



Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

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Fire Safety Edition

During the night January 7, 2025, California's fifth deadliest fire broke out in the San Gabriel Mountains. By noon the next day, the fire consumed over 9,000 homes and businesses in the diverse mostly middle-income community of Altadena as high winds sent embers flying throughout the night.

At the same time on the other side of Los Angeles, the third most destructive fire in California raged through tony Pacific Palisades, Malibu and Topanga. All told, 29 people lost their lives as terrified residents fled on inadequate evacuation routes. Fire doesn't discriminate.

San Diego County is no stranger to fire catastrophes. Victims of the Witch, Cedar and Normal Heights fires, among too many others, still haunt families years later.

The San Diego Sierra Club Chapter has always been about action. And so, this edition of the High Sierran is all about fire, offering our readers information on how to protect their neighborhoods, encourage responsible land use decisions, and support environmentally responsible brush management in our canyons and habitat preserves.

Native Trees Could Be Your First Line of Defense

Photo: Coastal Live Oak Micheal King

By Michael King,
Associate Community Organizer

January's devastating fires in Los Angeles are a wakeup call to residents all over California, but residents of the North County should pay special attention to their fire risks. The urban-rural interface, where low density residential areas and rural land begin to blend, is considered the highest risk for widespread damage from fire. This type of development defines the North County more than any other region in San Diego County.

When examining our fire risks, it is essential to understand how the natural, or man-made, ecologies we live in contribute to the

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Wildfire Evacuation

Living in Southern California, it is not a matter of if wildfires will strike, but when. Get prepared by downloading smart phone apps, making a wildfire action plan, and be ready to go at a moment's notice.

Smart Phone Apps

SD Emergency

San Diego County's SD Emergency app provides the ability to create your own emergency plan and build an emergency supplies kit. When disaster strikes, it will keep you and your family informed with emergency updates, interactive emergency maps and shelter locations. It also provides ShakeReady SD Earthquake alerts. You can also register your cell phone for Emergency Alerts at <https://www.alertsandiego.org/en-us/preparedness.html>

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Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet





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Fire Plants On Fire

The Los Angeles Times headline read: "Melt down, nightmares and regressions: The L.A. Fires are taking a traumatic toll on kids."

My thoughts traveled like an out-of-control blaze to my two young grandchildren whose world went up in smoke in the Eaton Fires that wiped out the historic Los Angeles community of Altadena. The family of four lost everything when their 100-year-old house burned to the ground, along with their beloved diverse neighborhood that not just a year ago they had settled into, making friends, hiking trails, working in the community garden, attending the local school.

Trauma wants a target for its anger, so today I dedicate this column to the two San Diego County Supervisors and the County Counsel who would turn their backs on public safety and cross their fingers that LA was just a victim of circumstance.

It was also a year ago that our San Diego Sierra Club Chapter began advocating for a Fire Safe Climate Action Plan at the County, fighting the two County Supervisors who on behalf of their building industry friends couldn't fathom the idea of keeping new development sprawling out into high fire areas in the back country.

We were in their chambers last September, alongside our environmental partners, passionate about saving habitat, air quality and lives, when three Supervisors won the day by passing the essential Fire Safe version of its Climate Action Plan. Supervisors Desmond and Anderson fumed. But self-congratulations were soon extinguished as that plan, clearly approved by the Board of Supervisors, remains mired in legal ambiguity as the County's lawyers argue it did not pass. I am not making this up.

And while Sierra Club must continue a decades long court battle for a fire safe Climate Action Plan, nothing brings home the real human consequence that follows fire incidents than when one becomes personal.

Long after the public memory fades, our family will be making its way along a long road to recovery through a thicket of agencies offering aid, as did the victims of the Cedar, Witch Creek and Normal Heights fires in San Diego not so many years ago. There are lessons to be learned from Los Angeles if only the public and its elected representatives take them seriously. History says otherwise.

The Eaton Fire started under So Cal Edison 220kv powerlines in ultra-high wind conditions, spreading to eagerly awaiting fuels, the ubiquitous SoCal emblematic palm trees whose embers whipped through Altadena. Similar conditions flourish in



San Diego neighborhoods on public and private properties. Further, an epidemic of highly flammable invasive plants chokes thousands of acres of protected chaparral covered habitat preserves that remain unprotected.

A myriad of bureaucratic snafus and funding priorities within the City of San Diego has long prevented implementation and, in some cases, creation of Preserve management plans with teeth, including removal and replacement of invasive plants within and adjacent to vulnerable open spaces. And so, for the moment we rely on public/private nonprofit partnerships dependent on grants and donations that have been replacing fire-prone invasive plants and trees with natives in San Diego canyons and along creek beds.

Much of this work is like a gilded game of Whack-A-Mole as homeowners and landscapers unwittingly continue to plant invasives that carry bad seeds right back into the open spaces. Whether recently doused fires racing up Montezuma Rd. toward San Diego State University neighborhoods, a La Jolla canyon brush fire or the flames licking at Rancho Bernardo, wildfires are the constant menace that sadly will, like all the others, leave public consciousness as the news cycle moves on unless communities act.

The proliferation of community-based Fire Safe Councils, now numbering 50, is a positive sign that neighborhoods are taking responsibility for fire safety on the ground, making sure the public does not forget.

On behalf of our families, land-use policies must consider fire threats and evacuation routes when approving new development, programs enabling replacement of fire prone invasive plants with natives on public lands should be a fiscal priority, and homeowners must be incentivized to remove flammable and infectious landscaping.

So far, the grand kids are alright after the Altadena catastrophe as the family searches for a permanent home. For them, and all the affected families, time is now to fire-safe our neighborhoods using environmentally sound practices.

Together, we will make "Good (Green) Trouble."

Home Hardening and Defensible Space

Recent catastrophic wildfires in Los Angeles have made wildfires top of mind for Southern California residents. It is important to dispel myths and focus on the most important actions that can be taken to prevent loss of human life and property.

Prescribed Burns Are Not the Answer

Chaparral and sage scrub cover most of California's coastal foothills and interior mountain slopes. This habitat is characterized by semi-arid, woody shrubs, and shaped by a Mediterranean-type climate (hot, dry summers & mild, wet winters) and infrequent fires (with natural intervals between fires being 30 to 150 years or more). Conservation International and other conservation organizations consider chaparral to be a biodiversity hotspot - a biological community with a large number of different species - that is under threat by human activity. There is enormous pressure from fire agencies and misguided conservationists to conduct prescribed burns on these plant communities in the false name of wildfire safety and ecosystem and climate "resilience". Wildfire management approaches developed for forests are not appropriate for chaparral and coastal sage scrub. These ecosystems are very sensitive to fire and prescribed burns are virtually never appropriate.

