



Sierra Club San Diego Chapter

# HiSIERRAN

Serving San Diego And Imperial Counties

Vol 84 No. 1

Visit our website at: [www.sandigosierraclub.org](http://www.sandigosierraclub.org)

January/February/March 2024

## Changes to our Sierra Club Bus Trip Program

For over 40 years our Chapter has sponsored bus trips to various locations within California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah. Our outings were largely backpacking trips within our National Parks, State Parks and National Forests, primarily organized by Mike Fry and various volunteers. It was an opportunity for people to experience the wilderness with knowledgeable leaders, and to foster a commitment to “explore, enjoy and protect our wild places.” Most of our trips were well attended and much appreciated. It was also an opportunity for people to meet like-minded people, and to forge lasting friendships. We often had post-trip parties where people shared photos and great food.

Unfortunately, over the years the rules set by the various forest entities for offering these trips changed and became more bureaucratic. In the past we were able to subsidize our leaders and coordinators as a way to thank them for their service. However, in the recent past, we had to change our model in order

to continue offering our trips. This meant that we could only charge for actual costs, and that everyone (including leaders) had to pay the same. To continue to subsidize our leaders would cause us to be seen as a “commercial” entity which would entail different leader qualifications (ex. Wilderness First Responder), and an entirely different application process. We were told that if we were commercial, we would be unable to visit certain locations. Thus, we chose to change our model to “noncommercial,” which unfortunately meant that our leaders had full responsibility but with no financial support.

As wilderness travel has become more popular, a big issue has been dealing with the competition for permits and campgrounds. This has required being online at an appointed time to compete with “the world” for desired campsites and trailheads. Often it took several of us online with [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov) at the same time to make sure a trip would be able to go since we needed a certain number of trips in order to afford a bus. We often had to advertise trips before we knew if we could actually secure them – a stressful situation for all involved. In the old days we could deal with the Forest Service and parks directly and it was much easier.

Other changes included issues related to the buses themselves. The actual charges for using buses for transportation grew exponentially. Thus, we had to charge more for our outings. The bus companies began using larger buses which made it difficult

*Bus Trips continued on Page 6*

## We're On The Move!!!

After 13 years in the Clairemont Mesa office we have moved. This move will allow us to accommodate our growing staff and will feature an expanded meeting area for our volunteers and members.

*Our new address is:*

**Sierra Club San Diego Chapter**

**4241 Jutland Dr., Ste 303**

**San Diego, Ca 92117**

**858-569-6005**

We will not be moved into our new office until February 5, 2024, therefore, the chapter staff will be working from home.



**Watch for our grand opening in February 2024.**

**Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet**

# HiSIERRAN

Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

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**Lisa Ross**

## Happy Green New Year

Sierra Club San Diego is moving on and moving up in our quest for meaningful environmental action in 2024. But first, a brief look back.

### The past year was one of accomplishment and loss.

Sadly, we lost our dear friend, long-time colleague, and brain trust, David Grubb. A tireless advocate for environmental protection and sound transportation planning, the San Diego Chapter mourned the loss of our former Chapter Chair, State and National Sierra Club representative, and liaison to numerous community groups and public agencies at a Celebration of Life attended by public officials, environmental advocacy groups and his family. Dave was attending a conference on wildlife protection at the Golden Acorn Casino near Campo when he passed away on October 25, at the Pine Valley Lodge, doing what he loved best in a place he loved. Dave died with his boots on.

Our landmark 75th anniversary celebration was highlighted by our "Picnic in The Park" Family Day attended by over 300 people, including Sierra Club President Allison Chu and California State Director Brandon Dawson, who marveled at the multi-generational turn-out.

Our San Diego Chapter firmly landed on the National Sierra Club map thanks to perfect planning and participation by our Zero Waste and Outings Committees, North County Groups, Seal Society and Director Richard Miller.

State Senator Catherine Blakespear and San Diego City Councilmember Joe LaCava presented the Chapter with proclamations from the State legislature and City of San Diego for our 75 years of service on behalf of the environment.

Other achievements include the permanent closure of Point La Jolla to protect the sea lion rookery after a 5-year effort by our Seal Society. Through collaboration with our partner advocacy groups, litigation settlements requiring developers to mitigate for greenhouse gas emissions within the county will add 1000's of conserved land acreage,

create climate friendly housing North and South County, and contribute to a potential Greenhouse Gas mitigation bank.

And our Conservation Committee led by Ron Askeland with member Diane Woelke made strides influencing national Sierra Club policies on artificial turf and controlled burns in chaparral habitats. We are hoping for Board of Directors approval to oppose both in the coming year.

Early in the year the Chapter received a record bequeath from the Mary Ann Curry estate ensuring the Chapter's fiscal health well into the future, allowing us to begin rebuilding Foster Lodge in Mt. Laguna, underwrite our newly hired South County organizer, create a dedicated litigation fund, and make possible a new home for the Chapter.

And so, we are moving on and up, literally. In December we bid farewell to our dated office of 13 years in Claremont that the Chapter had outgrown. We will be welcoming our members and the public to the new larger Jutland Moreno home in February. The expanded facility will allow for comfortable in-person, remote and hybrid meetings with state-of-the-art technical capacity and support for volunteers and staff.

It was my honor to have been elected to another term as San Diego Chapter Chair heading into our 76th year. Welcome to our returning Executive Committee members, newly elected board secretary Ruben Arizmendi, and our dedicated staff who keep us on track.

Our accomplishments and ongoing campaigns wouldn't be possible without the unwavering support from our incredible volunteers and generous donors who believe in our mission. Please consider joining one of our volunteer committees this year. The committees are our strength, providing vital policy analysis and developing action plans. We have a lot to do on behalf of climate action, environmental justice, wetlands expansion and habitat preservation.

