



Oct., 2014
Volume 51 No. 9

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Don't Miss:

Oct. 24-25:
20% off Bioneers admission for Sierra Club members!
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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

The Plan for Clean Power

The EPA'S first-ever national plan to curb carbon pollution from power plants is a major opportunity

As part of the President's Climate Action Plan, the Environmental Protection Agency has proposed the Clean Power Plan, our nation's first protections from carbon pollution from power plants.

The Plan puts states in the driver's seat to hasten their shift to clean energy and reduce carbon pollution. It will also help reduce other forms of dangerous air pollution.

By cleaning up and modernizing power plants, we will begin to clean up our air, reduce pollution-related illness, and curb climate disruption. Reducing carbon pollution from power plants will not only save billions of dollars each year, it will save lives. For every dollar of investment under the Plan, we'll see roughly seven dollars in health benefits. The plan will spur innovation, accelerate the clean energy economy, and create jobs.

Sierra Club will be working to strengthen the standard, showing we

can move from dirty to clean energy much faster than EPA predicts. Solar and wind power become more cost-effective every day and continue to grow exponentially. Clean energy and energy efficiency should be the focus of states' efforts.

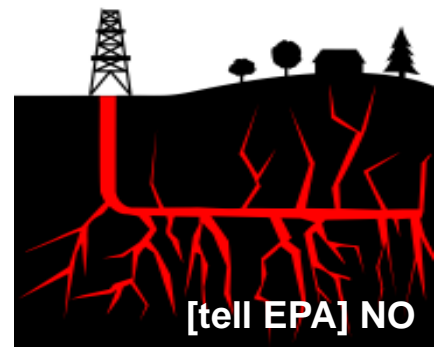
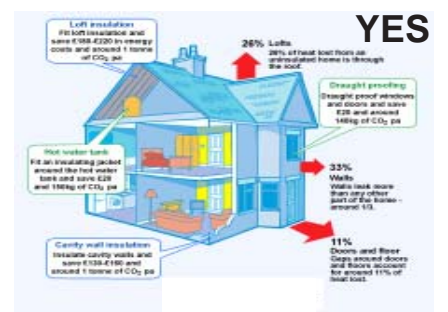
Sierra Club will also help to ensure that affected communities are engaged throughout the process, and that public resources are available to help workers and communities as they make the transition to a clean energy economy. Our country is already well on its way to meeting and exceeding the Clean Power Plan's goals, and is poised to show leadership in the transition to a clean, equitable energy future.

Carbon reduction goals

The Clean Power Plan will reduce carbon pollution from power plants 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. The EPA has estimated that the plan will make these reductions faster in the early years of the program — 29% by 2025 and 27% by 2020. We can go much further to reduce carbon pollution. Many states are already on a path to go beyond EPA's proposal by retiring dirty power plants and scaling up renewables and energy efficiency.

To set state-specific goals, EPA analyzed the strategies that states and utilities are already using to lower carbon pollution from the power sector. While the overall carbon reduction goals in the plan set out reduction relative to a 2005 baseline of emissions, the carbon pollution standards started with each state's 2012 energy mix to set that state's carbon reduction goal. These include improving energy efficiency, improving power plant operations, and encouraging reliance on low-carbon and zero-emitting electricity generation. Together, these make up what the EPA defines as the best system for reducing carbon pollution. The EPA applied these strategies consistently across every state, but each state's energy mix ultimately leads to a different goal that is unique to that state.

Many states are already on track to achieve greater carbon reductions than called for in the plan because they are retiring dirty power plants and moving to clean energy and energy efficiency more quickly and at greater scale than EPA estimates. A strengthened standard would take this progress into account as a base



to be built upon — not an excuse for states to avoid taking further climate action.

Each state will choose how to meet

Who Spun It?

Did PG&E and the NRC collude on the timing of their Diablo Canyon quake safety reports?

On September 10, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission denied a dissent by the former chief inspector at the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant, who said that new seismic data shows the plant may be vulnerable to earthquakes of greater magnitude than allowed by its license. On the same day, Pacific Gas & Electric Co. released a long-awaited seismic study that, like the NRC's ruling, also claimed that Diablo Canyon is safe.

Coincidence?

On September 18, Friends of the Earth, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, Mothers for Peace and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club filed a Freedom of Information Act request to determine whether the NRC and PG&E improv-

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photo:Kevin Walsh

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

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

A Deep Unconcern

County Supervisors lay out the welcome mat for frackers

At their September 23 meeting, the County Supervisors heard a report from staff on the current state of play in hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for oil in California.

By the industry's estimate, more than 600 oil wells have been fracked in the state over the last decade, with virtually no oversight or monitoring by the state agency that provides well permits.

Six California counties have already banned the practice or put a ban on the November ballot, for all the well-documented reasons pertaining to water contamination, air pollution, land destruction, and seismic activity. Eleven cities have also taken action in opposition to fracking.

At the very end of its September 23 meeting, awash in a sea of oil industry executives and consultants, the Board undistinguished itself by selecting the "status quo" option in the staff report and doing nothing.

In a discussion punctuated by less than engaged comments from Supervisor Adam Hill ("Can we go home?" "Let's go home and eat dinner"), the supervisors, evidently never having heard the fable of the grasshopper and the ant, noted that fracking isn't yet happening in the county, no one's submitted a fracking permit application yet, and the geology isn't perfectly suited to fracking, so there's no need to take any action now to prepare for any such eventuality in the future.

Giving the lie to that belief was the full-court press at the meeting from representatives from the California Independent Petroleum Association, Western States Petroleum Association, and what appeared to be the entire executive staff from Freeport McMoran's Arroyo Grande oil field operation, all trooping to the microphone to issue polite legal threats and tell the supervisors that banning fracking in SLO County would kill the oil industry. Many harped on the theme of energy independence, despite the fact that fracking is all about energy exports. Fracking is the reason why the U.S. has a swelling surplus of oil and gas, which the oil and gas companies are looking to sell overseas, hastening climate catastrophe.

None of the supervisors thought to ask the oil executives and lobbyists present why they were intent on urging the County not to ban a practice in which they were not engaged and/or

had no intention of engaging in.

The Sierra Club pointed out that the supervisors' faith in local and pending state regulations -- specifically Senate Bill 4 -- was misplaced. SB 4 was passed in 2013 after its regulatory and disclosure requirements were undercut by late amendments, negotiated by the oil industry, that included provisions that will hinder public access to information about fracking fluids and allow fracking to roll merrily along, free of rigorous environmental review and oversight, while the state takes two years or more to figure out a regulatory scheme and complete an Environmental Impact Report.

And the supervisors had nothing to say about this sentence in the staff report:

"...hydraulic fracturing is exempt from the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act, which address treating, storage, and disposal of hazardous wastes, protection of groundwater from injection wells, and disclosure of toxic chemicals, respectively."

The supervisors also chose to ignore 4,000 signatures on a petition turned in by SLO Clean Water Action asking for a ban, and what their staff told them is being done in other California jurisdictions that have grasped the magnitude of the threat to their citizens and natural resources:

- The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors has put a fracking ban initiative (Measure P) on the November 4 ballot.
- The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors has voted to prohibit fracking in their County.
- The Butte County Board of Supervisors has directed staff to prepare an ordinance to ban fracking.
- The Marin County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution against fracking in their County.
- The Mendocino County Board of

UNCONCERN continued on next page



Whatever The County Board of Supervisors firmly resolved to do nothing.

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TREASURERS

The **Executive Committee** meets the second Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. The **Conservation Committee** meets the second Friday at 1p.m. at the chapter office, located at 974 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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Broad Coalition Calls For a New Model of Trade

550+ groups reject fast-track trade promotion authority

On September 10, nearly 600 organizations led by the Sierra Club, AFL-CIO, the Communications Workers of America, the Citizens Trade Campaign, and Public Citizen sent a letter to Senate Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) firmly rejecting fast-track trade promotion authority and calling for a new system for negotiating and implementing trade agreements.

Fast track authority allows the executive branch to unilaterally select negotiating partner countries involved in massive “free trade” agreements, negotiate terms, decide when negotiations are complete and sign a final pact before Congress has had an opportunity to approve the contents. Signed pacts could then be rushed through Congress with a guaranteed vote in 90 days under rules that circumvent ordinary review, amendment and debate.

