



SIERRA
CLUB

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GENERAL MEETING

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Coming in November :

"Global Environmental Options 101: What we all need to know!"

The 2006 calendars are here



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SANTA LUCIAN



Protecting and
Preserving the
Central Coast

The official newsletter of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club • San Luis Obispo County, California

People Power vs. Cell Tower County just says "no" to Los Osos eyesore

On September 13, the County Board of Supervisors, in a stunning reversal of a County approved project to build a 50-foot Sprint PCS cell phone antenna at the entrance to Los Osos, bowed to the will of local citizens and upheld an appeal of the coastal development permit filed by the Coastal View Protection Coalition.

The Planning Commission had recommended approval of the Sprint PCS project on the basis of a staff report that said it conformed with the county's Local Coastal Plan. After hearing cogent arguments to the contrary from a number of residents and the Sierra Club, the Supervisors pronounced themselves satisfied that the area is already adequately served by four different carriers (contrary to subsequent statements in the press, there is no "gap" in cell phone coverage in Los Osos) and expressed concern over the unsettled and growing scientific debate over potential radiation hazards posed by the towers, especially one located in the midst of homes and businesses. Only the Sprint representative spoke in favor of the project.

The vote to uphold the appeal and deny the permit was unanimous. The Supervisors agreed the project would have had significant impacts on public views and the visual character of the surrounding area.

B. Blake Levitt, in the paper "Cell-Phone Towers and Communities: The Struggle for Local Control," notes the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was "the biggest land-grab in one



Not shown: A 50-foot antenna/flagpole that will not be greeting you as you enter Los Osos.

industry's favor at the federal level since the build-out of the railroads at the turn of the last century" and effectively hamstrung local communities in the siting of cell-phone towers, creating "a planning and zoning nightmare—and perhaps a public health problem, according to some scientists, journalists, and activists.... The situation is dividing communities around the country, often pitting neighbor against neighbor

when one is tempted by the licensing revenues of siting such a facility on their property, while adjacent landowners raise concerns about property devaluation and health endangerment."

"What's important to know, as planners," says Levitt, "is that although you can't set more stringent standards at the moment, you can site installa-

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What's for Dinner? And why can't you be told?

(Comments delivered by the Santa Lucia Chapter to the County Board of Supervisors, September 20, 2005)

The Sierra Club, the largest grassroots conservation group in the United States, joins with the many environmental, consumer, religious, and community groups concerned with the safety of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), particularly in regards to their use in agriculture. Our purpose is to protect the ecosystem. We believe that the rate of application of this technology far ex-

ceeds our ability to understand the environmental and public health risks and to avoid potentially serious impacts.

The biotechnology industry makes the misleading claim that genetic engineering is a simple extension of the traditional crossbreeding that nature and farmers have been using for thousands of years. However, there

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A Chill Grows in Cambria

Once upon a time, Cambria wanted to expand its water storage tanks. It wanted to expand them very, very much – beyond the required water capacity to serve current residents and fight fires, building up "quality of life" capacity – i.e. the longed-for day when the building moratorium will lift, the growth cap will ease, and a development gold rush will wash over Cambria.

But then the neighbors complained about the idea of giant tanks in their back yard, so the Cambria Community Services District decided to move the tanks into an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA), which would have

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"Every good thing,
great and small,
needs defense."

—John Muir



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Outings, events, and
more!

Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting

Santa Lucia Chapter

Beyond Imagination

A journey through the heart of the Arctic Wildlife Refuge

October 18, 7-9 p.m.

Filmed & presented by Walter Robie.

Join Chapter members on Tuesday, October 18th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Ludwick Center in San Luis Obispo, to enjoy this remarkable presentation of Walter's life-changing experience in ANWR.

Walter writes:

"I floated through the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, down the Hula Hula River, from the headwaters in the Brooks range to the ice-clogged Beaufort Sea. My camera burned through film. It was an awesome experience—like the first day of creation. Here nature still rules. I sensed I was only a visitor—even an intruder—in this land of the 130-thousand Porcupine Caribou herd, of polar and grizzly bears, wolves, muskoxen, millions of birds, and zillions of mosquitoes. Everything about this land has the feel and the sound of the wild."

Tuesday, October 18

7 - 9 p.m.

Ludwick Center

864 Santa Rosa Street (corner of Mill)

San Luis Obispo

From the Summit

By Steven Marx

The Sierra Summit that took place in San Francisco, September 8 to 11. My wife Jan and I had decided to attend to strengthen our connection to the national organization in this dark time and to learn from a luminary lineup of scheduled speakers. When some of our chapter representatives couldn't go, I became a delegate in return for half price on the registration fee. The delegate's job was to bridge a gap between leadership and grassroots and to democratically select goals guiding the Club's actions and budget decisions over the next five years.

We drove up on Thursday morning with Chris Wassenberg, who'd agreed to become a much in-demand under-30 delegate, checked into a cheap hotel in Chinatown, walked to the Moscone Convention center, and fell in with thousands of well-dressed members of the California Dental Association. Finally we found our way to "Moscone North" and what was billed as "Sierra Club's First Ever National Environmental Convention and Expo."

The prospect of a four-hour priority setting session after a long drive and no lunch in a cavernous banquet hall was not enhanced by lengthy "motivational" harangues by two professional facilitators with deep southern accents. Though the leader admitted that he had no environmental involvement of his own, he assured me that he did not normally work for energy companies like Exxon. Sitting at tables in groups of ten, the seven hundred delegates were put through a series of ill-conceived icebreaking exercises and endless question-

naires, and asked to prioritize vague, confusing and overlappingly phrased goals.

After three hours of this, delegates started speaking up, expressing bewilderment and frustration. Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director, convinced the audience not to give up and the facilitators to talk less and listen more. By the end of the session a general consensus did emerge: the first two priorities for future national action and budgeting were 1) build a clean and safe energy future with improved efficiency and renewable resources, and 2) build vibrant communities assuring environmental justice and reducing sprawl.

This selection makes significant changes in sequence and wording to conclusions drawn from pre-summit surveys. It signals a shift from primary emphasis on recreation and wilderness preservation and clearly reflects the impact of Hurricane Katrina. That impact was reinforced by the surprise announcement that the Convention would be addressed at 8:30 next morning by Al Gore. He had first turned down the Club's invitation because of a previous commitment on the same day to talk about global warming to an insurance industry convention in New Orleans.

The onslaught of Katrina is an apt metaphor for the Bush administration's onslaught on the world environment. The speeches I heard at Sierra Summit on Friday and Saturday gave evidence of an energy that might be able to resist and protect from these storms. Gavin Newsom, the radiant mayor of San Francisco, welcomed the Sierra Club to his "49 square miles surrounded by reality" by asserting that

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The Executive Committee meets the fourth Friday of every month at 5:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 1204 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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Cambria

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decimated one of the world's rarest stands of Monterey pines, protected by a conservation easement. The easement had been purchased by the Nature Conservancy and the people of California from the rancher who owned the land. The CCSD invoked eminent domain, seized the land and proposed to violate the conservation easement. "Fire!" they cried. "Earthquake! Flood! Any minute now, we could burn to the ground!" They applied for an emergency permit to escape Coastal Commission review.

The Coastal Commission pointed out that emergency permits are only for actual emergencies, issued a cease and desist order, made Cambria's emergency permit go away, and told the CCSD to scale back their plan for giant water tanks and get them out of the ESHA.

This made the CCSD very unhappy. They sued the Coastal Commission and the County, claiming the Coastal Commission had no jurisdiction over water projects in the Coastal Zone. This was very silly, so they lost, but the judge held the case open so the court could assure itself that the parties cooperated in moving toward an approved tank design.

Because the case was technically still open, the CCSD took the opportunity to cooperate, brandishing subpoenas and depositions, by going hunting for private citizens who had spoken against the now defunct ESHA-bashing tank plan.

In public meetings, Board President Greg Sanders has attempted to present the CCSD as defending itself against the legal assault of the California Coastal Commission, making the eyebrow-raising claim that it was the Commission who sued the CCSD over the water tanks.

Legal counsel Art Montandon has stated that the CCSD Board has spent "around \$50,000" on the matter, despite the *Tribune's* reporting more than \$400,000 of Cambria ratepayers' money expended as of last February, and the fact that the



Jan Marx explains it to the CCSD

CCSD has lavished further funds on lobbyists and the services of two outside legal firms since then in the quest to make the California Coastal Act not apply to them.

