



SIERRA
CLUB

- 40 Years on the SLO Coast -
Santa Lucia Chapter
1968-2008

January 2008
Volume 45 No. 1

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General Meeting

Jan. 25:

**Let's Make Trade
Clean, Green and Fair:
An evening with the
SLO Fair Trade Coal-
ition and the Sierra
Club Responsible
Trade Committee.**

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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

Where's the Water?

"It's not wastewater until we waste it." So said Sarah Corbin of the Surfrider Foundation, co-sponsor with the Santa Lucia Chapter of the December 9 forum, "Where's the Water?" at the Elm Street Community Center in Arroyo Grande.

Corbin was joined by Heather Cooley of the Pacific Institute, Conner Everts of the Desal Response Group, and County Supervisor Jim Patterson, formerly the Water Conservation Manager for the Atascadero Mutual Water Company. The 3-hour community meeting covered a wide range of water issues, from water quality to conservation to recycling to desalination. The 50+ attendees included elected officials, water purveyors, planners, environmental activists and interested citizens.

"We had excellent representation from the cities & communities of Nipomo, Oceano, Morro Bay, Cambria, Pismo, Grover," said Santa Lucia Chapter Chair Karen Merriam, "including electeds, appointeds, managers & planners, also some engineering and development folks, and just plain citizens."

Los Osos and Cambria are both in water-related building moratoria (of sorts). Nipomo is considering a desalination facility to ease pressure on its depleted aquifer. State water deliveries are in decline and troubling new information is emerging about the Paso Robles aquifer (previously thought to be the only aquifer in the county not in a state of overdraft). The County is facing mounting pressure to safeguard, not squander, its water resources.

"Community meetings like this are critical to educate the community about its choices," said Everts, a former member of the Ojai Water Board. "Citizens need to know what their options are, and understand the true cost of those options."

One option for new water is desal, the focus of Cooley's presentation. "Desal is a reliable water source for drought-prone areas with abundant energy resources, such as the Middle East" said Cooley, "because desal is not dependent on seasonal weather cycles and the energy costs are very high." But she also pointed out that it has environmental and social costs, as well as being the most expensive method of providing water. "You can expect your water bills to increase substantially...and some people will not be able to afford them." The result? Coastal water for the rich; everyone else can move away. In addition, millions of fish larvae are destroyed by the ocean water intake systems, and the impacts of the brine-waste discharge have not been fully studied.

All speakers agreed that aggressive conservation measures are the most cost effective means of assuring water security for communities. And the most effective way to implement con-

servation is by adopting a "tiered rate structure" whereby users are charged a higher "per-gallon rate" for increased water use. This creates a financial incentive to conserve, and imposes a penalty on those who waste water or use it inefficiently.

Unlike Cambria, which has had a tiered rate structure in place for years, Nipomo does not. Michael Winn, President of the Nipomo Community Services District (NCSD), lamented the fact that the NCSD has twice considered such a

Attention Cambria, Nipomo, Oceano, Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande

A Delta Opportunity

By Peter Gleick, Pacific Institute,
www.pacinst.org

On August 31, a federal judge acknowledged what many people have long known — we have run up against the limits of our water supplies.

U.S. District Judge Oliver Wanger ruled that state and federal water managers must change how they operate California's water system to reduce



Conner Everts fields a question as Surfrider's Sarah Corbin and County Supervisor Jim Patterson look on.



Attention Los Osos

Smaller Scale, Bigger Concept

By David Venhuizen, P.E.

When I was asked to write an article on the decentralized concept of "waste" water management, the request was to offer a "... comparison of centralized and decentralized wastewater systems with the pros and cons of each." It strikes me that the most important, most practically dominant contrast is

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Focus the Nation: Jan. 31

On January 31st, Cal Poly will participate in the largest teach-in in America's history, "Focus the Nation: Global Warming Solutions for America."

As Focus the Nation is being held at Cal Poly, similar events will be held simultaneously at over one thousand other universities across the country.

The purpose of Focus the Nation is to spark a national discussion about climate change solutions. The event has been planned to take place directly before presidential primary elections in order to make climate change a key

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General Meeting

Santa Lucian • Jan. 2008



photo/Karen Wash

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

A Fair Trade Evening

Join us for updates from the SLO Fair Trade Coalition and the Sierra Club Responsible Trade Committee! Fair trade is based on principles of economic justice and environmental sustainability, market access for farmers, and using your purchasing power for social and economic transformation. Fair Trade organizations, backed by consumers, are actively engaged in supporting producers, raising awareness and campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.



7 p.m., Friday, January 25
St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 1334 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo
- Pismo Street entrance; parking lot off Pismo.

On the Rocks

Rough seas for the Coastal Commission & the coast

By Mark Massara, Director, Sierra Club Coastal Programs

The California Coastal Commission, after three decades of epic battles fought over beach access and shoreline protection involving tens of thousands of activists, billionaire developers, litigious critics and hostile politicians, is now facing the greatest threat to its existence: Its Coastal Commissioners.

For Commission-watchers, this is not new and no secret. Over the years, members of the Coastal Commission have run the gamut from passionate coastal advocates to full-blown development zealots to self-interested criminals. More than a few place their own ambitions ahead of their sworn oath to uphold the Coastal Act.

Today Commission appointments are, more than ever, the product of intense political lobbying. By law, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Senate Pro Tem Don Perata and Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez each have four appointments to the coastal panel, with one-half of the twelve representatives also to be locally elected public officials.

As property values have escalated wildly along the coast, so has the intensity of the lobbying amongst developers. Rather than just lobby sitting members of the Commission, developers have used campaign donations to Sacramento politicians in order to control and manipulate the composition of the Commission makeup itself.

The result is that the Commission is more and more composed of extremely wealthy, extremely narrowly focused pro-development individuals who more resemble the developers they supposedly regulate than the public they are charged with protecting.

Their recent decisions reflect these changes. On November 14, 2007, the Commission, led by Santa Barbara resident Dan Secord, gutted expert recommendations to protect wetlands at Bolsa Chica in Huntington Beach (Orange County) in order to facilitate additional housing for developer Shea Homes. Secord was so zealous on behalf of the developer that he said, in public, "I just want to delete the wetland so houses can be built there."

The next day, the Commission, led by San Diego City Councilman Ben Hueso, tossed out protections of public water supplies and future development and sprawl controls in order to allow construction of the largest industrial desalination facility in the western hemisphere by Poseidon Resources, privately owned by Wall Street investors. In the future, residents of the City of Carlsbad and San Diego County will drink water

owned by Poseidon only if they can afford it. Meanwhile, catastrophic impacts to coastal resources and ocean fisheries resulting from Poseidon's daily draw of 304 million gallons of seawater (to make 50 mgd of freshwater) will go on in perpetuity.

In the coming months, as developers rush forward to bring damaging projects before one of the most compliant and disinterested Commissions in the history of the Coastal Act, citizens might ask themselves, "How did the Coastal Act, once considered the premiere environmental law in the country, become so ineffective?" Or, "Why is my coastal neighborhood/favorite beach impossible to access, overcrowded, overdeveloped and polluted?"

The answer is that the Coastal Commission doesn't care about the 99.9% of the public who cannot afford to live directly on the beach or in coastal luxury enclaves and isn't interested in the long-term impacts of overdevelopment on and destruction of coastal resources. And the reason they don't care is that the appointing authorities in Sacramento – the Governor, the Senate leader and the Speaker of the Assembly— make Coastal Commission appointments on the basis of political contributions and campaign donations, not the future health of the coast and beach access. Lobbyists who regularly appear before the commission are now throwing fundraisers for commissioners seeking re-election to local office.

At the same time that Commission membership deteriorates, so does the state budget that funds the work of the Coastal Commission's expert staff. Governor Schwarzenegger, for all his pro-environment rhetoric, has cut the budget of the Commission every single year since he was elected to office. At this time, the Commission is facing the prospect of having to lay off more than a dozen core staff from its 120 employees, meaning fewer and fewer qualified planners will be able to evaluate and protect our coastline from thousands of new development and industrial energy and infrastructure proposals submitted. Do the math!

It is long past time to fix the breakdown of coastal protection in California. Our beautiful, rapidly vanishing coast is perhaps the best argument for campaign finance reform we will ever see. But if we don't get that reform soon, we won't be seeing that coast much longer. Tell the Governor that when the people of California passed the Coastal Act, we meant it.

SANTA LUCIAN

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Smart Growth: Lip Service or Substance?

By Eric Greening

It has been close to two years since the San Luis Obispo County Supervisors formally adopted the following "Smart Growth Principles:"

1. Preserve open space, scenic natural beauty, resources, and sensitive environmental areas. Conserve energy resources and protect agricultural land.
2. Strengthen, and direct development toward, existing communities.
3. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods and towns.
5. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
6. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
7. Encourage mixed land uses.
8. Take advantage of compact building design.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.

So far, the net result of the adoption of these principles has been hard to find. Most of the development that gets approved is notably *un*smart, and even programs supposedly designed to create smarter forms of development fail to embody the principles laid out here.

For example, our County's Transfer of Development Credits program has created five times more lots than it has retired, and not one of the new lots is smaller than an acre, nor in an incorporated city. Our Agricultural Cluster policies, intended to combat rural sprawl, have only succeeded in creating leap-frogged suburban neighborhoods in the midst of agricultural land.

Luckily, our County Planning Commission has embarked on a serious effort to have the "Smart Growth Principles" move beyond lip service, by holding a series of hearings to encode strategies embodying these principles into the Framework for Planning, giving them the standing of General Plan policies.

There are countless details to this, and despite the many times words like "should" and "where practicable" dilute the intent, that intent—to change the patterns we create on the land—is visible in many of the policies that are being discussed. To fit in a reasonable space, this article can't discourse on all of them, so we will focus on a single example to show the dynamics of the process: how seriously we intend to support public transit.

It is already standard practice to provide lip service to "transit oriented development," and to mitigate the traffic impacts of larger projects by requiring the applicants to provide the amenities for a transit stop. The problem with relying on this mitigation is that it does not support the presence of buses to actually serve this stop; that is a matter of ongoing *operating* funding, which is not supported by the sort of one-time effort that can be completed prior to issuance of a building permit.

