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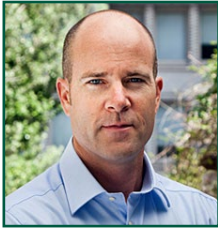
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Michael Brune
SIERRA CLUB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



To Combat the Climate Crisis, We Need a Government-Wide Mobilization



The climate crisis isn't a single issue: It's an everything issue. To solve it, we'll have to change how we get around, how we grow food, how we heat and cool our homes, how we create electricity, and much else. We'll need an economy-wide, and society-wide, transformation that will create millions of family-sustaining jobs in clean energy, energy efficiency, and more.

To achieve that economy-wide transformation, we need every part of our government working toward it, as well as a powerful movement pushing officials to be even more ambitious and inclusive. Thankfully, many of President-Elect Biden's first few cabinet picks show that he understands the necessity of a whole-government approach.

Chief among them is John Kerry, who was named to the new post of special presidential envoy for climate. Kerry is a longtime climate champion who played a key role in negotiating the Paris Agreement in 2015. His cabinet-level position sits in the National Security Council, which isn't known for its focus on the climate crisis. But this foreign-policy role offers Kerry, and Antony Blinken, Biden's climate-conscious pick for Secretary of State, the opportunity to mobilize the global community toward climate action.

After years of fossil-fuel boosterism by the Trump administration, they'll have their work cut out for them. As Kerry well knows, just rejoining the Paris Agreement is not enough to take us off the path of planetary destruction. We'll have to go well beyond those goals, and phasing out the use of coal worldwide is a good place to start. Communities from South Korea to South Africa have documented the destructive health impacts of mining and burning dirty coal while showing how clean energy will save lives and money and create millions of jobs. One key opportunity for international climate diplomacy is to share technologies and pathways to an accelerated transition to 100 percent clean, renewable energy.

Our own country is in the middle of a painful recession, and Biden understands that our best way out is through a green stimulus that creates millions of family-sustaining jobs in clean energy, sustain-

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San Diego Shouldn't Rush into Another Rip-Off Utility Franchise Deal

By Craig D. Rose

Mention "franchise," "utility" and "agreement" in the same sentence and a listener's eyes tend to roll backward. That's unfortunate. If you care about San Diegans paying \$100/month more for electricity than customers elsewhere, if you care about the climate crisis and racial equity, if you care about a city property worth more than \$15 billion — you must pay attention to San Diego's utility franchise agreement.

Years from now, San Diegans concerned with these issues will recall with gratitude that City Council President Georgette Gómez pulled the emergency cord on the runaway train to a deal that would have cost San Diegans billions of dollars.

Without the council president's refusal to docket the mayor's proposal or — more important — without the significant advocacy of individuals and groups urging Gómez to act, San Diego might be burdened with another multidecade agreement that has us paying the highest utility rates in the state, while San Diego Gas & Electric earns a net profit of \$1 million each day.

The irony is that SDG&E requires city land to earn those enormous profits, yet its shareholders pay no rent for the use of our commonly owned property. That's how this business has been done here for a century. With a raging pandemic, a climate crisis and a severe economic recession, San Diego cannot afford to do business this way any longer. A new City Council should insist on a more equitable model.

This will take time. Critics have a point when they note this process should have begun earlier and proceeded differently. But that's no reason to rush into another rip-off. This is not a matter of say, naming a neighborhood park, as symbolically important as that is.

The franchise is a matter involving more than \$15 billion — four times the city's annual budget. Few city assets are worth more than the utility franchise. Unfortunately, the threat of a rip-off agreement still looms. Citing bogus fears of what might happen when the city's current 50-year franchise

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Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

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A View from The Chair



David Hogan

Good government decisions to protect the natural environment are few and far between these days so it's important to recognize and celebrate the victories. Just as I was finally putting fingers to keyboard on this column some incredible news started popping on email and social media. An obscure California agency called the Wildlife Conservation Board had just voted to reject a land swap of part of the Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve with a developer that would have facilitated the awful Otay Ranch Village 14 sprawl development project in South County San Diego.

If you follow the Sierra Club's legal fights against bad development projects then you've probably already heard of the Otay Ranch Village 14, a project that would build nearly 1,300 new expensive homes far from job centers in the middle of a high fire risk area and on top of endangered species habitat among many problems. The Southern California regional office of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) had rightfully opposed the Village 14 project until the developer and County of San Diego staff went to Sacramento and cut a deal for the land swap with the Director of CDFW to create a more economically viable project. But the land to be traded was a part of the incredibly sensitive Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve and had been purchased for preservation with bond funds by the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). So WCB had to approve the lousy deal negotiated by CDFW. But to the surprise of many, WCB did the right thing and rejected the deal. The decision was unexpected given the support for the project and political clout of the developer, outgoing fossil County Supervisor Greg Cox, Building Industry Association, and other powerful usual suspects like Calfire and San Diego Firefighters Association (who support high fire risk developments because of mitigation money to build new fire stations and pay new firefighters' salaries).

A key takeaway from this victory is that it never would have happened without the very hard work by a very small number of activists to lobby the WCB and turn out the nearly 170 people who joined the remote video call and waited hours to speak for just two minutes each. Dan Silver of the Endangered Habitats League, Frank Landis of the California Native Plant Society, Tommy Hough of San Diego Democrats for Environmental Action, and Sierra Club's own George Courser and Peter Anderson are all environmental leaders who inspire us to believe that every now and then the good guys can win.

This local environmental victory is no small thing. Nor is the nail-biting victory of President Elect Joe Biden over environmental vandal Donald Trump in November. But the need for new environmental leaders and activists is still greater than ever as we're faced with the smoldering wreckage of environmental laws and regulations left by the Trump administration along with the likely timid response of the conservative Biden administration to restore and strengthen environmental protections. We desperately need more environmental and progressive activists to come together to press for an immediate start on environmental reconstruction under the new presidential administration. And there's exciting work to be done locally with the new Democratic majority at the County Board of Supervisors and in cooperation with newly elected environmental champions (and Sierra Club endorsed candidates) Terra Lawson-Remer at the Board of Supervisors, Joe LaCava and Sean Elo-Rivera at San Diego City Council, Esther Sanchez as Mayor of Oceanside, Jack Shu at La Mesa City Council, and many more.

So if you're feeling the inspiration and want to engage but you're not sure where or how, Sierra Club has a place for you! Our Conservation Committee meets the second Monday of every month and is a great place to plug in and start on your path to environmental leadership. Please join us!