In the letter, the diverse coalition stated that fast track, as an outdated mechanism that would limit Congressional and public oversight over trade negotiations, is “simply not appropriate” given the broad subjects covered by today’s trade pacts, such as the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

“Fast track is the wrong track for Americans who care about the health of our families and access to clean air, clean water, and land,” said Michael Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club. “We need a new model of trade — one that protects communities and the environment while keeping the

public engaged in the policy-making process.”

In January, then-Senator Max Baucus and Congressman Dave Camp introduced a fast-track bill, the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities Act of 2014, which would strip Congress of its ability to amend or sufficiently debate trade pacts. Sen. Wyden, the current Senate Finance Chairman, is now drafting a new trade authority bill.

“There is no ‘acceptable’ version of fast track,” said Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen. “Fast-track must be replaced so Congress can steer international trade in a new direction and create agreements that actually work for most Americans.”

Instead of fast track, the letter calls for a new model of trade authority that includes a Congressional role in selecting trade partners, a set of mandatory negotiating objectives, enhanced transparency, Congressional certification that negotiating objectives have been met before trade negotiations can conclude, and more.

“We need 21st-century trade authority that allows Congress to do its job and represent the interests of U.S. workers, consumers and communities. By any name, the flawed ‘fast track’ approach still would enable negotiators to bypass Congress and put in place new and binding agreements that have real consequences for all of us,” said Larry Cohen, president of the Communication Workers of America. “A new model of trade authority is the only way to ensure that workers and communities have a voice in these trade decisions. We want to determine

what kind of economy we have, not simply accept super-power status for multinational corporations and a snails’ pace for the enforcement issues raised by the rest of us.”

Congress has regularly created new trade authority mechanisms as international trade has evolved. Fast track first went into effect under President Nixon in the 1970s. Fast-track authority was last granted during the George W. Bush administration. That law expired on June 30, 2007.

“Only with new trade negotiating authority can we secure new trade rules that can help hard working Americans build a sustainable economy and promote broadly shared prosperity,” said Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO. “Chairman Wyden has a chance to make history by being the architect of a new and democratic trade policy, and we commit to doing all we can to help achieve that goal.”

Read the letter here: <http://sc.org/WydenTrade>



Why the Climate Movement Can't Ignore Trade

by Ilana Solomon, Director, Sierra Club Responsible Trade Program

On September 21, I joined more than 400,000 community members on the front lines of climate disruption -- environmentalists, workers, students, parents, and others -- to demand action on climate and to claim our collective rights to clean water, air, and land.

As someone who has spent many years in the halls of Congress and United Nations climate conventions calling for strong climate action, this diverse, public, outspoken, and in-the-streets action was a beautiful, incredible feat that signals a tipping point in the climate movement that policy-makers will not be able to ignore.

But there is another tipping point that will affect the success of the climate movement: the free trade tipping point.

The health of our planet depends on our ability to make big changes in our economy. These changes include moving beyond fossil fuels and building local green economies. However, our current model of free trade, which is written into agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and free trade pacts like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), threatens nearly every

CLIMATE & TRADE continued on page 10

Unconcern

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Supervisors directed staff to put a fracking ban initiative on the November 4 ballot.

- The San Benito County Board of Supervisors directed staff to put a fracking ban initiative on the November 4 ballot.

- Beverly Hills has enacted a ban on fracking and other well stimulating operations from anywhere within the city as well as from any site outside city limits that would extract oil and gas underneath the city. Los Angeles and Culver City are considering similar actions. Berkeley, Carson, Compton, Fairfax, Oakland, San Francisco, Sebastopol and Sonoma have all taken under consideration or approved one or more actions in opposition to hydraulic fracturing.

- The cities of Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo and the Cambria Community Services District have sent letters to the County opposing the use of hydraulic fracturing within the County.

“This presentation,” the staff report concluded, “is intended to provide the Board with an overview so that the Board can give staff further direction, if necessary. This is consistent with the County-wide goals of promoting a well governed, safe, healthy, and livable community.”

Instead of acting consistently with those goals, the supervisors replied that they didn’t want to put county staff to any trouble or otherwise burden them with an additional workload, so if they would just keep track of the state’s efforts to put some regulations in place

and report back sometime on how that’s going, that would be fine.

Of course, as more municipalities to the north and south of us follow the lead of those that have already moved to protect themselves and do what SLO County has decided not to do, we will become an increasingly attractive target for frackers.

On a more positive note, we can assume that Supervisor Hill had a nice dinner and got a good night’s sleep.

TAKE ACTION

The Supervisors have sent a clear message to county residents: You’re on your own. It’s up to the citizens of the cities most immediately at risk -- Arroyo Grande and Pismo Beach -- to get initiatives onto city ballots to head off fracking and well stimulation in their local oil fields before it starts. Freeport McMoRan did not send in the troops to that Sept. 23 board meeting to preserve some theoretical right to frack; they came to defend an option they intend to exercise, and soon.

Get in touch with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund at celdf.org and learn about Community Rights.

Download *The Urgent Case for a Ban on Fracking* at Food and Water Watch at foodandwaterwatch.org.

Get on the SLO Clean Water Action mailing list to stay abreast of local anti-fracking actions: slocleanwateraction.org.

Get a copy of the Beverly Hills ordinance banning fracking within city limits and any attempt by oil companies to slant drill under the city: call Therese Kosterman, (310) 285-2456.



Summit meeting The Sierra Club's Responsible Trade Committee and program staff met at the Club's Harwood Lodge near Mount Baldy over the weekend of September 5 to plan strategy for the next year. Clockwise from left: Ilana Solomon, Suzanne York, Jesse Swan-huyser, Don Holtz, Fred Huette, Andrew Christie, Joan Holtz, Courtenay Lewis.

Spun

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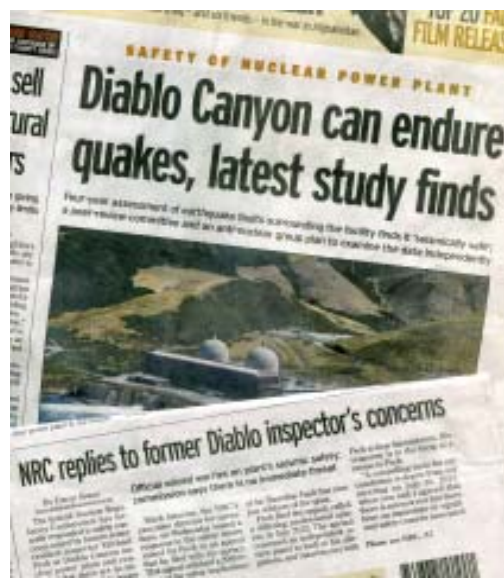
erly worked together on a public relations strategy to counteract widespread news coverage of the inspector's dissent.

In our FOIA request, we stated:

The PG&E seismic report, released on the same day [as the decision on the inspector's dissent] indicates a possible relationship between the regulator and its licensee that has brought up widespread public concern regarding the independence of the regulator. There have been numerous concerns as to how the two documents could have been released simultaneously, given that [the handling of the inspector's dissent] has been kept secret.

Our FOIA filing came three days after three PG&E executives and a senior staff member at the California Public Utilities Commission were removed for improperly working together to appoint the company's preferred judge to a case stemming from the September 2010 gas line explosion that killed eight people in San Bruno.

"You don't have to look any further than the day's headlines to see that PG&E is capable of trying to improperly influence a government regulator when its profits are on the line," said



Funny you should ask... 16 days after the Associated Press disclosed that the NRC had been sitting on Dr. Peck's dissent on the safety of Diablo Canyon, and two days after two County Supervisors inquired as to the response to that dissent (below), the NRC released the report as part of a p.r. blitzkrieg of reassurance.

Damon Moglen, senior strategic advisor for Friends of the Earth. "Unfortunately, the NRC's track record on this issue shows an unfortunate tendency to put PG&E's interests

before those of public safety. We want to find out to what extent PG&E and the NRC worked together to spin the story that Diablo Canyon is safe, despite the

mounting evidence that it is vulnerable to quakes more powerful than it was built to withstand."

San Luis Obispo County Supervisor Bruce Gibson, a seismologist and member of the Independent Peer

A MUST READ:
"How the NRC got it wrong on Diablo Canyon"
 by Dr. Michael Peck
 - www.sanluisobispo.com

Review Panel (IPRP) for Diablo Canyon appointed by the CPUC, also questioned the timing of the release of PG&E's report, saying in the September 16 issue of the *Tribune*:

PG&E chose to finalize its entire report and release it to the public before it sought any comment from—or even contacted—the peer review panel. It appears to me that PG&E's public relations staff advised them to get their story to the public before any detailed questions might be asked.