Transit's primary source of operating revenue is TDA, an acronym for the Transportation Development Act, part of the California Public Utilities Code. By this law, 1/4 of a cent of the sales tax collected in any jurisdiction is intended, once 2% is taken off the top for bike-ways, for support of public transit. This is clear from the legislative intent: "The fostering, continuance, and development of public transportation systems are a matter of state concern. Excessive reliance on the private automobile for transportation has caused air pollution and traffic congestion in California's urban areas, and such pollution and congestion are not confined to single

incorporated areas but affect entire regions." (Public Utilities Code Section 99220.)

However, for more rural counties, the option of diverting some of the money to road maintenance was added to the legislation to gain votes from rural lawmakers. This loophole is extensively used in San Luis Obispo County, with the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay being the only jurisdictions to use all applicable TDA funds for transit. Other jurisdictions, including the county, use half or more of the money

on roads, and the county claims its road needs are so pressing that this source is an essential part of its road budget. It is true that funds for road maintenance are scarce, but we also need to recognize that projects to add capacity to the road system are even more expensive than maintenance, and are necessitated by continuing growth in vehicle miles traveled, which is increasing much faster than population, in part because the transit option is too poorly funded to have the frequency and hours of operation to make it viable for most com-

muters and other travelers. To reduce vehicle miles traveled, the true cost of roads needs to be faced when one buys a car or puts a key in the ignition, not externalized onto other sources. In this regard, we have been moving backwards. Gasoline taxes are an ever smaller percentage of the price of gasoline, and chopping the vehicle license fee by 2/3 was Schwarzenegger's first act on becoming governor. The responsibility for enlarging roads has been passed

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Worse than Nothing

In the end, after five years and hundreds of hours of public meetings and testimony, hundreds more hours of work by planning staff and planning commissioners, GPS surveys and computer simulations, three men on the County Board of Supervisors threw it all away.

On November 27, Supervisors Achadjian, Ovitt and Lenthall tossed out the common sense compromise ordinance that would have created some level of protection for the 53 square miles of oak woodlands and rangeland known as the Cayucos Viewshed. They substituted a toothless sham ordinance that declared open season on the viewshed.

Supervisor Jim Patterson was the voice of reason, stating, when it was clear that his three colleagues were going for the privately drafted special-interest ordinance from Protect Our Property Rights (POPR), "my concern is we are not doing our job." The Planning Commission's draft, he noted, "truly accomplishes the objective without impacting the landowners involved. It

exempts agricultural operations. [The Planning Commission's ordinance] simply applies a regulation that would have to be followed in the event they couldn't build a *residence* anywhere on the property but on a ridgeline, and

staff and the Commissioners, Supervisor Harry Ovitt made the observation that "We would not have Hearst Castle" if we'd had viewshed protections back when William Randolph H. was building his dream.

Supervisor Jerry Lenthall attempted to polish up the apple of pragmatism and his image as a reasonable centrist. "Having some protection," he said, "is better than no protection."

He was wrong. This ordinance is less than the minimal standards it replaces. Previously, the County had the ability, on a case by case basis, dependent on findings, to require that structures be screened completely, or relocated to avoid silhouetting. The

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Testimony of the Sierra Club

Good afternoon. My name is Andrew Christie, I am chapter director for the Sierra Club in San Luis Obispo. Speaking on behalf of our 2,500 members in the county, you have something of a dilemma on your hands.

Supervisors Achadjian, Ovitt and Lenthall voted to send a very different ordinance to the Planning Commission. In doing so, you ignored the planning process, the advice of county counsel, planning staff, and the majority of citizens testifying before you over the last two years in order to vote for the least protective ordinance. Supervisor Lenthall then used his chairmanship to block the Planning Commission's request for adequate time for review. Because the Commission managed a heroic feat of schedule shifting, it was able to craft and unanimously pass a viewshed protection ordinance worthy of the name, correcting the glaring flaws in what you set before them.

Here's the problem: Since the three of you chose to do a service for land speculators and future developers interested in putting development where development should not be, you will have some explaining to do either way: If you do the right thing and pass this ordinance as amended by the Planning Commission, with no attempts to shrink it or weaken it, you can then explain to your constituents why you originally did the wrong thing — that is, why did you do the bidding of those making arguments about takings of property and impacts to agriculture from an ordinance that is not a taking and would have no, repeat no, impacts on agricultural operations. Or you could vote for POPR's latest, or vote to keep this ordinance as the answer to a real estate speculator's prayer, which was what you passed last August.

The Sierra Club is a public interest organization. We have been ungentle with you three gentlemen on this issue because we serve the public interest and we sense that you do not. You have been serving special interests. Your actions on this issue have sharply clarified that distinction, and the problem, in the minds of many people in this county who may not have fully grasped it until now. For providing that public education we thank the three of you, and we thank Supervisor Patterson, planning staff and the Planning Commission for providing an example of responsible land use planning and a picture of what service to the public interest looks like.

Thank you.

- Board of Supervisors meeting
County Government Center, SLO
Nov. 27, 2007

then it triggers standards. It doesn't prevent, it just sets standards.

"We are not protecting the viewshed with either of the two POPR ordinances," Patterson said.

In throwing out the work of planning

The Vandal Vote

Between the evening of the Cayucos Viewshed vote on November 27 and the following morning, someone cut the ropes holding the Sierra Club sign at our office and dismantled the "solar butterfly" beneath it. Comes with the territory.

Two weeks later, our permanent sign -- mounted on posts, in concrete -- was installed.



What Makes Harry Wary?

"Hearing the Sierra Club talk about special interests... kinda like the pot calling the kettle.... Well."

- Supervisor Harry Ovitt
Cayucos Viewshed ordinance hearing
Nov. 27, 2007

Dear Supervisor Ovitt,

At your Nov. 27 meeting, in response to the testimony of Santa Lucia Chapter Director Andrew Christie, you became audibly confused over the difference

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A Gift for the Carrizo Plain Pronghorn

By Louise "Letty" French

For years, the Santa Lucia Chapter and the Sierra Club's California Nevada Regional Conservation Committee have sponsored weekend "Antelope Protection Car Camps" – nature study/work parties at the Carrizo Plain National Monument in which our members remove miles of obsolete barbed wire fence to allow pronghorn antelope access to water and grazing areas. Here's how it went last December.

The bone-chilling wind drove right through sweats and polypro clothing as

a dozen volunteers waited for a radio to direct our next move. We had stopped in a swale on the American ranch overlooking the vastness of the Carrizo Plain. Cal and Doug had driven ahead on the tenuous dirt road to try to find the closest approach to that elusive fence. I held that foreign object of a radio, which finally spoke, "Come on here" Around the big curve and over the hill, there was the BLM truck.

We grabbed wire cutters, universal fence tools and post pullers and trudged up the ridge to that last section of



Pronghorn can't jump, so we do this (left) for them (right).

fence. We needed to pull it down; we could see the animal trails along side it where it interfered with their migratory pattern. With the strong incentive to work hard to keep warm and the desire to destroy this fence, this amazing group of 14 volunteers took care of that section in less than 2 hours. Rolled up barbed wire and heavy T-poles were left in neat piles about every 30 yards. Doug Wreden, our volunteer BLM resource person, stated that he would collect them with his ATV which saved us a lot of heavy carrying. As we finished lunch a shower came down from the black cloud overhead; we piled into the cars.

What's next? Doug had the job: a quarter mile of hog wire at the Washburn Center which he had needed out for a long time. Hog wire is nasty stuff. It's a square mesh of heavy wire sunk about 6 – 12 inches in the ground and deeply anchored to T-poles. Our group set to work. Many of them had never seen hog wire and exclamations warmed the air at the difficulty of freeing it from the T-poles. Well, maybe half an hour later, we had that bottom half of the fence neatly rolled up and carried over to the maintenance shack. In a few days it would be loaded onto a dump truck and taken to the steel recycling station in Taft.

Got anything else, Doug? Sure. Back up the road 6 miles to the Sprague road. Here we took down the bottom 2 wires of maybe half a mile of fence. When that is done, the pronghorn neatly slip under the fence and barely break stride. Eventually, Doug will get a smooth wire laid along the stretch which will be 18 inches above the ground. That keeps the cattle (what cattle?) and the ATVers on the road. So, it's now 3:45 and Doug has run out of suggestions. We laid a few plans for Sunday. We'll do one more section that Doug has his eye on. Those who want to work can work; those who want to play can play.

Ouch, it was cold! We pulled up to our site in Selby camp, parked the camper so it shielded the campfire from the wind, and immediately started the campfire. Next came happy hour. When darkness fell, the wind died and the heat from discarded oak logs spread out to warm us. Lots of good food and good conversation along with some chocolate and libation sent everyone to bed tired and happy.

Sunday dawned clear, sunny, and cold. We met Doug at the Visitors' Center again and drove towards the American ranch. Here was a long stretch of fence just begging to be modified. We yanked the bottom wires off rapidly – cut the loop of holding wire or knock out the clip of the pole. Old rotten wire and T-poles give up rather easily. By now, the sun had warmth and we were ready to go. But.... Doug had run out of work! OK, time to play!

Craig Deutsche lead us on an easy walk to some very interesting areas

where we explored. One big rock was pockmarked with holes up the face overlooking the plain.

We could clearly see 4 raptors nests. All were empty this time of year. Underneath one I picked up owl pellets with intact little mice and kangaroo rat skulls. Fascinating.

Finally, it was time to leave. As we came down the road from Selby camp, there, close on our right beside Soda Lake road was a herd of about a dozen pronghorn. They

were alertly watching us, and the faint breeze seemed to carry their message, "Thank you so very much."

Their thanks go to Doug Wreden, BLM maintenance manager, who took over at the last minute for our work party. Our volunteers came from all over: Eric Rorer from Mill Valley, Jane and George Collier from Oakland, Jim VerSteege from Porterville, Glenn Gregg from Santa Cruz, Tony Loftin from Sacramento, Sid Silliman from Upland, Alice Bond from San Francisco, Greg Frugoli from Cambria, Joan O'Keefe from Atascadero, Jason Hashmi and Craig Deutsche from Los Angeles. They braved rain and cold and did a fantastic job.



photos: Eric Rorer

Letters

send to: sierra8@charter.net, or P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. Letters may be edited for space.

