



# The Sequoia

## Your Tuolumne Group ExCom Needs You! We Currently Meet Monthly Via Zoom

**S**EEKING CATHARSIS in a COVID world? Looking for ways to express your concern and activism beyond the limited reach of social media? Searching for a way to put your mind, energy, and talents to work for a worthy effort? Our Tuolumne Group's Executive Committee is in desperate need of new members who are interested in participating in activism on local and state issues, and joining a larger conversation on environmental threats in our region.

The Executive Committee (ExCom) is a small group of Tuolumne and Calaveras County Sierra Club members who share a love of this place where we live, and who volunteer to manage and direct the activities of our local Tuolumne group.

ExCom members meet monthly (currently via Zoom), to monitor local environmental issues, plan and host public presentations, plan outings, coordinate our newsletter, and in general ensure that the group operates for the benefit of the local environment.

Meetings are fun, informative, and engaging. There is so much going on right now. Large unsustainable development threatens to overwhelm the Hwy. 120 corridor to Yosemite National Park. The threat of wildfire and its impacts in our region is touching all of us, and the health of our rivers and watersheds is under constant threat.

**If you care about these things, we welcome you to join our ExCom group.**

The importance of connecting with the natural world has never been more clear. Our robust outings group has been organizing weekly hikes for over 35 years! Currently paused due to COVID, Thursday hikes will resume as soon as Sierra Club guidelines allow — currently planned for summer 2021. Our trip leaders know the region by heart, and where the best hikes can be found every time of year. We're looking for new outings leaders to allow for a more varied program.

ExCom members can participate in a number of areas. You decide the amount of time and effort you can give. Find ways to plug your talents and interests into the mix, all with the knowledge that you are contributing to efforts to protect the earth in a time of great need. We are reaching out to the environmentalists of the future. Your vision and energy can help shape the direction and focus of our Tuolumne Group in years to come.

To learn more about how you can participate in the efforts of our local Sierra Club Group, contact our membership chair, Elaine Hagen at [elainehagen@att.net](mailto:elainehagen@att.net).

### INSIDE

CELEBRATING A NEW  
ADMINISTRATION

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
ISSUES & UPDATES

JOIN OUR EXCOM GROUP >>



# Biden Administration to Champion Environmental Causes & Climate Change

***“The United States will work with other countries and partners, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to put the world on a sustainable climate pathway.”***

***– New President Joseph Biden***

January 20th was a good day for Climate Action and the Environment. On Inauguration day, new President Joe Biden signed a raft of executive actions to combat climate change, including pausing new oil and gas leases on federal land and cutting fossil fuel subsidies, as he pursues green policies he billed as a boon to the economy.

Fulfilling one of his top campaign promises, Biden committed to putting the U.S. back in the Paris Agreement on climate change — an international pact aimed at curbing emissions that cause global warming.

“In my view, we’ve already waited too long to deal with this climate crisis,” Biden said at a White House ceremony, noting the threats the nation faces from intensifying storms, wildfires and droughts linked to climate change.

Alongside a variety of actions to “advance environmental justice,” Biden revoked the permit for the controversial Keystone XL pipeline — a 1,200-mile pipeline system projected to carry

crude oil from Canada to the U.S. that cuts through Indigenous lands.

The measure also restored several national monuments whose footprints were reduced by the Trump administration, and paused oil and gas leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Biden authorized a “rigorous review” during the pause of all existing leasing and permitting practices related to fossil fuel development on public lands and waters.

Biden also set a goal to conserve 30% of federal land and waters to protect wildlife by 2030 and seek to double renewable energy production from offshore wind, also by 2030.

He’s indicated he plans to prioritize Climate in Foreign Policy and National Security. To ensure that climate change considerations are central to United States foreign policy and national security; “It is the policy of my Administration that climate considerations shall be an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security. The United States will work with other countries and partners, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to put the world on a sustainable climate pathway. The United States will also move quickly to build resilience, both at home and abroad, against the impacts of climate change that are already manifest and will continue to intensify according to current trajectories.”

A new Presidentially appointed position, the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, directly addressing the issue of climate change, will be filled by former Secretary of State John Kerry.

Biden’s orders formalize a commitment to make environmental justice for disadvantaged communities part of every agency’s mission; developing programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionate health, environmental, economic, and climate impacts on them.

*White House Press Release Fact Sheet 1/27/21*





# Local Conservation Updates: Under Canvas, Terra Vi, Suction Dredging, & Wind Storms...

John Buckley

## ***Terra Vi & Under Canvas Projects Approved by County – Both Meet Legal Challenges***

For the past few years, the Tuolumne Group, other conservation organizations, Highway 120 corridor residents, and concerned citizens have all opposed two lodging development projects that have been proposed at a site a few miles from the entrance to Yosemite Park.

The Yosemite Under Canvas project is another of a resort chain's "glamour camping" lodging operations that have been built outside of national parks around the country. While "glamping" may be an appropriate lodging option for visitors to the Yosemite area, the Under Canvas project is highly controversial because it is proposed on a forest site with no public water, no public sewer system, extreme fire danger, and a location that is far from public services such as ambulance and law enforcement. The Terra Vi Lodge project that is proposed directly across the highway from Under Canvas would have a large lodge, cabins, a restaurant/bar, a market and other facilities including a helicopter pad. It has the same flaws and controversial issues.