In a chilly and bizarrely Orwellian response, a letter from PG&E Director of Geosciences Richard Klimczak appeared in the *Tribune* on September 24, saying "We appreciate Supervisor Gibson's viewpoint but we will not waver from our commitment to make this information publicly available," as though that were the issue.

The reader will note, per the internal e-mail reproduced on the facing page, that Mr. Klimczak was assuring his colleagues last November that the IPRP would have two months to review the study before it would be released. (In an interesting historical footnote, when the World Business Academy released a report on potential

links between Diablo Canyon and high cancer rates in the county last March, PG&E condemned and dismissed the report because it was publicly released prior to peer review.)

Dr. Michael Peck, the former chief inspector at Diablo Canyon, filed a Differing Professional Opinion or DPO in June 2013, raising concerns that the plant might not withstand an earthquake on several fault lines that were not known when it was built more than thirty years ago. Peck called for the shutdown of the plant until and unless PG&E could prove it is safe.

The NRC took no action on Peck's DPO. On August 25, 2014, the Associated Press revealed the existence of Peck's document, prompting Senator Barbara Boxer to call a hearing to examine NRC's handling of the dissent.

As public alarm grew and the regulator's p.r. crisis deepened, the NRC suddenly announced it had ruled against Peck. Within hours, PG&E released the seismic safety study that the NRC had ordered in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in March 2011.

Under federal law, the NRC has twenty days to respond to our Freedom of Information Act request. It should be interesting.

Asserting California's Oversight of the Costs of Nuclear Power

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

505 Van Ness Avenue might not have the recognition or cachet of, say, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, but when it comes to the controversial issues now swirling around the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, it is the address to keep in mind.

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, is the headquarters of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and that is where most of the action involving the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility (A4NR) is taking place. It is the venue where California can assert its Supreme Court validated state precedent over the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to assure that ratepayers receive economical and reliable energy delivery. The CPUC is also the august body that created an Independent Peer Review Panel (IPRP) to review the planning, implementation and results of PG&E's ratepayer funded seismic study program. As the summer of 2014 came to a close, both of these oversight capabilities were challenged.

In late August, PG&E's omnibus General Rate Case (GRC) was approved by the CPUC in a manner that reaffirms California's jurisdiction.

The first issue concerned expedited transfer of highly radioactive spent fuel from liquid pools to dry cask storage—reducing the density and the danger in the pools as the California Energy Commission (CEC) has been recommending since 2008. A4NR proposed that any ratepayer monies spent to construct more cement pads at the Diablo Canyon Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) to hold the dry casks be conditioned on an expedited removal of the spent fuel to casks on those pads. PG&E opposed this recommendation on the grounds that the CPUC and the CEC have no

legal right to regulate nuclear safety issues. However, the CPUC agreed with A4NR:

This Commission has legal authority to oversee seismic study activities relating to Diablo Canyon and to condition approval of PG&E's cost recovery of \$26.1 million to construct the remaining five pads at the ISFSI in 2014 upon PG&E's submittal of a plan to expedite the transfer of spent fuel to dry casks while maintaining compliance with NRC cask and pool spent fuel storage requirements.

Second, PG&E has had a Long Term Seismic Program (LTSP) in effect at Diablo Canyon for over two decades. This license condition from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was a result of the utility's failure to seek or identify significant seismic faults during the construction of the plant, which lead to \$ 4.7 billion in seismic retrofits. More recently, AB 1632 legislated updated seismic studies to assess the vulnerability of nuclear power plants, and, since Fukushima, the NRC has required the utility to undergo a "Senior Seismic Hazard Assessment Committee" review (SSHAC)—all of which are funded by ratepayers.

However, prior to A4NR's intervention in the General Ratepayer Case, only the AB 1632 studies received independent oversight from the CPUC (more later on PG&E's subversion of this process). A4NR's perspective was neatly summarized by the CPUC, who agreed with its recommendations:

A4NR proposes that the

OVERSIGHT continued on next page

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
 Mail Stop O-16G4
 Washington, DC 20555-0001

RE: Diablo Canyon Power Plant hazard analyses

Dear Dr. MacFarlane:

In recent weeks, we have been informed of two important reports regarding natural hazards that might affect the safe operation of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCCP) located in San Luis Obispo County. Specifically, we are concerned about your Commission's analyses of the Differing Professional Opinion (DPO) issued by Dr. Michael Peck and the tsunami hazard study developed by Dr. Robert Sewell.

As you likely know, Dr. Peck's DPO asserts that the DCCP plant operator, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) has not demonstrated that the plant is capable of safely withstanding ground motions attributable to earthquakes on certain local faults. This conclusion references a safety standard based on the DCCP double design/safe shutdown earthquake. We have received copies of at least some of the DPO technical material, which was released publicly by an advocacy group.

We understand that the NRC has initially rejected Dr. Peck's DPO, but that one more appeal process remains to be completed. We request that you advise us as to when the DPO appeal will be decided.

Similarly, Dr. Sewell's tsunami hazard analysis was not deemed to require immediate attention because NRC staff questioned the "usefulness of the study for making conclusions on the safety" of DCCP. Surprisingly, however, the NRC refuses to release the Sewell report, indicating it is still in draft form and subject to further analysis.

We understand this analysis is being undertaken as part of a post-Fukushima flood hazard analysis at DCCP and that a report that effort is expected in March, 2015. While we believe that the Sewell report is an important public document and would prefer that it be released now, we are most interested in the results of the flood hazard analysis and request it be made available as soon as possible.

The safe operation of DCCP has been a matter of great public concern in San Luis Obispo County, as our residents stand to bear serious impacts if a natural, or human-caused, disaster befalls the plant. We believe it fundamentally important that the NRC conduct a thorough, timely and transparent review of all natural hazards affecting its operation, and explain the conclusions drawn from any such studies in a manner that the public can understand.

We appreciate your attention to these issues and your efforts on the public's behalf.

Sincerely,



BRUCE GIBSON
 Supervisor, District 2
 San Luis Obispo County



ADAM HILL
 Supervisor, District 3
 San Luis Obispo County

Energy

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the goal through whatever combination of measures reflects its particular circumstances and policy objectives. A state does not have to put in place the same mix of strategies that EPA used to set the goal; states may work alone or in cooperation with other states to comply with the proposed rule.

So let's make it better.

We have the opportunity to push states to choose efficiency and renewable energy over dirty and dangerous power plants. Specifically, the Sierra Club is recommending the following improvements to the standard:

1) Increase Carbon Pollution

Reduction Goals. We can transition from dirty to clean energy much faster than EPA predicts. Carbon pollution reductions can be greater and happen faster in both the near-term (2020-2025) and the longterm (2030). With stronger standards, nationwide power plant pollution can be reduced on the order of 25-30% below current levels (2012) by 2020 (equivalent to 35-40% below 2005 levels), with further reductions thereafter.

2) Promote Renewables and Energy Efficiency. Renewable energy, especially wind and solar, and efficiency have been growing at an astonishing rate and costs to deliver renewable power have declined dramatically. EPA's estimates for growth and affordability of renewable energy

and efficiency don't match this reality and should be adjusted. In addition, states should meet the new standards through renewable energy and efficiency because it is the fastest, cleanest, and most cost-effective path.

3) Avoid Use of Natural Gas and Nuclear. States should not use dirty and dangerous energy sources like nuclear or natural gas to meet their goals. Sierra Club will urge states to look first to cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as other cost effective carbon-reducing strategies that eliminate the need to subsidize aging nuclear plants that are no longer competitive. EPA should consider the full impact of the use of natural gas (from cradle to grave) in this and other standards when

evaluating its effect on climate disruption and human health.

4) Incorporate Coal Plant Retirements. EPA did not include the latest coal plant retirements when it set the state standards. If included, states could set even more ambitious goals for carbon pollution reduction.

5) Empower Affected Workers & Communities. EPA must give affected communities the opportunity to be engaged throughout the process. Sierra Club will work to ensure that the plan protects the most vulnerable communities, and that they have meaningful input in the standard setting process. In addition, Sierra Club will advocate for public resources to help workers and affected communities as they make the transition to the clean-energy economy. EPA should ensure that this standard and state programs do not exacerbate impacts on communities that are exposed to numerous sources of pollution.