A recent study Expert Perspective: Wildland Fuels Management Would Not Have Saved Us from the January 2025 LA Fires was published by scientists from UC Santa Barbara and UCLA.

Key Takeaways:

- *Large scale and high intensity wildfires are natural in California's shrubland ecosystems occurring centuries before suppression efforts occurred. They are not a product of "mismanaged forests."*
- *The most destructive wildfires are human caused and driven by extreme Santa Ana winds, a natural phenomenon, and they are not stopped by landscape fuel reduction or prescribed fires.*
- *Shrubland fuel modification is useful in specific and limited contexts such as the strategic placement of fuel "protection zones" near human infrastructure and in conjunction with active firefighting operations.*
- *Large wildfires are inevitable across California shrubland ecosystems, and the scientific consensus to mitigate wildfire risk to human communities includes: (1) Home hardening, (2) Maintenance of defensible space, (3) Community & built environment planning, and (4) Ignition reduction.*

Fuel management zones failed to stop the barrage of embers in Paradise, CA during the Camp Fire pointing to the critical need for home hardening. Fuel reduction plays a role in creating defensible space. A study examining vegetation clearance and home survival found that clearance only needs to be 100 feet from structures to be effective and further clearance gained no additional benefit.

Home Hardening

Home hardening to reduce wildfire threats involves understanding the risks and taking proactive steps. Your home can be threatened by:

- *Direct flames: Typically coming from a wildfire or a neighboring house*
- *Radiant heat: Typically coming from nearby burning objects*
- *Flying embers: Embers can be particularly destructive - capable of igniting homes up to a mile away.*

Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home. Use composite, metal, clay, or tile roofing to resist fires. Close off gaps under roof tiles and shingles to block wind-blown embers. Regularly clear leaves, pine needles, and other debris from the roof to prevent ignition. Install 1/16-inch to 1/8-inch noncombustible, corrosion-resistant metal mesh over vents to block embers. Avoid fiberglass or plastic meshes, which can melt. Install dual-paned windows with at least one tempered glass layer to withstand fire-induced breakage.

Avoid flammable siding. Preferred materials include stucco, fiber cement, or specially treated wood. Construct decks from ignition-resistant building materials like composite and maintain an ember-resistant zone beneath decks by removing all flammable materials. Use ignition-resistant materials on patio covers. Box in eaves and soffits using ignition-resistant or non-combustible materials to prevent ember entry. Use noncombustible materials for the portion of the fence that connects to the house to prevent fire spread.

More information can be found at the CalFire website:

<https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/hardening-your-home/>

Defensible Space

Defensible space is crucial for your home's wildfire safety. It's the buffer zone you create between your property and the surrounding wildland area. This space is key to slowing or stopping wildfire spread and protecting your home from embers, flames, or heat. It also gives firefighters a safer area to defend your property.

In each zone, the intensity of vegetation management increases as you get closer to your home. The goal is to start at your house and work outward, reaching up to 100 feet or your property line. There are three zones. Zone 0 extends 0-5 feet from your home and is focusing on intense fuel reduction to protect against ember attacks. Zones 1 & 2 cover up to 100 feet around your home. They're required by law and involve varying levels of vegetation management.

Zone 0 - Ember Resistant

Zone 0 extends 5 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. While not legally required yet, Zone 0 is key for wildfire defense and preventing fires from spreading to your home. Here are the current guidelines:

- *Use gravel, pavers, or concrete instead of combustible mulch*
- *Clear dead weeds, grass, and debris; check roofs, gutters, and outdoor areas*
- *Keep branches trimmed 10 feet away from chimneys and stovepipes*

Defensible Space continued on page 4

- Minimize combustible items like furniture and planters on decks
- Move firewood and lumber to Zone 2 for safety
- Replace combustible fencing and gates with fire-resistant materials
- Shift garbage and recycling containers to a safer area outside this zone
- Relocate boats, RVs, and vehicles away from this zone to reduce fire risks

Zone 1 - Lean, Clean and Green

Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.

- Clear all dead plants, grass, and weeds
- Remove dead leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof, and gutters
- Trim overhanging branches and keep them 10 feet from your chimney
- Regularly trim trees to maintain a 10-foot gap from others
- Move wood piles to Zone 2
- Prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows
- Clear flammable vegetation and items from under decks, balconies, and stairs
- Maintain space between trees, shrubs, and flammable items like patio furniture and wood piles

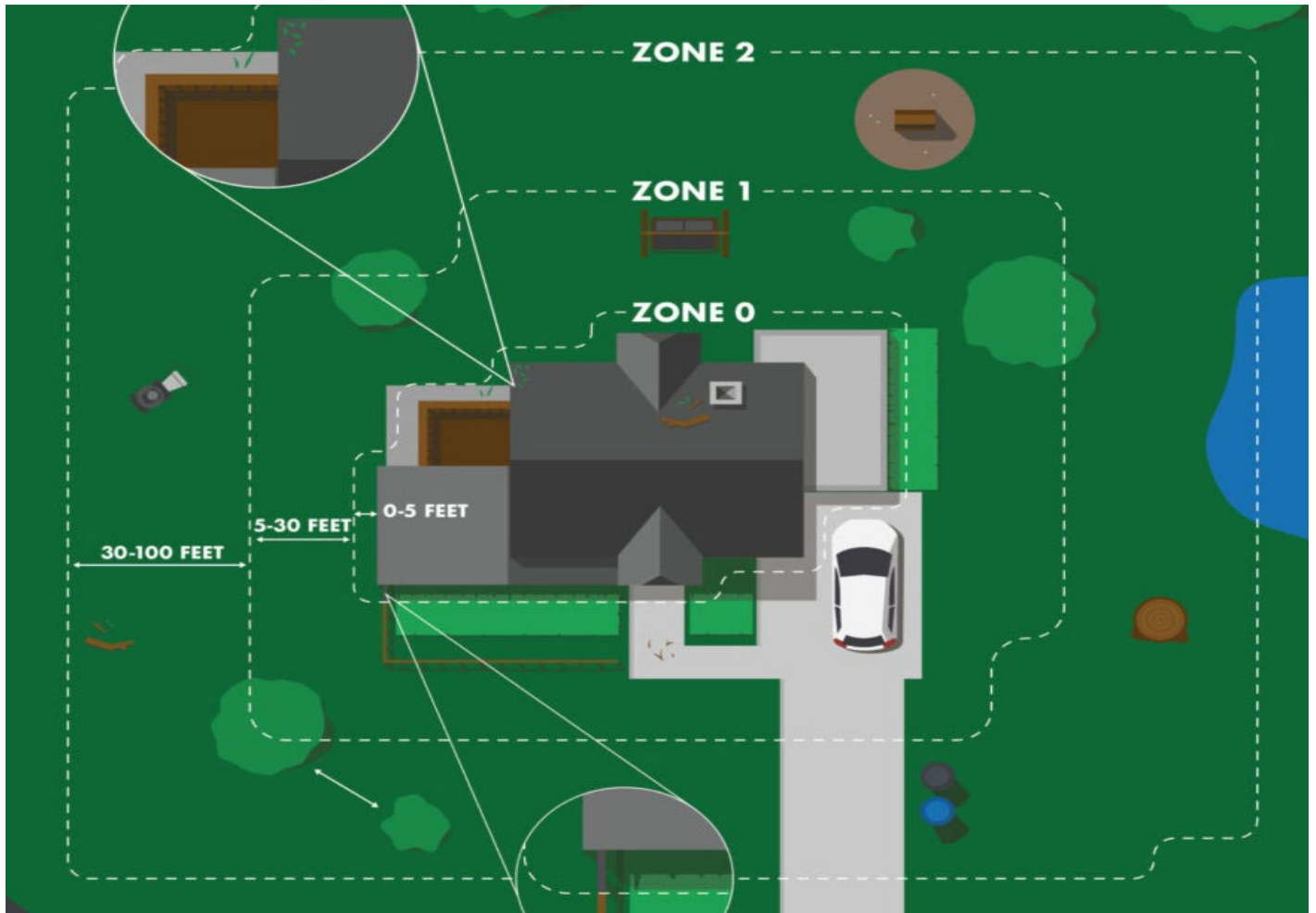
- Ensure outbuildings and LPG tanks have 10 feet of clear space to bare soil and no flammable vegetation within an additional 10 feet around them

