



ANGELES
CHAPTER

THE O.C. Sierran

A Newsletter for

■ SIERRA CLUB MEMBERS and SUPPORTERS IN ORANGE COUNTY ■

Open House

■ ■ EVERYONE IS INVITED ■ ■

You are invited to join us at our 1st annual

ALL ORANGE COUNTY OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, January 24, 2023: 6:30 – 8:45 pm

Thinking about joining the Sierra Club?

Already a member and are not sure how to help?

Ready to meet like-minded people?

The Open House is for Everyone!



> IN-PERSON:

Norman P. Murray Community & Senior Center
24932 Veterans Way | Mission Viejo, CA 92692

RSVP Required

> **TO ATTEND VIRTUALLY**, please visit our [calendar](#).

RSVP Required

> About 2 weeks after the event, a [link to the recorded meeting](#) will be posted on our website.

— PROGRAM —

6:30 – 7:00 pm

Reception with light refreshments compliments of Swell Energy. Opportunity meet representatives of Sierra Club entities in Orange County.

7:00 pm

Live transmission begins for remote participants.

7:00 – 7:15 pm

Welcome & Introductions

7:15 – 7:45 pm



SWELL ENERGY presentation:

Hired as one of the founding members of the Swell Energy Advisors team in 2017, **James Louis** has helped more than 1,500 customers navigate the landscape of the solar and storage market in California. In his various

roles at Swell, James' goal has always been to educate customers on the new concept and importance of Virtual Power Plants as well as on the benefits of solar paired with storage. James lives in Santa Monica and enjoys spending his time off at the beach with his dog, Benji, and playing volleyball and backgammon.

7:45 – 7:50 pm

SOLAR RIGHTS ALLIANCE presentation about SolarAPP+

7:50 – 8:00 pm *Intermission.*

Representatives of many Sierra Club entities in Orange County will display their brochures and programs.

8:00 – 8:45 –

Group presentations.

8:45 – Live transmission ends. Event closes.

TOGETHER WE ARE POWERFUL

DEAR ORANGE COUNTY SIERRA CLUB MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS,

You are a member of the nation's largest and oldest grassroots organization, with over 20,000 members and supporters in Orange County. Our geographically small county is the third most populous county in California, the sixth most populous in the U.S., and more populous than 27 States based on 2020 census data. Oddly enough, Orange County's population density is much higher (≈4000 people per sq. mi.) than our big neighbor to the north: Los Angeles County (≈2500 people per sq. mi.)! Our median income at \$94,441 is almost 40% higher than the national median household income of \$67,521 (2020 census).

We live in a small, wealthy, and densely populated county, facts that should make us leaders in the campaign to enact solutions to the climate crisis. Alas, our local efforts remain feeble, as most of our GHG reductions result from statewide regulations. This must change! Together, we need to ensure a livable future by taking our message to local governments and agencies, and you are vital in doing this.

It is our hope that you take your role in this effort for a habitable planet personally and seriously. Join us in actively enjoying, exploring, and protecting the environment and in becoming climate warriors! Together, we can do this!

SWELL ENERGY

"We're on a highway to climate hell," said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the opening of the climate conference in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt in November, and he added that "we cannot ... accept that our attention is not focused on climate change." The Sierra Club is very focused on preventing global warming from getting out of hand, and that is why the Angeles Chapter is cooperating with Swell Energy, a company creating programs that are helping the transition to clean energy.



- Swell's renewable energy systems not only offset demand on the electric grid and lessen the need for coal and natural gas power plants, but they provide energy consumers inflation-proof energy costs by locking in fixed monthly rates.
- Swell Energy is working with California's utility companies to create Virtual Power Plant programs throughout the state. Participating in a VPP enables homeowners and businesses that produce clean energy to sell their product to the grid in times of peak demand. This reduces the strain on the grid by lessening the need for "peaker power plants" and for transmitting electricity over long distances.
- Swell Energy is working with the Sierra Club to provide incentives to adopt clean energy.
 - > Angeles chapter members receive \$500 cash back on the installation of solar, energy storage, or both, and Swell Energy will donate \$500 to the Sierra Club on the member's behalf.
 - > In addition, Angeles chapter members can join a Swell VPP program and earn \$1,000 cash back, and Swell will contribute an additional \$750 to our chapter.

