SIERRA CLUB
Santa Lucia Chapter
Preserving California's Central Coast

Nov/Dec. 2015
Volume 52 No. 10

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

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Don't Miss:

Global Climate March in SLO
Saturday, Nov. 28

Global Climate Fest in Los Osos
Sunday, Nov. 29

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Marine Sanctuary Milestone

Nomination for Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary accepted

NOAA

On October 9, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced that the nomination for a new Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary has been accepted.

The acceptance recognizes our coast as deserving special status, and puts it officially under consideration for protection as part of the National Marine Sanctuary Program. The proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would be the first in the national system to focus on indigenous culture and history as a primary core value along with protection of ocean habitat.

"Many coastal Chumash people are very interested in learning how the proposed sanctuary would affect traditional cultural resources, both natural and archaeological," said Roberta Cordero, a member of the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation. "They hope for a vigorous dialogue throughout the process at all levels, including the possibility for consultation at the tribal level with NOAA."

The nomination was submitted by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, which has been working on the initiative with Central Coast environmental groups and Sierra Club California for the last two years. The area proposed for the national marine sanctuary stretches from Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria to Gaviota Creek in Santa Barbara, protecting marine habitat along some 140 miles of coastline.

As part of an effort to have more public involvement in nominating and designating national marine sanctuaries, NOAA revamped its process in 2014 to encourage community-driven nominations, as compared to its previous top-down approach.

"NOAA's grassroots sanctuary nomination process is about making it possible for people in coastal communities to take a stand for special

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Support Your Local Sierra Club

By Pat Veesart

Fall is finally here and despite the wacky weather, the promise of winter rains and cooler weather is believable and comforting.

The end of the year approaches and, if you are like me, your bleeding heart will be bled dry by multiple requests for year-end donations to every good cause under the sun. This request is a little different. I'm asking you to be selfish; to make a donation to yourself and your community. They say that "charity begins at home." You can't get much closer to home than the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club – our own homegrown Sierra Club Chapter.

Since 1968, the Santa Lucia Chapter has been on the front lines of virtually every major issue here in your home county. These are issues that directly affect you and your family in a personal way; these are the places that you know and love; these are your friends and neighbors.

Like other NGOs, the Santa Lucia Chapter depends upon donations from its members and friends to pay the rent, keep the power on and staff paid. For us, the sole member of that last category is our fabulous Chapter Director, Andrew Christie.

You may not know this, but it is unusual for a Sierra Club chapter as small as ours to have a paid staff person. This came to pass because chapter leaders (who are all volunteers) back in 2004 had the foresight to recognize Andrew's abilities at a moment in time when he was looking to settle in SLO County. As they say, the rest is history. We are very lucky to have Andrew and all of us who have worked with him make it the highest priority to retain him.

Under Andrew's tenure, our chapter has really ramped up its involvement in our community. Andrew is a familiar face at the Board of Supervisors, planning commissions and city councils throughout the county, and at meetings with other NGOs and community groups. Always on point, always polite, but firm, Andrew has raised the bar and changed the game. He writes well (best Sierra Club chapter newsletter in California), speaks well, plays nice with others; I can't say enough…. We have to find the money to keep this going. This is where you come in.

There are many ways to help. For a tax-deductible donation, make your check out to "Sierra Club Foundation," and be sure to write "Santa Lucia Chapter" on the memo line. Send it to:

Sierra Club
PO Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

An annual donation of $240 or more means you will be joining your friends in the Cal French Circle of Chapter

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Outings, events, and more!

Sierra Club General Meeting

7 p.m., Wednesday, November 18th

From Mexico to Canada on the Pacific Crest Trail

Last April, facing retirement, Nipomo resident Will Amarillas did something most of us would not even dream of: hiking the entire 2,650 miles of the PCT at the age of 69. Moreover, he completed it in four and a half months, gaining two shoe sizes and losing 40 pounds in the effort.

Tonight, Willie will recount his adventures, accompanied by slides of his journey. Conservation news will begin the evening.

Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO.
Info: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Aside from the Giant Fireball...

by Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

On both sides of the local and statewide debate over the Phillips 66 rail spur project that would facilitate the transport and refining of tar sands crude oil in SLO County, the prospect of fiery derailments and explosions tends to suck all the air out of the room.

That's pretty much what one would expect fiery explosions to do. But let's set that prospect aside for a moment and take a look at the air that's getting sucked out of the room – specifically, the air you breathe as the resident of a county that may or may not agree to permit the five-times-a-week transport and refining of the world's dirtiest crude oil.

First, let's look at one of the favorite canards of project proponents: The oil that Phillips 66 is proposing to haul through the county is the same stuff that is passing through the county now, two or three times a week, from the San Ardo oil field in Monterey County.

The next time you hear or see that claim in our local media, you should leap to your keyboard and point out that 1) no it's not, and 2) those San Ardo trains are indeed just passing through: They're not stopping to off-load and off-gas at a local refinery switching to tar sands crude feedstock.

Let me briefly return to those explosive fireballs (they're hard to get away from). It's difficult to set San Ardo crude on fire. Tar sands crude, when mixed with diluent and poured into a tanker car, can ignite at any temperature above zero degrees fahrenheit -- i.e. not at all hard to set on fire.

That tar sands crude is nothing like San Ardo crude has been pointed out more than once in the local media by various folks, with no noticeable effect on the reiteration of the same-as-San-Ardo claim by project supporters — the telltale sign that you are not having a debate with an individual capable of changing his or her mind when confronted with contrary or missing facts, but someone who has been drafted to reiterate p.r. talking points in a continuous loop. (Al Fonzi's recent *Tribune* op ed tried to support the "same stuff" claim with comparative vapor pressures while staying silent on comparative flash points, aka how easily does this stuff catch fire?)

But for Mr. Fonzi and the other folks who are urging our local decision makers to spin the roulette wheel and dismiss the scenario of a derailment/spill/explosion/fire as a remote and unlikely possibility (and that case got harder for those folks after the *L.A. Times* reported on the systemic problem of track integrity failure under the weight of oil trains, the heaviest freight on the rails), there remain the intractable problems built into the project that are not a matter of chance, but of certainty. And one of those problems is what will happen to the quality of our air if the project is permitted.

In the Phillips 66 rail spur project's Environmental Impact Report, nestled in the midst of Impact Summary Tables in a section labeled "CLASS I

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With Thanks

~ Sue Harvey made a $200 donation in memory of Letty French

~ Marty Brown made a $100 donation in honor of Joan Carter's son, Kent.

~ Myra Douglass made a $200 donation in honor of Elder Bill Denneen's 90th birthday.

~ Longtime Nipomo resident Evelyn Reagan has passed away at her home in Oregon. She requested that friends make memorial gifts to the Santa Lucia Chapter.

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 13th of the prior month.*

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Lindi Doud, Patrick McGibney
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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Printed by University Graphic Systems Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Mailing services courtesy of Silver Streaks.

Stepping up SLO Mayor Jan Marx at the Mitchell Park "Stop Oil Trains" rally last July.

At the Beyond Oil Summit

Local leaders engage in transitioning California to a clean fuel economy

By Devorah Ancel, staff attorney
Environmental Law Program

The Sierra Club's 2015 Moving California Beyond Oil Summit, held in San Jose on September 29, could not have come at a more pivotal time.

In the two weeks prior, Pope Francis made an urgent call to Congress to act aggressively on its moral obligation to address climate change, Hilary Clinton rolled out her energy and climate policy prioritizing the expansion of a clean energy economy, and Shell Oil announced its withdrawal from Arctic oil drilling pursuits and its multi-billion dollar investment losses in exploring that region.

California also passed SB 350, requiring the state to achieve a 50 percent increase in building energy efficiency and obtain 50 percent of the state's power from renewable energy sources by 2030, thus securing California's role as a leading player in the fight against climate change.

The Summit — co-hosted by the Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, San Jose City Council Member Ash Kalra, Berkeley Vice Mayor Linda Maio, and West Hollywood Mayor Lindsay Horvath — convened mayors, other elected and agency officials, as well as clean vehicle and transit industry stakeholders from across the state to address the role of local jurisdictions in combating the petroleum industry's attempts to thwart our democracy, and to adopt measures to rapidly and equitably transition California to a clean fuel economy.

The day began with two panels addressing the threats to California of extreme crude oil, including fracking and urban oil drilling, as well as the transport of volatile crude by rail in unsafe tank cars known to derail, spill, and explode, threatening our schools, local businesses, and water resources.

With Bakken and tar sands crude processed at polluting refineries in our urban areas and largely destined for export to the world market, California communities bear the burden of toxic air emissions, water pollution, and the threat of catastrophic accidents, while Big Oil reaps the profits.

