



SIERRA
CLUB

September 2009
Volume 46 No. 8

Inside

Localizing power	3
Support your local coast	6
Do we have a sewer?	7
Solar v. gas	9
About that oil vote	9
Classifieds	11
Outings	12

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 12:**
Photography workshop: The New Nature
- page 9
- Sept. 23:**
Transition Towns
- page 2
- Oct. 24:**
Carrotmob!
- page 3



Please recycle

This newsletter printed on
100% post-consumer recycled paper with
soy-based inks

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

Old Nukes? Whoa, Nukes!

by the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility

This month, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public hearing on the criteria in Generic Environmental Impact Statements for proposed reactor license renewals. The NRC has already approved license renewals for 54 reactors at 29 sites without updated criteria. These aging reactors were licensed to operate an additional twenty years without a current assessment of the environmental impacts associated with license renewals.

The NRC scheduled the only California hearing in West Lake -- 113 miles north of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, 155 miles south of Diablo Canyon, and 394 miles from oversight agencies and affected legislators in San Francisco and Sacramento. The hearing will be held September 22. Demand NRC hearings on environmental impacts of license renewal beheld near San Onofre and Diablo Canyon. Contact Senator Boxer: <http://boxer.senate.gov/contact/email/policy.cfm>. More information can be found at www.a4nr.org

For the past five years, California has been conducting its own review of the economic impacts of reliance on aging reactors. With constant encouragement and input from the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, the California Energy Commission and local, federal and state representatives continue to request and review information that is vital to understanding the economic and reliability impacts of the state's dependence on aging reactors. The Alliance also remains in contact with the office of

continued on page 6

A New Day Dawns for Graywater

Appropriate Technology Coalition publishes San Luis Obispo Guide

A two-year effort by the Appropriate Technology Coalition – SLO Green Build, the San Luis Bay Chapter of Surfrider and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club – has brought forth the SLO Guide to the Use of Graywater, the first-ever guide to installing graywater systems in the county.

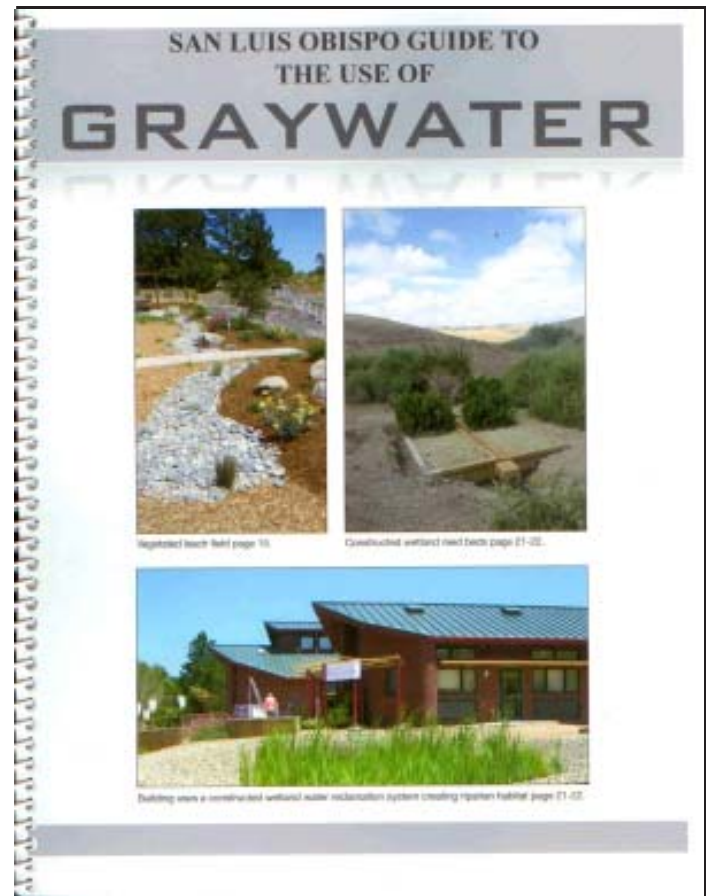
Graywater comprises up to 80% of residential wastewater. Increased demand for water and pollution of the water table has adversely affected once-balanced ecosystems and made water an increasingly valuable natural resource. Clean potable water is the most valuable type of water, but graywater can be extremely useful and should not be considered a waste product but a valuable resource that can be applied to irrigation and other non-potable water uses. Harvesting graywater to meet your non-potable water demand utilizes an appropriate technology that can recover initial costs quickly.

The potential ecological benefits of greywater recycling include:

- * Lower fresh water extraction from rivers and aquifers
- * Less impact from septic tank and treatment plant infrastructure
- * Topsoil nutrification
- * Reduced energy use and chemical pollution from treatment
- * Groundwater recharge
- * Plant growth

The added benefits to our watershed and community infrastructure make having a graywater system an environmentally friendly solution to scarce water supplies since more than half of your indoor water can be reused as graywater. Now is the time to tap in!

The Guide should be available from most municipalities in the county by the end of this month at \$10 a copy.



California Approves New Graywater Standard

By Art Ludwig
www.oasisdesign.net

As of August 4th, 2009, Californians could legally install simple laundry and single fixture graywater systems without a permit. For the first time, licensed professionals can legally help with the 1.7 million existing graywater systems in the state.

A collision of world views was in full evidence at the July 31 California Building Standards Commission hearing on the proposed new graywater standards. Highly qualified stakeholders spoke passionately for

continued on page 11

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 84
SAN LUIS OBISPO
CA 93401

Santa Lucia
Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

TAKE ACTION

Mikel Robertson, owner of Green Goods, will give a free presentation on graywater on September 19 at 3071 South Higuera, SLO. For more information, go to www.slogreengoods.com/



photo/Karin Walsh

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

Add your voice to protect the planet. Join the Sierra Club today.

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



My Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone # _____
 email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club
 Please charge my MasterCard Visa AMEX

Exp. Date ____/____/____
 Cardholder Name _____
 Card Number _____

Membership Categories INDIVIDUAL JOINT
INTRODUCTORY \$25
 REGULAR \$39 \$47

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to: **F94Q W 2500 1**
 Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

General Meeting

Transition Towns

7 p.m. Wednesday, September 23rd
Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo

"Transition Towns" swam across the pond from England and has taken root in the fertile ground of San Luis Obispo County, looking to address the three toughest challenges of our time— peak oil, economic instability and climate change -- by rebuilding community resilience and self-reliance. Join us for our September program when Transition Towns activists make a Powerpoint presentation and share their experience organizing local initiatives in North County, South County, the coastal communities, and the City of San Luis Obispo.

Invite your friends/social network to the program at 7 or come early and enjoy the Steynberg Gallery's great selection of drinks and pastries and its always fascinating exhibition of local artwork.

For more information, call 772-1875.

At the Circus

Once these stories get out there, they're hard to stamp out because our media do such a lousy job of speaking truth to stupid.

- Bill Maher, L.A. Times
 July 31, 2009

In this summer of "birthers" and "death panels," Danny Schechter of Mediachannel commented that the birther movement, for all its looniness, is succeeding in making the legitimacy of Barack Obama's presidency into a widespread topic of discussion. "Our adversaries are chanting 'We Shall Overthrow'," he wrote. "Sensing possible victory — whatever that means — the angeroid microfactious that lost the election are now seeking to polarize the public to topple the Administration with an electronic coup d'media." He noted that we need to "realize that all politics does not occur in DC."

Quite a lot of politics happened in SLO over the summer. Most of it happened when two special interest groups became overwrought over the outcomes of two county grand jury investigations — in the first instance because the grand jury found evidence of wrongdoing, and in the second instance because it did not. If you missed all the excitement, see this issue's "Taking Issue" feature on page 5 for a recap and a reprinting of our Chapter Chair's *Tribune* Viewpoint summing up the situation.

