



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

January 2010
Volume 47 No. 1

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Diablo and Desperation

PG&E's move to relicense the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant 15 years ahead of schedule is a case of spend first, study later

By the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, www.a4nr.org

When the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. held a surprise pre-Thanksgiving press conference announcing that it had filed to renew its license to operate the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant for another twenty years – a renewal of a license that is still fifteen years away from expiration — it was clear that the folks in the executive suites of PG&E are suffering from a severe case of premature application.

Just days before Thanksgiving, PG&E sent a press release to the media that they were going “to make a major announcement regarding California’s energy future.” Any hope

that their vision of California’s energy future would involve, say, a wind farm at the Diablo Canyon nuclear site were soon dashed. In an attempted full-court press, PG&E trotted out local school officials, the tax assessor, and Greenpeace turncoat Patrick Moore to trumpet their belief that adding twenty more years to Diablo

Canyon’s lifespan would be a boon for county coffers. The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility was tipped off to the press conference and spoiled PG&E’s fun by making sure that the



media knew the utility’s action flew in the face of the interests of consumers, state regulatory agencies and the

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DON'T MISS

**January 16:
Sharing the Dream**

Laguna Middle School

- see page 11

**January 25:
Environmentalists
Rendezvous**

Steynberg Gallery

- see page 2



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The Year in Review

Your Chapter in 2009

JANUARY

The Sierra Club submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Los Osos Wastewater Project calling for the following:

- tertiary— not merely secondary — treatment of effluent,
- increased water conservation,
- abandonment of water-wasting sprayfields for disposal of treated effluent outside the groundwater basin
- an “ag exchange” program for that effluent that would reduce pumping of the stressed lower aquifer
- a pressurized effluent collection system and ponding to reduce sludge production
- moving the treatment plant from its proposed Tonini Ranch site to the smaller Giacomazzi site, over the basin. (See August entry.)

The Sierra Club joined with North County residents to successfully

continued on page 6



Don't panic! The year got off to a great start with the break-up of the developer-fueled Ovitt/Lenthall/Achadjian power trio on the County Board of Supervisors.

Cartoon: Russ Hodin. Inaugural tiara: Anne McMahon. B-movie victims: Archie McPhee

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photo/Karin Walsh

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

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Bi-Monthly General Meeting Environmentalists Rendezvous

7 p.m., Tuesday, January 26
Steinberg Gallery, SLO

What are the major environmental groups in SLO County up to? Here's a unique opportunity to meet seven key players, all in one place. The roundtable confab will feature staff from the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, Audubon Society, ECOSLO, Morro Bay National Estuary Program, SLO Land Conservancy, Sierra Club, under the unblinking gaze of the great-horned owl from Pacific Wildlife Care. Each will discuss their premier projects and plans for 2010. Q&A follows. Free. For more info, call Joe, 772-1875.



It's Getting Ridiculous Supervisors are watching ag policy drift away

Two articles from the *Santa Ynez Valley News* were reprinted in this space in our last two issues ("Are We 'Protecting Agriculture?'," Oct., Nov./Dec), providing a helpful viewpoint from south of SLO County on the very familiar problems that Santa Barbara County has been experiencing by allowing commercial events on agriculturally zoned land, and the inevitable end point of this laissez-faire policy: Ag land turning into de facto commercial zoning, accelerating the loss of active agriculture.

At the end of the second installment, we learned that Santa Barbara's Board of Supervisors had finally acknowledged the problem and moved decisively to head it off.

Would that we could say the same. On October 6, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors interpreted the County's Temporary Events Ordinance on agricultural lands. Overturning their Planning Commission's interpretation on every count, they ruled that the Planning Department, not the Agricultural Commissioner, has final say on whether a site has enough agricultural use to qualify for an event permit, as required by County policy; that it's okay to convert barns and other ag structures to support commercial events so long as the footprint of the building does not increase (and disregarding the fact that many of these structures never received a building permit because Ag structures are "exempt"); and that a site can be graded for parking lots, roads, landscaping, etc., even though the ordinance specifically prohibits alteration of the site through grading. And they decided that the requirement to be engaged in production agriculture on site could be waived on a case-by-case basis, depending on whether or not Ag production is "feasible." The only Planning Commission recommendation they supported was that temporary events should be just that—temporary. But the definition of "temporary" was left up to staff.

The impacts of that decision in the real world quickly made themselves felt. On October 30, a County Planning Department hearing was held on a request for a Minor Use Permit for temporary events for a site on Highway 46 West at Dover Canyon Road. The applicant wanted to hold

15 commercial events per year, with up to 250 attendees. With only three acres of grape vines and no winery, the applicants did not meet the minimum requirement to have at least five acres of active agricultural use to qualify for a temporary event permit. Nor did they qualify for events under the Winery Ordinance – allowing six events per year, with up to 80 people – because they don't have a winery. The events requested were more than twice the level allowed under the Winery Ordinance.

The neighbors objected, the local advisory council objected, and the property is subject to a deed restriction that prohibits using a well for commercial purposes in this water-stressed area.

Undeterred, staff forged ahead and approved a permit. "Staff is not bound by the advisory council's actions," said staff planner Karen Nall. Also: "The Board in the October 6 meeting indicated a primary ag use is not a requirement to have temporary events on the site."

But that's not what the Board said on October 6. They said the primary ag use requirement can be waived if it is not feasible to have five acres of the site in agriculture. Such use is more than feasible on the 40-acre site in question, as evidenced by the fact that Phase II of the permit includes a winery and tasting room. Thus, no exemption from the "5 acres of ag" requirement applies.

Lacking any specific direction from the Board, the hearing officer ignored the findings of the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office that events cannot be permitted if agriculture is not the primary use of the site, that events must be secondary and incidental to that agricultural use, and commercial events have nothing to do with agriculture. He granted a five-year permit and threw in a five-year renewal.

"The direction we got from the Board is that temporary events need to have a time limit placed on them," explained Nall, "so this would have a ten-year time limit." That's a ten-year term for a temporary event. Ten years of weddings, concerts and other commercial events is now defined as a temporary use of the site.

In response to the vigorous protests

SANTA LUCIAN

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The *Santa Lucian* is published 10 times a year. Articles, environmental information and letters to the editor are welcome. The deadline for each issue is the 11th of the prior month.

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Dawn Ortiz-Legg

MEMBER

Steven Marx

TREASURER

Linda Seeley

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COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS

The Executive Committee meets the third Friday of every month at 12:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 547-B Marsh St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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Printed by University Graphic Systems

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Outings, events, and more!

GMO Update

North County Farmers Market labels genetically modified produce

The Sierra Club has a strong policy against genetically modified organisms released into the environment as genetically engineered food, a practice that constitutes an ongoing science experiment that has drafted all consumers and ecosystems as guinea pigs. The rush to permit the sale of genetically modified foods without the usual scientific testing requirements has been driven by the corporate bottom line of Monsanto. That bottom line: Create an ever-growing market for the company's Roundup herbicide and take ownership of the world's seed stock.

On November 11, the North County Farmers Market Board, sponsor of the Templeton Farmers Market, voted unanimously to require the labeling of genetically engineered produce. NCFMA Board President Mike Broadhurst told the Sierra Club, "Our Board discussed the issue at length and concluded that ensuring our customers' choice was the right policy for NCFMA. Therefore, at future markets you will find that any produce resulting from GMO crops will be so labeled."

Thanks to the 20 people who sent e-mails to the board prior to that meeting, and to the people who spoke at the meeting, including Karen Swift of Bear Valley Ranch.

The Santa Lucia Chapter worked with the late Dr. John DiVincenzo, owner of the Avila Valley Barn, to bring about the first known instance of the labeling of a genetically engineered consumer product in the U.S. when the Avila Valley Barn finally labeled Monsanto's Bt corn as "Our own G.E. corn" in 2007. Since his death last fall, it is not known if Dr. DiVincenzo's labeling policy will continue. We encourage readers to call the manager of the Avila Valley Barn at 595-2816 to ask what the Barn's policy regarding genetically engineered Bt corn will be.

We can all thank the North County

Farmers Market Association for their decision on labeling.

However, as Monsanto's world-beating GMO business plan is no friend to consumers or small farmers -- and if fully realized would spell the demise of organic farming -- genetically engineered produce should be excluded from all Farmers Markets in the county. Other Farmers Markets, such as the North Coast Growers Association of Humboldt County, quite logically take an anti-genetic engineering stand. Ours should, too. Tell NCFMA manager Sandra Dimond that



Francois Mercier



Monsanto and Farmers Markets don't mix. Call her at 748-1109, or e-mail her at Sandra@createabang.com. You can also get this message to Peter Jankay, Market Administrator for the South County Farmers Market Association, at 544-9570.

Cal Poly grew Monsanto's Roundup-Ready silage corn this year. We don't know if Cal Poly is continuing to grow Monsanto's Roundup-Ready alfalfa or if they grew Bt sweet corn. The Cal Poly students at Farmers Markets say they are not selling Bt corn. Questions regarding Cal Poly's Monsanto crops should be directed to Dr. Jeff Wong at 756-2428.

