



SIERRA  
CLUB

March 2006  
Volume 43 No. 3

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### GENERAL MEETING

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COMING IN APRIL:

Slow Food in SLO  
April 18



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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

## Morro Bay and Cayucos Must Not Delay Sewage Clean-up

By David Beckman  
Project Director, Natural Resources Defense Council

In the past decade, waivers from basic federal treatment requirements under section 301(h) of the Clean Water Act have become increasingly rare, and with good reason. The discharge of partially treated waste degrades receiving waters, and poses serious risks to public health and the marine ecosystem. For that reason, sewage treatment plants are not entitled to maintain Clean Water Act waivers from secondary treatment standards merely for their administrative convenience.

But if EPA and the Regional Water Quality Control Board issue another waiver to the Morro Bay-Cayucos Sewage Treatment Plant, bureaucratic convenience will be the true basis for such an action. Convenience for a discharger of partially treated sewage will come at the cost of the water quality improvements that secondary treatment provides, improvements that will both diminish risks to the ecosystem and ma-

rine life, including the threatened California sea otter, and to public health.

Because an upgrade—including one that would include tertiary treatment—can be accomplished feasibly twice as fast as proposed, and because the Plant is not entitled to a waiver from secondary standards, the only appropriate and lawful action is to deny the waiver and order an upgrade “as fast as possible,” the operative standard established under law.

There are numerous reasons why this is true.

First, a balanced, indigenous population of marine life does not exist in and around the plant’s out-fall zone. The presence of a healthy ecosystem is an indispensable prerequisite for issuance of a waiver—

even if a waiver applicant proves it has no role in causing identified problems. But, here, the agencies’ rote analysis of the evidence ignores a disease epicenter affecting a “sentinel” species—the California sea otter—nearly on top of the Sewage Plant’s discharge pipe. This disease epicenter is the proverbial “elephant in the room” that the agencies inexplicably fail to properly consider in concluding that the Plant has met its heavy burden of proof here. EPA’s analysis, and the accompanying assessment by the Regional Board, neither overcomes the mountain of data showing that pathogens have severely degraded the relevant ocean environment nor even persuasively rules out the role of the Plant in causing or

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## Outings, a Sierra Club Essential



Hiking Big Falls. Photo: Steven Marx

By Bea Morrow

John Muir, the father of the Sierra Club, knew the importance of outings as a tool of environmental preservation. He introduced people to wilderness on outings, knowing that they were much more likely to preserve what they had seen and experienced first hand. From his early vision came the Club’s mission

to protect, preserve, and enjoy the natural environment in all of its forms.

As a part of our strategic plan for 2006-2008, the Santa Lucia Chapter is renewing our commitment to Outings. We will expand our Outings

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## Whither the Marketplace?

By Jan Howell Marx

What the heck should the Board of Supervisors do with Bill Bird’s controversial Dalidio Marketplace project?

“Turn it down,” say many voices and the voters of the City of San Luis Obispo, “reject it.” “Keep the land in agriculture, preferably organic.”

But, say the landowner, Bill Bird and the Texas developer, we want to build a mega-mall on prime ag land right next to the city. We really, really want it, and we have even hired RRM to help us build that giant mall.

Three Supervisors are sounding like they will favor the wishes of the land owner over the will of the voters of the City of San Luis Obispo and over the General Plans of the City and the County. Is this how the Supervisors should make land use

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photo/Karin Walsh

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## Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting

### LIVING WITH LIONS

An evening with the Mountain Lion Foundation

The Mountain Lion Foundation presents "Living With Lions," hosted by the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, on March 21, 2006, at 7:00p.m. As San Luis Obispo moves and recreates deeper into lion country, education on mountain lions becomes increasingly important. This is your chance to get that education. Learn about the natural history, biology and behavior of lions, as well as ways in which we can reduce human-lion conflicts and live more peaceably alongside our wild neighbors.

plus short film: *Anima Mundi*

Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m.  
 Ludwick Center, Room A  
 864 Santa Rosa St. (corner of Mill)  
 San Luis Obispo

**Save the date!**

## At War with the Coastal Act

By Mark Massara, Sierra Club Director of Coastal Programs

On February 6, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors adopted a "Legislative Platform" for the County, including clever ideas for various new state laws that the County's lobbyist (using your tax dollars) will be pushing in Sacramento this year. How much this will cost county taxpayers was not mentioned, unfortunately.

You would think that the Board's proposals for how they want to amend state law would warrant some focused discussion. But you would be wrong, because the Board chose to bury this item on the Consent Agenda, which means there was no staff presentation, no formal discussion and no separate vote. The Consent Agenda exists to sweep up insignificant administrative tasks that are so minor they do not merit separate discussion. Probably not the ideal choice for revisions of state law, that would, if passed, dramatically alter and diminish the quality of life of San Luis Obispo residents.

Not everyone played along. District 5 Supervisor Jim Patterson made a motion to pull the Legislative Platform for a thorough discussion and separate vote. It died for lack of a second.

The two most hare-brained proposals in the Platform come straight out of the Hearst Corporation's wish list for the District 2. As usual, Hearst Corp. and the Supervisors supporting them are willing to sacrifice the coast in order to get the development they want in San Luis.

The first idea is to amend the Coastal Act to "give local officials predominant standing in determining the resolution of issues pertaining to local traffic safety."

This nutty idea would appeal to those wanting to go back in time to a world where local government and developers could build wildly, without having to comply with the California Coastal Act or protect coastal resources and the quality of life of coastal residents and visitors. It would override longstanding law and Coastal Act policy that requires Highway One remain a rural, two-lane road in scenic areas of the state.