They are also making the claim that the \$400,000 spent by the district in ongoing redesign and engineering fees is the fault of the Coastal Commission rather than the Cambria CSD, which could have avoided the expense by submitting for county review a project designed to comply with San Luis Obispo's Local Coastal Plan in the first place.

In addition to taking these positions at odds with reality, the CCSD Board stoutly maintained that it has made no move to subpoena Pam Heatherington and Eric Greening, two of the most effective environmental activists on the Central Coast, who spoke against the District's now-discarded tank siting plan in public hearings. In defending the CCSD's

August 25, 2005

To: the Cambria CSD
 President Greg Sanders
 Vice President Don Villeneuve
 Director Peter Chaldecott
 Director Joan Cobin
 Director Ilan Funke-Bilu

From: Jan Howell Marx, Esq.

Re: Threatened subpoena of Eric Greening and Pam Heatherington

I urge the Cambria Community Services District ("CCSD" or "District") withdraw your statement to the California Attorney General's Office that you intend to subpoena Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington. I am an attorney, but do not represent Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington at the present time. You are urged to make such withdrawal by resolution or by letter of instruction to your contract attorney David Cumberland, copy to the Attorney General's office and Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington. Failure to do so will risk liability on the part of the CCSD under the US and California Constitution, the Brown Act and the Anti-SLAPP Act.

During the CCSD meeting of July 28, 2005, which I have reviewed on videotape, a number of CCSD Directors questioned whether the District ever really did threaten to subpoena Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington. Several of you accused citizens testifying to that effect of lying. Perhaps the District's legal counsel does not keep you fully informed. It is a matter of Public Record that the District has threatened to subpoena Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington. Attached is the Declaration of John Saurenman, Deputy Attorney General dated June 23, 2005, which at page 3 states that contract legal counsel for the CCSD did indicate that they did indeed intend to subpoena both Eric Greening and Pamela Heatherington. Either your legal counsel did not keep you fully informed, or various Directors were being untruthful at the July 28, 2005, meeting. Either way, you cannot now deny that the CCSD has made this threat; you have it in writing right in front of you.

There is no doubt that since June of 2005, the CCSD has been threatening to subpoena Eric Greening and Pam Heatherington to testify regarding the Cross Complaint of the California Coastal Commission ("CCC") to the lawsuit filed by the CCSD against the CCC, regarding the Pine Knolls tank project, San Luis Obispo County Superior Court case no. CV 041032. The threat of subpoena has been hanging over their heads like a Sword of Damocles. The purpose of a threat is to intimidate, and when it comes from a public entity against a citizen who has merely testified, it chills Freedom of Speech for all citizens. This threat must be withdrawn.

There is no viable legal basis for deposing either Eric Greening or Pam Heatherington. The CCSD lost the Pine Knolls lawsuit and has appealed it. The cross-complaint was dismissed by the CCC. Furthermore, neither the testimony of Eric Greening nor of Pamela Heatherington has any relevance to the case. All they did was testify before the CCSD in public hearings, which is protected speech under the US and California Constitutions. The threat of deposing them must be withdrawn.

The CCSD's threat to depose Eric Greening and Pamela Heatherington is intended to intimidate them, make them (and everyone else) fearful about testifying and retaliate against them for criticizing the CCSD during public hearings. "The use of the machinery of the legal system for an ulterior motive is a classic indicia of the tort of abuse of process." *Coleman v. Gulf Ins.* (1986) 41 Cal. 3d 782, 792. Abuse of the subpoena power constitutes abuse of process under the law. This kind of abuse of power has become fashionable today among certain extreme legal litigants, in the tradition of the House Un-American Activities Committee of the 1950's.

AGP Video Whether a governmental entity threatening to depose someone—who has only testified at a public hearing and whose testimony has no relevance in a lawsuit which is on appeal and therefore cannot take further testimony—constitutes abuse of process is an interesting legal question. But does the CCSD really want to be a test case?

If the CCSD had subpoenaed either Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington, you would have been quickly served with a Motion to Quash and Motion for Protective Order. And you would lose, big time, because 1) the matter is on appeal (thus all testimony has been already entered); and 2) Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington's testimony has no relevance. A motion to quash will be granted where there is no information sought reasonably calculated to lead to discovery of admissible evidence in the pending action. Not that there really is a pending action, in this case, because the CCSD has lost the case. Plus, it is entirely possible that besides losing such a motion to Quash, the District would be subject to sanctions for its intentional conduct.

Furthermore, the Anti-SLAPP statute protects any written or oral statement or writing made in a place open to the public or public forum in connection with an issue of public interest or any other conduct in furtherance of the exercise of the constitutional right of free speech in connection with a matter of public interest. It protects against the use of the courts or the discovery process to discourage free speech. California Civil Code section 425.16(e). Does the CCSD want to be a test case in this regard as well?

In addition, by threatening to subpoena citizens for testifying at a public hearing the CCSD risks liability under the Brown Act, Government Code section 54954.3(c), which states that "the legislative body of a local agency shall not prohibit public criticism of the policies, procedures, programs or services of the agency, or of the acts or omissions of the legislative body..." For you to retaliate against members of the public who criticize the CCSD in any way, including threat of subpoena, violates the Brown Act.

No other governmental entity in this County has ever abused the subpoena power the way the CCSD is doing right now. The community will not tolerate this kind of governmental intimidation against citizens who are exercising their freedom of speech. The CCSD is urged to withdraw its threat to subpoena Eric Greening and/or Pamela Heatherington immediately. Failure to do so will demonstrate the District's deliberate intent to violate the First Amendment rights of Eric Greening and Pamela Heatherington and chill the freedom of speech of those testifying at public hearings.

Sincerely,

Jan Howell Marx

since the statement of Supervising Deputy Attorney General John Saurenman was read back to them at

discovery did not seek relevant evidence." (See Jan Marx's letter to the Cambria CSD, above.)

gencies — continues to pour residents' money down a legal rat hole, and continues to send a message the

NGK&E works to "overcome the raft of legal, environmental and political obstacles that stand in the way of development..." and "has a national reputation for the successful defense of large infrastructure and development projects against environmental challenges."

-- website of real estate law firm Nossaman Guthner Knox & Elliott, employers of CCSD President Greg Sanders

right to subpoena, Board member Ilan Funke-Bilu, at their July meeting, memorably likened this to the necessity of investigating a terrorist. The CCSD Board has become somewhat less stout in denying their intentions

their August 25 meeting. Deputy AG Saurenman testified that CCSD counsel notified him of his intent to take depositions from Ms. Heatherington and Mr. Greening. Mr. Saurenman "informed Mr. Cumberland that this

Meanwhile, the CCSD continues to push back against its now Coastal Commission-approved revised water tank site plan — still lobbying for storage capacity beyond that required for daily services and emer-

length and breadth of the Central Coast: Planning to testify against the plans of a local government agency in a public meeting? Get ready for your subpoena.

Diablo's Other Problem

By Andrew Christie, Chapter Coordinator

Over five years ago, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board ordered the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant to cease & desist in the destruction of marine wildlife via the plant's cooling system, which sucks in sea water, along with a few million fish and crab larvae and plankton, and then spews it out again, dead, in water 20 degrees hotter.

These destructive "once-through" cooling systems are now under stiff legal challenge nationwide as a violation of the Clean Water Act, and, by this time next year, the EPA is likely to bar power plants from using the antiquated technology or presuming to mitigate its damage — setting aside land in conservation easements, funding artificial reef habitat or no fishing reserves while continuing to rip a large hole in the web of near-shore marine life.

But PG&E and the Water Board drafted a settlement that proposed precisely that kind of mitigation deal in an effort by the utility to avoid having to spend the money to install closed-cycle cooling towers at Diablo Canyon. Closed-cycle cooling wouldn't suck in marine life or heat the water for miles around the plant.

On September 9, the Water Board met to review the situation. The Department of Fish and Game, Sierra Club, Surfrider, the Ocean Conservancy and other groups and individuals testified against signing off on any plan that would allow PG&E to claim mitigation of all their nuclear plant's present and future destruction of marine life and habitat while it continues to destroy it. We pointed out that no mitigation can provide the equivalent of the 60 to 90% reduction in impacts required by current EPA rules, and that those rules were likely to get even tougher once the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals rules on a pending lawsuit that could outlaw the cooling system used by Diablo Canyon. The court's ruling is expected next summer.

At the meeting, the Water Board settled for pursuing the conservation easement as mitigation for past —

not future — thermal impacts of Diablo's cooling water. (The conservation easement is highly fraught in its own right, as, at PG&E's insistence, it can be revoked at any time if the state or feds pass any regulations that "would require the Company to comply with a more stringent standard with respect to thermal effluent limitations than exists in the Plant's current Permit...or that would require a cooling water system technology that is more costly or burdensome than the [present] cooling water intake and discharge system....") The Chapter duly warned the Board of the trap awaiting them there.

