city's request to allow rangers staffed at Pt. La Jolla to also monitor La Jolla Cove, the city has failed to implement it. As a result, newborn pups were left unprotected amid thousands of daily visitors.

We support keeping the La Jolla Cove open year-round and are calling on the city to:

- Staff a ranger at La Jolla Cove daily.
- Request lifeguards and rangers to make frequent multilingual announcements reminding visitors to stay back from sea lions.
- Place cones and tape around injured animals and newborn pups.
- Close the western staircase temporarily when sea lions rest there, while keeping the eastern staircase open for access.

Emergency Pup Patrol

To fill the gap, SCSS launched an Emergency Pup Patrol in May. Volunteers received training on how to politely but firmly educate the public about safe behavior around sea lions. Within weeks, SCSS recruited and trained 16 new volunteers, providing t-shirts, badges, "Stay Back, Sea Lion Baby" signs, and child-friendly stickers explaining

how to safely view sea lions.

Together, the Pup Patrol and docents logged an average of 40 volunteer hours per week at La Jolla Cove from May through August. Their presence helped keep both people and sea lions safe.

In August, SCSS held an appreciation brunch for all docents and Pup Patrol volunteers. Armando Diaz won the prize drawing—congratulations!

Seal Society continued on page 9



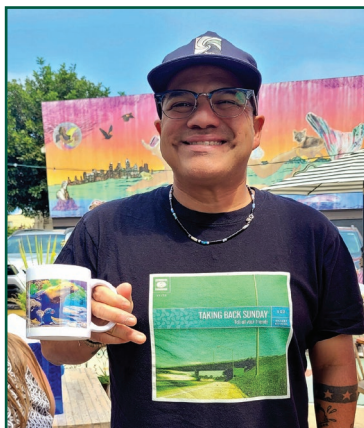
Crowds at the La Jolla Cove, photo Robyn Davidoff



Docent and Pup Patrol Appreciation Brunch - photo by Paul Emus

Upcoming Events

- **September 20 – I Love a Clean San Diego Beach Clean-Up**
9 am – 12 pm, Scripps Park/La Jolla Cove and Children's Pool south to the tide pools. This is our 5th year as Team Captains.
- **October 4 – Walter Munk Ocean Day at La Jolla Shores**
9 am – 4 pm. This is our third year as an invited exhibitor—an honor, since only select groups are chosen. Please stop by our booth!
- **December 7 – La Jolla Christmas Parade**
1:30 pm. Join us for our 6th year marching! Last year, kids ran into the parade to high-five our docent in a seal costume—it was a highlight.
- **December 14 – Beach Clean-Up at the Children's Pool**
9 am – 11 am. Help us prepare the beach for pregnant harbor seals before it closes for birthing season (Dec. 15 – May 15).



Drawing winner: Armando Diaz,
photo by Paul Emus



Kid Friendly -
Give Me Space Sticker,
Sierra Club Seal Society

Get Involved

Interested in becoming a docent or helping with a short-term project?

Email us at scsealsociety@gmail.com.

Stay connected and follow us on Instagram:

@sdsealsociety

Climate Change and Biodiversity: The Victim and the Solution

By Michael King, Community Organizer
Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

When we think about climate change, it's easy to picture smoke-filled skies, devastating storms, or talk of carbon emissions. But the story of climate change is also a story of biodiversity — the incredible variety of life that makes our planet resilient.

A powerful reminder of this sits far away in the Arctic: the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, a vault carved into the permafrost that stores hundreds of thousands of seeds. Its purpose is simple — protect the genetic diversity of the world's crops in case of disaster. But the truth is, the best “seed vault” isn't locked away in the Arctic. It's right here around us, in the ecosystems we live in every day.

As the climate warms, invasive species are spreading faster and hitting harder. In Hawaii, grasses brought from elsewhere have pushed out native forests, leaving the land holding 90% less carbon than before. A similar phenomenon is playing out with invasive grasses replacing invaluable and vulnerable Chaparral ecosystems here in San Diego. In wetlands, invasive trees choke out native plants until they're removed, at which point the natives bounce back, capturing more carbon and strengthening the ecosystem.