The recent article in the Santa Lucian "A Chicken in Every Pot? A Car in Every Back Yard?" (Nov./Dec.), blames animal agriculture as a major cause of global warming. The facts quoted, from a United Nations study, are largely erroneous. The article is clearly written as propaganda for a vegetarian diet. I suggest that you give our members a more balanced view.

Most of our members have enjoyed the wonderful wildflower displays along Shell Creek Road in years of good rainfall. This area has been grazed by cattle and earlier by sheep for about one hundred and forty years, yet it still produces this natural wonder and is the habitat of many wild creatures, including deer, bears, lions, wild pigs, eagles, hawks and others. In addition, we pay taxes on it. Take away the right to graze cattle and we could no longer afford to keep it. The land would have to be sold, to become houses and ranchettes. I fail to see how this would achieve the purpose for which the Sierra Club exists.

Jim Sinton
Shandon

Would that all livestock operations were run like the Sintons' Avenales Cattle Company, which retains grasslands and planting oak trees, thereby creating carbon sinks that amount to something close to a wash for the carbon emissions their operations create. The Sintons are genuinely good stewards of the land — and should be getting paid for it. As the thoroughly peer-reviewed report of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Livestock's Long Shadow, concludes: "improving the resource use efficiency of livestock production can reduce environmental impacts.... A top priority is to achieve prices and fees that reflect the full economic and environmental costs, including all externalities.... Payment for environmental services is an important framework, especially in relation to extensive grazing systems: herders, producers and landowners can be paid for specific environmental services such as regulation of water flows, soil conservation, conservation of natural landscape and wildlife habitats, or carbon sequestration. Provision of environmental services may emerge as a major purpose of extensive grassland-based production systems."

"Livestock's Long Shadow" studied the impacts of intensive livestock production – to be found in the midwest and southern U.S., East Asia, Central America, etc. Industrial livestock production, consisting in the U.S. of huge

Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and a handful of brokers controlling the markets, is what is causing the loss of biodiversity, land degradation, and the air and water pollution that marks the predominant reality of animal agriculture today. Additionally, as the UN report notes, much of the livestock sector's significant contribution to global warming and impacts on the world's water supply are the result of industrial feed crop production. If this unsustainable system were to collapse tomorrow, small, local, grass-fed beef operations like the Sintons' would continue, and thrive.

The decision to identify GE (genetically engineered) and traditional corn grown at the Avila Valley Barn ("SLO's GMOs," Nov./Dec.) came about in part because of constructive, respectful dialogue primarily between [Chapter Director] Andrew Christie, [Chapter Chair] Karen Merriam and me. Hopefully, others will follow this example encouraged by the Sierra Club.

The Avila Valley Barn has an off-season goal to implement additional information regarding the produce it grows and purchases from other local farmers, including sprayed, non-sprayed, organic and traditionally grown. Hopefully, county of origin identification can also be added. In the U.S. there is significant and so far effective resistance to even labeling country of origin on agricultural products ranging from apple juice (more than 70 percent from China) to dried apricots (80 percent from Turkey). American-grown produce is tightly regulated and all pesticides must be permitted and their applications reported monthly. Many new "soft" pesticides are now being used by both traditional and organic farmers in the U.S. This is not so in other countries. All U.S. farm organizations have supported country of origin labeling but so far resistance on the part of organized retailers and others have prevented this implementation.

I do believe that the most flavorful, nutritious and safe produce comes from local family-operated farms. Supporting locally grown agricultural products benefits both the community and the environment.

The Avila Valley Barn is committed to this concept and will be doing more to inform customers about the produce we offer.

John DeVincenzo, D.D.S.
San Luis Obispo

Maybe even better: Mileage labels. ("This food traveled xxx miles to reach you.")

What Becomes a Monument Most

A public planning process for the preparation of a new Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Carrizo Plain National Monument is underway. On December 5, the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Wilderness Society, California Wilderness Coalition, Western Watersheds Project, Center for Biological Diversity and Los Padres ForestWatch sent a letter to the Bureau of Land Management noting that the BLM's laws, regulations and policies must be applied within the priorities established by the Monument Proclamation, and that those priorities mean a new approach to grazing must be considered as part of the preparation of the new RMP for the Carrizo Plain National Monument

A study underway on the Monument is providing direct indications of the negative effects of grazing on the Monument and also shows that grazing is not a successful strategy for management of weeds or other types of vegetation management. These results are even more important for considering long-term grazing lease renewals. The results from the study on the Monument, taken in conjunction with the existing body of scientific research, underscore the importance of maintaining maximum flexibility in managing grazing on the Monument. Unless or until grazing can be shown to be consistent with protecting the Monument's natural resources, the BLM should limit any commitments to long-term grazing on the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Nuclear waste could travel through SLO,” by David Sneed, *The Tribune*, Dec. 9, 2007
 “PG&E CEO says U.S. future is nuclear,” by David Whitney, *The Tribune*, Dec. 16, 2007

Summary: The Department of Energy is considering shipping Diablo Canyon’s high-level nuclear waste through San Luis Obispo en route to its final resting place in Nevada. Meanwhile, PG&E’s CEO Peter Darbee maintains that Diablo Canyon is essential to fight global warming.



Dec. 9 More interesting than the content of the second article was its timing relative to the first one. The interview with Darbee is actually a reprint from the business section of the Nov. 18 *San Francisco Chronicle*. One week after a disturbing news story about Diablo Canyon’s radioactive waste hit the front page of the *Tribune*’s highest circulation Sunday edition, the old-news Darbee interview from the *Chronicle* reappeared on the front page of the *Tribune* the following Sunday.

Upshot: McClatchy News Service and reporter David Whitney have become CEO Darbee’s eager stenographers whenever the PG&E chief feels a hankering to say something nice about nukes (see “Nuclear power vs. global warming,” *Tribune*, Jan. 18, 2007). In November the Darbee interview was originally delivered to McClatchy’s papers as Congress was deliberating over Sen. Pete Domenici’s 100-percent loan guarantees to utilities that build nuclear power plants; a \$50 billion taxpayer-funded safety net. (Domenici received \$12,500 from PG&E’s Employees Political Action Committee.) In December, the McClatchy interview was summoned to soothe SLO folks who had just gotten a personal reminder of nuclear power’s permanent downside and presumably needed to be told: Resistance is Futile!

I believe that nuclear power will have to be among the solutions that we will need to pursue to meet those targets [of 80 percent reduction of carbon emissions by 2050].

“We do not support construction of new nuclear reactors as a means of addressing the climate

crisis. Available renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are faster, cheaper, safer and cleaner strategies for reducing greenhouse emissions than nuclear power.”

- Statement signed by 515 U.S. and international organizations, December 17, 2007

Q: How many nuclear plants are we talking about?
 A: I don’t have an estimate. It is a very substantial number of new plants by 2050.

It is, in fact, an impossible number of new plants: About 1,500 according to an MIT study, at a cost of over a trillion dollars and with no place to store the waste, would be needed to make a significant reduction in global warming emissions. “It is clear

that nuclear power is not helpful at addressing the climate crisis. Indeed, because of its high costs, long construction times, and its own considerable carbon footprint, its use would actually make matters much worse by diverting the resources necessary to take genuinely effective steps to end carbon emissions.” (- Michael Mariotte, executive director, Nuclear Information and Resource Service.)

It would be hard to meet the [state’s] 2050 [clean energy generation] goal without Diablo Canyon—and a lot more nuclear plants across the country.... We will do all we can to continue to run [Diablo] safely and reliably at a high level of efficiency.

In the unlikely event that California allows PG&E to file for a license extension, current renewals are for 20 years. Diablo Canyon’s licenses

expire in 2023 and 2025. Even with an extension, both reactors will be shut down by 2050. How can Diablo Canyon be part of the solution five years after its license expires? Is Mr. Darbee seriously trying to convince California ratepayers that PG&E can safely operate nuclear reactors 80 years after they were originally designed in the 1960s?

Focus the Nation

continued from page 1

issue during the race for the presidency. At Cal Poly, the day-long teach-in will feature presentations and panel discussions by two dozen faculty and staff experts in various fields including physics, biology, architecture, engineering, agriculture, business, economics, psychology and religious studies. All are open to the public free of charge.

Focus the Nation will conclude with a workshop on the public policy issues associated with climate change solutions. The workshop will feature a non-partisan examination of the 2008 Presidential candidates’ plans for climate change solutions from Cal Poly Political Science professors. It will culminate with keynote speeches from Congresswoman Lois Capps and State Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee during which students will have the opportunity to engage with visiting local, state, and federal representatives.

Additional Focus the Nation events include a Green Job Fair and Trade Show, an art display and installation, a dinner for university officials and elected officials, and “The 2% Solution,” a national webcast taking place on the night of January 30th featuring Stanford

Climate Scientist Stephen Schneider, sustainability expert Hunter Lovins and green jobs pioneer Van Jones.

“Focus the Nation: Global Warming Solutions for America” is being organized at Cal Poly by the Empower Poly Coalition, the coalition of sustainability related clubs and organizations on campus. Santa Lucia Sierra Club Chapter leader and Cal Poly English professor Steven Marx has been integral to the creation of the event. “Steven worked hard to secure Congresswoman Capps and Sam Blakeslee as keynote speakers,” said event co-director Chad Worth. “He also has been helping compile educational materials for professors to use in their classrooms and a lot more.”

For more information about the local events visit the website: <http://focusthenationslo.pbwiki.com> For information about the national movement on over 1100 campuses, visit <http://www.focusthenation.org> For information in person, contact Chad Worth, Co-director, Focus the Nation and President, Empower Poly Coalition, at focusthenationslo@gmail.com or (925) 595-5539.

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The Year in Review

Your Chapter at work in 2007

In January...