Zone 2 - Reduce Fuel

Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.

- Trim annual grass to a maximum height of 4 inches
- Space out shrubs and trees horizontally
- Ensure vertical spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, and small branches, but can leave up to 3 inches
- Keep exposed wood piles at least 10 feet clear from surroundings, down to the soil
- Ensure outbuildings and LPG tanks have 10 feet of clear space to bare soil and no flammable vegetation within an additional 10 feet around them.

Check local ordinances for defensible space or weed abatement; they may be stricter than state requirements; for example, some areas like San Diego County require 50 feet of clearance in Zone 1. Consult your local fire department or fire protection district for specific local rules



Chapter Outings Leader Training

By Stefanie Maio, Chapter Leader Training Coordinator

In October 2024, the Sierra Club San Diego proudly conducted its Chapter Outings Leader (COL) Level 1 and Level 2 training programs, welcoming a diverse group of members committed to leading and inspiring others in the exploration and preservation of our natural world. These training sessions are integral to the Sierra Club's mission, ensuring that outings are conducted safely, inclusively, and with a deep respect for the environment.

Comprehensive Training Approach

The COL training program is meticulously designed to equip prospective leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge. It comprises both in-class instruction and practical components, culminating in evaluated outings. This structure ensures that leaders are well-prepared to handle real-world scenarios.

During the in-class sessions, participants delve into a variety of essential topics:

- **Safety Protocols:** Emphasis is placed on risk assessment and management to ensure the well-being of all participants during outings.
- **Participant Evaluations:** Leaders learn to assess the needs and capabilities of group members, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment.
- **Route Planning:** Instruction covers the intricacies of planning routes that are both enjoyable and suitable for diverse groups, taking into account environmental considerations.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** A core focus is instilling a sense of responsibility towards nature, aligning with the Sierra Club's mission to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet.

The practical component allows trainees to apply their classroom knowledge in real-world settings. Under the mentorship of experienced leaders, participants conduct evaluated outings, receiving constructive feedback to hone their leadership skills.

Evacuation continued from page 1

Watch Duty

Watch Duty provides alerts and a real-time wildfire map. It also sends notifications about the status and conditions on the ground as they change. You can find clear and concise evacuation notices as well as shelters for people and animals all in one place. This service is powered by over 150 volunteers – firefighters, dispatchers, and first responders – who diligently monitor radio scanners and other official sources 24 hours a day to send you the most up-to-date information. <https://www.watchduty.org>

Air Matters

Air Matters provides real-time air quality index, allergy pollen, and weather data, as well as protection recommendations and forecast. When fires strike, maps showing the air quality index and PM2.5 are especially useful. PM2.5 (particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less) can penetrate deep into the lungs and cause a range of health problems.

<https://air-matters.com/index.html>

Join Us in Future Trainings

If you are passionate about the outdoors and wish to lead others in experiencing the beauty of nature, consider enrolling in future Chapter Outings Leader training programs.



Chapter Outings Leader Training takes place in the spring and fall.

**View details and sign up today at:
<https://sandiegosierraclub.org/learn/leader-training/>**

Wildfire Action Plan

Your wildfire action plan should include:

- A predetermined meeting point outside high-risk areas to determine who has evacuated from the affected area.
- Several escape routes that you have practiced often, so everyone in your family knows where to go.
- Make specific arrangements for pets and larger animals.
- A family communication plan that names someone outside the area to be the main contact point for all family members if you get separated or have trouble with phone networks.

Assemble your "Go Bag" which should include

- A 3-day supply of non-perishable food and 3 gallons of water per person
- A map with at least 2 evacuation routes
- Necessary prescriptions or medications
- A change of clothes and extra eyeglasses/contact lenses
- Extra car keys, credit cards and cash
- A first aid kit and sanitation supplies

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A Few Thoughts on Fresh Water

We all know water is life. In fact, most life, and even our organs have large fractions of water content. Human civilization developed as we learned to control water for irrigation and the dawning of urban life in the Tigris and Euphrates valley six or seven thousand years ago. Humans began millennia of dam building, disputes and wars over water. We understood the need to harness water to our purposes. Locally, dams in San Diego County need more than a \$1 billion in repair. The Lake Hodges Dam urgently needs replacing.

Planetary Boundary scientists, led by Johan Rockstrom and the Potsdam Institute, have identified two forms of freshwater, (1) Blue Water flowing in lakes, rivers, and streams and (2) Green Water in soils, key to plant growth and agriculture. Stresses on water include atmospheric water, soil moisture, surface water, ground water, and frozen water, all being driven by human activities.

Humans have acted to control Blue Water, but at huge environmental costs that demand immediate action.

