



September / October 2024 • Volume 33, Issue 5

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Deb,

Thank you for opening this newsletter at this important time, important because a pivotal general election is upon us, and I ask you to vote. Please take time to look at the *OC voter guide* and check all boxes, from national to local offices, and from state to local issues. And while you peruse your choices, remember that this past July was California's hottest month ever recorded, and that we, i.e., as individuals and voters, must make sure to take global warming's effects seriously.

On a lighter note, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who volunteered to keep the Sierra Club in Orange County a vital part of our community. Special thanks go to those who staffed our tables/exhibits at Earth Day events and at the Orange County Fair.

When I write to you next, you will have cast your ballots, and we'll see what the most pressing issues will be in 2025 for the Sierra Club,

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the nation's largest and oldest grassroots environmental organization.

When I feel frustrated because of our inability to decisively reduce carbon emissions, I think of Winston Churchill quoting an earlier prime minister during the darkest days of WW2: *"What is the use of living, if it be not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?"* In this spirit, cast your vote and continue to enjoy, explore and protect the planet.

Ed Maurer



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November 5, 2024 General Election

Please keep these important dates in mind:

- **September 26:** Approximately on this date, mailing of County Voter Information Guides commences
- **October 7:** Voters registered by this date will be mailed a County Voter Information Guide
- **October 21 – November 3:** Early voting locations will be open
- **October 26:** Vote Centers open
- **November 5: General Election**
- **December 3:** Registrar of Voter will certify on or before this date

Complete information is available at [OC Vote](#), a website of the Orange County Registrar of Voters.

Our Great Outdoors

Participating in our outdoor activities makes everybody feel better in body and soul. We invite beginners to join one of our easy hikes to try out their walking skills and to get to know our regular participants since our programs have a strong social component and many participants become friends.

Check out our calendar and come along! If you're not quite sure whether the chosen activity is right for you, please contact the leader with your concerns. Everybody is welcome to our activities.

Calendars of Events

A detailed description of each hike can be found in the calendar listings of all events offered by Sierra Club entities in Orange County. The level of difficulty rating for each hike—easy, moderate, strenuous—is based upon distance, elevation gain/loss, and nature of terrain. Please note that more outings may be added to the calendars after this newsletter is published.

[Rio Hondo Group Calendar](#)

[Orange County Group Calendar](#)

[Orange County Sierrans Calendar](#)

[Sierra Sage of South Orange County Calendar](#)

A dark olive green rectangular box with a thin white border. Inside the box, the words "Special Events" are written in a large, elegant, orange-brown cursive script font, centered horizontally and vertically.

Special Events

Creative Solutions for Thriving on Planet Earth



Join Sierra Sage on Tuesday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m. for a presentation by Jonathan Zaidman, Director of Impact and Partnership at The Ecology Center.

Tuesday, September 24, 2024: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

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

The Ecology Center is a 28-acre Regenerative Organic Certified™ farm and education center that serves as a hub for southern California's ecological movement. The agricultural and business practices followed are based on traditional principles of collective land stewardship, using the mutually supportive relationships found in nature to nourish humans, plants, and soil. This rigorous model focuses on the long-term health of the land. The Center's onsite and outreach programs create an ecosystem to gather and build a community of creatives, self-starters, architects, makers, farmers, culinary leaders, visionaries, educators, and organizers. The Ecology Center acknowledges that this 28-acre Regenerative Organic Certified™ farm rests on the traditional and unceded sacred lands of the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians known as the Acjachemen Nation.

RSVP

Season Opener for Wednesday Hikes

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Fall hiking starts off with an easy hike. Meeting at Turtle Rock Community Center in Irvine at 1 Sunnyhill at 8:30 in front of the Tennis Courts. After the hike at 11:30 we invite people to bring food for a pot luck lunch at the picnic tables at the Turtle Rock Community Park

For the picnic only, join us at 11:30 in Turtle Rock Community Park.

RSVP

Downtown LA Fundraising Hike

Saturday, October 19, 2024

10:45 AM - 3:00 PM

This exceptional urban odyssey features Chinatown, a Taoist Temple, Central Plaza and much more. The begins and ends at LA Union Station. Cost \$20.

Avoid the clogged freeways and use Metrolink.

	Northbound	Southbound
Saturdays	Train #661	Train #668
San Clemente Pier	08:50 AM	06:08 PM
San Juan Capistrano	09:05 AM	05:52 PM
Irvine	09:21 AM	05:36 PM
Tustin	09:28 AM	05:28 PM
Santa Ana	09:35 AM	05:22 PM
Anaheim	09:40 AM	05:12 PM
Fullerton	09:55 AM	05:04 PM
Los Angeles	10:34 AM	04:27 PM

This event is an Angeles Chapter (Orange and Los Angeles Counties) Conservation fundraiser. 100% of your donation supports local work.