Panelists such as San Luis Obispo Mayor Jan Marx discussed how cities and towns at the interface of the dirty oil supply chain can halt the expansion of dangerous oil supply infrastructure. The health risks to people living near wells are significant, and local jurisdictions, like San Benito County, are adopting fracking bans within their borders and leveraging other tools to mitigate the public health and safety impacts of oil production.

While California's demand for oil has decreased, our communities should no longer shoulder the burden of millions of dollars in health care costs and thousands of deaths every year associated with the production and processing of dirty, extreme fuels.

California's Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin de Leon gave the lunchtime keynote address. Senator de Leon aptly refuted the fallacy of Big Oil's message that climate change legislation that reduces our petroleum use and improves energy efficiency will lead to gas rationing and damage our economy. To the contrary, California — which already has the world's most progressive climate change policies, including AB 32, the Low Carbon Fuel Standard and now SB 350 — maintains the eighth largest economy in the world and has created nearly half-a-million jobs as a result of the state's commitment to bold policies that cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce demand for carbon-intensive fossil fuels.

Senator de Leon was unequivocal in his message that clean fuel vehicles and transit options must become real and tangible options for all communities and individuals at every income level in order to achieve a 100 percent clean fuel economy. State policies are making this happen with tax credits and bundling options that provide incentives to individuals to get rid of their dirty clunkers and purchase low- or zero-emission vehicles for low monthly payments and little-to-no fuel costs.

One of the single most important actions city officials and local jurisdictions can take to accelerate this transition is to work closely with their municipal and investor-owned utilities to ensure that long-term planning involves investments in clean fuel infrastructure and technology innovation to make clean vehicles, transit, and energy efficiency options accessible to all Californians.

The afternoon panels focused on California's clean transportation transition, with experts from the transit and low-emission and electric vehicle sectors discussing how clean transpor-

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Sierra Club California Meets at Rancho el Chorro

Sierra Club California and the Club's California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee (CNRCC) held their 2015 convention at Rancho El Chorro in SLO over the weekend of October 10. The event was an occasion to review chapter initiatives statewide, report on the progress of Club campaigns, network, and elect next year's executive committee for Sierra Club California.

Manuel Pastor, the author of *Equity, Growth and Community*, gave the keynote address on California's changing demographics and the way forward for inclusion in the environmental movement.

State Director Kathryn Phillips gave a rundown on a very good year for the environment in the state legislature (see "2015 Legislative Report Card," below). Even though we had a good year in the legislature, she said, it was worth noting that "except for SB 350, the oil industry killed just about everything they didn't like."

Sierra Club California Awards and the election of the 2016 Executive Committee rounded out the weekend, along with a conservation forum and workshops held by the Political Committee, Water Committee, Energy and Climate Committee, Population Committee, and a workshop on management and funding issues for protected lands.

It was a very good year State Director Kathryn Phillips delivered a report on how the Sierra Club fared in Sacramento in 2015.

Renewables task force formed

At the October 11 meeting, the Santa Lucia Chapter proposed a resolution to affirm that the Club will seek to uphold environmental laws such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA), California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when engaging with utility-scale renewable energy projects.

As California ramps up to meet the new goal of 50% clean energy by 2030, more utility-scale renewable energy projects are likely to be proposed in unsuitable locations -- i.e. endangered species habitat. The Sierra Club needs to be counted on to defend fragile habitat and imperiled wildlife in our deserts and grasslands, balanced against the need to ramp up renewable energy.

For years, Club activists around the state have expressed their frustration with the unfortunate tendency of power companies to propose large solar power projects in critical habitat areas for sensitive species that have already seen their breeding and foraging range fragmented by development pressures. A study published on October 19 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that most solar power installations in California have been located in "incompatible" areas, primarily defined as within six miles of protected lands. The researchers noted that "Protected areas are effective when land use nearby does not obstruct corridor use, dispersion capabilities, nor facilitate invasions of nonnative species through habitat loss, fragmentation, and isolation — including those caused by renewable energy development."

Equal time? The San Joaquin Kit Fox.

Lindi Doud, Santa Lucia Chapter Treasurer, told the assembled delegates that our goal was to "collaborate and craft a petition for policy change," and to that end "we invite all interested chapters to join us in crafting a resolution which we all feel will adequately address these concerns."

Delegates immediately suggested -- and formed -- a Large Scale Renewables Task Force, with ten members representing eight chapters in the state.

The task force will review the Sierra Club's existing policies and guidelines on the siting of utility-scale renewable energy projects and make recommendations to the national board of directors.

Sierra Club California Releases 2015 Legislative Report Card

Don't want to look like you're bought? Don't take oil money

Nearly twice as many California Senators as Assembly Members scored a 100 percent on Sierra Club California's 2015 legislative report card.

"When you look at the votes, it's pretty clear that many Democratic Assembly members who might vote well on other environmental issues, held back on votes that would have required them to challenge the oil industry to pollute less," said Kathryn Phillips, director of Sierra Club California.

Ten bills were scored in each house. Several bills made it to floor votes in each house and are included in the report card for Assembly members and Senators. Some bills died in their house of origin and are only included in that house's score tally.

Eight Assembly members received 100 percent scores on the report card. That meant they voted with the Club's recommendations on a list of priority bills that would protect the environment and public health. Fourteen Senators received 100 percent.

The Assembly members receiving 100 percent scores are Richard Bloom, Susan Eggman, Marc Levine, Patty

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Global Frackdown: A Message to the World

Since 2012, the Global Frackdown – an international day of action initiated by Food & Water Watch to ban fracking – has helped connect activists across the globe and demonstrated the growing power of the movement to stop fracking, gas infrastructure, sand mining and other related extraction methods. This movement is fueled by increasing scientific evidence of the impact of fracking on water, air, health, seismic stability, communities, and the climate on which we all depend.

While the Global Frackdown originated as a single international day of action per year, in 2015 the Global Frackdown will occur during the entire month of November in the lead up to the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris.

Last year, the Global Frackdown had over 300 partner organizations. This year, as we go to press, there are nearly 900 groups already signed on, including Sierra Club, representing 56 countries and 38 states in the United States. Our international letter to world leaders in support of a ban on fracking and a renewable energy future (at right) will be delivered to government officials who will be in Paris throughout November. A delivery in DC is planned for November 3.

The "Global Frackdown to Paris" will serve to highlight our growing movement and build pressure on national leaders to oppose fracking.

The oil and gas industry has spent millions of dollars on slick public relations campaigns and high-profile lobbying efforts to buy the ability to extract fossil fuels from our communities with as little government oversight as possible. Yet public opinion continues to grow in opposition to fracking.

While the industry is working hard to protect its profits and drown out the worldwide demand for clean, renewable fuels, there is a tremendous movement afoot around the world to protect our global resources from fracking.

2 November 2015

Dear Head of State/Parliamentarian:

As the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris (COP 21) approaches, we implore you to take bold action. This means not just setting emissions -reduction targets, but also by explicitly addressing the fundamental, science-based need to keep fossil fuels in the ground. Specifically, we call on you to reject hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and the use of acidization for oil and natural gas production and all of the related infrastructure.

Instead you must take action to move aggressively to a 100% renewable energy future, which is necessary for remediating global warming and ensuring climate stability. Last December, Governor Cuomo of New York finalized a review of the health impacts of fracking and moved to ban the practice in his state. This move followed the lead of countries such as France and Bulgaria, which have also banned fracking. Such precaution is a response to mounting scientific evidence concerning the negative impacts of fracking, which include air and water pollution, public health problems, and earthquakes, not to mention the significant impacts that frac sand mining, pipelines, and other infrastructure projects have on communities, the environment, and public health.

With respect to climate impacts, it is true that burning natural gas produces less carbon dioxide than does burning coal or oil. For this reason, fracked gas has been touted as having climate benefits and billed as a bridge fuel. However, the reality is that fracked gas is a bridge to climate chaos with no exit in sight. There are three basic reasons why.

First and foremost, increased natural gas use in the electricity sector does not just displace other fossil fuels, it also displaces cleaner solutions, such as solar, wind and energy efficiency. These solutions are paramount to meeting the climate challenge, yet fracking and an expanded energy infrastructure based on gas will continue to forestall their deployment. Second, more natural gas, and thus more of the potent greenhouse gas methane, is leaking from well sites and pipelines than previously thought, and methane is a more powerful greenhouse gas than previously understood. As a consequence, the increase in methane emissions that comes with using natural gas instead of other fossil fuels offsets, and may outpace, the decrease in carbon dioxide used to justify switching to natural gas.Third, setting aside the industry's problems with methane leaks and looking at carbon dioxide alone, extracting and burning fracked gas threatens to release significantly more carbon dioxide than the world can afford. To avoid the irreversible effects of climate change, almost all of the natural gas that could be extracted by fracking must actually stay underground, unburned. That is the case even if aggressive global action is taken to wind down the use of oil and coal.