The latest round in a 20-year development fight began when the sixteen-pound Santa Margarita Ranch Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) hit the table with a hollow thud and a record-breaking eleven "Class One" unmitigatable impacts – a catalog of the irreplaceable loss of mature oaks, groundwater, air quality and more if developers Rossi, Filippini and Wittstrom get all they want in the course of plowing under the largest privately owned valley oak savannah in the state for subdivisions, wineries, golf course, dude ranch, convention center, etc. The Chapter joined with Santa Margarita Area Residents Together (SMART) and other concerned citizens in demanding, and getting, the recirculation of a revised EIR, as this one did not address significant areas of new information. Onward.

Chapter Director Andrew Christie and environmental attorney Babak Naficy slammed the brakes on the proposed purchase of 584 acres of currently leased County land in the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area by State Parks when they pointed out to the county Planning Commission that the land in question was supposed to be a "buffer" area, not a riding area, according to the county's certified Local Coastal Program. The Commission agreed and reversed the approval of the Planning Director. The deal that had been quietly proceeding on greased rails in order to secure permanent use of the land as an off-road vehicle sacrifice zone was suddenly making local front-page headlines. Our successful appeal triggered four frantic appeals of the Planning Commission's decision, a task force, a series of town hall meetings and massive local resistance to the sale, greatly raising the profile of the issue. The Board upheld the Planning Commission's decision that the sale would not be in conformity with the General Plan. The off-roaders sued. Negotiations are ongoing.

At our general meeting, Cal Poly profs Hamilton Leong and Matt Ritter clued in attendees to the facts on eucalyptus and the deficiencies of the County's cut-'em-all-down-and-let-God-sort-it-out removal policy.

Both agreed to assist in drafting standards for preservation or removal in the update of the county's Conservation Element.

With the Chapter's informational and financial assistance, the Coastal Law Enforcement Action Network sued the Coastal Commission for allowing PG&E to replace the defective steam generators at Diablo Canyon without requiring mitigation of the additional 20 to 40 years of damage that will be done to marine wildlife and their habitat by a nuclear power plant on Diablo Cove.

Our Conservation Chair, Pam Heatherington, stepped down to fill a seat on the Atascadero City Planning Commission, thus becoming part of the refreshing change in the political wind

in north county.

In February...

The California Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision for the Sierra Club and co-appellants in *Vineyard Area Citizens v. City of Rancho Cordova*, with ramifications for planning and development statewide. The Court revoked the approval of an 18,000-home suburban Sacramento development because the County Board of Supervisors approved construction despite a failure to prove long-term water supply.

Our appeal of the Cambria Community Services District's ill-starred San Simeon Beach desal project nearly prevailed at the monthly meeting of the California Coastal Commission. Commissioner Katcho Achadjian delayed a denial by requesting a continuance. We relayed concerns to the Commission over the condition of the native vegetation under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Parks at Oceano Dunes that resulted in an investigation and mapping of the vegetation islands at the dunes.



At our February General Meeting, Walter Robie showed his multimedia presentation, "Treasures of Glen Canyon and Alaska Wilderness."

In March...

The proposed County AgTourism Events ordinance began making the rounds of local advisory councils, and the Chapter helped sound the alarm on this extraordinarily expansionist policy for many more "special events" with unlimited attendance on rural and ag land throughout the county's unincorporated area and no regard for impacts on infrastructure or neighbors, or what such events might

have to do with agriculture.

In April...

Following a year of meetings with Chapter staff and volunteer leaders, the Board of Directors of the SLO Chamber of Commerce voted to "take a leadership role in building consensus for a national marine sanctuary along the central coast."

An historic win: Sierra Club's Great Coastal Places Campaign helped mobilize opposition to the proposed Malibu/Oxnard Liquefied Natural Gas terminal. More than 3,500 project opponents turned out at the April 9 meeting of the State Lands Commission, the best-attended environmental hearing in California in 40 years. Faced with such overwhelming opposition, the Commission

voted not to allow the dirty and dangerous terminal off our coast, and was shortly joined in a united front by the Coastal Commission and the Governor.

The Chapter received a plaque from the City of San Luis Obispo and SLO Land Conservancy in recognition of its role as a major donor in the acquisition of the Brughelli ranch and three Union Pacific properties below the Cuesta Grade. The Chapter's contribution helped the Collaborative Conservation Project preserve the headwaters of Stenner and Chorro Creeks and keep the 390-acre Brughelli Ranch in agriculture.

Our fundraiser "Flora! A Celebration of Nature and Art" at the Santa Margarita and Sinton ranches, was a hit with attendees.

"Development Hot Spots" was the topic of our March and April general meetings.



In May...

The Chapter secured \$2,150 in grant funding from the Sierra Club Chapter & Group Educational Project to assist the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility in its "nuclear decommissioning project," heading off the rub-

ber-stamp renewals of operating licenses for nuclear power plants.

After year of pressure from the Santa Lucia Chapter, Surfrider, Natural Resources Defense Council, Otter Project and others, Morro Bay and Cayucos vote to bring their wastewater treatment plant up to the standards of the Clean Water Act and further upgrade to the highest level of treatment – tertiary – which produces reusable water.

Supervisor Jerry Lenthall's "Fossil Point Advisory Committee" was abruptly shut down by the developer-paid facilitator when it became clear that most of the local citizens on the committee didn't want the bluffs above Avila Beach to be developed and preferred they remain open space. The Tribune headlined its May 18 story of the committee shut-down: "Citizens group called a front for builders." Back in March, when the Tribune was still praising Lenthall's efforts to quarterback private development via his Fossil Point group, the Santa Lucian had noted that the committee was an example of focus groups "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."

On June 7, the Chapter and several other environmental organizations attended a meeting in Morro Bay with the Los Osos Wastewater Project Technical Advisory Committee, County Public Works, the Chumash Tribe and The TAC Environmental Working Group called the meeting to ensure that the environmental community was involved and engaged in the effort to create a wastewater treatment solution that best addresses pollution of the estuary and depletion of the aquifer.

It was a month of special recognition for several Chapter stalwarts: Outings Leader Gary Felsman won the Chapter's Kathleen Goddard Jones award; Darlene Felsman, co-creator of the San Luis Obispo County Trail Guide, won the



Guests admire the brand new solar panel array at the home of Chapter Chair Karen Merriam at our June potluck picnic with Los Padres ForestWatch.

Chapter's Starshine Award; Ken Smokoska received the Empower Poly Coalition's Agent of Change award; Dirk and Bonnie Walters won the SLO County Community Foundation's award for Sustained Environmental Contribution.

In July...

The Chapter officially took up residence in its new abode at 547-B Marsh Street.

The county Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA) take-back program went into effect -- one of the first in the state to supply drop boxes at re-

tain outlets for batteries and fluorescent lights. Teddy Llovet of Bulbs Across America persuaded IWMA to affix warning labels to all the drop-off boxes cautioning against breakage of fluorescents due to their mercury content.

In August...

The Central Coast Regional Energy Planning Conference at Cal Poly brought together for the first time representatives from local governments – mayors, planners, supervisors, city managers, etc. – to talk about energy policy. The leap forward for regional planning was sponsored by the Strategic Energy Alliance for Change, co-founded by the Santa Lucia Chapter in 2005.

On August 21, the aggressively pro-development majority on the County Board of Supervisors, after two years and six continuances, arrived at the



Things to come for the Cayucos Viewshed: Multiply by a couple hundred.

worst possible decision and the least protective ordinance for the Cayucos Viewshed, the 53 square miles of oak woodland and ranch lands between Highway 1 and Paso Robles. The board majority broke with their legal counsel, their Planning Commissioners, County planning staff and the basic requirements of the planning process in order to deliver the goods to their backers. The Chapter called them on it, pointing out at the August 21 hearing, and in the *Santa Lucian*, in an op ed in *New Times* and in an interview with Chapter Director Andrew Christie on KVEC's Dave Congleton Show, that the board majority is clearly in the pocket of land speculators and the real estate lobby.

In September...

The California Coastal Commission upheld our appeal of the Cambria Community Services District's proposal to drill desalination wells on San Simeon State Beach, an impermissible commercial use of public lands.

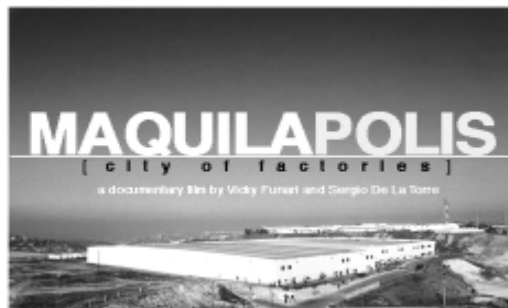


Rochelle Becker receives her award and congratulations from Sierra Club President Robby Cox.

Rochelle Becker won the Sierra Club's Environmental Alliance award in recognition of her work raising awareness of issues related to nuclear power. One of 24 national award winners, Becker received her award at the September 29 banquet at which Al Gore received the John Muir Award, the Club's highest honor, in recognition of his 30 years of effort to make the world aware of the dangers of global warming.

The Chapter hosted a SLO Steynberg Gallery screening of the documentary *Maquilapolis: City of Factories* with the SLO Fair Trade Coalition and HopeDance.

Audience members learned about the labor and environmental problems caused by free trade agreements and signed up for the Sierra Club Responsible Trade Committee's border tour of San Diego-Tijuana and the maquiladoras.



The Chapter submitted comments to the Local Agency Formation Commission on the ability of the Oak Park aquifer to sustain the proposed 300-home Los Robles Del Mar development in unincorporated Arroyo Grande and its

annexation to the City of Pismo Beach, which would then get to stick its straw into the development's new wells in support of its own future development. The EIR made a string of false assumptions based on omitted or inaccurate data which overestimated the amount of water in the deep aquifer, underestimated the amount of pumping from the aquifer, ignored impacts on streams, springs and wetlands, and assessed future water demands as though the area were a still-life painting rather than a complex ecosystem surrounded by planned development projects. LAFCO postponed the scheduled hearing to January 13.

The Sierra Club, Surfrider and SLO Green Build shared a room at the Sept. 29 Los Osos Wastewater Treatment

Project Open House at Los Osos' Sunnyvale Elementary School. We spent the day discussing with attendees, Supervisors and Public Works staff the notion of

wastewater as a resource to be utilized rather than a pollutant to be disposed of, and recycling as a way to reduce use and demand, and saltwater intrusion into the aquifer.