The policy protecting Highway One is

one of the primary reasons why local citizens were able to halt the Hearst Corporation's golf resort plans in 1998, and it remains a significant stumbling block to Hearst's current proposal to build a 100-room hotel at San Simeon (envisioned under their \$95 million "conservation" development agreement.) It would also allow transportation projects to trump coastal act protections for wetlands, habitat, agricultural lands and scenic viewsheds. If successful, the County's proposal would also put an end to numerous Sierra Club efforts around the state to halt inappropriate transportation projects, including the Orange County Toll Road at Trestle's Beach, development of the quarry property at Rockaway Beach in Pacifica and the replacement of the 10-Mile Bridge in Mendocino County.

The stated justification for this change is to overcome Coastal Commission objections to a left-hand turn lane on Highway One in Harmony. As justifications go, this one is highly unusual, because the Coastal Commission does not oppose a left-hand turn lane in Harmony.

"I am unclear as to how [the County] came to that conclusion," said Tami Grove, the Coastal Commission's Statewide Development and Transportation Liaison. "A few years ago, the Coastal Commission had concerns about a passing lane, which is a completely different component and would change the rural character of the highway, but we've always been attentive to addressing safety concerns such as left turn lanes where they're needed. We never said no to a left-turn lane at Harmony."

In other words, the county's legislative proposal would allow local governments to override the Coastal Act when dealing with transportation projects in order to fix a local "problem" that doesn't even exist, with county taxpayers picking up the expense for a legislative maneuver, which, if successful, would destroy hard fought-for quality of life in the California coastal zone.

Even worse is the proposal to amend the Coastal Act to require that disputes between local governments and the Coastal Commission be settled by binding arbitration rather than a court of law. This would neatly eviscerate the Coastal Act and eliminate public

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The Executive Committee meets the fourth Friday of every month at 2:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 1204 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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## Change of Address?

**Mail changes to:**

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**or e-mail:**  
 address.changes@sierraclub.org

## Visit us on the Web!

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*Outings, events, and more!*

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## Our Great Coastal Places: No Pass for Polluters

California's 34 "Areas of Special Biological Significance" (ASBS) are the richest and most sensitive ecosystems along the coast. ASBS were given special status 30 years ago by protecting them from discharges of all pollutants because of their "intrinsic value." Rocky intertidal reef habitats and extensive kelp forests are home to multitudes of fish species and endangered species.

The State Water Board is at a crossroads in deciding how to protect these precious waters. It discovered more than 1,600 illegal discharges into ASBS in 2003, and is considering a proposal to allow a "general exception" to the discharges. It would greatly enhance protecting these critical waters if letters opposing this "general exception" were sent to the Water Board, and a schedule for Best Management Practices was established tailored to eliminate pollution into all ASBS.

### TAKE ACTION

Conservation groups are working on a statewide effort to protect our ASBS. This is a draft support letter:

Tam Doduc, Chair  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 341-5620

Re: California Ocean Plan, Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS)

Dear Chair Doduc and Members of the Board:

California's 34 Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) are the richest and most sensitive ecosystems along the coast. These special areas, teaming with wildlife, are the foundation of California's coastal economy. Recognizing their intrinsic value, the California Ocean Plan gave ASBS special status 30 years ago, protecting them, in theory, from

discharges of all pollutants. In 2003, however, the State Water Board discovered that the ASBS are being degraded and destroyed by over 1,600 illegal waste discharges.

I urge you to protect California's 34 Areas of Special Biological Significance through strong enforcement of the waste discharge prohibition.

State Water Board staff has proposed a policy that would actually authorize illegal discharges into these irreplaceable marine resources by issuing thousands of "exceptions". I oppose granting exceptions to over 1,600 illegal waste discharges. The Board should remain faithful to the law and fully protect these areas by refusing to adopt a lax enforcement approach.

I support a framework that enforces the law yet enables waste dis-

charges to attain compliance by using off-the-shelf technologies and cost-effective options in their cleanup plans. This framework addresses the concerns of cities and polluters by allowing them to tailor cleanup plans to their circumstances on a schedule set by the Board.

Protecting the State's most biologically diverse and pristine coastal areas is not only good for the environment, but also demonstrates fiscal responsibility by protecting resources that underpin California's multi-billion dollar coastal tourism and recreational economies. After 30 years, the time is long overdue for full protection of our ASBS.

Sincerely,



### Spend a day in Monterey

## New Strategies for Healthy Oceans

Human activities are threatening the health of our oceans. Can new networks of marine protected areas provide a way to safeguard the marine environment and protect ocean biodiversity?

Come to a free symposium and find out! Saturday, March 4, 2006, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., California State University, Monterey Bay, University Center, Sixth Street, Seaside. Registration takes place at the symposium. No pre-registration is necessary.

For more information and program of events, visit [www.montereybay@noaa.gov](http://www.montereybay@noaa.gov) or contact Liz Love at the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary at (831) 647-4255 or email [liz.love@noaa.gov](mailto:liz.love@noaa.gov)

Sponsors:  
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments; California State University, Monterey Bay; Monterey Bay Aquarium; NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

## HopeDance

Films in March/April:

*Rumi: Turning Ecstatic*  
*State of Fear: The Truth about Terrorism* (the findings of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission)  
*The Celestine Prophecy*  
*Bad Reception: The Wireless Revolution in San Francisco*  
Michael Franti's new film "*I Know I'm Not Alone*"  
*The God Who Wasn't There*  
*The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*  
*Raspad* (a dramatization of the Chernobyl tragedy for the 20 year commemoration)

All films at the SLO Library, Osos & Palm. For dates and times, go to [www.hopedance.org](http://www.hopedance.org) or call 544-9663.

