

SoCal Now

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Banquet Planning Committee Co-chair Jess Chow and Chapter Director Morgan Goodwin were all smiles at the 2023 Annual Banquet

THE CHAPTER WELCOMES A NEW COHORT OF ACTIVISTS

By Kim Orbe, Senior Conservation Program Manager

The Angeles Chapter is excited to announce the inaugural graduating cohort of the Activist Academy Leadership program! The Activist Academy leadership program was created last year to invite new, young activists to the Sierra Club and to invest in these individuals' personal and professional growth. Participants of this leadership program joined the Activist Academy to get skills and training to build their activism in issues related to Environmental Social Justice and the Climate Energy Justice movement.

In January of 2023, the Activist Academy program invited its inaugural cohort of activists, which included individuals aged 16-35, to represent our regional area from Los Angeles to Orange County. Over four months, these activists participated in sessions that focused on a variety of issues, including community organizing, campaign planning, power mapping, collective decision-making, and generative conflict. Each of these sessions was led by chapter volunteers from our conservation program, Wilderness Travel Course, as well as our community partners Pacoima Beautiful and Sunrise Movement Long Beach.

Participants had the opportunity to meet and learn from the leaders and Sierra Club National staff on the ground leading our various climate and energy justice campaigns at each session. These included staff leading our beyond dirty fuels, electrifying transportation (My-Gen), Clean Air, Building Electrification, and Outdoors for All campaigns, and discussing their intersection with people, the planet, and the environment.



Pictured: Conservation Program manager, Kim Orbe, smiles with Activist Academy Graduates

"There are several resources out there, work is always available, and people are always organizing somewhere for some reason. Tools taught during these sessions that I had no clue or understood beforehand were presented with a lot of knowledge and patience to where I felt comfortable being in conversations with those specific topics."

-Amy Marie Van Auken, Activist Academy participant

In just a couple of months, we were able to create deep connections, and have uncomfortable but necessary conversations about environmental racism, climate justice, indigenous people's sovereignty, and the radical leadership needed to serve and protect our BIPOC communities from further harm from climate change. It has been a pleasure to share space with the incredible leaders and help them find a

home for their activism whether it is with us at the Sierra Club or the movement at large with our Environmental Justice partners. I am excited to continue inviting these activists to get involved in our various Sierra Club campaigns and see what they will accomplish in the future. If you have the opportunity to meet some of these activists, give them a warm welcome and I invite you to learn about them, and the wealth of knowledge and experience they bring to our work. I know the trainers and I have taken many learnings from the participants themselves!

We are excited to continue this leadership program for years to come. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please visit our website. Additionally, donations and contributions from members like you are appreciated to keep the Activist Academy and programs like this funded.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CHAPTER COORDINATOR

By Jeremy Goldsby, Chapter Coordinator

The Angeles Chapter welcomes Jeremy Goldsby as the new Chapter Coordinator. Jeremy comes to us from the Sunrise Movement, as well as Wells Fargo, and brings financial, environmental, and developmental skills to the chapter. He hails from Pink Hill, NC, and holds a B.A. from UNC-Charlotte. Jeremy is a climate activist focused on advocating for vulnerable rural BIPOC communities. He co-founded Table 33 ("T33"), a social justice collective, and joined the Sunrise

Movement, engaging in climate policies and protests. Jeremy enjoys water-related activities, visiting Venice Beach and Santa Monica. He also follows UCLA gymnastics and supports Fisk University's team. Additionally, he likes Alabama Football, food documentaries, and community-building events assisting the BIPOC population of Los Angeles. Jeremy looks forward to working with everyone to mitigate climate change based on our shared Core Values. His knowledge is so valuable for our movement at large, and we're so happy to have him.



STOP THE GONDOLA

By Amanda Stemen, Central Group Parks Committee Chair

The Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit (LA ART) project, also known as the Dodger Stadium Gondola or The McCourt Gondola, is facing opposition from community members and organizations due to three key concerns.

Firstly, there has been a lack of real community input and transparency throughout the planning process. The project, overseen by Los Angeles Metro and nonprofit Zero Emissions Transit, was gifted to them by Aerial Rapid Transit Technologies (ARTT), an LLC formed by Frank McCourt, a developer and former Dodgers owner accused of misusing team funds. Many suspect that McCourt's involvement is driven by his desire to develop the Dodger Stadium parking lots for his own benefit, potentially impacting the local community and environment. The absence of other bids, withheld information about the project's details, and the selection of potential routes without public input have fueled these concerns.

Secondly, critics argue that the project is a waste of taxpayer dollars. The funding for the gondola remains undisclosed, leaving taxpayers uncertain about their financial contribution to a project they have had little say in or even desire. Additionally, claims by LA Metro that the gondola would be considered "public transportation" and provide free rides for Dodgers ticket holders and local residents lack a concrete plan for implementation. If residents end up having to pay a significant fee to ride the gondola, it would not meet the criteria of affordable public transportation.

