



Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

HiSIERRAN

Serving San Diego And Imperial Counties

Vol 82 No. 2

Visit our website at: www.sandigosierraclub.org

April/May/June 2023

Annual Election for Sierra Club's Board of Directors is Now Underway

Each year, 5 of the 15 members of the Sierra Club Board of Directors end their three-year term. A list of candidates is selected by a combination of a nominations process and a petition process. Sierra Club members have the opportunity to vote on 5 candidates to fill the empty seats.

A democratic Sierra Club demands grassroots participation. If you have been a Sierra Club member since January 31st 2022, you are eligible to vote. If you joined the Sierra Club since then, you will be eligible to vote next year.

Ballots were sent to eligible voters in March. If you pre-registered to vote online, you'll receive an email from sierraclub.mg.election-servicescorp.com. Paper ballots will arrive in the mail to all other voters.



Election continued on page 6

PolCom Membership Appeals

Do You Want a Say in Local Politics?

Then join Sierra Club San Diego's Political Committee! Candidates on the federal, state and local level in San Diego value a Sierra Club endorsement. Through questionnaires, interviews and research, our committee recommends who the club should endorse. Then we hold them accountable after they're elected! We also recommend which ballot propositions deserve endorsement.

You might think the next elections are too far away to worry about now. But with the primaries less than a year away, we're already analyzing upcoming races and scheduling candidate meet-and-greets.

We also engage in other activities, such as conducting environmental training for local candidates. Even if you have only a few hours per month to participate, we can use your help!

Sit in (in-person or virtually) on our next monthly meeting and then decide if you want to join the committee. Contact richard.miller@sierraclub.org for details.



Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Demonstration Events Held in San Diego

The State of California funded a \$27,000,000 CORE (Clean Off-Road Equipment) voucher program to help small landscaping businesses transition to electric lawn maintenance equipment. The program reimburses about 70% of the costs of leaf blowers, mowers, string trimmers and other hand-held tools as well as charging units and extra batteries. To publicize the program, CORE, in conjunction with AGZA (American Green Zone Alliance) and CALSTART, are hosting ten statewide zero emission landscaping equipment outreach and demonstration events.

The inaugural event for the CORE and AGZA partnership took place on January 29 in National City. Landscape professionals participated in zero-emission equipment demonstrations from 14 CORE-approved manufacturers. Educational sessions engaged attendees, and a raffle awarded two participants with brand-new electric blowers. Jack Shu, La Mesa City Councilmember, was the keynote speaker. Over 100 landscaping professionals from San Diego County had the opportunity to demo equipment and learn more about CORE voucher incentives at Kit Carson Park on February 5. Escondido City Councilmember, Consuelo Martinez, addressed professional landscapers from the area as the keynote speaker. The events were made possible thanks to contributions made by local organizations including San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, San Diegans for Sustainable, Equitable & Quiet Equipment in Landscaping (SD-SEQUEL), and the cities of National City and Escondido.

Zero Emissions continued on page 6



Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

HiSIERRAN

Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

8304 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. #101
San Diego, CA 92111
(858) 569-6005

Managing Editor

Judy Thomas (619) 462-5168
thomascreative2@cox.net

Creative Director

Scott Thomas (619) 462-5168
thomascreative2@cox.net
www.thomascreative.com

Advertising

thomascreative@cox.net

Meetings and Activities

www.sandiegosierraclub.org

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Lisa Ross

There is a monster-mash appearing on my radar screen for the coming months, including the re-incarnation of formerly dead rural development projects, blood sucking land-use decision-making and urban signage miscreation.

Among the issues Sierra Club San Diego is watching are the never-ending Zombie sprawl developments that lurk throughout the countryside, much like the recently defeated 2000-acre Newland Sierra project, which had come back in various forms over 30 years until a ballot measure put it in its final grave. The subsequent November purchase by Golden Door as a nature preserve thankfully sealed its fate.

One such proposed zombie development that deserves a decisive machete chop by the County Board of Supervisors is the Rancho Palo Verde sprawl 150 mini-mansion extension called "Bell Bluff". Situated along the Sweetwater River near the Cleveland National Forest, the project's Environmental Impact Report was approved in 1979, long before the County's visionary albeit battered 2020 General Plan went into effect.

That plan confines development to village centers far away from Rancho Palo Verde and should shield the environmentally sensitive area in another high fire area from a reawakening in any shape or size.

Another worrisome zombie development is the proposed Harvest Hills project abutting Safari Park North of Escondido, a reincarnation of the formerly dead Safari Highlands Ranch. Just like its predecessor, this 550-home community would be built in a severe high fire area with limited evacuation egress.

Harvest Hills proponents hope public agencies will reanimate the misbegotten Safari Park Highlands by annexing the County controlled area into the City of Escondido whose current council members are more inclined to breathe life into another fire prone dead-end development. This bit of legislative trickery would allow increasing density 2,000% over that allowable by the County's General Plan.

This takes us to another form of vampire-like chicanery, courtesy of a recent San Diego

City Council vote that threatens to suck the life out of communities. Approved in February as one of 84 building code updates in an agenda item that would throw most mortals into semi-consciousness, one update expanded allowable density development along transit corridors from a walkable half-mile supported by Sierra Club to an unsupportable one-mile distance.