## Driver, Spare that Creek

As a condition of our 2004 legal settlement over the management of the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area, the Chapter is continuing to meet with representatives of State Parks to review progress in the effort to avoid vehicle crossings

*continued on page 4*



Powering through: Crossing Arroyo Grande Creek into the Oceano Dunes.

## Thanks, Tarren!




Thanks to Bob McDonnell (left) and his pick-up truck, Santa Lucia Chapter Coordinator Andrew Christie (right) and ECOSLO Environmental Education Coordinator Miranda Leonard were able to go to Shell Beach last month to pick up a large (and heavy) conference table donated by former Chapter Chair Tarren

Collins. (That's her red camisolite serving as traffic flag on the end.)

After disassembly, transport and reassembly, the table is now providing the Santa Lucia Chapter, ECOSLO, and all visitors with greatly expanded conference capabilities.

### Support our local chapter




photo/Kern Kiser

We send out an appeal in March to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter's budget.

When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able—remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.



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## Sewage

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contributing to the obvious problem. In fact, the one study relied on by the agencies simply does not rule out the possibility that pathogens—shielded from destruction by the relative inefficiency of the Plant's operation—are causing or contributing to otter morbidity and mortality.

Second, the Sewage Plant has not met its legal requirement to show that it can comply with its existing permit and meet applicable water quality standards consistently.

Based on a selective analysis, the Plant asks EPA and the Regional Board to ignore the accumulation of toxic metals around its discharge pipe, acute toxicity caused by chlorine, and the presence of dioxin in plant effluent, as well as other unambiguous violations of applicable standards. Dr. Bruce

Bell, one of the leading experts on the operation and upgrade of sewage treatment facilities in the United States, has exposed and debunked any contention that the Plant can satisfy section 301(h) requirements in this respect.

Third, recent water quality data, combined with an absence of evidence that the Sewage Plant has employed indispensable standard tracking and monitoring protocols, preclude the Plant from meeting its burden of proof that the discharge supports recreational uses in Estero and Morro Bays. By contrast, a leading expert on pathogenic contamination of recreational ocean waters, Dr. Mark Gold, demonstrates that the Plant's application creates more questions than it answers—while failing to account for recent data that undercuts the conclusion that the Plant is not degrading beach water quality.

Fourth, and more generally, the Sewage Plant's failure to present a "complete" application with current data and information precludes issuance of another waiver. EPA and the Regional Board have before them an application submitted in 2003 and which, in many instances, relies on even older information. As a result, EPA's and the Regional Board's analyses, findings, and determinations are based on incomplete and stale information. Moreover, the Plant and the agencies have not complied with various consultation requirements that are legally required and substantively germane to the issues. By contrast, throughout our analysis, NRDC identifies and submits current and material information that has been omitted in the record.

Fifth, contrary to the implicit assumption of the agencies, the Plant is highly likely to process additional volumes of effluent in the next five years, a fact which will exacerbate each of the substantive problems that currently plague its operation—including the rate of effective disinfection and water quality standards compliance. The agencies have improperly failed to consider these issues and improperly concluded that the anti-degradation requirements of the Clean Water Act are met in this instance. This is a glaring failure in light of the fact that waters of national significance are nearby, which deserve the highest level of protection from degradation. It is also a glaring failure in light of the Plant's record of collection system and other

spills, which show that even now untreated effluent is reaching local waters due to the outdated nature of the Plant.

Sixth, the upgrade proposed by the Sewage Plant and the Regional Board to improve Plant performance will occur as much as five years later than it feasibly can be accomplished. By contrast, state law requires that remedial actions like that proposed here take place "as fast as possible." This



photo: Jeff Foott

clear mandate has been so far ignored, paving the way for a 9.5 year upgrade schedule that will assure that water quality degradation continues to occur for nearly a decade.

Seventh, the Draft Permit the agencies propose in the meantime not only waives secondary treatment standards, it fails to include effluent limits and monitoring for pollutants which have a reasonable potential to cause or contribute to violations of water quality standards. Chief among them is the particular pathogen scientifically linked to sea otter mortality and morbidity. Given the stakes for an iconic threatened species that scientists call a "sentinel" for coastal water quality conditions generally, this omission is indefensible.

Finally, because of all of these issues and additional ones contained in the draft settlement agreement, the settlement document itself fails to meet the standard courts use to determine whether the government is acting consistent with its discretion and in the best interest of the public. While there can be no doubt the upgrade in general furthers that interest, the document fails to require the work on an expedited basis, as is required. Moreover, it otherwise creates the conditions for much longer delays beyond 9.5 years by providing insignificant fines—some smaller than a parking ticket—for many violations of its terms as well as broad, unusual interpretations of standard terms. Collectively, these factors indicate that the agreement may not truly reflect "an arm's length negotiation," which is what courts look for in assessing agreements like the one at issue here.

Since 2003, NRDC has been working to forge a collaborative and cooperative resolution to one of the three remaining 301(h) waivers in California, and the only one so closely associated with a known disease epicenter. Towards this end, NRDC has met with local residents, con-

servation groups, Regional Board staff, Plant staff, and Joint Powers Agency ("JPA") Board members. This process, which was greatly aided by the perspectives of the Regional Board, and many of its staff, resulted in a JPA Board commitment to upgrade the Plant.

While positive steps have been taken, given the risks and the evidence, additional commitments are both appropriate and necessary. Section 301(h) waivers are not intended to provide cover for bureaucratic wrangling, nor may they be issued to make meeting bedrock Clean Water Act rules convenient. Since this is the evident function of the proposal to grant the waiver here, EPA and the Regional Board should deny the waiver and require that the Plant upgrade so as to improve water quality "as fast as possible."