But the crude politics of those attacking the grand jury reports -- who made up stories about crimes and conspiracies in order to defame their foes and advance their agenda -- was just one flavor of political pressure, one very much in vogue right now, as noted above by Mr. Maher and Mr. Schechter.

The more refined variety of pressure politics was on view when the multiple solar power companies lobbying for utility-scale power plants on the Carrizo Plain leaned heavily on the Planning Commission to make sure the County's update of its Conservation and Open Space Element — the guiding document for all future land and resource decisions in the county — would include, in about half a dozen different places, language assuring that permits for utility-scale alternative energy facilities will be issued even if their proposed design, size or location is found to cause severe and unmitigatable environmental im-

pacts. One company rep made this demand to assure smooth sailing for her project even as the rep for another company told the Commission that their power plant would have "no impacts" on endangered species. For suggesting policy language that would actually hold that company to its confident promise and require such impacts to be avoided or mitigated, Planning Commission Chair Christie was roundly pilloried.

And when a common-sense revision of the Ag Events ordinance came to the Planning Commission, yet another passel of special interests descended, loudly advocating for the County's current laissez-faire approach, which will eventually turn agricultural lands into commercial zones under an avalanche of unsustainable non-ag related events of vast size and numbers. Another Sierra Club conspiracy was alleged. The whipped-up crowd demanded Commissioner Anne Wyatt recuse herself due to "bias" and "conflict of interest" because she runs a bed & breakfast. They continued to make that demand after the Fair Political Practices Committee ruled that she had no conflict.

In such strategies, facts and evidence are never the point. Stirring the pot and getting your way is the point — especially when a pro-development majority has been voted off the Board of Supervisors and an environmentally sane board has been voted in. As health insurance companies and the American Petroleum Institute have done nationally, local lobby shops can generate whisper campaigns and political operatives create "grass roots" groups (aka "astroturf"), which then concoct a frenzy over the specter of higher prices, raised taxes, and/or loss of livelihoods if the targeted constituency doesn't turn out in large numbers to oppose the targeted measure and maintain the status quo.

The strategy is to put pressure on elected officials who normally should know better than to vote in favor of

SANTA LUCIAN

Andrew Christie
 EDITOR sierraclub8@gmail.com

Karen Merriam
Melody DeMeritt
Jack McCurdy
 EDITORIAL BOARD

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

send to:

Editor, Santa Lucian
 c/o Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club
 P.O. Box 15755
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.
sierraclub8@gmail.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

2009 Executive Committee

Karen Merriam
 CHAIR karen@karenmerriam.com

Cal French
 MEMBER ccfrench@tcsn.net

Mark Shefrin
 MEMBER mshefrin@gmail.com

Dawn Ortiz-Legg
 MEMBER

Steven Marx
 TREASURER

Melody DeMeritt
 VICE CHAIR

Linda Seeley
 MEMBER

Cal French
 COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS

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

Committee Chairs

Political

Chuck Tribbey

Conservation

Sue Harvey

lfsusan@tcsn.net

Membership

Cal French

Litigation

Andy Greensfelder

Nuclear Power Task Force

Rochelle Becker

beckers@thegrid.net

Other Leaders

Open Space

Gary Felsman

805-473-3694

Calendar Sales

Bonnie Walters

805-543-7051

Chapter History

John Ashbaugh

805-541-6430

Activities

Outings

Joe Morris

dj1942@earthlink.net

Canoe/Kayak

open

Webmaster

Monica Tarzier

mtarzier@sbcglobal.net

Chapter Director

Andrew Christie

805-543-8717

sierraclub8@gmail.com

Coordinator

Kim Ramos,

Admin and Development

kimlramos@yahoo.com

General Information

Santa Lucia Chapter

P.O. Box 15755

San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

**Office hours Monday-Friday,
 11 a.m.- 5 p.m., 547-B Marsh
 Street, San Luis Obispo**

Printed by University Graphic Systems

Change of Address?

Mail changes to:

Sierra Club National Headquarters
 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
 San Francisco, CA 94105-3441

or e-mail:

address.changes@sierraclub.org

Visit us on the Web!

**www.santalucia.
 sierraclub.org**

Outings, events, and more!

Localize It

When it comes to the future of clean energy in SLO, there's one thing the County needs to do above all else.

In the course of a 15 minute Powerpoint presentation at the Board of Supervisors on July 21, Sierra Club interns Chad Worth and Nancy Cole summed up what the Santa Lucia Chapter found over the course of four energy town halls that we conducted across the county over the last six months, attended by hundreds of local residents: When it came to energy generation, "Localize" was a main theme that emerged.

Town hall participants told us of the "need to look in before looking out," said Worth. "House by house, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood... It was very much 'let's to it here, do it in our back yard, do it our way.' That speaks for an overall theme of keeping it locally distributed."

For our last town hall in June, we brought down Dave Erickson, senior carbon analyst for Local Power Inc., a bay area energy consulting firm. As the name of his company implies, Erickson is a specialist in local power, a model which his company helps local governments to implement as they navigate the legal, logistical and financial challenges to creating renewable energy projects. His company led San Francisco's CleanPowerSF program, the largest local green energy project in the world, has written implementation plans for city and regional governments, and created the first renewable energy financing authority in the U.S.

Erickson talked about the Sonoma Climate Action Plan, on which he served as technical director and which mandates that the County and its municipalities initiate a Community Choice program -- as SLO County's Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) update recommends -- and exercise local control in choosing their own energy provider and service rates while increasing the amount of renewable energy they use.

Erickson emphasized the benefits Sonoma has found in Distributed Generation over traditional dependency on a few remote, centralized sources of energy -- i.e. large power plants. In a Distributed Generation scenario, power is generated from multiple smaller scale sources and used locally. A distributed generation plan can be funded on the public power model, which levelizes costs, and in which rates are 15 to 20 percent lower than with investor-owned utilities.

"From the supply standpoint, it's a slam dunk," Erickson said. The end result of full implementation of a localized power plan is 100 percent energy self sufficiency for the county. "Sonoma could just as easily have called our Climate Action Plan a jobs plan," he said "or a green economic recovery plan, or an energy independence plan. We're using Community Choice to achieve the nation's most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction. It's essentially a public works project to meet the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2015."

That's what distributed generation is. And that's what you can do when you put policies in place that favor and encourage it.

For the last six months, the residents of this county have been telling us that this is the energy future they want. Our County Supervisors have the opportunity to give it to them.



Nancy Cole and Chad Worth make their Powerpoint to the Board of Supervisors.



SAN LUIS OBISPO CARROTMOB



Today, our planet has 390 parts per million of carbon dioxide – and this number is rising by about 2 parts per million every year.

Scientists worldwide have agreed that 350 parts per million (ppm) is the safest upper limit for CO2 in our atmosphere.

To reduce planetary warming, we need to bring our carbon dioxide levels back to 350 ppm.

Make this goal possible and rise to the challenge.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT 350.ORG



SATURDAY
OCTOBER 24
2009

WHAT IS A CARROTMOB?

Carrotmob is a method of activism that leverages consumer power to make the most socially-responsible business practices also the most profitable choices. Businesses compete with one another to see who can do the most good, and then a big mob of consumers buys products in order to reward whichever business made the strongest commitment to improve the world. It's the opposite of a boycott.

In San Luis Obispo, carrot mob is partnering with 350.org to raise awareness about climate change and the power that consumers have to reward businesses willing to engage in sustainable practices. On October 24th, eco-conscious consumers looking to vote with their dollar will mob one lucky business.

Follow the fun at: slo.carrotmob.org
For more information contact: slocarrotmob@gmail.com

King Coal's Judgment Day

This month, join the Sierra Club in a national day of action on coal. Stay updated and get in on our online petition at www.sierraclub.org/bigpicture

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

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

SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1909

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

How to Handle a Bus Strike

Transit users between rock, hard place

By Eric Greening

At the time I write this, it is impossible to know the outcome of the current melodrama on the Regional Transit Authority system that connects Central Coast communities from Santa Maria to San Miguel.