Hayashi and Sons continued to grow Bt corn in Arroyo Grande and sell it at Farmers Markets in Arroyo Grande, Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo and Templeton. Over the summer, thanks to stalwart volunteers, we were able to leaflet on the Bt corn issue at all of those markets.

For more information call Jesse Arnold at 927-3096 or go to www.slogefree.org.



Gouged

The worst vote of 2009 from the County Board of Supervisors: Sticking it to the public on land use appeals

On November 24, the Board of Supervisors voted to hike the fee for appealing a County land use permit decision by more than \$200. It will now cost you \$850 to appeal to the county Planning Commission or the Supervisors when planners make a bad call on a project.

The vote placed the public process out of reach of a large segment of the public. The Supervisors have built inequity into the system, seemingly unable to grasp their responsibility to protect the interests of the public. An increase of \$200 for appeals will do next to nothing in terms of replenishing the General Fund, but imposes a significant burden on the public, on top of a fee that is already beyond the reach of many.

The increase is not likely to net the county more than \$2,000 a year, but it will cut way down on appeals — the obvious goal of County Planning staff, who had originally proposed an even bigger hike. This will serve to assure developers (who, of course, can continue to afford to appeal any decision *they* don't like) of the smoothest path to building whatever they want, wherever they want.

The appeals process has been the means by which the general public has been able to bring information to bear that has stopped wildlife habitat from being paved over, traffic from mounting to intolerable levels, water from disappearing, and air and water quality from deteriorating. The board has implemented an increase in bureaucratic efficiency at the cost of a decrease in democracy.

There were bigger issues before the Board in 2009, and decisions made that may have more significant effects (see "It's Getting Ridiculous," at left), but no vote was more jaw-droppingly pointless. There was no pressure on the Board from any sector or interest group to do what they did. Not a single member of the public spoke in favor of increasing the land use appeal fee; all spoke against it. In discussing the issue immediately before they voted to increase the fee, the majority of the Supervisors clearly were themselves in favor of leaving the fee where it was, with no increase. Then, inexplicably, they voted the other way.

It is saddening to note that it was Supervisor Bruce Gibson who led the charge for the fee increase. For good measure, Gibson also set the County on a course to sponsor legislation to amend the California Coastal Act so that the County may charge the public to file an appeal on Coastal Zone land use decisions. Such appeals may be filed free of charge by any California resident, a right that was written into the Coastal Act and voted into law by the people of California to ensure the greatest access for the public to that public process.

In proposing to overturn a key measure of state law, the County basically chose to start a war in Sacramento, setting off alarm bells statewide -- a doomed effort that will cost tens of thousands of dollars in lobbying fees.

That forthcoming plunder of the general fund would be the ultimate irony of the way the Board concluded its deliberations on the issue of raising fees to offset costs to the general fund.

Your Next Trip

by Tony Rango, Director National Outings Program

Did you know that the Sierra Club offers 350 trips to amazing outdoor destinations annually?

Each year, the Sierra Club's Outings program leads nearly 4,000 outdoor enthusiasts on exciting, award-winning excursions in North America and beyond. With more than 100 years of experience, we're the oldest outfitter specializing in environmental travel. Our dedicated volunteer leaders are passionate about the spectacular places they visit and about sharing these special locations with you.

Vacations range from soft adven-



Surprise! David Weisman (right) gets the nod from Elder Bill.

Bill Denneen Environmental Award Winners

Bill Denneen presented the 69th and 70th awards of the Bill Denneen Environmental Awards Trust on December 5. Recipients David Weisman (right) of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility and Andrew Christie of the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter received a cash award, a framed limited-edition David Stroup photograph of the Oceano Dunes, and the environmental book of their choice.

The presentation took place at the annual holiday Peace Potato Party held at the Grover Beach home of longtime anti-nuclear activist Rochelle Becker. Per Elder Bill's preferred *modus operandi*, the surprised

recipients didn't know it was coming.

The Bill Denneen Environmental Award Trust began in the Nipomo Chamber of Commerce in 1996. The first recipient, Steve Aslandis of Ralcco Recycling of Nipomo, received state and national recognition for his 30,000 tons of recycling that year.

"The person most responsible for my Trust is Virginia Perry Souza," says Bill, "who took my original investment and continues it each year, and will even after I die. She was in my Ecology Class at Hancock long ago and started the Natural History Museum in Santa Maria next to the

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The Doughnut with Too Many Holes

Show up on Jan. 12 to ask the supervisors not to make smart growth stupid

By Eric Greening

The Board of Supervisors has embarked on a countywide General Plan Update process that threatens to make a mockery of its adopted Strategic Growth Policies.

Until now, updates of the Land Use and Circulation Elements have been done by official planning area. There are 19 of these, such as Estero, Adelaida, and Salinas River. The update process has encouraged maximum participation by the people of that locality, leading to the resultant plan incorporating as much

of the community's vision as would be consistent with the rest of the General Plan.

Now, the 19 planning areas have been collapsed into five, and the Board has authorized the rural parts of all five to be updated at once, creating a document that will supersede all existing area plans, at least as they apply to rural portions of the areas. Anything inside an urban or village reserve line is to be left as a hole in the multi-holed doughnut, awaiting future update of the relevant community plans. (One community plan update – Shandon's — is already

in progress. Apparently, the rest are in limbo until the Land Use and Circulation Element for the rural areas is completed.)

While Planning Staff claims this helps enact recommendations of the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) in redrawing area plan boundaries to reflect watersheds, there

are two important differences from the WRAC recommendation: WRAC had envisioned a considerably *greater* number of planning areas, and had not envisioned separating communities from their hinterlands. Watersheds do not have doughnut holes. If watershed planning is awkward around these holes, circulation

planning is even more so, as most trips will be to and from areas not scrutinized.

To make the process even more awkward, areas for future growth are to be identified, presumably adjacent to existing communities...but how do

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The consequence is likely to be a surge of applications for leapfrog development in the midst of our rural and agricultural lands, with the attendant impacts of habitat and wildlife corridor fragmentation, added traffic on rural roads, and increasing stress on farmers and ranchers who want to stay in agriculture.



Portland Breakfast Project

The View from Here

A note from Karen Merriam, Chapter Chair

I'm writing this note to you from a little cabin in the rainforest on the Puna coast, Big Island, Hawaii. At night tree frogs sing me to sleep. Each morning I greet my two gecko families, one green, one tan, as they climb about my walls and screens (there are no windows here) praising them for their handiwork of keeping the insect population in balance. In the distance I hear the ocean break against the lava laden cliffs, and later I will watch the surfer turtles troll the foam for treasures.

I've come to this place for refreshment: for renewal of physical strength, emotional resilience, and intellectual vigor. While two weeks is not enough time to accomplish all this, it is time enough to re-open my senses, my thoughts and my heart to the wisdom of the world around and within me. From that wisdom, new growth and direction will come.

In December 2004, I agreed to serve the Santa Lucia Chapter and its Executive Committee as Chair. What I have wanted most to accomplish as a leader of the Chapter is to set a positive, progressive course, providing expertise and intellectual rigor that can be a resource to others, and extending a hand of friendship to other organizations and individuals who share our basic goals of conservation and sustainability.

I am so proud of the work of our Chapter during these past five years. We have gained the respect of state and national Sierra Club leaders. We have formed coalitions of local organizations to promote smart energy solutions, and we have worked with local business and civic organizations to promote our cities and county as leaders of a new, green economy. Our Chapter Director is recognized as one of the most well-informed and talented writers and analysts of key environmental issues that face all communities: land use, water, wastewater, energy, trade, transportation, and food.

Before I traveled here to Hawaii, I realized that my time of leadership is complete. I've given the Chapter my best. My dear colleagues on the Executive Committee have been steadfast, generous and diligent. We work as a team, and count on each other for honesty and balance, humor and poetry. But five years is long enough. I will be leaving the ExCom as of December 31st.

In a few days I will leave this Hawaiian island paradise and return to SLO to celebrate the holidays and begin a new year. I will bring with me the serenity of the rainforest stillness filled with life and a renewed appreciation for the wisdom of nature. These renewed perspectives will inform and help me to remain open to change; to resist fear; to seek the right course, not the expedient; to listen deeply; to keep all my senses attuned. I welcome your companionship along this path.

With sincere good wishes,

Karen



Thank You

to Santa Lucia Chapter members!

On November 24, we sent a letter to many of our regular contributing members explaining the current financial straits of the Santa Lucia Chapter:

- * National Sierra Club is cutting funding to chapters by as much as 80%.
- * Grants once available through national Sierra Club and local foundations are not available in 2010.
- * Charitable donations are down at national and local levels.

To cope with this dramatic loss of revenue, the Chapter's Executive Committee has voted to do the following:

- * Eliminate one half-time paid AmeriCorps member.
- * Cut staff time by 20%. Our Chapter Director may be less available to assist our members and work on essential projects.
- * Sublease up to 2/3 of our office space.
- * Decrease the yearly number of Santa Lucian newsletters printed.
- * Freeze all expenditures other than core functions.