A Layman's Support of the Multiple Species Conservation Plan and Corridors

By Cynthia Wootton

IN HUMAN TERMS

Scenario 1: Imagine we are on a desert island, without ways of ordering food or building shelter. The ocean is rough and filled with sharks. We perish.

Scenario 2: Now, there is one 7-11 on this island. With water, hot-dogs, ice cream and nuts, we survive for a while, but we may not feel well, and may have fight for food. Again, we perish.

Scenario 3: Now, there is one well-stocked grocery store, a small tunnel we have to squeeze through to look for more food, friends and maybe even a mate. Some get through the tunnel and survive. If the tunnel were wider and led to more "food banks," then, all would survive and thrive.

Do you get the picture? Scenario 3 is an analogy for wildlife living in lands with corridors conserved by preserves and the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP). Let me be clear. MSCP lands are not just open space. These are lands that have an exceptional concentration of the ecosystems or "food bank" and habitat that allow threatened and endangered species to live rather than become permanently extinct.

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) is the zone of transition between wildlands and human development. In Scenario 1 and 2, the sharks in rough waters represent all the dangers outside the land conserved by the MSCP: construction projects, streets, highways, toxic trash. Many people don't like wild animals and plants or are afraid they'll hurt their children or pets. If the MSCP "food bank" or corridor is scanty, animals might step into the urban land and eat someone's fruit or scare someone. Eventually, the city dwellers feel they must trap, displace or kill the "threatening" wildlife. People introduce invasive species of plants and animals on their

property. They use pesticides and herbicides that kill the plants and prey that predators eat and become sick or die.

CLIMATE CHANGE & WILDFIRES

We are in the middle of a climate emergency, a species extinction crisis, ongoing drought and wildfire catastrophes. In San Diego County, it's in the WUI where fires are often started, a tiny spark carried by the wind that starts an out-of-control wildfire. These sparks can be created by a barbecue, a smoke out back, a car accident, even the incidental activity such as a power line electrical short. People living in a WUI need to be fully aware and alert when Santa Anna conditions exist. The native landscape has adapted for fire, however, human caused fire is now so frequent that the seed bank from mature habitats is weakening and invasive species such as flammable grasses are taking over. The result has been more fires, threatening our many species and ecosystems. The best solution is to preserve our habit rich lands and keep development away from it.

WILD ECOSYSTEMS

In San Diego County, the species that delight us thrive because of conserved lands. We have butterflies of all varieties including the endangered Quino Checkerspot. We have all kinds of birds including hawks, falcons, bald and golden eagles, and the many owl species. San Diego is also a byway for migrating birds. Southern mule deer, mountain goats and lions, bobcat, and gray fox inhabit our backcountry. And of course, there are all the waterfowl, frogs, fish and ocean creatures. There are mature plants, such as oaks, willow-sycamores, coastal sage scrub, chaparral and often riparian areas. The soil is alive with organisms, eggs, larvae and seed banks produced by mature, healthy plants and animals.

All of these wonderful creatures depend on the habitats offered by conserved lands.

EMERGENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

People became conscious of the need to protect natural

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able agriculture, and cleaning up pollution in communities of color and low-income communities. And his pick for Treasury Secretary, former Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen, will be a central part of making such a plan reality. Yellen can help ensure that we spend public money to create jobs that revitalize our communities and stave off climate catastrophe. And luckily, she's long been a proponent of using financial tools to address the risk climate change poses to this country and our economy.

Yellen's engagement on the climate can -- and must -- go beyond a green stimulus. After all, as Treasury Secretary, she will have profound influence over government spending, development finance, and risk management in our financial sector. Climate change is one of the greatest risks to our economy, but the largest US financial institutions are accelerating the crisis by pouring more money into fossil fuels. Yellen and other financial regulators in the Biden administration have the power to carry out a

managed decline of fossil fuels, and to ensure that financial institutions zero out their climate impact.

Biden still has many roles to fill in his administration, including the heads of the EPA, Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy. And I hope that for each one, he'll nominate a leader who understands the severity of the climate crisis and the environmental injustices that burden communities of color and low-income communities. Good policy starts with good people -- and good movements that push them to make the most of the power voters have granted them.

Michael Brune is the executive director of the Sierra Club, the largest grassroots environmental organization in the United States. You can email him at michael.brune@sierraclub.org, follow him on Twitter (@bruneski) and Facebook, and read his blog at sierraclub.org/michael-brune

Sierra Club Launches Stop Harvest Hills Campaign

Campaign in Escondido Re-Ignites with Video Release

In November, the Sierra Club North County Group announced the release of their new video for its Stop Harvest Hills Escondido campaign.

**Please go to the website
<https://www.facebook.com/StopHarvestHills/>
view and sign our petition.**

“We are ready to re-ignite the fight to halt sprawl development in Escondido and to Stop Harvest Hills,” said Laura Hunter, Chair of the Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club North County Group. “Defeat of the Harvest Hills development proposal is a top priority for San Diego Sierra Club members and their allies.”

Harvest Hills, if built, will include 550 luxury homes in a gated community next to the Safari

Park in the San Pasqual Valley near Escondido. Proposed by Concordia Homes, it

originally was marketed as Safari Highlands Ranch, but in 2019 Concordia changed the name to Harvest Hills perhaps to try to make the project sound more environmentally friendly. The project is proposed as a sprawl land use pattern throughout an 1,100 acres site of pristine chaparral and wildlife habitat.

The project is in the unincorporated portion of the County and would require the City of Escondido to annex the property if approved. It would also require the approval of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The video includes a recording of objections to the project process made at a LAFCO meeting by the chair, Dianne Jacob.

The video builds on community opposition that has experienced explosive growth against sprawl development in the north county. The recent defeat of the North River Farms project in Oceanside was the third major project denied by the public over the past few years. Previously defeated projects have included Newland Sierra and Lilac Hills Ranch.

“Sierra Club opposes Harvest Hills for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that this new development will decimate hundreds of acres of critical wildlife habitat and pristine open space to build 550 “estate homes” in a “Very High Danger” fire zone, exacerbating potential evacuation efforts of area residents to a dangerous level, and draining funding from the urban core,” stated Sierra Club San Diego Chapter Conservation Chair George Courser. Chapter Director, Richard Miller, called the project “A continuation of sprawl land use patterns that further frustrate efforts to achieve effective and efficient transit, adding an additional 67,000 vehicle miles traveled a day, significantly increasing traffic in an already congested area.”

More than two dozen community and environmental organizations join Sierra Club in opposing the project and are organizing against it.

