



SIERRA
CLUB

April 2007
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the south county

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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

Ag Land or Disneyland? Massive county ag policy changes must be thwarted

San Luis Obispo County is facing mounting pressure to open its ag-zoned lands to more and more ag-tourism uses—events, camping, retail, inns and the like. Why should this concern us, especially those of us who do not live in rural areas? We all need to be keenly aware that such changes in land use policy will affect everyone in the county, reducing open space and threatening the viability of our agriculture, our natural resources, and the county's rural character. We need to move very carefully in responding to this pressure—responding to the real needs of real agriculturalists but not allowing over-development that will trigger the transformation of our rural areas into an agricultural theme park.

New Proposals are Coming Down the Pike. The SLO County Ag Commission and Planning Department are teaming up behind a series of very expansive proposed ordinances that will greatly expand tourist opportunities in our ag neighborhoods. There will be individual proposals for Events, Camping and Rural Recreation, Lodgings, Retail and Processing. Proposals for Events and Camping have already been released.

Events. The Events proposal is *extraordinarily* expansionary. Today, we have two types of events—winery events, which require the highest level of permit, and temporary events, each of which must receive its own discretionary permit. The new Events proposal creates three new categories of events—special, agricultural, and temporary—all available in most land use

categories, including land zoned for agriculture. Rules governing winery events remain as before. The proposal allows anyone receiving a discretionary permit to host up to 40 days of events each year, with *no* limit on the number of people attending and *no* restrictions on hours of operation. Those in active agriculture (undefined at the moment) can host up to an additional 21 days of ag related events with *no* discretionary permit, and thus no opportunity for neighbor input, *and*, beyond that, an unlimited number of ag events with only a minor use permit. In addition, each parcel has a one-time opportunity to host up to 2,000 people with *no* oversight whatsoever.

Problems with the events piece of the Ag Tourism package are enormous. First, events, probably more than any other accessory use, threaten neighbors' well being and burden local roads and parking. Think amplified music,

Call to Action for the Cayucos Viewshed: April 3
by Sue Luft
President, North County Watch

(If you are reading this issue before the above date -- and we realize most of you aren't, such is the lot of a monthly printing schedule -- read fast and get ready for a meeting!)

Many of us are concerned about the future of our rural lands as the pressure to divide and develop them mounts. In coming months, the future of our rural lands will be a major topic discussed by County decision makers.

After literally years of effort, the Cayucos viewshed ordinance, intended to protect the pristine coastal hills and ridges of rural Cayucos, will

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Events by hundreds... unless you speak up.

Attorney General Moves Against Nuke Waste California demands environmental protection from NRC

Reverberations continue to be felt from the legal victory won last year by Mothers for Peace and the Sierra Club when an appeals court found that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) erred in refusing to consider the environmental impacts of a terrorist attack on the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power plant's proposed radioactive waste storage facility.

On March 16, the State of California petitioned the NRC to undertake rule making that will do the following:

"1) rescind NRC regulations that declare the potential environmental effects of the approval, construction, and operation of high-density pool storage of spent nuclear fuel are not and cannot be significant for purposes of NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act);

2) adopt and issue a generic determination that approval of such stor-

age at a nuclear power plant or any other facility does constitute a major federal action that may have a significant effect on the human environment; and

3) order that no NRC licensing decision that approves high-density pool



continued on page 5 Not safe: Diablo Canyon.



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photo/Kevin Walsh

It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting Hot Spots, Part Two: South County & Beyond

What's up with the Avila Beach tank farm site?
 Will Pismo suck the Oak Park aquifer dry?
 Can the Arroyo Grande rural fringe be saved?
 Will Carrizo Plain be grazed to stubble?

Talk with the activists on the ground, get the big picture on what the future holds for our way of life, and ideas for what you can do where you live!



**Friday, April 27,
 7:00 p.m.
 St. Stephens Episcopal Church
 1334 Nipomo St., at Pismo
 San Luis Obispo**

Enter parking lot off Pismo

Refreshments

Boosterism Backlash

Tribune's relentless development pressure galvanizes residents

Outrage over the SLO Tribune's coverage of the massive proposed Heart Hill winery project in Paso Robles and subsequent editorial endorsement (see "Taking Issue," page 6) may have far-reaching impacts.

The editorial was ill-received by local land use activists and citizens' groups in Paso Robles and other North County communities where rural and ag lands are under heavy development pressure. It followed by two days a *Tribune* editorial praising Supervisor Jerry Lenthall for using his office to quarterback a private development in Avila Beach, as he did previously for the Dalidio Ranch project.

"I have had it," said North County Watch President Sue Harvey in canceling her *Tribune* subscription and summing up the general sentiment. "I can't stand the Dalidio cheerleading, or Heart Hill, or the five lunching ladies, or days of Lohan on the front page. It takes me 5 minutes to read it and a lot longer to recycle it."

Atascadero resident Stephen Tillmann noted that when Ellen Beraud and Mike Brenner ran for Atascadero City Council on platforms of open government and a return to honest leadership in the wake of multiple development scandals

emanating from City Hall, the *Tribune* endorsed their opponents. "The Trib showed all of us in Atascadero that only the developer-sponsored candidates need apply for endorsements," said Tillman.

Industry's apparent influence on the *Tribune's* attempts at opinion-making, and the influence of Lenthall and Supervisor Harry Ovitt, both with long voting records that attest to their seldom having met a development project they didn't like, came in for special mention as e-mails flew in the response to the Trib's one-two punch, with general agreement on the solution to the problem: We need to secure at least three reliable votes on the Board of Supervisors for smart growth and responsible land use planning as soon as possible, or we are well down the road to a whole new county. The road to November 2008 may be the last opportunity for residents who care about the environment to get very serious about getting those three votes and to step up, for the next year and a half, to support candidates who will reverse the course we're on.