RSVP



SIERRA CLUB ELECTIONS

2024 Nomination Committees

Our nominations committees have put up candidates for positions on their Executive Committees for 2025 and 2026. Their complete candidate statements can be found on our websites. The election runs through October and November, and all members will receive election runsballots. **PLEASE VOTE!**

RIO HONDO GROUP

Mike Bressler
Penny Fonches

ORANGE COUNTY GROUP

Dorothy Gutierrez
Arlis Reynolds
Jay Schneider
Sherri Sisson - incumbent
Donna Specht - incumbent

SIERRA SAGE OF SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY

Tod Fitch
Ed Maurer
Helen Maurer
Linda Pauer
Doug Shepard - incumbent

[Candidate Statements](#)

[Candidate Statements](#)

[Candidate Statements](#)

The Executive Committees will meet in January to elect and appoint officers for 2025.

Orange County Group

at the OC Fair

This summer again, volunteers from all Orange County Sierra Club groups spent time at the table set up by the Orange County Group at the OC Fair . We reached out to hundreds of

Rio Hondo Group

The Rio Hondo Group has taken some significant steps over the past few months. We are happy to say that we've been part of a process to create a Sierra Club Student Internship position at Cal State Fullerton. Our newly hired intern Anna Schiebeck will

fairgoers informing them of our activities. We thank all volunteers for their time and effort.



Marcia Garten, Theresa Nguyen, Raúl Peña, Sherri and John Sisson

lead a test project intended to organize a Club group on campus. We have also become involved in the effort to pass the Puente Hills Preserve Protection Measure. This measure seeks to protect and preserve open land, wildlife, and hiking trails in the Puente Hills (including trails used for SC hikes). Check our schedule for local outings, including hikes in the Puente Hills. Finally, as our global climate temperatures reach new record levels we ask concerned members who would be interested in taking part in any of our political activities to protect our environment and planet (texting, phone banking, canvassing, etc.).

Sign Up for Political Action

Current Issues

Funding Wildlife Crossings

by Linda Pauer



Wildlife crossing structures have been shown to be one of the most effective means of reducing animal-vehicle collisions on highways. Yet the widespread implementation of such structures, especially wildlife overpasses, has been hindered by their perceived and actual expense.

[More ...](#)

Santiago Creek Update



Three small but significant steps toward rehabilitating Santiago Creek were taken concerning the creek's section in Orange and farther downstream in Santa Ana:

1. OC Reclamations, a subsidiary of Chandler's Sand & Gravel, has agreed to donate their gravel pit at the corner of North Cannon Street and Santiago Canyon Road to the city of Orange. Our Conservation Committee is sending a letter to the City of Orange suggesting that management of this newly public area be assigned to Orange County Parks.
2. Several priorities were addressed in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 that affect Santiago Creek. Representative Lou Correa's (CA-46) office issued a [press release on July 23, 2024](#), that addresses, among other items, green space along Santiago Creek.
3. The US Army Corps of Engineers' project to "improve" Santiago Creek in Santa Ana appears to be on hold. Les Hall has published an extensive article about this issue in the Spring 2024 edition of the *Neighborhood News* of the Fisher Park Neighborhood Association. We thank him for allowing us to republish it [here](#).

These actions came about only because of the tremendous grassroots involvement of community activists in central Orange County!

Related Articles:

OC Register, July 28, 2024: [Abandoned mining pit in Orange could become nature preserve](#)

The OC Sierran January/February 2024: [Santiago Creek before it gets "improved"](#)

Orange Heights

Heights of Folly

by Ed Maurer



This home-made map is based on [Cal-Fire's Fire Risk map of April 2024](#). The red area represents **very high fire hazard severity zones**, and it looks like the next wildfire may nip at Orange Heights! The Irvine Company recently been erected around the area, and grading may be commencing soon.

We're supporting Joel Robinson and neighborhood associations in their letter writing campaign to Donald Bren, Chairman of the Board, Irvine Company, in urging him to stop the Orange Heights development.

[Write a letter to Donald Bren](#)



The Pika

by Helen Maurer



© Richard Seeley

My own epiphany about climate change occurred during a Sierra Nevada backpack with my husband years ago, when we had a close encounter with a pika. It walked right into our camp...

[More ...](#)

Electric Battery Project in San Juan Capistrano



© City of San Juan Capistrano

A major battle is brewing in San Juan Capistrano over an electric battery facility. This is an important environmental issue pitting local public safety concerns against dire global needs.