### TAKE ACTION

Deny the waiver! Ten years is too long! The Morro Bay-Cayucos Sewage Treatment Plant needs to clean up its act now!

Come speak at the Regional Water Quality Control Board hearing: **Friday, March 24, 8:30 a.m.**  
895 Aerovista Place, San Luis Obispo

### Creek

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of Arroyo Grande Creek and find alternative access points to the ODSVRA. Vehicles driving across the mouth of Arroyo Grande Creek are a threat to endangered steelhead and tidewater goby.

The alternative access study is expected to conclude in August.

### Dalidio

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decisions? Forget the County General Plan, forget the City's General Plan, and the impacts on the environment? Run roughshod over the cities? Whatever the developer wants, the developer gets?

Approving the Marketplace project in the County would set an incredibly dangerous precedent. If our County allows any landowner, whose land happens to be located right next to a city, to build a huge mega-mall, if he or she "feels like it," we will be taking steps down the path of L.A. County.

When Los Angeles got in the business of commercial development, all the greenbelts between the cities got eaten up by strip malls and mega centers. This environmentally and economically destructive land use pattern could happen here. If the Marketplace goes forward in the county, the city of San Luis Obispo's residents would get all of the smog, traffic and other environmental impacts. The county would get all of the sales tax revenue, the city would lose tax dollars. City residents get all of the impacts, and the landowner gets a huge windfall.

That's right, a windfall. The landowner has no "private property right" to build a mega-mall on his land; it is zoned Agriculture. He has no "property right" to change that. But once our elected representatives give him vested commercial zoning, his land will be worth multiple millions more than it is now, as Ag land. Is one person's enrichment worth everyone else's having to suffer permanent smog, traffic congestion and increased danger of flooding? Is it worth undermining San Luis Obispo's downtown? The city voters said "NO" to these questions last April. Will the Supervisors say "Yes" in the near future? For them to do so is simply not acceptable.

Please write, email or phone your Supervisor and voice your opinion.

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# The Political Season Begins



The Santa Lucia Chapter's Political Committee, chaired by Sarah Christie (left) and Richard Kranzdorf (right), held its first meeting of the 2006 electoral year on February 18. They finalized the questions that will go out to Second District Supervisor candidates Roger Anderson, Bruce Gibson and Judy Vick for their responses.

The Committee will invite each candidate to be interviewed on the issues, then deliberate on their positions and qualifications. The Chapter will decide on whether and whom to endorse in May.

## McCloskey vs. Pombo

By Carl Zichella  
Regional Staff Director

Expressing outrage at the anti-environmental agenda and ethical lapses of Republican incumbent Richard Pombo (R-11<sup>th</sup>, Tracy), a former GOP congressman with a history of challenging corruption and fighting for

his belief has announced his candidacy for Congress in the June Republican primary.

In an open letter to the people of the 11<sup>th</sup> congressional district, Pete McCloskey explains in detail why, at 78 years of age, he is making the run. The list is long.

"As a fourth generation Californian Republican, who served for 15 years in the Congress, in military or civilian service under ten presidents from 1945 until 2000 and during three wars, I feel strongly that the Republican Party needs to return to traditional values of honesty, high ethical principles, fiscal responsibility and a reasonable balance between economic progress and environmental protection. My wife and I have moved to Lodi because we feel that Congressman Pombo, by reason of his voting record and close ties to Indian Gaming Lobbyist Jack Abramoff and former Majority Leader Tom DeLay, has become an embarrassment to the Republican Party.

"It is not comforting to have Congressman Pombo named as one of the



The gracious ladies of Code Pink came to downtown SLO on January 31 and adorned the ECOSLO and Sierra Club offices with their reply to the President's State of the Union address

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## A Caring Community that Shares Common Goals

By Meredith Whitaker

Sierra Club's president, Lisa Renstrom, is emphasizing community building as a goal for our whole movement. We Santa Lucians will see what we can do to further that goal.

One idea that has just gotten off the ground is having dinners in homes before our general meetings. Our e-mail alert addressees were the first group to be surveyed, and a dinner was held before our January meeting. People reported that they very much enjoyed getting acquainted and plan another one next month.

Perhaps the word "dinner" glorifies the occasion! It should not be fancy. It could be take-out or pizza with veggies provided by the host/hostess. When I have one at my house, I will make soup because I have the time. But the goal remains to get

acquainted at this different level and to discuss what is going on with the Sierra Club. Perhaps even do brainstorming to give input to the board.

Our survey turned up 2 scenarios. One: SLO members volunteer their homes and members

coming from elsewhere provide the food. Two: that the dinners be in other cities in order to build the critical mass to take on issues that might effect them.

Another way to start would be to subscribe to the "house parties

## Lake San Antonio Eagle Watch

by Jack Beigle

Winter on San Antonio Lake is usually quiet, very few speed boats, very few water skiers and very few fishermen. It can also be very cold. This year we had a beautiful day. It was "picture postcard perfect" every direction that you looked. The air was warm and crystal clear. The surface of the lake was flat like a mirror. The white lines in the blue sky from the jet exhausts were reflected on the lake surface. As we paddled, the reflected contrails danced around our boats. It was mystical.

It is always enjoyable to get on the water in a canoe or kayak but there is joy in sharing the experience with others. We had 19 boats on this out-



ing. We followed the north shore for a while and we saw hundreds of Canada Geese.