To illustrate this final point, it is widely accepted that no more than one-third of proven reserves of fossil fuels can be consumed prior to 2050 if the world is to have a better than 50-50 chance of avoiding 2 degrees Celsius of warming. But there are two ways in which this statistic understates the problem. First, it is only based on proven reserves — before accounting for most of the fracked gas, fracked oil, Arctic oil and tar sands oil now targeted. Almost all of this oil and gas must stay underground. Second, the estimate of "unburnable" proven reserves derives from dated climate science, and the 2-degree threshold is too permissive. Now, climate science is clear that surpassing even 1.5 degrees of warming will lead to unacceptable impacts, particularly in the Global South.

Put simply, we cannot afford to continue down an energy path that relies on fossil fuels if we are to maintain the stability of our climate and the health of the planet. Despite this fact, vested interests have succeeded in convincing many governments that fracking for shale gas is a harmless "bridge fuel" toward renewables. This is a dangerous and deeply flawed point of view.

The world is facing a climate crisis that has already brought devastating impacts that will only escalate to catastrophic levels without swift action. Fracking amounts to inaction, and it is anathema to developing sustainable energy systems available to all and premised on the efficient use of safe, abundant, affordable and renewable energy resources, subject to regional conditions and constraints.
At the Paris climate summit, it must be made clear that fracking for shale gas, tight gas, coalbed methane and tight oil, as well as other extreme fossil fuel extraction methods, are incompatible with climate stability. We implore you to support a ban on fracking and related processes, both as national policy and toward international agreements, and to make explicit the need to maximize the amount of fossil fuels to be kept underground and unburned.

Sincerely,

~ 900 organizations in 56 countries
www.globalfrackdown .org/global-frackdown-endorsers

Can We Conserve?

Will the County conservation program work?

As we go to press, the County Board of Supervisors is preparing to consider the establishment of an ordinance to implement a countywide water conservation program at their October 27 meeting.

We assume that, barring a decision to table the ordinance for further review, as you read this, the program has been established. We hope the County took to heart our previously submitted comments when the Planning Department completed its environmental review of the proposed program this summer.

In short, we hope the County passed a Water Conservation Ordinance at the end of October that's a lot better than what was on offer in the draft circulated this summer.

At that time, the Chapter expressed concern that the County was responding to the severely deteriorating conditions of three local water basins with a conservation ordinance whose main purpose appears to be finding ways to allow more development. This approach denies the reality of the conditions of these basins (rapidly declining water tables and/or rapidly advancing seawater intrusion), made significantly worse by the worst drought on record.

The draft ordinance ignored the reality that people, businesses, and dependent environmental resources face devastating consequences if these resources continue to deteriorate. The drought has likely reduced the recharge of these basins by more than half over four years. The full effects of this drought, especially on deep aquifers, will not be felt for years.

These are not conditions that can be successfully addressed with a conservation ordinance that focuses on development in an attempt to maintain status quo. The State has recognized the Paso Robles and Los Osos basins as "high-priority" basins requiring sustainable management, which means that the Level of Severity III designation is not adequate, signifying only that water demand has reached or exceeded the yield of the Basin. In Los Osos, extractions have exceeded safe yield by over 30 % for more than 35 years pulling seawater into the Basin more than a mile. The Paso Basin well levels have dropped 75 feet or more in some areas. These basins will not be preserved by maintaining water neutral development and minimal water waste programs.

Given that authorities generally recognize conservation as the quickest and most cost-effective way to address

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Conserve
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threatened water supplies—and the fact that the Sustainable Groundwater Plans (SGPs) for the Paso and Nipomo Basins will not be in effect for five years or more—the County has the opportunity to create a basin-wide conservation program that preserves and restores these vital water sources as the SGP's are being developed. As the land use authority for these areas, the County must also limit development unless the County can show there is ample water to sustainably support that development long term.

The Countywide Conservation Program as proposed in the EIR fails to protect and restore these Basins and prevent unsustainable development. We recommended improvements to the ordinance via the EIR process and alternatives that addressed these issues.

Agricultural offset

To improve Water Neutral New Development such that it has significant benefits on Paso Basin, we support a offset of water use at a 2:1 ratio using conservation/water use efficiency measures, including recycled water reuse and rainwater harvesting, dryland farming strategies, and other practices that substantially reduce potable water use. The program should apply to onsite use as well as offsite, i.e. to growers who share technologies and techniques with other growers to achieve a measurable reduction in their water use.

This program should not only be encouraged/ incentivized with the potential of adding crop production, but also by an award/recognition program that the County initiates to honor growers achieving similar or greater crop production with significantly less potable water use.

We support the recommendations of the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District that mechanisms to quantify and verify offset credits are part of the program, including ongoing monitoring of all wells. Adoption of Best Management Practices identified in the Conservation and Open Space Element should be mandatory for sending and receiving sites.

The enforcement actions outlined are wholly inadequate. The fines are merely the cost of doing business. The penalty for non-compliance should be more stringent e.g., a misdemeanor.

We support the conservation measures recommended by the Pacific Institute, and the State Water Resources Control Board and Department of Water Resources.

Urban/rural residential offset

In "high priority" basins, the first priority must be to stabilize and restore the Basin by reducing potable water use as much as possible with strong conservation programs for the existing population. Once Basin sustainability is established, more building can occur. This is consistent with County and State regulations, statutes and polices requiring an ample water supply to support development. The unavoidable impact from the urban/rural offset can't be addressed by greater offsets. Instead it must be addressed by establishing a sustainable water supply through a variety of programs and sustainable groundwater management with verifiable benefits. The Urban/rural offset program should be eliminated on the basis of its significant unavoidable impacts.

Agricultural Water Waste

This program currently involves only education/outreach for those who express an interest in receiving it. The program will not produce significant or measurable water savings. On the other hand, a program that involves progressive enforcement measures similar to the urban water waste program can produce significant results. We prefer positive incentives rather than negative (e.g. fines), but we recognize that voluntary participation will not produce the dramatic results needed to protect these basins.

Thus the ordinance should require that growers use a set of basic conservation practices and BMP's, and it should provide a series of appropriate incentives and consequences for not doing so. In addition, the ordinance should require a targeted reduction in water use and it should require metering and monitoring of all water use. Without metering and monitoring, the effectiveness of conservation programs cannot be determined, which makes enforcement and continuous improvement impossible.

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Rush to Desal

Last August, the plan whereby the County might make a deal with PG&E to obtain desalinated water from the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant made its formal public debut at a meeting of the Board of Supervisors, which gave staff preliminary approval to move ahead and come back in January with a status report.

In response to public criticism of the plan at the Supervisors' August 25 meeting, Supervisor Mecham said, "I don't know what else we can do."

Fortunately, the County has a General Plan and it covers this subject.

In an attachment to the 538-page report on the prospect of such a deal, County staff made note of the following policy from the General Plan, under the heading "Policy Conflicts:"

Policy WR1.3 New Water Supply. Development of new water supplies should focus first on efficient use of our existing resources. Use of reclaimed water, interagency cooperative projects, and groundwater recharge projects should be considered ***prior to*** *using imported sources of water or seawater desalination.* [Emphasis added.]

This is immediately followed in the General Plan, but not noted in the 538-page staff report, by a policy for the use of reclaimed water (proclaiming "The County will be a leader in the use of reclaimed water") and four Implementation Strategies to that end. Also in the General Plan but not mentioned in the August staff report is Policy WR 1.15 Desalination opportunities: *Support the expansion of desalination opportunities only if other new water sources are not feasible (e.g. increased efficiency and conservation, taking full allotments of existing surface water projects such as the Nacimiento Water Project).*

Instead of acknowledging this policy reality, the August staff report followed up with a suggestion to the County Supervisors as to how they might get around the clear directive and intent of the General Plan: "Reusing and re-purposing existing infrastructure provides the benefit of a new source of water while capturing embedded capital and operating costs."

But, yes, they conceded, "Comparing the benefits and impacts of recycled water projects with desalination projects would be appropriate in further analysis." Said further analysis, will, of course, take place within the context of a study the purpose of which is to advance a desalination project.

Obviously, that "prior to" policy is sticking in some craws. But it's there for a reason. When the County drafted and approved that policy, the planners knew that seawater desalination is the most expensive, energy-intensive, and potentially most environmentally destructive way to increase the water supply. Planners were also aware of the history of desal in the U.S., which is littered with project costs significantly in excess of estimates and water deliveries significantly below promises.

In the case of the proposed project, we can add the prospect of an electric utility making a bid to become a water wholesaler and switch the purpose of its desal plant from industrial use to municipal supply, and the necessity of expanding Diablo's current desalination intake beyond its current permitted level, with an attendant expansion of toxic brine discharge in the marine environment. The level and likelihood of regulatory approval needed to climb those two mountains – begging the question of whether they are mountains that should be climbed – further argues for the County sticking to the original plan.