- *We have placed dams on the majority of large rivers to control their flow, facilitate agriculture, and produce energy. 43% of us live in areas whose energy is produced and controlled by dams, and are protected from floods by abutments and constructs like the Embarcadero in San Francisco. By 2050, 61% of global dams will be at extreme risk of droughts, floods, or both. This year we've seen a dramatic curtailment of electricity supply in Brazil and Ecuador due to low*

water levels. Even the mighty Amazon has dried-up sections.

- *Humans adapt nature to our preferences, our fossil fuel-based civilization, and the rise of capitalism. Sometimes, we act to restore nature, e.g., by removing the dams on the Klamath River. But there's a huge cost associated with relocation and rewilding.*
- *We have an unpredictable hydrological cycle. For each 1°C rise in temperature, the atmosphere holds 7% more water. Since 2015, the atmosphere has reduced surface water by 220 cubic miles! This is a cause of atmospheric rivers dumping water in excess, causing floods like that in south San Diego that recently displaced thousands. Bill McKibben reports that in the first three weeks of October 2024, 35 countries experienced major floods, with untold harm to life and economies. Water, water, everywhere, except where we want it!*
- *We are at huge risk of passing an ice melting tipping point. Greenland is losing 30 million tons of ice EVERY HOUR. We may be headed to 24 feet of sea level rise from Greenland alone. Most of Florida is at risk of being underwater. The Thwaites glacier is melting and if Antarctic ice melts, we can expect 10 times the rise from Greenland. All coastal cities, where billions live, will be inundated. See California Against the Sea by Rosanna Xia for the story of California's attempt to hold back the ocean.*
- *Melting polar ice and removal of groundwater for agriculture have already altered the way water is distributed on the planet, and shifted Earth's tilt. Implications are unknown.*

Green Water is the stock of soil moisture available for plants. Groundwater is a finite resource and about half of Earth's aquifers are being depleted faster than they can be replenished. By 2050, enough groundwater will have been used to seriously diminish agricultural productivity.

- *Much farmland in California is subsiding one foot per year. Some has subsided 11 feet and one area has subsided 30 feet. Many thousands of acres are now fallowed due to diminished groundwater and the California's Sustainable Ground Management Law. See The Dreamt Land by Mark Arax for a compelling story of California's water infrastructure.*
- *India, in 2010, pumped 92 trillion gallons of water from underground, losing as much as 5 feet of groundwater per year.*
- *The Ogala Aquifer in western Kansas, western Texas and along the Rio Grande has depleted, forcing some farms to close.*
- *Globally, we have filled in massive wetlands to develop cities and farms. Recently, the US Supreme Court ruled that landowners can fill-in more wetlands on their property. Nature, birds, and wildlife will suffer.*
- *Since 1990, an additional 2.7 million square miles of land have dried out and are no longer fertile. No water anywhere, especially where its needed!*

In conclusion, every Climate Action Plan, must include water conservation projects. Clearly, we must rapidly reduce GHG emissions, reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides, reuse water, including grey water, remove lawns, use low-flow appliances, and act as if water is the foundation of life! It is also imperative that we have coordinated global action to protect fresh water. For an analysis of our global relationship to water, see Planet Aqua by Jeremy Rifkin.

Stay cool and hydrated!

Native Trees continued from page 1

likelihood of property damage or loss. When it comes to trees in particular, popular non-native imports to the region such as eucalyptus and palms pose a particular danger. Palm trees were a major driver of the fires in Los Angeles as their crowns are easily ignitable and are perfectly positioned to spread embers along roof lines. Eucalyptus, which are constantly shedding their bark and contain highly flammable oils are even worse and can burn fast and with extreme heat. The oil in eucalyptus trees has roughly the same flash point (ignition temperature) as kerosene and when distilled eucalyptus oil is considered a hazardous Class 3 Flammable Liquid by the Department of Transportation.

Some good news when we look at the ecology of the region is that being firesafe and being ecologically conscious go hand in

hand in southern California. In particular one local species sticks out as a robust, beautiful and resilient alternative to the palm and eucalyptus. The Coastal Live Oak not only won't contribute to your property's destruction, when properly maintained it could help mitigate your fire risk. The Coastal Live Oak is endemic to central and southern California and northern Baja California and grows at a moderate rate of about 2 feet per year. The tree is fire adapted with waxy evergreen leaves and a thick, multilayered bark that protects the interior of the tree against fires of moderate to high intensity. The canopy of mature trees has been demonstrated to effectively shield rooflines from embers and, when multiple trees are present, as a strong wind break. While smaller trees may still find it difficult to rebound after fires, medium to large specimens have a remarkable survival rate and ability to bounce back quickly.

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South Bay Report

By Charles Rilli, Conservation Organizing Manager

As we work toward a more sustainable future, I'm excited to share updates on the ongoing environmental efforts here in the South Bay of San Diego. From addressing local pollution challenges to advocating for stronger conservation practices, our community is making great strides, and I'm grateful for your continued support in these vital initiatives. In this edition, I'll highlight some key developments, celebrate recent successes, and outline the steps ahead to ensure a healthier environment for generations to come.

Over the past two months, I've been engaging with our membership through a listening tour across four of San Diego's nine City Council districts. This tour culminated in a special event with Council President Joe LaCava, where our members had the opportunity to directly engage with him about priorities for the year and discuss pressing environmental challenges facing the city, including the ongoing budget deficit.



Council President Joe LaCava speaking to members at the Pacific Beach Library. Photo by Charles Rilli

In tackling the Tijuana River pollution crisis, we've continued to build momentum, rallying community support and working alongside advocates to drive progress. We are closely monitoring

the federal funds allocated for the South Bay International Water Treatment Facility and remain committed to pushing for a comprehensive solution to the issue. Many of our local and federal legislators are exploring creative strategies to secure additional funding to address this crisis.

Paloma Aguirre, a true champion of the Tijuana River pollution fight and the mayor of Imperial Beach, is running for the County Board of Supervisors in District 1 after Nora Vargas' resignation. Aguirre has earned the endorsement of the Sierra Club, and we're excited to support her candidacy as she continues to advocate for our region.

Efforts continue to thwart the proposed East Otay Mesa Landfill, which, if developed, would be sited in unincorporated South San

Diego County at the base of Otay Mountain and 1/4 mile north of the border. Sierra Club members and allies will recall that the project will not go before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors for approval of its permit due to the way in which the authorizing ballot measure was written. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is still being prepared by the lead agency San Diego County Local Enforcement Agency (LEA). The timeline for completion and release of the DEIR is uncertain.