A strike vote by drivers and bus washers was held on July 30th, and the motion to strike passed, but as of August 9th, the strike had not yet begun and it may or may not at some time in the future.

The action is being taken by the Teamsters, and there is controversy over whether they are currently recognized or if they are the current choice of the employees. Some drivers are declining to renew their

Teamsters membership and seeking other representation: Amalgamated Transit Union or a County Bargaining Group.

Things are in a huge state of flux, and this is very distressing to the riders, especially those who don't drive or own cars, and who utterly rely on transit for access to work, health care, and other necessities.

The Regional Transit Authority carries 2000 riders on an average weekday. Since most of these are making round trips, the number of actual people is probably closer to 1000, but still is a substantial rolling community, comparable in population to Santa Margarita, San Miguel, or Shandon. If you can imagine one of those communities being quarantined, with nobody getting in or out, that gives you an idea of the scale of the impact.

In the event of a strike, there might still be buses moving now and then, driven by non-teamsters, and a moral dilemma transit riders would face would be whether to put their lives on hold to avoid an action tantamount to crossing a picket line. It would certainly go against my own grain to patronize "scabs," and any worthwhile strike would need the support of the public to deprive management of farebox revenue until they address the real needs of underpaid employees.

And the drivers *are* underpaid; they are public safety professionals with our lives in their hands, and they deserve far more than the \$12.50 to \$14.50 they are currently getting. Yet the discussion that accompanied the strike vote was that this strike was not to be about wages or benefits (health benefits have recently improved significantly, but only for the drivers themselves; those with families face major expenses to cover them), but about "recognition." For the drivers themselves to put up with the privation of living on a tiny fraction of their already inadequate pay without looking forward to making it up in higher wages after the strike seems self-defeating. But of the drivers present for the vote, 3/4 did vote to strike, and the threat of the actual walkout is still hanging over the system, its drivers, and its riders.

So what kind of strike is worthy of the self-sacrificing solidarity of the riders? I see four criteria that need to be met:

1. The strike has tangible objectives for which the case can be made that current circumstances are unfair and

the attainment of the objectives would move significantly in the direction of fairness.

2. These objectives, and the case for why current circumstances are unfair, are disseminated in writing to the RTA Board and the affected community, including riders.

3. All attempts to resolve the issue by negotiation have been tried in good faith, including recourse to the governing board of the RTA.

4. The effective date of the strike is no sooner than the day after the Board meeting at which this last

recourse is attempted, to allow for this resolution and to allow riders to attend this Board meeting.

At present, none of the four criteria have been met. If

they were, I would like to believe that "choice" riders (those with cars at their disposal who use the bus for economic or environmental reasons) would confer with the car-free and offer rides during the strike—that the diverse rolling community of bus users would come together in support of the people who get them safely to their destinations.

I do believe that the drivers are intrinsically deserving of support; it is shameful that while people with polluting vehicles are rewarded with up to \$4500 for replacing them with somewhat less-polluting vehicles, those of us who are *not* part of the single-occupant vehicle habit that is destabilizing our climate are offered nothing. Not that I personally would seek a check for \$4500, subsidized by the young people being pushed even deeper into debt, but adding \$4500 to the pay of our bus drivers would move them meaningfully closer to the middle-class lives they deserve as much as anyone.

Somehow, however, this doesn't get the attention of Congress or the Administration; transit *operating* funding was almost entirely left out of the "stimulus" package, and "cash for clunkers" operates on the logic of the protection racket ("You want me to stop polluting, pay up!")

So, dear reader, if the real, day-to-day lives of our transit riders and drivers are an abstraction for you, get on the bus and get to know the people there. You will meet folks of all backgrounds, ages, and stations in life, and experience the real diversity of the Central Coast in a way you can find in few other places. The RTA, with its 1000+ daily round-trip riders, is only one of the multiple transit providers in our area. Cumulatively, the systems carry multiple thousands of people both ways every weekday, and smaller but significant numbers on weekends. If this is a Central Coast community you have never visited because you can't find it on the map, get to know it; you will never forget the people you meet!

Transit Note

The "Graphic Arts" stop at Cal Poly will be moved in September with the closing of South Perimeter Road; this should affect the SLO City lines 4, 5, and 6, and the Regional lines 9 and 12. Most service will likely be rerouted via a stop to be created near the Kennedy Library. The stop at the PAC will continue in service as is.

Those of us who are not part of the single-occupant vehicle habit that is destabilizing our climate are offered nothing.



market cooking demos throughout the month of August, and also featured a barn-burner of a panel discussion, "Let's Be Frank...About Local Food," at the Cliffs Resort on August 16.

At \$5 a head, including grass-fed pastured beef and pastured turkey hot dogs and salad, it was a bargain by any measure, but the panelists were more than worth the price of admission.

The panel, moderated by Cal Poly's Neal MacDougall, Director of the Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium (SARC), featured Larry Bain, a restaurant entrepreneur and co-founder of Let's Be Frank, which sells those aforementioned grass-fed beef etc. hot dogs via street cart vendors; Bradley Ogden, James Beard Award-winner for Best Chef of California and the creator of the award-winning Root 246 restaurant in Solvang's Hotel Corque; and Judith Redmond of Full Belly Farm, a 250-acre organic farm in Yolo County, and a family farming advocate who serves on the advisory boards of the UC Agricultural Sustainability Institute and the Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium at Cal Poly.

The panelists addressed the question: How do we make local food, affordable food, healthy food and great food synonymous? Is this a "lifestyle" issue or a "democracy" issue?

Redmond opined that "the best way to get affordable, healthy food is to encourage people to get food that comes fresh from the farm and learn how to cook it at home." Chef Ogden asserted that it is ultimately cheaper to buy from a farmer's market than a supermarket because you tend to buy in smaller quantities in the former than at the latter.

Audience members insisted that this didn't change the fact that food that's fresh, local, organic, etc. tends to cost more than food that's none of those things. Bain, who ran a social justice

Local Food for Thought

"Pallet to Palate," the annual SLO celebration of the benefits of buying and eating fresh local food, featured gala dinners, a party and auction, and farmer's

non-profit before he started opening sustainable, socially responsible restaurants, urged the audience to "think systemically" and emphatically answered the "lifestyle vs. democracy" question:

"The stuff we have to buy, like education and health care — unlike countries where you don't have to pay for those — is what determines what money is left over and what's affordable for your food," he said.

Local farmers pressed the issue of how we can get actual, sustainable food systems in place and how small farmers can pay and get paid a living wage when their operations "run between the red and the black 99 percent of the time."

Redmond identified the problem as the absence of "infrastructure, incentives and efficiencies," which "just aren't there" for small farmers, unlike what Big Ag has managed to secure for itself via a steady stream of federal farm bills and subsidies. The conversation turned to the Food Safety bill, cunningly devised to point at small farms as the source of food-related illness outbreaks while shielding big growers and processors from its onerous requirements despite the fact that more than 90% of food-borne illnesses trace back to feed-lot cattle and heavily processed vegetables spreading disease through the centralized, industrialized food system.

"It's the lobbyists writing the rules, not the politicians," Redmond pointed out, and Big Ag's megaphone drowns out small farms. "We don't have an organized voice," she said. "We need to help build the organizations out there that could tell our story in DC and Sacramento."

"You need to get politically active," Bain agreed. "Voting with your fork works up to a point, but you need to vote with your vote."

TAKE ACTION

Knowledge is power and in networking there is strength. Here are three good ways to start doing more for healthy local food, small farmers and sustainable food systems: Get in touch with the Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org/farming) and join the Changemaker's Network at Roots of Change (www.rocfund.org).

And on September 7, join "Time for Lunch," the national day of action to get real food into schools. Go to www.slowfoodusa.org/ and click on "Events."