We are very happy to report that, at press time, we have received generous donations from the following members:

Alexandra Wyzga
 Barbara Weymann
 Barbara Wilson
 Beverly DeWitt-Moylan
 Bob and Laverne McDonnell
 C. and F.J. Collie
 Calvin and Letty French
 Charles Fritel
 Cheryl Ziehl
 Cleve and Ann Nash
 David Hannings
 David Weisman
 Denny and Kitty Mynatt
 Dirk and Bonny Walters
 Dominic and Christine Perello
 Donald Sauer
 Eliane Guillot
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 Eugene and Sally Kruger
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 Tom Wiltzenbach
 Valerie Benz
 Walter Sanville
 Watson Gooch
 Wendy McKeown

Thank you, thank you! Your donations will help us weather the next few months, but more is needed to ensure our continuing operation. Anyone reading this should consider doing whatever you can to support the Santa Lucia Chapter so we may continue our important work this year.

You can mail a check, contribute online at our website –

What's Next for the Dalidio Shopping Mall?

by Citizens for Planning Responsibly

Although the California Supreme Court has decided not to review the Appellate decision upholding Measure J, the struggle to save the City of San Luis Obispo's 1994 vision regarding the Dalidio property is far from over. The developers now have to decide whether to annex into the City and follow the rules, or to develop in the County, and follow only Measure J.

If the developers decide to proceed in the City, they will be required to dedicate one half of the land into agricultural open space, just as the two other property owners in that area have already done. This will result in preservation of a total of 90 acres of agricultural open space and

implement the City's 1994 General Plan.

Optimistic that annexation is a reasonable possibility, the City is creating a Master Plan for an urban farm on these 90 acres. Other projects in this area, which have followed the rules and have dedicated one half of the land to open space, have met little opposition and were approved quickly. The fastest, least expensive, and most efficient way to provide automobile access, water, sewer, and police/fire protection for the project would be to annex it into the City. Annexing would be a good business decision.

But, of course, developers, like all of

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Call for Candidates

In February, Chapter members will vote for the candidates who will lead the Santa Lucia chapter on its Executive Committee in 2010.

We encourage our members to run for the ExCom and become a part of the dynamic action of Sierra Club leadership on energy, global warming, water and land use issues.

The ExCom meets in February to appoint the chair, vice-chair, secretary

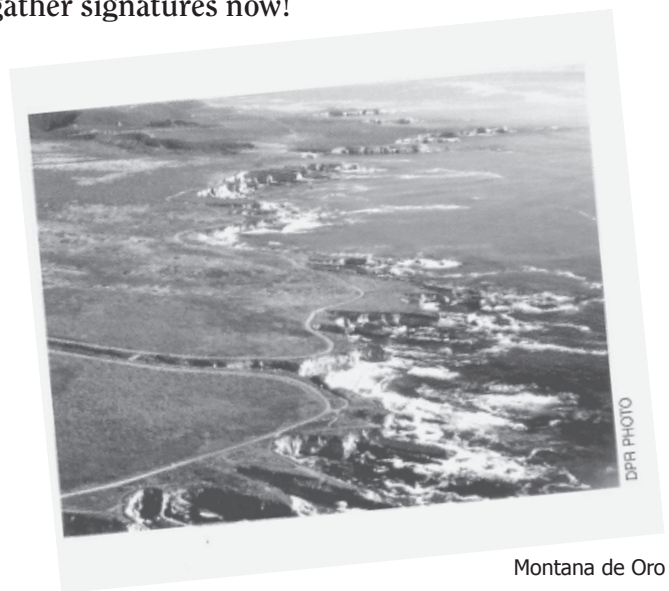
and treasurer, as well as program, conservation and outings chairs.

We also appoint a delegate to the Council of Club Leaders, a liaison to the national Sierra Club.

Candidates are elected for a term of three years. Deadline for nominations is **January 12**. Contact Cal French at cal.french@gmail.com or call the Sierra Club Office at (805) 543-8717.

For the Parks

Initiative would secure funding for state parks - Help gather signatures now!



Montana de Oro

Park lovers are gathering signatures for a state initiative to provide stable long-term funding for California's endangered state parks. Your help is needed now.

How did California's 278 state parks, once the best in the country, sink to being among the shabbiest?

Call it death by a thousand budget cuts. Our parks are falling apart because of persistent underfunding. The state still owns the lands—the spectacular vistas, historic sites, and beaches—but roofs and sewage systems leak, restrooms aren't washed out regularly but trails are, and campgrounds and visitor centers are shuttered. The repair backlog in California state parks tops \$1 billion, and it's growing.

Twice in the past two years, the whole state-park system was on the verge of being shut down. Only last-minute budget reprieves kept it open. But nearly 60 state parks are to have reduced hours or calendars because of last year's budget cuts, and more reductions are expected this year.

That's why park supporters are placing a statewide initiative on the November 2010 ballot called the California State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010. It will protect state parks and conserve wildlife by establishing a trust fund in the state treasury to be spent

only on state parks, wildlife and marine conservation, and state conservancies. It will only get on the ballot if volunteers collect the thousands of signatures necessary.

Funding will come from an \$18 surcharge on the registration fee for California vehicles, including motorcycles and recreational vehicles but not larger commercial vehicles, mobile homes, and permanent trailers. Surcharged vehicles will receive free admission to all state parks. In comparison, park visitors currently pay up to \$125 for an annual pass or \$10 to 15 per day at most parks.

In exchange for this small fee increase, California vehicles would be allowed free Day Use entry to our State Parks and Wildlife Preserves. Since many Californians visit a State Park or Beach more than once a year, this is a very fair exchange.

The trust fund will be sufficient to adequately fund state parks, freeing them from annual budget cuts and threatened closures. Money from the general fund currently spent on parks will be available for other vital needs, including schools, health care, social services, and public safety.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Fill out and send in the postcard included in this issue today!

A Will is a Way

Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others preserve the intricate balance of nature.

Contact:
John Calaway
Director of Gift Planning at
(415) 977-5639 or e-mail:
planned.giving@sierraclub.org

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FOUNDED 1913

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

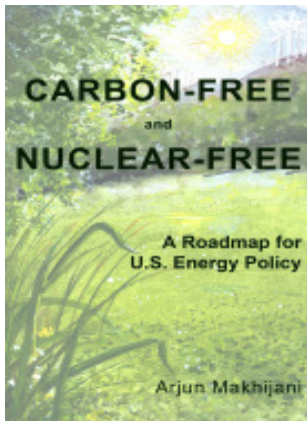
Year in Review

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demand the denial of a permit for a sand and gravel mine before the County Planning Commission. The mine would have had unmitigatable environmental impacts on the Salinas River.

On January 6, at the first meeting of the newly elected County Supervisors, we presented each supervisor with his own bound copy of our “Messages to the New Board” as they appeared in *New Times* over the previous five months, offering policy prescriptions on sustainable food production, affordable housing, local political reform, energy use, and the preservation of agricultural land.

Sierra Club’s California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee voted to endorse the “Carbon-Free, Nuclear-Free Statement of Principles.” The CFNF campaign has



created a blueprint for a clean energy future free of both coal and nuclear power. The Cal Poly Chapter of the Sierra Student Coalition and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility gave local residents a preview of that future when we brought CFNF founder Dr. Arjun Makhijani of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research to Cal Poly in October 2008.

FEBRUARY

On February 6, the Strategic Energy Alliance for Change, co-founded by the Santa Lucia Chapter, presented a Renewable Energy Education Forum at the SLO Vets Hall, a review of local renewable energy projects and energy efficiency opportunities on the central coast.

On February 19, we brought our Energy Town Hall series to Morro Bay, updating attendees on current state energy legislation, the need to develop a Climate Action Plan and the Sierra Club’s work on local green house gas emission inventories.

The team that put together the RESCO grant (Renwable-Based Energy Secure Communities) for SLO County got together with us to lay out their plans. Their proposal eventually won approval and \$100,000 from the California Energy Commission – one of 13 awards made statewide out of 54 applications — and they are now gathering data on the county’s solar, wind, biomass, landfill and energy

efficiency potential. They are now conducting their inventory of our county’s portfolio of resources, culminating in recommended pilot energy projects.

MARCH

After multiple Sierra Club presentations over the course of two years, on March 24, the Atascadero City Council voted to join ICLEI/Local Governments for Sustainability, a primary goal of the Sierra Club’s Cool Cities campaign.

APRIL

The Department of Fish and Game rescinded its idea for a black bear hunt in SLO after letters from Los Padres Forest Watch, the Santa Lucia Chapter, and many others pointed out they had no scientific basis for their assertion of a bear surplus.

On April 24, a committee exploring the feasibility of establishing a county-wide agricultural and open space district along the lines of the successful model established by Sonoma County, hosted a meeting attended by representatives of ranchers, farmers, the vineyard/winery industry, local governments, the Air Pollution Control District, parks commissioners, business, development and legal entities, environmental and conservation organizations (The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, SLO Coastkeeper, SLO Land Conservancy, North County Watch) and Resource Conservation Districts. The former general manager of the Sonoma district presented their findings to the group, looking toward a future ballot measure campaign to fund such a district. The committee continued to meet throughout the year, and has identified priority tasks and a timeline for completion.