They were beautiful and talked constantly. There were lots of coots and mallards a few bufflehead ducks and various grebes. We saw dozens of white pelicans. They are so majestic in flight. It is a thrill just to watch them

fly by.

We had our picnic lunch on the south shore and we saw five golden eagles and one immature bald eagle. At the end of an outing like this I really don't want to take my canoe out of the water.

Check the outing schedule and join us on the water.



connected to the Sierra Club Chronicles series ( see [www.sierraclubtv.org](http://www.sierraclubtv.org)).

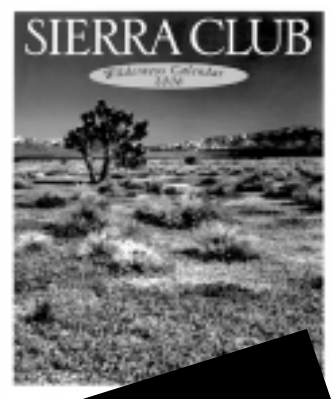
I welcome support and more ideas. Please contact me by phone 594-1133 or e-mail at [rmwhit@charter.net](mailto:rmwhit@charter.net)

## SIERRA CLUB 2006 CALENDARS



Sierra Club 2006 Wilderness Wall Calendar—Spiral bound, month-by-month format, featuring 12 majestic North American landscapes.

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# Taking Issue

problematic recent environmental commentary & coverage in our local press

"High Mercury Levels Found in Californians"  
Los Angeles Times  
Feb. 9, 2006



Dangerous amounts of mercury are being found in people who eat fish and seafood. Solution: cut back on seafood. But why is this happening? You won't know unless you read all the way down to paragraph 26, where you find out that:

"Greenpeace and the Sierra Club have been conducting the mercury survey because they are advocating stronger federal regulations for coal-fired power plants, the leading U.S. source of mercury."

The *Tribune's* five-paragraph abridgment of the *Times* story left out matters of cause and origin entirely, leaving even the most determined reader without a clue as to where all that mercury is coming

from. Coal burning power plants are the nation's biggest mercury polluter, releasing 42 percent of the country's industrial mercury pollution. Mercury from dirty power plants settles in lakes, streams and oceans, concentrating in fish and shellfish, which are then consumed by people. In 2005, the EPA proposed weak power plant mercury regulations that violate the Clean Air Act according to a lawsuit filed by 15 State Attorneys

General.

Switching from coal and oil to wind and solar energy would reduce pollution and its negative health impacts, help curb global warming and create jobs.

Pombo  
continued from page 2

thirteen most corrupt Members of Congress. The issues are those of ethics, honesty, influence by big money lobbyists, and the historic Republican principles of fiscal responsibility, limited government and environmental balance.

"If you have followed Congressman Pombo's record over the past several years, you have noted, following years of a budget surplus under a Democrat administration, he has walked us lock-step with so-called conservative Republicans into projected deficits in the trillions of dollars. The Government is substantially larger than it was five years ago. The number of lobbyists inside the Beltway has more than doubled and the DeLay/K Street Project and the activities of

The mercury research project is ongoing. To purchase a hair sampling kit or to view supporting documents visit: [www.sierraclub.org/mercury](http://www.sierraclub.org/mercury)

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## 2006 Eco Farm Conference

Representatives from the Santa Lucia Chapter and SLO GE Free, including Elizabeth Johnson (left) and Theresa Campbell (right) went to the Jan. 25 GE-networking session of the Eco Farm Conference in Pacific Grove, organized by environmental consultant Lisa Bunin (rear), where they connected with genetic engineering activists from around the state.

DVD copies of the film "A Silent Forest: The Growing Threat of Genetically Engineered Trees," were distributed to all attendees at the session by the film's director, former Cambrian Ed Schehl (center). For more information on the threat of GE trees, go to [www.globaljusticeecology.org](http://www.globaljusticeecology.org).

## At War

continued from page 2

participation, because it means that the enforceable policies of the law would no longer apply if a local government disagreed with how they are interpreted or applied. Instead, a single "arbitrator" in a closed process that would not include public review or participation would decide the fate of the coast when the Coastal Commission and local governments disagree.

Such "disagreements" as the ones over the 650-room Hearst Ranch Golf Resort, the proposed development of East West Ranch, public access to Diablo Canyon and scores of other decisions throughout the state where the Coastal Act has protected wetlands, scenic views, public access, agricultural lands and open space from the short-sighted desires of development-driven officials would be vulnerable to the binding decision of a private negotiating process presided over by a single individual schooled in "conflict resolution."

As it stands, local governments and the state are equal partners in coastal protec-

tion. Local plans have to be consistent with the Coastal Act, but locals exercise flexibility in how they administer those plans. As we've seen in the Periodic Review process and the endless North Coast Area Plan Update, the Coastal Commission cannot force a local government to change its policies or practices or amend its plan. Some local decisions are appealable to the Commission, but the majority are not. Local governments have an incentive to work with the commission to amend their plans because they must be consistent with the Coastal Act.

Binding arbitration means the decision is final. If a 26-year-old mediator with a Masters Degree in Conflict Resolution who did her internship at a conservative think tank such as the Hoover Institute were to decide that, say, a golf course in wetlands is reasonable and that a gated community can cut off historic public access because of security concerns, the public would have no legal recourse. Judicial review is the bedrock of the Coastal Act and protects the public and

developers equally.

Time and again the County has acted not in the interest of residents or resources, but as the handmaiden for inappropriate development schemes. It's understandable that they would now seek to undermine Coastal Act protections. The question is, can citizens stop them?

Is this how San Luis Obispo wants to distinguish itself as a coastal county? As sponsor of legislation to weaken the Coastal Act, circumvent judicial review and eliminate public participation?