The Clean Power Plan is an unprecedented opportunity for states to move beyond coal, choose clean energy and energy efficiency to meet their reduction goals, and build a true clean energy economy.

TAKE ACTION

The EPA's Clean Power Plan is a big step in the fight to get our energy from clean, renewable sources, but it needs to be stronger and you can help! Go to www.sierraclub.org and click the Take Action button under "Speak out for a strong Clean Power Plan" to get a message to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and President Obama that we can make bigger carbon reductions faster than what's in the EPA plan, and get to a clean energy future with no nukes or new natural gas power plants!

Attention Bill Denneen Award Winners

The Bill Denneen Environmental Award trustees are looking to beef up their records. If, as a reputable local eco-hooligan, you have received the Bill Denneen Environmental Award, or know an award recipient, please let that recipient know that the trustees would like to know:

- the year the award was given
- reasons why the award was given
- enviro organization(s) the awardee was affiliated with
- recipient's email



Send the info to David Georgi at dgeorgi@outlook.com

Not So, Ms. Bianchi

Cambria residents may have noticed the editorial by Shirley Bianchi in the September 18 edition of *The Cambrian* accusing us of getting our facts wrong in "Cambria CSD Still Crazy After All These Years" (Sept. *Santa Lucian*) and dragging a "red herring" into Cambria's water woes. Ms. Bianchi likes to mix it up, but, as often happened when she was a County Supervisor, she got mixed up. Our Chapter Director corrected her mistakes in an editorial reply which, as we go to press, has not yet seen print in *The Cambrian*. In case it never does, here it is: santalucia.sierraclub.org/news/news.html.



National Summit for a Nuclear Free Future

SIERRA CLUB NUCLEAR FREE CAMPAIGN

November 14-17, 2014

WHERE: The [National 4-H Youth Conference Center](#), 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD

WHO: *Sierra Club members and all those interested in ending nuclear power and dealing properly with radioactive waste. Participating organizations include the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Beyond Nuclear, Nuclear Energy Information Service, Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, Uranium Watch, Southwest Research and Information Center, the Information Network for Responsible Mining, and Earthworks.*

FRIDAY, Nov. 14:

- **DAY: Pre-Summit event** hosted by the [Nuclear Information and Resource Service](#) and the [Southwest Research and Information Center](#). Peer to peer sharing of concerns of communities where reactors have closed or will soon be closing, and communities that are being singled out for possible "centralized storage" of high-level irradiated nuclear fuel. In the morning people with the same immediate challenge will share information. In the afternoon plenary people will share common concerns and insights.
- **EVENING: Summit Kickoff A RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE: Moving to a clean energy economy through phasing out nuclear and carbon.** Speakers/discussion on EPA Carbon Rule; bailouts for coal/nuclear; gutting efficiency and renewables. Integrating the Campaigns: Sierra Club Beyond Coal, Beyond Natural Gas and Beyond Oil Campaigns and will also participate.

SATURDAY, Nov. 15: Plenary Workshops

- **CLOSING THE DINOSAURS:** Dirty coal plants, nuclear license renewals, myth of baseload
- **NUCLEAR FRONT END:** Uranium mining and milling; uranium enrichment; fuel fabrication
- **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**
- **SECURING WASTE:** High burnup fuel; waste confidence; hardened onsite storage (HOSS); centralized interim storage; transport; low level waste; importation; reprocessing

SUNDAY, Nov. 16: Strategy
Small group and plenary discussions on most useful actions, coordination and networking including:

- Media
- Engaging youth, Sierra Student Coalition
- Reports from regions on local challenges
- Co-mingling of weapons and power issues

MONDAY, Nov. 17:

- Lobby day, Congress is in session. Opportunities to meet with agencies.

FREE REGISTRATION with purchase of room (2 nights) and 6 meals: Quad room + 6 meals \$140.50; Double room + 6 meals, \$184.50; Single room + 6 meals, \$282.50. Other room/meal options available. Online registration coming soon.
Bring literature, books and DVDs, either free or for sale, for our resource tables!

See our Facebook page:
[SUMMIT FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE](#)

...or closer to home:



Multiple organizations and activists will meet at the SLO Grange Hall on Saturday, January 24, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to forge a statewide strategy for the shut-down of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. Meals provided. To get on the information list, send an e-mail to lindaseeley@gmail.com.

Election 2014: Sierra Club Endorsements

Note: Candidates that do not request to participate in the Sierra Club endorsement process cannot be endorsed by the Sierra Club

FEDERAL

Lois Capps for Congress, D-24.

Whenever you get a chance to vote for the member of Congress who established the National Marine Sanctuaries Caucus and wrote the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, take it. Capps has been an environmentally reassuring presence for so long, it's easy to think she'll always be there, but this is the wrong year to think that. The Tea Party has a real shot and they're going for it. We need to do the same. Help out at capps4congress.com.

LOCAL

Jan Marx for Mayor of San Luis Obispo. Marx has fought to ensure that city water cannot be sold outside the city limits, curbing sprawl development, and is starting to make the acquisition and preservation of natural open space visible again as a city priority. We expect her to continue to champion climate protection, habitat preservation, alternate transportation and rigorous CEQA standards, and defend the General Plan in latest development push for the Dalidio property. Go to www.janmarx.com.

Carlyn Christianson for San Luis Obispo City Council. A scrapper who has no problem pushing back when the council's anti-environmental contingent is pressing hard for more pavement & profit at any cost, Christianson is a veteran of the 2005-06 war over the Conservation and Open Space Element, in which she learned the most valuable lesson any local elected official can learn: the city council, not city staff, are supposed to be in charge. She's on Facebook at Carlyn Christianson for Council.

Tommy Gong for County Clerk-Recorder. The departing Julie Rodewald's top lieutenant is the only candidate with the skill and experience to replace her. Help make sure that Gong is the person who makes sure every vote is counted. Go to www.tommygong.com

Rick Hawley for Cambria CSD Board of Directors. Cambria, you have a problem. Here's where you start fixing it. Hawley is well versed in the community's sad water saga and advocates a watershed approach to managing San Simeon and Santa Rosa Creeks. He served 18 years as executive director for Greenspace - the Cambria Land Trust and is part of a

critically needed course correction and sea change in the bunker mentality that has set in at the CSD. Go to rickhawleyforccsd.org

STATE

Heidi Harmon for State Assembly, D-35. She's the Outreach Ambassador for the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby and Program Director for the SLO Chapter of 350.org, coordinates local educational meetings on climate change, and organized the September 21 Climate March in SLO. You get the picture.

To help send Harmon to the State Assembly, go to: heidiharmon.org.

Kamala Harris for Attorney General. As the state's top cop, Harris has aggressively defended and implemented AB 32, California's landmark climate change legislation, and ensured that local decision-makers fully consider alternatives to, and mitigation for, new projects that will impose significant environmental impacts on communities already overburdened by pollution. In January, Harris filed a U.S. Supreme Court amicus brief in support of the EPA's authority to apply the requirements of the Clean Air Act to greenhouse gas emissions from stationary and industrial sources.

Alex Padilla for Secretary of State. By making voting more accessible, convenient, and easy to understand, Padilla plans to increase voter registration and voter participation in elections. In the Senate, Padilla supports the California Clean Money campaign and has advanced legislation to ban the single-use plastic bag and promote renewable energy projects.

John Chiang for Treasurer. As Controller, Chiang racked up a sterling record on environmental issues. As Treasurer, he will promote investment in distributed generation and support other environmentally beneficial activities while sitting on state boards and commissions including the California Pollution Control Financing Authority and the California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority.

Betty Yee for Controller. There are several reasons to be excited by the opportunity to elect an environmental champion to this position. Betty Yee, a member of the State Board of Equalization, knows Climate Change is the overarching environmental problem to

tackle, and is also going to cost taxpayers a lot of money. She will promote renewable energy standards for public works projects throughout California and use her seat on the State Lands Commission to address uncontrolled fracking, water conservation, landfill waste and recycling, and income inequality. She is the only candidate who has promised not to accept campaign contributions from oil companies.

Dave Jones for Insurance Commissioner. Jones has promoted assessment of the impacts of climate change on insurance risks, and encouraged insurance companies to provide lower automobile insurance rates to people who drive less. As a member of the

Assembly, he wrote the Green Insurance Act of 2010.