MAY

Our Energy Town Hall series continued in Atascadero on May 6, with Supervisor Jim Patterson and Atascadero Mayor Ellen Beraud assisting us in addressing the audience.

On May 8, the California Energy Commission ruled that proponents of solar power plants on the Carrizo Plain would not be allowed to keep secret the results of a wildlife corridor study, citing extensive comments on behalf of the need for full disclosure filed by the Santa Lucia Chapter.

The Chapter’s annual awards banquet and fundraiser was held at the SLO Botanical Gardens on May 30. Michael Fitts of the Endangered Habitats League and national Sierra Club President Allison Chin keynoted with



speeches on land use activism and organizing as high-lights. Steven Marx, the Chapter Treasurer and Executive Committee member, received the Chapter’s highest award for service to the Chapter and the community.



Apr. Exploring an agricultural and open space district.

The series of “energy summits” staged by Republican Congressmen over the summer in an effort to block the American Clean Energy and Security Act came to SLO on May 28, when Rep. Kevin McCarthy and three of his Republican House colleagues tried to persuade attendees that nuclear power and oil drilling should be part of our energy future. They were fully rebutted by Sierra Club California Energy/Climate Committee member Ken Smokoska in the June 16 edition of

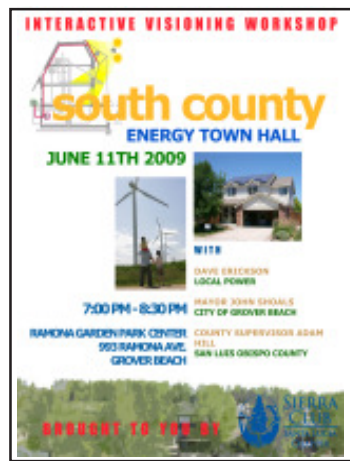
The Tribune (“Strengthen, Don’t Weaken, Energy Act”).

Sierra Club brought sea level rise to the attention of the County Planning Commission as they continued to deliberate on the Los Osos Wastewater Project. We pointed out that the

County’s estimates of sea level rise were overly conservative, out of date, and represent global averages. We furnished current numbers from a California coastal-specific study showing likely sea level rise of nearly five feet by the end of the century. As a result, the Planning Commission told the Public Works Department to seal pipes throughout the sewer’s collection system in all areas less than five feet above sea level.

JUNE

Our Energy Town Hall in Grover Beach, featuring Dave Erickson, Technical Director of the Sonoma County Climate Action Plan, kicked off a week of SLO county meetings for Erickson, sponsored by the Santa Lucia chapter. His message: the best, fastest, cheapest way to get to a clean power economy is with local power – generating energy as close as possible to where it’s used.



Confirming disturbing findings first brought to light by the Sierra Club, the SLO County Grand Jury issued its report “Staff Report on the Sale of Oceano Dunes Parcels: Error or Deception?” The grand jury investigated the circumstances in which the County Planning Department issued a seriously flawed staff report on the proposed sale of County land in the Oceano Dunes to State Parks’ OHV Division. The grand jury found strong evidence of County Planning staff misconduct in the creative editing of land use policies in an apparent effort to back up a finding of “no conflict” with the County’s General Plan. The finding would have helped the OHV Division tighten its grip on its off-



Feb. SLO County’s RESCO team laying plans on our patio.

road playground. A \$5-million land deal would have quietly transpired had the Sierra Club not caught the crucial policy information deleted from the staff report.

The California Energy Commission found that “photovoltaic solar arrays on rooftops and over parking lots may be a viable alternative” to conventional power plants. The historic ruling, known as “the Chula Vista decision,” should weigh heavily in the proposed upgrade of the Morro Bay Power Plant and possible further extension of its life, the proposals to build solar power plants in the Carrizo Plain, and many other proposed utility-scale energy projects statewide.

JULY

In its ongoing deliberations on the Los Osos Wastewater Project, the Planning Commission sensibly decided to move the treatment plant from where the Public Works Dept. wanted to put it — a location that would have destroyed hundreds of acres of prime ag land and disposed of treated water outside of the basin — to a modestly sized, none-prime-ag location inside the basin. Site-adjacent resident Barry Branim, saying that Los Osos Wastewater Project manager John Waddell called him and “asked me to alert as many people as possible regarding the change in location that the Planning Commission has made,” tried to whip up opposition in the local press. Many were saddened to see Public Works engaging in sewer obstructionism while publicly professing cooperation with the Planning Commission on the project.

In the wake of the County grand jury’s report of skullduggery surrounding the proposed sale of County land in Oceano Dunes

(see June entry), a local off-road activist tried to kick up some sand with feverish conspiracy theories

that he got into *The Tribune*, having identified two members of the 19-member grand jury as card-carrying members of the Sierra Club. His moment of media glory resulted in a smack-down by *The Tribune’s* editorial board for his “creepy, McCarthyesque” take on reality and



his belief that membership in the Sierra Club renders a juror “unfit” to serve, constitutes “gross conflict,” and “taints” the grand jury’s reports (when those reports come to conclusions that make off-roaders unhappy).

On July 10, La Perla del Mar Chapel in Shell Beach was packed to the rafters for a Sierra Club/Surfrider sponsored showing of HD under-water footage of marine life shot by biologist Terry Lilley off the SLO coast -- making the best argument for why we need to extend the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, which currently extends to Cambria, to include all the waters of San Luis Obispo County. Making SLO part of the Sanctuary will facilitate a proactive approach to ocean protection, enhancing public understanding of marine resources, helping fund scientific research, and allow local stakeholders to present a position on oil and gas development, ocean dumping and marine mammal issues.

The County granted a lot line adjustment to Hearst Ranch at San Simeon Point, the first stirrings of the corporation moving to take advantage of the many promises for coastal development it wrote into the deal for a conservation easement in 2004. The Sierra Club and SLO LandWatch appealed the County’s permission to reconfigure the lots as inconsistent with our Local Coastal Plan. At a July 14 appeal hearing, the Board of Supervisors dismissed our appeal on a 5-0 vote. We appealed to the California Coastal Commission, as did two Coastal Commissioners who gave the County Supervisors a quick lesson in the Coastal Act. The Commission found that our appeals raised substantial issues concerning the County’s approval of the lot line adjustment. A Coastal Commission hearing is pending.

AUGUST

After four months of analysis and review and productive public hearings, the County Planning Commission told the Public Works Dept. that their proposal for a Los Osos Wastewater Project could not be approved as

submitted. The Commission re-made the project to require tertiary — not merely secondary — treatment of effluent, the abandonment of the County’s proposed water-wasting sprayfields for disposal of treated effluent outside the groundwater basin, the addition of an ag re-use program for that effluent in order to reduce pumping of the stressed aquifer, and much more water conservation — all the things that concerned Los Osos residents, the Sierra Club and others had long been advocating must be part of the project while the County steadfastly maintained that they could not be. Now they are. This is what activism is about. (See January entry.)

SEPTEMBER

The SLO Coalition of Appropriate Technology published “San Luis Obispo Guide to the Use of Graywater,” a two-year effort by the Appropriate Technology Coalition —

SLO Green Build, the San Luis Bay Chapter of Surfrider and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club. This is the first guide to installing graywater systems in the county.

The Sierra Club joined the overwhelming majority of speakers at a meeting on the proposed upgrade of the Morro Bay/Cayucos Wastewater Treatment Plant, urging the communities to re-think as dictated by the suddenly changed plans — the project is now a tear-down and rebuild, not an upgrade, in a floodplain, eliminating current sludge handling facilities and lacking any recycled water component.

OCTOBER

October 24 was Climate Action Day worldwide, and the Chapter helped promote events in Cambria, Atascadero, SLO and Avila Beach, coordinated by 350.org to underline the safe threshold for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere: 350 parts per million. After the “most widespread day of political action in the planet’s history” (CNN), ninety-two nations, all poor and vulnerable to the early effects of climate change, endorsed that 350 target.

Santa Lucia Chapter Director Andrew Christie attended the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s western U.S. hearing on proposed changes to the Environmental Impact Study for nuclear reactor license renewals, held in Pismo Beach. He pointed out that the NRC’s assessment of alternative energy sources was pathetic. (“The EIS’s version of wind and solar power and renewable energy storage technology is cursory, severely out of date or wholly lacking. It is of no use in an alternatives analysis that should evaluate the viability of nuclear power plants over



Oct. Climate Action Day in Atascadero.

a 20-year period that will be marked by increasing cost and scarcity of nuclear fuel and increasing costs of plant maintenance and repair, simultaneously with smart grid and renewable energy storage technologies coming on line as the price of solar and wind power continues to drop.”)

NOVEMBER

Local signature gatherers start soliciting pedestrians for the anti-public power ballot initiative bankrolled by PG&E. They tout the

initiative as “inspiring more ethical business practices for selling power.” Those who read “The PG&E Plan: Trick the Voters and Make Them Cry” in the October *Santa Lucian* knew better than to sign.

The Appropriate Technology Campaign brought a seminar on graywater systems to the Morro Bay Vets Hall, and on rainwater harvesting to Paso Robles City Hall.