JP Theberge, the founder of pro-Smart Growth think tank, Grow the San Diego Way, stated, “It is fiscally irresponsible for the city

to pursue this project. A wide body of research shows that the cost of providing services to far-flung developments far exceeds the funds raised

by property taxes and fees, particularly when compared to infill development where services and infrastructure are already in place. Sprawl projects like this result in a de- facto subsidy by city taxpayers of high-end sprawl development projects, like Harvest Hills.”

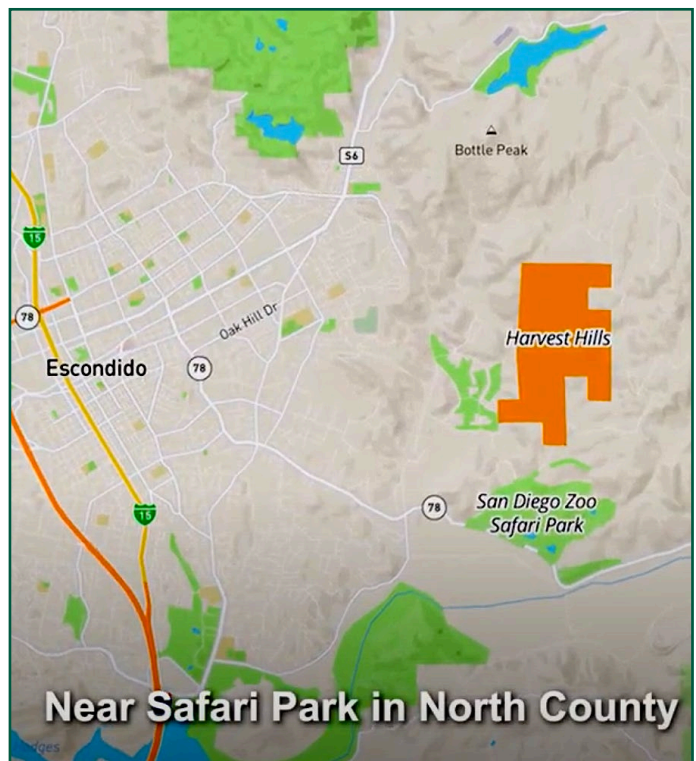
“Despite a big name change, the fundamentals of this project have not changed,” said NeySa Ely, founder of the San Pasqual Valley Preservation Alliance. “Trying to use the annexation process to effectively upzone 1,000+ acres from 27 homes to 550 homes – a 20X increase – in the face of the high fire risk and impact to habitat and wildlife, is why Harvest Hills is the epitome of the reckless urban sprawl development efforts being challenged and defeated in San Diego County and beyond.”

The video features several speakers including neighbor and member of the San Pasqual Valley Preservation Alliance Scott Graves, Escondido resident Linda Stanwood, Youth Climate Activist and Escondido resident Aisha Wallace-Palomares, Tribal Councilmember of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians Dave Toler, and former Escondido Union School

Board member George McClure.

Sierra Club is a proponent of quality urban infill, transportation-oriented development, smart growth, and affordable housing and will continue to campaign to defeat this ill- conceived project.

The video can be viewed on the Sierra Club NCG Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/StopHarvestHills/>



Oceanside Voters Say No To Measure L

Measure L, a referendum on a dense housing development on Oceanside farmland, was rejected by Oceanside voters by a landslide, with a 67% to 33% vote. Measure L would have rezoned 176.6 acres of agricultural land for a housing development of 585 new homes. The vote will keep the land zoned for agriculture. One year earlier the City Council had voted 3-2 to approve rezoning the land. Dozens of volunteers gathered over 12,000 signatures in 30 days to put the project to the voters in 2020.

The two campaigns that competed on the measure is a David and Goliath story. The No on Measure L campaign was a grassroots volunteer effort with an \$8,000 budget. They defeated a \$2 million Yes on L campaign, funded by Integral Communities, the developer of the project.

The Sierra Club endorsed the No on L campaign to stop another sprawl development in a wildfire danger area. The development would also have led to the permanent loss of some of the last remaining farmland in North County and created a steep escalation in traffic and GHG emissions.

Esther Sanchez Elected Mayor of Oceanside

Oceanside voters elected Councilwoman Esther Sanchez to be their next mayor. Ms. Sanchez will be Oceanside's first Latina mayor and the first woman to lead the city. She was endorsed by the Sierra Club in a very crowded race of 12 candidates to lead the third largest city in San Diego County. She was also the only woman in the race for Mayor.

Sanchez, an attorney, is a native of Oceanside and she has served on the Oceanside City Council for 20 years. On the Council she has worked to develop affordable housing in smart growth areas, preserve land from harmful development, and to adopt measures that would add to and protect parkland, agricultural land and the coast. She has championed green jobs, livable neighborhoods and bicycle-friendly policies for Oceanside.



Singles Section Going Away? It's Up To You.

In November, the governing board of the Singles Section voted to request the Chapter officially dissolve the Section. How did we get to this stage of the Sections history? Simple, lack of members willing to serve in leadership positions.

Like all Sierra Club activities, the Social Section has been unable to hold any events due to the COVID-19 pandemic since March. When it came time for new leaders to be selected to officiate over the section, no members came forward to help. All current leadership positions are vacant (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer). Repeated attempts to recruit new leaders has not been successful.

The Social Section evolved from the Singles Section to include couples and unidentified marital status members who shared a com-

The North County Group Executive Committee would like to welcome our new and returning board members; Linda Stanwood, Olga Diaz, Tim Swift and Pam Heatherington. We would also like to thank Doug Grover, DJ Strong and Suzi Sandore for their service to the Sierra Club and wish them well in their future endeavors

mon interest in enjoying all kinds of hikes/camping/outdoor trips, environmental protection, and various social activities. There have been a wide range of outings and activities, some with the Chapter's general membership and Outings program, that included day hikes at all levels, picnics/lunches/dinners, car camps, movie nights, and special events. Over recent years, it seems that social media and online networks (mainly MeetUp) provided alternative ways for people to organize and connect. It has become increasingly difficult to recruit members, especially for people to be leaders and board members. Thus, the decision was made out of circumstances to dissolve the Section.

The Chapter Executive Committee has decided that if no interested members come forward, the Executive will consider formally disbanding the Section. If you are interested in serving to keep the Singles Section active, please contact Chapter Director, Richard Miller at scoffice@sierrasd.org.

Recycling Your Bikes Made Easy

By Ellen Warner Scott, Bicycle Section

It's been ten long months since we had an official Bicycle Section club ride. Many of us are filling those empty hours rearranging our sock drawers and ridding our garages of unused or outdated items. Here's some good news: There are local organizations that will take your old, but still rideable, bicycles and gear — both mountain and road bikes. Beneficiaries include folks here and abroad who need a sturdy bike to get to work and school. Charitable receipts are provided.