North County residents have started a new blog to deal with local issues and are looking for contributors. Go to: <http://abovethegrade.blogspot.com/>

Pay no attention to that Supervisor behind the easel: Jerry Lenthall surveys the first meeting of his Avila Beach Fossil Pointe Discussion Group at the San Luis Bay Inn, discussing the development of oil-contaminated land. Focus groups are used by developers to create the illusion of public process and buy-in, helping grease the wheels for the developer's project in the permitting process.

At one point, a participant stated that any development should follow the policies of the Avila Beach Specific Plan. The developer-funded facilitator replied that this was not necessary and the plan could simply be "drawn upon for inspiration," then cut off the speaker as he said "I disagree with you, sir..." and changed the subject.



SANTA LUCIAN

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Outings, events, and more!

Diane Wilson in Town for Earth Day

By David Weisman,
Outreach Coordinator, Alliance for Nuclear
Responsibility www.a4nr.org

While the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility is dedicated to making sure that nuclear power is not foisted on the public as the solution to global warming, we must confess to heating things up with what will surely be the "hot ticket" this Earth Day.

Texas fisherwoman Diane Wilson -- activist, author and co-founder of Code Pink -- will make two local benefit appearances on Sunday, April 22nd. She

will be at the San Luis Obispo City Library from 4 to 5:30 p.m., and at a reception at a private home in San Luis to follow at 6:30 p.m.

Wilson, a fourth-generation shrimper, began fishing the bays off the Gulf Coast of Texas at the age of eight. By 24, she was a boat captain. In 1989, while running her brother's fish house at the docks and mending nets, she read a newspaper article that listed her home

of Calhoun County as the number-one toxic polluter in the country. She set up a meeting in the town hall to discuss what the chemical plants were doing to the bays, and thus began her life as an environmental activist. Threatened by thugs and despised by her neighbors, Diane insisted the truth be told and that Formosa Plastics stop dumping toxins into the bay.

Her work on behalf of the people and

aquatic life of Seadrift, Texas, has won her a number of awards, including *National Fisherman* magazine's "Highliner" Award, Lois Gibbs' Environmental Lifetime Award, and the Bioneers Award. She received the Blue Planet Award for environmental service in Berlin in 2006. As co-founder of Code Pink, she continues to lead the fight for social justice. Her autobiography, *An Unreasonable Woman*, published by Chelsea Green in 2006, is Diane's first book.

Reached by telephone at the trailer in which she is currently living, in the midst of a Texas Gulf coast swamp (and guarded by alligators, she declares), Ms. Wilson said she is eager to visit the Central Coast again, and looks forward to sharing stories about her many adventures over the last three years.

In the early spring of 2006, Diane served nearly four months in a Texas jail for her act of displaying a banner at a Monsanto facility in Texas holding them culpable for Bhopal. Her harrowing experiences at the hands of the Texas justice system have led her to a new project seeking justice for women in prison.

In addition to her activities with Code Pink, she did a 30-day hunger strike last summer across the street from the White House in order to bring awareness to demands for bringing troops home from Iraq. Following the hunger strike, and still in weakened condition, she undertook her own "fact-finding" trip to Iraq. Ms. Wilson will recount anecdotes from her many adventures, engage in a free-wheeling Q&A with the audience, and sign copies of her autobiography.

Having seen first-hand the destruction of the bays of the Texas Gulf, Ms. Wilson offers some cautionary advice for San Luis Obispo County, particularly when I informed her that a telephone poll was being conducted in this area about the possibilities of building an LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) tanker terminal off of Morro Bay, or the potential of rebuilding the Morro Bay power plant.

"They've already issued permits for three LNG terminals in the Gulf of Mexico" she commented, "and the problem is that the cooling system to re-liquefy the LNG sucks up lots of water and kills lots of larvae, and that's

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Bob Hattoy, 1950-2007

One-of-a-kind environmental activist Bob Hattoy passed away on March 4, one month after being named president of the California Fish & Game Commission.

Bob went to bat for San Luis Obispo more than once, fighting for the right of the public to speak against the Morro Bay Estuary waterfowl hunt at the Fish and Game Commission's August 2005 meeting in SLO, and spending most of 2006 arguing for higher levels of protection for Central Coast Marine Protected Areas, newly decreed by the Commission.

A collection of quotes once compiled by the California League of Conservation Voters gives some of the flavor of the "Best of Bob:"

"Substantive issues aside, naming a national forest after Ronald Reagan is like naming a day care center after W. C. Fields."

On the Walt Disney Co.'s plan to build a Long Beach theme park: "If we have to stand in line to ride the Matterhorn, Mickey Mouse should stand in line for a Coastal Commission permit."

On the loss of the Big Green initiative: "We were having a big environmental party and then war and recession showed up. I hate when that happens."

On big businesses capitalizing on the environmental movement: "You can't paint a chain saw green and say it's good for the forest."

Tarren Collins, Chair of the Sierra Club's Great Coastal Places Campaign and former Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter, said "Bob was one of my best, most beloved friends. Consequences were not part of the equation for Bob. Anyone who had the pleasure of his company would not be surprised to know that he worked at the Comedy Store in L.A. prior to beginning his work on political campaigns."

Bob's was hired by the Sierra Club in 1983, and became one of our strongest advocates for the environment in Los Angeles, Sacramento and Washington,

D.C. "I really think he's one of the most important environmental political figures in this country," said his old boss, Los Angeles City Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky. "That's not an exaggeration. He's credible in the halls of Congress and at City Hall. He's definitely somebody you'd want on your side."

In 1992, Bob quit his job as our Regional Director in Los Angeles in order to advise presidential candidate Bill Clinton on the environment.

That year, Bob learned he had AIDS, helped get Bill Clinton elected, and went to work in the White House.

The *Los Angeles Times* noted in 1995 that, as associate director of White House personnel, Hattoy shaped the Clinton Administration's policy on HIV/AIDS, and often clashed with politically cautious colleagues. "I didn't come to Washington to be a faceless federal bureaucrat," he said. "I came to Washington to be a bureaucrat in your face. If a foreign enemy were killing that many people, we'd be calling out the Marines."