It's a good plan, Supervisors. You can find it under Policies WR 1.15 and WR 1.3 in the Conservation and Open Space Element of our General Plan, which you reviewed, approved, and agreed to abide by in guiding the future of this county.

Afraid not Desal has issues.

Sanctuary
continued from page 1

places," said Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California. "This nomination is about taking action to make sure the natural wonders of California's Central Coast will be here for future generations."

In accepting the nomination, NOAA confirmed that the proposed national marine sanctuary has:

- natural resources or habitat with special ecological significance;
- maritime heritage resources with special historical, cultural and archaeological significance;
- important economic uses like tourism, fishing, diving, and other recreational activities that depend on conservation and management of the resources; and
- local marine resources that face potential threats and impacts, and existing management and regulations that could help with sanctuary conservation efforts.

"The area in the proposed national marine sanctuary is one that is certainly worthy of protection," said Congresswoman Lois Capps. "The cultural sites and marine wildlife there are a vital piece of the California coast's living legacy."

NOAA also concluded that a marine sanctuary off the coast of San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties would present opportunities for research, education, and local partnerships.

A study commissioned by the Sierra Club of the potential economic impacts of a national marine sanctuary concluded that such a designation on the Central Coast could add "at minimum 23 million dollars per year to the local economy and create almost 600 new jobs."

"A national marine sanctuary would provide new opportunities for locals and visitors to explore, learn and recreate off our coast," said San Luis Obispo County Supervisor Bruce Gibson. "Such a designation would be a win for our communities and our economy."

Throughout the process leading up to acceptance of the nomination, various commentators offered up anecdotes and distortions of fact (including the absurd and incredibly racist claim by a fishing industry lobbyist that a sanctuary would mean that the Chumash would take over the waters off the central coast and charge people to fish) in the local media. They all had one purpose: To persuade NOAA to reject the nomination and terminate the public designation review process before it could begin.

NOAA was rightly unpersuaded by comments that had nothing to do with the qualifications of the Central Coast for national marine sanctuary status. Nor were opponents able to counter the broad public support for the CHNMS proposal.

Now is the time for all concerned citizens to urge NOAA to commence the designation process for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. When that process commences, sanctuary opponents will surely be heard from, and will have the opportunity to submit their arguments and attempt to support them with actual evidence.

But the attempt to shut down the conversation before it can start has failed. Now all voices can be heard.

The TPP: Where We Are Now

Selden Prentice, a Sierra Club volunteer leader in Seattle, doesn't mince words: "When I learned about the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), I threw myself into fighting this toxic trade deal," she says. "Seattle prides itself on having some of the highest labor and environmental standards in the world, but the TPP would enable corporate polluters to undermine our laws and greatly expand exports of fossil fuels from ports all along the Pacific."

Here's the current state of play on the TPP:

Negotiations concluded October 5. The text is still being kept secret, but we know the biggest threats in the finalized agreement:

- It will include Investor-State dispute settlement -- i.e. corporations get to sue countries if their environmental or labor laws stand in the way of profit.
- It will still require the U.S. to automatically approve any and all proposals for the export of liquefied natural gas.
- The environmental chapter is too weak to be effective.

When President Obama formally announces to Congress his intention to sign the TPP, he has to wait at least 90 days after giving notice before signing the pact. Within that window, the text must be made available to the public for at least 60 days before the pact is signed.

After the President signs, he can introduce the implementing legislation for the TPP 30 days later (While the administration could introduce the implementing legislation sooner, that would be a major deviation from precedent), or he could wait an indefinite amount of time.

If all parts of the above timeline are pushed to the max, Congress could deliberate in early 2016.

TAKE ACTION

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has called for the filing of 100 "Stop TPP" resolutions by **November 15** in local legislatures and municipalities. Sierra Club's Responsible Trade Program is joining in this push to show members of Congress that local communities and political leadership oppose the TPP.

Want to help? Contact Courtenay Lewis at **courtenay.lewis@ sierraclub.org**.

Conserve

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Urban/Rural Water Waste

This program should be extended to include a comprehensive set of indoor and outdoor water use efficiency measures, including grey water, rainwater, and recycled water reuse, with appropriate incentives and consequences to ensure program effectiveness. It should also include per capita water use targets at achievable low levels -- e.g., 50 gallons per capita per day, gpcd, indoors and outdoors -- and metering and monitoring of all wells.

The significant unavoidable and unmitigated impacts from the proposed ordinance alternative, in addition to the severe adverse impacts that will result from a program that does not do enough to preserve these basins, make a strong Countywide conservation program the least harmful feasible alternative, as required by CEQA. It also accomplishes the development objective of the ordinance by providing the quickest, surest, and most economical way to allow sustainable growth to occur.

Offsets won't cut it

In September 2014, the California Coastal Commission sent the County a letter noting that the EIR's proposal to conserve water by offsetting water use via retrofitting of buildings would be "essentially ineffective in situations of severe drought and severe water supply shortages" due to "the finite number of non-retrofitted homes." The Commission wrote "We are concerned that the Programs' utility may by futile because water supply in [Level of Severity III] areas is already severely constrained."

The Coastal Commission recommended that amendments to the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP) "include language clarifying that water offsets do not in and of themselves establish adequacy of services and development entitlements," and that new development be prohibited in LOS III areas, stating "This way, new development in areas with existing water supply constraints will not inappropriately be found consistent with LCP provisions simply because they are not increasing water supply inadequacy."

We share the Coastal Commission's concern, although we believe development should not be allowed in *any* "high-priority" Basins until it can be shown with conclusive evidence that the water supply can sustainably support that development. For that reason, we are opposed to "conserve/retrofit-to-build" programs in high-priority Basins. Such programs will reduce water use initially, but they ultimately increase use by hardening demand at levels higher than previous conservation levels.

We applaud the County for recognizing that a Countywide Conservation Ordinance is needed, but it must be one that preserves and restores these basins—and water resources Countywide. Preserving the county's water resources, especially the three basins that are the focus of this ordinance, requires bold, dramatic action now to deal with the unprecedented threat. That's why we strongly encouraged the Board of Supervisors to take such action with improvements to the draft ordinance.

In view of the importance of the issues and the deficiencies in the program, we also requested that language be included in the ordinance that will require a mandatory review and board hearing of the ordinance in 12 to 18 months to amend, renew, or terminate the ordinance.

Let's Eliminate GMO Produce from Local Farmers Markets

by Jesse Arnold

Why not just ask for labeling?

We have already asked for labeling. The SLO Farmers Market board voted unanimously to not require labeling. The sale of unlabeled GMO corn at this market has been taking place for about ten years.

There is no law in California requiring labeling, so the Market board can argue they have no legal authority to require it. They *do* have the authority to decide what produce can be sold at the market and which vendors will be allowed to sell. It's time to make a change and protect the public by banning the sale of GMO produce at our farmers markets.

Isn't banning GMOs anti-competition?

Farmers Market is not a competitive environment. Only a limited number of growers get to participate in the market. They don't have to compete with all the growers not in the market. The Farmers Market board controls which produce can be sold at the market. The manager has been known to limit how many vendors can sell a particular item.

Do you agree that GMO produce is an industrial product that has no place at a Farmers Market? Would you like the SLO Farmers Market to adopt a policy to bar GMO produce, such as genetically engineered Bt corn, from its markets?

If so, you may make your views known to any or all of the following SLO Farmers Market board members:

Mike Cirone, See Canyon Fruit Ranch
Philip Langston, SLO Grown Produce
Dave Righetti, Righetti Avocados
or talk with Market Manager Peter Jankay

Aren't GMOs safe to eat?

We believe GMOs are inadequately tested for safety. The company which develops a GMO does a feeding test on lab rats for 90 days. The company reports its results to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA does not do any independent testing to verify the results.

GMOs should be tested for at least a year by an agency which is free of the influence of biotech companies. (For information on just how much influence those companies have on the scientific community, read the September 5 *New York Times* expose "Food Industry Enlisted Academics in GMO Lobbying War, Emails Show," and "The Puppetmasters of Academia (or What the NY Times Left Out") at **independentsciencenews.org**.)

For more information on GMO safety, see *GMO Myths and Truths: An evidence-based examination of the claims made for the safety and efficacy of genetically modified crops* (Earthopensource, June 2012).

Stick 'Em Up!

PG&E wants higher fees imposed on all who choose cleaner energy

As we may have mentioned a time or two (see "The Long and Winding Road to Community Choice Energy," October), the Pacific Gas & Electric Company is not fond of the idea of customers and communities leaving their embrace and choosing the lower costs, local control and cleaner energy available via a Community Choice energy program.