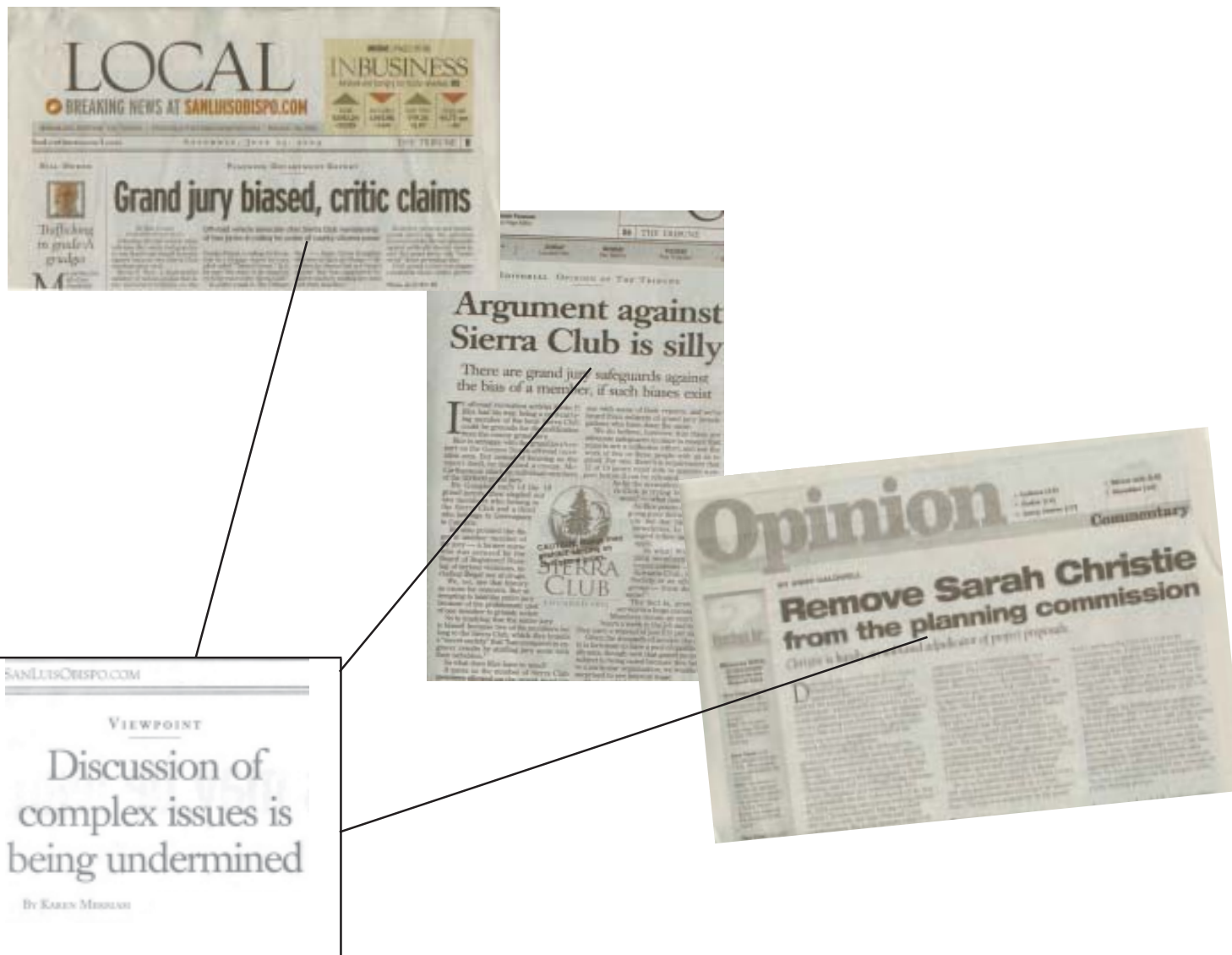
Festival of frankness: Judith Redmond, Larry Bain and Bradley Ogden confer at "Let's be Frank...About Local Food"

Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

- “Remove Sarah Christie from the planning commission,” by Andy Caldwell, *New Times*, July 23, 2009
- “Grand jury biased, critic claims,” by Bob Cuddy, *The Tribune*, July 25, 2009
- “Argument against Sierra Club is silly,” Editorial opinion of *The Tribune*, August 2, 2009
- “Discussion of complex issues is being undermined,” *The Tribune*, August 6, 2009

Summary: Near simultaneous attacks on the Sierra Club, the County Planning Commission and two reports by the County Grand Jury this summer had a common but hidden thread, which Chapter Chair Karen Merriam subsequently unwound in a *Tribune* Viewpoint.



We congratulate The Tribune for debunking Kevin Rice’s accusations against the Sierra Club. (“Argument against Sierra Club is silly,” Aug. 2). Standing up in defense of the natural world for 117 years has made the Sierra Club a target for detractors of many persuasions. We prefer honest, healthy debate on issues. Unfortunately, as the Tribune noted, Mr. Rice’s attack was personal, not substantive; all about individuals and conspiracy theories rather than “focusing on the report itself.”

It’s a political tactic: Change the subject and kill the messenger. The grand jury found evidence of serious misconduct in the preparation of a County Planning staff report which simply deleted a land use policy conflict pertaining to the proposed sale of county land in the Oceano Dunes – land that for off-roaders like Rice has become the hill to die on. Mr. Rice attacked jurors and the Sierra Club in his attempt to discredit the report.

It’s one thing when such attacks are focused on the Sierra Club over a single issue; it’s quite another when they are fronts for larger political

strategies aimed at subverting the will of the majority.

Last year, our country and our county voted for change. That’s why we have a new president, and, closer to home, a new majority on the Board of Supervisors. The voters want big change — strong leadership with a vision for reducing climate change through energy efficiency and renewable energy; promoting smart-growth land use; supporting local sustainable agriculture; and stewarding wildlands and endangered species.

Change will always face resistance from those invested in the status quo. It is in this light that several recent local events are clearly illuminated: The intense, coordinated pressure on the Planning Commission in updating the Energy chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE), and the baseless attack against a Planning Commissioner over another grand jury report.

The findings of that report, which exonerated Planning Commission Chair Sarah Christie from ridiculous and insupportable charges, have been distorted. The Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (COLAB),

an organization representing an extreme view of private property rights, is relentlessly calling for Christie’s removal — at public meetings, op-ed pieces, and wherever else anyone will listen. COLAB represents interests that lost some influence when their friends were voted off the Board of Supervisors last year. They want back what they lost.

Then there is the COSE, an update that will serve us well only if it is founded on a clear vision with specific strategies for reaching goals that protect our livelihoods, our health, and the environment. How will our decisions today determine our decisions for decades to come? For example, will we blindly rush to the judgment that we must locate utility-scale solar power plants on the Carrizo Plain to meet energy demands, or will we first consider how rooftop arrays and the development of local, distributed generation of energy could meet our needs with less environmental impact? Are we willing to accept destroying an irreplaceable suite of rare species to generate clean energy that very likely could be

generated with fewer impacts if we were willing to have an honest discussion about the options? Blatant pressure has been brought to bear to prevent that open discussion — especially at the Planning Commission, where Chairman Christie again has been the unmistakable target.

Connect the dots of the attacks on the Sierra Club, the grand jury and the Planning Commission, and what emerges is an insidious and cynical effort to undermine the public process and limit or prevent open discussion of the substance of complex issues. Such tactics should not prevent us and our elected officials from working to further the change we voted for last year.

It is the duty of citizens to stay informed and hold elected officials accountable. It is the duty of our local elected representatives - as the agents for that change – to ignore the distraction of baseless attacks and to exercise the political courage and vision needed to advance the meaningful change that will be their legacy.

Karen Merriam is the Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Upshot: Whether it’s COLAB whipping up a fake scandal in an effort to make County Supervisors cave, unseat a planning commissioner, and fast-track a strategy to put an anti-environmental board majority back in charge of the county in order to cater to their collection of economic special interest groups, or “the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity” employing a p.r. agency that forges letters to Congress on the letterhead of constituent organizations to urge opposition to the energy bill, the same thing is happening everywhere these days. Stay alert.