Whether legally defensible or not, making such a transformational land-use change under the cover of esoteric code updates is a stake in the heart of past agreements with environmental groups like Sierra Club that supported transit-oriented densification. Vampires combust in daylight as this zoning change should have. And would have if only the neighbors knew.

And last on the horror show program, is a proposal supported by the San Diego City Council Economic Development Committee to weaken the City's signage ordinance to allow 50 digital Frankenstein monster sized "kiosks" on Downtown public streets. Disguised as informational for visitors, the assemblages stitch together interactive maps with flashing electronic advertising coursing through.

San Diego's current signage ordinance was crafted based on a Supreme Court decision that the City lost in 1972. It has been legally enforced since the early 1980's and served to keep our urban and roadside public spaces free of distracting eye-pollution.

The proposed changes to San Diego's long standing sign rules are as aesthetically offensive as they are deceptive. We await at this writing a City Attorney opinion, including if amending the existing ordinance opens a floodgate for more of the same. Thanks to Scenic San Diego for leading the opposition charge.

And so get out your pitchforks. As we go forward, my focus remains on expanding our 13,000 plus San Diego membership to include more volunteers from South County, conserving critical habitat throughout San Diego and Imperial Counties, advancing electrification efforts to combat climate change, and keeping close watch on local legislative actions designed weaken legal environmental protections.

Stay Green.

Lisa Ross

Zeroing in on Zero Waste - Your Questions Answered

San Diego Sierra Club Zero Waste Subcommittee

In this issue of the HiSierran, we'll discuss highlights of the 10th Annual Zero Waste Symposium held on February 21 and follow up on our July, 2022 article on Tobacco Product Waste with a discussion of e-cigarette product waste. 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.

10th Annual Zero Waste Symposium: Global Overview, Local Action

Zero Waste San Diego hosted the 10th Annual Zero Waste Symposium: Global Overview, Local Action on February 21st. The hybrid in person and virtual meeting was held at the County of San Diego Operations Center in Kearny Mesa, with over 200 attendees. Symposium organizers from Zero Waste San Diego included President Laura Anthony, Treasurer Rick Anthony, Secretary Lori Mendez and Director Bob Sly.

Program Highlights

Opening Keynote: Actress, author, and activist Bonnie Wright (best known for her role as Ginny Weasley in the Harry Potter film series) discussed her passion for the environment in a pre-recorded video presentation. Ms. Wright is the author of *Go Gently: Actionable Steps to Nurture Yourself and the Planet*.

Video presentation by Sonia Mendoza, Mother Earth Foundation Philippines, entitled *On the Road to Zero Waste*.

Nicole Kurian from Californians Against Waste (pictured below) gave an update on key California legislative accomplishments in the 2021/2022 session related to waste, recycling, and plastic pollution.

San Diego County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer discussed the need for local commitment to food systems and the circular economy.

Amy Steward with Coronado Emerald Keepers gave an update on their efforts to enact a single use plastics ban in the City of Coronado.



Kim Knox, President of the League of Women Voters of San Diego County and San Diego City councilmember Joe LaCava described the successful Measure B Campaign to allow the City of San Diego to charge a cost recovery fee for single family home trash collection.

Closing Keynote: P. Wesley Schultz, Ph.D. California State University discussed strategies to divert organics from landfills in his presentation *Recology: The Science of Recycling Behavior*. Educational doorhangers, social norms and free kitchen recycling pails were all shown to increase food composting.

Zero Waste San Diego “walked the talk” by eliminating printed handouts and having a zero waste catered lunch with reusable plates and flatware. Goodwill San Diego County donated 200 coffee mugs. Coffee mugs were free to use with the stipulation that attendees take them home at the end of the symposium.

Tobacco Product Waste: It's Not Just Butts

By Lidia Greiner, Coordinator Thirdhand Smoke Resource Center, SDSU

Some have referred to electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigs or vapes, as the cigarette butts of tomorrow. Electronic nicotine delivery systems (or e-cigarettes) are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid mixture of nicotine and other compounds into an inhalable aerosol. Although they are available in a wide range of



shapes, from small pens to larger hand-size devices that are customizable, they all share similar components: a battery, a heating element, a chamber for aerosolization (an atomizer), a reservoir for holding the liquid, and a mouthpiece. Small, single use devices are growing in popularity because of their lower cost, when compared to reusable devices that typically have rechargeable/replaceable batteries, replaceable atomizers, and refillable reservoirs called “pods”.

While cigarette butts remain the most commonly littered item worldwide, with trillions littered annually, e-cigarette waste is becoming increasingly common.

These two types of waste have some characteristics in common. For example: (1) the contaminants from both cigarette butts and e-cigarette components can leach into air, soil, and water, and (2) combustion of tobacco when smoking commercial cigarettes and

Zero Waste continued on page 7

Awards Dinner & Celebration



LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT
George Courser (Posthumously)
Karen Courser, Christie Lange & Peter Andersen

The 2023 FEAT award was presented to Congressman Mike Levin (CA 49) for his exemplary legislative work on clean energy, combating pollution and a powerful force for environmental protection. Also honored were our volunteers, who have unwaveringly and dependably given thousands of hours to further Sierra Club's priorities, save wilderness and open space, help us to experience our special environment, win elections, and advocate for a sustainable future. These volunteers are the green energy that powers our organization. So, on March 18th we celebrated a community leader, our volunteers, and the exciting future of Sierra Club San Diego Chapter!