**Onward and upward. See you at our new  
Jutland Moreno home in February.  
Stay Green.**



## Monumental Progress

### FIVE national Monument campaigns in California and Nevada

*New monuments: Chuckwalla and Medicine Lake Highlands; Bahsahwahbee in Nevada. Expansions: San Gabriel Mountains and Berryessa/Snow Mountain National Monuments*

#### Chuckwalla-In Congress

On Sept. 21, Congressman Raul Ruiz (D-CA25) introduced HR 5660, the Chuckwalla National Monument Establishment and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act of 2023 into Congress. This new monument would permanently protect approximately 660,000 acres of public lands in Riverside and Imperial counties--stretching from Joshua Tree National Park's southern boundary to the Arizona border at the Colorado River.

"It's going to protect our land, it's going to protect the plants. It's going to protect the animals and it's going to protect sacred cultural sites," Congressman Ruiz said. He promised to work to move this bill through the committee process, but, "if there is no clear path through Congress," he will send a letter to President Biden.

At a public press event in Coachella on Sept. 25, alongside local elected officials, Tribal and community leaders, and residents, Congressman Ruiz announced his bill and urged President Biden to use the Antiquities Act in the California Desert to designate Chuckwalla National Monument and protect lands adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park.

"I'm very happy to be a part of this event, because we have a lot of different entities coming together in order to make this a successful request for a national monument," said Donald Medart Jr., a Councilmember for the Quechan Indian Tribe.

Some species that would benefit include the chuckwalla lizard, desert tortoise, desert bighorn sheep, and a rare population of giant saguaro (*carnegiea gigantea*) found in California. Rep. Ruiz said he is excited about the plan because of the strong involvement of Tribal leadership. "This is the movement of a community coming together to protect our lands for the betterment of all creation," he said.

Rep. Ruiz said the Chuckwalla National Monument would be co-managed with Tribes. The monument would help California reach its goal of conserving 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030. No lands within the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument boundaries overlap with areas identified as Development Focus Areas.

#### San Gabriel Mountains Monument Expansion

On November 7, USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources Dr. Homer Wilkes held a public listening session for a longtime effort to expand the San Gabriel National Monument.

Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter, supported by national staff alongside partners from the Nature for All Coalition and the San Gabriel Mountains Forever Campaign, composed of dozens of conservation groups, helped mobilize more than 150 community members to attend and provide more than 100 in person comments in support as well as thousands of petition signatures calling on the Biden Administration to use the Antiquities Act to expand the National Monument to protect more than 100,000 acres of the Angeles Forest.

A similar listening session occurred nearly ten years ago calling on then President Obama to declare the San Gabriels a national monument. It was exciting to see many leaders among local tribes, mayors, the governor's office and representatives from the state legislature come out now to support this expansion-- and to call for adequate resources to care for this special place. Today's active "30 by 30" statewide and national efforts lend new urgency to conserving these lands--even more than the strong rationale given in 2013. Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA28) and Senator Alex Padilla reintroduced legislation this year to expand the monument, currently HR 3681 in the House and S 1776 in the Senate). Los Angeles County as well as multiple cities across the region have passed resolutions calling for expansion of the monument.

The San Gabriel Mountains are an extremely important recreational resource to all of Southern California, being two thirds of all of Los Angeles' open space and receiving more than four million visitors per year.

The next steps for our campaign will be to continue to pressure the Biden administration on this designation by collecting more comments, resolutions from cities, and hosting more events to raise awareness about this effort.

#### Medicine Lake Highlands--A New National Monument Campaign

On November 1, the start of Native American Heritage Month, the Pit River Nation launched a public campaign underscoring the urgent need to protect ancestral homelands and spiritual sites currently managed by the US Forest Service in northern California. The Pit River Nation is calling on President Biden and California's federal delegation to put in place national monument protections for a little more than 200,000 acres in the Medicine Lake Highlands about 30 miles from Mount Shasta, known as Sáttítla. The area is mainly in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, partially extending into the Modoc National Forest. The Highlands were first formed from a caldera caused by collapse of the Medicine Lake volcano, probably the largest shield volcano in North America, more than 100,000 years ago.

These lands have sustained Indigenous peoples for thousands of years, and also serve as critical headwaters in California, providing pure water resources downstream for agriculture and millions of people. The volcanically formed aquifers below the surface capture snow melt and store as much water as California's 200 largest sur-

*Monumental Progress continued on Page 6*

# Tobacco Product Waste in San Diego County Neighborhoods

Kristina Tran, Grace Finnell-Gudwien, Lydia Greiner, Georg E. Matt, Center for Tobacco and the Environment San Diego State University

How much commercial tobacco product waste (TPW) is there



Community volunteers and researchers at a TPW survey.

in San Diego County neighborhoods? What types are most common? Once picked up, how fast does it reaccumulate? What can we do about this toxic waste? To answer these questions, the Center for Tobacco and the Environment at San Diego State University <https://cte.sdsu.edu/> partnered

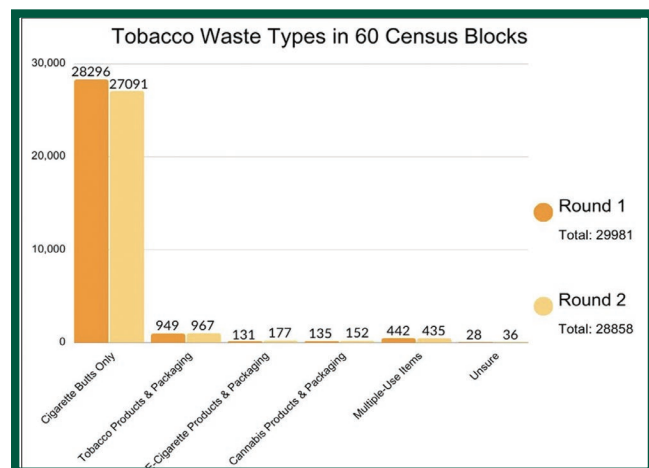
with community organizations and elected

officials to study the amount, distribution, and types of TPW in eight cities in San Diego County: Carlsbad, Chula Vista, El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, San Diego, San Marcos, and Vista.