Coastal Cleanup Day at 25

Saturday, September 19, 9 a.m. to Noon

25th ANNIVERSARY

CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2009 • 9AM-NOON

Presented by California Coastal Commission and Whole Foods Market®

Coming to a beach near you! Info: www.ecoslo.org

Major Local Sponsors: City of Pismo Beach, New Times, Pacifica Hotel Company, SLO County Supervisors, Sun Bulletin, Surfrider Foundation | Coca Cola Enterprises-Santa Maria, LEVEL Studios, Martin Resorts

by Holly Sletteland

The California Coastal Commission is gearing up to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Coastal Cleanup Day. After a quarter of a century, Coastal Cleanup Day is still the largest volunteer event of its kind in the world.

It also remains the largest volunteer event in the County, turning out hundreds of volunteers to remove trash along the coast that has accumulated over the course of the year. We're hoping that this will be the biggest and best cleanup ever! We're organizing cleanups at 28 local beaches, from Point Sal to the south to San Simeon in the north. All of them will take place on Saturday, September 19th from 9am to noon.

Trash on our beaches and in our oceans doesn't just look bad, it is bad for the gazillions of animals that call those places home and for the people that visit them. Beyond being an eyesore, some trash like broken bottles, jutting nails, and old syringes, can cause injuries to beach goers. Trash can also damage boats, clog intake pipes, discourage tourists and cause other economic hardship. It can also harm ecosystems by transporting invasive species and smothering life on reefs and the sea floor. But most worrisome of all, trash is extremely dangerous for marine wildlife, including seabirds, turtles, seals, dolphins and whales. Every year, hundreds of thousands of animals suffer and die needlessly from eating or getting tangled up in our discards, such as plastic bags, six pack rings and old fishing gear.

Coastal Cleanup Day is very much about getting the trash off our beaches. But it's more than that. It's about accepting responsibility for keeping the beaches clean, even if the trash is not our own. It's about

identifying what kind of trash is out there and trying to figure out where it came from. It's about going back to the source and finding effective ways to stop the flow, whether that be through education, ad campaigns, product redesign (think flip-top cans), incentives (return deposit), disincentives (fines) or other options.

The success of Coastal Cleanup Day can be directly attributed to the tens of thousands of volunteers who have generously given of their time – many over and over again – to clean up our shorelines. In 2008, almost 75,000 volunteers turned out for Coastal Cleanup Day in the state as a whole, a 20 percent jump over 2007. Last year's volunteers removed a record 1.6 million pounds of debris, of which almost 200,000 pounds was recycled, both record numbers for the Cleanup Program. In San Luis Obispo County alone, almost 1,300 volunteers collected over 4,500 pounds of trash and recyclables in 2008. Unfortunately, those numbers actually represent a decrease over prior years. We're looking for your help in reversing that trend. It's only a few hours. It's fun – kind of like a treasure hunt. All you need to do is show up at your favorite beach on September 19th to do your part. Bring your water bottle and we'll fill it up with ice water or lemonade. You'll walk away feeling good about making a difference and you may even win a prize!

Holly Sletteland is a Volunteer Coordinator with ECOSLO with a passion for getting people involved in projects to help heal the earth. She is a past Chapter Chair & Conservation Chair for the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club and a 20+ year member of the Sierra Club.

Take 2 Minutes to Support a Marine Sanctuary for SLO

The movement to get the waters off SLO County declared part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is gathering steam, and you can be part of it!

If you own or manage a business in the county dependent on tourism, the extension of the Marine Sanctuary would be just about the best thing that could happen to your business, and your opinion carries weight.

Just go to:

www.santalucia.sierraclub.org/documents/MBSE.pdf

and download the petition, print it out and fill it in — or hand it to your favorite local business owner to fill out and mail to us.

That's it. We'll make sure you get the word when your voice is needed at a public meeting to help make this happen. One call, one meeting.

If you or your friend want more information or need any convincing as to why this is a very good thing to do, go to: www.santalucia.sierraclub.org/lucian/2009/06June.pdf

The ocean thanks you!



Nukes

continued from page 1

California's Attorney General, who continues to monitor the mounting stockpiles of highly radioactive waste on our fragile coast with no permanent storage facility and no estimated date for offsite removal.

Last year, a cost, benefit and risk analysis of the state's dependence on coastal reactors designed and permitted in the late 1960s was mandated by AB 1632 (Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo). On the day the Energy Commission released the analysis, PG&E announced a new active earthquake fault had been discovered 1800 feet offshore of the Diablo site. Assemblyman Blakeslee immediately introduced legislation to fund 3D mapping and state-of-the-art technology to create a basis for reliance on the seismically active Diablo site. The bill would also require the Energy Commission to review these studies to determine whether Diablo Canyon can provide clean, safe and reliable generation for the future and if so, at what cost.

In June 2009, the Energy Commission sent a large packet of data requests to SCE and PG&E to update last year's analysis and create recommendations for this year's energy review. On July 22, 2009, SCE and PG&E responded to the CEC's data

requests. To read the CEC Data Requests, utility responses and A4NR's comments go to www.a4nr.org. We have just begun reading PG&E's responses on Diablo Canyon, so check back if they are not yet posted.

If you would like to review these documents and provide input or join others to provide input let the Alliance know your area of interest and how best to contact you. Feel free to provide your comments and whether you would like to have your comments attached to our CEC and/or NRC filings on license renewal issues. Send an e-mail to rochelle@a4nr.org

Many have joined the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility's "Audacity to Hope" that we can end the production of radioactive waste on our fragile coast; we ask you to support our efforts:

Encourage a CEC investigation into possibilities of wind power at Diablo, and other renewables (renewable@energy.state.ca.us) and investment in an energy efficiency think tank/retraining center to phase out production of waste while investing in future generations, and increasing jobs (njbouras@energy.state.ca.us).

A Sewer, Almost

Never did a project so flawed get so much better so fast

As a rule, improvements in what you are given are extremely unlikely if you simply take whatever is offered.

On August 13, after hundreds of hours of study and public testimony, two field trips, 8,000 pages of documentation and 170 pages of findings and conditions, the County Planning Commission proved this point when it approved the permit for the Los Osos Wastewater Project.

The Commission vastly improved on the project as originally submitted by County Public Works -- a project that had no chance of receiving a coastal development permit due to its impermissible environmental impacts. Sewage will now be subjected to a significantly higher level of treatment, producing effluent that can be safely recycled for use on crops. The treatment plant and disposal method will not consume 645 acres of prime agricultural land. The treated effluent will remain in the basin and be put to work curbing saltwater intrusion instead of being sprayed away outside the water basin in the middle of a drought. A mandate to reduce water use by 25 percent is included, more than doubling the originally proposed level of water conservation.

The improved project demonstrates the reason why the Sierra Club, in agreeing at the outset that we all

needed to "support the project," elected not to follow the path of least resistance in doing so. We joined with concerned local citizens who insisted that the project feature tertiary, not just secondary treatment of wastewater; that treated effluent be disposed of inside, not outside, the ground water basin and be made available to growers to reduce pumping of the lower aquifer and seawater intrusion; and that a more aggressive water conservation program be mandated. And so it has come to pass.

Unfortunately, what the Commission did not do, despite a wealth of evidence that it should, was mandate the use of a pressurized effluent collection system and the use of facultative ponds for treatment. The selected gravity system and Biolac treatment would result in greater

quantities of toxic sludge produced as an end product of treatment. These two parts of the project still need to be changed to ensure that the County takes the environmentally superior course of action on the largest public works project in its history.

The Environmental Impact Report on which those decisions were based was correctly and repeatedly characterized by Commissioners as "flawed." They were being kind. Golden State Water Co. correctly summed up the fatal flaw of the EIR's "failure to make a connection between the facts presented and the conclusions reached." Further: "because the County fails to set forth an accurate project description, a meaningful alternatives analysis is impossible. Because the DEIR does not provide a stable project description to which

alternatives can be compared, the 'alternatives' presented in the DEIR are more akin to a series of proposed projects, rather than the means to compare the worth and value of alternatives to a proposed project."