Thirdly, the preference of the community is for free shuttles rather than expensive gondolas. The existing Dodger Stadium Ex-

press bus system, committed to zero emissions, is already widely utilized by Dodgers fans to travel between Union Station and the stadium. Redirecting public transit funds to enhance this system would reduce emissions and vehicle congestion more effectively than the proposed gondola. Transportation researchers from UCLA dispute the environmental claims made by LA ART, stating that the gondola's impact on traffic reduction and public transit connections would be minimal.

Moreover, the gondola's proposed path would negatively affect Los Angeles State Historic Park, a green space cherished by the community. Trees would be cut down, and the skyline would be marred by cables and gondola cars. Wildlife, especially birds, would be displaced, and the local neighborhood would experience increased traffic and parking problems, potentially endangering pedestrians, especially seniors, and children.

Considering the history of seizing public land for private development and the lack of engagement with the local community, this project appears to be another instance of privatizing public spaces for corporate profit. Without transparency and meaningful dialogue, it could be perceived as corporate welfare for the wealthy and further harm the environment.



In solidarity with the community, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter co-sponsored a kite festival in LA Historic Park. We support underserved communities and highlight the significance of the park's sky, which would be compromised by the gondola overhead.

FEELING CONNECTED AT THE ANGELES CHAPTER ANNUAL BANQUET

By Jennifer Gregg, Chapter Fundraising Officer

Thank you to everyone who attended the Angeles Chapter Annual Banquet, making it an unforgettable day filled with warmth and togetherness. Ten outstanding individuals were honored for their dedication to the chapter.

The awardees included Al Sattler, Mathieu Bonin, Nithya Raman, Linda Cleveland, David Eisenberg, the White Cane Hike Team, Everette Phillips, Ken Beauchene, Frank Gruber, and Bill Lavoie.

The event featured various activities, including a sponsored coffee and social hour by Laleigh Coffee, a Swell Energy Welcome Lounge, a Parks Project Pop-Up Shop, auction bidding, and a collaborative painting project hosted by Urban Crop Circle. Informative breakout sessions called "Campfire Conversations" covered topics such as The State of the Chapter, Solar Power, Conservation & Outings, and Pro Outdoor Tips.

DJ Meatless Beatz provided music while Leaf Over Beef catered lunch, and LA-based breweries donated craft beer. Succulent arrangements by Sandra Cattell adorned the tables.

Comedian Kristina Wong's entertaining performance addressing environmental issues was a highlight of the afternoon.

The awards ceremony, presented by Chuck Currier, recognized each honoree's impressive accomplishments. Executive Chair Dyana Pena handed out plaques, receiving standing ovations from



Pictured: Awardees Linda Cleveland, Nithya Raman, and Mathieu Bonin pose with friends and loved ones.

the Sierra Club peers.

The event embraced a zero-waste approach with digital tools, reusable items, and composting, resulting in minimal landfill waste.

The organizing committee expressed gratitude to everyone involved, including banquet co-chairs Jessica Chow and Tejinder Dhillon, Chuck Currier, volunteers like Tesia Lee and Nancy Ly, and sponsors and vendors such as Swell Energy, Beneficial State Bank, and The Parks Project.

Appreciation was expressed to all who purchased tickets, tables, mugs, bid on auction items, or made donations. The event served as a fundraiser, helping expand the Sierra Club's work in the community.

Days like this remind us of the powerful connections we have built and the importance of preserving our environment.

Plans for next year's event are underway, and those interested in sponsorship or joining the planning committee were encouraged to contact chowjjs@gmail.com or jennifer.gregg@sierraclub.org.

Outings

Visit Harwood Lodge

Your Hidden Sanctuary with Sierra Club Membership



Harwood features a 40' great room with woodburning fireplace, dining/sitting room with woodburning stove

Did you know that being a member of the Sierra Club comes with a range of exciting benefits? Beyond the rewarding experience of contributing to environmental conservation efforts, Sierra Club members gain access to various facilities and accommodations. One such hidden gem is Harwood Lodge, nestled amidst the breathtaking natural beauty of the Angeles National Forest in California.

Angeles' lodges & huts are all must-visit

Harwood Lodge (Mt. Baldy in the San Gabriel Mountains)
San Antonio Ski Hut (Mt. Baldy in the San Gabriel Mountains)
Keller Ski Hut (Arrowbear Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains)

& Travel

Harwood Lodge, owned and operated by the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club, is a serene and welcoming mountain retreat. Tucked away in the tranquil setting of the San Gabriel Mountains, this charming lodge offers a unique opportunity to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Surrounded by towering trees, fresh mountain air, and scenic trails, Harwood Lodge provides an ideal setting for relaxation and rejuvenation.

