On August 28th, 31 days after a referendum began to overturn the Fontana City Council’s decision to turn over 37 acres of large open space into a 255-luxury condo development, the City Clerk’s office was presented with more than 2,700 referendum petition signatures. This was substantially short of the required 10% of registered voters in the city (110,000), but referendums “are difficult by design,” said Elizabeth Sena, Sierra Club member and founder of the South Fontana Concerned Citizens Coalition (SFCCC).

The proposed project is controversial because it would destroy an area of natural beauty that residents consider to be a significant asset to their community. The development will replace the open space with a high-end development and will severely limit access to the Jurupa Hills Refuge from the adjacent Southridge Park.

One of the main reasons support for the referendum petition was widespread, with over 30 volunteers working tirelessly for several weeks, was because community members see the proposal as hypocritical given the fact that the current city council and Mayor have rezoned numerous residential areas for industrial warehouses. Many of the same warehouse projects that the Sierra Club and other community members have fought against. The community has been repeatedly denied their requests for more green space and has seen land available for potential housing and community amenities turned into unattractive, industrial spaces. As a result, many felt this project was too much of a compromise to give up over 37 acres of open space.

A referendum petition requires gathering as many signatures as possible to show the City Council just how many people in the community were opposed to the project. The goal was NOT met, but the support for the referendum continues with many voices wishing they had signed the petition in time, or wishing that they could have signed but didn’t live in the city or were not eligible to vote.

The South Fontana community has been fighting for over a year to protect their open space against the proposed development project. Fortunately, community partner CCAEJ helped ensure that the fight continues with a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuit filed on August 25th. I invite you to watch a 60-minute video discussing the Fontana Referendum and the importance of conservation and preservation efforts in the face of development projects that threaten open spaces. (continued on page 2)
Local In-Person Events

**EV Expo Beaumont**
Sat, Sep 23 at 10:00 am - 1:00 pm PDT
Beaumont City Hall, Beaumont, CA

**San Bernardino EV Showcase**
Sun, Oct 01 at 10:00 am - 2:00 pm PDT
Inland Center Mall, San Bernardino, CA

This event will be at the Inland Center Mall on the last day of National Drive Electric week. We plan to have EV ride and drives and displays of medium-duty electric vehicles, as well as information booths. Join the Inland Empire Electric Vehicle Association at the Inland Center Mall on the last day of National Drive Electric week.

Local Online Events

**Storytelling to Boost EV Adoption: Expert Panel**
Sat, Sep 30 at 10:00 - 11:30 am PDT
Target Audience: Santa Monica, CA

Topics: Driving Experience • Environmental Benefits • Other • Equity

A panel of professional storytellers--writers, filmmakers and others--will share best practices for message creation and effective distribution to boost EV adoption by reaching a mass audience.

(A Message From Your Chapter Chair (continued from page 1))

The discussion held as my Chair’s Report during the August 29th Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting explores the next steps, including a CEQA lawsuit and potential future referendums.

The conversation also highlights the need for cities to prioritize long-term conservation and sustainability efforts over short-term economic gains, especially considering the negative impact of warehouses on the environment.

Watch the video now and learn more about this important issue.

Yours in the struggle,

Bobbi Jo Chavarria, Chapter Chair
Sierra Club, San Gorgonio Chapter

To read more about the referendum campaign and efforts for environmental work in the city of Fontana, please visit [fontanaforward.org](http://fontanaforward.org).
September 2023: Hiking the Arizona Trail

Wed, September 20th, 2023 7:00 PM

Joshua Basile will be presenting his experience hiking the Arizona Trail this summer during a heat wave. He will talk about the technology used to help guide him and his family to water sources during their trek.

Joshua is a student at UCLA studying Chemical Engineering. His academic interests include sustainable energy, carbon sequestration, and greenhouse gas reduction. This summer he is an intern for the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust as the Trails Coordinator. Joshua enjoys mountain biking, hiking, and backpacking. Register here.

You can catch up on this and previous episodes at the San Gorgonio Chapter's YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@sierraclubsangorgonio5811/videos

Call For Volunteers: Chapter Fundraising Committee

Joining our fundraising committee can provide a variety of valuable skills for individuals including:

1. Event planning
2. Marketing and branding
3. Strategic thinking
4. Relationship building
5. Leadership and teamwork

Fundraising committee members are essential. Without the dedication and commitment of these volunteers, we struggle to raise the necessary funds to keep our programs and services running.