PG&E is now proposing that Marin Clean Energy (MCE) and Sonoma Clean Power customers should pay even more "exit" fees than they already do to leave PG&E and join a Community Choice program.

The proposed increase ranges from 44% to 127% and would force residential customers, including low-income customers, to pay the highest rates associated with these fees.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) currently authorizes PG&E to impose exit fees on customers who choose to buy their electric generation from local Community Choice energy providers like Marin Clean Energy or Sonoma Clean Power. Although these fees are included in cost comparisons, they reduce the savings that MCE and Sonoma Clean Power customers receive and increase the cost of choosing a local provider over PG&E.

PG&E's exit fee is billed monthly, based on usage, and charged to from customers who choose to buy energy from another provider. When a customer makes that choice, PG&E sells the excess electricity that they bought for that customer.

Depending on market conditions, PG&E may earn or lose money when they sell the power.

PG&E has accumulated more than $1 billion from money made on the market when selling this excess power. If PG&E doesn't earn money through the sale of the excess power, the exit fee is applied. This covers any losses incurred by PG&E, forcing the customer to bear this burden *and* pay for energy that they will never use.

Along with their request to increase exit fees, PG&E also requested to close the account with over $1 billion.

"What PG&E is proposing is outrageous," said Dawn Weisz, CEO of Marin Clean Energy. "They've collected $1 billion from selling excess power on the market but when they aren't able to make a profit, they collect from our customers to avoid pulling funds from their billion-dollar stockpile. Those profits should be applied against any losses, so that the homes, schools, nonprofits and businesses in our communities are not burdened further."

This year, MCE estimates that its customers will be forced to pay PG&E $19.3 million in exit fees. If the CPUC approves PG&E's proposed increase, MCE customers would pay $30.6 million to PG&E in 2016 alone, with residential customers forced to pay more than half of that.

PG&E is the only California utility to impose these fees on low-income customers.

The CPUC is scheduled to make its determination on the exit free increase in December.

Capps Convenes Clean Energy Forum

On October 16, Representative Lois Capps hosted "Building a Clean Energy Economy: Challenges and opportunities for the Central Coast," a panel discussion with local clean energy experts from industry and academia.

Bill Toman, CalWave Project Director through Cal Poly's Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy; Cal Poly Civil and Environmental Engineering Professor Tryg Lundquist; Dawn Legg of the Economic Vitality Corporation; and Mitch Samuelian, Vice President of Operations for NRG Renew, were the panelists.

The discussion examined the economic and environmental benefits of shifting to a clean energy economy as well as the challenges that need to be overcome to fully transition away from fossil fuels.

The panel was one of two roundtables Capps hosted that week – the first at UCSB – to "bring together energy experts, scientists, and members of the community to discuss this exciting work and the challenges that lay ahead." Cal Poly and UCSB are conducting cutting edge research in new algae biofuels, solar and wave energy, and LED technologies.

Perhaps the most riveting presentation was by Professor Lundquist, who is also a principal in the MicroBio Engineering Inc., and spoke on his experience with microalgae production, from laboratory studies to multiple-acre raceway ponds, for both the treatment of municipal and agricultural wastewater and the production of biofuel feedstock. Cal Poly's pilot algae ponding facility is a national testbed site sponsored by the Department of Energy.

"This is just some of the energy innovation taking place right here in our own backyard," said Capps. "It is critically important that we continue to build support in our region for building a clean energy future."

After the Cal Poly panel, Capps wrote "The Plains oil spill at Refugio Beach last May serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of our continued reliance upon fossil fuels. That is why I penned an op-ed to publicly oppose the proposed Phillips 66 rail project.... Now, more than ever, we need to dedicate ourselves to shifting away from fossil fuels and instead focus on cultivating clean and renewable energy technologies that produce the power we need while minimizing carbon pollution."

Energy Panel Followed by Nuclear Tantrum

Diablo die-hards make last stand for our friend the atom

In the q&a following the Cal Poly clean energy panel, the panelists were immediately set upon by irate nuclear boosters, scolding the panelists for not touting their favorite radioactive energy source and dissing the non-deadly competition. Didn't the panelists know about a new report from "two Google scientists" who have opined that renewable energy cannot supply the world's energy needs? Didn't they know how high the price of electricity is in Denmark due to its rash decision to commit to renewables? Didn't they understand that global warming requires the reduction of greenhouse gases by any means necessary, and therefore we should all support the relicensing of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant? And so on.

Presumably the nuclear folks didn't read the *Tribune* from the day before, reprinting *L.A. Times* columnist Michael Hiltzik's trenchant commentary, "Why nuclear power is shrinking in the U.S."

Nor did they see the news the day before that about the shuttering of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Massachusetts.

Perhaps the most telling stat of all: No nuclear power proponents were sitting on the clean energy panel. Instead, they were a rag-tag band, commandeering a public microphone and angrily spouting bad stats.

Last things first: In the Clean Power Rule it released last summer, the EPA disqualified existing nuclear power plants from claiming credit for future reductions in greenhouse gas emissions because existing plants are part of the current baseline; hence they can do nothing to "further lower CO2 emissions below current levels."


Massachusetts nuclear plant scheduled to close by 2019

BOSTON (AP) — The beleaguered Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, the only nuclear power plant in Massachusetts, will close by June 2019 because it's becoming too expensive to run, its owner announced Tuesday.

The decision by New Orleans-based Entergy Corp. comes about a month after federal inspectors downgraded the plant's safety rating to the lowest level and said they would increase oversight in the wake of a shutdown during a winter storm. The owners maintained that the plant in Plymouth required such, although it needed millions of dollars in upgrades.

Entergy cited "poor market conditions, reduced revenues and increased operational costs."

Nuking on heaven's door Tribune, 10/14.

The persistent belief that renewable energy has caused Denmark to have sky-high electricity prices misses the fact that the household price of electricity in Denmark consists mostly of taxes, as would be expected in a high-tax country. Recent calculations have shown that the basic electricity price for most Danish companies is lower than in the 28 EU countries. (A statistic unmentioned by nuke-huggers: In 2014, Denmark's energy use fell to its lowest point in forty years, due in large part to conservation and efficiency measures.)

As for the opinion of the two Google scientists: panelist Bill Toman – a nuclear engineer — fielded that one, calmly replying to the fissile gentlemen in the audience that he looked forward to reading the report, but its conclusion as they reported it was "at odds with the preponderance of scientific opinion" on the matter of renewable energy and global energy needs.

Also at odds with the two Google scientists: Denmark -- again -- which last July, found itself producing 116% of its national energy needs from wind farms. They sold the surplus to Germany, Norway and Sweden.

Let's give the last word to Vicki Lesley, a British filmmaker currently directing a documentary in Europe on the history of the atomic era, *The Atom: A Love Affair.*

"It's fascinating to experience just how totally settled the whole question is there," she says. "Nuclear power is definitively over, and even those who like it basically accept that fact. The future there is all about new, exciting developments in renewables, efficiency, grid and storage developments, community energy etc., and the big, old vested interests of nuclear and coal are having to adapt to that changing reality."

Including, someday, San Luis Obispo.

Impede, Thwart, Omit & Evade

PG&E has a method for dealing with Diablo's seismic issues and prying eyes

PG&E has a special kind of relationship with the independent committee that's supposed to review its seismic studies for Diablo Canyon.

That relationship is outlined in a brief submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission on October 9 by the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, which argued that the Pacific Gas & Electric Company should not be given $4.56 million of ratepayer money to compensate it for the costs of seismic studies — the much ballyhooed most expensive seismic re-evaluation of a nuclear power plant in U.S. history — as required by the California legislature.

The 32-page brief, filed by Alliance attorney and former California Energy Commissioner John Geesman, presents a compelling argument for nonpayment based on noncompliance with the state's directives, i.e. the way PG&E went about conducting those studies

DIABLO continued on page 10

Beyond Oil

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tation options are becoming more accessible and how this expansion is creating thousands of jobs for Californians. A representative from Southern California Edison shared how the utility is integrating electric vehicles and other transportation electrification initiatives into its planning, as well as efforts to make these options available to low-income customers. The San Joaquin Regional Transit District has leveraged tens of millions of dollars in public and private resources to build out clean transit infrastructure, such as zero emission electric and hybrid buses, in partnership with companies like Proterra, Inc. that are leading the transit sector in building out clean transit infrastructure. Tapping into these public and private partnerships is a critical action that must be taken by cities across the state.

Finally, Dr. Alberto Ayala, Deputy Executive Officer of the California Air Resources Board, who is in charge of implementing and monitoring the state's clean fuel policies such as the zero-emissions vehicles and low-carbon fuel standards, drove home the message that California is leading the transition to avoid climate catastrophe while growing its economy. Since 2000, the state's GDP and population have steadily increased while making significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions (on an overall, per capita, and per GDP basis) and reducing oil consumption. California can only maintain this progress with the support of cities and local jurisdictions. Local officials must seek participation in California Climate Investments and work with agencies to leverage investments and support clean transportation infrastructure rollout, promote low-carbon transportation, and raise public awareness about zero-emission vehicles — and how to access programs that make them affordable to everyone. Much of this effort begins with local officials developing progressive, sustainable community strategies (pursuant to SB 375) that integrate transportation and emissions targets with responsible land-use planning.