Discarded tobacco products create large amounts of hazardous waste, including cigarette filters (cellulose acetate plastic), unsmoked and charred tobacco and cannabis, parts of vape pens (including batteries, electronic components, pods, and cartridges), and packaging from all of these products. TPW accumulates on sidewalks, streets, parking lots, parks, beaches, and private property. It flows into storm drains and eventually reaches rivers, lakes, marshes, and beaches.



Cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate, a type of plastic, fibers. They are not easily biodegradable, leach toxicants, and decompose into microplastics.



Across the 60 census blocks surveyed in Carlsbad, Chula Vista, El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, San Diego, San Marcos, and Vista, 94% cellulose acetate cigarette filter in.

It contains harmful chemicals — including known carcinogens — and microplastics that leach into soil and the aquatic environment and may eventually enter the human food chain. Cigarette butts alone present a massive issue to environmental and public health, as it is estimated that 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded into the environment every year and are the most littered single-use plastic item worldwide. Cleanup efforts, often associated with significant taxpayer expense and volunteer effort, raise awareness about TPW but are not an effective long-term solution. The waste will continue to accumulate unless prevented earlier in the process. Effective upstream strategies through policy change are needed to prevent the accumulation of this harmful waste stream in the first place.

To examine the issue of tobacco product waste in local communities, our researchers randomly selected 60 census blocks representing different land use categories and socio-economic groups in the eight largest cities in San Diego County. We identified, photographed, collected, geocoded, mapped, categorized, and disposed of every piece of TPW we found in these census blocks. We only measured TPW in public areas on the perimeter of the census block (e.g., sidewalks, public paths, landscaped areas, and street gutters) and any public areas inside the perimeter (e.g., shopping areas, parking lots, parks). We collected TPW from the census blocks twice to measure the re-accumulation of TPW. Community residents, local elected officials, and their staff, and employees of relevant city departments participated, including council members and their staff from Vista, Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Escondido, and San Diego.

In the first round of data collection, we found almost 30,000 items — an average of 500 TPW items per census block. In the second round of data collection, we found almost 29,000 items, or an average of 480 TPW items per census block. Tobacco products made up more than 98% of all TPW, and 94% were cigarette butts. After picking up TPW in the first data collection, approximately 96% of the TPW had re-accumulated by the time we revisited the blocks. Except for low-density residential areas, more than 90% of TPW had re-accumulated within two months of the first cleanup. Based on these data, we estimate that 9 million cigarette butts could be picked up every two months in the public areas of the eight cities. With a cigarette butt measuring about 1 inch, 9 million butts placed end-to-end would make a 140-mile line from the San Ysidro border to downtown Los Angeles!

We are now sharing what we have learned so far about the distribution and re-accumulation of TPW with community organizations, residents, elected officials, city officials, and other stakeholders. We are currently hosting community discussions focused on the impact of TPW on community quality of life, the environment, and city budgets, as well as exploring possible solutions, such as policy changes, to reduce and eliminate TPW. Visit us at the CTE website to learn more about this and other ongoing projects. <https://cte.sdsu.edu/current-projects/>



Example of a TPW on a San Diego city block. We cataloged 386 items in round 1 and 474 in round 2.



# The Seal Society Expands their Sphere of Influence



by Ellen Shively, Seal Society

Our Sierra Club identity and community activism on behalf of the La Jolla harbor seal and sea lion colonies has taken us in many and diverse directions.

In October, we participated in a Walter Monk dedication event at La Jolla Shores with other ocean-oriented groups. At another time, we met with one of the County Supervisors concerned with coastal zone issues and exchanged ideas of mutual interest. The La Jolla Town Council welcomed our presence at a newly formed sub-committee exploring safer ways to manage our beaches, wildlife, and nature.

Along with these reasons for hope, the last day of October ushered in the latest steppingstone with the year-round closure of Point La Jolla and most of Boomer Beach. Written into the Municipal Code, the public closure will evaluate the welfare of the sea lions given their freed-up space at the previously "shared use" of the mesa.

November brought the presentation of a year-long effort to create musical tribute to the beauty and wonder of our unique urban La Jolla resident colony of sea lions living, playing and giving birth with a new musically accompanied drone - filmed production of a "Sea Lion Symphony". It was well received, with one audience member expressing his delight with a resonant "WOW" as the program ended. We plan to revive it for other venues once the final editing

the holiday crowd at the La Jolla Christmas Parade to "Ask Us About Sea Lions and Seals". Unlike earlier years, we noticed no negativity "thumbs down", but only smiles and words of support, with plenty of friendly waves.

We then ended the "other than docent" effort with a beach clean-up prior to the closing of Children's Pool to the public for the harbor seal pupping season.