One of the remarkable advantages of being a Sierra Club member is the exclusive access to Harwood Lodge. While the lodge is open to the public, Sierra Club



There is a fully-equipped kitchen including dishware, cutlery, stoves/ovens and refrigerators.

members receive priority for reservations and enjoy discounted rates. This privilege allows members to experience the lodge's tranquil ambiance and natural wonders, creating lasting memories while supporting the Sierra Club's mission.

Harwood Lodge is a haven for nature enthusiasts seeking a rustic yet comfortable retreat. The lodge features cozy common areas, a fully equipped kitchen, and shared bathrooms with hot showers. Whether you're embarking on a solo adventure or planning a group outing, the lodge offers various accommodation options (sleeps up to 64!), including dormitory-style rooms and private bedrooms. Embracing the spirit of community, Harwood Lodge also provides space for group activities, workshops, and environmental education programs.

Surrounded by the stunning landscapes of the Angeles National Forest, Harwood Lodge is a gateway to outdoor adventures. Sierra Club members can explore different hiking trails, take in breathtaking views, and immerse themselves in the beauty of



There are numerous trails for everyone to enjoy, whether you are a beginner & want a short walk to the waterfall (San Antonio Falls) or you are in great shape and want lots of mileage & elevation to really get the heart pumping (Devil's Backbone Trail, Mt. Baldy).



nature. From leisurely walks to challenging summit hikes, there's something for every skill level. Embarking on these adventures fosters a deeper appreciation for the environment and strengthens the bond between members who share a passion for the great outdoors.

Staying at Harwood Lodge not only provides a memorable experience but also directly supports the Sierra Club's conservation efforts. The lodge is powered by solar panels, uses energy-efficient appliances, and encourages eco-friendly practices such as recycling and water conservation. By being mindful of our environmental impact during our stay, Sierra Club members contribute to the sustainable operation of Harwood Lodge and help protect the natural wonders that surround it.

Start planning your visit today—let the beauty of nature and the camaraderie of the Sierra Club community enrich your journey. The lodge is open on weekends, welcoming Sierra Club members and their guests from 10 am Saturday to 3 pm Sunday. Plan your visit by checking the lodge's open dates and exploring the outings calendar for the Angeles Chapter [link]. Join scheduled special events and Christmas week celebrations, beautifully decorated inside and out. Make reservations in advance for party weekends through the Activity Schedule. Don't miss out—pack your bags, gather your friends, and start planning your visit to Harwood Lodge today! https://angeles.sierraclub.org/outdoors/lodges_and_huts



Travel Adventures Fundraising Trips

Travel Adventures offer an unparalleled opportunity to visit special places throughout the world, with domestic and international trips longer than a week to prized destinations, and are led by our most experienced volunteer leaders. Proceeds for these Travel Adventures are important fundraisers which provide vital support for the work of the Angeles Chapter while Featured Events directly support the work of the hosting Sectional Group or Entity.

For more adventures, go to: https://angeles.sierraclub.org/outdoors/featured_events

JAMBO! LET'S GO ON AN AFRICAN SAFARI

DATES: AUG 31, 2023 - SEP 10, 2023

ORGANIZED BY: ORANGE COUNTY SIERRANS

Join us on an unforgettable African safari organized by Orange County Sierrans, now with an expanded group size of 24 participants! Embark on a remarkable 11-day journey through Kenya's captivating wildlife, from its renowned parks to hidden safari locations. Witness the majesty of the Big 5, encounter zebras, giraffes, hippos, and a plethora of bird species. Be amazed by the annual migration of wildebeests, zebras, and gazelles, and immerse yourself in the vibrant culture of the Masai community. Secure your spot! [Sridhar Gullapalli gnsridhar@hotmail.com](mailto:Sridhar.Gullapalli.gnsridhar@hotmail.com)

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NEWS

Fundraising: Making the Connection

by Jennifer Gregg, Fundraising Officer

Welcome to Fundraising Corner, a monthly dispatch of current fundraising activities that bring people together. Here is where you can find out about exciting, inclusive member experiences that truly have an impact on our Chapter's strategic goal. We hope you will join us...

This month we're tapping into your passion for the Sierra Club!

Ask members what they are passionate about, and you will most likely connect on some level with what they are sharing. It is when we connect that we discover how we can do more and include more people in our shared passion for exploring, enjoying, and protecting the planet.

The Fundraising Committee is actively creating a meaningful schedule of events and activities that center around connecting and sharing our passion for Sierra Club all while raising funds to support our work.

