

BOARD ELECTION WILD LANDS QUESTIONNAIRE

11 Feb 2022

Questions To All Candidates From: Sierra Club Wilderness & Wild Lands Activists,
Clayton Daughenbaugh, Karen Yarnell, Vicky Hoover, Anne Henny, Jill Workman Anderson,
Anne Millbrooke, John Harbison, Megan Leahy, Ken Gersten, Jim Margadant, Janet Maxwell,
Sandra Cattell, Wayne Hoskisson, Karl Forsgaard, David Sublette, Ken Cline, Angel Martinez,
and Pete Bsumek.

We are eager to learn what you believe are the best ways the Sierra Club can advance the contribution of land protection efforts to addressing the climate crisis, the biodiversity and loss of habitat crisis, and the corresponding need to grow our grassroots capacity from a foundation of equity.

Responses from: Aaron Mair, Candidate for Sierra Club Board of Directors, 2022

Question: It's become clear that wild and natural areas on land and water and the protection thereof serves to retain carbon and methane in plants, soil, and water as well as keeping fossil fuels in the ground. Additionally, these places, whether currently protected or still in need of protection, are critical for sustaining a healthy and resilient (possibly even viable) habitat for humans and other creatures on the Earth. **What are your thoughts on how the Sierra Club can increase its work to protect wild and natural areas sufficient to include 30% by 2030, and ultimately 50% by 2050, of U.S. land and water? Please keep your answer to 100 words or less.**

Answer by Candidate Aaron Mair:

We rake in MILLIONS of dollars annually in revenue from the Wilderness Guardians and John Muir Society through regular appeals; and yet continue to underfund the very programs that are critical to those appeals and core Sierra Club mission values to protect wilderness, wildlands and promoting grassroots member action to enjoy the outdoors. The money is there, you need to support Board leaders who have called for the proper allocations of those donations to this portfolio & not sweep grassroots wildlands donations away to other non-wilderness protection areas.

Question: The Sierra Club raises a sizeable percentage of its funding from appeals based on its work to protect wild and natural places yet it does not invest a corresponding amount of money into those programs. The current year budget includes a corrective “down payment” supported by the entire Board and senior staff. **Would you support a further increase in funding for the WILD campaign and associated Chapter and Grassroots Network led actions as a percentage of the overall budget in 2023?**

Answer by Candidate Aaron Mair:

See above & I pledge to make sure this revenue stream is restored to its donor intended purposes.

Question: The power of the Sierra Club comes primarily from its grassroots base and its participation in larger citizen movements. Hence maximizing our capacity to make change requires both strengthening our internal volunteer structures (Chapters, Grassroots Network Teams, organizing staff) and diversifying our base so that we become representative of the overall population. **Please name three specific steps you would support which would both enhance our internal volunteer strength and increase the equity with which we act in the world.** *Please keep your answer to 100 words or less.*

Answer by Candidate Aaron Mair:

The “POWER” of the Club comes from its grassroots volunteers & their volunteer led democratic Club practices. There is now a majority Board led effort to shift the power and stewardship of the Sierra Club from its volunteers to staff; and shift its long standing traditions of being centered on the environment to that of “social justice.” This is being done in “top down” power shift driven by the Board without the consent and inclusions of the grassroots Club membership like we did during “Project Renewal.” When a Board does not trust its grassroots to lead; its time to elect one that does!

Question: Native Americans stewarded wild and domesticated lands prior to European settlement. The settlement of the United States resulted in the removal of both indigenous peoples and wildlife communities onto “reservations”. Genocide and ecocide operated in tandem suggesting that corrective measures need to do so as well. The Wildlands Team has begun an effort, in collaboration with the WILD Campaign, to address this matter. **What are your thoughts on how the Sierra Club can support, in tandem, the growth of Native American sovereignty and giving strong protection to the wild places where the human species does not dominate the community of life?** *Please keep your answer to 100 words or less.*

Answer by Candidate Aaron Mair:

The tragedy that is America when it come to its founding’s is more than just the violence against First Nations. Forced Nations of African slaves and a slave economy is what build our brand of western capitalism. Moreover, the themes of “Make America Great Again” still drive that message of f hate and oppression that all organizations must rise up and resist against. To that end, The Sierra Club must continue its pioneering EJ programs and communities engagements within its environmental efforts. If we are to “enlist humanity” then we must include (justly) ALL humanity in our grassroots environmental movement. The Sierra Club stands heads and shoulders above any other international environmental organizations in engaging Communities of Color.

Question: As a Sierra Club entity, the Board, like all other entities, leaders, and staff, are mutually accountable to act within the established policies and rules of the organization. **Do you pledge that as a Director you will act within the established policies and rules of the organization?**

Answer by Candidate Aaron Mair:

We must all follow national Club policies, Rules, & Guidance! Moreover, the Board must do so; it has the burden to go to its grassroots via national conventions (like we have done in the past) to get full grassroots approval as well. Making changes under the cover of closed meetings and secrecy have not been keeping in Club tradition. In short, the Board must walk the expectations of its talk!.