As we have noted, the visiting crowds have increased over the years, so we have adopted an "empathetic" approach to speaking in support of protecting the animals need for space and managing the crowds, using hints from a book called "Verbal Judo. We try to talk to people who may unknowingly be disturbing the animals by approaching them too close. We speak in a reasonable but firm tone when asking them to change their behavior if it is disturbing the animals. We then follow up with reasonable explanations such as watching for signs of disturbance, or changes in their position. Usually, the visitors appreciate the warning as they mean no harm. Our hope is to be able to increase the distribution of "safer" "Viewing Guidelines" by asking Tour Busses and at local businesses and around the Scripps Park area to place the posters in strategic locations.

If you are interested in joining us in our mission of educating visitors and working for the benefit of this unique marine mammal colony, please visit the link:

<https://sandiegosierraclub.org/seal-society-4/>



Live performance of Sea Lion Symphony Premiere



Leadership answering questions at Sea Lion Symphony Premiere

## Seal Society Seeks Volunteers

Do you have a few spare hours a week to spend at a very worthwhile activity which will make a difference to the well being of our La Jolla sea lions and harbor seals as well as enriching the visit for the many visitors who come to admire our wildlife? Become a docent (guide) ambassador for the local sea lions and harbor seals found on the beaches of La Jolla with the Chapter's Seal Society.

**Why:** Our urban marine mammals deserve a safe place in this unique urban setting to "share the shore" and live their lives without undue disturbance.

**How:** We talk to visitors from around the world to guide their behaviors consistent with both visitor safety as well as for the welfare of the marine mammals. We also advocate for a better management policy

**Who:** We provide a comprehensive training course for anyone over 18 willing to commit at least one 2-3 hour shift or more per week at the designated beaches.

**When:** On site shifts may be at any time. Most of the training falls on weekends, but exceptions can be made.

**What we do:** During each shift, we document our observations such counting the number of animals and people present within view at select spots, describe any unusual episodes between visitors and the animals, and count the number of people you interact with.

**In addition:** An alternate opportunity exists to become a "Counter" of the number of pinnipeds and people present at a certain time with weather conditions accounted for. This helps us track the traffic and most popular times of day for visitors.

To answer this volunteer opportunity appeal, please go to the Chapter's Seal Society website.



*Bus Trips continued from Page 1*

for the drivers to drop hikers at certain desired trailheads.

Another issue with the buses is that they drew unwanted attention from regulators. In one instance we got cited for bringing a bus to an area we had previously visited several times without problems. Apparently, the rules had changed without our knowledge, and we were in violation of those rules. It was a difficult situation for all involved.

This is especially true for some of the National Parks, where rules could change from year to year depending upon the current Park administration. The buses needed to have a CUA (commercial use authorization). We had to plead our case that we were noncommercial and did not need a CUA (although the bus company did). We had to explain that the buses were not tour buses, but were just hired for transportation. In several cases it was touch and go as to whether we could actually do the trip until the very last minute.

In the past, we organized these trips using a manual process by which participants sent in checks and included self-addressed stamped envelopes for future correspondence and instructions. PayPal was added years later. The larger we grew, the more we needed staff with technical skills that are often hard to find.

Our website kept crashing during registration times which was very frustrating for all involved. Computers made many things easier but increased our costs in dealing with problems we didn't have the skills to master.

On top of everything else is climate change. Over the past few years we have been hit with forest fires, floods, blizzards and other unforeseen phenomena. This past season we had to cancel 2 trips due to the impact of the enormous snowpack in the Sierras. Roads were closed, trailheads were inaccessible, and streams were overflowing. Some of our expenses were retrievable, but others were not. We were all terribly disappointed.

Due to the above, we regretfully came to the conclusion that we could no longer continue with business as usual. We hope that leaders will offer backpacks on a smaller scale that will entail car-pools and lower costs. We may be able to offer one or two bus trips, but a new committee will need to be organized that has the technical skills to make it work. For those of us on the Committee it has been an honor and a joy to put these trips together for our members. I hope that the next generation will step up and create the kinds of trips that our membership will grow to love.

For updated information, please check our website. Thank you!

*Alice Fichandler, Bus Trip Committee*

*Monumental Progress continued from Page 3*

face reservoirs. These aquifers deliver clean water to the Fall River Springs — the largest spring system in the state, and one of the biggest aquifer networks in the western United States.

The Pit River Tribe fights to defend the lands and waters of the Medicine Lake Highlands from potentially devastating geothermal energy development. Since the late 1990s they have opposed multinational geothermal corporations-- to prevent polluting industrial geothermal energy development with associated hydraulic fracturing, acid leaching and habitat fragmentation from getting a foothold on this sacred ground. Permanently protecting these lands and waters will honor the Tribe's long standing preservation efforts.

Sierra Club stands in support of the Pit River Tribe goals. In September, in advance of a delegation from the Tribe traveling to DC, Executive Director Ben Jealous sent a letter to President Biden in support of the Tribe's call for a Monument proclamation. Here is an excerpt:

*Dear President Biden:*

The Sierra Club urges you to honor the Pit River Tribe's request for national monument protections via use of the Antiquities Act for sacred and traditional cultural lands

*Monumental Progress continued on Page 10*



# 75th Anniversary Celebration A Success!

*Lisa Ross, San Diego Chapter Chair*

In spite of storm warnings for October 2, Sierra Club San Diego Chapter's 75th Anniversary family "Picnic In The Park" celebration hosted over 300 participants under blue skies at the naturally picturesque San Dieguito County Park in Del Mar. The thoroughly green event, thanks to the efforts of the Chapter's Zero Waste Committee, began early in the morning.

From the picturesque hikes and bike rides through the stunning landscapes of San Dieguito County Park and the area to the enriching Walk & Talk sessions, yoga, and tai chi classes that helped us harmonize with nature, your enthusiasm and participation made these activities come to life, all organized by Stefanie Maio and her band of volunteers from our Outings program.