Summer fundraising is on tap! Join us for an evening of cool music, tasty food, craft beer, and more at HiDef Brewery on July 14th. \$35 per person (must be 21 or older). For tickets, more information, or to make a donation, please go to: HiDef Fundraiser

Planned Giving events bring members together to connect their stories to their legacy. The next event will be in Orange County in the early Fall. Stay tuned for more details. If you would like to attend or host a Planned Giving event, please contact Elizabeth, our Fundraising Committee Chair at ean1948@gmail.com

Did you know that the Angeles Chapter has a treasured collection of books available for members to enjoy? Starting this June, we'll be hosting Library Events, which are small gatherings where members can enjoy a special presentation by various guest speakers. If you are interested in coming to one of these events, please contact the Chapter Fundraising Officer at jennifer.gregg@sierraclub.org.

Coming to your mailbox (or inbox) this July is our Summer Appeal. We'll be sharing why the most important work of our chapter needs your support. Thank you to everyone who has requested "digital only" fundraising correspondence. If you no longer wish to receive your fundraising letters by mail, please email a request to angeles.sierraclub@gmail.com.

Every donation, every membership, every volunteer, every program, every outing, every conversation, and every event hosted by the Angeles Chapter is a reflection of our connection to one another.

We hope each and every one of you know how important you are to our mission, and we hope you feel connected. Thank you for all you do. Your support is so valuable.

If you are interested in joining the Fundraising Committee please contact our Fundraising Committee Chair Elizabeth Neat at ean1948@gmail.com or the Chapter Fundraising Officer Jennifer Gregg at jennifer.gregg@sierraclub.org.

"Connection is why we're here. We are hardwired to connect with others; it gives purpose and meaning to our lives."

Brene Brown, Professor, Author, and Storyteller

Preparing for Fire Season

By Swell Energy

Fire season in California can start as early as May with the peak months being July through October. Be prepared! Secure your power with an energy storage battery.

With this year's wildfire season upon us, here's some informa-

1. Secure Power during Outages

Wildfires can cause power outages as a safety measure (Public Safety Power Shutoffs) or due to damaged infrastructure. Solar energy systems coupled with energy storage batteries can provide a reliable and uninterrupted power supply during these outages.

2. Off-Grid Emergency Power

In areas affected by wildfires, access to electricity may be limited or completely cut off. While normally connected to the grid, solar plus energy storage systems can function as off-grid power sources, providing electricity for essential needs like lighting, charging devices, running medical equipment, and operating communication systems.

3. Grid Resilience

By integrating solar and energy storage into the grid, California can enhance its resilience against wildfires. In addition to providing homeowner resiliency during fire season, solar and energy storage can support critical infrastructure such as hospitals, fire stations, water treatment plants, and emergency shelters.

4. Demand Response and Load Shifting

Energy storage systems can help manage the electricity demand during peak periods. By storing excess solar energy during the day and discharging it during peak hours, energy storage helps reduce strain on the grid and saves on costs. This load shifting capability can be especially valuable during wildfire seasons when electricity demand is high.

5. Virtual Power Plants (VPP) for Resilient Communities

Solar plus energy storage systems can be combined with demand response technology to create localized, energy networks. These VPPs can operate independently from the main grid, ensuring energy storage batteries are optimized to provide a reliable power supply to homes and businesses during grid outages caused by wildfires.

6. Reduced Emissions and Climate Impact

By relying on solar energy instead of fossil fuel-based power sources, solar plus energy storage systems help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This contributes to mitigating climate change, which is closely linked to the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires. By adopting renewable energy solutions, California can work towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy future.

tion to help you prepare and mitigate against likely power outages.

High winds can bring tree branches, brush and debris into contact with live power lines that can damage equipment and ignite a wildfire. As a result, the utilities may need to turn off power during severe weather to help prevent wildfires. This is called a Public Safety Power Shutoff and they are prevalent in Southern CA during this time of year.

Solar plus energy storage can play a significant role in mitigating the impact of wildfire seasons in California. Here's how:

The effectiveness of solar plus energy storage systems in wildfire situations depends on factors such as system capacity, proper installation, and maintenance.

Sierra Club Angeles members qualify for up to \$500 off your energy storage installation and Swell will donate up to \$750 to the chapter on your behalf.

Call Swell Energy at 888-839-0296 or visit swellenergy.com/sierraclubangeles



angeles.sierraclub.org/join_donate/ways_to_give/donate_your_car

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ANGELES CHAPTER

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Equity, Democracy, and Sustainability

To benefit California Sierra Club PAC
August 13, 2023, 3-6:00 PM PT,
Norma Hertzog Community Center, Costa Mesa, CA

To purchase a ticket or sponsorship: angeles.sierraclub.org/PACAwards