Representatives of Sierra Club, Los Osos CSD, County Public Works, Surfrider, the County Board of Supervisors, and SLO Green Build got together at the Sept. 29 Los Osos Wastewater Treatment Project open house.



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In October...

The Chapter submitted comments to the U.S. Army outlining the devastating impacts to air, water, and cultural resources of Monterey County should the Army proceed with the proposed expansion of Fort Hunter Liggett to base a Brigade Combat Team. In December, the Secretary of the Army told Congressman Sam Farr that Hunter Liggett will no longer be considered for a Brigade Combat Team.

In November...

The second "Step it Up" event, nationwide community rallies challenging politicians to go beyond saying the right words about global warming to actually

doing the work to transform our energy economy, transpired on November 3. In SLO, the Chapter assisted Dawn Hutchinson in putting together the local rally. "Screwing in a light bulb is important," said national Step it Up organizer Bill McKibben, "screwing in a new federal policy to deal with climate change is crucial, especially if we're ever going to regain enough credibility to help lead the world toward a stable climate."



The *Santa Lucian* broke the story of the Avila Barn's labeling bins of Bt corn, which is genetically engineered to produce an insecticide. It was the first known labeling of genetically engineered crops in the United States, which was the result of more than a year of discussions between the Chapter and Avila Barn proprietor John DiVincenzo. The *Tribune* picked up the story a few weeks later, minus any mention of the Sierra Club's role.

A nuclear initiative bites the dust: State Assemblyman Chuck DeVore, proponent of a ballot measure to repeal California's 1976 nuclear safeguards act — which prohibits new reactors until there is a permanent solution to the problem of disposal of high level radioactive waste — quietly withdrew his proposed initiative from circulation. Apparently having trouble getting sufficient signatures to qualify, and enough financial backing and public support to pass, DeVore's backers pulled the plug. San Luis Obispo's own Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility had a lot to do with organizing the opposition. Bill Magavern, Senior Representative for Sierra Club California, said "California has much cheaper, safer and quicker solutions to our electricity needs. We should be moving forward with 21st-century clean energy technologies instead of pouring more money down the nuclear rathole."



In December...

On December 1, we co-sponsored the "Sustainability Seduces" concert in Cayucos with Surfrider and SLO Green Build, an all-day music fest that raised money for public education on sustainable technologies. On December 9, "Where's the Water?" (see page 1) became the first educational forum to come out of that venture.

Three days later, the Cambria CSD's desal plan received its final rejection from the Coastal Commission.

Chapter Election Returns

Thanks to members who took the time to vote in our Chapter's Executive Committee election. Here are the election results and appointments for the year 2008:

- Karen Merriam, elected Dec. 2007 for a second three-year term
- Judith Bernstein, elected Dec. 2007 for a first three-year term
- Jack Morrow, appointed Dec. 2007 to fill a two-year vacancy

Continuing ExCom members:

- Cleve Nash, elected Dec. 2006, 1st three-year term
- Cal French, elected Dec. 2005, 1st three-year term
- Steven Marx, elected Dec. 2005, 1st three-year term
- John Ashbaugh, appointed Dec. 2006 to fill a two-year vacancy

On December 8, 2007, the 2008 Executive Committee made the following decisions:

ExCom meetings will be held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. in the Chapter office, except March 18 (3rd

Tues.). Chapter members welcome.

Officers elected by ExCom:

- Karen Merriam, Chair
- Jack Morrow, Vice Chair
- Steven Marx, Treasurer
- Cal French, Council of Club Leaders delegate
- John Ashbaugh, member
- Cleve Nash, member
- Judith Bernstein, member
- (Recording Secretary - Letty French)

Committee Chair appointments:

- Conservation: Sue Harvey
- Political: John Ashbaugh and Richard Kranzdorf
- Outings: Gary Felsman
- Legal: Andy Greensfelder
- Membership: Cal French
- Nominations & Awards: Letty French
- Fundraising: Steven Marx and Judith Bernstein

Other appointments:

- Chapter Historian: John Ashbaugh
- Nuclear Task Force: Rochelle Becker
- Water Issues Task Force: Jack Morrow

Where's the Water?

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ity, which will cost its ratepayers millions of dollars, rather than raise rates for those who are consuming more than their fair share of water.

"I was shocked to learn that," said County Planning Commissioner Sarah Christie. "I have heard NCSA representatives say they have no other option left to them other than desal, but clearly their limitations are based on political constraints, not engineering or natural constraints. They have better, more economic options available to them."

One attendee from Nipomo said "The elephant in the room is the fact that the more water we make available, either from conservation, reclamation or desal, will be made available for new growth. We have to do a better job of linking land use decisions to water availability."

Reclamation, or water recycling, is another way for individuals or entire communities to get every last drop of use out of their water resources. Cooley discussed home graywater systems that irrigate landscape using water from sinks, showers and washing machines, and fully developed community wastewater treatment facilities that purify urban wastewater and recharge the groundwater basin. "You have to get over the 'ick' factor when you talk about recycling waste water," she admitted. "But the reality is that these systems produce water that is often cleaner at the end of the cycle than many places start out with."

Communities can expect to reclaim about 30% of their water through recycling, according to Everts. And while the initial cost of construction is high, perhaps even as high as a desalination facility, the cost of the ongoing water supply will not be directly tied to the cost of energy, as desal water is.

"I'm just an average citizen" said SLO resident Susan Devine, who attended the meeting. "I used to think desal was a good thing, but now I see it's a lot more complicated."

Sarah Corbin is Central California Regional Manager for Surfrider Foundation and a participant in the Monterey Regional Water Resource Collaborative that is working to develop a regional water supply project in Monterey County. Surfrider Foundation advocates for an integrated approach to water use that improves coastal water quality and minimizes impacts to the coastal environment.

"We need to get smart about our water options," said Corbin. "The opportunities and tools are at hand to shift from an unsustainable present to a sustainable future. We hope the public, our planners and elected officials will participate in this forum and take to heart what they learn as we face the challenges ahead."

The message of the evening was clear: With global climate change affecting weather patterns, sea level rise posing risks to coastal infrastructure facilities, and demographic trends and population growth promising continued growth for the Central Coast, the time is now to start planning much more intelligently for our future water security. And only an informed, engaged citizenry can make that happen.

"Where's the Water?" is now showing on Channel 21 and on the web at www.slo-span.org (click on "special meetings")

Delta Opportunity

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environmental harm.

It now seems inevitable that the total amount of water taken from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta will have to be scaled back. While the details and magnitude of these changes still must be worked out, we're already hearing the predictable cries of catastrophe, economic collapse and impending doom.

This crisis has been coming for a long time, but it isn't a surprise and need not be a disaster.

We now have the opportunity to discuss issues that have long been ignored or considered taboo: inappropriate water rights and allocations, groundwater management and use, real land-use planning, and water-use efficiency.

In the past, we've always assumed that we could grow as fast as we wanted,



Smaller Scale

continued from page 1

that the biggest "pro" of the conventional centralized concept is that it is accepted—despite its many flaws—as THE way to plan and implement "organized" wastewater systems by all the institutions that deal with wastewater management, while the biggest "con" of the decentralized concept is that it is not accepted, in fact not even understood. Sure, there is a group of dedicated people within EPA that actively promotes consideration of decentralized wastewater systems, but it seems that their major focus hews to what I call a "dichotomy" view of this function. The bulk of their effort deals with individual on-site systems as *the* alternative to "sewer" systems, as if it is always one or the other. The decentralized concept is much bigger than that, however, encompassing a continuum of options for planning and implementing wastewater systems.

That said, it is obviously necessary to provide a working definition of the decentralized concept, then to review how it compares with the conventional approach. Cut to its most basic, the idea is to treat—and reuse where practical and beneficial—the "waste" water as close to where it is generated as practical. Sure the "on-site" system is the most ubiquitous example of this strategy, but an individual system for each generator is not the only—and often not the best—way to organize the overall wastewater system. A treatment center might also serve a group of homes, a commercial center, a whole subdivision, or the central core of a community. Note that the latter might, in fact be considered a "centralized system." Clearly, we must differentiate between a

wherever we wanted, and find new water sources to meet our demands. Over the past century, we spent hundreds of billions of dollars building dams, reservoirs, aqueducts and pipelines to realize this vision of California. The complex water management system we built has permitted 37 million of us to live, work and play here.

But we are beginning to understand that our manipulation of the water system, based on 19th and 20th century ideas, hurts the natural environment. We are killing our rivers, deltas, wetlands, birds and fish. While we didn't recognize or care about those impacts in the last century, we do now. The judge's decision shows that the system we built must be modified to address the environmental and economic challenges of this century.

The water use of the agricultural sector should be re-evaluated. Our farms consume 80 percent of the water used by California, but produce less than 10 percent of jobs and revenue. We must continue to have a healthy agricultural community, while using less water. To grow more food with less water, we must improve irrigation efficiency, monitor and measure groundwater use, choose to grow fewer water-intensive crops and develop rules to encourage these improvements.

Current water rights regimes in California, combined with inappropriate federal subsidies for water and certain crops, have locked in a level of waste and inefficiency that we can't afford.

Land-use planning also needs to be re-evaluated. It makes little sense to permit uncontrolled development in floodplains, only to pass flood risks from developers to homeowners or the state. It is myopic to build McMansions on prime farmland with landscaping that

Conservation needn't mean brown lawns, shorter showers or mandatory rationing. It is about doing what we want, but with less water.

sucks up water faster than farms, with no assurance that a reliable water supply will be available.

Conservation needs to be redefined. It needn't mean brown lawns, shorter showers or mandatory rationing. It is about doing what we want, but with less water.

We use far more water today than is necessary, whether for flushing our toilets, growing food or making semiconductors. Our conservation efforts have eased this inefficient use, enabling us to grow our economy and population over the past several years without increasing our water demand. But far more could be done.

Efforts to improve water-use efficiency have slacked off in the past decade. Even without the judge's wake-up call, our water agencies and utilities should have been implementing new efficiency programs to deal with the drought. The faster we reduce inefficient uses, the longer we can delay or avoid mandatory cutbacks.