Richard Miller presenting \$1,000 grant to Pam Heatherington, recipient of the **JOANNE H. PEARSON MEMORIAL AWARD** in Environmental Public Advocacy



FEAT AWARD:
Congressman Mike Levin



Congressman Mike Levin addresses the audience accepting the FEAT AWARD



DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT:
Chapter Chair Lisa Ross presents to Robyn Davidoff



CONSERVATION ACTIVIST;
Chapter Chair Lisa Ross presents the Seal Society Leadership Team
Ellen Shively, Carol Archibald, Carol Toye and Robyn Davidoff



SPECIAL SERVICE:
Sally Prendergast



OUTINGS LEADER: Chapter Chair Lisa Ross presents to Bob Stinton



POLITICAL ACTIVIST:
Chapter Chair Lisa Ross presents to Harold Standerfer



LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT
George Courser (Posthumously)
Karen Courser & Christie Lange, Lisa Ross



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:
Barbara Collins



Phil Lauder-Heatheringtons-Steven Hunter and Deborah Gostin.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:
Ric Anthony



Mike Levin, Pam Heatherington and Seal Society Winners for Conservation Activists.



2023 FEAT AWARDEE, Congressman
Mike Levin with wife Crissy.



Bob and Sally Predergast



AWARDS CEREMONY

**Sierra Club
North County Coastal Group
Quarterly Meeting
Tuesday, April 26th
7:00 to 8:30 pm**



**Buena Vista Nature Center
2202 South Coast Hwy, Oceanside
Hybrid Meeting In-person/Zoom**

Featured Speaker: City Council Member Dist. 1 Eric Joyce

Special Presentation :

Diane Nygaard - Intro to Effective Activism

Learn from a recognized expert how you can help to protect our remaining open spaces and how to defend against dangerous and damaging sprawl development. Ms. Nygaard will provide practical tips and essential strategies based on her long and successful record as a land use and development activist.

We are looking forward to resuming our in-person meetings.

However we will have a zoom link for those who prefer to participate virtually.

**For more information please contact Sally Prendergast at
sallyp123@mac.com.**

Everyone welcome!

If You're Not Using Your Car, Donate It to the San Diego Chapter!

When's the last time you even turned your car on? Rather than continue to let your vehicle sit in sad neglect, donate it to the San Diego Chapter. We'll give it a new home and turn your gift into significant funds for our program and services. We make donating your car, truck, motorcycle, or boat easy, the pick-up is free, and you may even qualify for a tax deduction.

Here's How It Works:

- **Call 844-6-SIERRA (844-674-3772) or Complete the Online Donation Form at <https://scfch.careasy.org/index.html>. Our Vehicle Donation Support team is available seven days a week and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.**
- **Schedule Your Free Pick-up:** We arrange to have a licensed tow company pick up your vehicle at a time convenient for you. The vehicle will be taken to one of our many sale locations where it will be sold – all at no cost to you.
- **We Receive the Funds and You Could Qualify for a Tax Deduction!** Vehicle donations are tax-deductible, and we work to get the highest return per vehicle for us and for your tax benefit. In most cases, when the driver arrives for your tax-deductible gift, you'll be provided with the donation receipt. You will be mailed a thank-you letter within 30 days of the sale of the vehicle, which also serves as a donation tax receipt.

**SUPPORT THE SAN DIEGO CHAPTER TODAY AND DONATE
YOUR FOUR WHEELS!**

Election continued from page 1

Additional information about the election, this year's candidates, and how to vote can be found on the Sierra Club website www.sierraclub.org/board/election

Your participation is critical for a Strong Sierra Club. Voting in the Board of Directors election is a privilege, and important responsibility of your membership.

Help us to get a record voter turnout this year. Typically, less than 10% of eligible members vote in the Board elections. A minimum of 5% is required for the elections to be valid. Our grassroots structure is strengthened when membership participation is high. That means your participation is needed in the voting process. Cast your vote early and encourage other members you know to do the same. Ballots must be received by 12:00 PM Eastern Time on April 26th.

How can I learn about the candidates?

Resources to help you learn about the candidates are available onlinesierraclub.org/board/election. You can read each candidate's bios and statements, as well as their answers to important forum questions selected by a Forum Questions Committee. Each candidate has also recorded a short video about their candidacy!

You can also learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know.

Voting is Quick and Easy!

If you received a paper ballot but would like to vote online, you can use the registration numbers you received in the mail to login to the e-voting site <http://vote.escvote.com/sierra>. If you vote online, please do not also send in your paper ballot.

If you have not received your ballot by March 31st please contact Sierra Club's Member Care team at 415-977-5500 or member.care@sierraclub.org.

To request a replacement ballot, or receive assistance to vote online, contact Election Services customer service at sierraclub.org/electionservicescorp.com or phone 1-866-720-4357.

Your ballot must be received by no later than 12:00 PM Eastern Time on April 26th. If you're voting by mail, please drop off your ballot with enough time for it to reach the facility in New York.