Bikes del Pueblo email: bikesdelpueblo@gmail.com serves residents of the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego. Staffed by volunteers, they accept donations on Sunday mornings. They prefer a photo first so they can determine if it fits their needs. Several Bike Section members have already donated bikes and gear and found the process effortless.

Bicycle Warehouse accepts bicycle dona-

tions on behalf of Mike's Bike Foundation MikesBikesAfrica.com which is based in Northern California. It ships bicycles to Africa where local NGOs "give it a new home and change a life for the better." Their website shows some of the grateful recipients. August 29, Andrew at Bicycle Warehouse reported that they have temporarily stopped accepting bike donations due to the healthcare crisis but hope to resume soon. Contact him first: Info@mikesbikes.com

Trek Bicycle Superstore accepts both rideable and non-rideable bikes. (All makes are accepted, not just Trek.) Grant Nelson leads the effort: GNelson@TrekSD.com Donations are sent to Bicycles for Humanity bicycles-for-humanity.org and given to "less fortunate cycling lovers in developing countries." Grant says that he may personally do minor repairs to make your bike rideable. Donations are accepted most days but contact Grant first.

Goodwill, AmVets, and San Diego Boys & Girls Clubs have also accepted bicycles in the past.

Nuclear Waste at San Onofre Still Here

By Peter Andersen, Vice Chair
Chapter Conservation Committee

Last summer, Sierra Club San Diego testified before the California Coastal Commission to oppose Southern California Edison's Coastal Development Permit for the maintenance of nuclear Waste at San Onofre. Edison leaves behind no system that would repair any of the 123 huge nuclear canisters stored above the beach at San Onofre, each containing dozens of hot radioactive fuel rods. Canisters can be damaged by earthquakes, tsunamis, terrorism, corrosion, high-burnup fuel, loss of helium, or by accidents.

Sierra Club San Diego, members of the Coalition for a Safer San Onofre, and members of the Samuel Lawrence Foundation testified that removing the spent fuel pools at

San Onofre without a validated handling facility on-site is an irresponsible decision. The spent fuel pools are the last option for dealing with a damaged canister. There is no other backup plan.

Sierra Club officers George Courser, Pam Heatherington, and Peter Andersen urged that the coastal commission should require Edison to construct a handling facility on-site to mitigate damaged canisters by retaining spent fuel pools, until a validated handling facility is built (i.e. hot cell). A damaged canister would expose the Southern California coast to dangerous radiation that would harm California's residents, natural resources, coastal tourism, and economy. Sadly the Coastal Commission rejected this plan, leaving us vulnerable to a potential nuclear catastrophe. Sierra Club San Diego will continue to work for safer storage of this toxic nuclear fuel stored on our beautiful Pacific Coast.

Layman's Support continued from page 3

resources slowly, even while companies dumped hazardous materials into rivers and polluted the air with toxic chemicals. Two wake up calls came in 1968, when the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland was so polluted, it caught fire and in 1969, when the Santa Barbara oil spill filled people with horror. The major environmental protections we have today were signed into law by Republican leaders. President Nixon created the Environment Protection Agency in 1970 and signed into law the National Environmental Policy Act (1970) and the Endangered Species Act (1973). California Governor Reagan signed the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) into law in 1970, primarily to deal with the water quality and air pollution in California.

CREATION OF THE MSCP

Despite these protections, in 1991, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife reported that "71 percent of the plants and animals on the state's threatened and endangered lists were continuing to decline." Their habitats were small and fragmented. The same was happening nationwide. The US Department of the Interior found already some plants and animals were extinct.

In 1991, California Republican Governor, Pete Wilson, came up with the plan that created the Natural Community Conservation Planning program and California state law AB 2172, which resulted in the creation of the San Diego City and County MSCP's protected by CEQA and part of the Fish and Game Code. Many, like Wilson, believed that local governments, landowners, developers, environmentalists would voluntarily collaborate on regional multi species conservation plans when planning for urban growth.

All these environmental laws recognized that both animals and their habitats needed protection in order to ensure their mutual survival. They also asserted that endangered and threatened species of wildlife and plants 'are of esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people'

URBAN SPRAWL VS. SMART GROWTH?

Developers love wildlands. Vacant, unimproved land is cheaper than urban land with services like schools, hospitals, roads, electricity and water lines. While developers may pay the initial cost for streets, electric, sewer and water lines, they recoup those costs with every sale. It is the cities and counties who end up paying the costs infrastructures in the long run as citizen taxes must support these services for decades. Despite all the disadvantages of developments in wildland areas, governments continue to approve developer requests to rezone MSCP land for urban sprawl.

Smart growth incorporates parks and greenspaces, storm-water management, helps maintain and improve air and water quality, and promotes conservation. Increased use of green design and construction materials use renewable and fewer natural resources. All of these things improve the health and comfort of our communities.

CONCLUSION

The San Diego Sierra Club has joined with other environmental groups to sit at the table with local governments, landowners, and developers to create an MSCP plan in North County. We are still working together to protect current MSCP lands that are being threatened by sprawl developments, like Harvest Hills in Escondido. You can help us by signing petitions, writing, emailing local government authorities, speaking at city and county meetings and voting in local elections. Let's work together to preserve the MSCP and the living beings and habitats that fill us with wonder.

Cynthia Wootton is a member of the Chapter Conservation Committee.

If you are interested in getting involved, please write an email with the subject line stating:

"Sierra Club Volunteer Involvement" and tell us about your interests to: Wootton-clark@outlook.com



SAVE THE DATE

Sierra Club
North County Coastal Group
Quarterly Meeting
January 27, 2021
7:00 PM

Virtual Via Zoom -look for our email in January that will have meeting registration information

Please Join us for our first Quarterly Meeting of 2021!

Featured speaker to include newly elected county supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer for a look at environmental priorities in the county and what it means for you. The meeting will also include a discussion of our 2021 priorities and how you can get involved. We can't wait to see you!

Everyone is Welcome.

Rip-off continued from page 1

agreement expires in mid-January, allies of the very costly status quo are urging the city to restart that express train and cut a bad deal quickly.

Some of these folks purport to be guardians of the public interest, yet they've lost sight that they're urging the rushed sale of an asset whose value the city has yet to determine. Is the franchise worth \$6.4 billion, as a consultant suggests? Or is it worth more than \$15 billion, which the evidence suggests?

Either way, among the flaws of the plan blocked by Gómez was the proposal to begin auctioning this franchise for less than 1 percent of its value. No reasonable homeowner would begin an auction of their house at 1 percent or less of its value.