The 2015 Moving California Beyond Oil Summit was inspirational, and it exemplified the real power of local government to stop Big Oil from polluting our communities and diluting our democracy, while leveraging resources and implementing local policies that will transition California into a 100 percent clean fuel economy without leaving any community behind.

The Sierra Club is proud to partner with local and state leaders who are championing these efforts. Together with our co-host, Communities for a Better Environment, we look forward to continuing to develop a powerful network of local and state officials, environmental justice organizations, and green industry partners who are allied in building a sustainable and equitable California.

Increasingly, these extreme extraction methods – blasting oil and gas out of rock, steaming oil out of tarlike dirt – are being used together, as when fracked natural gas is piped in to superheat the water that melts the bitumen in the tar sands, to cite just one example from the energy death spiral…. We are blasting the bedrock of our continents, pumping our water with toxins, lopping off mountaintops, scraping off boreal forests, endangering the deep ocean, and scrambling to exploit the melting Arctic – all to get at the last drops and the final rocks. Yes, some very advanced technology is making this possible, but it's not innovation, it's madness.

-Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*

Support

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supporters, but any amount is greatly appreciated.

Another easy way to support your local Chapter is to go to **www.sierraclub.org/santa-lucia/donate** and choose either a monthly automatic donation or a one-time donation. This will not be tax-deductible, but will have a broader reach. While you're on the website, check out Andrew's blog and look for upcoming outings and events.

Personal checks to the "Santa Lucia Chapter Sierra Club" are always welcome, sent to the above address. A very convenient way to contribute is to set up a monthly bill pay check from your bank for any amount you like. $20 or more per month will put you in the Cal French Circle.

The world is kind of a scary place these days. There is a lot going on. Sometimes it seems overwhelming. When I feel overwhelmed, I reflect that what we must really do is take care of our own gardens; our own community. This is our little corner of the world and we are the stewards of this place. Here we have some power to control what goes down.

Do yourself a favor. Take a few moments out of your busy life to find your check book or rummage around in the sofa cushions to come up with some money to send to the Santa Lucia Chapter.

I can't think of nicer gift to give yourself and your community. It's just what you always wanted and it is the right thing to do.

A Get-Together for the Cal French Circle

What: the Cal French Circle ThanksGiving Party
When: Sunday, November 22: 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Where: A Chapter member's home in the Edna Valley. (Directions will be provided when you RSVP)
Why: To thank our very generous, sustaining Chapter members for their ongoing financial support.

You will enjoy gourmet appetizers, wine, beer, juices, convivial company, and the Celtic harp stylings of Lindi Doud. We will share stories of our successes in helping to protect, explore and enjoy the environmental resources of San Luis Obispo County.
RSVP by November 16 to sierraclub8@gmail.com or (805) 543-8717.

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3. Download/stream and enjoy!

Global Climate March & Flotilla

Send a message to the Paris climate talks

MARCH:
Saturday, November 28, 11:00 a.m.
San Luis Obispo Court House, 1050 Monterey St., across from the Fremont.
Hosted by Heidi Harmon

SLO will join millions around the globe in marching to demand meaningful action on climate change at the start of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris. The weekend before the world's leaders convene, all around the world people will be coming together in massive global action that will make sure the world's heads of state know that the entire world expects them to take dramatic action to move away from the fossil fuel industry and build the renewable energy we need.

FLOAT:
Sunday, November 29, 11:00 a.m. - sunset
1391 2nd St, Los Osos
Hosted By Ted Emrick

All are invited and welcome to the Baywood Climate Fest as we fill the day with world music, inspired speakers, multi-cultural blessings, a back-bay peace-sign flotilla and as much positive action energy as possible. An aerial camera will capture what we hope to be an abundant crowd gathered next to a giant flotilla of kayaks, SUPs and other boats forming a peace sign on the bay shore. This striking visual is meant to send a message to the world leaders as they begin their summit meetings at the U.N. Climate Change Conference on November 30th.

The Baywood Climate Fest will be photographed, videotaped and documented along with all the other Global Climate March events throughout the world, and together, we will create an expansive and beautiful portrait of benevolent activism and hope.

11:00am - Sunset

MUSIC – DANCE – SPEAKERS – POSITIVE MESSAGES IN A FESTIVAL SETTING (Food, beer and wine available to purchase on site. This non-profit event is free and organized by volunteers.) Show up early for the aerial camera shots capturing our gathering of people along the shore and Giant Peace Sign Flotilla on the Back Bay in the gorgeous setting of Baywood Park. These photos/video will be posted on Avaaz.org, the world's largest and most powerful online activist network, and presented to world leaders at the Paris Conference. We're targeting 300 boats (kayaks, canoes, small sailboats & powerboats, SUP, etc...) to all tie up into a peace sign formation. All are welcome. If you have a boat, let's see it! Attendees on land are encouraged to bring greenheart signs and wear green for this photo.

Event Schedule:
11:00 am – Peace Sign Flotilla On the Bay. Bring your kayak, SUP, canoe or whatever floats you and help create the biggest Back Bay Flotilla in history!
12:00 pm – Opening Ceremonies with Sound Bath with Handpan & Crystal Bowls by Tim Costa & Justin Perkins, and also a Multi-Cultural Invocation.
12:30 pm – The Cayucos Players - hot new combo from the Cayucos Middle School Band
1:15pm - Mama Tumba - 10-piece Afro/Latin/Funk Rhythm & Groove Band
2:00 pm – Speakers & Poets (Dian Sousa & Lisa Coffman)
2:30 pm – Zongo All-Stars (Afro-Carribean Dance Music)
4:30 pm – A Festive Musical March Through Baywood Streets! Musicians from Zongo All-Stars and Mama Tumba along with the other local drummers, musicians, and dancers will lead the crowd of event participants through the scenic streets of Baywood. The march will end at the Baywood Pier at sunset. All to be captured via aerial camera for the world (leaders) to see!

Visit our Facebook page for more info and join the event:
www.facebook.com/events/907661865992888

Report Card

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Lopez, Adrin Nazarian, Anthony Rendon, Mark Stone, and Phil Ting. Other Assembly members who scored 89% or above are Toni Atkins, Rob Bonta, Ed Chau, David Chiu, Kansen Chu, Matthew Dababneh, Jimmy Gomez, Rich Gordon, Reginald Jones-Sawyer, Sr., Kevin McCarty, Kevin Mullin, Bill Quirk, Miguel Santiago, Tony Thurmond and Jim Wood.

Assembly member Das Williams, who was absent from voting on the last two nights of the legislative session to attend to the birth of his daughter, missed voting on three bills he co-authored that were priority environmental bills. Had he been there to vote, he would have scored a 90 percent on the report card.

"Getting 89 percent or above in the Assembly is a good score this year," said Phillips. "Anything lower than that means your constituents are not getting the representation on the environment and public health that virtually every public opinion survey indicates Californians want."

The state Senators receiving 100 percent scores are Ben Allen, Marty Block, Kevin de Leon, Loni Hancock, Jerry Hill, Hannah-Beth Jackson, Mark Leno, Carol Liu, Mike McGuire, Holly Mitchell, William Monning, Fran Pavley, Bob Wieckowski, and Lois Wolk.

"Generally, if you got less than a 100 percent in the Senate, it was because you took a walk or voted against the environment on at least one bill the oil industry overtly worked to defeat," said Phillips.

One of the things we looked at this year was campaign finance reports. Thanks to the new system online at the Secretary of State's website, we could quickly research who received oil money in their last campaign and through the summer. It was disappointing—not surprising—to see how many legislators who had low scores received a lot of oil money.

The lowest score among Democratic Assembly members was garnered by Jim Frazier, Adam Gray,

Sebastian Ridley-Thomas and Freddie Rodriguez, who each received a score of 46 percent. The highest score among Assembly Republicans was 60 percent, which was garnered by David Hadley. Oil-soaked Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian scored 33 percent.

"Anything below 60 percent would earn an F grade in most schools," noted Phillips.

In the Senate, the lowest score among Democratic members was earned by Cathleen Galgiani, who scored 50 percent. The highest score among Republican members was 30 percent, earned by five members: Jeff Stone, Sharon Runner, Bob Huff, Anthony Canella, and Tom Berryhill.

Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the 13 Sierra Club chapters in California, representing more than 380,000 members and supporters statewide.

The report card is available on the Sierra Club California website at **www.sierraclubcalifornia.org**.