A legislative path through Senator Steve Padilla's bill SB 1208 was almost successful but the bill failed to reach a critical second vote on the final day of the State Legislative session on August 31, 2024. The focus of SB 1208 was to preclude any landfill from being developed in the impaired and sensitive Tijuana River Watershed. Another potential path is a regulatory response by the coalition Protect Otay Foothills, of which Sierra Club San Diego is a vital member and with whom we are partnering, to action involving the conveyance of mineral rights by the Bureau of Land Management. We still need, of course, solid on-the-ground opposition by residents, stakeholders and community organizations to fight the proposed project! Once the Draft EIR is released, a Review and Comment Period will begin. We'll need you to get involved, submit Letters of Comment, and testify at any public hearing!

For more information about the project and Sierra Club San Diego's efforts, contact me at charles.rilli@sierraclub.org or contact:

Stephanie Peck, Protect Otay Foothills, at info@protectotayfoothills.org, 858-531-5257.

At the County level, we are actively working with staff to ensure the swift implementation of the Fire Safe and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)-efficient alternatives in the recently adopted Climate Action Plan. These strategies will incentivize new development in safer, more sustainable areas, and we are attending county "Sustainable Land Use Framework" workshops to better understand the county's direction for future development.

Lastly, we continue to oppose the proposed Fairmount Fire Station in the Chollas Creek community, a project located in a steep canyon within an already polluted watershed. We are hopeful that alternative sites will be studied by the City of San Diego, and we look forward to supporting this essential project in a more suitable location. We are awaiting the Draft Environmental Impact Report which should be released very soon.

Evacuation continued from page 5

- A flashlight and battery-powered radio with extra batteries
- Copies of important documents (birth certificates, passports, etc.)
- Pet food & water

Always have sturdy shoes and a flashlight near your bed, ready for sudden night evacuations.

If time allows, consider adding easy to carry valuables, family photos and irreplaceable items, personal computer data on hard drives or disks, and chargers for cell phones and laptops.

Go! Evacuation Guide

Pre-evacuation steps which can be taken to give your home the best chance of surviving a wildfire include:

Inside the House

- Close all windows and doors but leave them unlocked
- Take down flammable window treatments like shades and curtains and clear away light curtains
- Move anything that burns easily to the middle of rooms, away from windows and doors
- Turn off the gas at the meter and pilot lights
- Leave lights on for firefighters to see your house in smoke
- Switch off the air conditioning

Outside the House

- Bring in flammable items from outside, like patio furniture, toys, doormats, and trash bins.

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La Jolla Harbor Seals Give Birth with Pup Patrol

With Comments by University of California San Diego Students.
by Robyn Davidoff and Carol Archibald, Sierra Club Seal Society

The 2025 harbor seal birthing season at the Children's Pool in La Jolla is underway. As of the end of February, 37 pups had been born, with more births expected in March. In 2024, there were over 60 viable seal pups born. The pups are learning to swim and fish and their moms are kept busy chasing them in and out of the water. It's fun to watch. The Children's Pool



Mother seal and one day old pup. Photo by Robyn Davidoff



Training of UCSD Pup Patrol students

remains closed until May 15 so the pups can mature enough to take care of themselves without human interference.

This year, for the second time, the Sierra Club Seal Society reached out again to University of California San Diego (UCSD) Scripps Education Association (SEA), a marine biology major group and the Ecology, Behavior and Evolution major (EBE) clubs to participate in public education during the harbor seal birthing season. Over 40 students were trained to answer questions about seal reproduction and behaviors, take counts of harbor seal adults and newborns, and many were lucky enough

to view a live birth. The student clubs named themselves the "Pup Patrol". The Seal Society looks forward to repeating this collaboration next year.

We wanted to know how the UCSD students felt about their experience and asked them to provide comments:

Brandi Sanchez, a Master's student in the Department of Biological Sciences, UCSD wrote: "I have learned so much from helping kickstart the UCSD Seal Society program. Carol Toye from San Diego Sierra Club Seal Society first approached EBE and SEA Club at UCSD to give students a chance to become docents for the adorable seals at the Children's Pool. Myself, Eleanor Cole, and Martha Fiehn then created the fun Seal Pup Patrol program through which I learned of the importance of community science, where we involve the public in conservation efforts. We want to make sure that there is a legacy where the public can come and learn about the ecological importance of seals from the students of La Jolla, creating a larger community that is eager to protect the seals and their habitat. I hope this program continues to thrive and grow even more!"

Haiven Smith, Marine Biology student, UCSD wrote: "Being in Seal Society has been such an amazing experience. It's incredible getting to see these pups learn and grow from the moment they're born, up until they're able to live on their own. I originally joined because when I first heard about it through my friend Sophia it sounded interesting and like a fun side hobby, and it really lived up to my expectations. It makes it all worthwhile to make the trip from campus when I'm able to educate people on harbor seals and see their faces light up over fun facts I bring up about them. I hope to continue doing this for years to come, whether with UCSD Seal society or Sierra Club Seal Society of San Diego as it's truly been a highlight of my school year so far."

Gabriella Paonessa, a UCSD SEA student said: "I really enjoyed volunteering at the beach, watching the seals, and educating the public, especially when I witnessed the birth of one of the seal pups. We waited hours and finally the baby came. It was a wonderful experience to be able to see and share the experience with the watching public. I will miss going to the beach and seeing the seals, and I hope I can volunteer again next year."

Joanna Montero, a UCSD SEA student wrote: "The opportunity to volunteer and docent for the Sierra Club Seal Society has been an unbelievable once in a lifetime experience. From the wonderful training the docents provided that gave a plethora of information, to the amazing interactions with the public, to witnessing harbor seal pup births, and their overall behavior, it has been the most rewarding experience. Being able to educate people on these magnificent animals and see their faces light up with increasing appreciation for them has to be my favorite part. After all, the more people that care for wildlife, the better we can protect them. Witnessing the births and seeing the mother and pup interactions is also a spectacular sight that I don't think I will ever get tired of. I have learned and received so much out of this experience and I hope everyone can have the opportunity to see, appreciate, and learn about the harbor seals and wildlife in La Jolla!"

Seal Society continued on page 9

Megan Kassebaum, a first-year undergraduate, out-of-state UCSD student, said: “Finding a sense of community has been challenging. My weeks are filled with lectures, assignments, and long hours studying on campus. Hoping to branch out, I joined the UCSD/Sierra Club docent program - a decision that not only reconnected me with nature but also allowed me to engage meaningfully with the public. I’ve met incredible people: families from Germany, photographers who have traveled great distances, dedicated docents, and welcoming La Jolla residents, all who share a curiosity and interest in the seals. The seal rookery is a truly special place, from the playful Harbor Seal pups to the nesting Brandt’s Cormorants, and it’s a real gift to spend my time and benefit my community in such a beautiful setting. It’s incredibly rewarding to



Sea lion mom and newborn pup, photo by Roxy

witness people’s excitement as they watch and learn about the seals and it’s fulfilling to know that I’m helping others appreciate and understand these remarkable animals. This experience has made me feel more connected to San Diego and given me a genuine sense of belonging. Being a docent gives me something to look forward to every week, and I can’t wait to continue with the program in the years ahead.”