Bob was appointed to the California Fish and Game Commission in 2002.

Marcia Hanscom, Vice Chair of the

Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, including 83 acres in Ballona Creek and an adjacent area, which a DFG staffer told us would be only be done 'over [her] dead body.' The State Coastal Conservancy is working with stakeholders on a plan for sensible public access at Ballona."

"As President of the Fish & Game Commission and Chair of the Wildlife Conservation Board, I'm sure Bob had plans for the Commission to revisit an issue he had championed but not yet found a way to win -- to get the lead out of bullets hunters use; lead that has proved lethal to the California Condor and other wildlife.

"California is already in a diminished state without Bob's leadership," said Hanscom. "I hope the Governor realizes he needs to appoint *three* good Commissioners to take the place of one Bob Hattoy."

"As an organizer and leader for the Sierra Club, Bob was an exceptional political strategist" said Warner Chabot of The Ocean Conservancy. "He worked, usually behind the scenes, on quiet campaigns that put many brilliant, talented and deserving conservation-minded leaders into positions of power and public service. He combined courage, humor, political savvy, passion for the environment and people

in a wonderful, ethical, eclectic, outrageous and fun package.

"He drove his White House and Interior Department bosses absolutely crazy," said Chabot, "because of his total inability to do anything other than speak absolute truth to power."



Bob Hattoy, Sierra Club Great Coastal Places Campaign Chair Tarren Collins and friend in Shell Beach.

Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter Conservation Committee and former member of the national Sierra Club Board of Directors, recalled Bob's role in the struggle to save the Ballona Wetlands of west Los Angeles.

"As a Fish & Game Commissioner,

Arbor Day Events

On April 12th and 19th, the city of San Luis Obispo's Urban Forest Dept. will have a booth at Farmer's Market. Come check out the information and meet mascot Annie Oak Leaf.

On Saturday, April 21, will be participating in various activities in recognition of Arbor Day. Events include a Commemorative Tree planting and an Arts and Prose Awards presentation to elementary school students. Information on tree planting, tree identification and illnesses will be available from members of the City's Tree Committee. Mayor Dave Romero will accept this year's Tree City USA Award presented by the California Department of Forestry.

Activities begin at 10:00 a.m. at Laguna Lake Park. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact the City Arborist office at 781-7220.

Cayucos

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soon be back at the Board of Supervisors for final action. Other issues will soon follow. Taken together, these initiatives will have profound effects on how this county's rural lands look and function in the future. They will determine how much non-ag use (such as event centers) we see in our rural areas, whether we have the will to conserve important scenic, ag and natural resources, and whether we can control sprawl.

Our rural areas have been under tremendous development pressure and decisions on viewshed protection and the other issues will be crucial to the county's character for years to come. People who care about our rural lands are moving to join this important discussion and they need to hear from you.

All these efforts aim to balance the public interest of protecting productive ag land, open space and natural resources, with a land owner's financial interest in development. The community's interest in this balance is reflected in zoning laws and land use regulation that have been in place for over 100 years. Indeed, the balancing of community and individual property rights is one of government's fundamental roles.

The long struggle over the viewshed ordinance has revealed a vocal minority

that holds extreme views on property rights. This group has loudly opposed modest regulation of residential development, falsely claiming a threat to agriculture (when virtually all ag buildings are exempt from this regulation). Their mission — promoting unrestricted development rights over the interests of neighboring properties and the public at large — was on display in their vehement opposition to the recently passed County trails plan. This 19th-century view of property rights poses a considerable threat to our rural lands as development pressure mounts.

The viewshed ordinance is simply a set of standards for siting, sizing and screening residential development in the Cayucos rural area. Such standards are universal in urban areas to limit the impact of residential development on neighboring properties. It's only due to increasing population that such standards are now needed in the rural areas. As many have noted before, 1) such rural viewshed standards exist elsewhere in the County, 2) the standards do not prevent houses from being built on legal parcels, and 3) the standards exempt virtually all ag structures.

Since we have a fast-growing rural population, we need to carefully consider how development should proceed.

Upcoming decisions will have important effects on how this county looks in 10, 20, and 50 years. Do we want huge houses on our rural skyline? Do we believe in smart growth? Do we care about the protection of productive ag land and important natural resources? Are we content to let the real estate market dictate the outcome?

We need to express a vision for our rural lands. We need to speak to the proper balance of the public good and individual interests. We need to make clear that we support reasonable regulation to protect the community interest in our rural areas. Many who live in these areas support this 21st-century view of property rights; this view also requires the support of a strong community voice.

Support for effective viewshed protection standards is important now, as a clear statement that we care about how our rural areas look. (See the box below for the details.) The viewshed effort is a prelude to upcoming (and significant) discussions about how we want our rural areas to develop and function. We need to articulate the important idea that the wider community has a legitimate interest in protecting the commonwealth represented in productive ag land, open space and natural habitats.

This effort is crucial to our county's future character.

TAKE ACTION: Speak up on the Cayucos Viewshed Protection Ordinance

A full public hearing on the ordinance will be held April 3 at the Board of Supervisors. The staff ordinance covers views only from Highway 1 and two rural roads. The Board needs to be urged to support staff's recommended ordinance, with the addition that it be made applicable to new structures within one mile of *all* public roads within the Cayucos rural area.

CONTACT all five County Supervisors expressing your support for protecting views from all public roads and places.

ATTEND the April 3 hearing (check the posted agenda for approx. time).

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Ag Land

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late-night noise, poorly monitored attendees, alcohol mixed with major increases in traffic on narrow country roads. Lots more of these is lots worse for us! Second, enforcement of the few rules that might protect the neighbors is weak to non-existent. Third, the county is making no effort to evaluate the cumulative impacts of this proposal combined with those that will come behind it.