The County's proposals have little chance of success and are likely the equivalent to throwing public money into the wind. Yet given their track record on coastal protection, one has to wonder when they are going to stop expending public resources on ill-advised petty warfare against the Coastal Commission. The Supervisors should accept the fact that it is their responsibility to implement the Coastal Act, not spend public money trying to re-write it to fit a laissez-faire approach to coastal planning.

Jack Abramoff have threatened the indictments of a number of Republicans, inside the Administration and in Congress. Many chief executive officers of our largest corporations and largest Republican contributors continue to plead guilty to serious crimes," McCloskey wrote.

As a prominent moderate Republican during his terms in Congress, McCloskey was at the forefront of supporting wildlife and land conservation laws. "It was a Republican, Teddy Roosevelt, who gave us a strong environmental policy to protect parklands, wildlife preserves and wilderness, as well as anti-trust laws to control business excesses. Presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan and the first George Bush substantially increased park and wilderness areas and environmental health protections," McCloskey said.

McCloskey himself helped author the landmark Endangered Species Act.

But McCloskey believes Pombo has abandoned these values to favor developers and to advance a far-right ideology. "Mr. Pombo has, thus far (unsuccessfully), suggested putting up millions of acres of mining claims land for sale at bargain figures to mining companies for development; he has suggested the sale of 15 National Parks, he has proposed a resort on the Farrallone Islands and drilling for oil and gas off the California coast and in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve. Even his fellow Republican congressmen saw these recent efforts as egregious and embarrassing and omitted them from recent bills," McCloskey said.

Pombo has reacted to McCloskey's candidacy with a derision, predictably charging that he is too liberal for the district. McCloskey believes that people like Richard Pombo are betraying what the Republican Party has stood for and are ruining our country. And he is very angry about it. This will be an extremely interesting campaign.

## Outings

continued from page 1

Program to encourage participation by all of our members and newcomers, and provide outings for all levels of abilities. Ideally, our outings will include not only day hikes and conditioning hikes, but also a wide range of campouts, backpacks, and trips far afield—from the Channel Islands to the Sierra Nevada. Some of our outings may even be offered as Chapter fund raisers.

Our training program for new Outings leaders will include not only the essentials of safety and first aid, but also elements of good communication skills to introduce our Chapter to prospective members. Some people join the Sierra Club for its outings opportunities and become conservationists along the way. Some join to be active environmentalists and become hikers along the way. We need both if the Chapter is to remain strong.

John Muir's words of decades ago still ring true today: "The tendency nowadays to wander in the wilderness is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but also fountains of life."

If you want to help expand this important program, please contact Chapter Chair Karen Merriam: 544-6628 or [kmerriam@digitalputty.com](mailto:kmerriam@digitalputty.com)

# Classifieds

Nov/Dec issue ad deadline is **March 15**. To acquire a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:

Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter  
 p.o. Box 15755  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406  
 sierra8@charter.net

## Local Government Meetings

- City of SLO--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
- Arroyo Grande--2nd and 4th Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 473-5404
- Atascadero--2nd & 4th Tues.; 466-8099
- Cambria CSD -- 4th Thurs.; 927-6223
- Grover Beach--1st & 3rd Mon., 6:30 p.m.; 473-4567  
 Grover Beach Planning Commission-- 2nd Tues.
- Morro Bay--2nd & 4th Mon.
- Paso Robles--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 237-3888
- Pismo Beach--1st Tues., 5:30 p.m.; 773-4657
- Los Osos CSD board-- 1st Tues. & 2nd Mon., varies
- California Coastal Commission-- 3rd Tues., varies
- SLO County Board of Supervisors-- every Tues.; 781-5450
- SLO Council of Governments; 781-4219  
 SLOCOG Citizens Advisory Committee--1st Wed. every other month, 6:00 p.m.  
 SLOCOG Board--1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

## Meeting Minutes

highlights from recent Chapter meetings

The Conservation Committee  
 February 7, 2006

Present: Pam Heatherington, Jono Kinkade, Holly Slettland, Lynne Harkins, Leslie Krinsk (by phone).  
 Absent: Sue Harvey, Jack McCurdy.  
 Staff: Andrew Christie. Guests: Shoosh Crotzer, David Broadwater, Karen Merriam

The meeting was called to order by chair Pam Heatherington at 5:20 p.m. ConsCom will continue to meet the first Tuesday of each month at 5:15 pm.

Andrew and Karen announced that the Mercury Testing project of the Sierra club would announce results to media tomorrow.

Shoosh Crotzer reported on the effort to expand the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary all the way down our coast to Pt. Conception.

David Broadwater presented his proposal in support of extending the County moratorium on land application of sludge for another 4 years. So moved by Jan and seconded by Lynne that we recommend to ExComm the chapter send a letter to the BoS in support of his proposal before the 2/28 BOS meeting.

MIG/MPLA. The chapter will support Package #2 and Package AC as they

afford the most protection, and oppos any further dilution of Package #2.

Cool Cities: Jan will present Dave Romero with a plaque on 2/28 to honor SLO's commitment to climate protection.

MB Power Plant: Jack McCurdy is out of town. We will seek an update on his return. Power plant ad hoc committee is clicking.

COSE: The next and possibly last meeting regarding the Conservation Open Space and Energy Element of the Gen. Plan will be on 2/28/06 before the SLO City Council. Andrew and Jan are working with Jodee Bennett of ECOSLO and Michael Sullivan to keep protections of Open Space in place. So far, successfully, but still need to review the latest version of the COSE thoroughly. Public turn out is needed to show people care about these issues.