In our waterways, invasives blanket the surface, blocking sunlight and altering the delicate chemistry of lakes and rivers. Insects, too, are on the move. As temperatures rise, non-native pests weaken forests, devastate pollinators, and in turn reduce agriculture's resilience. On islands, invasive mammals like rodents and pigs strip vegetation and erode soil, setting off a cascade of ecological damage. These phenomena result in enormous disruptions to carbon systems and retention.

All of this points to the same conclusion: when biodiversity declines, ecosystems lose their ability to fight climate change.

Some argue that we should embrace whatever species are strongest, regardless of where they come from. But that thinking risks treating ecosystems as experiments in “survival of the fittest.” Biodiversity is more than a numbers game — it's our insurance policy.

So many of humanity's breakthroughs have come from plants and animals once overlooked: medicines for cancer, treatments for pain, agricultural innovations. To let species vanish now is to shut the door on discoveries that could shape our future.

Biodiversity is also about culture and responsibility. We are the ones driving climate change, and with that comes a duty to protect what remains. Just as our communities benefit from clean water, fresh air, and open space, they also depend on healthy, diverse ecosystems.

The lesson is simple: protecting biodiversity isn't an optional part of fighting climate change — it's central to it. Like the seed vault in Norway, the variety of life around us is our best defense.

Chapter & Group Executive Committee Ballot Instructions

Do I have a Single or Joint membership? The mailing label on this newsletter will indicate whether your household has a single ("SINGL") or joint ("JNT") membership. This will be found above your name and before your 8-digit membership number.

Examples: JNT 12345678 = Joint membership, Membership number (8-digits).

SINGL 12345678 = Single membership, Membership number (8-digits).

How to Vote:

ONLINE: go to go to <http://sandigosierraclub.org/vote/>

BY MAIL:

You must write your membership number on the outside of your mailing envelope (below your return address is a good place).

Your membership number is required for your vote to count (this

is how the election committees can verify that you are a member). Your membership number is the eight (8) digit number that appears above your name and mailing address.

Problems or questions? Please email the Chapter office at scoffice@sierrasd.org or call 858-569-6005.

Did you know that you can adjust your contact preferences in MyAccount? You can also review your donation history, vote in your local executive committee election and look for events and campaigns near you! Check it out!

It's very easy to create your account and log in. Visit this page for instructions: sc.org/myaccount-instructions. Here are specific instructions on how to adjust your contact preferences: sc.org/myaccount-adjustpreferences.

Please email member.care@sierraclub.org if you have any issues or questions.

Our Future Environmentalist



My name is Zoë Geller-Alford. I'm from San Diego, currently studying Environmental Engineering at the University of British Columbia, and from July through September I have

been our Climate Action Plan Intern, laying the foundation for our campaign that will increase action and implementation in the cities of our region.

Being the intern for the first phase of our Climate Action Plan strategy exhilarated me. Coming from a background of grassroots climate organizing and currently pursuing my undergraduate degree in Environmental Engineering, I was situated in a lens that allowed me to dive right into the project. The goal was to more comprehensively understand these cities' Climate Action Plans and their status on implementation, and then use that information to feed a new strategy of political advocacy, community work, and education around these topics. The major questions going into the research phase were:

1. *What are the patterns and common themes across these documents? What information is consistently being mentioned or left out?*
2. *How can we catalogue these in a digestible, comprehensive way?*
3. *What questions can we ask these cities to more efficiently see how implementation is going?*

This began with reading all of the relevant CAP documents – the 17 cities that have them, and the County's. I accumulated all of my notes into a database I created to track each city's document based on measure, timeline, status, and budget sources. This process was also studied with valuable meetings with city staff and volunteers that provided insight into the areas of success and struggle with implementing these plans.

The major takeaways from this work: the biggest delay is budgetary restrictions, there should be a larger emphasis on community engagement, and there are universal gaps to address (including nature-based solutions, comprehensive environmental justice and water conservancy plans, and utilizing publicly available tools). While this is centered on all that it is not getting done, it also shines light on

opportunities for us as a chapter.

The view on CAPs was these powerful tools that could help keep a city on track for making sweeping environmental progress. In our region, we are seeing that is not the case. This means we must shift our view. Honoring and celebrating all the small items cities are implementing, while being a constant force of support for larger plans. The question should not be, "Why are you behind on all these things?" and instead be, "How can we help you get this done?"