The BBQ lunch, serenaded by the band The Acoustic Asylum, featuring mouthwatering options like wood-fired BBQ Tri Tip, BBQ Chicken, and Vegan Ancient Grain Bowl, was a delicious highlight of the day, and we hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

The giant lawn games, rock painting, and interactive displays added an element of fun and creativity to our gathering, proving that age is no barrier to enjoying the great outdoors and fostering connections with friends and family.

Booths representing environmental organizations, our committees, and supporting sponsors dotted the picnic grounds. Animal life was represented by gorgeous owls from Avian Behavior International, presentations from the Sierra Club San Diego Seal Park, MB Fit Studio, San Diego Tracking Team, Qi Gong for Inner Ecology, Make-A-Wish Foundation Trailblaze Hiking Challenge, Laguna Mountain Volunteer Organization and The Natural History Museum.

Also in attendance were National Sierra Club President Allison Chu, Sierra Club California Director Brandon Dawson and Sierra Club Chief Operating Officer Michael Parrish. All were impressed with the multi-generational participation that demonstrated the strength of the 13,000-member San Diego Chapter.

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for making the San Diego Sierra Club's 75th Anniversary Picnic in the Park a memorable and meaningful event. It was a day filled with adventure, celebration, and a deep connection to our

natural world, and it wouldn't have been the same without your presence. We also extend our appreciation to the various community organizations that joined us, sharing their commitment to environmental stewardship and enriching our understanding of conservation efforts.

Throughout the day, we witnessed the true spirit of the Sierra Club community, coming together to explore, enjoy, and protect our planet. Your passion for nature and the outdoors is a testament to the legacy of conservation that the Sierra Club has upheld for 75 years.

Once again, thank you for being a part of this momentous celebration. We hope you left the park with cherished memories, a renewed connection to nature, and a commitment to continue exploring, enjoying, and protecting the planet.

**And a special "Thank you" to our sponsors, who helped make this such a great event:**

**Columbia Sportswear**

**Ocean Beach People's Food Co-op**

**Therm-a-Rest**

**Straus Family Creamery**

**Nomad Ventures Mountain Equipment**

**MSR Gear**

**Lowa Boots**

**Jimbo's Naturally**

**Hillsound Equipment**

**Botanical Interests**

**Black Diamond Outdoor Gear**

*"The day was a glorious success," said Chapter Chair Lisa Ross. "Let's do it again."*





# 75th Anniversary Celebration







"The day was a glorious success,  
let's do it again."





# Holiday Planning for your Home

By Karl Aldinger

This time last year, I shared information about the upcoming Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) electrification incentives (Jan 2022 Hi-Sierran pg. 6) that were scheduled to launch in 2023. I covered the groundbreaking High Efficiency Electric Home Rebate Act (HEEHRA) incentives, which promises substantial savings to help folks change appliances from gas to electric, also known as fuel switching. I'm sad to report that the rollout of HEEHRA, and the Home Energy High-Performance Whole House Rebate, have been substantially delayed by unfortunate bureaucracy. When they do arrive, those two programs will provide \$582 million dollars to Californians for fuel switching and efficiency upgrades. Our friends at Rewiring America have an excellent calculator [www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator](http://www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator) to try to show you the projected IRA incentive savings.

I hesitate to ask anyone to wait, as we are in a climate emergency. If you can afford to switch without these rebates, or if you research them a bit and realize your income is too high to qualify (IRA text says you must be at or under 150% area median income), then by all means start switching your appliances now. If you know you will qualify, I urge you to either work with a home energy auditor to create a plan, or at least make up a list of your gas appliances and begin pre-shopping and budgeting so you are ready to act when incentives are made available. Tax credit incentives are already live as they were federal rules that were extended. Share this news to people you know so everyone gets a chance to participate in the planning exercise.

My teammates at Sierra Club have written some nice Holiday Guides to get you thinking about fuel switching. Xavier Boatright, Deputy Legislative Director, has written *A Holiday Shopping Guide for Healthy and Affordable Home Upgrades* <https://bit.ly/41gqs9> which you'll find in the Sierra Club Magazine. In it, Xavier walks you through some tips on what to switch, why, and which federal tax credits already apply.

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*Monumental Progress continued from Page 6*

of great ecological significance in the Medicine Lake Highlands of Northern California.

We believe this effort to protect the Medicine Lake Highlands is important for the original people of the region and an important action to address the biodiversity and climate crises. We stand with the Pit River Tribe in recognizing that protection for Medicine Lake Highlands is long overdue and needed urgently.

The Medicine Lake Highlands are highly significant to the cultural and religious ways of the Pit River Tribe as well as the Modoc, Shasta, Karuk, and Wintu. The Pit River and Modoc Tribes continue to use the area for religious activities, ceremonies, and gatherings....The Medicine Lake Highlands have been designated a Traditional Cultural District due in large part to the broad and undeniable recognition of the deep connection of Native people to the landscape.

The National Congress of American Indians passed its own

Are you ready for Public Safety Power Shutoffs? Does your home's solar system work in a blackout? Many solar systems were installed without the right components to operate during a blackout including a daytime heat induced one. You can plan to update these with batteries and all the appropriate grid disconnect hardware. When shopping for a new HVAC system, consider that some modern heat pumps can allow a solar plus battery system to easily power them in a blackout, because they include soft-start tech that prevents a large spike in power draw from a large compressor. Make sure soft-start or low power operation tech is present on the heat pump you choose so that your appropriately designed solar + battery system can act as a beneficial nanogrid in a heat induced power outage. That may sound daunting, but these are great conversations to have with your HVAC installer, or your electrician if you're installing a solar or battery system. Your home could help others stay cool or warm in an emergency or extended blackout.