Gómez also stopped a deal that would have tied the city hands, if we choose in the future to form an independent public utility. These public utilities vary widely but share one characteristic in California: All provide lower rates and comparable service.

The mayor's proposal also omits a so-called off ramp, or a reasonable option for exiting a franchise agreement by buying out the utility for fair value. An off ramp enhances the city's ability to enforce an agreement. The need for that ability has been underscored by SDG&E's refusal to move equipment at its expense, despite the requirement to do so under the current agreement to accommodate the city's recycled water project.

The omission of an off ramp is among the reasons that consumer and environmental advocates are calling for further deliberation and study. This will require going past the expiration date of the current agreement. That should cause little alarm. After mid-January, we can continue to operate under terms of the expired agreement. The lights will stay on, by order of the California Public Utilities Commission.

Fears that SDG&E will refuse after January to pass along tens of millions in franchise fees are also overblown. As the city attorney has noted, if SDG&E failed to pass along these fees — fees that are collected from us, by the way — the city could charge the utility with trespassing on city property.

What's more, if SDG&E withheld those fees from the city, some explaining would be in order to state regulators, who authorized collection of the fees from ratepayers for payment to the city. And it would certainly seem ill-advised for a utility angling to reach a long-term agreement with the city to provoke a two-front legal war here and at the California Public Utilities Commission.

The franchise is fundamentally a land-lease agreement. Utilities need exclusive use of city property to run their wires and locate substations. The City Council should step back and recognize that San Diego is in a very strong bargaining position.

Getting a good franchise deal means getting the city a fair share of the billions that a franchisee will earn. Of course, the city can capture most of those dollars by forming an independent public utility.

In Sacramento, which has a public utility, customers now pay \$100 a month less for electricity than customers of SDG&E. And customers of the public utility in Los Angeles also pay substantially less.

For those who say San Diego lacks the competence to organize a public utility, although it's been done in some 40 other California communities, I recall the words of a long-gone labor leader: God bless those who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed.

San Diego can do what's been done elsewhere. Period. If city leaders don't believe that, they aren't leaders.

Political momentum for public power is growing rapidly and could reach critical mass sooner than some expect. In the meantime, we have an overwhelming consensus for the city to maximize its return on the utility franchise, to avoid a massive rip-off, and to keep the option for public power wide open.

Going forward, the city's top priority should be commissioning a professional assessment of the value of the franchise. Without a better assessment of that, we can't make a good decision.

The city should also fully assess the cost and benefits of organizing a public utility, as well as ensure that any utility option includes significant funding to address environmental injustice and the climate crisis. Through all this, we need robust public engagement, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

And for the next six weeks, city leaders must remember there's no reason to rush onboard a runaway train headed for a costly wreck.

Craig Rose is a mostly retired journalist who works with the Citizens Franchise Alliance, a group focused on the financial aspects of San Diego's utility options. This article originally appeared in the Times of San Diego on December 6, 2020 and is reprinted with permission.

State Board Rejects Proposed Developer Land Swap

In 2019, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) made an agreement with a private developer to exchange portions of the Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve and biologically prized Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) land for less habitat sensitive property. The proposed “swap” was to facilitate a developer’s plan to build the Otay Village 14 housing project near rural Chula Vista. Otay Village 14 is proposed to be build next to the already approved Otay Village 13, both of which will be upscale housing projects. Otay Village 13 is planned with 1900 homes in a gated community and Otay Village 14 was planned for an additional 1100 homes. The Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve had been purchased with public funds for “permanent preservation.” Fortunately, in California, exchanges of preserved and MSCP lands must be approved by the state Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) that is required to hold public hearings.

As required, the WCB held a hearing on the proposed land swap December 8, 2020. About 150 organizations, land trusts, conservancies and individuals rushed to the defense of this habitat from all over California. They included the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, rescuers of the Northern Spotted Owl, Golden and Bald eagles, Quino checkerspot and Hermes copper butterflies, monarchs, gray fox, burrowing owl, 16 special-status plants and 41 special-status wildlife species. Protectors came from deserts to wetlands such as the Mojave Desert Land Trust to the Rivers and Lands Conservancy, from the coastal forests, like Save the Redwoods League to the mountains such as Eastern Sierra Land Trust. Some were experts, biologists, zoologists or botanists. All were individuals who are alarmed by the fact that so much wildlife is on the verge of extinction due to sprawl and loss of habitat, and climate devastation with its fires and pests.

Here were many reasons they opposed this exchange:

- 1.)-It was a **BAD DEAL**. it would have traded critically important habitat that nourishes many imperiled species for open space with little habitat value. Not all open space is equal.
- 2.)-It would have **BROKEN AGREEMENTS**. The valuable habitat of the Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve was purchased in perpetuity in 2003 by the CDFW specifically for “permanent protection” of important biological, scenic, cultural and historic resources.
- 3.)-The exchange **VIOLATED GUIDELINES AND LAWS**. It was based on a faulty Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that is required under the California Environmental Quality Act for MSCP lands.
- 4.) This exchange would establish **ADVERSE PRECEDENTS**. It would have signaled developers that they could “swap” protected valuable habitat lands for far less valuable open space and that CDFW would ignore their own guidelines regarding conversions of public land.
- 5.) It would have **DESTROYED PUBLIC TRUST** in two ways. Firstly, this is public land, purchased via bonds and tax payer money for preservation. How can it be given away merely to help developers make more money from luxury housing? Second, how

could any conservation group ask their supporters for funds if they couldn’t guarantee the land would be preserved?

6.) This is a **HIGH FIRE SEVERITY** zone with inadequate evacuation roads for these planned developments and the existing communities.

7.) Villages 13 and 14 are 20-30 miles from any major employment center, adding about 65 million round trip miles per year if each home was occupied by only one working family member. The amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from that many autos would prevent the county from achieving state climate goals. Furthermore, traffic is already clogged along the freeways leading to employment centers.

8.) The exchange would have resulted in **LOSS OF SPECIES**. It would have given up 219 acres in the heart of the Ecological Reserve in the center of Proctor Valley. The Ecological Reserve, is a “crown jewel,” essential for golden eagles, and many other endangered, threatened and sensitive species and the corridors that are vital for their survival. Wildlife and habitat groups count on preserves in different areas when making their overall local and state plans for species survival in the habitats and corridors between them.

9.)-This area is prime location for the Quino checkerspot butterfly. This butterfly has been on the federal endangered species since 1997, but is not “covered” in the local San Diego MSCP. Although the butterfly used to be prevalent throughout California, it is now extinct in many areas and is nearing total extinction.

