

CHAD HANSON

RESIDENCE: Kennedy Meadows, California

CURRENT MEMBER SINCE: 1991 (Life member)

OCCUPATION: Ecologist and climate scientist, John Muir Project.

SIERRA CLUB LEADERSHIP: National Board of Directors (2018-2024, 1997-2003); national Conservation Policy Committee (2018-2024); national Finance Committee (2018-2021); national History & Future Task Force on race/equity (2020-2021); Chair, Many Rivers Group (Oregon) (1993-1994).

STATEMENT:

In 1989, I hiked the 2,600-mile length of the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada with my older brother. I saw beautiful wild areas, but also vast devastation caused by logging on our National Forests. I remember sitting on an old-growth tree stump in the Willamette National Forest, looking around me and seeing nothing but stumps to the ridgelines. I knew then I would devote my life to protecting wild places, so I became an active Sierra Club member.

I spent two years helping to pass the California Desert Protection Act, and led a national Sierra Club ballot initiative advocating for an end to commercial logging on federal public lands, which the national membership passed in 1996. My desire to protect the natural world led me to get a Ph.D. in Ecology. I wrote the book “Smokescreen”, about protecting ecosystems to mitigate the climate crisis, and how to increase wildfire safety of communities, like those tragically devastated in Los Angeles recently. Currently, I am fighting for natural climate solutions, such as protecting giant sequoia groves from destructive logging projects.

Some argue we should only protect wild places. Others argue we should focus on social justice, not wild places. That is a false choice. Nearly all conservation campaigns have a strong environmental justice connection. And, environmental justice typically has a conservation component, like the campaign against the forest biomass energy industry, which burns trees like sticks of coal for dirty energy, worsening climate change, and polluting air in environmental justice communities.

We must strengthen connections between conservation and environmental justice to counter the threats of the Trump Administration and the current Congress. Bold campaigns inspire our members and foster a diverse, growing grassroots volunteer activist base.

I will:

- Increase funding and staffing for protection of wild places, wildlife, and public lands, including campaign work to end the commercial logging program on federal public forests. For over a decade, funding for protecting Nature has declined unacceptably. This must be reversed, so we can fight the extinction crisis and help mitigate climate change

by protecting habitats so they can better absorb the dangerous excess of atmospheric CO2.

- Support chapter outings. Exploring and enjoying Nature is part of the soul of the Sierra Club. I will work to eliminate unnecessary administrative burdens that have been imposed on outings leaders and participants in recent years, and have driven many people away. I will work with outings leaders to increase participation.
- Ensure a positive work environment for staff, who do so much to advance our mission.
- Prevent harassment and discrimination, while ensuring meaningful due process, which is currently missing from our procedures.

With your support, I will be a strong voice on the Board for conservation, environmental justice, and outings.

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