Our role will involve engaging with these communities to increase awareness and excitement to get involved. This campaign strategy includes appointing a "local champion" in each city, to be our instigators of action. The most inexpensive resource for these cities lies in their people – a passionate and motivated community can do remarkable things for climate action. One of the most common things that came up in this research is backlash or resistance from the community. We can help root these actions – building decarbonization, installing roundabouts, etcetera – in meaning and connection to things people love and want to protect. We can help be this bridge between the cities and the heart of the people.



Lucy Terry, originally from San Clemente, California, graduated cum laude from the University of Washington with a B.A. in political science and double minors in environmental studies and Indigenous studies. Growing up in Southern California not only shaped her love for the outdoors, but also exposed her to climate impacts at a young age and motivated her to study how environmental issues are governed. In 2021, she founded the Environmental Policy Student Association

at UW to amplify diverse perspectives in environmental fields and improve access to professional development for students.

Upon graduating, Lucy moved to Washington, DC where she interned with the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Global Food and Water

Security Program. While at CSIS, she supported strategic partnerships and program management, including project launches like the United Nations' The Unjust Climate report. This experience provided her with formative insight into food systems and inspired her to pursue a Master's in Climate Science and Policy at UCSD's Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO).

Lucy's research at SIO focused on climate change-induced water scarcity and agricultural adaptation in Colorado's Upper Yampa Watershed. In addition to conducting a statistical and spatial analysis of regional snowpack, she interviewed ranchers in order to understand how they experience climate change and what investments they need in order to adapt to changing conditions. Now, having graduated from SIO in June,

Chapter and Group Executive Committee Ballots

All Chapter members are eligible to vote in the Chapter Executive Committee election.

San Diego Chapter Executive Committee Ballot

Vote for no more than four (4) candidates, including write-ins, by marking the box next to a candidate's name, including write-ins. For JOINT memberships please use the second set of boxes to vote. (The order of candidates' names was randomly chosen.)

VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN 4

☐ ☐ Susan Baldwin ☐ ☐ William Morse

☐ ☐ Ron Askeland ☐ ☐ Alan Geraci

☐ ☐ Write In _____



North County Group Executive Committee Ballot

Vote for no more than four (4) candidates, including write-ins, by marking the box next to a candidate's name, including write-ins. For JOINT memberships please use the second set of boxes to vote. (The order of candidates' names was randomly chosen.)

VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN 4

☐ ☐ Alan Geraci ☐ ☐ Write In _____

☐ ☐ Joe Houser ☐ ☐ Write In _____

☐ ☐ Rochelle Hancock



If you live in these cities, please vote!

Bonsall, Escondido, Fallbrook, Oceanside zip code 92058, Pala, Palomar Mtn., Pauma Valley, Poway, Ramona, San Diego zip codes 92127, 92128 & 92198, San Marcos, Santa Ysabel, Vista, and Valley Center.

North County Coastal (Coasters) Group Executive Committee Ballot

Vote for no more than three (3) candidates, including write-ins, by marking the box next to a candidate's name, including write-ins. For JOINT memberships please use the second set of boxes to vote. (The order of candidates' names was randomly chosen.)

VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN 3

☐ ☐ Amilie Catheline ☐ ☐ Write In _____

☐ ☐ Barbara Collins

☐ ☐ Paige DeCino

If you live in these cities, please vote!

Cardiff, Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, Oceanside zip codes 92052, 92054, 92056 & 92057, Rancho Santa Fe, and Solana Beach.



All ballots must be received by 3 p.m., Tuesday, November 11, 2025.

Paper ballots should be mailed or hand delivered to:

Elections-San Diego Chapter Sierra Club, 4241 Jutland Dr., Ste 303, San Diego, CA 92117

You must write your membership number on the outside of the mailing envelope!

Defend the Environment in Your Community

Join the Coasters Conservation Committee

By Barbara Collins

Have you ever wondered how sustainable your city's policies are and how you can ensure that the environment is a priority in your community? Or maybe you've been upset about a proposed development on precious open space in your community. Well, there's a great opportunity for you to work with a team of like-minded folks and



make a difference. The Coasters have recently reconstituted its Conservation Committee to review environmental issues in our cities (Del Mar, Encinitas, Carlsbad and Oceanside) and take action.

Whether you want to dip a toe in the water or dive right into the environmental issues affecting our coastal area, the Conservation Committee is a great way to get involved with real time environmental issues that affect your community right now.