Beyond that, the board decided to await review of two studies of just how much damage Diablo is doing — one by independent scientists and one by PG&E. The scientists concluded that PG&E is doing a lot of damage off the Central Coast. The utility concluded that it's not, and that any compensation they are required to make should be minimal. At the meeting, their representatives testified that under the economic theory of "non-use value," they are not destroying anything unique. That is, lakes, rivers, streams, trees, marine wildlife, etc., all exist in other places, and, as they are all substitutes for each other, no claim to special value can be made when they are destroyed somewhere else.

As the day wore on and it became clear that there was no action the Water Board could take that was not likely to be rendered moot by the court in short order, the meeting's most refreshing exchange transpired between frustrated board member Gary Shallcross and Chairman Jeffrey Young, when Shallcross said the board should simply once again tell Diablo to cease & desist destroying marine life with its fatal cooling water, and mean it.

"They can't cease," replied Young. "They can't cease?," said Shallcross.

"No, they can't cease." "Sure they can," said Shallcross. "They can throw a switch."

Energy Commission Raises Nuclear Concerns for California

Alliance calls for review of license extensions for nuclear plants

The California Energy Commission has released a report on the future of nuclear power that emphasizes the high hurdles utilities must surmount if they wish to continue operating nuclear power plants in the state -- and, by extension, the rest of the country.

The report examines issues such as transportation and disposal of the spent fuel, replacement of aging plant components, and potential extensions of operating licenses.

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility participated in two days of workshops in Sacramento last month that served as the basis for the Energy

Commission's report.

"The Alliance is pleased that its efforts to convince state regulators and legislators that the economic risks of continuing to operate California's nuclear plants beyond their current licenses has resulted in a active and informed dialogue on

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Patty Andreen, David Weisman and Rochelle Becker at a meeting of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility



Southern California Forests Face Uncertain Future

Report Identifies Leading Threats to Region's Last Natural Areas

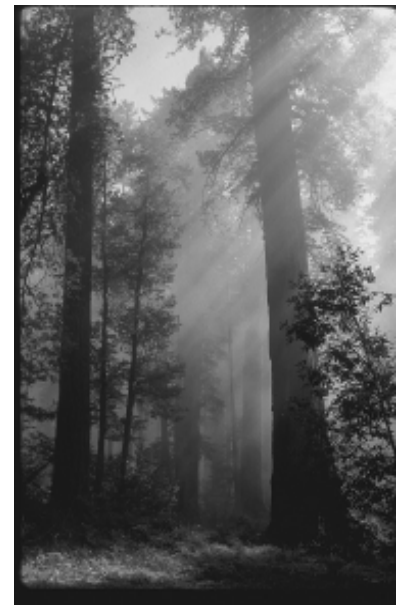
A report released in September by The Sierra Club Southern California Forests Campaign takes an in-depth look at numerous challenges facing the four national forests of southern California. The report, "At Risk: Southern California's Magnificent National Forests," documents the damaging impacts of several proposed projects, including plans to flood a popular recreation area for a private hydroelectric plant, build a toll road through wilderness-quality lands, drill for oil in condor habitat, and construct massive power transmission lines along a spectacular scenic vista. "The national forests of Southern California face new and rapidly growing threats to their long-term health and natural beauty. The Forest Service must act decisively so that these spectacular, unspoiled places are conserved for future generations of southern Californians," said Doug Hansen, President of the California Chapter of REP America (Republicans for Environmental Protection — www.rep.org).

The report was issued as the Forest Service prepared to release its final Land Management Plans for the Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests.

Stretching from Monterey to Baja, the forests are visited by over eight million people a year—twice the number of visitors to Yosemite National Park. These local forests are where many children play in snow for the first time, see their first pinecones and deer, and wade in their first creek. "So many people come up here on weekends with their kids, their bikes, to find some peace and get in touch with nature," said Chay Peterson, a mountain biker and resident of Silverado Canyon, which neighbors an area of the Cleveland National Forest threatened by a proposed toll road. "What is sacred and special about this area, and so beneficial to the residents of southern California, is going to be lost forever if it's paved over."

The report illustrates how major new developments are encircling our forests, threatening vital wildlife migration trails, increasing the risk of fire, and threatening recreation opportunities. As the amount of open space

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Saving Los Padres

By Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Los Padres National Forest stretches from Monterey County to the edge of Los Angeles County, encompassing about 1.75 million acres of central California's most scenic areas. Residents of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Kern counties can all easily enjoy this wonderful natural area, and people come from all across the nation to enjoy the hiking, fishing, camping and other activities it offers. Besides first-class recreation, the Los Padres watershed also helps to provide California with rich, pure water resources.

I am pleased to join forces with Congressmembers Lois Capps and Sam Farr and Senator Dianne Feinstein in introducing legislation to protect Los Padres National Forest from the damage that would result from mining and oil and gas drilling and development.

A proposal was recently announced that would open new sections of Los Padres to oil and gas drilling. The expansion of oil and gas claims or mining in Los Padres would result in limited supplies of natural gas or gasoline while causing permanent damage in pristine, wild areas. And the damage does not end with environmental degradation because there would also be a loss to the economic vitality of this region that depends on tourism and fishing. Our bill would ban further development of mining and oil and gas claims in all of Los Padres National Forest.

Los Padres National Forest provides diverse wildlife habitat, rich water resources and priceless recreation and wilderness experiences. I am pleased to work for its protection from the damage that oil and gas drilling and mining would bring.

Putting Money to Work

Worthy causes win funding

In September, the Chapter was pleased to be able to pledge a matching grant of \$2,500 to Save the Park, the group of Morro Bay citizens who are suing the State Department of Parks and Recreation over unpermitted tree removal and habitat

Planned Development ordinance. Paso Watch is organizing opposition to perhaps the worst land use measure ever to come down the pike. The RPD ordinance is a developer's

brought a civil liability action against the two for allowing massive erosion and discharge of silt into a blue line creek, but sought to fine the dischargers only \$25,000 each —

designed to restore that same watershed.

Chapter staff and volunteers participated with Water Board staff and the discharger's representative in the process of identifying and prioritizing appropriate projects and setting funding levels for nearly \$100,000 from the Pierson fine earmarked to go toward the completion of selected local projects. In negotiations, three nominees were found acceptable to the Chapter, the Water Board staff and the discharger, and their restoration projects were ratified at the Board's September 9 meeting:

- \$7,314 to the Atascadero Land Preservation Society's Stadium Park fencing project
- \$70,586 to the San Miguel/Salinas River Riparian Restoration and Bank Stabilization Project (with pipe fencing to keep out determined dirt bikers intent on trespassing)
- \$19,050 to the County Parks Foundation to purchase surplus Bureau of Land Management parcels around Santa Margarita Lake.

The third project will do the most to restore the watershed, foreclosing future development and all the impacts it would bring at the headwaters of the Salinas River.

In a time of scarce funding for projects seeking to improve water quality and restore habitat in the County, the Chapter was pleased to participate in a process that makes up that shortfall by collecting significant fines from the environmental gross malefactors who make such projects necessary.



destruction in five State Park units in San Luis Obispo, in violation of the Local Coastal Plan. The suit also seeks to compel the County and the Coastal Commission to enforce the routinely ignored conditions of the

Coastal Development Permits issued to the Parks Department.

For the past year, the Parks Dept. has been throwing up a barrage of "demurrers" — legal delaying tactics — requiring Save the Park to expend money and resources on filing reply briefs. The citizens' group has raised and spent \$20,000 for legal costs via bake sales and local fundraisers and is now close to getting its day in court.

"It is a shame that our citizens must sue public agencies to force them to protect public lands, just as the Chapter had to sue State Parks to buy adequate studies and some breathing room for the snowy plover," said Chapter Chair Karen Merriam. "We commend Save the Park for seeking to compel adequate public review and enforcement of the laws that protect wildlife and habitat on our coast."

The Chapter also pledged \$500 toward the preparation of a legal opinion on the proposed Rural

Condemned to die: These trees at Morro Bay State Park (left) and Montana de Oro (right) are a few of those "girdled" and poisoned by the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

dream that would blast open virtually all remaining ag land and open space in the county to L.A.-style sprawl.

The legal opinion, related materials and background information (See: "The RPD Must Die!" at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org) will be presented to local advisory councils in advance of an upcoming public meeting between all the councils and the County Planning Department.