[More ...](#)

Electrifying Transportation: We May NOT Be Getting There

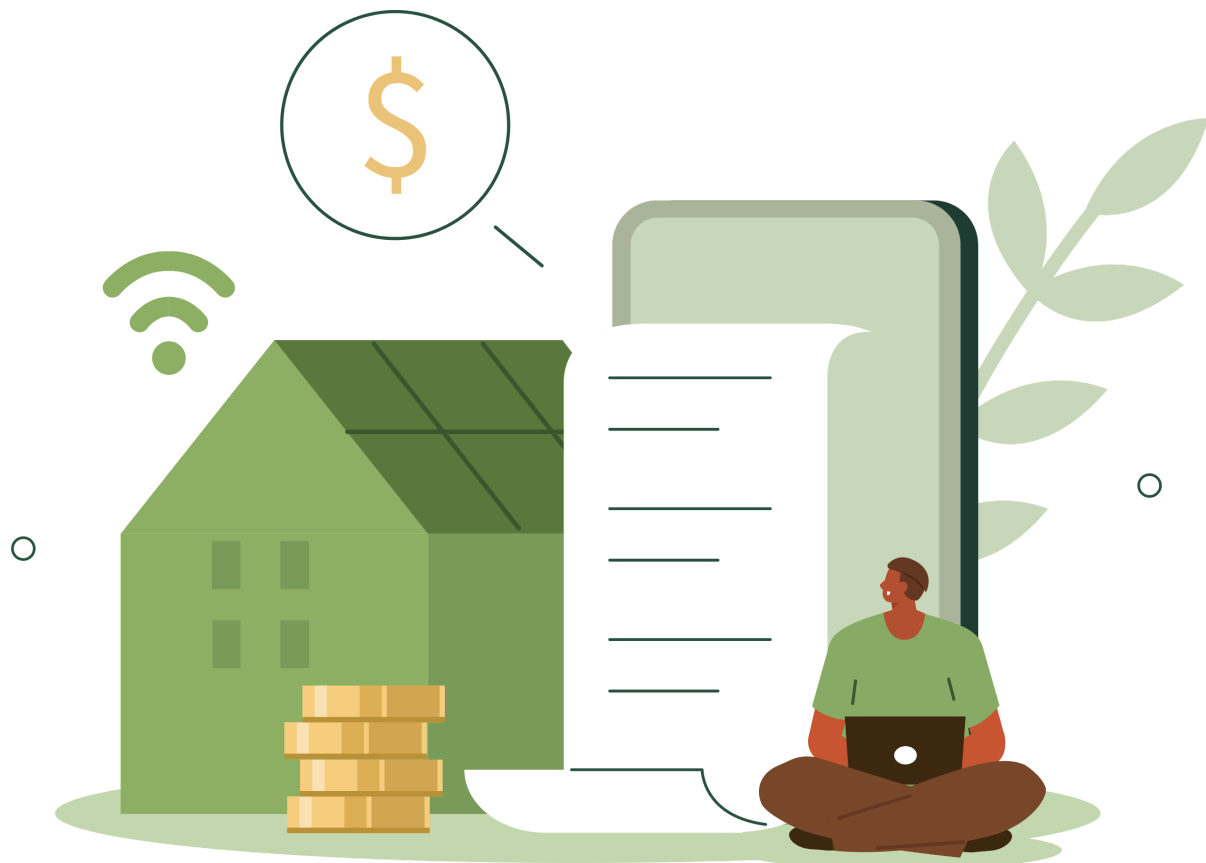


© Portland General Electric

California is doing a pretty good job when it comes to the generation of electricity from renewable sources; however, we're not doing enough to meet the challenge of the transportation sector representing 39% of GHG emissions.

More ...

IRA of 2022 Home Energy Rebates



“New York and Wisconsin are the first to launch their long-awaited Inflation Reduction Act programs meant to deploy everything from **heat pumps to insulation**,” writes Alison Takemura in the Canary Media Report of August 14, 2024.

Too bad if you live in California, because the California Energy Commission seems to be unable to get to the finish line.

Publication and Subscription Information

Circulation

The OC Sierran is sent to over 23,000 email addresses of members, friends, and supporters of the 3 geographic Sierra Club entities in Orange County, i.e., Rio Hondo Group, Orange County Group, and Sierra Sage of South Orange County.

Contributors

A big thank to the writers that have contributed to this issue and to our copy editor, Helen Maurer.

Mike Bressler, Kristi Golden, Les Hall, Helen Maurer, and Linda Pauer.

Current & Back Issues

Our archive includes the current and back issues of **OC Sierran** and copies of its predecessor, the **Sierra Sage**, stretching back to 2011.

[OC Sierran Archive](#)

Archived Videos

The bimonthly general meetings of Sierra Sage have been videotaped since May 2022. This was prompted by the pandemic, but it also means that these educational events remain available for your perusal.