By joining a fundraising committee, you can make a significant impact in your community and support the work that our chapter does throughout the region.
Equity, Democracy, and Sustainability
This summer, Sierra Club San Gorgonio nominated Riverside City Councilmembers Ronaldo Fierro, Erin Edwards, Clarissa Cervantes and Steve Hemenway to receive the Chapter’s 2023 Annual Political Leadership Award. The event, held on Sunday, August 13th raised around $20,000 for the California Sierra Club PAC.

Approximately 25% of California’s greenhouse gas emissions derive from natural-gas use. In December 2022, the Riverside City Council narrowly passed an ordinance which would phase in building decarbonization over the next three years. The City of Riverside involved Sierra Club and multiple other stakeholders in the Decarbonization Advisory Group to drive what an effective measure would entail. Effective as of 2023, all newly constructed buildings three stories or less must be all-electric buildings. In 2026 the ordinance will include all buildings with four stories or more to be all-electric. The building electrification ordinance is one step of the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan which aims to have citywide carbon neutrality by 2040.

“By passing this ordinance, we are showing everyone that Riverside is a trailblazer leading the way towards a breathable and sustainable future,” Fierro said. “Our goal from the outset was to craft an emission reduction strategy that makes sense for Riversiders -- and a policy that the State can emulate because of its careful and effective considerations.”

Riverside is the 18th largest city in the Inland Valley and the 12th largest city in California. The Inland Valley region has the highest concentration of ozone in the country according to the American Lung Association, with San Bernardino County edging out Riverside county as the worst. In January, over 60 local environmental groups signed on to a request for Governor Newsom to declare a public health emergency based on the report “A Region in Crisis” developed by the Robert Redford Conservancy, Sierra Club and Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas is a step in alleviating this crisis, along with better planning for logistics industry growth impacts.

On Sunday, August 13th, Mayor Pro-Tem Ronaldo Fierro who sponsored the measure accepted the award on behalf of himself and his Riverside Council colleagues; Councilmembers Erin Edwards, Clarissa Cervantes and Steve Hemenway for voting yes to adopt Electrification of New Buildings to the Riverside Municipal Code.

Please consider making a contribution today:
Donations to the California Sierra Club PAC are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. The California Sierra Club PAC funds support political programs and activities geared towards electing pro-environmental candidates and protecting voters’ rights. Please make your donation to the PAC today. Big oil, mining and polluters will be doubling their efforts to stop California’s progress toward sustainability and a stable climate. We need your help now to make sure California stays on track for a Green Future.

California Sierra Club PAC
3250 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 1106
Los Angeles CA. 90010

Contributions to the California Sierra Club PAC (PAC ID 1399719) require that Donor name, address, employer and occupation information be provided.
Moreno Valley Group News

Compiled by Christina Torres, Moreno Valley Outings Leaders, George Hague, Conservation Chair, & Ann McKibben, Secretary

From the Outings Chair:
“Hello fellow hikers and nature lovers, our group has a few hikes being planned for the fall and winter months starting with the Redlands San Timoteo Nature Sanctuary hike on September 13. You will find this and other updated outings on our Chapter website and register for them online. Also, if you are interested in becoming a hike leader for our group, please contact me for more info (cmt.teck@gmail.com). Training sessions are normally held in June every year so you have some time to think about it and get prepared! Hope to see you out on the trails soon.”
Christina Torres

Our Fall Group Newsletter: Look for our Moreno Valley Group fall newsletter with our fall group executive committee election ballot during the first half of October. Please take time to read our news and mail your ballot to us in the return envelope that we have provided.

Villages of Lakeview (VOL): Victory in court...Thanks to your donations and the amazing help of the Center for Biological Diversity this proposed 8,735 housing units, office and commercial development on the southern border of the 10,000 acre San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) that is adjacent and east of Lake Perris cannot go forward as proposed. The Sierra Club and the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society were represented by an attorney from the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD). The ruling from the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division Two was in our favor. The county had approved Villages of Lakeview without analyzing water supply impacts or providing a workable plan to offset damage to the nearby San Jacinto Wildlife Area.

The proposed 2,800 acre VOL development near the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) would use 1.5 billion gallons of water per year but the county failed to study the impacts of this usage on wildlife, rivers and nearby communities. This water use could have possibly even impacted current residents in the area — including Moreno Valley. The project would pave over habitat for sensitive species including burrowing owls, Swainson’s hawks, tricolored blackbirds, willow flycatchers and Stephens’ kangaroo rats.