Sierra Club filed an opposition brief in *Friends of Oceano Dunes v. County of San Luis Obispo and Sierra Club v. California Dept. of Parks and Recreation*, challenging arguments that State Parks can declare that its policies at the Oceano Dunes State



Nov. Rainwater harvesting seminar at Paso City Hall.

Vehicular Recreation Area preempt County policies and state-mandated Local Coastal Plan provisions that restrict OHV activity on County land in the dunes. They dropped their “preemption” argument.

DECEMBER

The County Air Pollution Control District released its follow-up study



on the particulate air pollution, the worst in the county, afflicting the residents of the Nipomo Mesa, confirming that the culprit is off-road vehicle use at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. The Santa Lucia Chapter pointed to the same conclusion in 2003 in our video *Easing the Throttle: Issues in Management of the Oceano Dunes SVRA*, which presented David Chipping’s testimony on how vehicles break the surface crust of the dunes, making the sand more easily airborne.

On December 13, four days before the Planning Commission finalized its update of the Conservation and Open Space Element, Chapter Chair Karen Merriam’s *Tribune* viewpoint (“A New Reality of Solar Power”) got out the latest word on locally distributed energy generation such as rooftop solar: It’s far more capable of meeting the state’s renewable energy goals than previously thought (and as it is still characterized by its competitor, investor-owned utilities.)

The Chapter filed a protest with the Bureau of Land Management over its scientifically unsupportable grazing policies in the proposed Resource Management Plan for the Carrizo Plain National Monument.



Our Loss

At the end of the County Planning Commission's December 17 meeting, Commission Chair Sarah Christie announced her resignation after five years of service. Following is the text of her remarks.



Commissioners, before we adjourn I have some news to share with you and staff and members of the public. I am resigning today as District 5 Planning Commissioner, effective upon adjournment of this meeting.

As you know, we all serve at the pleasure of our Supervisor. Unfortunately, Supervisor Patterson has made it clear that he no longer supports my continued service on this Commission, so I am stepping down. He has grown weary of defending me against the criticism that has been lodged against me from the start, which has escalated in intensity since the new Board and the new Commission were seated in January. He says he can no longer defend me because, more often than not, he now finds himself in agreement with my critics.

This is troubling to me, because I have been nothing if not consistent on this Commission. I have been an advocate for affordable housing, public transportation, clean air and water, ag land protection, open space and habitat preservation, and public access to a fair and transparent democratic process. These are the values I have always held, and moreover, they are the values on which the Supervisor ran when he defeated Mike Ryan in 2004. Unfortun-

I have been nothing if not consistent on this Commission.

nately the manufactured controversy fomented by a small group of special interests in this county who have historically maintained a stranglehold on the decision-making machinery of county government has succeeded in perpetuating what is now a self-implementing myth: that I am not fit for public service.

That said, the work of this Commission is too important, and the commitment of time and energy is too great for me to continue to represent a Supervisor who no longer supports that work.

And it's a sad day for me, because I am deeply committed to protecting and conserving this county's natural and human resources through enlightened land use planning. The last five years have been a deeply rewarding and challenging experience in which I take great pride. This last year in particular has been a pleasure and a joy, because I have so enjoyed working with the four of you. And "work" is the operative word here. In all the years I have been observing, serving on, and interacting with the planning commission, I have never seen a harder working group, or a more thoughtful and substantive commission. I'm proud to have been a part of it. I'm proud of the accomplishments of this commission and staff over the last 12 months, includ-

ing our work on the Grading ordinance, the Conservation and Open Space Element, our courageous denial of the sand and gravel mines and the San Miguel Ranch, and of course our work on the Los Osos sewer.

Gene, you were here when I got here and you're here to see me go, and every day in between you have been a consummate gentleman and a quiet and steadfast voice for smart growth and agriculture, and I appreciate your contribution.

Carlyn, I've known you since long before you took this appointment, and I am so pleased we got to serve together as colleagues for the year. It's been a pleasure.

Bruce, you have been such a wonderful surprise. You had trepidations about taking this job because you hadn't done this kind of work before, but you do your homework and you ask good questions, you advocate for your position and keep an open mind, and I don't think anyone can ask for anything more from their planning commissioner.

Anne, I almost feel like we're foxhole friends at this point, we've been in the trenches together for so long. And I think we've made a really good team as we've taken on some of the challenges like the Viewshed ordinance, the condo conversion, temporary events and mobile home ordinances, and the Smart

Growth amendments. In particular, you had my back through the Santa Margarita Ranch hearings, and I will always remember that. Thank you.

And I can't leave without acknowledging all the members of the public who come to these hearings year after year to participate in the decisions that shape our communities. You inform those decisions, you improve the outcomes, and you make a difference. And while you may not always get the result you want, you have to know that San Luis Obispo County would not be the lovely, livable place that it is today without your continued advocacy and engagement, and I look forward to joining you, again, shortly.

The silver lining here is that I know that I am leaving the county's resources in competent, compassionate hands. I know that you will welcome my replacement warmly and you will mentor him as he works his way up the learning curve. And I hope you know that you can call on me if I can ever provide a perspective or institutional recollection that you may find useful.

I only hope I have contributed to the future well-being of this county half as much as I have been personally enriched by this experience. It's been an honor, and it's been a labor of love. Namaste.

Denneen Award

continued from page 1

Lawn Bowling. She will be the 71st recipient of this award at their big Earth Day celebration in April."

Now, for the first time in print, we are pleased to publish the full honor roll of those who have been recognized for their work over the years by the Central Coast's godfather of environmental activism:

BILL DENNEEN ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD WINNERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 70. Andrew Christie | 35. Bill Robinson |
| 69. David Weisman | 34. Pam Heatherington |
| 68. Hilda Zacarias | 33. Cindy Cleveland |
| 67. Terry Lilly & Sue Sloan | 32. Susie Aguilar |
| 66. Russ Hodin | 31. Eric Greening |
| 65. Dave Georgi | 30. Rochelle Becker |
| 64. Karen Merriam | 29. Larry Veheilg |
| 63. Betty Faas | 28. Marla Morrissey |
| 62. Jane Swanson | 27. Patty Herrera |
| 61. David Gonzalez | 26. Mary Caldwell |
| 60. Mariah Gonzalez | 25. Save the Mesa |
| 59. Sasha Stackhouse | 24. Dirk & Bonnie Walters |
| 58. Laura MacCarley | 23. Amy Shore |
| 57. Dennis Apel | 22. Raye Fleming |
| 56. Sarah Christie | 21. David Chipping |
| 55. Mark DiMaggio | 20. Bud Laurent |
| 54. David Broadwater | 19. Bob Banner |
| 53. James Murr | 18. Tim Gallagher |
| 52. Silvia Toscano | 17. Jim Blakley |
| 51. Ian Wells | 16. Vie Oberrn |
| 50. Brianna Martin | 15. Jean Barry Schuyler |
| 49. Charles Wells | 14. Jim & Sue Higman |
| 48. Gwen Tindula | 13. Pat Veesart |
| 47. Clark Campagna | 12. Anne Stubbs |
| 46. Katherine Greig | 11. Jim Merkel |
| 45. Monica Cruz | 10. Herb Kandel |
| 44. Jan Marx | 9. Charlie & Cindy Gulyash |
| 43. Roger Wightman | 8. Klaus Schumann |
| 42. Donna Gilbert | 7. Ernie Simpson |
| 41. Lisa, East Fork Farm, OR | 6. David Blakely |
| 40. Jack Beigle | 5. Kathy Diperi |
| 39. Peter Douglas | 4. Gary Felsman |
| 38. Peg Pinard | 3. Geof Land |
| 37. Jim Patterson | 2. Janice Fong Wolf |
| 36. Richard Kranzdorf | 1. Steve Aslandis |

Your Trip

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ture, such as lodge-based family outings, to rugged athletic challenges, like wilderness backpacking. We also run special interest trips such as birding, art and writing, and women-only backpacking.

For winter and early spring, we feature both warm weather destinations and snow trips. Here are just a few to choose from:

- * Snow: ski, snowshoe, or dog mush in Alaska, Canada and the Lower 48
- * Backpack: trek through untouched wilderness with a team of hardy explorers
- * Lodge: enjoy the outdoors by day and return each night to the comforts of home
- * Service: mix work with play on a fun and rewarding volunteer vacation
- * National Parks: see the best of our spectacular national parks
- * International: visit exotic locales from Central America to the Far East

If you'd like to learn about upcoming trips, or receive the inside scoop on the latest outdoor vacations, be sure to add your name to our list at www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/. We promise not to bombard you with emails - just periodic roundups of the very best getaways, including bargain adventures, domestic excursions, and expeditions in far away lands.

No matter what your passion, we've got a trip to satisfy your adventuring appetite. We hope to see you on an outdoor adventure soon!



"Inside the Cliff Palace"
Mesa Verde, N.P.S.

"Painting with Light" Notecards Available

Celebrated local photographer Paul McCloskey has created notecards from prints of dozens of his most remarkable photos. Notecard sets are available from the Santa Lucia Chapter office @ \$6.00 each. For all notecards purchased through the Chapter, Mr. McCloskey donates one third of your purchase price to the Sierra Club.

Drop by our office at 547-B Marsh Street in downtown SLO, or contact Kim Ramos at kim.sierraclub8@gmail.com, or 543-8717.