Camping. The camping proposal is similarly expansive, opening the door to unlimited ag-related organizational camping with permanent structures on ag land and up to 90 days of "incidental" camping (no special facilities permitted). In both cases, RVs qualify as "camping units." Required acreages and setbacks are modest.

Again, the camping proposal poses enormous problems for our ag areas. Imagine being the neighbor as RVs set up with their generators and radios for an evening of fun on the other side of your fence line. Imagine the consequences as someone flicks a cigarette into the field in mid-summer. Imagine sharing a quiet country road with RVs and boat trailers, curve after curve after curve.

How Should We Approach the Issue of Ag Tourism? Ag tourism must be an integral part of a healthy agricultural economy. To protect our agriculture, we need to help make it pay, and the best way for a real farmer or rancher to make most types of agriculture pay is through direct marketing—on-site sale of on-site ag production. So the rules should permit activities that support direct marketing—processing, retail, tours, reasonable and related "events" like harvest festivals, etc. To preserve agricultural opportunities and limit the troublesome impacts of ag-tourism, these activities should *only* be undertaken in direct support of on-site agriculture.

A few principles offer good guidance in deciding how far is far enough:

Expand land use opportunities for all agriculturalists [olive oil, meat, etc.]; do not favor wineries.

Strictly limit accessory uses, making them available only to those *actively* engaged in agriculture.

Appropriately *scale* accessory uses to match on-site agricultural production and available infrastructure and

resources.

This approach benefits our county's real farmers and ranchers by directing opportunities for the accessory uses to them. It protects our agricultural lands and rural character by strictly limiting accessory uses to activities that directly support on-site agriculture. It is win-win for county agriculture and county residents.

How Do Current Proposals Measure Up? The Events and Camping/Rural Recreation proposals do not conform to these principles. They offer a large menu of commercial opportunities to all ag land owners, not just to active agriculturalists. They expand uses—like camping and special events—that don't relate to direct marketing or even to agriculture. They impose weak if any size or density limits on the activities they permit. They would serve to further stoke the feverish rise in land prices, the engine driving agricultural loss, and strip all of us of our county's most valuable and irreplaceable asset—its agricultural lands.

Watch for the AgTourism Proposals. Although the components are integrally related and have significant cumulative effects, the Planning Department will introduce their AgTourism package piecemeal—with separate proposals for Events, Rural Recreation and Camping, Accommodations, Processing, and Retail. They are beginning with the Events proposal, which they are taking to the advisory and ag interest groups and will probably take to the Planning Commission in late spring. If you believe this expansion is harmful, go to your area Advisory Group to oppose the Events proposal, and then join in opposing it when it comes to the Planning Commission.

Find out your community advisory council's meeting times and locations:

- Avila Valley: <http://www.avilavalley.org>
- Cayucos: <http://www.cayucos-ccac.org>
- Los Osos: <http://www.locac.us>
- South County: <http://www.scac.ca.gov>
- North Coast: <http://www.northcoastadvisorycouncil.org>
- San Miguel: [hme@tcsn.net](mailto:hmey@tcsn.net)
- Santa Margarita: <http://www.smaaconline.org>
- Oceano: elitaw@aol.com
- Shandon: shandoncouncil@yahoo.com
- Templeton: <http://www.taaginfo.org>

The Adventures of Huck Finns

By Joe Dickerson

Well this was a strange outing, albeit a lot of fun. First odd thing was that the chiefs outnumbered the Indians by a ratio of two to one. We had only one other paddler show up at the appointed place and the appointed hour. But the weather was warm, lots of blue-sky overhead and a gentle breeze. So Ann & Ann and I set out to see what we could see. The aforementioned breeze propelled the boats southward along the sand spit with very little paddling required, and we all felt a bit like latter-day Huck Finns.

It's supposed to be a little late in the season for the birds to still be in the bay but nobody has mentioned it to the birds. All the usual suspects were present and many of them were actively working for their keep. The white pelicans were mostly napping or preening while the elegant terns were diving on fish, the willets, curlews, godwits, dowitchers, et al were busily probing the mud for whatever it is they probe the mud for and the gulls were mostly pestering everybody.

Ann and Ann were doing a little harbor seal watching, who was doing a little kayaker watching of his/her own and, to our great joy, joined our little flotilla for a bit. I spotted fins breaking the surface near Grassy Island and at first thought I had spotted a couple of small sharks. After a couple of minutes it became clear that my pair of small sharks was a fairly good-sized bat ray with its wing tips nearly a yard apart. Very cool.

We headed across the bay to the beach below the heron rookery to eat lunch and stretch out the cramped leg muscles a bit. By now the wind was starting to blow, and as we had launched at

Coleman Beach the paddle back to the cars was going to be all up hill.

On the way back I played my usual mind game of which sailboat I'll buy when I win the lottery while Ann and Ann chatted and paddled and paddled



and chatted. None of us was in a hurry, which was a good thing as the wind was really starting to blow, so we took our time and watched an otter doing otter stuff and the Laser, Lido, and Day Sailor folks having a very exciting regatta.

Nothing is quite so nice as messing about in boats.

On a personal note, Ann and I are currently caring for her mom and I'm not getting to my phone messages as often as I should. Please use our E-mail address; slopaddlers@aol.com or my cell phone number (805) 235-1037 if you have questions about our outings.

See you out on the water.



Letters

Dear Editor,

I prize good environmental quality just as much as I prize business prosperity and a robust economy. I've been a supporter of Ernie Dalidio and his family, from the day I met him (and wife Christy) five years ago. I'm a member of the Santa Lucia chapter of the Sierra Club (just as I was in years past, in the Mt. Shasta area of Siskiyou County, CA).