Mission Creek Campout 2023 March 3 to 5 Mission Creek Campout by Christina Torres

$5.2 million for habitat was realized from a settlement by several environmental groups who litigated over the impacts of the Mid County Parkway (MCP). Most of this money is targeted to provide either conservation easements or land acquisition for habitat south of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA). The Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) (https://www.wrc-rca.org/about-rca/) is the agency that is responsible for using these monies for habitat in the areas designated in the settlement. The Moreno Valley Group of the Sierra Club is now with the help of the Center for Biodiversity attorneys monitoring the RCA efforts in using this money.

MoVal 2040—Moreno Valley General Plan Update (GPU) & Climate Action Plan (CAP): Moreno Valley General Plan Update (GPU) & Climate Action Plan (CAP): On August 15, 2023 our city council voted to not move forward with a settlement agreement with the California Attorney General (AG) and the Sierra Club on the GPU/CAP. We spent the better part of two years trying to settle this litigation that we filed on July 15, 2021 and on which the AG joined our effort a year later. We were very hopeful the city would move forward with the settlement agreement to significantly reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts on the health of people—especially children and the elderly—as well as the environment. We now must rely on our litigation with the help of the AG to eventually make this happen. When the California state attorney general, Rob Bonta, joined our litigation on June 22, 2022 he issued a press release in which he stated, “We’re intervening today so that those...”
communities do not continue to bear the brunt of poor land use decisions that site warehouses outside their doors.”

Compass Danbe Centerpointe Warehouse: Thanks to your donations the Sierra Club filed our lawsuit on this project on February 17 and will be in court Friday, September 29 arguing our case. The 389,603 square foot project site is located south of Alessandro Boulevard between Frederick Street and Graham Street. The warehouse is across the street from a charter school, apartments and homes. The project’s Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) indicates that trucks accessing or exiting the project site may also use the city-designated truck routes along Frederick Street, Heacock Street and Alessandro Boulevard to travel to and from State Route 60. Nine schools are located within 1/4 mile of these City-Designated truck routes that could/would be used by the proposed project. When settlement talks broke down our attorney filed their brief for the case in March.

Cottonwood & Edgemont Warehouses (C&E): On Tuesday, May 2, 2023 our city council voted to approve the Cottonwood & Edgemont twin warehouses which are only 17 feet from one family home and 19 feet from another. There are other homes within 30 to 50 feet. This neighborhood is in an environmental justice (EJ) community. According to CalEnviroScreen they are already in the worst 5% of California for air and other pollutions as well as socio-economic impacts. This project will only add to their pollution burden. Thanks to your donations we were able to afford the required $750 to appeal this warehouse project near family homes to force a city council vote because otherwise the Planning Commission approval would have been final. We have now been able to file our intentions to litigate this warehouse project. We had our required settlement meeting with the developer as well as his attorney and will probably have others. This warehouse developer is also the same as for the Compass Danbe Centerpointe warehouse in which we are in court. It is so sad to see our city’s continued failure to cover the massive warehouse roofs with solar, to require zero emission equipment, install many operational Level 1 and Level 2 Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers among other things.

Please consider making a donation to our local Sierra Club (P.O. Box 1325, Moreno Valley, CA 92556-1325) to challenge these unhealthy warehouse projects being built near people’s homes. Thank you to all of you who have already donated to help us make them less harmful to Moreno Valley residents, especially children.

Moreno Valley Business Park Warehouse (MVBP): The Moreno Valley Business Park warehouse is proposed at the southeast corner of Ironwood Avenue and Heacock Street, in the same shopping center as the new Sprouts. The warehouse’s diesel trucks will significantly impact not only family homes as they travel on adjacent roads, but also the SR-60/Heaco dock Street interchange as well as the entrance to the shopping center. After the administrative record was complete and we were ready for our hearing the developer said he found more information to put into the record which caused another delay—if the judge accepts them.