Lose the 'foam

By Kim Ramos

According to Seba B. Sheavly of The Ocean Conservancy, in a report to the Plastic Debris Rivers-to-Seas Conference, "Marine debris is one of the most pervasive and solvable pollution problems plaguing the world's oceans and waterways." The major sources of debris come from consumption activities taking place on land that get washed into our waterways and into the ocean, and include food wrappers, beverage containers, cigarettes and related smoking materials.

Although plastic food containers are

bad, polystyrene (a product family that includes Styrofoam) is much worse. Styrene, recognized by the EPA as a carcinogen and neurotoxin, can leach into the food and drink the containers hold and the water bodies in which they frequently end up. Styrene mimics estrogen in the body and can disrupt normal hormone functions, possibly contributing to thyroid problems, menstrual irregularities, and other hormone-related problems, as well as breast cancer and prostate cancer. It doesn't biodegrade, but breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces which often end up in

the marine environment and are eaten by fish and birds. The plastic toxins accumulate in their tissues and are then taken up by humans when they in turn eat the fish and birds.

An accumulating body of research and a greater understanding of the problems of marine debris have convinced the California Ocean Protection Council and numerous environmental groups to focus on a strategy to reduce plastic waste, and almost 100 municipalities to ban polystyrene and plastic bags.

The Morro Bay High School Environmental Club is working to address the problem of plastic pollution through a campaign to:

(1) Raise awareness about the problems caused by single-use polystyrene containers in our coastal and marine environment and the availability of alternatives.

(2) Persuade businesses on the Estuary that provide take out food and drink in polystyrene food and beverage containers to switch to biodegradable alternatives.

(3) Produce educational and presentation materials to share with businesses and the public.

If you would like more information or to sign up for a presentation for your group, please send an email to kim.sierraclub8@gmail.com. And lose the foam.



Algalita Marine Research Foundation

Diablo

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democratic processes which have historically eluded the nuclear industry.

And that, as Alliance outreach coordinator David Weisman explained to reporters at the scene, is where the story gets interesting. PG&E was granted \$16.8 million in ratepayer funds in 2007 by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to study the feasibility of renewing Diablo Canyon's license for 20 years. At the same time, Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee sponsored legislation, AB 1632, which required the California Energy Commission (CEC) to conduct a full cost/risk/benefit study of continuing to operate the nuclear reactor. That study continues to be a work in progress, but a year ago, the CEC said this:

The Energy Commission, with the CPUC, should develop a plan for reviewing the overall costs and benefits of nuclear plant license extensions, the scope of the evaluation, and criteria for the assessment... The review should include: plant safety culture and maintenance, waste storage, transport and disposal plans, seismic hazards, comparison with generation and transmission alternatives, and contingency plans for long-term outages. This is the information the state must evaluate to determine if California should continue to rely on aging reactors and a co-located high-level radioactive waste facility sited within two and a half miles from two offshore active earthquake faults.

In granting PG&E the ratepayer funding for their internal feasibility study, the CPUC added: "PG&E should defer to the extent feasible its work on its own study, and associated spending, until after the CEC issues its finding and conclusions. PG&E should incorporate the findings and recommendations of the CEC study in its own work."

The most pressing concern for residents of the Central Coast should be PG&E's failure to complete the seismic studies required by AB 1632. Blakeslee — a Ph.D. in seismology — raised questions about the effects on California's economy if Diablo were struck with a devastating earthquake like the one that crippled the Kashiwazaki reactor in Japan in 2007.

At that site, which the utility believed had been designed for every conceivable seismic event, a 6.8 earthquake on an unknown fault shut down the facility, costing Japanese ratepayers over \$12 billion in replacement power and related repairs. It has

only regained limited use today. With the discovery of the new and unstudied "Shoreline Fault" half a mile from Diablo in 2008, this took on new urgency. However, in recent communiqués to the CEC, PG&E says they are still a few years away from completing the high-tech 3-D seismic mapping studies requested by Blakeslee and the CEC. (The point of AB 42, Blakeslee's bill mandating such studies — see "Try It Again, Sam," below — was that PG&E *must* do the studies *before* filing for license renewal.)

Why, then, would PG&E take shareholder money and file a relicensing application with the NRC before all the answers needed first have been presented to California state oversight agencies? PG&E may be hoping that they can preclude public participation in the process, because on issues of safety, security and health, the federal NRC pre-empts all state authority and control. Historically, of the more than 50 license renewal applications filed with the NRC, none have ever been rejected—including those from states that raised seismic concerns. The NRC also accepts PG&E's current claims, without conducting any new studies, that the "Shoreline Fault" poses no threat.

However, California is a special place. As a result of a famous case from 1983 known as "Sun Desert" (and more formally as *Pacific Gas & Elec. v. Energy Resources Comm'n*, 461 U.S. 190), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that, nuclear or not, "States exercise their traditional authority over economic questions such as the need for additional generating capacity, the type of generating facilities to be licensed, land use, and ratemaking." And those decisions reside at the moment particularly with the California Energy Commission and Assemblyman Blakeslee's study. The state has asked "how much" continued reliance on the aging reactors will cost, especially if a Kashiwazaki-style quake event occurs. In a statement to the San Francisco Chronicle on the day of PG&E's announcement, Commissioner James Boyd wrote: "The California Energy Commission is concerned that PG&E has not completed all of the studies... nor have they provided state officials and the public an opportunity to review the overall economic and environmental costs and benefits of a license extension for Diablo Canyon."

PG&E can thumb their noses at our state legislators and regulators; they can trot out discredited former

environmentalists like Patrick Moore, now a paid spokesman for the nuclear industry; they can say they'll show us their economic feasibility study—which we paid for—sometime next year; they can hope Californians will forget that the last time they tried to claim there were no earthquake faults worth investigating near Diablo, ratepayers ended up forking over \$4 billion dollars to repair PG&E's goofs. They can do that, all the while claiming that nuclear power is "affordable."

But they can only do that if we forget; if we let them.

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility is prepared to take on a leader-

ship role in pressing the CPUC and the CEC to assert our state's rights—but massive public pressure will be necessary. At some point, PG&E will have to file with the Public Utilities Commission if they want to recoup ratepayer funding, and we will need to hire lawyers and intervene in this precedent-setting case. The issues of state's rights and local control versus federal pre-emption will be on trial.

California has the legal tools to prevail in that fight. We can lead the nation in creating the progressive energy model of the future. This is no time to let that tool be wrested from our hands.

Try It Again, Sam

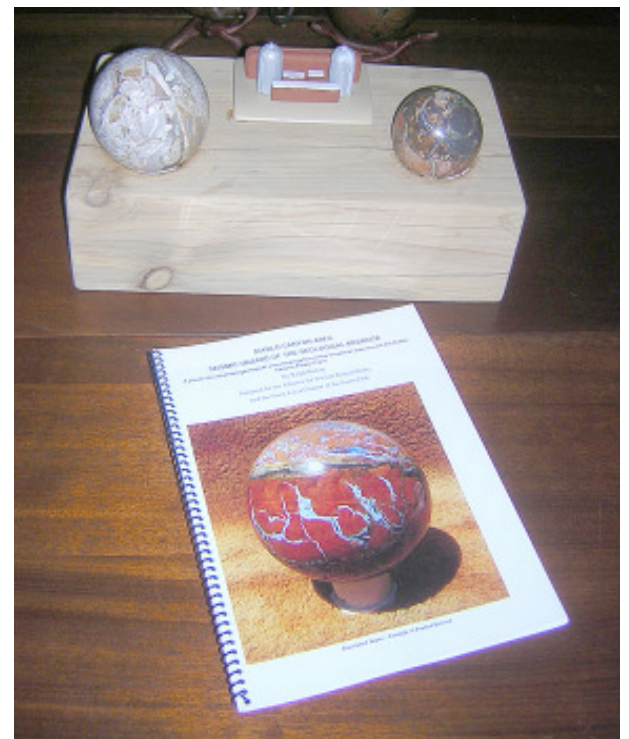
Last year, the state Assembly and Senate passed Assembly Bill 42, which would have required three-dimensional seismic mapping of the area around the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, a very good idea in light of the newly discovered earthquake fault less than a mile offshore, which is only the latest previously unknown fault to have been discovered around Diablo.

In October, for no good reason, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill. It remains a very good idea, so the Santa Lucia Chapter and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility gave the bill's author, Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee, a copy of a very limited, hot off the press edition of *Diablo Canyon Area: Seismic Hazard of the Geological Bedrock*, a highly detailed photo-documented geological tour of the area prepared for ANR and the Santa Lucia Chapter by Ralph Bishop, a local geologist with fifty years of field study experience.

Bishop also provided polished mineral spheres for a model accompanying his report of the "network of chaotic multi-

dimensional faulting" around Diablo. The spheres — brecciated jasper from the saddle of Prefumo Canyon, just north of the power plant, and brecciated rhyolite from Avila Bay, just south of the power plant — graphically show the crushing effects of the Pacific tectonic plate as it moves against the American plate and the resulting shattered bedrock that makes up the geological profile of Diablo Canyon.