Tom Torlakson for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Torlakson joined the Sierra Club in 1963, and became a Life Member in 1983. He became an Ecology teacher in 1970—the year of the first Earth Day. As State Superintendent, he has promoted California schools in the National Green Ribbon Program — www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html -- and established an Environmental Education Interagency Network and Environmental Literacy Task Force to help guide California's implementation of Education and the Environment Initiative Curriculum.

Pismo Beach election

They Can Run But They Can't Hide

Higginbotham, Vardas and Reiss are trying to escape from Spanish Springs

As Pismo Beach voters ponder Measure H and the prospect of relieving the city council of its ability to develop Price Canyon, we point out that voters should also consider retiring the sprawl-happy city council majority — Mayor Shelly Higginbotham and councilmembers Mary Ann Reiss and Kris Vardas — that made Measure H necessary.

If not for an aroused citizenry, this city council would have approved not one but two of the biggest and most unsustainable sprawl development proposals in the city's history.

On both Los Robles del Mar and Spanish Springs, the incumbents fumbled and stumbled — trying as hard as they could to do the bidding of private developers and fling sprawl into the canyons surrounding the city, but with an ineptitude that was startling to behold.

The citizens rose up, LAFCO rebuffed the council on their annexation bid for Los Robles del Mar, and the Sierra Club sued the city over Spanish Springs and won. The reality: it was the Sierra Club, mobilized citizens who turned themselves into activists, and sheer bungling by the council that spared the city from Los Robles del Mar and Spanish Springs.

How much simpler things would be if Pismo Beach had a city council that doesn't do things like that.

Mistake number one

On Los Robles del Mar, determined residents, with help from the Sierra Club, halted the ten-year march of the proposed development in 2008 when the project's severe underestimation of water usage was exposed. Residents showed that many more parcels over the basin would be developed over the coming years than were contemplated in the Environmental Impact Report, that their water use was grossly underestimated, that future agricultural

uses had not been considered, and local Meadow Creek wetlands were already being impacted by pumping for existing water needs, without the addition of the proposed 312-unit development. LAFCO concluded that



So why did we have to sue you? When candidates Kris Vardas, Mary Ann Reiss and Shelly Higginbotham try to claim they didn't "approve" Spanish Springs, they're playing games with semantics.

Thanks, Lou!

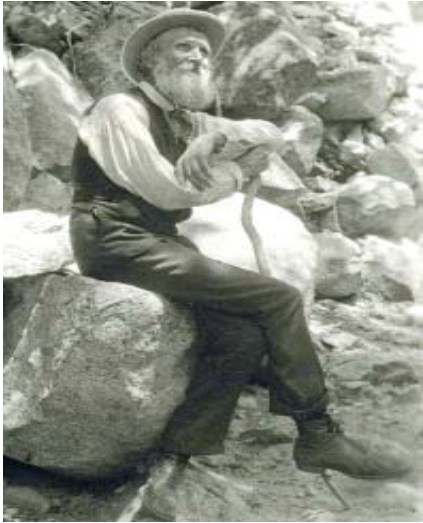
Longtime member Lou Pitelka gave us a call in September just before he moved and asked us if we'd like to have his copies of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, forerunner of *Sierra* magazine, from the 1960s. Our archive of *Bulletins* is pretty comprehensive for the '40s and '50s thanks to other generous longtime local members, but issues from the '60s -- rife with articles from environmental legends like Martin Litton, Morris Udall, and David and Ken Brower -- have been scarce. We said yes.

Much obliged, Mr. Pitelka!



from the pen of John Muir

1868 – Muir in Yosemite



July 15: Followed the Mono Trail up the eastern rim of the basin nearly to its summit, then turned off southward to a small shallow valley that extends to the edge of the Yosemite, which we reached about noon, and camped. After luncheon I made haste to high ground, and from the top of the ridge on the west side of Indian Canyon gained the noblest view of the summit peaks I have ever yet enjoyed. Nearly all the upper basin of the Merced was displayed, with its sublime domes and canons, dark upsweeping forests, and glorious array of white peaks deep in the sky, every feature glowing, radiating beauty that pours into your flesh and bones like heat rays from fire. Sunshine over all; no breath of wind to stir the brooding calm.


Never before had I seen so glorious a landscape, so boundless an affluence of sublime mountain beauty. The most extravagant description I might give of this view to anyone who has not seen similar landscapes with his own eyes would not so much as hint its grandeur and the spiritual glow that covered it. I shouted and gesticulated in a wild burst of ecstasy....

Following the ridge, which made a gradual descent to the south, I came at length to the brow of that massive cliff that stands between Indian Canon and Yosemite Falls, and here the far-famed valley came suddenly into view throughout almost its whole extent. The noble walls—sculptured into endless variety of domes and gables, spires and battlements and lain mural precipices—all a-tremble with the thunder tones of the falling water. The level bottom seemed to be dressed like a garden—sunny meadows here and there, and groves of pine and oak; the river of Mercy sweeping in majesty through the midst of them and flashing back the sunbeams. The great Tissiack, or Half-Dome, rising at the upper end of the valley to a height of nearly a mile, is nobly proportioned and life-like, the most impressive of all the rocks, holding the eye in devout admiration, calling it back again from the falls and or meadows, or even the mountains beyond—marvelous cliff, marvelous in sheer dizzy depth and sculpture, types of endurance. Thousands of years they have stood in the sky exposed to rain, snow, frost, earthquakes and avalanche, yet they still wear the bloom of youth.

I rambled along the valley rim to the westward; most of it is rounded off on the very brink, so that it is not easy to find places where one may look clear down the face of the wall to the bottom. When such places were found, and I had cautiously set my feet and drawn my body erect, I could not help fearing a little that the rock might split off and let me down, and what a down!

ECOLOGISTICS

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Communities Network Event

To learn more about Bioneers,
visit www.bioneers.org

Attention card carrying Sierra Club members: Central Coast Bioneers is offering a 20% discount on admission to the conference for any type of ticket to members of the Santa Lucia Chapter. To get your discount you must register online by October 23 and use discount code scd2014.

Addition to the Central Coast Bioneers conference: Tensegrity® instructors Renata Murez and Teo Alfero will be conducting an experiential workshop on the shamanic practice, brought to the modern world from a Toltec line of seers by Carlos Castaneda. The workshop will be take place Friday morning, October 24, from 11 to 12:30 at the SLO Grange Hall, 2880 Broad Street, and will include lecture and movement instruction. \$5 at the door or free with Total Immersion or Weekend Pass. Go to www.centralcoastbioneers.org.

— more than three thousand feet. Still my limbs did not tremble, nor did I feel the least uncertainty as to the reliance to be placed on them. ...After withdrawing from such places, excited with the view I had got, I would say to myself “Now don’t go out on the verge again.” But in the face of Yosemite scenery, cautious remonstrance was in vain; under its spell one’s body seems to go where it likes with a will over which we seem to have scarce any control.

After a mile or so of this memorable cliff work I approached Yosemite Creek, admiring its easy, graceful, confident gestures as it comes bravely forward in its narrow channel, singing the last of its mountain songs on its way to its fate—a few rods more over the shining granite, then down half a mile in snowy foam to another world, to be lost in the Merced, where climate, vegetation, inhabitants, all are different.

Emerging from its last gorge, it glides in wide lace-like rapids down a smooth incline into a pool where it seem so rest and compose its gray, agitated water before taking the grand plunge, then slowly slipping over the lip of the pool basin, it descend another glassy slope with rapidly accelerated speed to the brink of the tremendous cliff, and with sublime, fateful confidence springs out free in the air.

I took off my shoes and stockings and worked my way cautiously down alongside the rushing flood, keeping my feet and hands pressed firmly on the polished rock. The booming, roaring water, rushing past close to my head, was very exciting. I had expected that the sloping apron would terminate with the perpendicular wall of the valley, and that from the foot of it, where it is less steeply inclined, I should be able to lean far enough out to see the forms and behavior of the fall all the way down to the bottom.

But I found that there was yet another small brow over which I could not see, and which appeared to be too steep for mortal feet. Scanning it keenly, I discovered a narrow shelf about three inches wide on the very brink, just wide enough for a rest for one’s heels.

But there seemed to be no way of reaching it over so steep a brow. At length, after careful scrutiny of the surface, I found an irregular edge of the flake of the rock some distance back from the margin of the torrent. If I was to get down to the brink, that rough edge, which might offer slight finger holds, was the only way.