Members can take advantage of these **offers** to combat climate change, because, again in the words of UN Secretary General, "It is the defining issue of our age. It is the central challenge of our century. It is unacceptable, outrageous and self-defeating to put it on the back burner."

SOLAR APP+

Only 10% of properties in California have solar, and if we want to meet the future demand for renewable energy, this number must triple in the next few years. In our state, one of the biggest obstacles to solar growth is outdated and bureaucratic permitting. Therefore, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm launched SolarAPP+, developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in 2021. It allows cities (and other permitting entities) to greatly lower the cost and time of permitting.



SolarAPP+ (Solar Automated Permitting Platform) is software that automates permitting for residential rooftop solar systems. The contractor using this app answers a series of questions to verify that the solar system's design is up to code, then receives a permit, and installation can begin almost instantly. SolarAPP+ has reduced permit timelines from as many as 20 business days to zero.

It is important to know that **California Senate Bill 379** became law in September 2022. The bill requires that most cities install SolarAPP+ (or similar) by September 23, 2024, and it sets aside a limited amount of grant money to pay for installation costs. Smart cities are stepping forward throughout the state and are snapping up the grants that cover the cost of software installation. **More...** ■

Outings

January/February 2023

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EACH HIKE can be found in the [calendar](#) listing all events offered by Sierra Club entities in Orange County. The level of difficulty rating for each hike—easy, moderate, strenuous—is based upon: 1. distance, 2. elevation gain/loss, and 3. nature of terrain.

Please note that more outings will be added to the calendar after this newsletter is printed. Suggestion: print this page as a handy reminder of Sierra Club hikes in Orange County.

- **Wednesday, January 4:** Grand Tour of Aliso & Woods Canyon Park. 11.5 mi., 900' gain/loss, strenuous. **LEADERS: Ed & Helen Maurer**
- **Saturday, January 7:** Trail Maintenance in the San Mateo Wilderness. 4 – 7 mi., 1000' gain/loss, strenuous. **LEADERS: John Kaiser, Daniel Donovan, Kim Crane & Linda Ledger**
- **Sunday, January 8:** O'Neill Regional Park Loop. 5 mi., 300' gain/loss, moderate. **LEADERS: Sylvie Coté & Todd Clark**
- **Wednesday, January 11:** Buck Gully, Corona del Mar. Memorial Hike honoring Chet & Janice. 6 mi., 600' gain/loss, moderate. **LEADERS: Tod & Leslie Fitch**
- **Saturday, January 14:** Ancestor's Trail, San Clemente. 6 mi., 300' gain/loss, 600' gain/loss, moderate. **LEADERS: Tod & Leslie Fitch**
- **Sunday, January 15:** Snowshoe Day in the San Jacinto Wilderness. 5 mi., 500' gain/loss. **LEADERS: Sylvie Coté & Todd Clark**
- **Sunday, January 15:** Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve Hike. 5 mi., flat, easy. **LEADERS: Donna Specht, Dorothy Gutierrez & Jay Schneider**
- **Wednesday, January 18:** Black Star Canyon. 10 mi., 1300' gain/loss, strenuous. **LEADERS: Ed & Helen Maurer**
- **January 20–22:** Mammoth Bus Trip: Ski Downhill or Snowboard on Mammoth Mtn. Daily backcountry ski tours and snowshoe tours with the leaders. XC Ski or Snowshoe on your own at Tamarack Nordic Center. Learn to cross-country ski in the backcountry with our instructors.
- **Saturday, January 21:** Arroyo Vista Hike. 5 mi., minimal gain/loss, stream crossings, moderate. **LEADERS: Vicki Hazley & Mike Sappingfield**
- **Saturday, January 21:** La Vita Trail Hike, Brea. 4 mi., 1,300' gain/loss, moderate. **LEADERS: Eric Johnson & Fred Reed**