The Sierra Club is appealing the certification of the EIR in order to correct those flaws, correctly state the project's environmental impacts and clarify the collection and disposal options before a permit is approved.

The Planning Commission's process and the project that emerged from it was a testament to the value of public advocacy. Local residents, community groups, wastewater experts and environmental organizations brought their concerns to the Commission, backed them up with facts and data, and the Commission listened.

Had we all heeded the call to "just do it" and acquiesced to the project that Public Works submitted to the Planning Commission, none of the above improvements would be part of the project now.

When the permit comes before the Board, for the sake of the aquifer, the Morro Bay Estuary and the citizens of Los Osos, those improvements need to stay there, and two more need to be added: an environmentally preferable treatment method, and the consideration of an alternative collection system in the bidding process.



"We're trying to give the county some guidance and direction to avoid a train wreck at the end of this line."

- Peter Douglas
Executive Director,
California Coastal Commission

Sewer Myths Busted

The County Planning Commission hearings on the Los Osos Wastewater Project shone a bright light on various claims asserted by the County and the Public Works Department about the biggest, longest-running public works project in county history. They fell like autumn leaves before the questioning of Commissioners and in the face of hard data.

A short list, with >corrections<:

Gravity sewers don't leak; any evidence of such deficiency is a result of old technology, the failure of 100-year-old clay pipes, etc.

> Major infiltration and inflow of groundwater has been found in gravity systems less than ten years old.

Gravity sewers are environmentally preferable to STEP/STEG collection.

> The only significant environmental benefit of gravity over STEP is the reduction of the amount of sludge produced when a gravity system is used with facultative ponds. If facultative ponds are not used, there is no environmental advantage to a gravity sewer. Facultative ponds are not (yet) part of the County's project.

All collection systems would have roughly equivalent impacts and the Coastal Commission has no issues with the selection of one over another.

> Dan Carl, Central Coast District Manager, California Coastal Commission, wrote to County Public Works Director Paavo Ogren on July 15 to say that sludge reduction should be made a "a high priority in the selection of preferred collection and treatment technologies."

The Tonini disposal site might not be outside the water basin because,

theoretically, there could be connecting strata between the aquifers.

> The Tonini site is outside the water basin. Treated wastewater disposed of at Tonini would be water wasted.

The Andre site cannot be used because PG&E will not allow the hay/grass crop that would be required to

be grown under power lines.

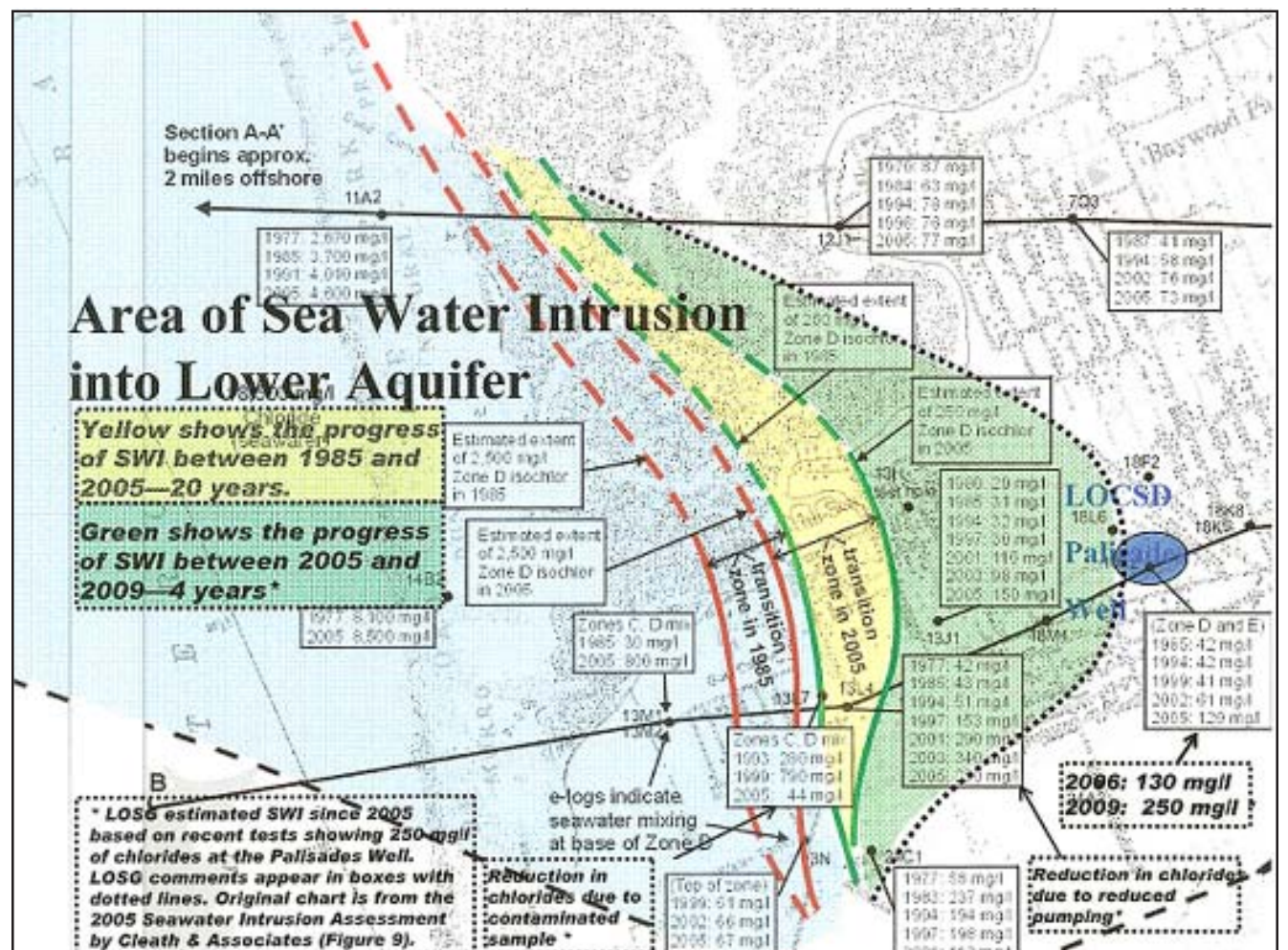
> PG&E restrictions apply to the heights of trees and structures under power lines, not grass and hay.

The use of recycled water in the Los Osos basin cannot be required until the basin has been adjudicated.

> State law requires that recycled water must be used in lieu of well water by ag users if recycled water is available.

"You're about to approve a \$200 million wastewater project that won't be worth a dime if the basin is lost."

- Keith Wimer to the Board of Supervisors, 7/14/09



The estimated progress of seawater intrusion since 2005 is the third, and biggest bulge; the rate of progress for the prior 20 years is shown in the layers to the left of it. The rate of seawater intrusion into the basin is now under the Los Osos downtown and commercial area and appears to be four to eight times faster than it was four years ago.

Historic State Ruling: Solar Beats Gas

Energy Commission decision could apply to Morro Bay plant upgrade

by Jack McCurdy

A landmark June 17 California Energy Commission decision ruled for the first time that solar energy is a viable alternative to fossil-fuel power plants.

The finding is expected to have revolutionary consequences statewide and nationally in recognizing that solar energy can replace conventional energy generation as a more feasible, cost-effective and much more environmentally protective way to produce electricity and meet the public's needs.

The Commission ruled that "photovoltaic solar arrays on rooftops and over parking lots may be a viable alternative" to a gas-fired plant, a ruling that applies in principle to energy production by conventional plants the length of the California coast that have long used fossil fuels, primarily natural gas.