Our priorities include:

- *Enacting effective Climate Action Plans for our cities*
- *Preservation of wildlife habitat and corridors*

- *Protection of our coast, lagoons, wetlands and watersheds*
- *Challenging sprawl developments and building in wildfire danger areas*
- *Supporting Smart Community Planning near public transit, services and existing infrastructure*
- *Advocating for walkable communities, safe bikeways and bike paths*

That is not an exhaustive list and we've just begun to organize our committee so please join us. Send an email to becollins92@gmail.com for more info or to attend a meeting. The committee meets on the 4th Friday of the month at 10:30 AM by Zoom.

Climate Progress continued from page 1

We're also stepping into a bigger regional conversation during the Inaugural San Diego Climate Week. The San Diego chapter of the Sierra Club will host two events:

- *Local Climate Action at a Crossroads: Accountability, Activism, and People Power — Thursday, October 2 from 6-8pm. A practical conversation with community leaders and policy experts on what it will take for our cities to meet their CAP commitments this decade—plus how residents can help move measures from planning to pavement.*
- *Exploring Ecosystems and Water Pollution at the Tijuana River Estuary — Friday, October 3 from 2:30-5:30- A solutions-focused discussion on binational coordination, funding, and nature-based infrastructure to protect the estuary and South Bay communities from the Tijuana River pollution crisis.*

Our ongoing advocacy in the Tijuana River Valley is a core pillar of our work. We're building broad coalitions—tribal partners, community groups, nonprofit leaders, scientists, public health advocates, and cross-border allies—to demand near-term protections and long-term

resilience. That includes urging agencies to expedite policies and projects that mitigates exposure to sewage, trash, and sediment, prioritize public health protections for South Bay neighborhoods, and invest in natural infrastructure like wetland restoration and climate resilience projects. We're pressing for stable funding, transparent project tracking, and real community oversight so residents see and feel improvements quickly—and so progress survives beyond election cycles.

On the Tijuana River pollution crisis, we will not rest in our advocacy until beaches in the South Bay are open 365 days a year and the environmental catastrophe affecting our habitats, residents and region has ended. We demand clean water and clean air for ALL residents of the region.

If you're ready to help—whether you love data dives, public speaking, coalition building, or habitat restoration—we'd love to plug you in. Volunteers interested in climate advocacy or Tijuana River pollution advocacy, please email me at charles.rilli@sierraclub.org. Together, we can make sure San Diego's climate commitments turn into climate results.

Climate Change Committee continued from page 1

of dollars into a new GHG fund at the San Diego Foundation. The money can only be used to reduce GHG here in San Diego County.

- *The Club have endorsed and helped numerous environmental candidates to win elections resulting in the County Board of Supervisors and several city councils resulting in policy-makers that are more pro-environment and climate friendly than officials were in past years.*
- *We established a Sierra Club Climate Committee that meets monthly that is working with call seventeen cities in the county to improve each city's Climate Action Plan. Please contact Peter Andersen (westone47@gmail.com) or Charles Rilli (charles.rilli@sierraclub.org) for more information or to join in our efforts.*

The climate crisis is real; and each of these actions reduce GHG is a global effort to reduce GHG and slowing the very real and dangerous climate crisis. On any given day here is the United States we see record drought, unprecedented wildfires, record hurricanes and tornados, beach erosion and cliff collapse, flooding in coastal cities, and record hot temperatures. San Diego must do its part to reduce the severity of climate change and to be a model for other cities, counties, and counties in fighting an impending global disaster.

Youth Climate Action continued from page 3

spoke this summer in support of an electrification resolution in front of our school district's board, which passed unanimously. Through my club's collaborative efforts, I have learned the importance of bringing youth together to propel change.

On behalf of the San Diego and Imperial County members of the Sierra Club, I spoke at a Make Polluters Pay press conference in June to represent youth support of the bill. This bill aims to make fossil fuel companies pay for their share of the expenses caused by climate change, and youth voices are vital to ensuring its success.

The Sierra Club, in our effort to expand youth climate involvement, is starting a youth committee that will entail embarking on a team-led climate project with the guidance of experienced professionals. I will personally be joining this team, and I hope that other passionate youth will join me.