Diablo Cyn: Recommend to ExComm the chapter participate as an Intervenor in CPUC ratepayer lawsuit with a cap of \$2,000. Approved unanimously.

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# Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Leader Gary Felsman (473-3694). For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. Outings Leaders please get your outings or events in by the 1st for the next month's outings.

## Hiking Classifications:

**Distance:** 1 = 0-2 mi., 2 = 3-5 mi., 3 = 6-9 mi., 4 = 10-12 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.

**Elevation Gain:** A = 500', B = 1000', C = 1500', D = 2000', E = 2500', F = 3000' or more.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 11:00 a.m. CANOE/KAYAK MORRO BAY:** We are two weeks early for Saint Patrick's Day, but bring a green salad or a green sandwich in your canoe or kayak for a day on the bay and a picnic on the sand spit. Spring is beautiful on the Morro Bay Estuary. If we are lucky and this date works in between spring showers we will paddle to the sand spit and enjoy a picnic lunch. After lunch we will have a hike to find the early spring wild flowers and a short business meeting to discuss future outings. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, windbreaker and a picnic lunch. HIGH TIDE 12:33 P.M. 4.1' LAUNCH AT MORRO BAY STATE PARK MARINA LOW TIDE 6:42 P.M. 1.7' PUT IN 11:00 AM, Details call Jack Beigle 773-2147

**Sun., Mar. 5th, 9:30 a.m., COAST HIKE.** A 4 mile hike on coast. Call or e-mail Bill Denneen a few days before for details: 929-3647 or <BDenneen@SLONET.org>

**Sunday, March 12, 1 p.m. - Bishop Peak.** Please meet at the Patricia Drive trailhead. To reach the trailhead, take Foothill Blvd. west and make a right turn at Patricia Drive. Continue north on Patricia Drive and the trailhead will be on the left just past Patricia Court. Call 781-7302 for information on upcoming hikes. (Sponsored by the City of SLO.)

**Mar. 17th, Backpack Trailwork Trip.** Join the VWA Trail Crew for a 3-day backpack trailwork trip somewhere in the northern Santa Lucia. Location to be announced. For details or to reserve a place on this trip, contact leader Dave at dknapp1@gmail.com. (Sponsored by Ventana Wilderness Alliance)

**Sat., March 18, 10 a.m. COREOPSIS HILL:** The Coreopsis is blooming along with lots of other wild flowers! Also, birding will be good on the bridge over Oso Flaco Lake. 5 mrt; with river crossings, dune walking, wildflower ID and birding. Meet 9am at the Lompoc Pizza Hut parking area 1620 N. "H"; or 10am at Oso Flaco parking lot (\$4 parking charge).

CONNIE 735-2292 (A)

**Tues., Mar. 21, 7 p.m. Living with Lions.** The Mountain Lion Foundation presents "Living With Lions," hosted by the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, on March 21, 2006, at 7:00p.m. As San Luis Obispo moves and recreates deeper into lion country, education on mountain lions becomes increasingly important, and this is your chance to get that education. Learn about the natural history, biology and behavior of lions, as well as ways in which we can reduce human-lion conflicts and live more peaceably alongside our wild neighbors. Meet at the Ludwick Community Center 864 Santa Rosa St. (corner of Mill) San Luis Obispo, Details call 543-8717

**Friday Mar. 24, 8pm through Sun. Mar. 26, CARRISA PLAIN.** Come join us on a loosely structured weekend. We will have a group potluck at the house adjacent to the Visitor Center at about 8pm on Friday. There is room for eight people to sleep in that house with the remainder camping just outside if need be. Contact the leader to be put on a list of the first 8 persons. We will decide as a group where we will hike/explore or you may do something individually or in a smaller group. We will rendezvous at 9am on Sat. and Sun. at this house. You may stay there on Saturday night as well. Please bring your own food, drinking water and anything else for staying over the weekend. Heavy rain just prior to that weekend will possibly postpone this outing. Please contact Carlos at 546-0317 if you plan to go.

**Sat., Sun., Apr. 1-2, Antelope Protection Carcamp** (Nature Study/Work Party) With little rainfall and few water sources, the species that live here are both hardy and endangered. Particularly beautiful are the pronghorn antelope, which evolved in these wild, open spaces. Then cattle ranching left a legacy of endless fences - which are deadly to the pronghorn. Join us for a weekend in this remote area removing fencing for their benefit. Camp at KCL campground; bring food, water, heavy leather work gloves, and camping gear for the weekend. Potluck Sat night. Rain cancels. Resource specialist: Alice Koch. For more information, contact Leaders: Cal and Letty French, 14140 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446, (805-239-7338). Prefer e-mail <ccfrench@tcsn.net>. Santa Lucia Chap/CNRCC Desert Com.

**Wed., Apr. 5, 12, 19, 26, 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes Return.** 2-3 hour hikes around the San Luis Obispo Area. Bring water, snack, and dress for the weather. E-mail [gfelsman@onemain.com](mailto:gfelsman@onemain.com) for meeting location.