Many people know about the devastating decline in the bee and Monarch butterfly populations, but this is another butterfly nearing extinction due to climate change and loss of intact habitat. Quino checkerspot butterflies used to be prevalent all-over Southern California and further north. Now 5% of their population are left in only a few remaining pockets with open growths of coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland and desert pinyon-juniper woodland.

Many groups like the Sierra Club, the Endangered Habitats League, Preserve Wild Santee and more are devoted to preserving such few remaining pockets, in MSCP lands or perfect habitats such as Fanita Ranch, Harvest Hills, and this Ecological Reserve. These lands are important due to their intact cryptobiotic soil crust, which is untrampled, non weedy soil filled with microorganisms.

Fun facts:

The Quino Checkerspot larvae may remain in diapause for multiple years prior to maturation.

They need to sun bathe between plants:

Quino’s are exothermic (cold-blooded) and therefore require an external heat source to increase their metabolic rate to levels needed for normal growth and behavior. Within open, woody canopies, larvae seek microclimates with high solar exposure for basking in order to speed their growth rate.

Land Swap continued on page 14

Sierra Talks

**These Sierra Talks will be Broadcast Live at 6:30pm on Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/sierradubsd/>
Check Our On-Line Calendar for Updated Info**

February 5

Wonderful discoveries in modern astronomy The presentation will begin with the more than 4000 planets around other stars, called exoplanets, discovered mostly by the famous Kepler space telescope. Then it will look at what the Hubble space

telescope has shown us about the birth and death of stars. Finally, the presentation will explore two concepts currently at the top of the astronomical hit-list—dark matter and dark energy. Both are invisible and controversial, but they are used to explain observable phenomena such as the rule-breaking speed of galactic rotations, multiple images of the same galaxy in the same photograph, and a universe that is expanding ever more rapidly.

Our presenter, Monte Marshall, PhD, studied astronomy at Villanova and at SDSU. His interest continued both by way of astronomy articles in scientific journals and occasionally attending talks in the astronomy department at SDSU. Monte devoted his career to the earth sciences, when he saw the total solar eclipse in Oregon his interest in astronomy was revived! He has given well-received presentations on the formation of the solar system as well as the rest of the universe to several professional groups.

February 12

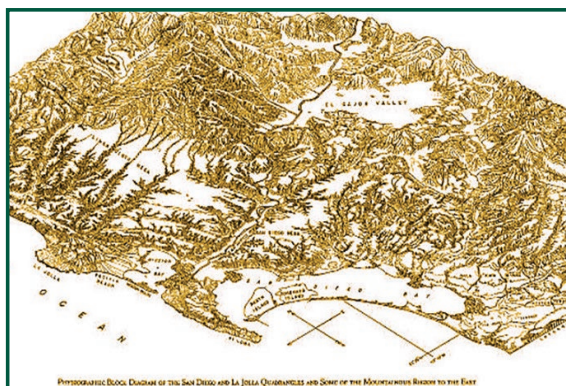
San Diego Chapter Member Community Update

Join us virtually (1 hour) to learn more about your local San Diego Chapter, what we have accomplished, what we plan for 2021 and how you can participate even during these trying times. At Sierra Club, we believe in the power of together. We are a powerful collective of nearly 4 million grassroots changemakers with different races, ages, identities, incomes and zip codes -- when we show up together, we can create powerful change. This year demanded more than we could imagine. With the Sierra Club San Diego Chapter, you can find your environmental community and make a difference right here in your neighborhood. Together we can build green and equitable communities, fight climate change, improve our environment, and preserve what we hold dear.



March 5

The Shape of San Diego: How Our Landscape Formed



Mount Soledad, Mission Bay, Point Loma, Mission Beach, San Diego Bay, Silver Strand, Kearney Mesa, and more combine to make San Diego unique. The varied coastline, former islands, the bays, mesas, hills, and mountains of San Diego all were created, and are maintained, by active geologic processes. San Diego was buried by a massive alluvial fan in Eocene time (56 to 34 million years ago), warped by regional tectonism, cut into and abandoned by rising and falling sea levels, distorted by active faulting, and healed by river and ocean waters depositing sediments. This pre-history of our region will be discussed in this talk.

The presenter will be Dr. Patrick L. Abbott, Professor Emeritus of Geology at SDSU. Pat's Ph.D. studies at The University of Texas at Austin emphasized reading the history stored in sedimentary rocks and fossils. Some of his work is presented in the book and the video "The Rise and Fall of San Diego". Another of his local books is the "Geology of Mission Trails Park" and its video "Rise of the Mountains". Pat also is author of 11 editions of "Natural Disasters" for McGraw-Hill Publishers.

Member Comments

Chapter members may submit comments to the HiSierran editor. Submit your comments to HSEditor@sierrasd.org and please include in the subject line "Member Comments". The HiSierran reserves the rights to reject comments for any reason including false statements or language. Comments will not be edited, although we may ask you to shorten due to space available. We cannot guarantee all comments will be printed, however we will try our best.

Smart Growth and Sprawl

We have to rethink what maximizing profits means.

By Cynthia Wootton

In this day and age, we spend so much money mitigating and repairing problems that have developed as a result of climate devastation. Although this is necessary, it is based upon "backward" thinking. Sprawl, for instance, creates more problems, we end up spending more money on making repairs. Remote development stretches our infrastructure and increases our cost of living. It increases the possibility of more fire devastation and more GHG, which increases climate destruction and we end up spiraling downwards and looking backwards, spending our public wealth needlessly. We have to look forward so that we can use our public wealth to innovate the best solutions that resolve the emergencies we're facing.

More and more people are facing food and shelter insecurity. HOMELESSNESS is growing. For those with humanitarian goals, that's not acceptable. For those with monetary goals, the economy is dependent on consumers who have the ability to consume. People who are homeless have a harder time keeping clean and getting jobs. Diseases, fires and suffering are harder to contain among this group. Again, this creates backward thinking, we have to use our community public wealth to stop further destruction. By thinking solely of making monetary profits we all lose. Let's use our faculties for WIN WIN solutions and SMART GROWTH.

What does this mean in terms of development? It means that we must have AFFORDABLE COMPACT HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS rather than housing created for foreign investors. Affordable smart growth is the only answer for our times when people are continually displaced and financially hurt by climate destruction and when younger generations are entering the workforce.

If unsuitable development did not continually drain our public wealth, we could be using it for creation and innovations. There's so much open space that developers can use for their projects, they don't have to pave over remote ecologically biodiverse habitat with luxury housing. It would be so much better if they would just use skills and creativity to develop projects that incorporate SMART GROWTH, compact communities with mixed types of affordable housing, green buildings and spaces that save commuting costs and energy bills.