Questions? All the details about the election, the candidates, and how to vote is available online www.sierraclub.org/board-directors-election-2023. Additional questions can be directed to mail-to: member.care@sierraclub.org

Zero Emissions continued from page 1

If you use a landscaping business, please let them know about the new voucher program. More information can be found at the CORE website <https://californiacore.org>. The website features both a list of approved zero-emission professional landscape equipment and manufacturers <https://californiacore.org/equipment-category/landscaping-gardening/> and a list of approved dealers (<https://californiacore.org/dealerlist/>). This program does not require landscapers to turn in or destroy old equipment. Currently, \$6.3 M in funding has been requested by micro businesses and \$2.3 M by small businesses, leaving \$18.4 M of available funds.

Zero Waste continued from page 4

production of aerosols when using vapes both result in air contamination.

However, the waste products also have unique characteristics. While the cellulose acetate filters in cigarette butts are a source of plastic and microplastic pollution, the plastic e-liquid pods, batteries, electronic circuitry, other metal components, and the entire plastic or metal e-cigarette itself produce not only plastic waste but also metal and batteries.

Discarded e-cigarettes are a source of environmental metal contamination from the breakdown of their component parts. Metals in e-cigarette components include aluminum, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, iron, lead, nickel, silver, tin, and zinc. The batteries in discarded e-cigarettes are another source of environmental contamination: in some states, including CA, these batteries are considered hazardous waste.

The solution that remains in the e-liquid pods of discarded e-cigarettes add to the environmental impact of these devices. Not only does the contaminated e-liquid contribute to metal contamination, but the liquid itself can contain high concentrations of nicotine in liquid form, along with additives for flavoring that are known to be toxic. Nicotine is included on the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) list of acute hazardous waste, with specific handling requirements if the amount discarded is above a certain quantity.

San Diego State University is collaborating with Sierra Club San Diego to develop and field test a smartphone app designed to monitor tobacco product waste in local communities. The goal of the project is to engage community residents and groups to document the distribution of tobacco product wastes in neighborhoods where they live, work, and play and to communicate what they learn to their social networks and elected officials. This is an exciting project! The app has the potential for significant impact if used by community groups to educate about the local and regional impact of tobacco product waste. Volunteers are needed to field test the app in late spring/early summer. Please contact richard.miller@sierraclub.org if you are interested!

Sources:

Beutel MW, et al. A review of environmental pollution from the use and disposal of cigarettes and electronic cigarettes: Contaminants, sources, and impacts. *Sustainability* 2021; 13, 12994.

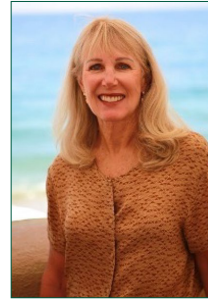
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Public Health Law Center. Disposing of e-cigarette waste: FAQ for schools and others. 2019.

Venugopal PD, et al. No butts on the beach: Aquatic toxicity of cigarette butt leachate chemicals. *Tob Regul Sci* 2021;7(1):17-30.



Jan Chatten-Brown Receives Environmental Law Lifetime Achievement Award



The Environmental Law Section of the California Lawyers Association presented the prestigious 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award to Jan Chatten-Brown. In presenting the ninth annual award, the Environmental Law Section stated “In her over 50 years of practice, Jan has made important contributions to California’s environmental jurisprudence and has been recognized as one of the top environmental litigators in the State.”

Jan graduated from UCLA Law School in 1971 and spent two decades working for public law offices. While working in the California Attorney General’s first environmental section, she argued the No Oil, Inc. case, as amicus, before the California Supreme Court. She later and organized the first environmental prosecution program in the country for the Los Angeles City Attorney. Jan opened her own public interest oriented environmental law practice, now called Chatten-Brown Carstens & Minter LLP, in 1995. She successfully argued several important California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) cases before the Courts of Appeal and again argued before the California Supreme Court. The Supreme Court decision in *Save Tara v. West Hollywood* is widely considered the key case in preventing public agencies from pre-committing to projects prior to conducting the necessary environmental review.

In 2010, Jan moved to San Diego where she represented the San Diego Sierra Club and successfully challenged the San Diego County Climate Action Plan, resulting in three Court of Appeal victories that helped stop urban sprawl. Other legal victories with the Sierra Club include a successful challenge to a proposed hotel on the Del Mar Fairgrounds that would have prevented restoration of the wetlands there, and several cases challenging the adequacy of the environmental review, and particularly the mitigation of greenhouse gases, approved for various housing projects in undeveloped areas.

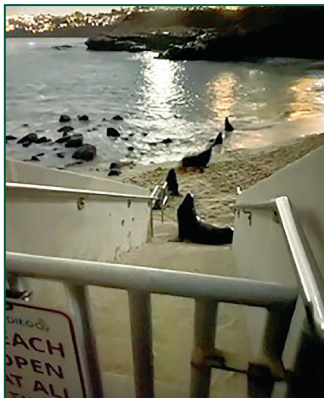
Jan retired last year, but is continuing her work as a local activist, including with San Diegans for Sustainable, Equitable and Quiet Equipment in Landscaping. Her son, Josh Chatten-Brown, Managing Partner of Chatten-Brown Law Group continues the family tradition by representing the San Diego Club Chapter to enforce California’s environmental laws.