\$100K Secured for Salinas Watershed Restoration

Ever since a pair of L.A. land speculators "grubbed" 239 acres of prime grasslands near Creston in 2002, violating the Clean Water Act in the process, the Santa Lucia Chapter has steadily pressed for justice and restitution.

After two years, the staff of the Regional Water Board finally

simply reimbursement for staff costs incurred in handling the cases. We testified that that wasn't nearly enough, and the Board agreed, directing staff to go back and try again. Staff came back with fines of \$100,00 for Haig Kelegian and \$125,000 for David Pierson.

Kelegian's fine was allowed to be whisked out of the County and into a general state fund in Sacramento (an action we are appealing to the state Water Board), but Pierson was allowed to designate most of his fine for "Supplemental Environmental Projects," a Regional Water Board program that allows fines for discharge violations damaging a watershed to go to local projects



Out of destruction — the denuding and erosion of more than 200 acres near Creston, choking a tributary of the Salinas River with silt and obliterating wildlife and fish — there shall come restoration, via \$100,000 in local environmental projects.

SIERRA CLUB 2006 CALENDARS



Sierra Club 2006 Wilderness Wall Calendar—Spiral bound, month-by-month format, featuring 12 majestic North American landscapes.

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For mail orders, write or call the Chapter office, p.o. box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406; (805) 543-8717. For in-town pick up, call Bonnie at 543-7051.

Dinner?

continued from page 1

is a drastic difference. While conventional breeders face natural barriers that prevent unrestricted gene transfer between unrelated species, genetic engineers bypass this protective barrier by combining genes from totally unrelated species. Furthermore, the technology involved in transferring foreign genes is imprecise, unstable, and unpredictable, so that engineers have no way of predicting how GMOs will behave once released into the environment.

The Sierra Club calls for:

- * Extensive, rigorous research on the potential long term environmental and health impacts of GMOs before they are released into the environment.
- * Use of the precautionary principle, whereby: (1) harm is avoided before scientific certainty has been established, and (2) the burden of proof is on those with the power and resources to prevent harm.
- * Mandatory environmental impact

statements to be made for every ecosystem into which any new GMO is to be introduced. These should be based on rigorous science and open public debate.

* An end to the concept of “substantial equivalence” by our regulatory agencies as a ploy to sidestep safety studies and oversight responsibilities. For example, toxins meant to kill insects are being genetically engineered into plants, yet the consequences of these toxins in the diets of humans, livestock, beneficial insects, and wildlife are unknown.

* Mandatory labeling of genetically altered products in a manner that is easily discernible. All consumers, both citizen and corporate, should be given the right to choose what they buy.

This county needs to make it clear to Washington and federal regulatory agencies that it affirms this basic principle.

Read The Sierra Club Genetic Engineering Committee's report "Genetic Engineering at a Historic Crossroads," at www.sierraclub.org/biotech/report.asp

Support Your Local Farm

By Sandra Sarrouf

The movement to support local agriculture in our County has gained momentum over the past few years. We are blessed in San Luis Obispo County with some of the best agricultural land in the world, a climate that supports year round growing and a number of family farms still in operation. Like many rural communities, we are at risk of losing our agricultural lands and open space to urban sprawl. One way of ensuring the viability of our small farms is to directly support them. Many farmers sell at Farmer's Market's or through other direct markets, including farm

stands, Community Supported Agriculture Programs (CSA) and direct sales to local vendors such as restaurants and grocery stores. As a consumer it is always a benefit to your farm to ask where the produce you buy comes from, or where the

veggies in your meal came from and promote the buying of local produce.

The Cal Poly Organic Farm (CPOF) has started working with various organic growers in the County to develop a network of farmers providing local produce to its CSA Program, to the Cal Poly Campus, as well as to Grocery Stores including Vons in San Luis and Food 4 Less. Creating a network



What's Up with the GMO Task Force?

Preordained conclusions on genetically engineered foods seem nigh

By Andrew Christie
Chapter Coordinator

The County Health Department's GMO Task Force – tasked with determining whether the County should support the labeling of genetically modified organisms, aka genetically engineered (GE) food – met on September 6.

The task force seemed uncertain as to its mission and reason for being. Members expressed and agreed with the perspective that exploring the issue of health concerns related to genetically engineered foods is simply a matter of “which lie you want to believe” and that the task force could fulfill its mandate by simply presenting to the Health Commission the arguments for and against genetically engineered foods, conclude that there are two sides to the issue, and leave it at that.

Should this course be followed, the task force will not be telling the Health Commission, the Board of Supervisors, or San Luis Obispo residents who followed last year's Measure Q debate anything they do not already know.

Much in evidence at the meeting was a belief that holds that scientists who report problems with GE technology or its products “have an agenda,” whereas those who defend the technology, dismiss concerns, perceive no problems, or attack the methodology and competence of critics, do not.

The work of Dr. Arpad Pusztai, a subject of debate in the task force, is a case in point. The world's leading authority on lectin proteins, he was accused of making an elementary blunder, using a known toxic lectin in a research experiment that found toxic effects on rats that were fed genetically engineered potatoes. The charge was false — he had used a harmless snowdrop lectin — but he was gagged by his employers while being attacked in the press on the basis of the false charge. Later, his

findings were confirmed by an Aberdeen University pathologist, published in the British medical journal *Lancet* and supported by a 20-member international scientific panel, after a year of relentless industry attack had already destroyed his career.

This was similar to the attacks on Dr. Ignacio Chapela after he reported the spread of transgenic genes of corn imported from the U.S. to native Mexican maize. Conclusive evidence that the attacks were orchestrated by a Washington p.r. firm that specializes in biotech industry cli-



A recent Greenpeace report gives a clue as to the nature of the resistance to labeling genetically modified food.

ents was later discovered by the *Guardian* of London — after Chapela, despite the unanimous recommendation of his department, had been denied tenure and fired by UC Berkeley, which had recently signed a \$50-million research contract with biotech giant Syngenta.

It is not surprising that the majority of researchers involved with and heavily invested in their vocation will defend against anything they perceive as an attack, nor that an industry would move to protect a multi-billion dollar investment. Any study or methodology can be picked apart for alleged flaws, and whistle-blowers are never in a majority.

Therein may lie the answer to the question asked at the meet-

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Engineering Consent

By Elizabeth Johnson

All those who voted for Measure Q last year — over 43,000 voters — expected those numbers would count when it came to setting future official policy on genetically modified organisms in this county. I regret to state that the opposite has happened.

Under the banner of the SLO County Health Commission, the Farm Bureau and its pro-GMO friends have managed to co-opt the discussion on health and safety issues in GE food in the Health Commission's GMO Task Force. How did this happen? Measure Q was citizen/consumer-based, a people's attempt to move local laws to protect

our food security. It was completely volunteer and those of us who spent countless hours in the trenches needed to work and attend to our families after the election. Some of us applied for the Task Force. All were rejected.

In August, I started attending the Task Force meetings when Mark Phillips gave his presentation on labeling of GE food products. We were told by the Chair that the group would not take any stance on labeling, period. The mission statement included labeling as a ‘consideration.’ Something was amiss. I got copies of

Health Commission minutes and public comment statements to try to see what happened.

All 43,000 of us have been had. It turns out that “stakeholders” are people who collect a salary while they lobby. As such, they are allowed to direct the discourse, unless too many citizens complain. This is not a small matter. As a public-accessible Task Force, this committee has weight and will be allowed to report its findings to both the Health Commission and the county Board of Supervisors. We hoped to enter a resolution for labeling of GE foods in this little committee and let it wend its way toward the more powerful voices, onward to state and national politics. This will never

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Mark Phillips

for local distribution or organic and sustainably farmed products is an exciting opportunity for the CPOF.

The CPOF is just ending their Spring/Summer 26 week season CSA season with members receiving seasonal fruits and vegetables every week. We had about 180 members, successfully networked with county growers and began our Free Range Egg program. The CPOF will be starting their Fall and Winter Season October 17th and welcome new members to the farm. It is a great time to start as the Fall season is 9 weeks and is a good trial period for folks who want to experience a CSA program. Each week members will receive a harvest box of freshly harvested produce, a newsletter with recipes and can also sign up to receive free range organic eggs.

Community Supported Agriculture creates a direct relationship between you and our farm – a partnership, if you will. In essence, it is a mutually beneficial arrangement, where in exchange for your commitment to buy a share in our farm's harvest, students and staff commit to grow high quality vegetables, herbs and fruit, and deliver a bountiful portion of it to you every week of the season. All the produce is harvest the same day you receive it so freshness and nutrition is at it's peak. In addition members receive a weekly newsletter with recipes and farm news.

