

What is 30 by 30 and Why?



A national movement is seeking to conserve 30 percent of our lands and coastal waters by the year 2030 -- or “30 by 30.”

Biologists tell us we’re in a global crisis for biodiversity, as countless species of animals and plants could be extinct in 50 to 100 years unless we drastically change our sprawling land use and protect far more wild habitat. Probably at least “Half Earth” is needed of places where nature can dominate. Aiming for 30 percent over the next decade is seen as an achievable stepping stone toward conserving 50 percent—called “Nature Needs Half.” The Sierra Club has joined the global Nature Needs Half initiative. We need to preserve nature so that nature can preserve us, because nature is truly our life support system.

California became the first state to adopt “30 by 30” as official state policy in an October 2020 Executive Order by Governor Gavin Newsom. In January 2021, a week after his inauguration, President Biden issued a national 30 by 30 Executive Order called “America the Beautiful.”

In addition to fighting species extinction, “30 by 30” directly addresses climate change because protecting natural lands enhances the carbon sequestration ability of lands and waters, whether they are unlogged forests, undisturbed desert soils, grasslands, or marine habitats.

Thus, 30 by 30 connects the fight for biodiversity and the fight to mitigate the climate crisis. Sierra Club volunteers and staff have long pushed both these goals, and now 30 by 30 embraces both and ties them together.

At present, some 12 percent of the nation and about 22 percent of California (which has more protected lands than the average) is considered “conserved.” To work with the state of California and assure that its new policy will result in real action with significant conservation gains, Sierra Club set up the California 30 by 30 Task Force with representatives from most of California’s Chapters. The Chapters have identified local places and priorities important to them for conservation. Here, those places are the Oceano Dunes, Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and the 12,000 acres of undeveloped coastal land surrounding the soon-to-be closed Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

Get involved by contacting Anne Henny or Vicky Hoover, co-chairs of the statewide Sierra Club task force, at anneth16@sbcglobal.net or vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org.