Locally, the ruling could prevent a proposed upgrade of the 55-year-old Morro Bay Power Plant and further extension of its life, which its owner previously had said will end in 2015.

Under the Commission's precedent-setting decision rejecting proposed gas-fired "peaker" units at the Chula Vista plant near San Diego in favor of considering solar as a substitute source, solar energy from panels installed on residential and commercial buildings could be required in place of proposed new peaker generation units at the Morro Bay plant.

The Chula Vista peaker project proposed by MMC Energy, Inc., the plant owner, was rejected primarily because of zoning conflicts, but the solar finding established a new far-reaching standard. If that finding on solar were applied here, it could mean there would be no further need for the Morro Bay plant because electricity volume equivalent to what the peakers would produce could be generated by photovoltaic (PV) solar off the plant site.

The testimony of Bill Powers, an engineer with more than 25 years of experience in the energy field, was instrumental in the Commission concluding that solar is a viable alternative to conventional plants. Powers says there is no reason why that finding would not be applicable to Morro Bay and throughout the industry in California.

Expanding on the Commission's findings in a recent article in *Natural Gas and Electricity*, an industry journal, Powers wrote "The decision implies that any future applications for gas-fired generation in California, or any other type of generation, including remote utility-scale renewable energy generation that may require public land and new transmission to reach demand centers, will be measured against using urban PV to meet the power need." Powers pointed out that installing PV on rooftops in urban areas is far less costly and environmentally disruptive than solar plants being developed in desert areas. (Read Powers's articles at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org -- click on "Localized Power.")

A top Commission official said the Chula Vista decision is likely to become a precedent and will be a key issue in future cases when analyses of alternatives, which is required under Commission review procedures, to proposed projects using conventional

generation are considered.

As the Commission was poised to vote on the Chula Vista decision in Sacramento, member Julia Levin said the Commission "needs to site more solar power in California," adding "we need as much support for solar as we do for peaker plants."

The current Morro Bay plant owner, Dynegy, has made no effort to pursue state permission to build a new and larger plant in Morro Bay since a 2004 federal court decision banned use of sea water for cooling by any new power plant, a process known as once-through cooling. In the case of the Morro Bay plant, water for cooling is drawn from the Morro Bay National Estuary, and this withdrawal by a new plant could kill up to 33% of the Estuary's crab and fish larvae, according to state-supervised studies.

Another such court decision in 2007 banned use of sea water for all existing plants, raising questions about the legal or regulatory authority to allow the current plant to continue to operate using once-through cooling.

Prompted by those landmark court decisions, the California State Water Resources Control Board last year issued draft regulations requiring gas-fired plants to stop using once-through cooling by 2015, which led to Dynegy telling the Morro Bay City Council that it would close the plant that year. A final draft of those regulations is expected shortly.

But recently, Dynegy has come up with the idea of installing new gas-fired units at the plant, City Hall sources said. Dynegy apparently wants to install the peakers because the old plant now operates only about six per cent of the time as it is highly inefficient. The peakers would operate during high-demand summer periods in Southern California.

In its decision, the Commission said: "The (Chula Vista) Applicant effectively eliminated photovoltaic (PV) generation from its alternatives analysis when it stated that it did 'not meet the project objective of utilizing natural gas available from the existing transmission system'... This is another example of a too-narrow project objective artificially limiting the range of potential alternatives."

The Commission noted that "Photovoltaic arrays mounted on existing flat warehouse roofs or on top of vehicle shelters in parking lots do not consume any acreage. The warehouses and parking lots continue to perform those functions with the PV in place. Mr. Powers provided detailed analysis of the costs of such PV, concluding that there was little or no difference between the cost of energy provided by a project such as the Chula Vista Energy Upgrade Project compared with the cost of energy provided by PV.

"In addition, while PV is not a quick-start technology which can be dispatched on ten minutes' notice any time of the day or night, PV does provide power at a time when demand is likely to be high—on hot, sunny days."

"In the event the Applicant chooses to pursue this matter further, we will require a more in-depth analysis of the PV alternative by both Staff and Applicant."



Painting of the Month

Here at Sierra Club's downtown SLO hq, we're pleased to share our wall space with the San Luis Artists Collective, and to share with you peeks at intriguing new canvasses as they appear. Our spotlighted canvas for September is "Waiting," by Evy Justessen, acrylic, 32 x 17."

All the Artists Collective's works are for sale, with 25% of the proceeds donated to the Sierra Club. Call 546-8907, or e-mail evyjust@gmail.com

Power Plant Comments Due Sept. 30

New regulations required by two recent federal court decisions to end the killing of fish and larvae by coastal power plants that use ocean water for cooling purposes are under consideration by the California Water Resources Control Board. The draft regulations fall far short of bringing a 50-year slaughter of sea life to an end within an acceptable time frame.

The board will accept comments on the draft regulations until 12 noon on

September 30. What will count is the number of people who register their objections to the regulations as written and call for compliance with the Clean Water Act, which prohibits destruction of coastal resources by power plants, for the first time since the Act was adopted 35 years ago.

For information on the flawed draft regs and points to make, go to www.morrobaypowerplant.org.

Well Oiled

You can't "expunge" anything on the web

For a riveting lesson in civics and state politics, it would be hard to beat the July 23 debate on the floor of the California State Assembly over Assembly Bill 23 (DeVore, R-Irvine), the attempt to stake a new oil lease in state coastal waters for the first time in 40 years as part of the budget bill.

Taken up after thirty hours of budget wrangling, the bill would have reversed longstanding state environmental policy, reopening the coastline to offshore drilling for the first time since the 1969 Santa Barbara oil disaster, the event that created the environmental movement.

The debate is available on the California Channel at www.calchannel.com/channel/viewvideo/611. Scroll down the timeline to 00:46:25 to see and hear who was in favor of protecting our priceless coast and who wasn't, in the name of delivering a windfall gift to an oil company.



Smackdown: Assemblymembers DeVore and Nava face off.

Most notable is the evidence of the wisdom of the people of Santa Barbara in electing Assemblymember Pedro Nava, who noted, per the *L.A. Times*, that the bill's assurances of future environmental protections constituted promises "written in the sand at low tide."

The Assembly vote in which AB 23 went down to defeat 43-28 was the vote that was quietly "expunged," to a statewide storm of protest. But video is forever, so take advantage of The California Channel's invaluable resource and tune in. A full vote tally is provided at the end of the half-hour debate.

FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

A PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP FOR YOU

Learn to communicate your passion for the natural world through still photography. The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club is offering a series of monthly workshops led by local professional photographers.

“The New Nature” with Gary Dwyer
 Saturday September 12. 9:00 am - 11:00 am



Gary Dwyer’s images often indicate constraints and isolation, and demonstrate the increasing complexity of our relationship with the environment. Gary’s interests are those places where environmental and cultural values have collided visually in “The New Nature”. He will demonstrate how to capture this tension in images containing duality, irony, and reflection. Gary will also discuss how to see more with your camera when you travel.

Dwyer has documented World Heritage Sites for UNESCO in Vietnam, and as a resident artist at the American Academy in Rome he photographed Architecture in Danger of Disappearing for the World Monuments Fund. His work has been exhibited in Washington DC, Oakland, the Canary Islands and at several locations in France. View his work at:
www.calpoly.edu/gdwyer/index.html.



Workshops (limited to 40 participants) will be at:
 the First American Title Company
 Community Room, Pacific and Morro in SLO
COST \$40.00 (Sierra Club Members \$30)

To register call or email Kim Ramos:
kim.sierraclub8@gmail.com (805) 543-8717
 Check payable to the Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club
 Mail to: P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
 Or visit our website: www.santalucia.sierraclub.org
 and click the Donate button to pay by credit card.
 (Enter as “donation”)

SLO Community Gardeners 3rd Annual Seed Exchange

Seed Exchange takes place on Friday, October 23, from 6 – 9 p.m. at the SLO City Library Community Room. It’s free and open to the public.