My colleague, Kim Orbe, an organizer at the Angeles Chapter, has written *Healthy Homes this Holiday Season* <https://bit.ly/4aq20u3> which brings the focus into the kitchen with low cost ways to fuel switch in there. Kim rents an apartment, and her plug-in choices keeps them affordable. That means you could potentially gift them to a loved one, too.

One thing I'd add to Kim's list of renter's options is a portable heat pump that looks much like a rolling radiator with a hose to exchange air through a window. This is a much more efficient and safer way to heat a room than a resistance coil space heater, and it doubles as an air conditioner as do all heat pumps. It brings heat pump tech to people who might not otherwise have options to alter their apartment's HVAC system. If you're lucky, your apartment may already use a heat pump, so look closely before choosing this option.

I hope everyone enjoys a happy, healthy and peaceful holiday season. Planning is caring for your budget and your planet. It also gives us time to negotiate big changes with family members who may not yet be on board with the need to change. My wish is this helps some of you make helpful fuel switches.

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resolution supporting the establishment of a new Medicine Lake Highlands National Monument to honor the Pit River Tribe's long-standing efforts to permanently protect these sacred lands and waters from development.

The Sierra Club respectfully requests that you take action to ensure national monument protections for these sacred and ecologically significant lands and waters.

Sincerely,

*Ben Jealous, Executive Director, Sierra Club*

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The campaign's petition asks President Biden to use his authority under the Antiquities Act to take swift action to ensure the Medicine Lake Highlands are permanently protected. Won't you sign too? Go to: <https://www.protectmedicinelakehighlands.org/take-action>.

*Monumental Progress continued on Page 11*



## Nevada: The Effort to Create the Bahsahwahbee National Monument

by Janet Carter

A coalition of various environmental and conservation groups, local officials, and tribal representatives met in late November to discuss the effort to establish the Bahsahwahbee ("Sacred Water Valley") National Monument in the area also known as the "Swamp Cedars" in northeastern Nevada. Tribal Nations are now calling for these federal public lands, covering some 27,000 acres east of Ely in White Pine County, to be preserved as a National Monument within the National Park System. The land is considered sacred by the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, who are leading the Tribal effort, which also includes the Ely Shoshone Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Goshute.

There was enthusiastic discussion among the approximately 25 people attending the Zoom meeting on how to best promote the proposed monument. In addition to Tribal leaders, those present included representatives of such varied groups as the White Pine County Tourism Council, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Nevada Plants, the Great Basin Water Network, the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, and the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter.

Bahsahwahbee National Monument will protect land that has been a ceremonial and pilgrimage site for indigenous peoples for centuries. There were many villages in the area, as there are numerous springs and water was relatively plentiful. Tragically, the site was also the location of a number of large massacres, all of which occurred at times of religious gatherings. The Newe people believe that the sacred Swamp Cedars at Bahsahwahbee embody the spirits of those who were killed there. Tribal members from throughout the area still visit the area regularly to pray and honor their ancestors.

The grove of so-called swamp cedars within the proposed monument is thought to embody the spirits of those who were killed there. These ecologically unique trees are actually Rocky Mountain junipers, and they are unusual in that they are growing in an area very different



from their usual habitat. The trees have a shallow root system and usually are found on mountainsides. The abundance of water in the Spring Valley allows the trees to grow on the valley floor, and their unusual presence helped make the valley a sacred place for the Shoshone people.

*The PolCom is also busy processing additional candidates.*

The PolCom meets monthly via Zoom. For information on attending a PolCom meeting contact Harold Standerfer at: [haroldloyd99@gmail.com](mailto:haroldloyd99@gmail.com).

The recent coalition meeting began with an introduction and greeting from Warren Graham, Chair of the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, and was led by Tribal members. All present were in agreement that the Tribes should serve as the chief messengers on the proposal. The Tribes strongly support the formation of a national monument. They prefer National Park Service management, as they view the National Park Service as one of the most effective "story-tellers" for similar sacred places. Tribal members want all the monument's supporters to understand that it is important to have indigenous voices front and center in this effort due to sensitivities about what happened on these lands. Tribal members are developing sample language for emails, social media posts, and other communications to share with supporters.

The Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club has unanimously passed a resolution supporting the establishment of the Bahsahwahbee National Monument and is hopeful that other Sierra Club chapters will join in the effort. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) plans to introduce legislation that would establish the monument. She is also asking the Department of the Interior and the Biden administration to create the monument. In 2021 the Nevada Legislature passed a joint resolution asking for the protection of the Swamp Cedars. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has endorsed the proposal.

At this point, the best help we can give is to get the word out, using language and messaging that the Tribe will develop. They hope to have an event at the proposed monument in the coming year. This would provide an opportunity for Tribal elders to tell the story of Bahsahwahbee and encourage broader support for a national monument. You can learn more about the proposed monument, see maps of the area, and sign a petition in support of its formation by going to [www.swampcedars.org](http://www.swampcedars.org). This sacred and unique land definitely deserves our recognition and support.

*(Janet Carter is Secretary of the Toiyabe Chapter)*

## Molok Luyuk: Interior Secretary Deb Haaland Visits

by Bob Schneider

In a show of support for Berryessa/ Snow Mountain Monument expansion, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland came to visit Molok Luyuk on September 23, 2023! It was an exciting and emotional day.