- **Wednesday, January 25:** Riley Park Loop. 3.5 mi., 650' gain/loss, easy. **LEADERS: Ed & Helen Maurer**
- **Wednesday, February 1:** Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park. 5 mi., 300' gain/loss, easy. **LEADERS: Mike Sappingfield & Ed Maurer**
- **Saturday, February 4:** Trail Maintenance in the San Mateo Wilderness. 4 – 7 mi., 1000' gain/loss, strenuous. **LEADERS: John Kaiser, Daniel Donovan, Kim Crane & Linda Ledger**
- **February 8, Wednesday:** Laguna Coast Wilderness Park Moro Loop. 10 mi., 2100' gain/loss, strenuous. **LEADERS: Ed & Helen Maurer**
- **Saturday, Feb 11:** Caspers Regional Wilderness Park, 6 mi., 857' gain/loss, easy. **LEADERS: Leslie & Tod Fitch**
- **Saturday & Sunday: February 11–12:** Lucky Boy Vista Backpack in Joshua Tree National Park backpacking trip. 5 mi., 200' gain/loss, easy. **LEADERS: Todd Clark & Sylvie Coté**
- **Saturday, February 11:** Lower Aliso Canyon, Chino Hills. 6.3 mi., 1100' gain/loss, moderate. **LEADERS: Eric Johnson & Fred Reed**
- **February 15, Wednesday:** Duck Ponds, 4 mi., flat, easy. **LEADERS: Dan Donovan, Leslie & Tod Fitch**
- **Saturday, February 18:** Ladera Ranch Crown Valley to I-5 Loop, 8 mi., 1340' gain/loss, moderate. **LEADERS: Ed & Helen Maurer**
- **Sunday, February 19:** Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve Hike. 5 mi., flat, easy. **LEADERS: Donna Specht, Dorothy Gutierrez & Jay Schneider**
- **Wednesday, February 22:** Bell View Trail Loop, 5 mi., 1150' gain/loss, moderate. **LEADERS: Ed & Helen Maurer**



■ Puente Chino Hills hiking group

Group Updates

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

This provides a forum to discuss Orange County conservation topics and supervises 11 ongoing conservation projects. The committee meets quarterly. Contact the chair for details, [Conservation Committee](#)

[Visit our website.](#)



ORANGE COUNTY GROUP

With about 5,000 members, our group is one of the largest in the entire Angeles Chapter, which is one of the largest chapters in the national Sierra Club!

If you are concerned about environmental issues and want to do something about them, the Sierra Club in Orange County offers you congenial groups and venues to make yourself heard and possibly even make a difference. On this website, you will find information about issues we feel strongly about, and you will also find links to some like-minded groups in our area.

Wednesday Hikes

Unique to the Angeles Chapter are our Wednesday Hikes because they are guaranteed to be offered every Wednesday throughout the hiking season from September through June. Of course, weather-related events such as fire and rain may keep us from setting out, but apart from that, you can consider Wednesday your *jour fixe* for a good hike in great company. The [Calendar](#) informs you of where we're headed.

[Come and join our next hike!](#)



SIERRA SAGE OF SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY

Sierra Sage is a part of the Sierra Club, the nation's oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental membership organization. Our group is one of 13 regional groups within the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter, representing the over 43,000 members of the Sierra Club residing in Orange and Los Angeles Counties.

Sierra Sage members live in the communities of Aliso Viejo, Coto de Caza, Dana Point, Ladera Ranch, Laguna Beach, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Lake Forest, Las Flores, Mission Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, and with the Orange County and Rio Hondo groups, we number almost ten thousand members throughout Orange County.

[Visit our website.](#)

RIO HONDO GROUP

Many of you may be wondering what the Sierra Club Rio Hondo Group is. The Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club, which consists of Los Angeles and Orange Counties, is broken down into 13 geographic groups. The communities composing the Rio Hondo Group in Orange County are Brea, Buena Park, Fullerton, and La Habra. Most of these communities are near the Puente / Chino Hills.

Because of its proximity to the Puente/Chino Hills, many of the group's conservation activities involve the hills. The group is active in the Puente/Chino Hills Task Force, which is working to preserve the wildlife corridor running from the western edge of the hills in Whittier to the Cleveland National Forest near the 91 Freeway. The group has also been involved in efforts to save West Coyote Hills in Fullerton and sponsors outings in the local area.



ORANGE COUNTY SIERRANS SECTION

We are the Orange County Sierrans Section of the National Sierra Club Angeles Chapter. We are open to all and welcome people of all backgrounds and ages. Our schedule of activities includes hiking, backpacking, hikes for Conservation, special Newcomer events, BBQs, City Walks, destination multi-day trips to lodges, backpacking, camping, winter sports and ski trips.

[Visit our website.](#)



■ Orange County Sierrans ski Mammoth Mountain

(article continues on next the page...)