Cynthia Wootton is a member of the Chapter Conservation Committee and volunteer.

The City of Encinitas Declares a Climate Emergency!

By James Wang

Sierra Club people are well aware that our climate is in dire straits, that urgent and determined action is needed, and that time is short.

Therefore, it was gratifying when Encinitas City Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency (CE) on December 16. But it is only a small step: the CE declaration is only words: it's actions that count.

Furthermore, because the emergency is global, we need to bring everyone and every jurisdiction on board.

How can we do that? Here's how the process succeeded in Encinitas ...

Starting about a year ago, I wrote a report for the Encinitas Environmental Commission describing why we are in a Climate Emergency, including a proposed resolution. Since the city staff would be responsible for implementing the CE, I worked with them on the resolution's wording. To be meaningful, it must include committal operative clauses; otherwise it's only symbolic. The key is to find a satisfactory midpoint acceptable to all.

With the unfortunate intervention of the pandemic, it was months before we had a final draft. In June, the Environmental Commission approved it 6-1 (Eldon dissenting). The months that we spent were worthwhile since now the CE resolution was endorsed by both the city staff and the Commission.

With that concordance, augmented by the uncontested and ardent public speakers (many from the Sierra Club) at the City Council meeting, the Council members had a clear path forward.

Have you asked your city to declare a Climate Emergency? We need more cities, and then the county, the state, and the country to declare Climate Emergencies!

The City of Encinitas report on the Climate Emergency is available to the public and can be used as a starting point for other jurisdictions: <https://bit.ly/2KqnxeP>

James Wang is an active Chapter volunteer and member of the Encinitas Environmental Commission.



San Diego Chapter Political Endorsements General Election Results

U.S. Representative

WIN 49th Cong. District – Mike Levin –
(San Diego County Only)

Loss 50th Cong. District – Ammar Campa-Najjar

WIN 51st Cong. District – Juan Vargas

WIN 52nd Cong. District – Scott Peters

Loss 53rd Cong. District – Georgette Gomez

State Senate

WIN 39th – Toni Atkins

State Assembly

WIN 76th – Tasha Boerner Horvath

WIN 79th – Dr. Shirley Weber

WIN 80th – Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher

San Diego Superior Court

WIN Seat #30 – Tim Nader

San Diego County

Board of Supervisors,

WIN District 1 – Nora Vargas

Loss OPPOSE– Board of Supervisors,

District 2 – Joel Anderson

Board of Supervisors,

WIN District 3 – Terra Lawson-Remer

City of Carlsbad

Loss City Council, District 2 – Lela Panagides

WIN City Council, District 4 – Teresa Acosta

City of Chula Vista

WIN City Council, District 3 – Steve Padilla

City of Del Mar

Loss City Council – Glenn Warren

Loss City Council – Bob Gans

City of Encinitas

WIN Mayor – Catherine Blakespear

WIN City Council, District 1 – Tony Kranz

WIN City Council, District 2 – Kellie Shay Hinze

City of Escondido

Loss City Council, District 3 – Don Greene

Loss City Council, District 4 – Andres Yanez

City of Imperial Beach

Loss City Council – Mark West

City of La Mesa

WIN City Council – Jack Shu

City of Lemon Grove

WIN Mayor – Racquel Vasquez

WIN City Council – George Gastil

City of National City

WIN City Council – Marcus Bush

Loss City Council – Gonzalo Quintero

City of Oceanside

WIN Mayor – Esther Sanchez

Loss City Council, District 3 – Shari Mackin

Loss City Council, District 4 – Jane Marshall

WIN NO - Measure L – North River Farms Development

City of San Diego

WIN City Council, District 1 – Joe LaCava

WIN City Council, District 3 – Stephen Whitburn

WIN City Council, District 5 – Marni von Wilpert

WIN City Council, District 7 – Raul Campillo

WIN City Council, District 9 – Sean Elo

City of San Marcos

Loss City Council, District 3 – Alan Geraci

Loss City Council, District 4 – Neil Kramer

City of Santee

Loss Mayor – Stephen Houlihan

City of Solana Beach

WIN Mayor – Lesa Heebner

WIN City Council, District 1 – David Zito

WIN City Council, District 3 – Jewel Edson

City of Vista

WIN City Council, District 3 – Katie Melendez

Vallecitos Water District Board of Directors

WIN Division 5 – Tiffany Boyd-Hodgson



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SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

..... 6 FEET



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Due to Covid-19, we decided to take this next year of 2021 to focus on a more comprehensive program with improved experiences for our students! Please continue to check back for updates and self-guided hikes @ wbc.sierraclubnsg.org Stay Safe!

Sierra Club Bus Trips

We plan to move the entire 2020 bus trip schedule to 2021. Please check our website <https://www.sdsierraclub.org> for continued updates. Hopefully, with a vaccine now we will be able to safely travel together again soon.

The Bus Trip Committee

Inspiring Connections Outdoors

Bill Tayler
San Diego, ICO Co-Chair



Reflections on 2020 and Anticipating a Better 2021

by Bill Tayler

“Ten more minutes and then we’re leaving,” I announced to the kids near and far climbing rocks on the Ellie Lane trail on a trip earlier this year. Sitting on the rock next to me, a 4th grade girl named Delilah responded quietly, “I just want to stay here forever. It’s so peaceful and quiet. My house is always so noisy.” As I reclined on our granite perch and gazed over the boulder-studded chaparral toward Iron Mountain, I knew exactly what she meant.

In a few minutes on Google, you can

find hundreds of articles about the mental health benefits of spending time in nature. Or you can spend time listening to what kids tell you when they are actually out in nature and learn much the same thing. On a different trip, a sixth grader named Pamela told me, as we walked through the forest on the Sunset Trail on our way to Laguna Meadows, “I really like hiking because you don’t have time to think about anything other than where to put your feet.” Words of wisdom worthy of John Muir.

On yet another trip to the Ellie Lane trail, I noticed Danny, a boisterous sixth grader, sitting quietly and alone, both of which were unusual for him. When I checked in on him, Danny looked back at me over his shoulder, smiled lightly and said, “It’s

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.sandigosierraclub.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

like being in a forest. You can hear so many birds.” He then turned back to his bird-listening, more genuinely content than I had ever seen him.