Moreno Valley Business Center (MVBC) Warehouse: This poorly located warehouse would be located at the NE corner of Alessandro Boulevard and Day Street. On the east side of the project, homes are adjacent to the site; north are a few homes across a narrow two-lane road; and to the west a few homes are across a narrow two-lane road. The census tract containing this project site shows its residents are in about the worst 1% of areas in all of California for air pollution and other socioeconomic impacts. The project site is owned by the city. Both the Sierra Club and CCAEJ filed appeals on July 25, 2022. We were not given extra time as normal to present our appeal during the Dec 6th council meeting, but instead our out-going mayor Gutierrez allowed us only two minutes each and would not accept our request for a continuance. Council members Edward Delgado, Elena Baca-Santa Cruz and Mayor Gutierrez (elected our new Supervisor in November 2022) voted in favor while council members David Marquez and Ulises Cabrera (our new mayor) voted against it. On Thursday January 5, 2023 our Sierra Club attorney submitted a case for filing a lawsuit on this poorly placed warehouse. Your Moreno Valley Sierra Club volunteers are currently in settlement talks with the developer and their attorney. Thanks to your donations we hope to make this project have less impact on the environment and nearby families.

Have you thought about volunteering with our Moreno Valley Group? If you have a few hours or more to contribute to our efforts, please contact us at: movalleygroup@yahoo.com Some examples of tasks would be managing our group web page. Training would be provided; updating our information would be the main requirement.
The Moreno Valley Certified Farmers Market is held every Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Riverside University Health System Medical Center, 26520 Cactus Avenue (near Nason Street) You can follow them at their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/morenovalleycertifiedfarmersmarket/

Riverside County Department of Waste Resources:
They offer free classes online and/or in person on Environmental Justice, Green Cleaning, Green Gardening, Climate Change, Zero Waste, and Composting. For more information, please check: https://rcwaste.org/free-classes

Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA) has a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/Lakeperris/) where they post information on events they sponsor whether they are bird walks, hikes, events for children. Information on entry fees and annual passes can be found at: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23887

Please take time to check out our Moreno Valley Group Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/MorenoValley Sierra Club/ for more information about our group and the variety of issues we are following here in Moreno Valley. Our Moreno Valley Group web page can be found at: https://sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/groups/moreno_valley Future outings and hikes are listed in the “Upcoming Events” column.

Big Bear Group News
By Ellen Kesler, Group Chair

It has been an active summer for our Group with several tablings and the Xeriscape Tour. We have been busy showing people how to make pinecone birdfeeders at our tabling displays for the Earth Day event in Big Bear Lake, at the “Adventure Days” event in Fawnskin area (Discovery Center), at our Xeriscape Tour Community Gardens area, and am preparing to set-up at Barton Flats for the “Forest Festival”. Tabling is a great way to reach people and promote Sierra Club; while they’re smearing peanut butter on the pinecone, it gives us an opportunity to promote and share.

Our Xeriscape Gardens Tour was a huge success being the first time we could return to an “in-person” tour. The selected home landscapes were truly amazing to see. Linda Garcia, our new ExCom member and Xeriscape Committee Chair, did an outstanding job of organizing and coordinating the Tour. Many, many thanks to her and her committee! We can now fund another scholarship for a qualified Big Bear High School senior next June.

We will continue with speakers at our General Meetings through October. Our meetings are the third Thursday of each month at 6:30pm in the Bridges Presbyterian Church in Big Bear Lake. Everyone is always welcome!
Santa Margarita
Group Update

By Pam Nelson, Group Chair

Our summer planning ex-com meetings went well. We’ve come up with interesting projects and a bit of fun thrown into the mix.

Jerry Willenbring was awarded a Grassroots Climate Emergency Committee grant of $1000 for one of these projects. Congratulations!

Below is his description of the project:
The Santa Margarita Group is leading a special project called “Home Electrification in Low-income Communities” funded by a grant from the Sierra Club Grassroots Network. They are conducting a series of panel discussion meetings this Fall to educate homeowners about how to electrify their homes to reduce consumption of natural gas. Home electrification includes installing heat pumps and induction stoves and chargers for electric vehicles. The meetings will take place in San Jacinto, Hemet and Menifee and will include a panel of experts on heat pumps, home improvement financing (including tax credits and rebates), electric vehicles and rooftop solar systems.

Anyone interested in attending can contact the Project Leader, Jerry Willenbring, by sending an email to JerryWill951@gmail.com to get detailed information on the time and place of the meetings.

Other projects are the student intern program, awareness and protection of the San Jacinto Basin and Wildlife Area, I-15 and other wildlife crossings, and native plant and butterfly gardens. There is even a plan for a Holiday party, thanks to Margaret Meyncke and Caren Hanson.