[Video Archive](#)

The OC Sierran

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

- Orange County Group (OCG)

Editorial Team

Core Group

- *Editor*: Ed Maurer
- *Assistant Editor*: Linda Pauer
- *Copy Editor*: Helen Maurer
- *Title Design*: Risa Koppel

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

The editor is responsible for all content. Comments, letters, and submissions are always welcome.

The OC Sierran is delivered by email at the beginning of January, March, May, July, September, and November to all members and supporters in Orange County.

Submission deadline is 3 weeks prior to publication.

[Email the Editor](#)

Advisory Group

- **Orange County Group:** Gideon Strich
- **Sierra Sage:** Vicki Hazley
- **Rio Hondo Group:** Mike Bressler & Margee Hills
- **OC Sierrans Section:** Donna Specht,
- **OC Group Outings:** Sherri Sisson
- **Sierra Sage Outings:** Sylvie Coté
- **Pol Com Reps:** Darrell Neft & Sharon Koch
- **Conservation Com Rep:** John LaRue
- **Communications Technology:** Tod Fitch

November / December Issue

Our last issue of 2024 will review the year past and look forward to 2025, and it will appear around the middle of the month when we've had a chance to digest most of the results of the November 5 General Election. Of course, the results of our local and chapter Sierra Club elections will also be posted.

Rio Hondo Group Nominations Committee 2024

The Rio Hondo Group's **nominations committee** is presenting eligible candidate for the election of members of our Executive Committee for the years 2025 and 2026.

Executive Committee members guide the Sierra Club's work in our communities. We make decisions about environmental policy, recommend the endorsement of political candidates, and direct our outreach activities. A good Executive Committee member has a deep love for the Sierra Club and the environment, and a willingness to serve the organization to and collaborate with fellow members to enjoy, explore, and protect the wild places of Southern California.

The Orange County Group belongs to the **Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club** and our members will also be voting for **at large members of its Executive Committee**.

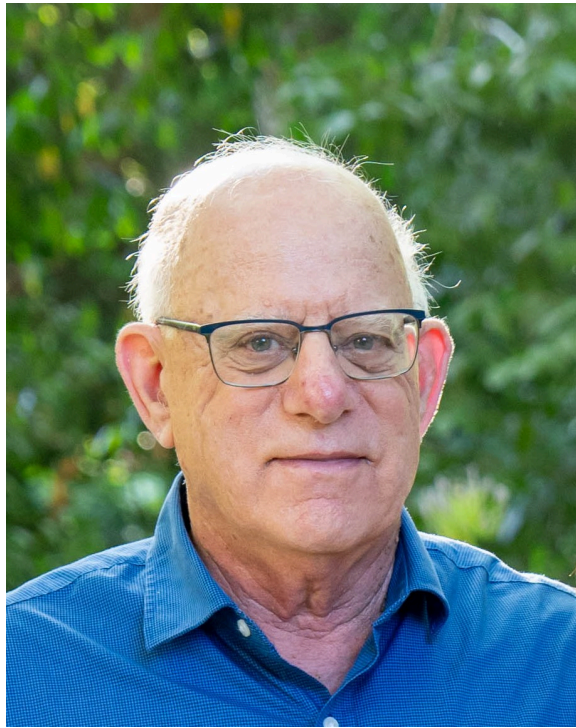
Some things to know:

- Terms are for two years and begin in January 2025.

- To be eligible to run, candidates must be active Sierra Club members and have their nomination submitted by July 10, 2023.
- The election runs through October and November, all members receive ballots.
- The candidates of the **Rio Hondo Group** and their statements are listed below

Penny Fonches

I humbly ask for your support and your vote to serve on the Executive Committee for the Rio Hondo Group. I believe in being civically engaged. I have a background of advocacy and activism for many worthwhile causes and organizations in addition to Sierra Club. I will continue my efforts to build greater inroads with the underrepresented communities across the Rio Hondo Group area. I will endeavor to increase awareness of the many issues, actions and activities for the Rio Hondo Group. Thank you for your consideration.



Mike Bressler

I am a longtime member of the Sierra Club and joined the club because I enjoyed hiking and backpacking, and appreciated and wanted to preserve what is left of the natural areas of our country. I remain a strong supporter of the club's stance on environmental issues. I am a college instructor and have done research on Global Environmental Politics. At the family level, we have attempted to reduce our environmental footprint by composting, backyard vegetable/herb gardening, and native plant gardening. For the past year and a half, I have been the Chairman of the Rio Hondo Group and I have also worked with the OC Political Committee. I would like to see our group have greater effectiveness in achieving grassroots support for environmental justice and earth friendly policies and have worked in various ways to promote these goals. I would appreciate your vote for me to continue on the Rio Hondo ExCom. If elected I will continue with the policies

and actions I have supported to try and
grow the group and increase its
effectiveness.

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