I do not personally believe the Sierra Club (or kindred organizations) has any business in getting tangled up in the Dalidio project, as is now occurring. The project is little different, but just as beneficial to the community and the economy, as the Madonna project on Los Osos Valley Road. I never saw this level of intensity directed towards the Madonna family...it is simply unfair, inconsistent, and unkind for this Chapter to go down this road, now, with this project. Where was this chapter when the car dealerships were approved next door? Have you ever heard the term "light pollution?" Are you aware of how much asphalt and concrete rests beneath an auto dealership, thus preventing soil absorption of storm runoff? Where did our chapter stand on that? Did we say anything at all?

I still view this as an "infill," rather than a "sprawl" project. I also very firmly believe in the freedoms possessed by an individual in America today, to have the right to do anything he or she wishes with their personal property, provided laws are not broken, and people are neither deprived of their personal and legal rights, nor suffer from damaged health.

I don't think the initiative to place this on the ballot was illegal; every other avenue and solution was explored, publicly debated, blocked or exhausted. This was just another option, and one that Ernie shouldn't have been boxed into taking, in the first place.

I will remain as a member of the Sierra Club and this chapter, but we *absolutely* part ways with respect to the chapter's stated, public position on the Dalidio Project.

Thank you very much.

Lee Ferrero
Los Osos, CA

Would that there were enough activists, enough resources, enough time, and enough concerned and aware citizens to besiege our city councils, planning commissions and the County Board of Supervisors over every one of the hundreds of dubious development proposals that come down the pike every year!

Our position on Measure J is based on the sound principle that if successful, it invites "single-issue" spot zoning initiatives that make a mockery of comprehensive planning.

Here's the thing: If you wanted to put in a deck, or a swimming pool, or a second unit, how would you like to walk into County Planning and be told that your project and your property were exempt from any "development plan...plot plan approval, zoning clearance, site plan approval, site plan review...or any other review or entitlement purporting to regulate or guide land use or development"?

What if your project could harm wildlife habitat, impair views, drainage conditions and the value of historic structures on the site, but whatever conditions of approval were initially required could never be changed, even if they were found to be insufficient — and there would be no way to make that finding? Your development will be subject only to "ministerial actions," so planners, the city council or board of supervisors simply have no say.

If that sounds like a pretty good deal to you, how would you like to be the

applicant who comes in after the guy who gets that deal, and be told "Sorry, you have to play by the rules"?

That's what Measure J did, for a single project. It's likely that most of the people who voted for it didn't know the above-quoted provisions were in it. We were told it was "the fair solution."

Measure J has made the County's General Plan — our constitution for land use planning — inconsistent, incoherent, and contradictory. It also presumes to exempt itself from state law. That's why the court needs to determine whether Measure J meets the criteria of an "individual's right to do anything he or she wishes with their personal property, provided laws are not broken, and people are neither deprived of their personal and legal rights, nor suffer from damaged health." The legal arguments in Citizens for Planning Responsibly and ECOSLO v. County of San Luis Obispo are clearly stated, well written and worth a read. You can access it at www.ecoslo.org/cprfinalpetition022707.

Others who feel as you do have objected to the legal action on the

Diane Wilson

continued from page 3

going to ruin your fishing industry. Even the Governor of Louisiana is opposing it. Then they are going to have to dredge all these ship channels double-wide for the tankers. What are they going to do with the dredging spoils? And what about terrorism?"

She adds, "I've been there, lived there, and seen what happens when you bring in a plant or industry and say this is the hope for your community and the economic bonanza that is going to make your community grow and create jobs. They only see the initial investment, but then we end up with chemical discharges, larvae kills, mercury pollution, the plant goes bankrupt, the jobs are lost. We've killed off the fishing industry and we've ruined our chances for ecotourism because we destroyed the bay that would have created and sustained it."

She concludes ruefully, "The bonanza of short term economic goals is so very short, and the price is so high. If you want to destroy your bay, just invite industries...and if you want to see how badly it can end up, come look at us in Texas!"

As someone concerned with the health of bays, Ms. Wilson realized early on that fishermen could be her best allies. As she says, "Even though I do a lot of environmental work, I have no problem swinging with a bunch of fishermen, because fishermen are my people, and because it's who I am, and I am comfortable being with them. It takes independence to

grounds that Measure J passed with 65% of the vote. But if 100% of the voters vote for an illegal initiative, it is still illegal. Measure J will now get its day in court. If it is ruled to be invalid, the developers are free to go through the normal planning process with a project that is capable of being conditioned and approved. (Its previous incarnation was rejected by the SLO Planning Commission, as well as by the city's voters.) That project should be on an appropriate scale, provide for adequate open space, and not dump a traffic nightmare on local residents — things that the planning process can provide, and ballot-box planning cannot.

That's why we shouldn't heed the Tribune's call to "throw in the towel" or City Councilman Paul Brown's urging to "let this wound heal." Measure J has broken the General Plan. Healing will require removing the foreign object from the wound and setting the bone. It may be a painful process, but it's preferable to infection and a permanent limp.

-Ed.

HopeDance

SLO Library: San Luis Obispo Public Library, Osos and Palm Streets

- Fri April 6, 7pm:** *Hand of God* \$5
- Thurs. April 12, 7pm** *Born into Brothels* (part of CalPoly's Film Series) \$5
- Fri April 13 7pm:** *Black Gold* (the story of Fair Trade Coffee) \$7
- Sat April 14 7pm:** *America: From Freedom to Fascism* (illegality of the IRS) \$5
- Fri April 20, 7pm:** *Planet Earth* (Part 1 and 2) celebrating Earth Day! FREE
- Sat April 21 7pm:** *Planet Earth* (Part 3 and 4) celebrating Earth Day! FREE

No one turned away for lack of funds. For information, call 788-0929. For HopeDance film schedule, go to www.hopedance.org

Nuke Waste

continued from page 1

storage of spent nuclear fuel at a nuclear power plant or other storage facility may issue without the prior adoption and certification of an environmental impact statement that complies with NEPA in all respects, including full identification, analysis, and disclosure of the potential environmental effects of such storage, including the potential for accidental or deliberately caused release of radioactive products to the environment, whether by accident or through acts of terrorism, as well as full and adequate discussion of potential mitigation for such effects, and full discussion of an adequate array of alternatives to the proposed storage project."