Call it 3-D seismic mapping, grassroots style. We hope that Mr. Bishop's independent efforts will keep the very good idea of the 3-D mapping of Diablo, and a determination to get the real thing done, foremost in the mind of the author of AB 42.



Spheres: Ralph Bishop. DCNPP model: Rick Keller. Base: Ken Haggard

It's Getting Ridiculous

continued from page 2

of neighbors, who pointed out the site's problematic water restrictions, the lack of analysis of the cumulative impacts of all the wineries proliferating in that area of Highway 46, and the lack of a traffic analysis from CalTrans, the hearing officer scaled down the request slightly. Based on "what feels better in my gut," he decided to permit 12 events per year, with up to 150 people in attendance. "I can't point to any science," he said, "but that's what feels better to me."

The irony here is that the Winery Ordinance was created to make it easier for wineries to hold commercial events, because such events are critical to the successful marketing of their agricultural product: wine. If the applicant had invested in the construction of a winery and/or tasting room on site, he would have only been eligible for 6 events of 80 people per year. If he wanted more, he would have been subject to a hearing before the Planning Commission for a Conditional Use Permit—a higher level of review than a Minor Use Permit, which is decided by a hearing officer; that is, a single staff planner.

This process has now been turned on its head. Unless the Board overturns this decision on appeal, owners of ag land can now qualify for an unlimited number of events with virtually no on-site agricultural use whatsoever, and -- depending on a hearing officer's "gut" -- they can count on getting at least *twice as much development with a simpler, cheaper Minor Use Permit*. If the Board upholds the decision, commercial event centers will proliferate on Ag land through the less-than-rigorous Minor Use Permit process.

Because the Supervisors did not uphold consistent planning standards and make the protection of agriculture paramount in their interpretation of the Temporary Events Ordinance, permit requests are now stampeding into the temporary events permit process, where they can take advantage of the Board's declaration of open season on Ag land.

So why does it matter if farmers make a few extra bucks by renting their land for a wedding or a rock concert now and then?

Because for the most part, it isn't farmers who are cashing in on this policy. It is people who own ag-zoned land and see the potential for bigger profits in commercial events instead of orchards or row crops.

Ag zoned land is zoned that way for a reason. *We need active agriculture to maintain a balanced economy, healthy watersheds, and the ability to provide food for our communities*. When entrepreneurs can buy cheap ag land and turn it into corporate retreats and event centers, it drives up the price of all ag land, virtually assuring that no young, enterprising farmer will ever be able to afford the down payment and make the land pay as agriculture.

Under the scenario the Supervisors created last October, our agriculture is on track to being reduced to a scenic backdrop for a proliferation of gazebos, dance floors and parking lots, set to amplified music. For that to happen, all you need now in SLO County is three acres of grape vines.

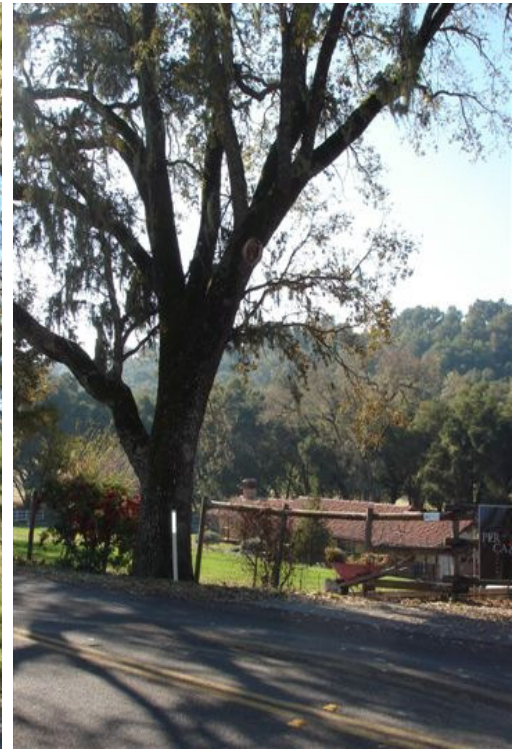
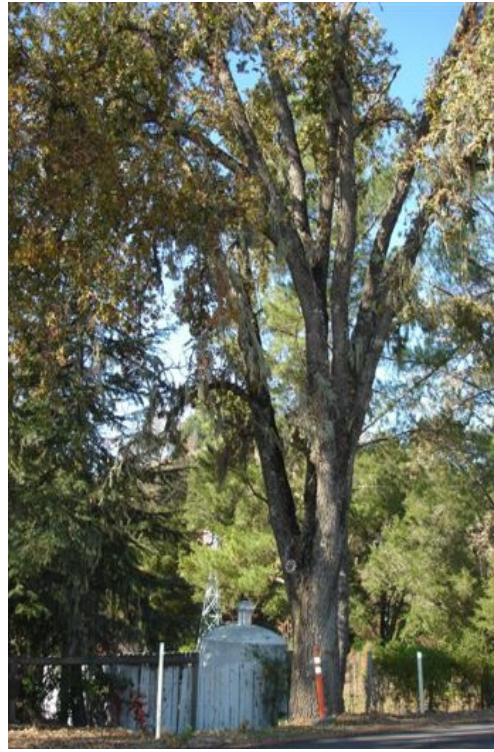
The County can't force a land owner to plant tomatoes or raise cattle. But the County *can* make sure that our ultimate ag resource—the land—remains viable, intact and available for agriculture. This can be achieved via the mechanism known as "land use planning." The Board of Supervisors should look into it.

Winery, Spare Those Trees

Alarmed at the number of wineries now on Vineyard Drive in Paso Robles — seven in a four-mile stretch, and six more in another two miles — concerned neighbors weighed in late last year when another Vineyard Drive landowner requested a permit for yet another winery.

Local resident Alison Denlinger requested a hearing on the Minor Use Permit requested for the Teckman Winery proposal. She got that hearing, before a County Planning hearing officer, on December 4.

Among her, and our, major concerns: The County's plan to remove two large oak trees so that the driveway could be widened, and the



Alison Denlinger

cumulative traffic impacts of all the events and all the public tasting rooms that would be concentrated into the area.

A dozen letter-writers, including the Santa Lucia Chapter, weighed in. Planning staff visited the site, and

agreed. Upshot: No oak trees will be removed, no tasting room, production limited to 2,500 cases, no amplified music, not open to the public.

"Just goes to show that together we can (sometimes) make a difference," wrote Denlinger.

Dalidio

continued from page 5

us, are free to make bad business decisions. Measure J now allows the Dalidio developers great freedom to make bad business decisions. They could decide to build a 560,000 square foot shopping mall and huge sewer plant next to established homes, without mitigating the negative impacts, including gridlock.

But if they build the mega-mall, how could anyone get there? No one—not the County, the City, Cal Trans, nor the developer—can afford to construct the approximately \$72 million Interchange necessary to

prevent gridlock generated by a project that size, in that location. If they go the Measure J route, the developers will face yet another groundswell of community opposition and constant monitoring by CPR.

CPR & the urban farm

We are happy to announce that CPR has been named a stakeholder in the creation of the Master Plan for the 90 acres. What form should the urban farm take? See the SLO City website, www.slocity.org/naturalresources/

agreferencematerials.asp

You are invited to join us and other stakeholders on January 14, 2010, at 5:30 pm in the Council Hearing Room at City Hall. If you are interested in being a part of a group that receives periodic email updates relating to this project, email April Richardson (arichard@slocity.org). After creation of the Master Plan, CPR will continue to work hard to support its implementation and make sustainable urban farming on City land for the public good a reality here on the Central Coast.

Doughnut

continued from page 4

we avoid a bias toward identifying areas for growth *outside* reserve lines instead of *inside*, where our Strategic Growth Implementations call for them to be? After all, we tend to find things where we are looking, not where we avoid looking!

But perhaps the greatest affront to our "Strategic Growth" principles is the open window, until November 2010, for "Property Owner Requests." Rural landowners who wish to upzone will get a subsidized ride as passengers on a train that is already moving. While rural applicants will still pay a flat fee, they will not have to arrange and pay for their own individual environmental review, nor for the consultants who normally shepherd individual applicants through all stages of the process.

This courtesy is *not* to be extended to those inside existing towns and villages; even though they live where our policies say growth should be encouraged, they get to pay for the subsidizing, not to be subsidized. The consequence of this on the ground is likely to be a surge of applications for leapfrog development in the midst of our rural and agricultural lands, with the attendant impacts of habitat and wildlife corridor fragmentation, added traffic on rural roads, and increasing stress on farmers and ranchers who

want to stay in agriculture.

So far, the authorization to move forward with this contrary process has been a matter of generalities. The Board approved a work plan while leaving many details for future meetings. At press time, the next meeting at which such a discussion is tentatively scheduled is that of January 12th. (It would be good to double-check this and all agendas, as items are sometimes shuffled to other dates.) It is important for the public to show up and to ask how the Land Use and Circulation Element's rural-specific process can be reconciled with policies encouraging growth in existing communities, how communities that do *not* wish to expand outside their reserve lines can make their wishes clear, and how the perverse impacts of economic incentives for rural upzonings can be mitigated.