Sophia Lamotte, Marine Biology student, UCSD wrote: “On my first day as a Pup Patrol docent, I never imagined how deeply this experience would capture my heart. I found myself completely enchanted, spending hours mesmerized by the graceful seals. Driven by a passion for wildlife conservation and a love for marine life, joining Pup Patrol felt like the perfect way to dive into the world of marine biology. During our initial training session, a cascade of fascinating seal facts ignited my curiosity and set my excitement soaring. From my very first shift, every moment was exhilarating - I saw

a kindred spirit in these reserved, shy creatures who, like me, cherish their personal space. Their tender care for their young is nothing short of remarkable. They can go days without food just to stay close to their pups - a rare and inspiring trait in the animal kingdom. Being a docent not only allows me to witness these incredible behaviors up close, but it also gives me the chance to raise awareness about the importance of protecting these fascinating animals and their natural habitats. It’s a

privilege to be part of such an impactful program that lets me make a real difference while immersing myself in one of my greatest passions.”

The Seal Society furthered public education by presenting four “Talk and Walks” at Mangelsen’s Images of Nature Gallery in La Jolla. Each Saturday in February, a 30-minute presentation about seals and sea lions was given followed by a short walk to see the harbor seal pups as they nurse, rest and swim with their moms. It was well publicized on social media

and in the city’s events calendars and 25 - 40 people attended each presentation.

In June, the sea lions that live at Pt. La Jolla will begin their birthing season. SCSS will host weekly lectures and tours of the sea lion rookery at Mangelsen’s Images of Nature Gallery in La Jolla. Check the Sierra Club calendar for dates and times.

The Sierra Club Seal Society continues to partner with other wildlife groups to get the word out about safe viewing of wild animals. Our key reminders are to view a bus length away from the animal; if it looks at you, you are too close. Refrain from taking close pictures of animals as it encourages others to get too close, and use your zoom on your camera to get the perfect photo.

To volunteer with the Sierra Club Seal Society, contact us at scealsociety@gmail.com or on Instagram @sdsealsociety.

The tree also provides habitat for local birds of prey and is perfectly suited to endure as a long-lived species in our climate. Choosing to replace existing palms and eucalyptus on your properties, especially if you live in a low-density neighborhood on the edge of town, is an investment in your home’s future and your local ecology. When combined with other local species that are naturally fire resistant, your home can be made safer as you create a hospitable environment for local flora and fauna. No single piece of vegetation can save your property from a severe fire, but a collective commit-

ment to local species can go a long way to creating communities with an overall lower fire risk and higher biodiversity count.

Great local resources such as CalScape, an organization that helps people find and identify the right local plants for their landscaping needs, can be a guide to better understanding how the decisions you make as a homeowner impact your local ecology and fire risk. As we look forward to warmer weather on the horizon and getting outside more, let’s take this moment to look at our properties and make some long term decisions about our safety and how we can contribute to the health of the ecosystems we inhabit.

Zeroing in on Zero Waste - Your Questions Answered

San Diego Sierra Club Zero Waste Subcommittee

In this issue of the HiSierran, we'll present highlights from the 12th Annual Zero Waste Symposium that was held on February 26 and provide information on Fixit Clinics.

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.

12th Annual Zero Waste Symposium

The theme of the 12th Annual Zero Waste Symposium, held on February 26th, was Back to the Future of Zero Waste: Lessons from Our Past, Informing Our Path Forward. The event was a tremendous success with a sold-out crowd of over 200 people in person and more than 100 participants online. In addition to inspiring and informative presentations, the symposium also provided an opportunity to connect with industry leaders, explore innovative Zero Waste solutions, and network with like-minded professionals.

Symposium Highlights

Senator Catherine Blakespear (*pictured above*), who represents District 38 and is Chair of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee, led off the symposium with State of California Environmental Updates. She spoke about two of the most important bills passed in previous legislative sessions: SB 54 and SB 1383. CalRecycle will soon publish permanent regulations for SB 54 the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act, which shifts the burden from consumers to manufacturers.

SB 1383, California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy, was passed in 2016 and aims to reduce methane and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions statewide. To meet this goal, the bill established two targets by 2025:

- A 75% reduction of statewide organics waste disposal from 2014 levels
- A 20% or greater recovery (for human consumption) of edible food currently disposed of in California

It is very important for local municipalities to take action to meet these GHG goals.

Senator Blakespear's bill SB 1053, passed in 2024, closes loopholes in

California's initial plastic bag ban to ensure that consumers are using either reusable bags or are offered paper bags at grocery store checkouts. This law goes into effect on January 1, 2026.

In 2025, accountability and affordability will be key for California legislators. When producers are responsible for end of life, they will come up



with affordable solutions.

California's Zero Waste Plan will implement policy and legislative changes to drive the state to zero waste by reducing, reusing, repairing, and recycling resources. The Zero Waste Plan sets a path to close existing program gaps, identify what's working, and recommend what's needed for a truly circular economy.

Equity and inclusion are priorities as California builds a comprehensive, circular strategy to reduce and reuse all materials. The Zero Waste Plan is due for publication in 2026.

This year's keynote speaker was Darcy Shiber-Knowles, Director of Operational Sustainability & Innovation at natural soap maker Dr. Bronner's. Her talk REFILL! REFILL! OK! described the challenges of getting away from plastic for liquid soap products. Glass and metal packaging don't work well for these types of products. Paper-based cartons have the best environmental footprint. Dr. Bronner's now has refill stations at several retailers.

Nick Lapis, Director of Advocacy at Californians Against Waste provided an update on California's Policies and Legislations. Recent campaigns have included expiration date reform to reduce food waste, anti-greenwashing efforts and Senator Blakespear's SB 1053 plastic bag ban. Current 2025/2026 legislative priorities include:

- AB 762 (*Irwin and Wilson*) - Prohibits the sale of nonrefillable or nonchargeable vaping products.
- SB 279 (*McNerney*) - Makes it easier for farms and vineyards to do on site composting.
- AB 823 (*Boerner*) - Bans microplastics in cleaning, coatings and personal care products.