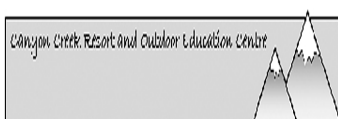
The petition, filed by Attorney General Jerry Brown, notes that "the NRC has not properly evaluated the significance of storing spent fuel assemblies in pools that were designed for a much smaller number of spent nuclear fuel assemblies, thereby greatly increasing the possibility of catastrophic accidents involving fire," and that the agency also needs to acknowledge that our understanding of threat has changed since September 10, 2001, and since the NRC regulations were written.

Contrary to popular belief, the "dry cask storage facility" at Diablo Canyon will not empty the plant's spent fuel pools; it will merely make room for more spent fuel rods to be stored in the pools before they are ultimately moved into cement casks.

"The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility had requested that California's Attorney General support a similar Petition for Rulemaking filed by the Massachusetts Attorney General," said ANR Executive Director Rochelle Becker. "The Alliance is pleased to see this independent action by our Attorney General to ensure that issues of security, both of pools and dry casks stored on our coast for an indeterminate length of time, are fully addressed and all safety issues are resolved. We look forward to working with Attorney General Brown's office and other state legislators and agencies on the economic impacts of California's dependence on aging nuclear reactors and onsite storage of highly radioactive waste on our priceless coast."



Come share conversation and inspiration with Diane Wilson. See and hear her at the SLO Public Library from 4 to 5:30 PM on Sunday, April 22nd. The suggested donation is \$20 for adults; \$5 for students with I.D. For a more intimate discussion, join the Alliance for appetizers, wine, hors d'oeuvres and desserts at a private reception to follow; suggested donation \$40 per person. A large turnout is expected for both events and seating is limited, so guarantee your reservation by calling (805) 772-7077 or e-mailing davidweisman@charter.net. All proceeds benefit the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility.



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Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local press

"Have a heart, allow the permit," *The Tribune*, Mar. 4, 2007.

Summary: The *Tribune* endorses the issuance of a development permit for the proposed Heart Hill winery in Paso Robles.

Although the size of the operation would be comparable with many other wineries and wine production facilities around the county, it would dwarf its immediate neighbors on the west side.

It would be by far the biggest wine production facility on the west side of Paso and one of the largest in the county.

It should be remembered that each of those wineries and each acre of vineyard have changed the complexion of the land. And, given that our county's economic vibrancy depends increasingly on tourism dollars, we see the value in this evolution.

Is this agriculture or tourism? The Department of conservation, which oversees the Williamson Act, notified the county that the hospitality building, commercial kitchen, and proposed events with amplified music at Heart Hill are not consistent with the Williamson Act.

We fully understand that change can feel threatening. No doubt the Chumash and Salinan natives who lived here weren't happy when the Franciscans took up residence in the 1700s

No doubt that unhappiness was validated when the Franciscans began to exploit, enslave and slaughter them.

The original negative declaration, with the viewshed impacts "mitigated to a level of insignificance," was found to be so inadequate as to require an amendment and recirculation of the document. The revised project proposes to use 45,000 cubic yards of dirt from the site to construct earthen berms to screen the visual impacts. If impacts were "insignificant" before, why would they require such a drastic re-design?

The Morro Group found in its report that the visual impacts of the Heart Hill project can be softened to a level of insignificance - through landscaping, replanting and restoration of graded areas, use of earth tones on buildings, and unobtrusive signs and lighting. It found - and county planning staff agrees - that a full environmental impact review is unnecessary.

"Diablo to get ready for the heavy lifters," David Sneed, *The Tribune*, Mar. 4, 2007.

Summary: The *Tribune* does some heavy lifting for PG&E by printing a story affirming that everything is full-speed ahead for the utility's plan to replace the steam generators at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant and there's not a hitch in sight, saying:

The work will begin within the next month or so, once final permits are received from the Coastal Commission.

and:

Only one aspect of the replacement project remains unresolved. The Coastal Commission has required PG&E to spend \$300,000 to allow visitors to the nearby Point San Luis Lighthouse to bypass armed guards at the plant's entrance.

Mysteriously missing from the story is the fact, previously reported, that the lawsuit *CLEAN v. California Coastal Commission*, filed on January 11, directly challenges the Commission's decision to issue permits to PG&E to replace Diablo's steam generators. The Commission voted to issue the permits without requiring mitigation measures for the destruction that will be done to the marine environment by Diablo's cooling system once the generators give the plant a new lease on life. (One of the attorneys for CLEAN is the Coastal Commission's former senior counsel.) More than "only one aspect of the replacement project remains unresolved."

Because of a lack of production capability, almost 60 percent of the grapes grown within the Paso Robles area are sold out of the area.... This means fewer people nationwide will be exposed to a fine Paso wine.

Many of the area's vineyards are owned by corporate entities, such as Gallo, who choose to process their grapes at existing facilities out of the area, where they also have distribution facilities for a global market. This makes better economic sense for them than building additional wineries locally.

Other growers have lucrative contracts with Napa and Sonoma vintners, and have no desire to process their grapes locally. Still others grow grapes not of sufficient quality for premium appellation status, and require blending with grapes grown out of the area. There is no data to support the statement that grapes leave the area due to lack of processing capacity. It is unreasonable to expect that all grapes grown locally should be processed and sold locally.

Yet, if the Paso Robles Appellation is to gain more national prominence and market share - which will bring more wine-tasting tourists - more production facilities like Heart Hill are needed.

If Paso is interested in increasing its status

as a premium wine region, the large amount of poorer quality grapes that are shipped for processing at large facilities out of the area would not help improve its status. Paso could become known as producing a lot of poor quality wine.