Group Updates

(...continued from the previous page)

PUENTE/CHINO HILLS TASK FORCE

The Puente-Chino Hills Task Force is working to preserve the Wildlife Corridor from the Puente Hills through Chino Hills State Park to the Cleveland National Forest is an island of beauty and biological significance in a sea of urbanization.

The development of the middle of the Wildlife Corridor will increase traffic, increase pollution, crowd schools, destroy wildlife habitat, and impact everyone's quality of life.

[Visit our website.](#)



POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Political activists work at the local level in Orange County to promote the election of environmentally sensitive candidates to public office. They recommend endorsements to the chapter Executive Committee, organize support for endorsed candidates, and maintain a liaison with successful candidates after their election. Regional groups, are eligible to appoint a voting member of the committees, and interested individuals may also become members.



INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA)

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 includes \$369 billion in funding to address climate change. If implemented in a timely manner, it may bring the United States closer to the Biden administration's goal of cutting climate pollution in half from 2005 levels by 2030. There's plenty in it for members considering buying an EV and upgrading their homes.

[What's in the IRA for members?](#)

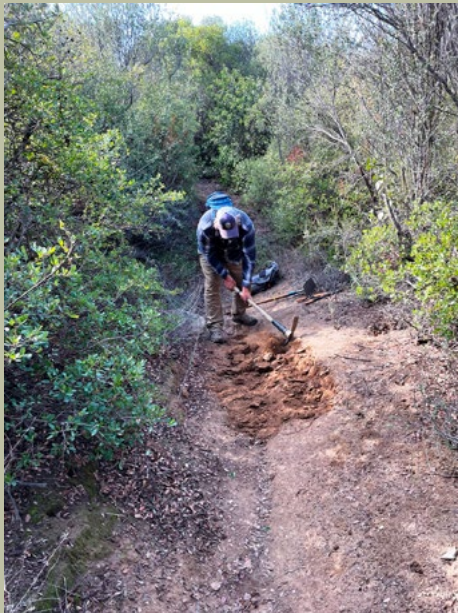
MARCH/APRIL ISSUE

Our next issue will focus on Earth Day 2023. We'll report on how Orange County is dealing with climate change and where the Sierra Club will be present at Earth Day events with exhibit tables. We will need volunteers to help us at our tables. Are you willing to spend 2-3 hours promoting our goals and missions to your fellow residents? Drop us an email.

[Yes, I'll help](#)



■ Morgan Trail



■ Trail Maintenance, leveling tread



■ Puente Chino Hills

Mule Pack Hikes

Mule Pack Section

IF YOU LOVE BEING IN THE SIERRA, you'll love mule pack trips! All the joy of backpacking and more without carrying a pack!

The Mule Pack Section conducts camping trips in the Sierra Nevada mountains in California of between four to seven



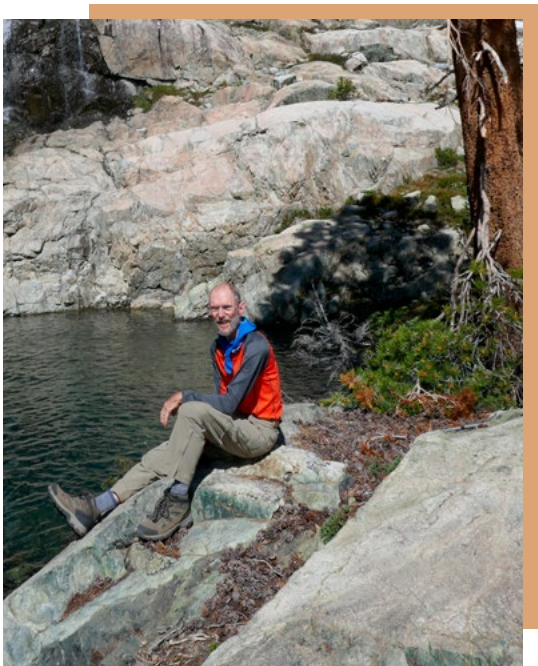
days in length. Most trips start on the east side, from Lone Pine in the south to Yosemite in the north. Because mules carry 40 to 55 pounds of each participant's gear, food, and supplies, you can enjoy the beauties and activities of the Sierra without the burden of

a heavy backpack and with a greater variety of food and drink, a larger tent and other amenities not possible on a typical backpack.