Winter Tales From The Seal Society

Docents And Our Recommendations To The City For Safe And Responsible Seal/Sea Lion Viewing

The Cove Is Popular With Both Visitors And Sea Lions

Angela Moini: On a winter Saturday during harbor seal pupping season, I and a new trainee docent worked the South Casa Beach which is still open but used by a few moms and newborn pups. We were able to speak to many visitors about not getting too close to the harbor seal moms and their newborn pups without the protection of the larger protected and closed Children's Pool beach. A big male seal was blocking the stairs and a few others were being disturbed by people on the beach shining flashlights to better see the sea lions. They were compliant in turning the light off after I explained that it can disturb the animal's eyes. We left after 7 pm as there were not many people still around.



"Shared Beach" Policy Shows Lifeguards Empathy For Sea Lion

Robyn Davidoff: While docenting at Point La Jolla on a recent weekend, I walked over to the popular "Cove" beach to view the sea lions who often come ashore to rest. To my dismay, earlier in the week, a little girl was caught on video when she threw a rock at a resting 800-pound male sea lion. The lifeguard called her out saying "little girl in the purple, you may leave now". The video went viral and soon the media started contacting me for tv interviews and comments. We are grateful for the lifeguard announcements but unfortunately, people continue to approach the sea lions for selfies and even try to touch them. We are trying to get the word out that disturbing or touching sea lions or seals comes with a hefty fine enforced by NOAA. It seems a never-ending task, but well worth our time for the health and welfare of both species.

A Spiritual Connection

Ellen Shively: Some time ago while docenting at Children's Pool open beach a woman hastily descended the left twin stairs and headed straight for a small pod of sleeping harbor seals near the water's edge. I caught up with her to explain the recommended guidelines which outline safe viewing distances and behavior. Her

gaze never left the seals as she defied my cautionary advise and staunchly informed me, "I am following my native American tradition and have a spiritual connection to all ocean beings", then proceeded on her path to the seals. Choosing not to challenge her alleged special privilege inheritance, I quietly withdrew to observe her taking a lotus-like position as the seals looked her over but stayed relaxed in their resting place. Perhaps she does have a connection denied to the rest of us I concluded and returned to other visitors willing to listen as I explained what I thought I knew about the seals tolerance to their comfort zone spacing from us humans.... or maybe I don't know it at all.....

Being A Docent Is One Of The Most Rewarding Things That I Have Done!

Carol Toye: It's harbor seal pupping season at Children's Pool in La Jolla. The area is closed from December until May to protect pregnant, birthing and nursing moms and pups. A few seals have taken to giving birth on South Casa, a small public beach close by. As a docent, I speak to people descending onto the beach to ask them to keep a safe distance so the seals can use the beach without interference. I always try to use empathy to explain why seals would be

scared if people get too close when they give birth or nurse. People so often don't realize that their behavior can affect this crucial time when moms and pups are bonding during the first few weeks of life. People are amazed when we point out that some of the pups are only a few days old and still have parts of their umbilical cord showing! It is an amazing to watch visitors from the sidewalk, stairs and at safe distances on the beach hoping to catch glimpses of a birth, a pup frolicking on the sand, playing with seaweed or tenderly touching noses with their moms as they recognize each other's scent: "oh, look, they are kissing!". The bonds between moms and pups are as strong as we have with our children, and they deserve to be able to be safe in the 2 months when the moms teach them all they need before being weaned around 2 months. Members of the public often tell me how grateful they are that we are there to provide that safety.

I've Had Many Memorable Experiences As A Seal Society

Carol Archibald: I've had many memorable experiences as a Seal Society docent – too many to name. I recall a seal mom whose pup was stillborn. She didn't leave it for over a week and had the saddest face I've ever seen, even on a human. Then there was an 800 lb. bull who took protecting his harem seriously; warning them to move to higher ground when the tide was coming in or pushing pups back from the edge of the rocks with his head or front flippers so they wouldn't drown. I've delighted in watching pups play in the tidepools and the beauty of sea lions body surfing. The gratitude visitors express is very rewarding. These marine mammals contribute greatly to the ecosystem and the diversity of species. They live in a societal milieu which I appreciate and understand. They should be protected and treasured if we are going to preserve our oceans.

A Little Girl Said "Hello"

Pam Thomas: Often during the year, I get the opportunity to visit classrooms or public libraries to share information with children about the harbor seals at Casa Beach in La Jolla. On one of my visits, I met a young girl who lived in San Diego but had never been to the beach. When my presentation was over the little girl stayed to ask me many questions about the seals. I answered her questions and then said good-bye. About three months went by and one afternoon, when I was volunteering as a docent at the beach, I overheard a young girl eagerly and confidently sharing information about the seals with two other children. I walked a bit closer to listen. After a few minutes the little girl looked up at me and said "Hello." It was the girl from the library! She was there with her grandparents, an older brother, and a younger sister. They had come to the beach, at the urging of the girl, to see the harbor seals! We talked for a few minutes and as I walked away, I smiled knowing that the joys and value of education would continue.



Recommended Viewing Guidelines for Seals and Sea Lions

The La Jolla Seals and Sea Lions are wild animals living in their natural habitats. They are a unique natural treasure. The experience of watching them is an enriching and educational experience when conducted responsibly.