If you would like to learn more about the Cal Poly Organic Farm or about CSA programs please contact us at 756-6139 or visit www.calpoly.edu/~sarc/csa.htm.

Organic Farming Produces Same Corn and Soybean Yields as Conventional Farms

But consumes less energy and no pesticides

By Cornell University News Service

Organic farming produces the same yields of corn and soybeans as does conventional farming, but uses 30 percent less energy, less water and no pesticides, a review of a 22-year farming trial study concludes.

David Pimentel, a Cornell University professor of ecology and agri-

culture is the lead author of a study that is published in the July issue of *Bioscience* (Vol. 55:7) analyzing the environmental, energy and economic costs and benefits of growing soybeans and corn organically versus conventionally. The study is a review



CPOF workers consult on small farming issues.

of the Rodale Institute Farming Systems Trial, the longest running comparison of organic vs. conventional farming in the United States.

"Organic farming approaches for these crops not only use an average of

30 percent less fossil energy but also conserve more water in the soil, induce less erosion, maintain soil quality and conserve more biological resources than conventional farming does," Pimentel added.

Chapter Resolutions passed by Sierra Club Cal-Nev Committee

By Louise "Letty" French, CNRCC delegate

The Sierra Club's California Nevada Regional Conservation Committee met at Rancho El Chorro Educational Center September 24 and 25.

Four important workshops occupied Saturday morning, where energy, population, political, and agriculture were discussed at length. After lunch, a lengthy agenda occupied the 45 delegates until noon on Sunday.

The election of officers for the following year produced the following results: Chair – Cal French; Vice Chair North – Pat Jones; Vice Chair South – Ken Smokoska;

Conservation Committee Liaison – Allen Eberhardt; North Secretary – David Underwood; South Secretary – Lorraine Unger; Treasurer – Dan Sullivan. Congratulations to our chapter ExCom member Cal French.

The CNRCC then approved our Charter, including our chosen name of California Nevada Regional Conservation Committee. The charter will function similar to bylaws, since there is now no system of regional conservation committees nationally. As this entity we will now seek funding from national com-

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Dinner Picnic on the Sandspit

By Jack Beigle

One of my favorite canoe sayings is that you never place your paddle in the same river twice. The idea is that Nature is constantly changing. If you are observant you can see changes all around you.

We didn't have to look hard to see the changes on Morro Bay Estuary the evening of our dinner picnic on the sandspit. We launched eleven boats at 5:00 on a cool Saturday evening. We could see the sandspit but light fog was blowing our way. In our skipper's meeting I asked everyone to stay in a tight group in case the fog became thicker. We had several boats with compasses and we were set for dead reckoning if necessary but all boats had to stay in sight of each other at all times.

When we were halfway across the estuary, the fog did thicken and we could no longer see the spit. After a quick count of the boats (we still had eleven boats in sight), it was evident that we could no longer see the mainland nor any moored boats or landmarks in any direction. We could only see fog in every direction outside our small cluster of boats. It gives you an odd feeling. We confidently paddled our compass course and landed on the sandspit right where we wanted to be.

After beaching our boats, we found a warm spot in the wind shadow of a large dune. We enjoyed a good dinner picnic and good conversation. As we launched our boats for the return trip, what appeared to be a very large sea otter floated by. It seemed extra large because in the dense fog our eyes had no reference points to indicate how far the otter was from us. It

was big because it was close to us but it seemed far away in the fog and our minds were telling us that the otter must be over six feet long.

As we paddled our compass course back to the marina, we again lost sight of everything but our group. It gives you a warm feeling to see the marina materialize out of the fog. We returned with eleven boats and a lot of good memories of our adventure that we can share when friends ask "why do you enjoy going to the same place every year?"

Check the outing schedule and join us on the water.



Cell Tower

continued from page 1

tions in a way that accomplishes the same thing. It often takes decades for public policy to catch up with scientific research. We need to err on the side of caution as best we can in writing zoning by-laws. It's the one real handle we actually have."

"I have learned a vital lesson through this experience," said coalition member Judy Vick. "It is important for us to know one another and it is important that we speak up when something as important as our health is jeopardized, even when we are told 'You can't win, the Board rarely upholds appeals.'"

The success of a scrappy group of Los Osos residents is an example of the power of local organizing and the difference it can make when you show up to look decision-makers in the eye when they have to vote on a contentious issue. The Coastal View Protection Coalition had no experience in lobbying or local politics; they were just local residents who knew they didn't want a cell tower in their neighborhood and set about the task of informing themselves as to what they could do about it.

And then they did it.

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Summit

continued from page 2

cities can act when federal and state governments fail to address environmental issues. San Francisco has required all retired city vehicles to be replaced by hybrids, has embarked upon an aggressive green building program, and has been the first US city to adopt the Precautionary Principle as a guiding policy.

Bill McDonough, the author of *Cradle to Cradle* and prophet of the Second Industrial Revolution, asked "how do we love all the children of all species for all time?" McDonough often works with people the Sierra Club is aligned against, such as the Ford Motor Company, for which he designed a green assembly plant in Dearborn Michigan. McDonough and his company devise products, buildings, industrial processes and cities according to standards that require zero waste and zero pollution. He showed us some of his ecotopian plans for the construction of seven new cities commissioned by the government of China which he said has adopted *Cradle to Cradle* as their industrial policy. Less optimistically, he alerted us to the fact that the world's oceans are rapidly lowering in Ph, and that if the present trend continues, by the year 2100, calcium carbonate will dissolve, destroying all coral and molluscs—the bottom of the food chain.

While McDonough spoke to an audience of 800, six other presentations were taking place simultaneously. For the late afternoon session, I attended a small one on "engaging youth" mounted by the Sierra Student Coalition. These

young people organize projects like "Victoria's Dirty Secret" exposing the practices of the catalog industry which is destroying boreal and Appalachian forests to produce junk mail. SSC may be able to help us start a local group bringing together high school, college and university student allies.

Delegates convened again Saturday morning from 7:30 to 11:30 to prioritize means to achieve goals prioritized the day before. First place went to organizing people locally to take action. Second was creating new allies and coalitions. Others included supplying environmental expertise, getting people outdoors, public education, bringing legal action and creating media visibility. Delegates were then treated to a lengthy study by Harvard Professor Marshall Ganz on how the club could increase general effectiveness (NPLA). He concluded we need motivated well trained leaders and lots of attention to engaging new members in club activities. If interested, see www.clubhouse.sierraclub.org/committees/oegc/workplan/index.html

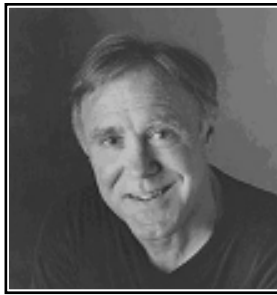
Saturday's highlight for me was the plenary session featuring Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Security was extensive

and the great hall was even more packed than for Gore. Hoarse with laryngitis, at times desperate with



Al Gore's speech is at www.sierraclub.org/pressroom/gorespeech/

anger at others ecstatic with ardor, Kennedy repeatedly brought me to tears. This is a person you could follow to the barricades. Presented with the Sierra Club's William O. Douglas award, he spoke at length about his childhood relation with Douglas and then went on to indict the present administration—headed by the worst environmental president in history who has corrupted all agencies by heading them with the bought dogs of the corporations who finance his campaigns. A former NY state assistant attorney general who spearheaded the salvation of



Robert Hass

New York's Hudson River, Bobby's son spoke about his three sons who suffer from asthma brought on by the unprosecuted criminal activities of corporate polluters. He talked about the subversion of the free market by the corporations that now control government. He talked about the ignorance of what's going on caused by the corporate media's refusal to report it. He talked about his own success at awakening and converting Red-state audiences. And finally he rhapsodized at length about Saint Francis, the Bible, religion and nature. You can find an early version of this speech at www.commondreams.org/views03/1120-01.htm

A quiet and lyrical coda to this Riverkeeper's jeremiad came in a presentation by Robert Hass entitled "River of Words." Another local as well as national hero, Hass used his position as former US poet laureate to create an organization promoting environmental education for children. His objective, following Aldo Leopold, is to get them to "think like a mountain." As he does with his students at UC Berkeley Hass encourages teachers to take their students outdoors, to cultivate their senses and encourage their observations of nature, and then to have them write

poems and draw pictures about their experiences. This traditional but nowadays rare approach has generated thousands of submissions from around the world which his organization makes available on-line and in published collections, and which in turn generate more rivers of words. Hass spent the hour showing and commenting upon exquisite examples of the childrens' work. For more information on this project see, www.riverofwords.org/index.html

There was much more at this amazing conference than can fit here. The impact of what I heard and saw is still not absorbed. The sensation of simply being together with so many people of like mind, common loss and shared aspiration—people for whom I immediately felt affection and respect—will nourish me for a long time.