While predictions of economic disaster arising from the Delta decision may come true, they don't have to. But it will take a re-evaluation of our ideas about water-use and political courage by the governor, Legislature and water users to have open and honest discussions about how to redesign our water system so that it is smart, efficient and sustainable. Only then can we transform this water crisis into an opportunity.

Peter Gleick is president of the Pacific Institute in Oakland. A version of this essay was originally printed in the Sacramento Bee on September 9, 2007.

"centralized system" as a collection of hardware components and as an organizing paradigm. The former can be a part of a decentralized concept system, the latter excludes consideration of the decentralized concept. It is the exclusionary conventional paradigm which is compared with the decentralized concept in the following.

Many considerations would determine how close to the source of generation it is practical to place the treatment center. One very important factor is the potential for beneficial reuse of reclaimed water, challenging the very concept of "waste" water. Other considerations include topography, soil conditions, development density (existing or desired), type of land use, and environmental impacts of the wastewater management function in any given locale.

It is also important to understand that the decentralized concept embodies organized management of the overall system. It seems that "decentralized management" instead of "decentralized concept of management" has become the standard shorthand for this strategy. This is obviously a misnomer, since it is the system hardware that is decentralized, while the management function can be as highly centralized as it is for any conventional "regional" system. It must be kept in mind that sewer mains, lift stations and treatment plants in a centralized system would not continue to function properly for very long if their operations and maintenance were left to the whims of individual users. A decentralized concept system is obviously no different in this regard. *all* facilities must be managed by an entity with powers and duties appropriate to

the demands of the methods used.

An immediately obvious difference in the two strategies is that the decentralized concept eliminates a very large portion of the very expensive conveyance system required to execute the conventional centralized strategy, a system which does nothing but move pollution from point to point. Actually, we are finding out that the conventional collection system does more than just *move* pollution—it seems that it also *distributes* it. In his keynote address at the ASAE Ninth National Symposium on Individual and Small Community Sewage Systems, Dr. George Tchobanoglous stated that, due to leaking sewers, the whole water table of the Los Angeles basin is contaminated at a low level. This highlights that the collection system, besides consuming a large majority of the investment in a conventional, centralized system, is itself a potential environmental and public health hazard. This is rich irony, since the original reason for being of "the sewer" was to eliminate public health problems by piping the wastewater "away."

Another major difference in the two concepts is that, in a conventional centralized system large flows are routed through one main or one lift station or one treatment plant. Therefore, the consequences of any mishap are often "large." I have often said, not entirely tongue-in-cheek, that the rationale for a "regional" system is to get all this stuff together in one place where it can *really* do some damage. By contrast, flows at any point in a decentralized concept

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Smart Growth

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from drivers to children through their obligation to repay \$40 billion (including interest) of Proposition 1 B money over the next 30 years, and to users of county services through the use of the County General Fund to take care of roads—supplemented by the crumbs the County can get from TDA.

Yet, if we are serious about a more “transit oriented” county, our General Plan should insist that our use of TDA money be in line with the act’s legislative intent and our stated priorities.

To bring this about, Planning Commissioner Sarah Christie proposed the following language as one of the implementations of Smart Growth Principle #5: “Utilize 100% of the county’s share of TDA funds, outside of the bicycle allocation, for transit operations.”

Public works staff was not happy with this proposal. Their first memo in reaction to the proposal did not just dis-

agree, but *vehemently* disagreed! Public Works proposed alternate language as follows:

“Exercise maximum flexibility in the programming of Local Transportation Funds (LTF-TDA) to fully fund public transit, multimodal connections to public transit, and to facilitate strategic growth.”

“Maximum flexibility” presumably translates as “spend it on roads,” depending on the definition of “fully fund” as applied to public transit. Is the present funding of the Regional Transit system “full?” The system is so starved that drivers work for less than 2/3 of the nationwide standard for people in their profession—and let’s not forget they have people’s lives in their hands!

So this was the choice that presented itself to the Planning Commission at their meeting of November 29th. After long wrangling, transit users ended up

with half a loaf: “Give highest priority in the programming of Local Transportation Funds (LTF-TDA) to fully fund public transit operations.” The bad news is that this language is less clearly enforceable than a strict 100% directive; the good news is that it *does* indicate a genuine change of direction for the County, although citizens may need to remind decision makers of what their General Plan says.

First, however, this verbiage has to survive the rest of the process. The Planning Commission will be finalizing its work on Smart Growth Implementation shortly (they meet the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month), and this language may or may not retain its present form—along with the hundreds of other issues that are part of this complex process. All readers of the *Santa Lucian* are encouraged to follow and

participate in this item as it works its way through the Planning Commission, then, in February and March, makes the rounds of local advisory committees, before going for the action that truly counts: adoption by the Board of Supervisors sometime in the spring.

Public participation is needed to keep the language strong; the recent travesty of the Cayucos Viewshed shows that the Supervisors do not always take the advice of their Planning Commission.

Will vehicle miles traveled ever actually diminish in this county?

Will the dense nodes that pass for “Smart Growth” be livable communities with people walking, bicycling and catching buses, or will they be congested with densities of cars to match the densities of people?

You can make a difference!

Smaller Scale

continued from page 8

system generally remain very low, so that the consequences of any mishap would be “small.”

In any case, the likelihood of mishaps—leaks, bypasses, overflows, etc.—would be lower in a decentralized concept system. A major feature of the concept, at least as I envision and practice it, is the almost exclusive use of effluent sewers for any conveyance that is required, and the use of more “fail-safe” treatment methods. The conveyance system that remains is built “tight” with cleanouts in place of manholes, and is smaller, of more limited extent and carries only liquid effluent. Thus, it presents a much lower potential for leaks and overflows, and it also minimizes infiltration/inflow and the problems caused by wet weather surge flows in conventional systems. Because treatment centers are dispersed, lift stations are eliminated or greatly reduced in number in a decentralized concept system, further lowering the potential for bypasses.

“Fail-safe” treatment methods are those that, by their very nature, are resistant to bypassing poorly treated effluent. An excellent example of this is the contrast between a biofiltration system (e.g., a “sand” filter)—the type of technology highly favored for use in the decentralized concept—and the activated sludge plant most often used at the end of conventional centralized collection systems. The activated sludge plant depends for its treatment effect on very few trophic levels of organisms, living in concentrations far higher than found anywhere in nature, so the process is inherently unstable. It depends upon constant inputs of energy and close attention to process function in an attempt to prevent “upsets” which can happen quite quickly if optimal conditions are not maintained. Typically there is no physical barrier to passage of poorly treated effluent in that treatment system, so any upset results in release of poorly treated effluent in short order. Once off track, it often takes some time for the process to “settle down” and all the while an out of compliance discharge is occurring. By contrast, the biofiltration system depends upon many trophic levels of organisms for treatment and is fairly low rate, so it is inherently stable. The filter bed also presents a physical barrier to passage of poorly treated effluent. The major failure mode is clogging of the filter bed, a condition that generally builds up very slowly, affording the operator the opportunity to conduct required maintenance essentially at his leisure. When properly designed and loaded, maintenance requirements would be minimal and filter runs of

several years should be expected. In-sightful design of the filter bed system allows the bed to be restored to normal function quite expeditiously at the end of a filter run, taking the bed out of service for only a few hours.

By such judicious choice of technologies, the presence of many small dispersed treatment centers which the decentralized concept may entail would not create the untenable operations and maintenance liability that the concept’s detractors claim. Of course there would be an organizational challenge in setting up the management system to address dispersed treatment centers, and that is probably the biggest reason why this alternative concept is resisted by operating entities, engineers which serve them, and regulators which permit and oversee them. They feel they can maintain better control over a single centralized facility than they could over many dispersed facilities. That view is colored, I believe, by experience with conventional treatment methods and lack of familiarity with “alternative” methods. And, as just reviewed, that “control” of conventional technologies is often illusory.

Through the elimination of much of the conveyance system, the use of lower cost effluent sewerage systems, and the use of low maintenance treatment methods that are cost effective to deploy at small scale, a decentralized concept system will quite often be far less expensive to install and to operate and maintain than a conventional centralized system. Many examples of this have been generated all over the country. Perhaps the greatest testimony to the institutional resistance to the decentralized concept is that these cost advantages are not compelling; rather, uncertainties about how to manage the system and/or a view that anything but “the sewer” is a secondary good tend to dominate the considerations. I clearly recall the time a woman stood up during a meeting and asked, “Why don’t we just pay more and get a real sewer system?”

Besides the environmental and fiscal aspects, a number of “societal” factors differentiate the two concepts. One, referred to previously, is that beneficial reuse of effluent can become more cost efficient when integrated into the decentralized concept. The reclaimed water would be made available throughout the service area, nearer to points of potential reuse, decreasing the cost of the redistribution system. Non-potable demands such as landscape irrigation, toilet flush supply, and cooling tower makeup supply could be served with appropriately treated reclaimed water. In many areas, this could be a signifi-

cant contribution to the regional water economy, a factor that will likely become more important as fresh water supplies become increasingly strained worldwide.

Regarding water conservation, a little noted feature of using decentralized concept systems is that **they would accommodate any level of water conservation found to be economically attractive or ecologically necessary.** Only liquid effluent is transported, so reduced wastewater flows due to water conservation measures would not cause clogging problems in the collection system, as has occurred in conventional centralized systems.

A decentralized concept system can also be easier to plan and finance. Each project would be small in comparison to the typical “regional” system expansion. The management needs of each area or new development would be considered directly and could be generated independently. Also, much of the cost of the decentralized concept system could be privatized to those who directly benefit from those investments, or assigned directly to the activity generating new demands on a much fairer basis. Quite often, the full cost of conventional centralized system expansion and upgrading is “buried” in bonds and service charges which are born by all customers regardless of whether the expansion project benefits them in any way except to keep the overall system in compliance.

Another aspect of public financing is the time value of money. In a decentralized concept system, capacity expansion—and therefore capital requirements—would track actual demand much more closely than it typically does in a “regional” system. In centralized systems, considerable investment is often required to build facilities that would not be fully utilized for many years to come.