We also need to monitor standards protecting biological and cultural resources; now that standards in all area plans will be superseded, we need to be sure that their protectiveness is also superseded, not undermined. Most of all, we need to remind the Board that even though this doughnut is being designed with holes, they are only holes in our minds; in reality, it is in those holes that most of the supervisors' constituents live!

Update: Reserve or Feedlot?

In our October issue, Jeff Kuyper of Los Padres Forest Watch reported on the shocking state of the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, portions of which have clearly been allowed to become a commercial feedlot for cattle, with severe environmental degradation — erosion, trampled wetlands, hillside terracing, and other evidence of grazing inside the Reserve where cattle are prohibited — all in violation of the lease agreement administered by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Los Padres ForestWatch, the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club and five other conservation groups sent a letter to DFG and the Wildlife Conservation Board detailing the destruction and demanding action to protect Reserve resources.

On October 30, Fish and Game Regional Manager Jeffrey R. Single wrote back to say that the Department is "actively working with the operator to rectify this issue and have directed the lessee to remove the cattle from all pastures which do not meet minimum standards for that pasture. We have directed him to repair fences which are in disrepair if cattle will be present."



Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **January 12**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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sierraclub8@gmail.com



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Got Graywater if You Want It

The Sierra Club has on hand a limited supply of *The San Luis Obispo Guide to the Use of Graywater*, the new manual produced by the Appropriate Technology Coalition -- SLO Green Build, the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club and the San Luis Bay Chapter of Surfrider.

Graywater systems turn a waste product that can comprise up to 80% of residential wastewater into a valuable resource for irrigation and other non-potable uses. Harvesting graywater to meet your non-potable water needs utilizes an appropriate technology that can recover initial costs quickly. No permit required.



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Sharing the Dream invites you to the 15th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday event

When: Jan. 16th 2010
 11- 5 pm.
Where: Laguna Middle School Multi-Purpose room.
Activites: Music by: Louie Ortega, Al "Shival" Redwine, Higher Movement dancers, California Arts International, David Smith, Tim Jackson, & House of prayer choir plus Martin Luther King Videos.
Entrance Fee: \$10

Lunch provided by Bon Tempe Creole Cafe, served for \$5 a plate.

Contact: sharingthedream@kcbx.net



Outings and Activities Calendar

Seller of travel registration information: CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

All 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 Chair Joe Morris, 772-1875. For information on a specific outing, please call the outing leader.

Sat., Jan. 9th, 9:30 a.m. Cerro San Luis Hike. Start the New Year outdoors with a hike up Cerro San Luis for a look at all of SLO in 2010. Meet at the Fernandez Road parking area (Marsh Street to 101 south on-ramp) at 9:30 A.M. for an energetic and just a little strenuous hike to the summit (1000 ft. elevation gain). Trail is rough in places, just over 4 miles round trip. Boots or sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Leader: Mike Sims, 459-1701, msims@slonet.org

Sun., Jan. 10th, 10 a.m. Eagle Rock Nature Trail. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of using trekking poles. 2.2 miles/720 feet elevation change. The trailhead is located across from Cuesta College at El Chorro Regional Park. From SLO, take Highway 1 North and turn east (right) at the first of two turn signals to El Chorro Regional Park. Follow the signs to the Day Use area, passing the ball fields and Botanical Garden. Park in the Day Use area at the end of the road, just before the locked gate. Confirm with David Georgi at polecatleader@gmail.com 458-5575 for upcoming activities. Bipeds welcome.

Fri-Sun, January 22-24, Wilderness Restoration - Death Valley National Park. Come help protect Death Valley National Park from abuse by illegal off-road traffic. This wilderness restoration project along the park's scenic eastern boundary in the Amargosa Valley involves installation of signs, raking out vehicle tracks and moving rocks. Meet late Friday afternoon, or early Saturday morning, work Saturday and part of Sunday. Camping Friday and Saturday nights will be in a Park Service camping area (no water, portable toilets). Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen@wildblue.net, (661-944-4056). CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat., Jan. 23rd, 10 a.m. Quarry Trail. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of using trekking poles. 2 miles/320 feet elevation change. Meet at the at the Cabrillo Peak trailhead. From SLO, go 12 miles north on Hwy 1 to Los Osos/Baywood Park exit just before Morro Bay. Go south on Southbay Blvd. and drive .7 miles to the State Park entrance. Continue straight for .2 miles and look for the dirt parking lot on the left. It is easy to miss. Do not wait at the Live Oak trailhead, which is shortly after the Quarry trailhead. Confirm with David Georgi at polecatleader@gmail.com or 458-5575 for upcoming activities. Bipeds welcome.

Tues, January 26, 7 p.m. Bimonthly General Meeting: 1st Annual Environmentalists' Rendezvous! What are the major environmental groups in SLO County up to? Here's a unique opportunity to meet seven key players, all in one place. The roundtable confab will feature staff from the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, Audubon Society, ECOSLO, Morro Bay Nat. Estuary Program, SLO Land Conservancy, and our own Sierra Club

chapter. Each will mention their premier projects and plans for 2010, allowing time for questions. -- all under the gaze of the great-horned owl from Pacific Wildlife Care. Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Free. Info: Joe, 772-1875.

Sat-Sun, January 30-31, Fencing a Wilderness - Golden Valley Wilderness Area. During the past year, a long fence has been constructed along the northern boundary of the Golden

Valley Wilderness to prevent illegal vehicle entry. Where this fence is still high above the ground, we will assist Marty Dickes of the Ridgecrest BLM office in placing reinforcements. For those who wish to stay over on Monday, there will be a hike up one of the nearby peaks. Car camping; potluck Saturday evening. Contact leader: Craig Deutsche, (310-477-6670), craig.deutsche@gmail.com. CNRCC Desert Committee



Outings Sponsored by Other Organizations

Jan. 1, 9:30 a.m. Mussel Rock Hike with Kara Blakeslee. You are invited on the annual Bill Denneen hike to Mussel Rock/Paradise Beach in the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes, on New Years Day. Bill has led this hike for countless years, but may not go the whole distance this time. (We'll see about that!) Meet at Guadalupe Beach (take Main Street to the west from Santa Maria to parking lot on the beach, or drive south on Highway 1 through Guadalupe, turning right/toward the west on Main Street). Bring: water(!), food, layered clothing, sunscreen, hat, and shoes comfortable for a beach and dune hike. If you feel like it, perhaps bring a poem, or something inspirational to share with fellow hikers. Expect a moderately strenuous hike of 4-5 hours, depending on your speed. Kids are welcome, and there's no problem turning back early. Sadly, Fido has to stay at home. We will lunch afterwards at a great restaurant in Guadalupe. If you do come, please let us know so we have an idea of what to expect. If you are willing to help as a leader or "sweep," let us know, or if you have any questions. karaslo@charter.net.

Ventana Wilderness Alliance Trail Workdays in the Big Sur Area. The Ventana Wilderness Alliance is hosting many volunteer opportunities to help clear and maintain trails on

the Big Sur Coast. No experience is necessary, just the desire to be outdoors and work with others. You may be able to just come for the day or spend the weekend, depending on trip location.

Steve Benoit: Jan. 2nd, Pine Ridge Trail, Day Trip, (831-394-4234)
Dave Knapp: Jan. 22-24, Brushing on the Gamboa Trail
To sign up or to get more information contact Dave Knapp, Trail Crew Leader at daveknapp@ventanawild.org.

Central Coast Concerned Mountain Biker Trail Workdays around San Luis Obispo County. The Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers host many volunteer opportunities to help clear and maintain trails on the Central Coast. No experience is necessary, just a desire to be outdoors and work with others. You may be able to just come for the day or spend the weekend, depending on trip Location.
Saturday, January 9th, 9 a.m. - Morning Glory Trail. Meet at the end of Stenner Creek Road.
Sunday, February 7th, 8 a.m. - Montana de Oro State Park. Meet at the Visitor Center.

To sign up or to get more information, contact Greg Bettencourt, Trail Crew Leader at gmbett@charter.net

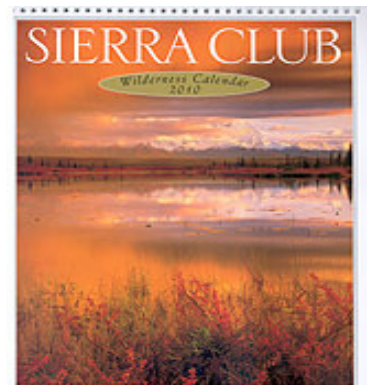
Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park, May 7-9; Jul 16-19; Aug 6-9; Sep 10-12.

The Channel Islands are Galapagos USA! Marvel at the sight of whales, seals, sea lions, rare birds & blazing wildflowers. Hike the wild, windswept trails. Kayak the rugged coastline. Snorkel in pristine waters. Discover remnants of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. These 3 & 4-day "live aboard" fundraiser cruises are sponsored by the Angeles Chapter Political Committee & Sierra Club California Political Committee. Depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' Truth. \$590 for May and September; \$785 for July & August, 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 leaders: Joan Jones Holtz & Don Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leaders for more information (626-443-0706) jholtzhl@aol.com



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.

2010 Sierra Club Calendars



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