(Continued next issue....)

Excerpted from *My First Summer in the Sierra* by John Muir, The Modern Library, 2003.

SLO Down Cancer

First annual all star benefit concert Oct. 23



SLO County has some of the highest cancer rates in California. That’s why the Bioneers will rock the Fremont Theater on October 23 with the All-Star Benefit Concert to SLO Down Cancer.

Central Coast Bioneers and RAD Presents are joining forces for this fundraiser for San Luis Obispo’s Noor Clinic. Monies raised will be used to provide free cancer screening for SLO County residents.

Concert starts at 7:00 p.m. featuring New Times award-winning bands Shadowlands, Jody Mulgrew and the Skeleton Crew, and Proxima Parada. Patrick Contreras will headline.

Tickets are \$20 advance general admission, \$25 at the door or \$35 for VIP tickets with reserved seating and pre-concert party. Tickets available at slonoorfoundation.org, centralcoastbioneers.org, festivalafterdark.com and Boo Boo Records in SLO.

City Farm

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of engagement and interest from the students.

The long-term collaborative programming and partnership between Central Coast Grown and Pacific Beach High School is made possible with the support of the Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation, United Way of San Luis Obispo County and Janssen Youth & Youth Sports Fund, held at the Community Foundation San Luis

Obispo.

The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo is a public trust established to assist donors in building an enduring source of charitable funds to meet the changing needs and interests of the community.

For more information about Central Coast Grown and City Farm—San Luis Obispo, visit www.centralcoastgrown.org.

GMOs at Home



Pharming in SLO

by Andrew Christie

Corn genetically engineered to produce experimental drugs is being grown at an undisclosed location in SLO county.

You'd have known that a month ago if you read the *San Francisco Chronicle*. A month later, as we go to press, if you read *The Tribune* or *New Times*, you still don't know.

The fairly interesting local news story that residents of San Francisco got to read about us in the September 8 *Chronicle* began thus:

At a secret location among the vineyards of California's Central Coast, a plot of genetically engineered corn is producing proteins for industrial and pharmaceutical uses, including an experimental vaccine for hepatitis B.

The altered corn is growing with federal approval 100 feet from a steelhead stream in San Luis Obispo County, in designated critical habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog.

The story by investigative reporter Bill Lambrecht got more alarming as it went along. The corn is being grown in a pharmaceutical drug trial to produce

a hepatitis vaccine. It is in a category of genetically engineered crops that is supposed to be strictly regulated by the federal Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which requires that the seeds show documented chain-of-custody and the corn not be grown within a mile of commercial corn.

But as it turns out, APHIS regulates pharmaceutical GMOs in much the same way the NRC regulates nuclear power plants. Lambrecht's investigation found that the SLO corn pharm is part of "a picture of vast, swiftly expanding outdoor experimentation and industry-friendly oversight of those experiments."

Francisco Chronicle

Monday, September 8, 2014 | PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER | 12 *****



Modified crops stir oversight concerns

Central Coast corn used for varied experiments

By Bill Lambrecht

WASHINGTON — At a secret location among the vineyards of California's Central Coast, a plot of genetically engineered corn is producing proteins for industrial and pharmaceutical uses, including an experimental vaccine for hepatitis B. The altered corn is growing with federal approval 100 feet from a steelhead stream in San Luis Obispo County, in designated critical habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog.

The local news + 200 miles *The San Francisco Chronicle* broke the news of SLO's GMO drug experiment on its front page. *The Tribune* and *New Times*, so far, aren't interested.

400,000 People in the Street

An estimated 400,000 citizen activists, including more than 25,000 Sierra Club members, hit the street in New York City on September 21 for the People's Climate March, two days before the UN Climate Summit, in what is being called the largest climate protest in history.

It was also the largest-ever gathering of Sierra Club members and supporters in our history. The Club organized and funded more than 100 buses from 35 states, and Climate Caravan trains from Washington D.C., the Midwest and as far away as California.

Californians who didn't make that trip still managed to join in. About 300 of them came to Mitchell Park in downtown SLO. Addressing the crowd from the bandstand before the marchers set off for downtown, Ariana Brandao, President of the Cal Poly

Chapter of the Sierra Student Coalition, said "We can change the course of history. Our generation can rebuild the future, because we are the future."

Richard Kurrasch, Executive Director of People of Faith for Justice, announced a climate change sermon contest for the faith community, with winners posted at peopleoffaithforjustice.org for use by people of faith as they enter the public square.

SLO organizer and State Assembly candidate Heidi Harmon summed things up: "We are here to say no to the fracking that poisons our precious water and yes to the solar energy that provides the good jobs and sustainable future we deserve. We are here to say no to dangerous oil trains set to barrel through our neighborhoods, putting us all at risk, and yes to the wind energy that will make us truly energy indepen-

dent. We are here to say no to continuing to prioritize the short-term economic gains of a very few, and yes to the long term survivability of all of us."

Two days later, President Obama went to the UN and called on the assembled world leaders to act, saying, "Our citizens keep marching; we cannot pretend we cannot hear them. We have to answer the call."

Years from now, if world leaders listen to the alarm being sounded by citizens to take meaningful action to curb climate disruption, future generations may look back at the People's Climate March as the watershed moment when the tide turned in the fight against climate disruption.

SLO Nature Through Artists' Eyes



SLOPE's Rosanne Seitz told the Steynberg Gallery audience how she works.

Five members of San Luis Outdoor Painters for the Environment (SLOPE) spoke at our general meeting on September 18 and gave the audience insight into what it means to be a plein air painter. "I just love being there with my subject," said Laurel Sherrie. "There's nothing like it. When you stand in a place for three hours looking at something, you get so much more than you would see just walking by."



Stepping off State Assembly candidate Heidi Harmon, aka a force of nature, led the local climate march from the Mitchell Park gazebo.

In addition to the potential threat such crops pose to the environment, they can cause economic devastation if seed or pollen escape their field trials and contaminate a commercial crop.

SLO's pharmed corn experiment is being conducted by John Howard, founder of The Applied Biotechnology Institute, which is located in the Cal Poly Technology Park. Howard, the *Chronicle* story relates, "previously founded another company that was permanently banned from GMO trials after creating such contaminated messes in the Midwest that a half-million bushels of soybeans and more than 150 acres of corn had to be destroyed."

All of which is the kind of thing you might think our local media might think local growers and consumers of food might want to know about.

Update: GE Corn at SLO Farmers Market

By Jesse Arnold

It has been an interesting summer at the SLO Thursday night farmers market. I've been walking around holding a sign reading "Let's Get the GMO Corn Out of Farmers Market."

I've encountered two mutually incompatible misconceptions: that all corn is GMO, and there is no GMO corn sold at the market.

Certainly most field corn is GMO, but field corn in San Luis Obispo County is less likely to be GMO. Hayashi & Sons sells GMO sweet corn at local farmers markets.

A singular misconception I encountered came from a local PhD in the employ of Dow AgroSciences. He assured me that the FDA had never approved a GMO sweet corn, hence there could be none for sale here. When the Sierra Club provided proof that FDA had approved GMO sweet corn for sale twelve years ago, he admitted that he was mistaken.

One consumer at the market got my information after she had purchased some of Hayashi's GMO corn. I told her she could return it for a refund. I knew Hayashi has give refunds in such cases at the Templeton market. But she said she would just throw it out.

Meanwhile, the Sierra Club's July letter to North County Farmers Market Association President Joe Thomas urging the association to observe the Precautionary Principle and prohibit the sale of GMO corn until and unless it is proven safe has received no reply.

TAKE ACTION

If you want to get GMO corn out of local farmers markets, you can do the following.

- Don't buy it. Tell your friends.
 - Politely ask any vendors you deal with at the market to work to have GMO corn excluded from the market. The market is run by a board of directors. They have the power to bar GMO corn from sale by their vendors. Other farmers markets around the country have adopted this policy.
 - Politely convey your views to farmers market directors, such as:
 - SLO:** Mike Cirone, See Canyon Fruit Ranch, 459-1829.
 - SLO:** Philip Langston, SLO Grown Produce, 481-1040.
 - Templeton:** Sandra Dimond, 748-1109.
- Ask them to put the welfare of consumers and small farmers ahead of the profits of the ag biotech industry.

Hide

continued from page 7

the developer and the city could not show that they had a water supply that was adequate, reliable and sustainable.