Margaret and Caren are brain-storming about setting up a coalition of individuals and organizations focused on protecting Monarch butterflies. Education and advocacy will be the main themes of the group with hopes of creating butterfly gardens throughout the region.

A community project involving saving trees at the Four Seasons development near French Valley has come to a compromised end. The County will remove more than 50% of the mature pine trees, but will save those that are not causing damage to the HOA. This is a win for the residents since there were plans to remove all trees. We helped them organize and be able to make their case. In their letters and calls, they explained that temperature and chaos buffering, shade and ambiance for walking and exercising, market value and even air quality were the benefits they receive from the trees.

We determined our schedule for our General Meeting/Speaker Series that will resume meeting in-person at the Ron Roberts Temecula Public Library on a quarterly basis. Our first presentation on Sept. 7th at 6:30pm. Butterfly expert, Dr. Gordon Pratt, will be speaking about Joshua Tree National Park butterflies. He will bring his recent book on the subject. Hope to see you there; it’s been a long time!

- 8 -
Notice: 2023 Chapter Elections

According to our bylaws: An Annual Election shall be held in the fourth quarter of each year to choose ExCom members. The ExCom shall provide written notice of this schedule and of the opportunity to nominate candidates by petition to all Chapter members. Group elections are conducted in the same manner.

The complete election schedule and contact information can be downloaded here.

Last Date to Accept Nominations:
Moreno Valley Group: August 25
Chapter & All Groups (except Moreno Valley):
September 15

Deadline for Petition Candidates:
Moreno Valley Group: August 31
Big Bear Group: September 18
Chapter & Los Serranos, Mojave, Tahquitz, Santa Margarita and Mountains Groups: October 2
Minimum Signatures for Petitions: 15 for all, except Mountains group which is 5

Ballots will be sent to members (as of October 23) by:
Moreno Valley Group: October 7
Big Bear Group: October 10
Chapter & Los Serranos, Mojave, Tahquitz, Santa Margarita and Mountains Groups: October 27

Send questions or ExCom nominations to chair@sangorgonio.sierraclub.org. For Group nominations, contact your current Group Chair.

New Volunteer & Activist Orientation!

Are you looking to make a difference in your community? Do you want to get involved in volunteer work but don’t know where to start? Then we invite you to our volunteer and activist orientation event!

It's a great opportunity for new and long-time members who want to get more involved to meet and learn about our organization and how we make a positive impact in the community.

During the event, we will provide information on our current volunteer opportunities, our mission, and the benefits of volunteering with us. You will also have the chance to meet with our experienced volunteers who will share their stories and advice on volunteering successfully.

We welcome all individuals who are passionate about making a difference to attend our orientation event. Whether you're looking to help with fundraising events, community outreach, or administrative tasks, we have a place for you.

So mark your calendar and RSVP for our volunteer orientation event: Thursday, September 14 from 7-8pm. It will be a great opportunity for you to learn, share, and connect with others who are committed to making a difference in the community.

NEW VOLUNTEER & ACTIVIST ORIENTATION
Be a volunteer, make a difference!

Thursday, Sept 14
7 - 8 pm PST
RSVP bit.ly/ChapterOrientation0923

WWW.SANGORGONIO.SIERRACLUB.ORG
California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) launched the 30x30 Partnership to support implementation of 30x30 and to engage and empower all partners working toward its objectives. The 30x30 Partnership is an alliance of groups and leaders advancing 30x30 and is open to all who are interested in participating! The Partnership provides an organizational hub for dialogue, shared learning, coordination, and strategic planning.

San Gorgonio Chapter is excited to see the 2023 Partnership Gathering right here in Riverside. Our geography has great potential for conserving open space and improving the equitable access to nature in our region. One of our major efforts is driving support for the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument. We have volunteers working on several locations in our region that would be ideal additions to local open space protection.

This event is an opportunity to collaborate with and learn from folks around the state working on 30x30 land protection. Let’s welcome the CNRA to our chapter with a robust showing from the San Gorgonio Chapter!

More info and registration link HERE. There is a registration fee of $40 for each individual day, or $75 for both. Stipends are available so please contact ruizmaryann@gmail.com if you are interested.

Thirty-by-thirty (30×30) refers to efforts by the global community to conserve 30% of terrestrial and marine habitat by 2030.