The safest and most responsible place to watch them is from the sidewalk.

- *Give seals and sea lions space. Always stay 50 ft away; don't surround, corner, or block their path to and from the ocean.*
- *Don't scare them. Watch quietly; no shouting, yelling, or clapping to get their attention. Move slowly; no jumping or running.*
- *Respect them. Never attempt to touch or pet, follow, or chase, or throw any item at them.*
- *Stay safe. Do not take selfies and prevent children from approaching them: they can be unpredictable if they feel threatened.*
- *Keep them safe. Keep dogs away, do not feed them or touch them – it can make them sick.*
- *Read their behavior. If they look up, move or bark, they have been disturbed so move away quietly. Always be respectful of the seals, sea lions, and their habitats. Share your experience and these precautions with friends and family!*

If you have an interest in joining the Sierra Club Seal Society, please email us at scsealsociety@gmail.com, or call **Ellen Shively** at 619-479-3412.

Disadvantaged Communities in Imperial Valley

Neglect is Not an Option

by Maria Nava-Froelich

Center of Our Universe

Growing up in the Northend of the Imperial Valley in California, in a townsite called Niland, my family along with fourteen other families lived in railroad section homes. My father worked for Southern Pacific, and my mother was a homemaker and worked part time picking tomatoes locally and grapes in the Coachella Valley. My parents had thirteen children with my twin being number ten and I number eleven in the pecking order. Both parents are gone now leaving fond and happy memories in our “center of our universe” with the natural everyday scenery of the Salton Sea, Chocolate Mountains, and agriculture fields, as we crossed the railroad tracks to go to and from school.



Heading south through Niland on Hwy 111.

Photos by: Christian Froelich

All Niland kids are transported to the city of Calipatria located eight miles away to the feeder schools for grades 5 through 12. Many of our K-12 students from Niland and Calipatria that attend Calipatria Unified School District will eventually move away once they complete college, stay in the big cities, and never return to their home towns. This exodus is in addition to a decline of population due to lack of jobs, economic opportunities, and housing development to sustain the families, especially in our Northend communities.

Another major struggle is that Niland and Calipatria homeowners pay much higher property taxes than other residents of the Imperial County. These are among major factors that contribute to the Northend communities becoming ghost towns. We are the fence line communities closest to the Salton Sea. Today, it is so sad to witness the Sea becoming toxic with fish dying off. Years ago, there were recreational activities at the Salton Sea that attracted fisherman, ski boats, and families camping out over the weekend. It attracted people from near and far including snowbirds.

Today, many abandoned single homes and trailers remain on both sides of the sea, where people who had bought homes or business properties decided to no longer invest or live around or near the sea. Yet, to this day, many who live here have hopes that someday the sea will be restored.

The City of Calipatria will be the most impacted municipality due to its close proximity to the Lithium Valley Area. The City of Calipatria is located in the northeastern end of the Imperial Valley,



contiguous to the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area. The City of Calipatria has among the highest poverty rates in the nation with a median household income (in 2020 dollars) of \$37,196, compared to County \$46,220 and State \$80,440. Both nearby Niland as well as Calipatria have been negatively affected by a lack of jobs, higher tax rates than some larger cities, and by several forms of environmental pollution.

Game Changer

The prospect of recovering lithium from brines that power the geothermal energy facilities at the south end of the Salton Sea have received a great deal of study. The recently released Imperial County Lithium Valley Economic Opportunity Investment Plan (the Plan) outlines the local, statewide, and national benefits of local lithium extraction. It also prescribes the specific activities we believe are necessary in order to best capitalize on those benefits. We believe this is definitely a game changer that can help the whole Imperial County.

As one of several disadvantaged communities in Imperial County, the City of Calipatria supports this Plan. The citizens of Calipatria believe that it will enable the responsible development of an industry that has the potential to improve the economic future of Calipatria and Niland residents for generations to come. Specifically, the plan stipulates that 20% of excise tax revenues be assigned to restoration of the Salton Sea with the remaining 80% going to Imperial County of which 30% would be earmarked for the Northend communities. The Plan also has the potential to severely impact the natural and built environment in and around the incorporated boundaries of Calipatria. Questions remain about where the water needed for the lithium extraction will come from and about health impacts from chemicals used during the Lithium extraction. This plan is still developing and is currently in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report Phase.

The City of Calipatria welcomes the economic and global environmental benefits this Lithium Valley Industry will achieve. The city also recommends that a Calipatria Lithium Valley Disadvantaged Communities Economic Development Plan be written and adopted to directly support the economic and environmental needs of the communities that will be most directly affected by the newly created industries. Problems which might be anticipated include increased operational activity, toxic emissions, required public services, infrastructure upgrades, and potential annexation. Such a plan should follow the State of California Clean Energy Act of 2018 as well as the Federal Government Green Act of 2021. This community plan should zero in on the relevant social, economic, and environmental factors affecting the communities adjacent to the project site

and would reveal those factors which will have the greatest influence on the successful implementation of the lithium extraction project and the final impact on the Northend.