Because three outgoing county supervisors desired to vote on the two development projects before they left office, county staff rushed both projects through the planning processes. For the Under Canvas project, detailed comments by CSERC (a local conservation group that partners with the Sierra Club) got left out of the final EIR and there were no county responses to CSERC's comments. The same flaw occurred for the Terra Vi Lodge project when county staff failed to include comments from the Tuolumne River Trust in the final EIR. At the last-minute county hearings held in final days before the outgoing

supervisors left office, the supervisors discussed wildfire risk on the project sites as well as the concern that the projects' wells could potentially dry up existing wells on neighbors' properties. Yet the supervisors took no action to mitigate for those risks. Instead, they just unanimously approved both controversial projects.

In response, concerned area residents and CSERC have now jointly filed a legal challenge of the county's approval of both projects. The fate of the projects will be determined by the courts.

## ***Suction Dredging Plan***

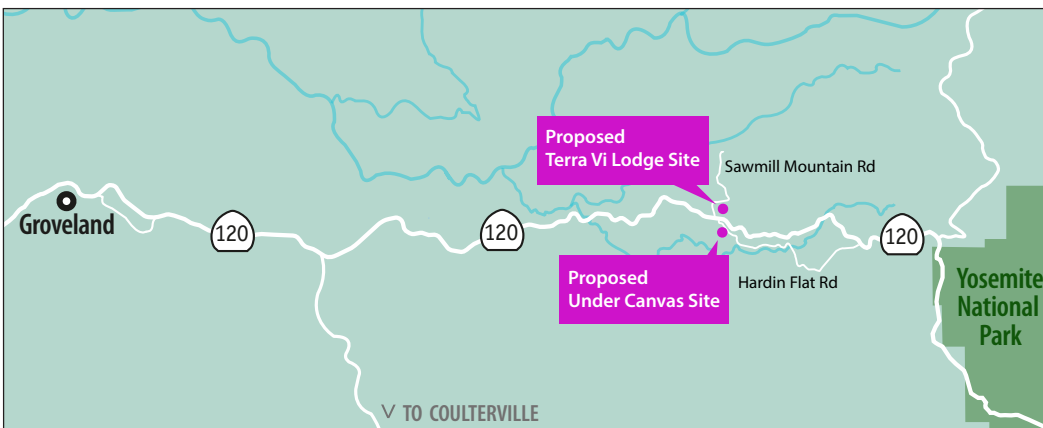
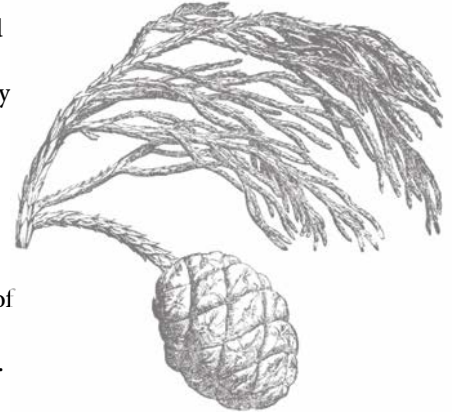
After a decade-long ban, the State is now considering new policies to allow recreational suction dredging mining in streams and rivers. The activity pollutes water, can harm aquatic species, and often conflicts with recreation. The State Water Board is now in the process of creating a new permit system for this controversial activity.

## ***Yosemite Park Day-Use Reservations***

Due to COVID-19 mandates and Yosemite Park visitation that often comes in surges, Park officials have re-started a requirement for day-use reservations in order to keep visitor use consistent with social distance goals and management concerns.

## ***Wind Storms Ravage Forest Areas***

Yosemite Park was especially hard hit, first by violent winds, and then by exceptional snow events that combined to topple trees, block roads, damage power lines, and force the Park's closure for nearly a week. Local region residents in forest communities suffered days without power as well as dealing with countless fallen trees.



***“Both the Terra Vi and Under Canvas projects are proposed on forest sites with no public water, no public sewer system, extreme fire danger, and locations that are far from public services such as ambulance and law enforcement.”***



**SIERRA  
CLUB**  
TUOLUMNE GROUP

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Due to COVID-19, the Tuolumne Group Executive Committee is currently only meeting by phone or with online sessions. For information on how to participate in the next ExCom call, contact Elaine Hagen at the email listed below.

**Chair** Jim Bearden, [jbearden@ieeee.org](mailto:jbearden@ieeee.org)

**Secretary**

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**News Editor** Joe David, [jd@daviddesign.com](mailto:jd@daviddesign.com)

**We welcome your input and feedback.**

## NOTES & UPDATES

### GET INVOLVED • TAKE ACTION

Today, years of hard-fought environmental protections are under threat—and to influence governments and businesses, we need everyone to speak up and shout out. Explore how you can get involved: go to [www.sierraclub.org/take-action](http://www.sierraclub.org/take-action)

### CONNECT WITH YOUR SIERRA CLUB TUOLUMNE GROUP

Want to get more involved with your local Sierra Club group? Interested in joining our Executive Committee? Have a great idea for a local Sierra Club presentation? There are many ways to volunteer for whatever time you are able to share. Interested members are invited to attend our monthly ExCom meetings. See page 1 for details. Email your ideas to Membership Chair, Elaine Hagen at [elainehagen@att.net](mailto:elainehagen@att.net).

### RATHER RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email either instead of, or in addition to our printed edition, email your request to [mail@sierratuolumne.org](mailto:mail@sierratuolumne.org).

The Sequoia Newsletter is designed to provide local Sierra Club members with a trusted source of information on people, events, and issues impacting our environment. Members can also find additional information on our updated web page: [www.sierratuolumne.org](http://www.sierratuolumne.org).

★ THANKS FOR VOTING ★