Divesting From Dirty Fuels Now a Massive Movement

By Peter Martin, Executive Director, The Sierra Club Foundation
From The Planet, *abridged*

Taking your investment dollars out of dirty fuels is a good idea, and one that's gaining steam. In fact, Shell Oil's former chairman calls divesting from fossil fuels a "rational response" to the industry's head-in-the-sand approach to climate change.

A just-released report from Arabella Advisors makes it clear that leaders of several of the largest institutions around the world are creating a tidal wave of enthusiasm for divestment. Ultimately for these investors and institutions, investing in fossil fuels is not morally justifiable, and it's not good for business.

For the ethical argument, we can turn to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who said, "Just as we argued in the 1980s that those who conducted business with apartheid South Africa were aiding and abetting an immoral system, we can say that nobody should profit from the rising temperatures, seas, and human suffering caused by the burning of fossil fuels."

The growing list of financial reasons not to invest in fossil fuels is perhaps an even greater factor for divesting. The Arabella Advisors report points out that "Climate risk to investment portfolios is helping drive the exponential growth of divestment...."

Meanwhile, a coalition of the world's largest companies have come together to announce that they will power their businesses entirely with clean energy.

Several years ago, The Sierra Club Foundation was a founding member of the Divest-Invest philanthropy initiative. Back then, there were 17 foundations, with a little more than one billion dollars in total assets under management. Today, 436 institutions and 2,040 individuals across 43 countries and representing $2.6 trillion in assets have committed to divest from fossil fuel companies.

But we realize divestment isn't enough. That's why earlier this year we committed to invest 20 percent of our endowment in climate solutions — and the White House took notice.

We have an unsurpassed opportunity to confront the climate challenge and create a cleaner, more prosperous, and more just society. But it's going to take all the tools that we have: tough negotiations in Paris, a strong Clean Power Plan here at home, and hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets at the local level. Investors, too, must heed the call and put their capital to work to create the world that we all want — and that is within our reach.

Diablo

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and the utility's extreme non-cooperation with the state-appointed committee tasked with overseeing that work.

The brief paints a vivid picture of a utility earnestly trying to jigger studies in order to come to the conclusion desired: Diablo is safe.

It also goes into detail in describing all the ways that PG&E has sought to evade review by that state-appointed committee, the Independent Peer Review Panel (IPRP), made up of representatives from the California Geological Survey, Seismic Safety Commission, Energy Commission, Office of Energy Services, San Luis Obispo County, and the California Coastal Commission. The Alliance brief notes that PG&E "intensified the stonewalling strategy it had deployed after the IPRP's unsparing mid-2013 criticisms of PG&E's ground motion assumptions" (which included: "Compared to traditional approaches, the PG&E method resulted in lower ground motion hazard estimates," whereas "in typical, state-of-the-practice seismic hazard analysis," the data would result in "estimated ground motion hazards beyond the original design level" of the plant).

The utility spent only $230,000 out of $950,000 approved by the CPUC to support the activities of the peer review panel. PG&E didn't share a draft of its seismic report with the IPRP prior to completion and submittal to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The IPRP asked for six months for a post-submittal review. The utility gave them 30 days. The brief outlines all the ways in which PG&E effectively ran out the clock, assuring that the panel's after-the-fact review would have "no meaningful impact" on the process.

Issues identified by Geesman and the Alliance that "should have received thoughtful consideration from the IPRP rather than be determined by unilateral decisions from PG&E" include a theoretical model, backed by almost no data, based on the assumption that large earthquakes on the faults closest to the plant would have no greater effect or magnitude than a fault rupture at a greater distance. In the "show your work" department that your high school math teacher was so keen on, the final report is opaque. Geesman notes Dr. Sam Blakeslee's observation on the striking paucity of the data on ground motion – heavy on the theoretical and light on hard data from test wells — on which PG&E based its conclusions: "Given the relative ease and low cost, it's not clear why more wells aren't simply drilled so that the velocity question, which is so important to the final shaking predictions, can be resolved once and for all through direct measurements."

PG&E Geosciences Director Richard Klimczak wrote an extensive analysis of a possible joint rupture – an earthquake scenario in which a rupture in one fault triggers ruptures in connecting faults. PG&E did not include his analysis in its final report, substituting a greatly reduced two-fault joint rupture scenario instead of Klimczak's multiple fault analysis, reducing the potential magnitude of the resulting quake from what Kimczak found – M8 to 8.5 – to a level the plant was designed to withstand.

The utility ignored the state's directive to study potential seismic impacts on Diablo's non-safety related systems, structures and components, focusing only on the power block, claiming they were justified in doing so based on an outdated 2010 analysis that was issued four years before the current level of seismic hazards around the plant was identified and upgraded.

Not buying it Geesman

The brief notes PG&E's distinct preference for review by its "Participatory Review Panel," stocked with scientists who have longstanding close ties with the utility, including the financial variety, and the energetic use made of them by PG&E's media department, putting one such panelist in touch with a reporter "without mentioning his compensation arrangement with PG&E" in the course of seeking to, in the words of PG&E Technical Services Director Jearl Strickland, "lay out a strategy to have third parties that have been involved in the seismic studies weigh in to the Trib."

The brief concludes that "PG&E has severely undermined the value of a large ratepayer investment in the seismic re-evaluation of Diablo Canyon," both in its conduct of the seismic studies and its attempts to shield them from the gaze and critique of the Independent Peer Review Panel.

Bad news for the big utility: The recent passage of Assembly Bill 361 means that the Independent Peer Review Panel, which had been set to expire early next year, will instead be sticking around until the end of the plant's license period in 2025.

Geesman pointed out that AB 361 "received a unanimous vote in every committee and on the floors of both legislative houses" before it was signed by the Governor, reaffirming "the priority of subjecting PG&E's seismic evaluations to rigorous scrutiny."

Fireball

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Impacts – Rail Spur Project: Impacts That May Not Be Fully Mitigated To Less Than Significant Levels," you will find this:

AQ-5: Operational activities of trains along the mainline rail route associated with the Rail Spur Project would generate toxic emissions that exceed thresholds.

This is one of eleven significant "impacts that must be addressed in a 'statement of overriding consideration' if the project is approved." That means the County Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors must make a legal finding of fact that the benefits which the project will bestow upon the people of San Luis Obispo County are somehow so great, they outweigh its threshold-exceeding toxic emissions, as well as the risk of oil spills, explosions and fires that can be so hot and uncontrollable they must be left to burn themselves out over several days.

But it's not just a matter of debate between those who think that the alleged benefits of the Phillips 66 project would somehow make it worth living in a place with "toxic emissions that exceed thresholds." There's a problem — actually a number of problems — with the Environmental Impact Report on which our decision makers must base that decision. This passage reveals much about the sleight-of-hand tendencies of the EIR:

Emissions of fugitive hydrocarbons from the Rail Spur Project would be substantially less than that from the existing refinery (1tons/yr versus 33 tons/year). The Applicant indicates the expected [hydrogen sulfide] content of the crude oil vapor could be about one percent by weight.

Take note: No mention of the difference in the *kind* of emissions represented by the Rail Spur Project vs. the existing refinery's emissions. Existing emissions are not emissions from refining tar sand crude oil, which is loaded with lead, copper, vanadium, and volatile organic compounds — another way in which it differs significantly from San Ardo crude. In a table purporting to represent "Properties of Current and Potential Crude Oils at the Santa Maria Refinery," the EIR does not even include comparative amounts of lead between the refinery's current "typical crude blend" and tar sands crude. (Hint: there's a lot of lead in tar sands oil.) Nor will you find acknowledgment or analysis of the whole chemical cocktail of vaporizing elements, not just (extremely toxic) hydrogen sulfide. Nor is there any acknowledgment or analysis of the fact that the reassuring "one percent by weight" statistic represents 20,000 gallons per train, five times a week, vaporizing and out-gassing as each train rolls through your town en route to the Nipomo Mesa. The NRDC has calculated that a day's worth of vaporizing leakage from a 100-car oil train traveling 260 miles through California roughly equates to nine tons of reactive organic gasses (ROG) released into the air.

This phenomenon, known in the trade as "crude shrinkage" or "settling in transit," is absent from the EIR, which does not include these emissions in its emission calculations.

Breathing a cumulative dose of poisons and carcinogens in your daily air supply can make you just as dead as a rapidly expanding fireball. It will just take longer.

Which means if this project gets a permit, it won't just be a potential problem for everyone living in the evacuation zone within one mile of the tracks. It will be a daily, chronic problem for millions of Californians. We will all find out what it feels like to live in an industrial sacrifice zone.

In other words, the fireball is a risk, something project supporters want to bet won't happen here. Threshold-exceeding toxic emissions – at a level even worse than what the project's Environmental Impact Report is willing to admit to — are a sure thing.