Santa Lucia Chapter delegate Steven Marx weighs in on national priorities

Resolutions

continued from page 2

mittees to fund our necessary projects. Dan Sullivan chaired the committee that slaved to produce this document and truly deserves a lot of credit. This charter still needs approval from Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club California ExCom, and the national Board of Directors.

Seven resolutions were presented for approval. Many lacked details for funding or implementation and were tabled until problems could be resolved. Two resolutions proposed by our Santa Lucia chapter were approved in modified form. They support the prohibiting of re-licensing of existing nuclear plants until the problem of nuclear waste disposal is solved, and oppose the use of once-through cooling for any of the 21 existing power plants on the California coast. Cal French shepherded these resolutions to approval.

A group from Napa, Sonoma, and Medico counties called Fish Friendly Farming had a Powerpoint presentation of their environmental certification program, which helps the landowners comply with water

quality laws, pesticide and local regulation and the Endangered Species Act. With voluntary enrollment, the landowners get a lot of help for compliance and recognition for their efforts.

Our state director, Bill Allayaud, reported on the few successes and many close misses of the legislative year. The Cache Creek Wild and Scenic bill still is awaiting signing by Governor Schwarzenegger, who has proven to be less and less green. On a personal note, Bill is getting married, and looked very happy.

Harry Love from Bakersfield reported on the success they have been having on getting developers and solar engineers together to attempt to get solar onto every new house and school built in the area. One of the biggest builders has decided to go solar. A solar conference provided information and contacts for many of the businesses on how to get started.

That's a short summary. The true value of this meeting is the coming together and networking of devoted Sierra Club members, sharing and working together.

HopeDance

Films in October. \$5 donation suggested to cover expenses and help HopeDance with its varied activities.

Soldiers Speak Out plus *Caught in the Crossfire: The Untold Story of Falluja* Sat., Oct. 8, 7:00pm, SLO Library.

Screening of a work in progress to raise finishing funds for Barbara Trent's Empowering Project, a voice for the anti-war and anti-occupation movement within the military and among military families. It will be a tool for organizing, mobilizing, and counter-recruitment. Trailer can be seen at www.empowermentproject.org/trailer.html. Suggested donation \$10. Monies go to the filmmakers. Also a 30-minute film on Fallujah by Santa Barbara filmmaker Mark Manning.

Trudell the movie Thurs., Oct. 13, 7:00 p.m., SLO Library.

The passionate, painful and multi-dimensional life of John Trudell, who went from being a spokesperson for the Indians of All Tribes occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1968 to Chairman of the American Indian Movement to an internationally recognized poet, recording artist and actor. Includes historic footage that documents the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM). Featuring Cherokee Chief Wilma Mankiller, Jackson Browne, Robert Redford, Kris Kristofferson and others. Go to www.trudellthemovie.com to see the trailer. A portion of the proceeds goes to the filmmaker.

Internationally Speaking Wed., Oct. 19, 7:00pm, SLO Library.

See the view from outside the media bubble. Voices from around the world address America's foreign policy, government, and people. In the midst of growing international "anti-Americanism," real people tell Americans what they think and why in an attempt to further understanding.

Greg Junell's 2nd Animation Festival Thurs., Oct. 20th, 7:00pm, SLO Library.

Since the first one last year was so successful we asked Greg to return with more of the same animations... and he agreed, armed with more potent and humorous animations and short video streams.

An Evening of Film & Discussion on Affordable Housing Wed., Oct. 26, 7:00pm, SLO Library

With "Jerry" Rioux, Director of the San Luis Obispo County Housing Trust Fund. The featured film "Homes and Hands: Community Land Trusts in Action" is an award-winning video that introduces and promotes the community land trust (CLT) model. CLTs create permanently affordable housing by combining community ownership of the land with individual home ownership. The film shows how the CLT approach works in different kinds of communities. For clips from this film, go to www.womedia.org/hh_clips.htm

Latino Film Festival Sun., Oct. 30
"Soldados" 1:30pm and 3:30pm, SLO Library
"Macario" 1:30pm, Palm Theatre Reception at 5:30pm

Presented by the Latino Outreach Council. Reception with author Charley Trujillo at the new Gov. Center on Monterey from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. (Details in the current issue of *HopeDance*).

County Moves to Protect Oaks (Cheaply)

SLO first to enact state law, but...

San Luis Obispo is the first county in California to implement the Oak Woodlands Conservation Bill, which went into effect on the first day of 2005.

Authored by Assemblymember Sheila Kuehl, the new law applies special provisions to projects that are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act and projected to convert or remove significant portions of oak woodlands. On-site replanting of replacement trees cannot be used for more than half the mitigation of impacts, and the other half must be accomplished through either an off-site tree replacement fee or conservation easement.

On the down side, alas, the new state law does not provide guidance on the calculation of how much replacing a destroyed oak tree should cost.

Left to their own devices, County Planning staff have estimated the replacement value of an oak tree at \$662. The message to developers – cut all you want, they're cheap! – is not one this county should be sending, nor would it seem to be a very effective way to preserve oak woodlands.

The County's calculation is based on a SLO Land Conservancy oak replacement budget spreadsheet. At the

Planning Commission's September 8 meeting, the Sierra Club pointed out that the Conservancy's figures were plainly labeled "Calculates costs for planting, maintenance, monitoring only. Model not intended to assign value to actual trees."

In other words, the County has calculated what it costs to acquire land, pay for planting materials, installation labor and maintenance to re-establish an oak tree, without ref-

erence to how much an oak tree is worth-- a value of which any realtor is acutely aware.

Suggestion to County Planning: Watch the doughnut, not the hole!



City Moves to Protect Open Space from Open Space Plan Activist watchdogs, Planning Commission ride herd on unruly General Plan update

The City of San Luis Obispo is coming down to the finish line in the effort to "streamline" portions of the City's General Plan into the Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE), essentially a digest version of open space provisions adopted by the City in 1994.

The update process began in late 1998, halting in February 2003 as residents raised concerns over the content of the Draft Element and the way the Commission was going about it. The process resumed in September 2003 with provisions for more public participation.

In seeking to cut fat, Planning staff's scalpel has frequently slipped and cut bone, blurring definitions and inserting new language that would allow, or cutting existing language that would prevent, "active recreation" in undeveloped open space — that is, activities appropriate to city parks, but which would degrade areas meant to remain as much as possible in a natural state for the benefit of wildlife.

When these instances have been pointed out to the Planning Commission at public meetings by representatives of the Sierra Club, ECOSLO

and others, Commissioners and staff have been prompt in rectifying the problems and sharpening those blurring definitions back up.

Unfortunately, the Conservation and Open Space Element is a massive document, and there are a lot of places for "slips" to slip by. All concerned SLO residents should review the COSE documents at www.slocity.org/communitydevelopment/cose.asp and plan on attending the Planning Commission review at SLO City Hall on October 26. The open space you save may be your own (or next to your house).

Forests

continued from page 4

beyond forest boundaries dwindles and the population grows, protecting the unspoiled scenic beauty and recreational opportunitwildlife is struggling just to survive. Southern California's national forests provide the core refuge for many of these animals, and the Forest Service has a responsibility not only to protect the forests for wildlife but also to maintain crucial connections to other natural areas."

The Forest Service's final management plans affect 3,530,723 acres of forest land, guiding decisions on everything from mining and drilling to off-road vehicles and hiking trails. The Service's final preferred land use alternative has been dubbed "Alternative 4a." Remarkably, in the face of public demand for more wilderness, the Forest Service has reduced its recommended acreage from 96,000 in the draft plans to 87,000 in the final plans. The agency is only recommending 2.5% of total forest acreage for new wilderness. A new land use designation, BCMUR (Back Country Motorized Use Restricted), allows for agency administrative access for fuels reduction and other purposes. This new zone — 13% of the four forests — does not allow for off-road vehicles, but does allow utility corridors and new agency roads. Sadly, the Forest Service seems to be pitching BCMUR as a substitute for wilderness protection, which it is not. As the threats report points out, the future of the four Southern California forests lies in these plans.