And then there’s Ayleen, a fourth grader who, completely out of the blue, told me during a trip to Valley of the Moon in early March, “I can’t wait until I’m 18 so I can go hiking whenever I want and get away from everything buzzing around my head.” At just 9 years old, Ayleen had already learned exactly how healing nature can be. That’s quite a connection to make at such a young age. And it was about to be torn away from her by COVID.

Conversations like these validate the value of the ICO program to the kids we serve. And over the last 9 months, while we have been unable to lead ICO trips, I have thought a great deal about how those kids need ICO trips even more during these exceptionally stressful times, and about how much they will benefit from ICO trips when we are able to resume them. We have missed taking kids on trips and have been frustrated at our inability to bring them the healing power of nature when they need it the most. And we are looking forward to resuming trips when possible with a renewed energy, enthusiasm and appreciation for what we give (and what we get) from spending time in nature with kids.



“Enjoying Solitude in Valley of the Moon”

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

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

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by check to: Sierra Club San Diego

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Submission Deadlines for HiSierran Newsletter:

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

April/May/June 2021

Deadline March 1st 2021

**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.**

Land Swap continued from page 8

After hearing all the arguments pro and con, WE WON. The WCB board members ruled 4-1 in to deny the land swap. The majority did not want to establish such a precedent. Also, they did not want to betray the faith of the public in their guidelines. The board members were pleased by the research of their staff on the issues and they were thankful for the civil public discourse. One WBC board member, Fran Pavley, who ruled against the land swap said, developers knew exactly what they bought. They knew the location of the MSCP and the Rancho Jamul Ecological Preserve and that it would be a roadblock for them. They must have thought, up till now, in San Diego County, developers always have the upper hand.

In conclusion, destructive sprawl developments are still being planned for San Diego County. Sierra Club San Diego Chapter is still fighting projects such as Otay Village 13 and 14, Harvest Hills near Escondido and the Fanita Ranch project in Santee. The San Diego Chapter is fighting to preserve MSCP lands all over San Diego County. The exact same issues are in question. We can and must come together to save ourselves, each other and the climate that sustains us. By doing so, we can preserve our habitats, our fellow species, and stop our climate emergency.

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Committees & Contact Information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person meetings have been cancelled and meetings have moved on-line or by phone conference. Please check our Activities Calendar (<http://sandigosierraclub.org/news/activities-calendar/>) on how you can participate.

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Meets 2nd Wednesday 6:30 pm Chapter office

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Secretary: Amanda Mascia (2021)
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NORTH COUNTY COASTAL GROUP (COASTERS)

Contact Chair or check website for meeting information.

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sallyp123@mac.com

NORTH COUNTY GROUP (INLAND)

<http://sierraclubncg.org>
Contact Chair for time and location.

Chair: Pam Heatherington
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pjheatherington@gmail.com

COMMITTEES

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Meets 2nd Monday at 6:30pm
Chair: George Courser 858-231-0156
gcourser@hotmail.com

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Zero-Waste

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Ellen Shively

ellenshively@sbcglobal.net
619-479-3412

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Meets 1st Thursday at 7:00pm

Chair: Fred Rogers
ferogers@gmail.com

OUTINGS COMMITTEE

Meets quarterly, contact Chair for date and location.

Chair: Bob Stinton

sd.outchair@gmail.com

Leadership Review & Safety Committee

Chair: Michael Taylor (619 -948-2062)

sd.lrscc@gmail.com

Meets quarterly, call for information.

Bus Trips

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Chapter Outings Leadership Training (COL)

Stefanie Maio

sd.col.training@gmail.com

Pacific Crest Trail

Rob Langsdorf (858) 454-4777

SDSCPCTS@yahoo.com

WILDERNESS BASICS COURSE (WBC)

Held annually beginning in January

San Diego

Bryan Pray

info@wildernessbasics.com

www.wildernessbasics.com

Escondido

Kelly Conrad

slpypup@gmail.com

www.wbc.sierraclubncg.org

SECTIONS & SOCIAL COMMITTEES

Bicycle

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

Photography

www.sandiego.sierraclub.org

Steven Cirone
stevencirone@gmail.com

Social Sierrans- formerly Singles

Beverly Kanawi
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INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS (ICO)

Call or check website for meeting information.
www.sandigosierraclub.org

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On the north side & just west of the 163.

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Seal Society Docents Improving Life for La Jolla's Sea Lion Rookery

by Carol Archibald and Ellen Shively

Seal Society Docents spend most of their time educating visitors and looking out for the safety and welfare of the sea lions and visitors at Point La Jolla and Boomer's Beach. To this end, we have spoken to the City Council's Environment Committee, Parks and Recreation Department, and NOAA leaders for over six months to bring attention to the public's lack of awareness for the animal's well being and to lessen the horrendous human harassment we have witnessed at this Rookery.

The annual birthing season for sea lions is June and July. This past summer, 200 or more visitors were observed by Docents to illegally touch, pet, take selfies, pick up pups, and repeatedly disturb these animals on a continual basis. The Federal MMPA, State Wildlife laws, and the City Municipal Code were mainly ignored. In September and October, City Rangers working only weekends counted over 400 instances of visitors mistreating the sea lions; unaware that these are wild animals in their natural habitat and not a petting zoo!

Sea lion pups cannot swim for 2 - 3 months after birth and are in great danger of drowning when people block their path to the beach, such as during high tides. Pups can't forage for food until they are 8 months old, which is why mothers may nurse them for up to a year. In addition, if humans touch a young pup, the mother may reject it, leaving it to starve.

Human safety is another reason why people must keep a reasonable distance from sea lions. If they are too close, sea lions may growl, bite, or chase intruders away. The terrain at these beaches is uneven sandstone and slippery, causing many visitors to lose their balance and fall.

We have begun to circulate two petitions: 1) to continue to assign City Rangers to the Rookery; and 2) to close the Rookery to visitors during Pupping Season from June



Photo: Docents have been extremely busy educating the public and protecting the sea lions. The photo depicts docents Danielle Tackoor, Ellen Shively, and Robyn Davidoff, with our official banner.

Docent Name	Danie Tackoor
Date	11.22.20
Time	2-4 pm
Tide Position	High tide - 3:24 pm
Seal Numbers (+ pups)	62 pups and adults
People Educated	18
Harassment (barking, blocking, nipped)	2 instances of people blocking the sea lions. Both times the sea lions were trying to come up the rocks from the ocean.
Flushing	N/A
Petting, touching	0
Selfies	0
Falling	0
Dogs	1 - man brought his dog onto the rocks and when told about the rules politely went back upstairs.

Seal Society Incident Reporting Form

1st to October 31st. Please sign these petitions, which are posted on the Sierra Club website, within the next month to support these efforts. We thank you!