Zero Waste continued on Page 11

- **SB 45 (Padilla & Blakespear) - Requires bottle manufacturers tether caps to bottles (Connect the Cap).**

Maricruz Carrillo, PhD, is the Founder & CEO of Menos Waste. Her presentation Green Without the Wash: Authentic Sustainability in Packaging gave examples of four types of deceptive advertising:

- **Direct: Making false claims.**
- **Indirect: Pretending to care about the environment while causing damage, like fast fashion brands.**
- **Incognito: Selling eco-friendly brand products while being owned by an irresponsible parent company.**
- **Political: Claiming to support human rights while violating them.**

Dr. Carrillo also described “green hushing” as when a company avoids discussing their sustainability efforts to avoid greenwashing accusations.

Dr. Ron Askeland, Chair of the San Diego Sierra Club Zero Waste Subcommittee, described the subcommittee’s 2025 goals:

- 1) **Adoption of a countywide Waste and Toxic Materials Reduction Program**
- 2) **Methane reduction by diverting organics from landfills, including edible food recovery**
- 3) **Phase out all uses of synthetic turf**
- 4) **Reduce/eliminate pesticide use on school grounds**
- 5) **Track City of San Diego’s implementation of Measure B and Polystyrene Foam Ban/Single Use Plastics Ordinance**
- 6) **Reduce Tobacco, Cannabis and E-cigarette Waste by collaborating with SDSU**
- 7) **Work with State Senator Blakespear’s office on CA Zero Waste legislation**

Evacuation continued from page 7

- **Shut off propane tanks**
- **Move grills and other propane BBQ appliances away from the house**
- **Don’t leave sprinklers or water running as it can lower critical water pressure.**
- **Keep exterior lights on to make your home visible in smoky or dark conditions.**
- **Put your emergency kit in your car**
- **Park your car in the driveway, facing outwards, loaded and ready, with all doors and windows shut**
- **Keep an eye on the fire situation and don’t wait for an evacuation order if you feel at risk**

Keep pets close and ready to go. Stay alert because you may be directed to temporary assembly areas to await transfer to a safe location. If you become trapped in your car, stay calm, park in an area clear of vegetation, close all vehicle windows and vents, cover up with a wool blanket or jacket, lie on the vehicle floor, and use your cell phone to call 911. Help firefighters by not returning home until fire officials notify you that it’s safe to do so.

Source: <https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/>

8) Phase out gas-powered leaf blowers in San Diego County

The primary focus of the presentation was on the Waste and Toxic Materials Reduction proposal. This initiative aims to enhance education, recycling, composting, and durable goods recovery efforts by increasing the AB 939 Disposal Fee by \$1.00 per ton for waste disposed at landfills in San Diego County. Sierra Club San Diego and Zero Waste San Diego are collaborating to form a coalition in support of this proposal.

Highschool student activist Jack Gonzalez with Save the Albatross Coalition & Zero Waste Youth is the founder of Stop the Caps (www.stopthecaps.org). His presentation Senate Bill 45: Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution in California described the benefits of SB 45 which would require bottle manufacturers tether caps to bottles:

- **Reduce loose plastic cap pollution**
- **Protect marine life from ingesting harmful caps**
- **Increase recycling rates**
- **Align with global standards**

Tethered plastic bottle caps have already been implemented in the European Union.

Fixit Clinics

Do you have a household item in need of repair? Don’t trash it. Come fix it for FREE at one of the upcoming Fixit Clinics, where space, tools, and expert coaches will be provided to help you troubleshoot and repair your well-loved items. Go to:

**<https://zerowastesandiego.org/?s=SD+fixit>
to learn more about upcoming Fixit clinics and to reserve your spot.**

Fire Safe Council

The Fire Safe Council of San Diego County is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing fire safety awareness and preparedness, managing fire hazards, and supporting forest health in San Diego County. San Diego County has been home to three of the largest fires in California. Wildfires not only destroy life and property, but also damage our air, watersheds, wildlife habitat, health, and our quality of life. Helping San Diego residents prevent, prepare for, and deal with the aftermath of these devastating wildfires is the goal of the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County. Through their programs and support of community Fire Safe Councils, they are committed to making San Diego fire safe.

Fire Safe Council of San Diego County is a member of the California Fire Safe Council and acts as the umbrella organization for the 50 locally-formed community Fire Safe Councils within San Diego County. There are more community fire safe councils in San Diego County than in any other county in California. Local fire safe councils are grassroots, community-led organizations, that mobilize residents to protect their homes, neighborhoods, and environments from wildfire. They know the unique challenges their communities face and implement projects like hazardous fuel reduction programs, local wildfire protection planning, and homeowner training to ensure its protection.

To learn more and find your local fire safe council, go to:
<https://firesafesdcounty.org/san-diego-fire-safe-councils/>



Explore, Enjoy & Protect the Planet

Sierra Club North County Coastal Group Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, April 30, 7:00 to 8:30 pm

The Ecology Of Wild Fires And How We Can Protect Our Communities While Protecting Habitat

Bryant has over a decade of experience in land and water conservation, community outreach, and ecology research. He holds a Master's and Bachelor's in Environmental, Soil, and Water Science

He has published multiple peer-reviewed scientific papers and is also a GIS analyst, cartographer, award-winning photographer, and videographer, whose work has appeared in the Los Angeles Times, San Diego Tribune, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Montana Free Press, Mother Jones, several books, and the feature-length documentary about wildfire in the western United States, Elemental: Reimagine Wildfire.

Everyone welcome! Register on-line to attend this Zoom meeting, <https://sandiegosierraclub.org/news/activities-calendar> for more information contact sallyp123@mac.com



Bryant Baker, M.Sc.
Director of Conservation & Research,
Los Padres Forest Watch

An Invitation to Form a Community of Eaters of Health-Giving Food

By Pat Holland, Conservation Committee Member

Answer these questions and if they intrigue you or are important to you, then consider joining me in an effort to educate other in the benefits of eating well and having a healthy life.

- Do you relish the flavor of just picked Non Genetically Modified Organism (NGO), including Non CRISPER, Non Ribonucleic acid (RNA) altered food and drink, grown with no man-made chemicals?
- Do you buy or grow fresh produce that is USDA certified organic, Bio (European certified organic), Certified Regenerative, certified Real Organic? Or do you wonder why people do? Or do you wonder what these and other labels mean?
- Do you know the importance for genetic diversity - of eating only wild caught fish and sea food? Or are you curious why others do?
- Do you, if you eat meat, seek to buy and eat meat that is Certified Organic, grass fed and finished, Regeneratively grown, in an area that is unpolluted?
- Are you concerned that GMO's, microplastics, heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, forever chemicals like PFAS, nano poisons could be a part of our coatings, packaging, dishes, cookware of food?