Inspiring Connections Outdoors



Rattlesnakes: Teaching Fascination, Not Fear

by Bill Tayler



Eli with a large Rattlesnake



Maribel observing a small Rattlesnake



Southern Pacific Rattlesnake

Spend much time with me outdoors and you will know that I absolutely love snakes and that rattlesnakes are among my very favorite. In San Diego County, we are blessed with much biodiversity, including four species of rattlesnakes. When luck is shining on us, we find them on our hikes, and always make the most of the opportunity to teach the children with us that rattlesnakes, while they certainly merit our respect and caution, are nothing that they need to fear (and are definitely nothing to be harmed). From an appropriate distance (the snake's body length is more than enough), even a child who has never seen one before can safely observe a wild rattlesnake in its native habitat and learn that they are not aggressive and, given the chance, simply want to be left to rest peacefully. This summer, we found several Southern Pacific Rattlesnakes of various sizes in Laguna Meadows, and every encounter was a great teaching experience for the young hikers.

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



Naomi with a friendly Gopher Snake

And because the San Diego Gopher Snake is often confused with a rattlesnake (which on occasion leads to their being killed), we never miss the chance to teach kids about these most friendly of snakes so that they will be able to tell the difference.

My goal is not simply to teach kids not to fear rattlesnakes. Rather, my goal is to have every one of them learn to love rattlesnakes, to have their fear replaced by fascination and a lifetime love for these beautiful creatures. And for some, they are well on their way to sharing my obsession: one second grade girl, upon seeing her first rattlesnake, started crying – not out of fear but out of happiness at seeing one, or as she put it “having her dream come true.”

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San Diego, CA 92117

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500 acre ranch with small blueberry & apple farm in Humboldt County California. Ranch is off grid, has 2 homes, and is the quietest place on earth. Lots of trees, delicious spring water and clean air. Contact Mike @ yewbearranch@gmail.com (707) 223-2444

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858-569-6005 or scoffice@sierrasd.org

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

Upcoming Issues:

**January/February/March 2026
Deadline December 1, 2025.**

To submit by email,
please email to both:
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scoffice@sierrasd.org.
Submissions are subject to approval for content and subject matter.

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Committees & Contact Information

Some meetings still offer the option of attending on-line. Please check our Activities Calendar (<http://sandigosierraclub.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:
Charles Rilli
858-569-6005, ext 3
charles.rilli@sierraclub.org

Community Organizer:
Michael King
858-569-6005, ext 2
michael.king@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: Ron Askeland (2025)
ron.askeland@gmail.com

Secretary: Ruben Arizmendi (2026)
rfaawsierraclub@gmail.com

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

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

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

Susan Baldwin (2025)
susanbaldwin@aol.com

Alan Geraci (2025)
alan@alangeraci.com

Pam Heatherington (2027)
pheatherington@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

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:scsealsociety@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
ncg.col.training@gmail.com

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Meets 3rd Thursday at 6:30pm
Chair: Kathryn Burton
kathrynsburton@gmail.com

WILDERNESS BASICS COURSE (WBC)

Held annually beginning in January

San Diego

Matt Clapp
info@wildernessbasics.com
www.wildernessbasics.com

Escondido

Yosina Lissebeck
ylissebeck@san.rr.com
www.wbc.sierraclubncg.org

SECTIONS & SOCIAL COMMITTEES

Bicycle

For information contact Jerry Fitzsimmons
membership@sdscls.org

Photography

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

INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS (ICO)

Check website for meeting information.
www.sandigosierraclub.org

Chair: Bill Tayler,
btayler@taylorlaw.com

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Hi Sierran Newsletter

Managing Editor: Judy Thomas
thomascreative@cox.net



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myplan.sierraclub.org





San Diego Chapter

4241 Jutland Dr., Ste 303,

San Diego CA 92117

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

Phone: 858-569-6005

www.sandigosierraclub.org

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Travel Blanket

Price: \$14.95

This fleece travel blanket features the Sierra Club logo and comes in blue, white and red plaid. It features a packing strap when not in use with a convenient carrying strap.

Dimensions: 40" wide x 60" long

Dimensions Rolled: 11" long by 6" in diameter

Color: Blue, White and Red Plaid

Green umbrella with Sierra Club logo. Collapses to 12" making it easy to carry and stow in car, home or backpack. Includes cover sleeve.

What a great way to show your support for the environment.

Price: \$9.95



E-conscious organic/recycled ball cap with John Muir silhouette and Sierra Club San Diego.

Price: \$20.00

Emerald Forest color cap with oyster colored stitching.

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