Each summer, you can choose from five to eight trips to different locations. On the first day, mules carry our gear while we hike separately to our selected campsite in a scenic wilderness area, typically at an elevation of 9,000 to 11,000 feet. We set up our base camp and, for the next several days, enjoy hiking, fishing, reading, relaxing, or whatever activity the participants choose.

Our unique trips sell out very quickly; therefore, head to your website and reserve your space!

[Visit our website](#)



■ John Kaiser, Shadow Creek



■ Mule Pack hikers



■ Mule Pack mules



■ Mule Pack, Shadow Creek

Trail Maintenance | John Kaiser

The Morgan Trail

OUR TRAIL MAINTENANCE CREW under the leadership of **John Kaiser** has made this fine trail in the San Mateo Wilderness much finer during four sessions this fall. The work took 34 volunteers, a total of 245 hours to cut and remove brush, cut and remove a fallen tree, level the trail gouged out by erosion, and install or repair water-diversion features to prevent future erosion. They cleared the trail with loppers, saws, McLeods, and pick mattocks.

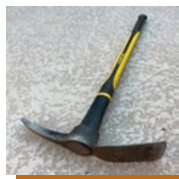
Those tending a backyard are familiar with **loppers**, which are the primary tool for clearing plant growth that narrows the hiking corridor. The ones employed by the trail-maintenance crew include gears or levers to improve the cutting action. When the branches are too tough for loppers, a variety of folding saws are available with saw blades as short as 6" and as long as 19". On rare occasions when trees fall across the trail, a cross-cut saw is used, although that tool is only carried to the trail when there is a known need.



McLeods are named after Malcolm McLeod, a US Forest Service ranger for the Sierra National Forest, who invented it at the beginning of the previous century. This handy tool was originally designed for clearing fire lines, but it is also a very popular tool with our trail crew. The tool has a wide hoe-like cutting edge on one side of the head and large metal teeth on the other side of the head. It is used for chopping lighter brush, raking debris from the trail, cleaning water drains, chopping into softer soil, and moving soil to fill in ruts—an extremely versatile tool.



Pick-mattocks are tools for digging into harder soil to repair the tread; the tread is where you put your feet as you are hiking. The head of the tool has a pick at one end and a 3" wide hoe on the other end. Pick mattocks and McLeods are both used to build or repair water bars/drains that divert water from the trail to prevent future erosion.



Walking the Trail from the Candy Store and back.

NOTE: (Adventure Pass required) at both trailhead parking areas.

On November 30 a group led by **Leslie and Tod Fitch** checked out the new and improved Morgan Trail from the Candy Store on Ortega Highway up to the South Main Divide Road and back, covering 10 miles with a total altitude gain/loss of 1200'/350'. The initial mile from the highway up into the San Mateo Wilderness is accomplished on the Bear Canyon Trail to an intersection with the Morgan Trail.



The route crosses chaparral-covered slopes and some dirt roads that serve the private Potrero de la Cienega



and Round Potrero. Between granitic boulders, the path meanders up a hillside into Morrell Canyon, where stately live oaks and willows provide shade. On this last section, equestrians often share the trail with hikers, and during the rainy season, there may even be water in the creek.

After a final short climb, the trail reaches the South Main Divide Road, where a map and picnic table mark the end/beginning of the Morgan Trail. Due south and way down is Lake Elsinore, fed by the San Jacinto River. On weekends, hikers may watch hang-and paragliders take off from high spots above the lake. ■

Photos courtesy of Leslie Fitch & John Kaiser



OCA Update

OCA Update

The Orange County Power Authority, aka OCPower, has been in full operational mode since the end of October when it launched service to nearly 800,000 residents in the cities of Buena Park, Fullerton, Huntington Beach, and Irvine. This is in addition to its having connected 38,000 commercial customers in these four cities in April of this year. Its first rollout proved to be successful, with a participation rate of 92%.

Since OCA is the sole local provider in Orange County able to offer 100% energy produced from renewable sources, these are big steps toward lowering greenhouse gas emissions in our county.

The OCA Board of Directors met on December 13, and staff reported some very positive news:

A complete financial audit of the agency conducted by Pisenty & Brinker LLC resulted in a clean bill of health. The auditors stated that OCA is financially strong, that no significant deficiencies were found, and that no changes or corrections are needed.