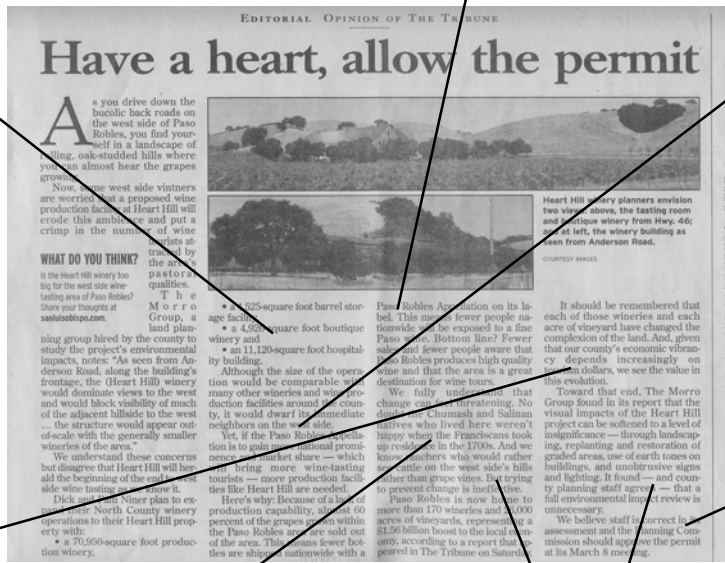
We believe staff is correct in its assessment and the Planning Commission should approve the permit at its March 8 meeting.

At its March 8 meeting, the Planning Commission rightly chose to continue the item in order to get more information on its impact to ground water supply and traffic safety, and its implications for local Williamson Act contracts.

And we know ranchers who would rather see cattle on the west side's hills rather than grape vines. But trying to prevent change is ineffective.

Understanding the impacts of a project is required under

the California Environmental Quality Act, and managing change is what land use planning is all about. The project will clearly have a negative impact on water supply, water quality, traffic, scenic resources and community character.



Classifieds

May issue ad deadline is **April 12**.
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

OUR MARCH APPEAL

Don't you love getting all those letters from worthy causes constantly appealing for funds? No, huh? Well, that's why the Chapter only sends you a letter once a year asking for financial assistance. We need the money to challenge bad development projects and policy proposals, advocate for clean energy, keep telling you about the great hikes and outdoor opportunities here, donate to wonderful land conservation projects like the Union Pacific properties and Brughelli Ranch, and bring you this newsletter every month.

If you already responded to our letter, thank you! If you haven't, any amount is welcome. Please think about the difference you can make, and what we could do if each of our members gave just \$100, once a year!

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.

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SEARCHING FOR CONNECTION
An Exploration of Trauma, Culture, and Hope
by Karen Merriam

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ISBN 0-9777334-3-2
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Truthsayer Press
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San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
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"Searching for Connection offers hope, inspiration, and meaning to those who have been traumatized, to family and friends of those touched by trauma, and to those who have dedicated their lives to helping the victimized and traumatized. Most importantly, it illustrates that one can endure with dignity and survive with meaning, even in the face of terrible experiences."

—Beverly Engel, M.F.T., psychotherapist and author of *Breaking the Cycle of Abuse*

Survival at the Edge of Experience

Karen Merriam's *Searching for Connection: An Exploration of Trauma, Culture, and Hope* delves into the heart of traumatic experience, where important connections to safety, hope, and strength are severed. Even in the darkness of traumatic events, however, personal and collective resources can be discovered and brought to bear to help oneself and others endure. Through a series of personal stories and case studies, Merriam develops a paradigm of traumatic experience that reveals the common factors that allow individuals to survive and to overcome nightmare experiences. Amazingly, survivors often discover within themselves untapped resources they have never known before.

The ten chapters of *Searching for Connection* build with cumulative authority and power, shining a search beam ever deeper into the abyss of traumatic experience. Merriam's exploratory approach will be especially appealing to readers who prefer to reach their own conclusions based on their unique strengths and wisdom. This is a groundbreaking study addressing a subject of profound significance, which all readers will profit from contemplating.

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FOUNDED 1892

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

photo/Dave Wicks

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.

April 1st, 2007, Sierra Club Special Event. Wildflowers will be involved more details to follow.

APRIL 1st, 0930, Sun. BIKE TOUR of WOODLANDS: We'll bicycle about 8 miles the roads & golf trails of this 'instant city'. Meet at junction of Willow & Albert Way. A "city" replacing a 1,000 acre "euke forest"—you have to see it to believe it—amazing. Who said water is limited on the mesa? Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

April 6, 7 & 8, Carrizo Plain Outing: Join our group for a weekend of either relaxing or hiking in one of our county's most precious places. Hopefully there will be some wildflowers to see. We will stay at Selby Camp or at the visitor center Friday, and Saturday nights. This is a public camp with no fees. It has no drinking water, so you must bring your own as well as your own food and camping gear. Saturday we will meet there at 9 AM to do a group hike to a yet to be determined place. Rain cancels. For more info call Carlos at 546-0317

APRIL 8th, 0930, Sun. BLACK LAKE CANYON Meet at junction of Leguna Negra & Guad. Rd. which is just north of Hwy #1 & Willow Rd. Dogs OK. An easy hike. We'll see a former lake, euke forest and oak woodland. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Sat., April 14th, 8:00 a.m. Machesna Mountain Hike: Come take a 12 – 15 mile, with 3000 foot elevation gain, hike through the Machesna Wilderness. Starting from American Canyon Camp-

ground, we will climb 1500 to an open meadow and pond below Machesna Mountain itself. After lunch we will climb another several hundred feet to a ridge over looking the Carrizo Plain. We will soon start our descent to a lush green valley, before climbing up to our final rest stop. We should have plenty of wildflowers, and pleasant weather. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes, and plan to be out all day. Some of us may go to the Pozo Saloon after if open. Meet at Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. This is not a beginner's hike. Limit 20 people. For details, reservations and meeting place call Gary (473-3694)(5F)

Sat.-Sun., April 14-15, Birds and Beat the Tamarisk. Service and carcamp. Help remove the invasive salt cedar on the wetlands along the shore of Owens Lake at the base of the spectacular eastern Sierra Nevada scarp. Work several hours each day, probably, and take time to enjoy the birds and scenic attractions. We'll car camp at Diaz Lake just south of Lone Pine where birds congregate. Then watch the migratory birds on the re-watered part of the Owens Lake. Can also visit the new Lone Pine Film History Museum and Manzanar N.M. Bring camping essentials (though motels are close), food, water, work clothes and gloves. Resource specialist: Mike Prather. For more information and to sign up for trip contact leaders: Cal and Letty French, 14140 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446. Prefer e-mail ccfrench@tcsn.net CNRCC/Santa Lucia Chap.