"The Forest Service has a chance to provide 21st-century leadership for protecting our forests for a generation to come," said Bill Corcoran, Sierra Club Senior Regional Representative. "It needs to adopt a more balanced approach that better serves the vast majority of forest visitors."

The report is available online at www.sierraclub.org/ca/socalforests. To request a copy by mail, call Juana Torres at (213) 387-6528 x226.

Task Force

continued from page 6

ing by Task Force member Dr. Scott Steinmaus, who noted that GE critics seem to "have this agenda," and if they're right, "why isn't everyone else hopping on board?" In commenting on the enormous pressures brought to bear on him, Dr. Chapela said "They have made an example of me. Other scientists see this and decide that maybe they should go back to studying the bristles on the back of a bug."

We would propose that the task of the GMO Task Force is relatively simple. It need not devote time to exhaustive descriptions of RDNA technology delivered to support the case for "substantial equivalence" nor compile the particulars of the debate nor find ways to attack the research and researchers that have found problems with these foods. Rather, it need only note the exceedingly small number of peer-reviewed studies



Consent

continued from page 6

happen unless a number of citizens start speaking up. The GMO Task Force is a local version of the kind of political cronyism that created the human tragedy in the Gulf states.

If you can talk about food security and what you expect from a balanced committee charge with studying health effects from GMO food products, then you should start writing the Health Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and Letters to the Editor. Without your input, the Health Commission GMO Task Force will report to the Health Commission that GE food is safe, then do a joint presentation to the Board of Supervisors in December, saying that GE

that have sought to measure the effects of these foods on human health, that even among that small number red flags have been raised, and conclude that far more study needs to be done and should have been done before the first such product was allowed onto the market.

When one side is saying that there's absolutely no cause for concern when the most powerful technology ever devised is creating new organisms and unleashing them without adequate testing for potential effects on the environment or human health, and the other side is saying maybe it would be a good to know what you're eating before you buy it, how hard is it to pick the right side?

Uncontested facts that were brought forward in the course of the meeting — that the commercialization of GE foods has been a "large, unregulated public health experi-

ment," and that recombinant DNA technology differs from traditional breeding techniques in that it introduces foreign genes into organisms and these new organisms into the environment, and an inevitable result is unforeseen consequences (see: increased lignin in Bt corn, unpredicted and undetected for five years). This should be sufficient cause for the task force to report to the health Commission that there are obvious, legitimate health concerns with GE foods.

Nuclear

continued from page 4

Contact Mark Phillips for dates of task force meetings and SLO GE-Free presentations at the Board of Supervisors that you can come out to support: mark@slogefrees.org, 461-0376.

this important issue," said Rochelle Becker, the Alliance's executive director and chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter's Diablo Canyon Task Force.

California has an ongoing role in protecting public health and safety and assuring the economic cost-effectiveness of investments in electricity generation. Given the safety issues, as well as the long-term accumulation of spent fuel and adverse thermal impacts on the marine environment from the cooling technologies used at coastal facilities, it is appropriate that the state undertake a thorough review of the costs and benefits of license extensions for nuclear power plants. The legislature should develop a framework for such a review, including delineation of agency responsibilities, the appropriate scope of review and criteria for assessment.

"We intend to take the Energy Commission's Report and presentations to state lawmakers and request that legislation be introduced next year which will restrict the production of high-level radioactive waste on California's coast to current license terms," said Becker.

food and GE crops are safe in every respect. Tell them you disagree, and say it loud. Ask the Health Commission to consider three options in dealing with a Task Force that is functioning as a special interest group:

- 1) Disband the GMO Task Force immediately, based on its overwhelmingly biased membership.
- 2) Remove the Health Commission sponsorship and suggest that the meetings be held at the Farm Bureau for the benefit of its membership.
- 3) Disband the Task Force and create a new, transparent and more representative group that clearly has its priorities in public health issues.

Classifieds

Nov/Dec issue ad deadline is **October 14**. To acquire a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:

Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
 p.o. Box 15755
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
 sierra8@charter.net

Local Government Meetings

- City of SLO--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
- Arroyo Grande--2nd and 4th Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 473-5404
- Atascadero--2nd & 4th Tues.; 466-8099
- Cambria CSD -- 4th Thurs.; 927-6223
- Grover Beach--1st & 3rd Mon., 6:30 p.m.; 473-4567
 Grover Beach Planning Commission-- 2nd Tues.
- Morro Bay--2nd & 4th Mon.
- Paso Robles--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 237-3888
- Pismo Beach--1st Tues., 5:30 p.m.; 773-4657
- Los Osos CSD board-- 1st Tues. & 2nd Mon., varies
- California Coastal Commission-- 3rd Tues., varies
- SLO County Board of Supervisors-- every Tues.; 781-5450
- SLO Council of Governments; 781-4219
 SLOCOG Citizens Advisory Committee--1st Wed. every other month, 6:00 p.m.
 SLOCOG Board--1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

highlights from recent Chapter meetings

Executive Committee Meeting
 August 26, 2005

Chair Karen Merriam called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm in San Luis Obispo, California. Present: Karen Merriam, Jack Morrow, John Ashbaugh, Cal French, Eliane Guillot, Susan Harvey. Staff, Andrew Christie; guests Letty French, Gail McPherson, Joey Racano, Judy Vick.

The minutes of the July meeting were approved.

Old Business

Cal French reported on some final issues regarding Sierra Summit. California Department of Fish and Game did not vote to limit the duck hunting in the Morro Bay estuary. Activists are organizing a hunt watch for the first day of the hunt. Andrew Christie presented information on DF&G's incorrect basis for the decision to change the start time and season start of the hunt.

It was agreed to end the Google chat room for lack of participation.

The Committee discussed the Goals and strategic Plans for 2005-6 document. Cal French moved to accept the document as modified as a working plan with the understanding it can be modified. John Ashbaugh seconded and all agreed.

Chair Karen Merriam met with Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee's representative, Christine Robertson, and with Greg Haas, representative for Representative Lois Capps. The com-

mittee agreed to have Karen ask Assemblyman Blakeslee and Representative Capps to speak at a General Meeting on environmental issues.

New Business

Steven Marx gave the Treasurer's Report and it showed that the Chapter was in better financial shape than last year. Karen Merriam will continue to explore the possibilities of a URL bike ride as a fundraiser and the possibility of a joint fundraiser with Hospice of SLO and The Chapter.

Application fee for a booth at the Green Earth Festival authorized.

Judy Vick gave a presentation for the group Coastal View Protection Coalition asking for support of their resolution opposing the proposed cell tower to be located in Los Osos. The Committee authorized Andrew Christie to speak at the upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting opposing the cell tower.

The ExCom endorsed the Conservation Committee approval of the Chapter's inclusion in the list of opponents to oil drilling in the Los Padres National Forest.

The ExCom voted to request the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club make a commendation of the life work of the late BLM Carrizo Plain National Monument Manager Marlene Braun.

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A Will . . .

. . . is a way to protect the environment as well as yourself. If you do not have a will, the state decides how your property and other affairs are handled. Decisions made now can later provide financial security for family, friends, and the Sierra Club. You may even direct your bequest to a specific Club program or your home Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact
John Calaway
Sierra Club Planned Giving Program
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441
(415) 977-5538.

Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo County

Preserving and Protecting Our Environment Since 1971

Downtown Office:
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 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

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 Fax: (805) 544-1871
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Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Leader Gary Felsman (473-3694). For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. Outings Leaders please get your outings or events in by the 1st for the next month's outings.

Hiking Classifications:

Distance: 1 = 0-2 mi., 2 = 3-5 mi., 3 = 6-9 mi., 4 = 10-12 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.

Elevation Gain: A = 500', B = 1000', C = 1500', D = 2000', E = 2500', F = 3000' or more.

Sat., Oct. 1 SURF BEACH:

Celebrate the opening of Surf Beach by walking south 3.5 miles. Meet at 1pm in Surf Parking Lot west of Lompoc where West Ocean has turned southward near Surf Railroad Station. Bring water and a snack. Low tide is at 3:32pm. Dogs welcome. Always contact the leader; hike particulars can change. CONNIE 735-2292 (AR).

Oct. 2nd, Sun, 0930 MUSSEL ROCK: We'll hike along coast, into dunes, see Chumash midden, track mountain lions and (hopefully) get to the top of Mussel Rock to read poetry & HDT. Dogs on leash permitted at this time of year. Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or <BDenneen@SLONET.org>

Wed., Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26. 5:30 p.m. Informal 1-2 hour hikes around San Luis Obispo. Check Website at <http://santalucia.sierraclub.org/index.html>, or e-mail gfelsman@onemain.com for meeting location.