Oil vs. Aquifer, Round III

After a hearing packed with 100 upset neighbors (see "Oil vs. Aquifer," October) and two County Planning Commission hearings dogged by protestors -- now continued to a third -- it's safe to say that Freeport McMoRan and the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources are not getting an easy ride in their bid to both expand the Price Canyon oil field and legalize dumping of the wastewater where they're currently dumping it.

Thanks to all who submitted comments to the Planning Commission expressing concerns about groundwater contamination. The commissioners are listening. Answers are promised for the Nov. 12 hearing.

But Speaking of Fireballs....

Prepping for avoidable disaster

On October 21, emergency responders from multiple County agencies converged at the California Mens Colony for an oil train disaster drill.

Per the *Lompoc Record*, the drill simulated an emergency response scenario for a "4 a.m. derailment of 32 cars from an 82-car train directly behind the prison, involving a unit with 500 inmates and four staff members. It also entailed an oil spill into the nearby creek, ensuing wildland fire, overturned emergency vehicles, structure collapse, structure fire and multiple casualties."

Not mentioned in the press coverage: The standard response of firefighters to an oil train fire is to pull far back, put up a safety cordon, and let the fire burn itself out, as there is no safe way to fight such a fire and no degree of preparedness can change that fact.

Thus, it should now be burned into everyone's minds that "This could realistically happen in this county," in the words of Cal Fire engineer Bennet Milloy.

It should be equally clear that for this kind of disaster, prevention — not preparation — is the best medicine.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **December 2.** To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierraclub8@gmail.com

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.

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.

Sun., Nov. 1st, 8:30 am, (note change to Standard Time), Montaña de Oro SP This outing features a look at the northern half of MDO St. Park. Meet at the turn off to the Horse Camp, a dirt road on the left side of the main road (Pecho Valley Road) about 100 yards from the entrance to the park. We will hike to the East Boundary Trail, to the Hazard Peak Trail, to the Hiedra Trail, to the Bloody Nose Trail, to the East Cable Trail, and back to the parking area. This is a moderately strenuous hike of 8 miles, a total elevation gain of 2000 ft., (some of which is in sand), with a total hiking time of 4 hours. Make sure to bring water, snacks or lunch. Sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hats, and jackets are recommended. No RSVP needed. The local plants and animals will be discussed during the hike. Rain cancels. For more information, contact Bill Waycott (805) 459-2103, bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Tues., Nov. 10th, 10 a.m. Los Osos Oak Reserve Walk A one and a half mile walk through a series of scenic loop trails in a unique, ancient oak forest, a great recreational or conditioning one-hour walk. Meet at Oak Reserve parking lot on Los Osos Valley Rd. soon after entering Los Osos, across from Eto Rd. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, 528-5567 or vmarchenko57@gmail.com.

Sat., Nov. 14th, 8:30 a.m. Cruikshank to Alder Creek Camp Moderately strenuous, eleven-mile hike, 2400 ft. gain, in Silver Peak Wilderness. Probably some trail-side poison oak. You may go part way since we will return on the same trail. Bring lunch, water, and hiking shoes. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area in San Simeon State Park, one mile north of Cambria on Hwy 1. Rain will postpone hike to a later date. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sun., Nov. 15th, 10 a.m. Quarry Hill Trekking-Pole Hike Two-mile, 400 ft. gain, hike to demonstrate the effective use of trekking poles. Meet at the trailhead for Quarry Hill, off South Bay Blvd. in Morro Bay. Rain cancels. Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or hiking poles@gmail.com .

Thur.-Sun., Nov. 19th-21st. Death Valley Wilderness Service Trip Help restore wilderness values in this stunning desert national park. Project may be eliminating a marijuana grow site or helping with cabin cleanup in the Panamints—or maybe something else entirely. Meet Thursday afternoon , place to be decided and work Thursday afternoon and Friday. Potluck either Thursday or Friday night. Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com or 661-944-4056 CNRCC Desert Committee.

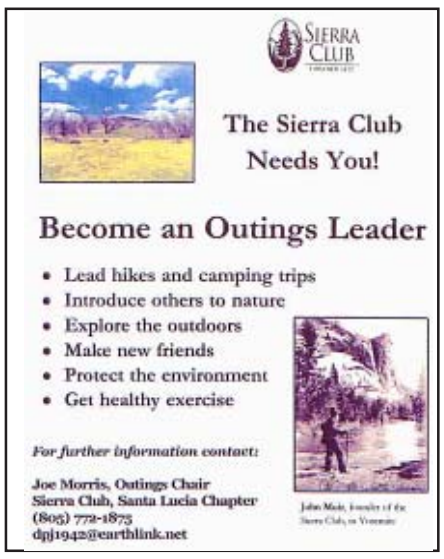
Sat., Nov. 21st, 8:30 a.m., La Panza Range to Castle Crags Hike Strenuous, nine-mile, 2000 ft. gain, hike to explore eastern SLO County on road walk into Machesna Wilderness to Castle Crags for great views and lunch stop. Bring lunch, water, hiking shoes, and dress for the weather. Meet at Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita for one-hour drive to trailhead. Leader: Gary Felsman, 473-3694.

Thur.-Sun., Nov. 26th-29th, Basin and Range Thanksgiving Campout Primitive camping (no amenities) in our newest national monument, Basin and Range National Monument, in southern Nevada, with dry, dusty valleys and rocky, wooded ridges, archaeological sites. We will tour the area mostly by vehicle, with some hiking. Bring all supplies needed, including water. Leader: David von Seggern, vonseg1@sbcglobal.net or 775-303-8461 Toiyabe Chapter.

Sat., Dec. 5th, 9 a.m. Cerro Alto Anniversary Hike Moderate, seven-mile, 1700 ft. gain, loop hike through forest to cable road and summit, with excellent views of morros and coastline. Meet at Cerro Alto campground, on Hwy 41, about 12 miles west of Atascadero or 8 miles east of Morro Bay. $5 day use fee. Some trailside poison oak. Bring lunch or snacks, water, and dress for weather. Lunch stop at Taco Temple for those interested. Leader: Chuck Tribbey, 441-7597.

Thurs., Dec. 10th, 10 a.m. Hazard Peak Hike in Montana de Oro State Park. Five-mile, 1000 ft. elevation gain, hike up to summit for stunning views of mountains and coastline. Meet at Hazard Canyon parking lot, 1.6 miles from park entrance. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, 528-5567 or vmarchenko57@gmail.com.

Sat., Dec. 12th, 8:30 a.m., Trout Creek to Buckeye Camp Hike Moderate, eight-mile, 1000 ft. gain, hike on remote trail in Garcia Wilderness. Poison oak likely trailside. Need high-clearance vehicle to drive on Hi Mountain Rd., a dirt road, to trailhead. Meet in front of Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita. Rain will postpone hike to another weekend. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.



Sun., Dec. 13th, 8:30 a.m., Morro Bay State Park Traverse. Moderate, five-mile hike, 300 ft. gain, along Live Oak, Park Ridge, Chumash, Crespi, and other trails, with option to ascend Cerro Cabrillo. Duration about 3 hrs. Bring water, snacks, lunch, sturdy hiking shoes, hat, jacket. Local plants and animals will be discussed. No RSVP needed. Rain cancels. Meet at Quarry Ridge trailhead on South Bay Blvd., 1.4 mile south of Hwy 1. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com .

Sun., Dec. 13th, 10 a.m., Islay Hill Trekking-Pole Hike Two-mile, 400 ft. gain, hike to demonstrate effective use of trekking poles in area with spectacular views of Edna Valley to south and morros to north. From Broad St. in SLO, go east on Tank Farm Rd., turn right on Wavertree, left on Spanish Oaks, and veer right onto Sweet Bay, parking near the cul-de-sac. Rain cancels. Leader: David Georgi, hikingpoles@gmail.com or 458-5575.

Sun. Dec. 13th, 5 p.m., Victorian Christmas City Walk in San Luis Obispo. Easy, guided stroll past 15 holiday-lit, Victorian houses in the Old Town to learn of the festive Christmas customs, events, and locales of the 1890s. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Flashlight recommended. Meet in front of St. Stephen's Church, corner of Nipomo and Pismo Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Activities sponsored by other organizations

Sat., Nov. 14th, 1 - 3 p.m. Condors: Back from the Brink at SLO Botanical Garden The largest birds in North America were reintroduced into the wild in 1991 after being on the brink of extinction. Now there are hundreds of condors found in the western U.S., but their struggle isn't over yet. Join Dave Clendenen, lead biologist of the Condor Recovery Team, as he shares his story of working with the condors, what is being done and what can be done to make sure condors stay a permanent feature of California. $5 Garden members / $10 public. More info at slobg.org/condor. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., SLO. 805.541.1400 x304. www.slobg.org.