APRIL 15th, 0930, Sun. POINT SAL. Meet at west end of Brown Rd which is 2 miles south of Guadalupe. We'll hike 2.5 miles with 1K ft elevation change to ridge & then decide. Dogs OK. Bring lunch, water & windbreaker. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21 BIRDING ON OSO FLACO LAUNCH AT OSO FLACO: Oso Flaco is a small freshwater lake nestled in the Guadalupe Dunes. A stopover on the birding flyway we expect to find American bitterns, ruddy ducks, ring-neck ducks, white pelicans, Virginia rails, sora rails, and raccoons. NOTE: There is a parking fee of \$5.00 per car and a short portage from the parking area to the lake. We will help you portage your boats. Please allow an extra hour for the portage. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, binoculars and your picnic lunch that you can eat in your boat. LAUNCH OSO FLACO CAUSEWAY PUT IN 10:00 AM FOR DETAILS PLEASE CALL Joe Dickerson 693-9534

Sat., April 21, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Cambria History Walk: Learn how Cambria got its name and see some of Cambria's historic buildings. Enjoy the commentary from a long time Cambria resident. Meet across the street from the Olallieberry Inn, which is at 2476 Main St. Some of us may be going to lunch following the walk. For info, call Jesse at 927-3096

Sat., May 5, 7:30 a.m. Hike the Santa Lucia Trail to Pimkolam (Juniperro Serra) Peak. Join the leader on this annual hike to the highest peak in the northern Los Padres National Forest. This is a very strenuous hike and not for beginners. We will cover 12 miles and gain 3800 ft in elevation. We will begin hiking through a meadow with wonderful rock formations and then transition through a forest with blue oaks, followed by manzanita, chaparral, and finally a pine forest near the summit. The view from the top is fantastic and there is an old fire tower at the top. Bring plenty of water, lunch, snacks, and dress for the weather. The weather at the top can be unpredictable. Meet at the Las Tablas park and ride in Templeton which is just west of Highway 101

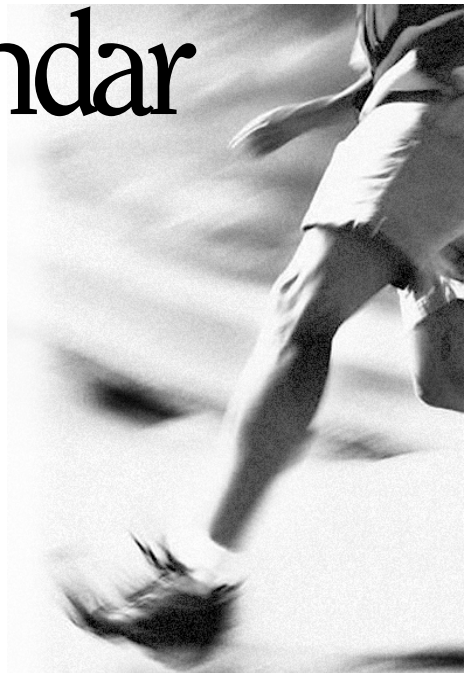


Photo by Joaquin Palting

at the Las Tablas exit in Templeton. Plan to be out all day. To confirm and obtain info, please call Chuck at 805-441-7597. (5F)

MAY 6, 0930, Sun. BIKE TOUR of WOODLANDS, We'll bicycle about 8 miles the roads & golf trails of this 'instant city'. Meet at junction of Willow & Albert Way. A "city" replacing a 1,000 acre "euke forest"—you have to see it to believe it—amazing. Who said water is limited on the mesa? Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Whales, Pinnipeds & Wildflowers: Channel Islands National Park



April 13-16 May 4-7 July 20-23 4-day, 4-island cruises visiting San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz & Anacapa Islands. \$775

August 25-29 September 15-19 5-day, 5-island cruises visiting all five islands included in Channel Islands National Park: San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa, & tiny Santa Barbara Island. \$925

All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. Prices include assigned bunk, All meals, snacks, beverages, & services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to help identify, seals & sea lions, birds & wildlife, plants & flowers, whales & other creatures of the sea. We'll also see remnants of the rich culture of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years.

Each island is unique & offers its own special charm: **San Miguel** for its white, sandy beaches and huge congregation of elephant seals; **Santa Rosa** for its rare Torrey Pine forest; **Santa Cruz** for high mountains, deep

valleys & the famous Painted Cave, **Anacapa** for the west coast brown pelican rookery, steep cliffs, a picturesque lighthouse and excellent snorkeling waters, **Santa Barbara Island** for pristine waters and a friendly colony of frolicking sea lions. All islands have rugged shorelines, dotted with sea caves, & inhabited by an abundance of wildlife. Activities include hiking, kayaking, snorkeling, beachcombing, or just relaxing at sea.

In spring the islands are ablaze with colorful wildflowers. In summer, the enticing, pristine waters of the Marine Sanctuary, churning with colorful fish and sea lions, will delight snorkelers and swimmers.

These cruises are fundraisers to benefit Sierra Club political programs in California. To make a reservation, send \$100 check payable to Sierra Club to leader Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, 91732. (626-443-0706; jholtzhl@aol.com). Website: www.truthaquatics.com/hiking.htm

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.