Three years later, the City tried again. As local resident Laura Sprague observed in these pages (“Los Robles del Mar: Who’s Got the Water?” Sept. 2011), the city attorney “grossly oversimplified the critically important water element of the development agreement” and “essentially recommended that an ignorant City Council blindly assume that substituting unlimited well water with a potentially inadequate state water allocation would not create any problems.” Of the city’s assurance of reduced water need, “we are not convinced that the manner in which the lesser amount of water was calculated was based on proven methods, as opposed to assumptions and conjecture.”

Sprague reported that the entire council voted to approve an amended Environmental Impact Report for the project, despite their obvious “gaping lack of knowledge about what they were voting on.”

One more time

On Spanish Springs, the General Plan amendments approved by Higginbotham, Vardas and Reiss eliminated the requirement that there be no new residential development in the Planning Area without an inland arterial street to alleviate traffic. The councilmembers were prepared to risk objection by SLOCOG and Caltrans by eliminating this requirement in order to get more residential development, without considering what this would do to traffic on the 101. Also eliminated

was the General Plan requirement that any proposed developments demonstrate a new source of water sufficient to meet future long-term demand prior to approval for annexation. Other flaws in the project included the lack of detailed mitigation measures or steel-head relocation protocols in the open space management plan, as pointed out by the San Luis Coastal Resource Conservation District and the National Marine Fisheries Service, and insufficient mitigation measures for greenhouse gas emissions and other air quality impacts, as pointed out by the Air Pollution Control District. The description of the project’s water recycling plan did not meet the informational requirements of state environmental law.

Just as the city council was approaching the crucial vote on Spanish Springs, the superior court happened to hand down its ruling against the would-be developer of Los Robles del Mar, who had sued over LAFCO’s denial of annexation for LRDM. The court found that the City’s calculations of water available for the development -- the same water supply that was being proposed to help float Spanish Springs -- were severely flawed and the City had failed to demonstrate that existing supplies were capable of meeting demand in severe drought conditions.

The council ignored the court ruling on Los Robles del Mar and proceeded to certify the EIR and approve the General Plan amendments needed to pave the way for Spanish Springs.

The incumbents have lately taken to making public statements of the “hey,

The candidates are attempting to flee from their records: Certification of the Environmental Impact Report is the whole ball game.

don’t look at me” variety. Vardas has said “I did vote to approve the project’s environmental impact report, but we never voted to fully approve the project,” and “we did not proceed with reckless development.” Reiss mused at a September candidates forum “We did consider whether it would be a good thing for the city or not. It was not approved.”

The candidates are attempting to flee from their records. Many who attended the June 18, 2013, Pismo Beach City Council meeting where the deed was done had trouble figuring out just what the council did, but certification of the Environmental Impact Report is the whole ball game. Once that’s done, all subsequent actions to “fully approve the project” – i.e. approval of the specific plan and the development agreement – are a formality, the crossing of T’s and dotting of I’s. A candidate claiming that by having thus refrained she withheld approval is essentially telling the voters it depends on what the meaning of “is” is.

That’s why the Sierra Club sued to overturn the approval of the EIR. And that’s why, when we won and the City agreed to rescind that approval, then and only then was the possibility of moving ahead with Spanish Springs well and truly foreclosed.

When we sued, our attorney, Babak

Naficy, marveled at the target-rich legal environment provided by the City of Pismo Beach. “They chose not to heed their citizens when they overwhelmingly urged the city council not to proceed. The Sierra Club repeatedly warned them about the deficiencies in the EIR, but they certified it anyway. The city was not indemnified by the developer because the city council approved the EIR and the General Plan Amendments without approving the project itself, as is normal practice. The developer himself asked the City Council to rescind the General Plan Amendments because the wording wouldn’t pass legal muster. It’s as though the council was trying to do everything wrong.”

Mayor Higginbotham and council members Reiss and Vardas are running on the basis of their experience — a combined 36 years on the City Council. As has been observed before, the length of one’s experience doesn’t matter as much as what kind of experience one has. Pismo Beach has now avoided two close calls at the experienced hands of Higginbotham, Vardas and Reiss. That should be all the experience voters need.

The people of Pismo Beach have the opportunity to say goodnight to the incumbents as the sun sets on November 4, and then greet the new day.

Climate & Trade

continued from page 3

aspect of this much-needed economic transition. And yet, the U.S. is currently negotiating massive new free trade pacts, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) with eleven Pacific Rim nations, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the European Union. These deals would severely restrict the ability of governments to restructure our economy and address the climate crisis.

If these deals are beaten back, we can open up space for governments to embrace a new model of trade that is compatible with — even supports — efforts to combat the climate crisis. If these agreements move forward, they lock in a new set of rules that will further hinder our ability to solve the climate crisis.

Let’s take a deeper look at just how our trade rules are getting in the way of climate progress.

Corporate challenges to climate and clean energy policies: In order to combat the climate crisis, we must move beyond fossil fuels and embrace clean energy. However, investment rules in free trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties threaten our ability to do so. The rules actually empower corporations to sue governments, in the secrecy of private trade tribunals, over laws and policies that corporations allege reduce their profits, including protections from dirty fossil fuels. Such rules have allowed corporations including Chevron and Exxon-Mobil to launch nearly 600 challenges against almost 100 governments. Increasingly, corporations are using these perverse rules in free trade and investment agreements to challenge

energy and climate policies, including a moratorium on fracking in Quebec, a nuclear energy phase-out and new coal-fired power plant standards in Germany, and requirement for a pollution clean-up in Peru.

Nearly 60 percent of so-called investor-state cases are decided in favor of the investor (making taxpayers foot the bill to the corporation or investor) or settle (sometimes weakening the policy, as happened in Germany). When governments “win,” they just get to keep the policy in place and are often stuck with part of a legal tab averaging \$8 million per case.

Unfettered exports of fossil fuels: The vast majority of fossil fuel reserves must stay in the ground in order to avoid climate catastrophe. We have to move beyond fossil fuels here at home and stop exporting them to other countries. Current free trade rules once again stand in the way. The U.S., for example, is legally bound to automatically approve all exports of natural gas to countries with which it has a free trade pact. (If no free trade pact is in place, the Department of Energy must conduct a public analysis to determine whether exports are inconsistent with the public interest before granting a license.)

And there is increased talk of a potential free-trade challenge to current U.S. restrictions on crude oil exports. In fact, the EU is pressuring the U.S. to lift its crude oil export restrictions in the context of its negotiations on TTIP, the U.S.-EU trade pact. According to Oil Change International, lifting the crude oil export ban would lead to 9.9 billion barrels of additional crude between 2015 and 2050, which would release as much carbon dioxide as 42 coal-fired power plants.

Restricting local and low-carbon economies: Another part of solving the climate puzzle relates to production and consumption: We need to start producing and using products, from our food to our energy, closer to home. Sadly, the current trend is to produce goods wherever labor is cheapest and environmental protections are lowest and ship them across the world. (This trend, incidentally, was made possible—even encouraged—by free trade rules.) But think about the endless benefits, both for our climate and for the creation of new green jobs, of producing wind turbines and solar panels locally. In fact, strong domestic renewable energy industries may be one of the most powerful tools to combat climate disruption. The transition to a clean energy economy depends on local renewable energy industries that can challenge the power of the fossil fuel industry.

Governments across the world recognize the benefits of renewable energy programs that create green jobs. From Ontario, Canada to India, in addition to a number of U.S. states, governments are increasingly using “local content rules” that require enterprises to purchase or use locally-manufactured goods in renewable energy programs. But a long-standing tenant of trade law is that governments cannot “privilege” local goods or producers over foreign ones, so there have been a string of cases at the WTO challenging local content rules in renewable energy programs. Japan and the EU have used WTO challenges to strike Ontario, Canada’s local content rule out of its clean energy program; the U.S. is challenging local content rules in India’s national solar program; India has, in turn, threatened a number of U.S. state-based renewable energy

programs; China is threatening local content rules in EU renewable energy programs, and the list goes on.

Unfortunately, the trade rules described above are a small sample of the myriad rules that make it difficult to bring about what the 400,000-plus people who marched on September 21 want — strong action on climate.