The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument proclamation was signed July 10, 2015. Eight years later we are back in support of tribal efforts to add Molok Luyuk to the monument. Molok Luyuk is presently named Walker Ridge, and the current campaign adds this 13,975-acre ridge to the national monument. The campaign also

# David Grubb Memorial



It was with profound sadness that we announced the passing of our dear friend and long-time colleague, David Grubb in October. A tireless advocate for environmental protection and sound transportation planning, his service to San Diego was honored by representatives from many environmental organizations, community leaders and office holders at a widely attended Celebration of Life at the La Jolla Community Center.

Dave passed away October 25 while participating in the Tribal EPA and U.S. EPA Region 9 Annual Conference Hosted by the Viejas Band Of Kumeyaay Indians and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He died while doing what he loved to do.

Dave was honored by proclamations from the San Diego City Council presented by Council President Pro Temp Joe LaCava and the County of San Diego presented by Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer.

*The Grubb Family requests that donations in David's name should be made to the Sierra Club San Diego Chapter.*

## TRIBUTES:

### From Laura Hunter, North County Group activist:

*Dave was the ultimate community champion. He was the complete package. Unlike many people who have one or two issues or places they care about, Dave deeply cared about all of them, all of the places and all of the issues.*

*Monumental Progress continued from Page 11*

renames it to Molok Luyuk, which means Condor Ridge in the Hill Patwin language; and calls for tribal co-management for a full recognition for these lands and Tribal ancestors. This ridge is sacred land and an important Tribal place for prayer and medicine herb gathering.

The strong collaborative effort with key Tribal leadership working for this monument addition includes the Sierra Club, Cal Wild, California Native Plant Society, Tuleyome, Conservation Lands Foundation, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Western Conservation Foundation, businesses, elected officials, and many others.

Haaland's visit was a recognition of this effort and these Tribal values. On her arrival, the Secretary first toured to the top of the ridge at Cold Springs Mountain with clear views towards Medicine Highlands, Mt Shasta, Lassen, Sutter Buttes, Mt Diablo, and Mt. Konocti at Clear Lake. The group then traveled to and over the newly rebuilt Low Water bridge across Cache Creek to the Stone Barn for a roundtable discussion.

Other federal officials present in the Secretary's party included Congressmen John Garamendi and Mike Thompson, BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning, BLM California Director Katherine Mortison, National Monument manager Mellissa

*He deeply cared about fair housing, about climate, about worker rights, about environmental justice, about transportation, about the California coast, and about habitat conservation and more.*

*He was an irreplaceable brain trust for all of us in the activist community. His length and depth of service to the San Diego community was key to many of our successes. His knowledge of the machinations of Sacramento, State/National Sierra Club, SANDAG, local elected leaders, and many other areas was always relied on in our decision-making.*

*I will miss him personally because he was a partner in understanding the critical importance of achieving environmental justice in our communities, diversity in our movement, and the critical imperative of collaborating with the labor community. He knew how to build power for justice—in all its forms.*

### From Pam Heatherington, Executive Committee Member and Chair Environmental Center:

*I really did not want to speak today. Dave's passing is still pretty raw for me. I'm still reduced to tears when I think of him and the significance of our friendship over many years. He was a mentor to many. Not in a purposeful way but more if you had the patience to learn about the environment through education, advocacy and direct action.*

*Dave intensely believed we all had a part in protecting the planet. He was an intellectual who remembered a constant stream of information, was able to distill it, and recall the most obscure information in casual or intense conversations. He wasn't always agreeable but he was almost always compassionate.*

*When we formed the Environmental Center of San Diego back in 2015, it wasn't so much that San Diego needed another environmental organization, it was more for the things that were falling through the cracks, so to speak. But that was Dave, picking up the pieces of the whole, so that they all worked together towards the end goal of a survivable planet.*

*We all have a heavier load with Dave's passing. But he prepared us the best*

*Memorial continued on Page 16*

Hovey, Forest Service Region Five Supervisor Jennifer Eberlien, and Mendocino National Forest Supervisor Wade McMaster. Tribal members came from Yocha Dehe, Kletsel Dehe, and Lake Miwok tribes.

After the discussion Deb Haaland led a brisk hike along the Frog Pond Trail. (You should be fit to keep up!)

I was honored to attend, along with others from the coalition working for the monument— such as Nick Jensen of California Native Plants Society and Sandy Schubert, executive director of Tuleyome, that led the effort for the initial monument designation, and Ryan Henson of the California Wilderness Coalition and Sara Husby, Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

And I am humbled by a comment by a Tribal elder about the name Molok Luyuk: "When they say the name it makes us feel good."

Please stay involved for important next steps: right now, you can help by signing the petition to ask for Presidential expansion of the Berryessa Snow Mountain by adding Molok Luyuk, (Condor Ridge). [CLICK HERE](#)



# Inspiring Connections Outdoors



## Kumeyaay Village: A Place for Peaceful Reflections and Joyful Discoveries

by Bill Tayler

Laguna Meadows is a great area to explore with kids, and a short way off trail and secluded by trees lies one of our favorite places: an outcropping of large, flat granite rocks nestled below towering pines that we have come to call Kumeyaay Village. Tangible echoes of the generations of Kumeyaay who lived there reach out across the years to remind us that we travel on their land: numerous grinding holes (morteros) in the granite slabs and hundreds of pottery shards (potsherds) in a nearby midden testify to the countless lives lived well and close to the land. In a small mountain meadow that lies just behind the granite, with only

a little imagination one sees children playing around Kumeyaay 'ewaa (homes). A perfect setting for both quiet reflections and joyful discoveries.