The decentralized concept also provides greater flexibility to address a variety of situations within a service area in the most cost efficient, environmentally sound and societally responsible manner. With the system facilities decentralized, there would be no compelling reason to impose a “one size fits all” management approach. Different strategies could be employed in various parts of the service area—e.g., individual on-site systems in low density areas, cluster systems for pockets of development, and more centralized systems in more impacted areas. As this implies, centralized systems can indeed have a place within the decentralized concept, as noted earlier. This would allow a regional management entity to cost efficiently assure that ALL the

wastewater management activities in this area were addressed in the most responsible manner, whereas typically these authorities only address areas to which they extend conventional sewers and leave the rest of the area pretty much completely unmanaged.

Another aspect of this flexibility is that **the system can be designed and installed in a manner that is “growth-neutral”, whereas installing or extending centralized systems often spurs growth—even requiring it to be fiscally viable in many cases—regardless of whether or not this fits with community planning desires.** A frequent consequence of conventional sewer authorities refusing to accept management responsibility for anything except centralized sewerage service is that some areas are forced into accepting the “big sewer” and the growth consequences that it entails, at the expense of the existing populations. Indeed, such “annexations” are often driven by land development interests.

Clearly the conventional centralized system has its place, but also quite clear is that there is ample reason to question if that place is everywhere that an “organized” wastewater system is desired. As reviewed, several comparisons indicate that the decentralized concept can produce systems that are more fiscally reasonable, more environmentally benign, and more societally responsible in many situations. However, lack of understanding and fear of the unfamiliar retards even the consideration of anything except the conventional paradigm by operating entities, engineers and regulators.

Indeed the biggest “pro” of the conventional, centralized system is its familiarity, and the biggest “con” of the decentralized concept is that very few understand it. This is unfortunate, because the two concepts should complement each other, not be mutually exclusive. The decentralized concept is, in fact, an overarching concept that can include centralized systems, making it the truly regional strategy for planning and implementation of wastewater management systems.

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Worse than Nothing

continued from page 3

POPR ordinance takes that discretion away, precludes relocation, and deems structures to be “not visible” if they are screened by 50%. It exempts additions of up to 25% of the total area of the structure, with no limits on serial additions. Thus, you could add 25% every year for 4 years, double the size of your house (or winery) and be totally exempt.

Nothing in the ordinance gives the county the ability to relocate a structure off a ridgeline or hilltop, even if another, less visible, feasible site exists on the property. There is virtually no circumstance in which an applicant can’t successfully argue that the ordinance doesn’t apply to them. The definition of “ridgeline” is so tortured almost noth-

ing qualifies as a ridgeline, and even when it does, “hilltops” are exempt, and hilltops can be ridgelines so....

The private development agenda surrounding the process and driving the board’s actions had become as obvious and as thick as a midsummer fog bank rolling in off the bay. As the SLO Chamber of Commerce E-insider noted, “It’s a sad day when elected officials bow to the wishes of a small special interest group and ignore a majority of the public, their own professional staff, and their own handpicked advisory body.”

It will take some doing to clean up the mess that Mssrs. Achadjian, Ovitt and Lenthall have made.



Cathy Longacre of Edna with more than 115 signed flags from residents who wanted to show their support for strong viewshed protection but couldn't come to the meeting — ignored by the board (left).

Sierra Club California Rocks!

by Ed Easton

Sierra Club California, Central Region Excom Member

You’ve heard how successful the Sacramento Office of the Sierra Club is. How four lobbyists take the agenda of California’s largest and most influential environmental lobby to regular successes. We regularly win battles for cleaner air and wild lands. Even the Governor consults the Sierra Club when he wants to take a popular environmental stand. When you hear or read about it I’m sure you say to yourself, “I’m proud to be a part of that. That’s why I belong to the Sierra Club.”

Would it surprise you to learn that the National Sierra Club doesn’t run that office? Would you be interested to know that the dollars to run it aren’t part of the national Club’s budget?

The Sacramento office of the Sierra Club is partially funded by the thirteen Sierra Club Chapters in California and it is *our* lobbying office, not an adjunct of the San Francisco national office. Its policies and political positions are developed by the California Legislative Committee in consultation with the California/Nevada Regional Conservation Commission and its committees. It is overseen by the Sierra Club California Executive Committee, a committee elected at the California Convention which is held annually in San Luis Obispo. Sierra Club California belongs to all the members of the Sierra Club in California.

Why is that so important? Isn’t it all

one club?

In every other state, there is a state Sierra Club Chapter, which lobbies its legislators and governor. The costs for this are raised by that Chapter and it is responsible for success and failure. In California, there are thirteen chapters (one jointly with Nevada). This divides us, and makes a high level of consultation crucial to success. It also means that no Chapter feels like Sierra Club California is *their* lobbying arm and takes responsibility for it. That job falls to a state-wide organization: Sierra Club California.

This also makes fund raising difficult. Because the Sacramento office doesn’t belong to anybody, and because every Chapter has its own local issues which take priority, funding for it is a periodic headache.

So Sierra Club California has to go to Sierra Club members with an outstretched hat, asking for dollars to fight the good fight in Sacramento. That chapeau is stretching toward you right now. The mailing just went out. You can help.

Whether you will, or already have, or won’t contribute, at least check out the website, and learn how easy it is to know what is happening in Sacramento on issues you and the Sierra Club care about:

www.sierraclubcalifornia.org

Local Food Workshop Jan. 19

Melanie Blankenship, owner of Nature’s Touch Foods and Nursery in Templeton, will coordinate a workshop on local food economy on Saturday, January 19, 2008, from 12-4 p.m., in cooperation with the Institute for Sustainable Living (ISL), a non-profit organization based in Paso Robles. For information on the location and more details, go to the Institute’s website at: www.sustainablecentralca.org or contact Jim Cole at: jim.cole@charter.net.

Wary Harry

continued from page 3

between special interests and public interest groups, and made it clear that you believe the Sierra Club is in the former category, not the latter.

And you weren’t alone. A few weeks later, a POPR popped off in the paper, writing that you and yours had voted “to uphold property rights when challenged by special interests in the name of the public good.” Pretzel logic abounds!

To clarify: The original confusion of the terms “public interest” and “special interest” was a deliberate political strategy first formulated in a 1971 memo to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce by future Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell. Powell warned against a threat to commerce from the rising tide of environmental and social activism that was bringing about the passage of landmark public interest laws. He urged that corporate money be directed into think tanks, universities, and legal foundations to fund a counter-attack, to rescue society from its citizens as it were, who were hereinafter to be designated as “special interests” — a term that previously had been clearly understood as applying to entities that exerted influence on the political and legal system with the intent of enhancing or protecting their bottom line.

This is how the deliberate confusion of “public interest” with “special interests” came to pass, often expressed in challenges to environmental laws on the basis of “property rights.” Through the work of the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation and other corporate front groups that rose to answer Powell’s call, and a drumbeat of campus and media campaigns, this confusion has been carefully watered and tended over the years.

Let’s look at a real-life example where

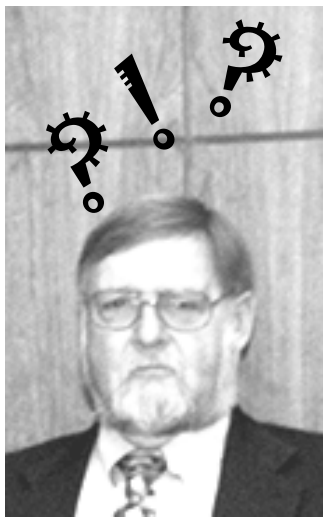
the two categories can be seen in sharp relief. Last September, the states of New York and Vermont, along with the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, won a watershed legal case when a Vermont judge ruled that the auto industry is not exempt from requirements to cut greenhouse gas emissions and that California Clean Air standards, now adopted by at least eleven other states, can start being enacted by states, EPA willing, in order to mandate the reduction of global warming gasses by car manufacturers.

Arguing for the public interest here: The citizens of New York and Vermont, and the members of the Sierra Club in those states. The interest of the states and public interest organizations, in this case, was reducing the amount of carbon emissions that special interests, yoked to the profit motive, can put into the atmosphere.

Arguing for special interests: GM, Ford, Chrysler and others who argued in court that the technology isn’t sufficient to allow them to cut emissions, that requiring them to do so would mean cars would become unsafe, jobs would be lost, the science isn’t in yet on global warming, etc., etc.

“We have long known that these arguments were not true,” noted Sierra Club attorney David Bookbinder, “and Judge Sessions’ ruling indicates that he did not believe them either.”

Why make false arguments? Because



the interest of special interests is money, and spending money on emissions reduction technology means less money as pure profit. So why not just make that argument, then?

Well, because special interests try not to make a habit of making it easy to identify them as special interests (the better to blur that line between them and us.) Hence, during the Cayucos Viewshed

ordinance saga, many variations on the following were heard from the POPR contingent: *I’m a good steward of the land, and even though it doesn’t look like the planning standards in the real ordinance would have any agricultural impacts, “agricultural impacts” are strange and mystical things of which mere planners and supervisors can know nothing, and which I can’t articulate, and I don’t need an ordinance to do the right thing by my land so don’t vote for the real ordinance.* That position doesn’t stand up to much scrutiny (If you don’t need an ordinance because you already do everything the ordinance would mandate, then why would you care one way or the other? Why come down to the County Government Center to testify? The outcome would make no difference to you either way, so why even get out of your chair?), but “Do me a favor and suspend rational planning standards because I want to make a killing when I sell,” just as with “We want to reap maximum profits from car

sales so don’t make us cut global warming emissions,” is not a winning argument, if you know what we mean. In order to make winning arguments, special interests frequently have to put some English on the ball. They have to filigree the doily. They have to lie. Another difference between special interests and the public interest.

David Sirota recently observed on Truthdig.com that everyone flying coach tends to jam their seatbacks into the space of the person sitting behind them — causing most people to feel, in the words of the *New York Times*, “a brief, murderous urge to strike back” when that public space is violated. “We are beginning to feel similar emotions when a carbon-belching Hummer drives by,” he wrote. “That is, we are beginning to feel violated when others harm the planet.”