**Sat., April 8th, 8:00 a.m. Machesna Mountain Hike** (Tentative). Come take a 12 - 15 mile, with 3000 foot elevation gain, hike through the Machesna Wilderness. Starting from American Canyon Campground, we will climb 1500 to an open meadow and pond below Machesna Mountain itself. After lunch we will climb another several hundred feet to a ridge over looking the Carrizo Plain. We will soon start our descent to a lush green valley, before climbing up to

our final rest stop. We should have plenty of wildflowers, and pleasant weather. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes, and plan to be out all day. Most of us will go to the Pozo Saloon after. Meet at Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. This is not a beginner's hike. Limit 20 people. For details, reservations and meeting place call Gary (473-3694)(5F)

**Fri-Sun., April 14-16. Panamint Mountains Service, Carcamp & Hike.** Improve the environment and learn the Surprise Canyon story. On Saturday we will join the BLM staff in tamarisk eradication. Families welcome. Possible Spring wildflower display and Easter egg hunt. Sunday will be a recreational hike. 2WD vehicles OK. Send large SASE, rideshare info, vehicle type, H&W phones, E-mail to Reserv.Co-ldr: Sue Palmer, 32373 Saddle Mtn Drive, Westlake Village, CA 91361, [dotts333@adelphia.net](mailto:dotts333@adelphia.net), (818-879-0960). Ldr: Jim Kilberg, (310-215-0092). CNRCC Desert Com/Desert Peaks

**Sat. April 15th, 7A.M., MCPHERSON PEAK HIKE.** Come join our trip to a well known mountain in the Sierra Madre Range located near New Cuyama. It tops out at 5,749 feet. With clear views we will see the San Rafael Wilderness, the Caliente Range, the Cuyama Valley and possibly the Sierras. This 11 mile hike with 2870 elev. gain is moderately strenuous. This will be an all day excursion with the 170 mile round trip drive from S.L.O. Expected return time is approx. 8PM. We will meet at Santa Rosa Park in S.L.O., and at the Halcyon exit parking in A.G., and on the East side of the highway on Route 166. It is possible to stay at Aliso Campground the night prior to and/or the night after the hike. We will have supper at the BUCKHORN in New Cuyama after the hike if you want join us. The little poison oak that we encounter is avoidable. The climb up can be hot, but the top can be cold and windy. Bring appropriate clothing, food and water. If hot weather is expected this will be postponed because of a lack of shade on most of the route. Adventure Pass is required at the trailhead. Please call if you want to meet at a site other than Santa Rosa Park or you have a question. Carlos, 546-0317. (4F)

**Sat., May 6, 8:45 a.m. ADOBE TRAIL:** Moderate to strenuous uphill hike through grassland, canyon, and oak-studded grassland (8 mrt, 1300 ft elev. gain). Bring lunch, water, jacket and sturdy shoes. Meet 8:45am in Santa Maria at the North SB County Government Center's easternmost parking lot. Rain cancels-trail can be very muddy. JERRY 928-3598 (AR)

**May 20-27, VOYAGE OF THE GLACIERS.** Answer the call of the wild with your pioneer spirit as we explore the land John Muir said "was still in the morning of creation." Travel with your Angeles Chapter and Orange County Sierra Singles friends on the luxurious Sapphire Princess as we head north up the Inside Passage from Vancouver, Canada to the Alaskan ports of Ketchikan, Juneau, and Skagway. View all the great maritime mammals and active tidewater glaciers with an on board naturalist. Join us for on board get

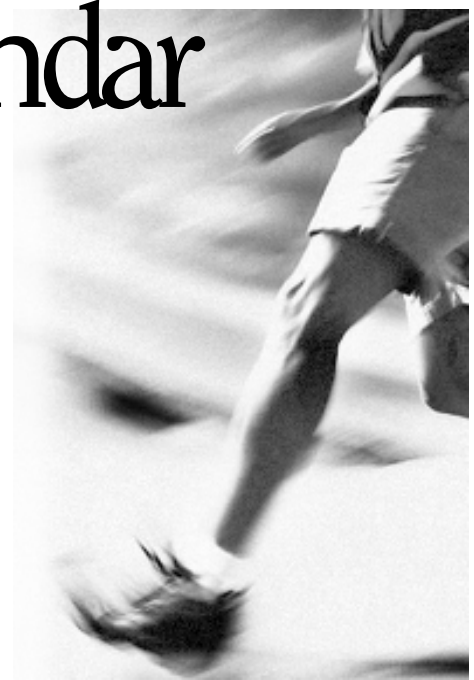


Photo by Joaquin Palting

together and brisk hikes around the promenade deck. On Ports of call days, go ashore and see the totem poles of Ketchikan, the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, the Klondike Gold-Rush Trail of '98 from Skagway or join the leaders on hikes and frontier saloon explorations. Cruise Glacier Bay National Park and College Fjord. After crossing the mighty Gulf of Alaska, we bid farewell in Whittier for transport to Anchorage and the flight home. Your cruise fare includes an astounding array of onboard facilities: ship stateroom, ocean transport, gourmet meals, quality entertainment, exercise opportunities and some beverages. Staterooms available from \$564 based on d/occupancy. Port charges, gov't taxes, transfers, tips, discounted airfare extra. Move fast, limited spaces in each category. Call Violet Calderon ([vcalderon@montrosetravel.com](mailto:vcalderon@montrosetravel.com)), Montrose Travel's Group Division, 800-301-9673 for a brochure and the best cabin choices or go online [www.montrosetravel.com/sierraclub](http://www.montrosetravel.com/sierraclub). A post-cruise extension will be offered to Denali Nat'l Park. For information on either the cruise or the extension, please send a sase or e-mail to Cruise Coordinator: DONNA SPECHT, 22221 Wood Island Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, 714-963-6345 e-mail [donnaspecht@juno.com](mailto:donnaspecht@juno.com) Co-Leader: ANA CADEZ (Angeles Chapter Fundraiser, Orange County Sierra Singles)

**This is a partial listing of Outings offered by our chapter. Please check the web page [www.santalucia.sierraclub.org](http://www.santalucia.sierraclub.org) for the most up-to-date listing of activities.**