If you don't already know, that honest scientists have been finding pollutants from the list above - for decades - with repeated health harm to humans (sometimes immediate harm, often over a period of time), to other living creatures, and harm organisms in our soil that produces our food.

• Have you heard of the soil food web, first explained by Dr. Elaine Ingham several decades ago?

• Did you know that fragrances usually are neurotoxic, carcinogenic, and laden with multiple types of health harmers?

The toxins in fragrances pollute our air, water, soil, food and bodies? Everything in the ecosystem affects our food, our ability to think clearly, to live healthy, and to produce healthy children and grandchildren.

Would you like to get together with others to learn, share experiences, share the healthiest food we can grow, help find, and buy health food (at the very least Certified Organic)?

Would you like to regularly get together: in nature, in restaurants, and/or virtually?

Would you like to help fix the 90% of our USA food system which harms humans and environmental health?

If health harming food concerns you, and if health giving food and drink is important to you, give me a phone call, Pat Holland at 858-455-1033. This telephone number is an old fashion, but very reliable land line with an answering machine and call screening.

I hope to hear from you.

Inspiring Connections Outdoors



We're Getting Them Hooked on Nature Young!

by Bill Tayler



Building Climbing Skills in Laguna Meadows



Snowy Fun in Laguna Meadow



Beautiful Views at OakOasis

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

Historically, we have allowed students to begin coming on ICO hikes when they were in third or fourth grade, although occasionally we took some second grade students on a short and easy hike toward the end of the school year. This year, however, we have started taking a large number of second grade students on a variety of ICO hikes. Why the change? With the increasing amount of stress, anxiety and other mental health issues we have seen in the older students, it seemed like a good idea to allow younger children – ones who were in COVID quarantine at ages 3 to 5 – to start getting the physical and mental health benefits of being in nature as soon as possible. And it seemed like a fun thing to try – kids at that age are full of energy, enthusiasm and gratitude. All around, it has been a wonderful experience. Seeing them grow in confidence and outdoor skills has been immensely rewarding. We have been assisted significantly in these efforts by several of their teachers, who have come on the trips with them (which makes the kids more excited to go and their parents more comfortable allowing them). Our trips have included a Sunday spent climbing rocks and trekking through the forest in Laguna Meadows, a Saturday of exploring OakOasis Preserve, and a Wednesday afternoon trip to Laguna Meadows to hike and play in the snow. These young hikers have really taken to ICO trips, and many of them are already asking when they can go camping and snorkeling.

Stay tuned – it's definitely coming!

Classified Ads

Classified Ad Rates and Information:

Sierra Club Members (up to 25 words)

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

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

Non-Members (up to 25 words)

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

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

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

Sierra Club San Diego

*4241 Jutland Drive, Ste. #303
San Diego, CA 92117*

Send ad to:

info@thomascreative.com

FOR SALE

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

858-569-6005 or scoffice@sierrasd.org

Submission Deadlines for HiSierran Newsletter:

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

Upcoming Issues:

**July/August/September 2025
Deadline June 1, 2025.**

To submit by email, please email to both:
thomascreative2@cox.net
richard.miller@sierraclub.org

Submissions are subject to approval for content and subject matter.

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SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

**4241 Jutland Drive, Ste. #303
San Diego, CA 92117**

Donate online:

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The team will be responsible to review, arrange and facilitate online media and speakers.

Volunteer participation may be needed during presentations.

Speakers will be needed for videos or slides to show nature's wonders, great hikes, inspiring discoveries, environmental science, activist projects and environmental research.

Please let me know if you would like to be involved to assist presentations or can present on first Fridays of the month. *Richard Fewell* rwfewell@gmail.com

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, ext 4
richard.miller@sierraclub.org

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Conservation Organizing Manager:
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charles.rilli@sierraclub.org

Associate 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)
rfalawsierraclub@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)
ptheatherington@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

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

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

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 92117
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm
Phone: 858-569-6005
www.sandigosierraclub.org

In Memoriam

The San Diego Chapter recently lost two of our memorable leaders.

JANET ANDERSON



Janet Anderson was active in the Chapter beginning in the mid 1980's when she moved to the San Diego region. After going on a hike and learning about a proposed dam near Ramona, Janet joined the Conservation Land Use committee eventually becoming Chair.

Janet was very involved with the creation and adoption of the Multiple Species Conservation Plan in 1997 by both the city of San Diego and County. Janet served as Chair of the Chapter Conservation Committee for 3 years and was a Board member for the Desert Protective Council (DPC). With the large number of people moving into southern California, Janet was actively working to protect our southern desert from landfills, off-highway vehicle (OHV) abuse, and inappropriate development.

Janet's motto and advice; "One informed and impassioned voice CAN make a difference. I encourage our members to take on leadership roles, speak up and speak out, spread the environmental gospel." Janet earned her B.S. in biology from Western Reserve College. Her vivacity, optimism, warmth and infectious laughter made her the life of any party. She also had a brilliant, inquisitive mind. A true trailblazer, unlike most suburban housewives, she returned to school and earned her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Case Western Reserve University.

CYNTHIA WOOTTON



Cynthia Wootton was active in the Chapter's conservation programs from the beginning of her activism in 2016 to 2024.

Cynthia became a member of Sierra Club's Conservation Committee in 2016. She promoted conservation principles in meetings or correspondence with the San Diego Board of Supervisors, US Congress, State and City officials, and the San

Diego Association of Governments. She helped advance Community Choice Energy in City Councils of San Diego, Santee, La Mesa and Community Planning Groups. She served on the Chapter's Political Committee and worked on the campaigns of Sierra Club's endorsements. She helped organize Sierra Club educational programs. She set up the venue and helped promote the California Environmental Quality Act. She helped write educational materials about the benefits of electric buses based on extensive scientific evidence. She co-authored the article "A Look at Climate Change on San Diego County," published in San Diego Free Press. She conceived and helped design a San Diego Chapter brochure.

She was a prolific writer and provided many an article for the HiSierran covering subjects like the protection of Multiple Species Conservation Plan (spearheaded by Janet Anderson) lands as well as reporting on the proposed developments of Harvest Hills, Fanita Ranch and Village 13 and 14. She was also the force behind checking all the facts, making sure the Chapter's Conservation initiatives and information were factual and scientific.

As a child, Cynthia travelled around the world with her family. It was the beauty of Torrey Pines State Park that brought her to San Diego. She joined San Diego Sierra Club to explore the beauty of our county and state. Her appreciation of animals and the natural world will be greatly missed.