We recommend you pick up a copy of Paul Hawken’s *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*, including a 110-page index of civil society — all the charitable organizations around the world that exist as part of movements to address environmental and social justice issues and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Ultimately, when you realize that millions of people are advocating on behalf of billions, and for the planet and all its creatures and biosystems, the notion that this is all a “special interest” becomes, well, unsustainable.

That’s pretty much the public interest in a nutshell, Mr. Supervisor. If you have any questions, just give us a call.

Warmest regards,

Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **January 11**.
To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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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.

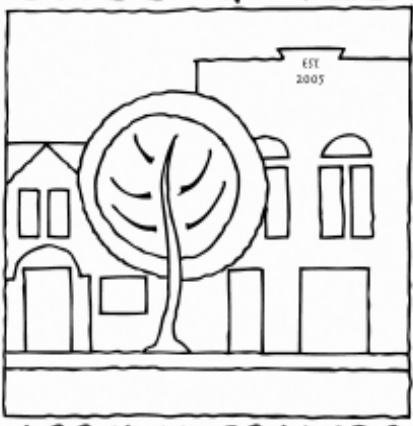
SLOCOG Board--1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

There are *four spaces left* on the Santa Lucia Chapter's

EUROPEAN SMART ENERGY TOUR

March 24 to April 5, 2008

TREE GUILD



ARROYO GRANDE

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We will tour facilities that offer real-time examples of cutting edge technology for production and distribution of renewable energy, green building, innovative transportation, energy efficiency & conservation in numerous applications. Included are carefully selected visits to locations in England, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden.

Land package includes: 11 nights hotel with breakfast, welcome dinner and farewell dinner; Eurostar from London to Brussels, First Class Thalys Train to Amsterdam, ferry to Samso, plus all motor coach transportation, entrance fees for special tours. Cancellation/Trip insurance is included. A guest energy expert will accompany the tour.

LONDON: Tour the BedZED project, meet with national and city planners...**BRUSSELS:** Meet with EU officials...**AMSTERDAM:** Energy Research Center, Netherlands Wind Energy Association...**DENMARK:** Samso "Energy Island," Riso Institute.
SWEDEN: Malmo Western Harbor District.

Tour Costs: \$2,300.00 per person/ double occupancy. **A deposit of \$500 is required** to secure your reservation. Please make your check payable to **Gulliver's Travel** and send it directly to them. The group is limited to 40 participants. Payment for airline ticket will be due upon reservation. **Final payment will be due by January 15th, 2008.** Upon receipt of your reservation, a full packet of information will be sent to you.

Airfare is separate. Please call **Maureen at Gulliver's Travel** to confirm the

best price and schedule. You will need to arrive London by noon on March 25th in order to take advantage of our airport shuttle. Travelers arriving after 12 noon will be responsible for their own transportation to the London hotel.

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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.

Sunday, Jan. 6th, 9:00 am, Morning Glory Trail – Los Padres National Forest Work Party. Come help the CCCMB maintain one of the newer trails on West Cuesta Ridge. Meet at the SLO Vets Hall or at the Top of the Grade.

JAN. 6, 0930, Sun., DANA ADOBE Meet at Adobe in Nipomo, we'll hike Nipomo Creek, talk about history of the Adobe, see contaminated area. Dogs & kids welcome. Confirm or information a few days before at <bdenneen@kcbx.net> or 929-3547.

Sat., Jan. 12, 8:30 a.m. Salmon Creek Trail and Spruce Creek Trail to Dutra Flat. Celebrate 2008. Join the leader on this moderate 8.4 mile hike which has about 2000 ft. of elevation gain. We will hike the Salmon Creek Trail for about 2 miles and then take the Spruce Creek Trail to Dutra Flat camp, which is the site of an old homestead. There is a possibility of ticks and poison oak. Bring lunch or snacks, water, and dress for the weather. Meet at the Washburn day use area just north of Cambria on Highway 1. There will be an optional refueling stop at the Main Street Grill in Cambria after the hike. Rain cancels. For info call Chuck @ 441-7597. (3D) .

JAN. 20, 0930, SUN., BLACK LAKE CANYON. Meet at junction of Leguna Negra &

Guad.Rd. to hike into cyn & Xenon Rd. See erosion ditch, euke invasion and Native Oak Woodland. Dog & kids OK. Confirm or information a few days before at <bdenneen@kcbx.net> or 929-3547.

Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2008, 6-9 pm "The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County Annual Reception - "A Vision for the Future", Monday Club, San Luis Obispo. Join us as we look back on another successful year and celebrate our accomplishments. Members are invited to bring a friend. Please RSVP to 544-9096 by January 11.

Jan. 26th, 9 a.m. Informal Hike Four Peaks of Montana de Oro State Park. Come take a long 18 mile hike to the top of Valencia, Oats, False Alan and Alan Peak. Guaranteed brush and some poison oak if you go past False Alan Peak. Where long pants and dress for the weather. Bring plenty of water snack and lunch for this strenuous 18 mile hike according to Jim. More details can had by call Jim at 286-7214.

Sat.-Sun., Feb 2-3, Mecca Hills Carcamp: Join us as we explore the Mecca Hills Wilderness Area east of Indio, CA. While ATVs roar through the Algodones dunes to the south, we will walk quietly through the gravel washes and rocky hills to several well-known and spectacular sites. Saturday we visit Hidden Springs and the Grottos, and Sunday we will explore Painted Canyon. Carcamping will include the civilized amenities, potluck supper and campfire Saturday night. Limit 12 participants. Ldr: Craig Deutsche, deutsche@earthlink.net, (310-477-6670). CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sunday, February 3rd, 8:00 am. Montana de Oro Work Party. Come help California State Parks and the CCCMB. Maintain trails in Montana de Oro State Park. Meet at the Spooners Cover Visitor Center, MDO SP.

FEB., 3, 0930, SUN., SUSTAINABLE LIVING. Tour my farm to see photovoltaics, windmill, clothesline, solar panels, compost, orchard, garden, goats, pig, heat source, & waterless toilet. Meet at 1040 Cielo Ln (off Primavera, off Orahard) in Nipomo., friendly dogs welcome. Confirm or questions at <bdenneen@kcbx.net>.

FEB. 10, 0930, SUN., BIKE NIPOMO. Meet at Nipomo Library to tour Native Garden, new bike-trail, Creekside, Dana Adobe etc. Kids welcome (no dogs) Confirm or information a few days before at <bdenneen@kcbx.net> or 929-3547.

FEB. 17, 0930, SUN., BIKE WOODLANDS A bicycle tour of the "instant city" with many stops. Meet at junction of Willow Rd. & Albert Way. Must wear helmet. With bikes we can go on golf cart trails. Confirm or information a few days before at <bdenneen@kcbx.net> or 929-3547.

Sat.-Sun., March 1-2, Grass Valley Wilderness Backpack: This will be an easy to moderate journey to explore a little known area with Marty Dickes, wilderness resource specialist with the Ridgecrest office of the BLM. We will monitor ORV impacts, but our reward will be the washes, low hills, and open grassland views in early spring. At these low elevations in the Mojave, wildflowers are possible, and rain is unlikely. Carry all water. Limit 12. Leader: Craig Deutsche, (310-477-6670), deutsche@earthlink.net. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat.-Sun., March 15-16, Ghost Town Extravaganza: Come with us to this spectacular desert landscape near Death Valley to explore the ruins of California's colorful past. Camp at the historic ghost town of Ballarat (flush toilets & hot showers). On Sat, do a very challenging hike to ghost town Lookout City with expert Hal Fowler who will regale us

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

Six Sierra Club California Fundraising Cruises Scheduled for 2008

February 9-11, 3 islands (\$475)
April 4-7; May 2-5; July 18-21;
4 islands (\$775)
August 23-27; September 13-17;
5 islands (\$925)

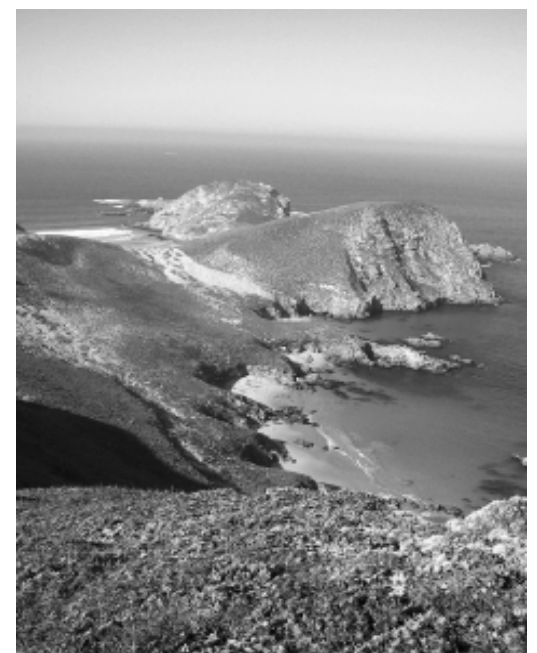
Explore the wild, windswept islands of Channel Island National Park. In spring the islands are ablaze with wildflowers. In summer, the pristine waters of the Marine Sanctuary entice swimmers, snorkelers and kayakers. All year long, enjoy unusual plants and flowers, seals and frolicking sea lions, sea and land birds. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel *Turth*. Fee includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and point out interesting features.

To make a reservation mail a \$100 check, payable to Sierra Club to leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El

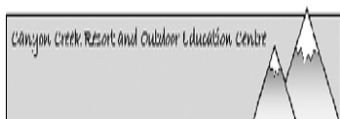


Photo by Joaquin Palting

with tales of this wild west town. Later we'll return to camp for Happy Hour, a potluck feast and campfire. On Sun, a quick visit to the infamous Riley town site before heading home. Group size strictly limited. Send \$8 per person (Sierra Club), 2 sase, H&W phones, email, rideshare info to Ldr: Lygeia Gerard, P.O. Box 294726, Phelan, CA 92329, (760) 868-2179. Co-ldr: Don Peterson (760) 375-8599 CNRCC/Desert Committee.



Monte, CA 91732. Contact leader for more information (626-443-0706; jholtzhl@aol.com)



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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.