The staff has worked up a suggested rate plan for 2023 that puts OCA in a competitive situation vis-à-vis SCE: OCA rates will be 2% lower than SCE's! This may appear to be an insignificant difference, but it is only the beginning. We need to remember that this price differential will increase as renewable energy gets less and less costly. Here is a rate comparison for a typical residential Orange County household in 2023 that will go into effect in January 2023:



BASIC CHARGE** for a residential customer using 425 kWh per month				
Charge Type	OCA	SCE	Difference \$	Difference %
Generation Charge	\$55.53	\$56.66	(\$1.13)	-2.00%
SCE Generation Surcharges	\$6.74	\$6.74	\$0.00	0.00%
SCE Delivery Costs	\$72.08	\$72.08	\$0.00	0.00%
Total	\$134.35	\$135.48	(\$1.13)	-0.80%
*38% renewable energy				
SMART CHOICE** for a residential customer using 425 kWh per month				
Charge Type	OCA	SCE	Difference \$	Difference %
Generation Charge	\$59.75	\$56.66	\$3.12	5.50%
SCE Generation Surcharges	\$6.74	\$6.74	\$0.00	0.00%
SCE Delivery Costs	\$72.08	\$72.08	\$0.00	0.00%
Total	\$138.60	\$135.48	\$3.12	-2.30%
**69% renewable energy				
100% Renewable Energy Choice for a customer using 425 kWh per month				
Charge Type	OCA	SCE	Difference \$	Difference %
Generation Charge	\$61.91	\$56.66	\$5.24	9.30%
SCE Generation Surcharges	\$6.74	\$6.74	\$0.00	0.00%
SCE Delivery Costs	\$72.08	\$72.08	\$0.00	0.00%
Total	\$140.72	\$135.48	\$5.24	3.90%

These charts were lifted on 12/13/2022 from the OCA Staff Report, Item 9.2., page 56.

These figures show that anyone lucky enough to live in Buena Park, Fullerton, Huntington Beach, and Irvine can receive electricity generated from 100% renewable sources for only an additional \$5.24 a month!

With these impressive results, more cities will want to join OCA, and we ask for volunteers to help with this effort because many OC cities need a nudge. We need folks to promote green energy at city council meetings, visit city council members and staff in their offices, write letters to local newspapers, and raise this issue on social media. We are part of a big coalition of organizations that will help you make the most of any time you can spend on this effort. This is about our future, and it is well worth your time.

Please **show your interest** in our 100% green electricity campaign by providing us with your name, mobile number, and zip code.

Happy New Year!

from the OC Sierrans

Editor's Letter

Dear Reader,

YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE FIRST OC SIERRAN, a collaborative newsletter of the Sierra Club entities in Orange County: **Orange County Group, Sierra Sage of South Orange County, Rio Hondo Group, and Orange County Sierrans**. You will receive this publication six times a year—it will reach over 20,000 members and supporters in OC.

My job as an editor is to solicit materials to be published, establish the features of each edition, create and fulfill deadlines, and decide what will be published in each issue. As such, I will be responsible for the newsletter's success content. Helping me with this work is a great team of volunteers.

My primary goal for this newsletter is to foster a dialogue between leaders and members. I will try to make this newsletter as appealing, informative, and engaging as possible, and I hope you will respond to some of my requests for your involvement. I ask also that you contact me with any concerns and questions you may have.

Secondly, the newsletter will keep you updated on climate change, what's being done about it in Orange County, and

what you can do to keep us moving forward on reducing GHG emissions and increasing renewable energy production

I want the OC Sierran to encourage Sierra Club members to hold our elected officials' feet to the fire by insisting on the rapid implementation of measures to address climate change. This goal is in the best Sierra Club tradition as the largest and oldest grassroots organization in the country.



■ Ed Maurer

Cordially,



Ed Maurer, *Editor*

P.S.: It's easy to get in touch with me, just press the button to initiate a meeting.

[Get in touch with Ed](#)

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Publication & Subscription Information

The **OC Sierran** is a bimonthly newsletter published by and for the members of these Sierra Club entities belonging to the Angeles Chapter.

- Orange County Group (OCG)
- Orange County Sierrans Section (OCSS)
- Rio Hondo Group (RHG)
- Sierra Sage of South Orange County (SSOSOC)

— The **OC Sierran** is delivered by email in January, March, May, July, September, and November to all members and supporters in Orange County.

— The submission deadline is six weeks before publication.

— Photographers: **Leslie Fitch, James Louis, John Kaiser, Ed Maurer, Helen Maurer, Donna Specht.**