The Disadvantaged Communities Plan Should Provide:

Quality Assurance

- **An Environmental Impact Report specifically for the Lithium Valley and Salton Sea Geothermal Basin area.**
- **Efforts and increased funding to improve air quality to the impacted communities.**
- **Quality control funding for the lithium extraction and mining testing within the Lithium Valley project.**

Community Needs

- **Economic, environmental, and public health benefits to the Calipatria and Niland communities, particularly from the Salton Sea receding shoreline.**
- **Job creation for locally impacted communities within the Lithium Valley and Geothermal Basin Area.**
- **Infrastructure funding for State Highway 111 and local streets, for acquisitions for the water system, sewer, public safety, and services for the redlined communities of Calipatria and Niland.**
- **Educational funding assistance to locally impacted Calipatria Unified School District, Imperial Valley College, and funding assistance for a higher institution of learning specializing in minerals and green energy curriculum and degrees, such as San Diego State University.**
- **Funding for the Calipatria and Niland Impact Severance Tax for the immediate impacts on infrastructure, job training, community enhancements, and environmental mitigation.**
- **Funding for increased and improved medical services to our local hospitals, including a children's hospital.**
- **Immediate funding for improvements to the Calipatria State Prison wastewater collection system.**
- **Direct investment toward the most immediately impacted disadvantaged communities and households within the redline community of Calipatria and Niland of the Lithium Valley project.**
- **Provide opportunities for business, public agencies, nonprofits, and other community institutions to participate in and benefit from state-wide and national efforts to promote green clean energy.**

The Question of Water

As an active advocate of the community, it's my fear that California's current water shortage is going to become a local (county) emergency, and will become especially acute if and when the Lithium extraction becomes a reality and becomes fully operational as proposed by the lithium industry.

In explaining my fear, mining large amounts of lithium will require huge amounts of water to extract it. Imperial County can go years without rain, and the people and the local communities depend on fresh water from the Colorado River. Regardless of the extraction method, the process where lithium chloride is turned into Lithium carbonate requires water, and the Northend communities worry about how much fresh water will be required and used in the final stages of the process (hydrology) to receive the final work product.

Living Beside the Salton Sea

The Salton Sea depends on untreated and polluted water from Mexico (via the New River) and from the farming community

(agriculture run-off) via the Alamo River. Conditions at the Salton Sea are getting worse, and now with climate change upon us, state-wide drought, the COVID-19 pandemic, and high asthma rates in the Imperial Valley, stakeholders in the area need to come together and strengthen the plan for the Sea. The California Natural Resources Agency has conducted community updates regarding the restoration projects that are underway and the proposed long-range plan. Many local community organizations are working for better education on the environmental exposures of the Salton Sea and for social justice to be included in the effort.

Down the road, and before the economic benefits begin to trickle in, I fear that the current water shortage will become worse as a result of the water usage and needs of the proposed lithium plants. I visualize restricted daily water access in the future. Many states are also suffering moderate to severe droughts. Can the reader imagine the cut-backs of water during the heat and humid summer months here in the Imperial Valley? Here, where we have poorest residents, high unemployment, and medically underserved people, the Northend will be forced to reduce their water usage. Eventually, the amount of water used by the local farming industry coupled with the water that will be required by the lithium plants will create unequal and unfair access to the basic needs of water. The Northend communities have been neglected and deprived for many years, therefore the water distribution network cannot be looted for unlimited use by or for use by the commercial/industrial projects that do not benefit our indigenous people in the Northend of the Imperial County.

The Imperial County and the State of California in collaboration with the Northend and the Lithium industry have developed a partnership. All parties must agree to treat water, food, jobs, and energy as human rights.

Besides having more community meetings and more state or federal government funded studies of the Salton Sea, the State, Federal and local stakeholders need to work as a cohesive group and exercise flexibility and develop and fund a "Wetlands" Strategy to start the hard work of restoring the Salton Sea.

During the interim period of planning long term solutions to save the sea, further development and implementation of wetland remedial projects are absolutely essential and beneficial to our local ecosystem. Wetland projects are needed before the Salton Sea becomes more laden with toxic minerals and agricultural runoff and before it becomes a super-saline body of water (dust bowl). It's anticipated that such projects should bring tangible benefits to our long underserved Northend communities because of the close proximity to the Salton Sea.

On a positive note, although the effects of the Lithium Project are still uncertain, it is possible that over the long haul strong economic growth will help the Northend so that this section of the Imperial County be "saved" as a visible and self-sustainable and self-sufficient region.

Maria Elena Nava-Froelich graduated from Calipatria High School in 1980 and Imperial Valley College in 1986. She became a city council member in Calipatria in 2011 and as served several terms as Mayor in 2023, 2019, 2016 and 2014. The list of local community organizations for which she has worked is long and varied. Reprinted from Sierra Club Desert Report.

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.



Save The Date For The Following Tentative Trips: 2023

May 3-7, 2023

Zion National Park

Bus camp and backpack

June 21-25, 2023

Sequoia National Park

Bus camp and backpack.

July 26-30, 2023

Yosemite National Park

Backpack

August 24-27, 2023

Channel Islands

Short backpack, base camp with day hikes

Oct. 5-8, 2023

Mammoth Fall Colors Trip

Stay in condos, day hikes

Check The Website For Updates

www.sdsierraclub.org

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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.