We usually begin our time at Kumeyaay Village by looking for red, tan and gray potsherds lying on the surface of the midden. We allow the kids to collect potsherds to keep with them during our visit, and explain the necessity of returning these artifacts to the midden when we leave. Our visits to Kumeyaay Village always involve about 10-15 minutes of quiet time on the granite slabs. Sometimes we prompt the kids to use quiet time to think about the individual people who made and used the pots and to try to connect

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](http://www.sandiegosierraclub.org)

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

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3446 N. Mountain View Drive,  
San Diego, CA 92116

with them across the years as they hold potsherds in their hands. Or we ask them to contemplate whether the Kumeyaay – who lived here without all our modern conveniences (and distractions) – were any less (or more) happy than we are (their answers span the spectrum, with many seeing how Kumeyaay lives were likely both better/ happier and more difficult). Or we simply listen to birds and the wind in the trees.

After quiet time, the kids have unstructured play, which often involves using the morteros to grind and prepare pretend meals of acorn mush. Telling them it is time to leave always brings howls of protest. They would gladly stay there for days if they could. And honestly, so would I. Kumeyaay Village provides a welcome respite from our digital chaos and a poignant reminder of what else is possible. Can't wait to go back and visit it in the snow.



Lucia and Rayito with Potsherds



Victoria with Potsherds



Salvatore with 4 small Morteros



Julian with a large Mortero

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# Committees & Contact Information

**As we prepare to move into our new offices, many meetings have moved on-line. Once our offices are ready, many meetings will go back to in-person. Some meetings will 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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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

**Chair:** Lisa Ross (2026)  
[lisa@lisaross.com](mailto:lisa@lisaross.com)  
[www.lisaross.com](http://www.lisaross.com)

**Vice-Chair:** Ron Askeland (2025)  
[ron.askeland@gmail.com](mailto:ron.askeland@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Ruben Arizmendi (2026)  
[rfalawsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:rfalawsierraclub@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Rochelle Hancock (2024)  
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## NORTH COUNTY COASTAL GROUP (COASTERS)

Contact Chair or check website for meeting information.

**Chair:** Sally Prendergast  
[sallyp123@mac.com](mailto: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](mailto:joe@ecinstitute.com)

## COMMITTEES

### CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Meets 2nd Monday at 6:30pm

**Chair:** Ron Askeland  
[ron.askeland@gmail.com](mailto:ron.askeland@gmail.com)  
**Zero-Waste**

Meets 1st Monday at 6:30 pm  
Contact the Committee at  
[zerowastesdsc@gmail.com](mailto:zerowastesdsc@gmail.com)

### SEAL SOCIETY

For meeting and docent information:  
**Ellen Shively**  
[ellenshively@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ellenshively@sbcglobal.net)

### POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Meets 4th Thursday at 6:30pm

**Chair:** Stephanie Peck  
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### OUTINGS COMMITTEE

Meets quarterly, contact Chair for date and location.

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### Leadership Review & Safety Committee

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### WILDERNESS BASICS COURSE (WBC)

Held annually beginning in January

#### San Diego

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### Photography

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## INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS (ICO)

Check website for meeting information.  
[www.sandigosierraclub.org](http://www.sandigosierraclub.org)

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### Hi Sierran Newsletter

**Managing Editor:** Judy Thomas  
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Phone: 858-569-6005

[www.sandigosierraclub.org](http://www.sandigosierraclub.org)

*Memorial continued from Page 12*

*he could given his limited time on this planet. So, we carry on with protecting the environment through the lens of justice, diversity and collaboration. Just as he would. May you rest in peace, dear friend.*

### **Cynthia Wootten, Member Conservation Committee**

*David Grubb was a never-ending fountain of knowledge about Sierra Club, the political and environmental players in San Diego and California. He was involved with every group that needed his skills to make worthwhile practical changes. He was an intellectual expert who knew how to achieve results. He was a successful grant writer. He could and did teach me about any topic that moved me. I watched him direct many people towards finding answers and solutions. I will miss him, and he will be missed by many others.*

### **Katie Petit, Legal Counsel, San Diego Chapter**

*It was an honor and privilege to have had the opportunity to work with Dave. I am so sorry to hear of his passing.*

### **Margot Lowe, Conservation Committee Member**

*Hard to believe he's gone. He was just at our last meeting. A warrior for the environment. His boots will be hard to fill.*

### **Peter Andersen, Former Chair and Conservation Committee Vice-Chair**

*I am so shocked and saddened! He was a tireless and smart environmental champion. He will be missed.*

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE BIO:**

*He served the San Diego Chapter in a variety of roles:*

- Served on the executive committee of the North County Group in 2003,
- Founder and driving force behind the formation of the North County Coastal Group in 2004, served as Chair 2004 to 2015,
- Member of the Chapter Executive Committee 2004-2014 including Chair in 2014,



- North County Group newsletter editor 2004,
- Chapter webmaster
- Member of the Chapter Conservation (Coastal, Transportation, Energy) and Political Committees.
- Chapter Sierra representative to the Quality of Life Coalition

### **On the State level with Sierra Club California:**

- Co-Chair Coastal Committee
- At-large delegate to the California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee
- California State Political Committee

### **Other Environmental Organizations:**

Surfrider Foundation  
San Dieguito River Park Conservancy  
Bay Council

League of Conservation Voters San Diego since 2004

Founding member Environmental Center of San Diego

### **Other Advisory Roles:**

SANDAG Regional Transportation Plan  
California Coastal Commission

### **AWARDS:**

#### **San Diego Chapter**

- 2019 - Joanne H. Pearson Memorial Award in Environmental Public Advocacy
- 2013 - Silver Cup Award (Chapter's highest award)
- 2011 - Political Activist Award
- 2009 - Chapter Service Awards
- 2006 - North County Group Award

#### **Sierra Club California Award:**

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