Sat., Oct. 8th, 9 a.m., Santa Margarita Lake Exploration. Come explore the County's biggest park Santa Margarita Lake. We will explore the Grey Pine Trail, hike up into the Craggs, and out to Vaca Point on this 6 - 8 mile hike. Bring lunch, water, and dress for the weather. There is a \$5.00 per car entrance fee. Meet at the Pacific Beverage Company, in Santa Margarita. Details call Gary at 473-3694 (3C).

Sun., Oct. 9th, 9:30 a.m., COAST HIKE: Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Sat-Sun., October 15-16. Panamint Valley Exploration. Come with us to this spectacular, seldom visited, desert landscape just west of Death Valley. Camp at the historic ghost town of Ballarat (flush toilets & hot showers). On Sat, do a challenging hike to Lookout City, followed by Happy Hour, potluck and campfire. On Sun, more short hikes to visit other historic ruins. Group size strictly limited. Send \$8 per person (Sierra Club), 2 sase, H&W phones,

email, rideshare info to Ldr: Lygeia Gerard, 1550 N. Verdugo Rd. #40, Glendale, CA 91208; (818-242-7053). Co-Ldr: Bill Spreng, (760-951-4520). Mojave Group/CNRCC Desert Com

Sat-Sun., October 15-16.

Turtle Mountains Rescue. The Turtle Mountains, in the low desert north-east from Joshua Tree, are known for their colorful volcanic peaks and for the wide variety of minerals found there. Unfortunately visitors along the northern end of this wilderness have left an appalling quantity of trash. We will assist the BLM in collecting the larger objects and bagging smaller debris in preparation for removal. Recreation will include a dayhike to the interior of the area, but our reward will be in knowing that we have helped restore a truly beautiful place. Contact Leader: Sandy Suzanne Swedo, wild@inetworld.net, (818-781-4421). Angeles Chap/CNRCC Desert Com.

Oct. 15th, 9 a.m., Cerro San Luis Work Party. Come help the City of SLO maintain its local trails. Bring water, pants and sturdy shoes. Snacks will be provided. Meet at Maino Open Space Area at the Marsh and Higuera onramp. Call 781-7300, or visit the City's website at www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation/parkrangers.asp for more information. Sponsored by the City of SLO.

Sat., Oct. 22, 9:00 a.m. Cerro Alto. Now that the hills have cooled off a bit join us on this 7.5 mile, 1700 ft. loop hike. Carpool at 8:30am from large dirt pullout on right past Miners Hardware as you leave Morro Bay on Hwy 41. Meet at Cerro Alto campground, on Hwy 41 8 miles east of Morro Bay, 12 miles west of Atascadero. Park at headquarters parking lot at end of campground road (\$5 parking fee or USFS pass). Bob Schwartz, 441-9508, <rws_usa@yahoo.com> (3D).

Sat., Oct. 22nd, 9:30 a.m. CANOE/KAYAK OSO FLACO LAKE. Join us on this leisurely tour of Oso Flaco Lake. We will check out the local wildlife as we paddle around this beautiful freshwater lake in the dunes. NOTE: There is a parking fee of \$5.00 pre car and a ¼ mile portage from the parking area to the lake. We will help you portage your boats. Please allow an extra ½ hour for the portage. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, binoculars and your picnic lunch that you can eat in your boat. PUT IN 10:00 AM at Oso Flaco Lake Causeway. Please call Jack Beigle, 773-2147 for details.

Sun., Oct. 23rd, 9:30 a.m., KAYAK OSO FLACO: Meet in parking lot with kayak, pfd and paddle. I have an extra kayak for someone to help me load and transport (I have wheels). Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Fri-Sun., October 28-30.

Whipple Mountain Carcamp. For this trip in the far eastern San Bernardino County, we will need 4X4 vehicles. Bring all your drinking water as there is none available. We will explore Whipple Wash which is supposed to rival the Zion Narrows. To get on the trip, send \$20 made to Sierra Club to David Hardy, Box 99, Blue Diamond, NV 890004. If you show up or cancel more than 10 days before the trip, you get the \$20 back. Ldr: David Hardy,

hardyhikers@juno.com, (702 875-454). Toyaiibe Chap/CNRCC Desert Com.

Sat, Oct. 29th, 9:00 a.m.,

Islay Creek - Ridge Trail-Barranca Loop. Stay cool on the coast on this moderate 7-mile, 1500 ft. loop hike in Montana de Oro SP. Meet at Islay Creek Road Trailhead, 2.3 miles past park entrance. Park in large pullout across from the trailhead. Possible lunch after for those interested. Details call Chuck Tribbey, 927-3769 (3C).

Oct. 29th, 9 a.m., Bishop Peak Work Party. Come help the City of SLO maintain its local trails. Bring water, pants and sturdy shoes. Snacks will be provided. Meet at the top of Highland Drive in SLO. Call 781-7300, or visit the City's website at www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation/parkrangers.asp for more information. Sponsored by the City of SLO.

Sun., Oct. 30th, 8 a.m., Bishop Peak. Join us for this 2 hour, 5 mile roundtrip hike with 1300 feet of elevation gain. Everyone is welcome, but beginners will fall way behind due to the fast pace and elevation gain. Meet at the trailhead in the 800 block of Patricia Drive in SLO. Leader: Al (534-0462) (2B) Note: Daylight Savings time change.

Oct. 30th., 0930: BLACK LAKE CANYON HIKE: Meet at junction of Guadalupe Rd. and Leguna Nigra to hike down Xenon Way, see oak-woodland, a man-made canyon, giant crab-grass and protected areas. We will see how well the counties "soft" blockade of Zenon works (the Land Conservancy used big rocks but was told to take them out). Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Nov. 5th, 9 a.m., Irish Hills Work Party. Come help the City of SLO maintain its local trails. Bring water, pants and sturdy shoes. Snacks will be provided. Meet at the top of Highland Drive in SLO. Call 781-7300, or visit the City's website at www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation/parkrangers.asp for more information. Sponsored by the City of SLO.

Sat-Sun., November 5-6. East Mojave Primitive Carcamp. Join us on this weekend near the dark moon to hike 1 mi, 700' gain to the top of beautiful Kelso Dunes where we'll enjoy the desert panorama and hear the booming caused by the grains of sand sliding together. Sat night Happy Hour, potluck and campfire. On Sun, we'll do another beautiful hike through a Joshua Tree forest. 2WD ok. Group size strictly limited. Send \$8 per person (Sierra Club), 2 sase, H&W phones, email, rideshare info to Reserv/Co-Ldr: Bill Spreng, P.O. Box 129, Victorville, CA 92393; (760-951-4520). Co-Ldr: Lygeia Gerard (818-242-7053). Mojave Group/CNRCC Desert Com.

Sat-Sun., November 19-20. Antelope Protection Carcamp. With little rainfall and few water sources, the species on the Carrizo Plain are both hardy and endangered. Particularly beautiful are the pronghorn antelope which evolved in these wild, open spaces. Then cattle ranching left a legacy of endless fences - which are deadly to the pronghorn. Join us for a weekend in this remote area removing fencing for their benefit. Camp at



Photo by Joaquin Palting

KCL campground, bring food, water, leather work gloves, and camping gear for the weekend. Potluck Sat night. Rain cancels. Resource specialist: Alice Koch. For more information, contact Leaders: Cal and Letty French, 14140 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446, (805-239-7338). Prefer e-mail: ccfrench@tcsn.net. Santa Lucia Chap/CNRCC Desert Com.

Sun., Nov. 20th, 10 a.m., CANOE/KAYAK MORRO BAY. Here is a chance to get a little exercise before that Thanksgiving Dinner. Join us for a picnic and a short hike on the sand spit. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, binoculars and your picnic lunch. HIGH TIDE 11.38 AM 5.3' LOW TIDE 7.47 PM 0.2' PUT IN 10:00 AM, LAUNCH AT MORRO BAY STATE PARK MARINA. Details call Jack Beigle 773-2147.

Thurs., Nov. 24, THANKSGIVING LAND CONSERVANCY HIKE: Call Land Conservancy of SLO at 544-9096 for details.

Sun., Dec. 25, CHRISTMAS DUNE CENTER HIKE: Call Dunes Center at 343-2455-105 for details.

Sun., Jan. 1, 0930, ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY MUSSEL ROCK HIKE: This will be the 29th NY's attempt at MR Peak. Last year rain turned most of us back. Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

This is a partial listing of Outings offered by our chapter. Please check the web page www.santalucia.sierraclub.org for the most up-to-date listing of activities.