But all of this is not reason to despair; it’s a reason to organize. Bigger and badder threats from the fossil fuel industry have set a fire under the climate movement. New, dangerous trade deals such as the TPP and TTIP, which threaten health, environmental, and worker protections, have set ablaze another movement of trade justice advocates. If we can combine the force of these movements and continue to strengthen our work, the power of our movements will tip our governments to act on behalf of the people instead of on behalf of the polluters.

The climate movement must stand up to the free trade rules and ideology that helped get us into this climate mess and that will thwart our ability to solve it and say, “enough is enough.”

TAKE ACTION

The only way the TPP and TTIP can get approved is if the executive branch secures “Fast Track” authority (See “Broad Coalition Calls for a New Model of Trade,” page 3). To find out how you can help make sure that doesn’t happen, go to sierraclub.org/trade and drop us a note at responsibletrade@sierraclub.org



Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **October 14**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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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. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. 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, 549-0355. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

A Clarification on "Field Tripping"

By Joe Morris, Outings Chair

An article in last month's newsletter by Greg McMillan described a proposal to lead national and international trips sponsored by our chapter. For clarification, Mr. McMillan is not a certified Sierra Club leader and has not led outings for our chapter. For all hikes and trips sponsored by chapters, National Sierra Club standards require leaders to have such official certification, which includes specific instruction and personal supervision. Additionally, conducting national and international trips requires further intensive training and experience. We don't plan to sponsor such trips until leaders who demonstrate these qualifications are available.

Sat., Oct. 4th, 10 a.m. Beach and Dune Walk. Co-led by Calif. Native Plant Society and Audubon leaders, this 3-mile walk will view and identify prominent shorebirds and coastal dune plants in Montana de Oro State Park. Bring water, snacks or lunch, binoculars, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat, and jacket. Meet in parking lot at end of Sand Spit Rd., a right turn from main road, 0.8 mile from park entrance. For more information, contact Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Sat., Oct. 18th, 9 a.m. Pt. Sal Road Hike. Your choice of a 5- or 10-mile hike. The 5-miler, moderately strenuous, ascends a hill to long views of coast, cliffs, and pristine beach, lasting about 2 hours. The 10-mile hike, strenuous, continues on, with some tricky hill scrambling, then down to beach for playing/relaxing time, lasting about 5-6 hrs. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, hat, and sweater in case of cool weather. Meet at main gate to Pt. Sal, end of Brown Rd. 3.9 miles from Rt. 1. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 934-272.

Sun., Oct. 19th, 11 a.m. San Simeon Point. Walk 2 1/2-mile walk, 100 ft. gain, to lovely views of San Simeon Cove, Monterey Pine and cypress forest, plus sightings of herons, pelicans, and cormorants on rocky north side. Lunch on cliff overlooking Piedras Pt. Binoculars and sturdy footwear recommended. Meet 3 miles

north of San Simeon, turning left into Hearst Memorial Beach and parking near pier. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, 528-5567 or vmarchenko57@gmail.com.

Sun., Oct. 19th, 2 p.m. SLO City Walk: Railroad Historic District. Easy guided stroll past 15 sites in the old commercial district, depot area, and century-old boardinghouses. Hear the stories about the heyday of the Southern Pacific during the steam age, 1890s to 1950s, when the SP dominated public life in SLO, transforming it from a cow town to a boomtown. Duration about 90 minutes. Meet at Gus's Grocery, corner of Osos and Leff Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sat., Oct. 25th, 8:30 a.m. Stoney Creek Trail Hike. A moderately strenuous, 10-mile, 2,000 ft. gain hike through Garcia Wilderness, accessing North trailhead via a locked gate. Some poison oak on trail. Bring lunch, sturdy shoes, water, and dress for the weather. Meet in front of Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita. Extreme heat postpones hike until a November weekend. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sun., Oct. 26th, 10 a.m. Sycamore Springs Trekking Pole Hike. Polecats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes to model the techniques and benefits of using trekking poles. A

two-mile, 600 ft. elevation change, hike. Meet near entrance to Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Drive. Need to confirm beforehand with Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or hikingpoles@gmail.com.


Thu-Sat., Oct. 30th-Nov. 1st Death Valley Wilderness Restoration Trip. Help restore wilderness values in this remote and beautiful National Park by cleaning up debris from a marijuana grow site on Friday. We will gather early Thursday afternoon to work on another TBA project in the Valley before heading to campsite. Trip requires four-wheel drive vehicle to get to work site. Camping is primitive: need to bring everything, including ample water. Group size limited. Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com, 661-944-4056. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Fri-Sun., Oct. 31st-Nov. 9th Desert Wilderness Celebrations. Choice of attending one or both weekends or any days in between for a series of gatherings sponsored by the Sierra Club California/Nevada Wilderness Committee to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and 20th anniversary of the Calif. Desert Protection Act. Things start evening of Oct. 31st, joining NPS "Mojave Fest" on November 1st, heading next day to Mecca Hills Wilderness and continuing as a moving campout, ending Nov. 8th and 9th in Saddleback Butte State Park, led by CNRCC Desert Committee. For details as they develop, see www.caldesert20.org or contact Vicky Hoover, 415-977-5527 or vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org.

Sat., Nov. 1st, 10 a.m. SLO City Walk: San Luis Cemetery. Guided stroll past gravesites of famous pioneers like Angel, Murray, Sinsheimer and Civil-War vets, plus the old "potter's field" for indigents and the landmark pyramid. Learn the compelling stories of the 19th-century founders of San Luis Obispo. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet in south parking lot adjacent to the pyramid, 2890 S. Higuera St. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.



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.




The Sierra Club Needs You!

Become an Outings Leader

- Lead hikes and camping trips
- Introduce others to nature
- Explore the outdoors
- Make new friends
- Protect the environment
- Get healthy exercise

For further information contact:

Joe Morris
Sierra Club
(805) 549-0355
dpj1942@earthlink.net



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

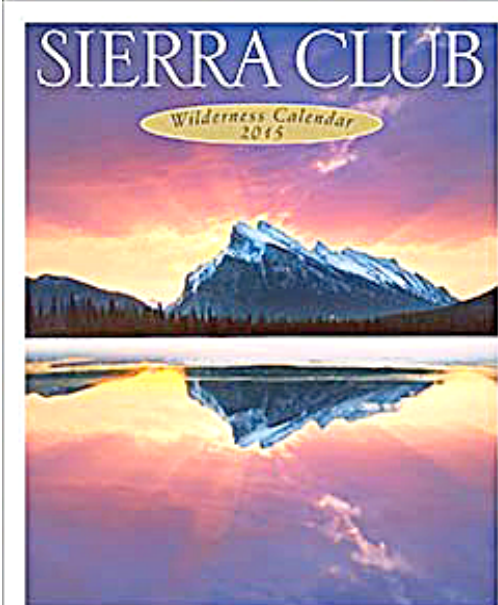
Sat.-Sun., Nov. 15-16th Explore and Serve in Carrizo Plains. Saturday work to remove sections of fence to enable pronghorn antelope movement. Sunday activity is group choice—either hike in Caliente Range or tour of popular viewing areas in the plains. This is an opportunity to combine car camping, day hiking, exploring, and service in a relatively unknown wilderness. Leader: Craig Deutsche, 310-477-6670 or craig.deutsche@gmail.com. CNRCC Desert Committee.

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Activities sponsored by other organizations

Sat., Oct. 4th, 9:45 a.m., Citizens' Climate Lobby meeting. SLO Grange, 2880 Broad Street, SLO. Learn what you can do to slow climate change and make a difference in our community. Become a climate activist and part of the solution to the most pressing issue of our time. For more info, email: citizensclimatelobbyslo@gmail.com.

Sat., Oct. 11th, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. SLO Steward Trail Work Days. Please wear long pants and sturdy shoes. Water and snacks are provided. Directions: From the 101, take Los Osos Valley Road towards Los Osos. Turn left on Madonna Road. Follow the street to the end, then walk up the dirt road to the trailhead. For more information contact: Adria Arko, ECOSLO Program Coordinator 544-1777.

Sat., Oct. 18, 9-11 a.m. Audubon Bird Walk, SLO Botanical Garden. Jessica Griffiths and Marlin Harms of the Morro Coast Audubon Society lead a birding walk through the Garden and surrounding environs. We will look for returning wintering birds and fall migrants including sparrows, warblers, raptors, and others. October is prime time for rare migrants when nearly anything can show up. Walk begins near Garden entrance. \$5 for Garden members/\$10 non-members. No reservations. More info at slobg.org/bird.

