1892 The Sierra Club is founded on May 28. John Muir elected first president. Club helps defeat proposal to reduce boundaries of Yosemite National Park.

1893 First Sierra Club Bulletin issued. Thirteen-million-acre Sierra Forest Reserve established with support of the Club.

1897 The Sierra Club urges strengthening of public forest policy and supports creation of additional national parks, including Grand Canyon. Club membership reaches 350.

1899 Congress establishes Mt. Rainier National Park in response to efforts of the Sierra Club and other groups.

1901 In the Sierra Club’s first outing, William Colby leads 96 participants on a trip to Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows, beginning a tradition of annual High Trips.

1903 President Theodore Roosevelt visits Yosemite with John Muir.

1905 State of California, through efforts of John Muir and others, returns Yosemite Valley to federal management.

1907 The Sierra Club opposes use of Hetch Hetchy Valley as a reservoir.

1910 Glacier National Park established with Sierra Club support.

1916 National Park Service created with support of the Sierra Club and others.

1919 The Sierra Club supports Save-the-Redwoods League and protests threats to redwoods.

1920 The Sierra Club opposes proposal for major dams in Yellowstone National Park.

1923 The Sierra Club successfully opposes dam sites in Kings River region.

1926 The Sierra Club leads successful effort to enlarge Sequoia National Park. Congress adds Kern and Kaweah regions, including Mt. Whitney.

1927 Aurelia Squire Harwood becomes the first female president of the Sierra Club.


1933 The Sierra Club participates in successful campaign to prevent dam construction in Dinosaur National Monument. The Atlantic Chapter becomes the first Club chapter outside of California.

1935 47,000 acres added to Olympic National Park at urging of the Sierra Club and others.

1935 The Sierra Club’s first major touring exhibit, “This Is the American Earth,” is organized.

1936 The Sierra Club participates in successful campaign to prevent dam construction in Dinosaur National Monument. Club membership reaches 10,000.

1960 The Sierra Club Foundation is established. This Is the American Earth, the Sierra Club’s first coffee-table book, is published. Membership reaches 15,000.

1962 The Sierra Club assists in establishing Point Reyes National Seashore in California and Padre Island National Seashore in Texas.

1964 Wilderness Act is passed by Congress after a long campaign by the Sierra Club and others.

1968 The Sierra Club leads effort to create Redwood National Park and assists in successful fight to expand Land and Water Conservation Fund.

1970 Efforts of the Sierra Club and others lead to passage of National Environmental Policy Act and creation of Environmental Protection Agency. Sierra Club chapters extended to cover all 50 states. Club membership passes 100,000.

1971 Opposition from the Sierra Club and others helps defeat supersonic transport (SST) proposal. Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund established.

1972 Congress passes major marine protection legislation with Sierra Club support. Water Pollution Control Act passed.

1973 The Sierra Club leads successful effort to open Highway Trust Fund to mass transit funding.

1974 The Sierra Club successfully lobbies to establish Big Thicket Preserve in Texas and Big Cypress Preserve in Florida.

1975 The Sierra Club persuades Congress to enlarge Grand Canyon National Park and establish Hells Canyon National Recreation Area in Oregon and Idaho.

1976 The Sierra Club launches national program to provide safe and fun wilderness trips for low-income youth and others who have limited access to the outdoors.

1977 The Sierra Club joins successful effort to strengthen Clean Air Act. Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act passed.

1978 The Sierra Club leads successful campaign to add 48,000 acres to Redwood National Park and works to pass Endangered American Wilderness Act, which preserves 1.3 million acres.

1979 The Sierra Club participates in formulation of regulations for National Forest Management Act.

1980 Ansel Adams receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom for “his efforts to preserve this country’s wild and scenic areas.” Adams served as a member of the Sierra Club Board of Directors from 1934–1971. Club plays leading role in passage of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, adding 103 million acres of parks, wildlife refuges, and wilderness areas. Superfund legislation passed.

1981 The Sierra Club helps gather more than a million signatures urging ouster of Interior Secretary James Watt. Club leads effort to block MX missile complex in the Great Basin region of Utah and Nevada.

1982 The Sierra Club helps block effort to weaken Clean Air Act.

1983 The Sierra Club wins suit blocking plans to drop 1.5 million acres from Bureau of Land Management wilderness inventory.

1984 The Sierra Club plays leading role in passage of legislation designating 6.8 million acres of wilderness in 18 states.
1990 The Sierra Club supports strengthened Superfund and Clean Water Act reauthorizations. Club leads campaign to add sodbuster and swampbuster provisions to Farm Bill and establish a 40-million-acre soil-conservation reserve.

1996 The Sierra Club launches campaign to protect Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and California desert. Membership tops 400,000.

1997 The Sierra Club leads successful effort to pass Michigan Wilderness and El Malpais National Monument and Wilderness bills. Club campaigns to reauthorize and strengthen the Clean Air Act.

1999 Under pressure from the Sierra Club and other groups, the World Bank withdraws a $500-million loan to Brazil that would have led to construction of 147 new dams and inundated large areas of the Amazon basin.

1998 The Sierra Club plays a key role in supporting pro-environmental candidates, winning 38 out of 43 close congressional races.

2000 The Sierra Club’s long-standing campaign pays off as President Clinton designates 328,000 acres of giant sequoia groves and surrounding forests as a national monument. The Sierra Club forms Environmental Justice program to address overwhelming evidence that low-income communities and people of color bear disproportionate environmental burdens.

2001 The EPA finally adopts standards to reduce the level of arsenic in drinking water after public outcry and criticism from the Sierra Club. Club membership reaches 700,000.

2002 Sierra Club wilderness advocates secure protection for 500,000 acres of desert wildlands in southern Nevada. Club helps pass precedent-setting California clean car standards to combat climate disruption.

2003 The Sierra Club’s Environmental Justice program partners with the Zuni tribe to stop construction of the Fence Lake coal mine, saving the sacred Zuni Salt Lake in western New Mexico.

2004 The Sierra Club and allies block proposed oil and gas development in Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Club also blocks attempt to lift moratorium on offshore oil leases for California, Florida, and the East Coast.

2006 A Sierra Club lawsuit stops Bush administration plan to allow commercial logging in Giant Sequoia National Monument.


2009 The Sierra Club successfully advocates for Omnibus Public Land Management Act — protecting more than two million acres of wilderness, three new national parks, and 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers — in largest public-lands conservation effort in 20 years.

2011 Having successfully defeated 150 proposed new coal-fired power plants, the Sierra Club sets goal of a retiring one-third of the nation’s oldest and dirtiest coal-burning power plants by 2020. Bloomberg Philanthropies donates $50 million to help expand the Beyond Coal campaign. Club successfully advocates for President Obama’s first national monument designation at Fort Monroe in Virginia.

2012 The Sierra Club is instrumental in getting Fort Ord and Chimney Rock designated as national monuments.

2015 President Obama designates Browns Canyon and Berryessa–Snow Mountain National Monuments. Aaron Mair becomes the Sierra Club’s first African American president. Bloomberg Philanthropies announces it will invest an additional $30 million to secure the replacement of half the nation’s coal fleet by 2017 with clean energy. The Beyond Coal campaign announces its 200th coal plant retirement. The Keystone XL pipeline is rejected by President Obama, who cites climate concerns. The Sierra Club participates in the historic COP21 climate conference in Paris.

2016 The Sierra Club launches its Ready for 100 campaign to accelerate the transition to 100 percent clean, renewable energy. President Obama declares three new national monuments in the California desert — bringing the total acreage of public lands he’s protected to 4 million.