Inspiring Connections Outdoors



How One ICO Hike Changed My Life

by Karen Santos (2001-2022)

As a child who arrived in the United States from Oaxaca speaking no English, I always had a difficult time expressing myself and using my voice at school and at home. That began to change when I was in sixth grade and one day I decided to step out of my comfort zone and go on a hiking trip with ICO. At first I didn't think much of it, but after a couple of trips, my peers and my teachers told me that they noticed some changes in me. I began to speak more and ask more questions in class, I became less nervous in group projects, and I started to be able to make friendships easier.

In my freshman year of high school I took another step out of my comfort zone and decided to volunteer on ICO hiking, camping and snorkeling trips with an elementary school to try to help the younger generation grow as I once did. I was definitely not disappointed. It was so amazing to watch the youth connect with the outdoors first hand, and this made me realize how passionate I am about that. And I hope to find a career that will allow me to explore nature and help my community.

I never would have guessed that one simple hiking trip would lead me to experience so many changes in myself, but ICO trips influenced my life remarkably. I'm convinced that I would not be happy with who I am if I hadn't taken the first step and gone on that first hike. I am now confident in letting my voice, opinions, and thoughts be heard, and I now have a passion and dedication to protecting our home, the outdoors. I am and will always be grateful for the changes I experienced from ICO trips, and I can confidently say that without them I would be a different person academically and personally.

[This was written by Karen in 2019. In November 2022, Karen died from brain cancer. She was close to finishing a degree in Psychology at SDSU and planned to become a child therapist.]

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



Karen and Jessica in Anza-Borrego (2016)



Karen and Jessica in Sedona (2016)



Karen with kids at Silverwood (2017)



Karen learning to love nature (2013)

Classified Ads

Mount Laguna Home for Sale.

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

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

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Submission Deadlines for HiSierran Newsletter:

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

**July/August/September 2023
Deadline June 1, 2023**

**To submit by email,
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thomascreative2@cox.net

richard.miller@sierraclub.org

Submissions are subject to
approval for content and
subject matter.

I.T. Technicians Wanted

The Chapter does as much as it does because many volunteers donate generous amounts of time to making it all work. We can always use more hands. The Chapter will soon be moving to new office space, and we need IT people to help us in determining what we need, set up our computers, and what other tasks we need to do.

If you can help, contact Richard Miller at 858-569-6005 or richard.miller@sierraclub.org

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Donate online:

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Committees & Contact Information

Due to COVID most meetings have moved on-line. Please check our Activities Calendar (<http://sandigosierraclub.org/news/activities-calendar/>) on how you can participate.

CHAPTER STAFF

Chapter Director Richard Miller
858-569-6005
richard.miller@sierraclub.org

Administrative Assistant: Marty Marquez
858-569-6005
martha.marquez@sierraclub.org

Conservation Organizer: Karl Aldinger
karl.aldinger@sierraclub.org

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

Chair: Lisa Ross (2023)
lisa@lisaross.com
www.lisaross.com

Vice-Chair: Ron Askeland (2025)
ronaskeland@gmail.com

Secretary: Rochelle Hancock (2024)
Rae_1024@yahoo.com

North County Coastal Group Rep:
Pam Heatherington
pjheatherington@gmail.com

Susan Baldwin (2025)
susanbaldwin@aol.com

Alan Geraci (2025)
alan@alangeraci.com

Dale Russell (2023)
Dalerussell05@fulbrightmail.org

Agatha Wein (2024)
agathawein@gmail.com

Treasurer (Non-voting):
Orion Hudgins
orion@orioncpa.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
ronaskeland@gmail.com

Transportation

Meets 3rd Wednesday at 5pm
David Grubb
davidzgrubb@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:
Ellen Shively
ellenshively@sbcglobal.net

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Meets 4th Thursday at 6:30pm
Chair: Stephanie Peck
sapeck425@gmail.com

OUTINGS COMMITTEE

Meets quarterly, contact Chair for date and location.

Chair: Michael Taylor

Leadership Review & Safety Committee

Chair: Michael Taylor
sd.lrsc@gmail.com

Bus Trips

Mike Fry
mnfry@cox.net

Chapter Outings Leadership Training (COL)

Stefanie Maio
sd.col.training@gmail.com

Pacific Crest Trail

Rob Langsdorf
SDSCPCTS@yahoo.com

WILDERNESS BASICS COURSE (WBC)

Held annually beginning in January

San Diego

Kristi Andersen
info@wildernessbasics.com
www.wildernessbasics.com

Escondido

Kelly Conrad
slpypup@gmail.com
www.wbc.sierraclubncg.org

SECTIONS & SOCIAL COMMITTEES

Bicycle

Call for meeting information. Jerry Fitzsimmons
(858) 224-3437 Membership@sdscls.org
www.sandigosierraclub.org/get-outdoors/bicycle

Photography

<https://sdphotoclub.com>
Alexander Kunz
mail@alex-kunz.com

INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS (ICO)

Check website for meeting information.
www.sandigosierraclub.org

Chair: Bill Tayler,
btayler@taylorlaw.com

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Fundraising/Membership

Richard Miller (858) 569-6005
richard.miller@sierraclub.org

Hi Sierran Newsletter

Managing Editor: Judy Thomas
thomascreative@cox.net



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San Diego Chapter

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San Diego, CA 92111

On the north side & just west of the 163.

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