This event is an opportunity to share gardening knowledge and learn more about saving seeds, locally grown grains and grasses, medicinal plants, hybrid vs open pollinated seed, how to garden year round in our climate, and plants that attract native pollinators.

You don’t need to bring seeds, just your curiosity and interest.

—SEEDS

Vegetables, flowers, specialty domesticated plants, native plants, and trees are welcome.

—BULBS & ROOT STOCK

Welcome

EVENT SPONSORS:

SLO City Parks & Rec
 Clark Valley Farm
 Cal Poly Organic Farm &
 SARC/Sustainable Ag Resource Consortium
 Growing Grounds Santa Maria
 Growing Grounds Downtown
 ECOSLO
 Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter

For more information call: 543-5364.

Save the planet – grow organic!



Let’s Paddle

It’s time for Surfrider San Luis Bay Chapter’s annual benefit paddle for the Central Coast Junior Lifeguard Program

What:

17th Annual Ken Harmount Pier to Pier Paddle, A benefit for Central Coast Junior Lifeguards.

When:

Saturday September 12th at Old Port Beach, Avila Beach
 Registration 7:00-7:45 a.m.
 Event begins 8:00 a.m.

Who:

All paddle craft are welcome—kayaks, paddleboards, stand up boards, etc.

How long:

Two distances to choose:
 6.5 miles from Cal Poly Pier to Pismo Pier (the Classic), or
 13 miles round trip (the Endurance)

How much:

\$30 advance registration or \$40 day of. Registration includes t-shirt, water, and equipment transportation back to Avila. All proceeds go to Junior Guards.

How to:

Pre-register at Central Coast Kayaks in Shell Beach at 805-773-3500.

Who to call:

For more details, call Paul Schiro at 773-3500.



photos8.com

Letters

send to: sierraclub8@gmail.com, or Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. Letters may be edited for space.

The off-road threat

Thank you for exposing SLO County's deliberate omission of important documents concerning the proposed sale of buffer lands to the ODSVRA ("Grand Jury Slams County Planning on Oceano Dunes," July-August). You can't know how happy it makes those of us who've been struggling with this issue—we residents and business owners who've felt utterly defeated by this burgeoning threat to our quiet enjoyment of our dunes and beaches.

I've been studying the mounting threat of off-roading not only to our area, but to natural areas throughout the country, and am convinced it's one of the worst threats to our environment. The constant erosion, not to mention loss of habitat to so many flora and fauna, is reaching critical proportions, while the so-called "sport" grows unabated. In some areas, it's tripled in the past 5 years!

Years ago, off-roading promoters talked government agencies into setting aside areas of public lands for them to ride on with the argument that if they didn't, enthusiasts would run roughshod over private lands. I'm sure it wasn't this argument alone that got politicians to go along with this—when big bucks change hands, all kinds of things happen. But the BLM and States went along with this reasoning, and now we've been taken over by minority interests that have a sense of entitlement promoted by the tacit approval they receive from politicians who benefit from the "sport."

The ODSVRA is an abomination,



Catch a wave: An unsuccessful creek crossing at the ODSVRA.

and everyone with half a brain in their head realizes it's causing millions of dollars of damage each year to public health and wealth, yet it goes on with the approval by local governments influenced by interagency collusion. And everyone who's been encouraged to participate in off-roading over the years now has an ingrained sense of nostalgia about having had the opportunity to ride around wherever they please. They cite a rhetoric we used to hear about cowboys and west—making it really difficult to use logical arguments in the discussion. If their daddies did it, it's good enough for them, etc.

Clearly this is a huge problem, not restricted to a few state parks, but nationwide, and internationally as well. Off-roaders have been encouraged to demonize anyone wanting to curtail their activities. I see bumper stickers with "death to the Sierra Club" messages, etc. They personally

attack people in our area who are fighting against expansion of their parks.

I'd like to see environmental groups working shoulder to shoulder to bring about a sea change concerning off-roading. We need to go beyond the arguments that focus on a single endangered species, such

as the snowy plover, in order to gain the support of middle America. They need to understand how it is causing irreparable harm to our lands, and diseases such as mesothelioma, cancers, and heart disease to populations affected by dust.

I'd also like to see a complete investigation of the Chappie-Z'berg Act of 1971 that continues to swindle us out of gas taxes to finance off-roading. And the practice of off-roaders financing the cost of hauling their vehicles using tax deductions for "business and farm" vehicles to the

tune of \$25,000—another loss to taxpayers.

All this has to change because it's enabling people with little education to purchase and operate the very vehicles that are the nemesis of beaches, mountains, and streambeds throughout the country.

Thanks again for your support on this. Let's keep the heat on. There's so much at stake.

SM
Grover Beach, CA

You're welcome, SM. (And we're just printing your initials because a local off-roading representative and avid reader of this publication has a well-earned rep for the "investigation" and harassment and of folks who hold opinions such as yours, and would surely add you to his enemies list if we printed your name.) If you have not yet read the Foundation for Deep Ecology's Thrillcraft: The Environmental Consequences of Motorized Recreation, we recommend you -- and everyone else -- do so. Go to www.stopthrillcraft.org/.

Fall Lodge Calendar



By Olivia Diaz

Fall at Clair Tappaan Lodge is golden. Located 7000 feet up in the Sierra Nevada, the lodge experiences sunny days and crisp nights. In late September and October the leaves turn and change the color of the mountains. The Clair Tappaan Lodge and Hutchinson Lodge are located at 19940 Donner Pass Road in Norden/Soda Springs, California.

This fall there are two national outings and fall program offered by Lodge staff.

- * September 4, Full Moon Hike
- * September 20-26, National Outing,

50+ Ridgetop Rambles, Tahoe National Forest, CA.

* September 25-27, Weekend Lodge Work Parties: Come and help spruce up the Lodge you love. Volunteer for six hours on both Saturday and Sunday in exchange for free lodging and meals during the weekend. We'll also send you home with a 20% discount for a future weekend. Let us know if you have any special skills that you'd like to show off and share. Tasks during the weekend range from lodge cleaning and painting to firewood splitting and stacking and everything in between.

* October 4-10, Pastel Painting along Sierra Trails, Tahoe National Forest, CA. A Sierra Club National Outing.

* October 31/November 1, Halloween party and Day of the Dead commemoration. Bring a costume, pumpkin(s) to carve and your tools, and a remembrance of a loved one who is no longer in this world.

* November 26, Thanksgiving dinner at Clair Tappaan Lodge is always a fun event.

* December 31, Traditional New Year's celebration.

Reservations required. Call 1 800 679-6775 for information and reservations or check out our website at www.sierraclub.org/outings/lodges/ctl.

Circus

continued from page 2

environmentally destructive projects or against policies necessary to maintain a healthy environment and sustainable resources. Once targeted officials have been persuaded to turn against their own constituencies and have lost their compass – whip-sawed, compromised and alienating the people who elected them to head in a new direction rather than allow themselves to be lashed back down the path of the old direction — they become easy pickings in the next

electoral cycle. The developer-backed "business candidates" sweep back in, and get back down to business; the business of long-term destruction for short-term profits.

That's the playbook these plays are being called from, both at the national level and in our neck of the woods. In both arenas, one great truth pertains: When the circus comes to town, we all have to sweep up after the elephants.



Three days before the Planning Commission heard the proposed Ag Events ordinance, Supervisor Adam Hill (left) presided over a SLO Chamber of Commerce-hosted discussion of the ordinance with County planner Karern Nall, Sierra Club's Andrew Christie, the Farm Bureau's Jackie Crabb, Kim Pasciuto of the Ag Tourism Coalition, and Daniella Sapriel (not shown) of the Coalition of Affected Business Owners. Sierra Club and the Ag Tourism Coalition support the revision of the ordinance to ensure that events on ag land are supportive of active agriculture and keep ag land from turning into de facto commercial zoning. The ordinance's opponents packed the meeting, called us "dishonest" and warned of destroyed livelihoods while flourishing poll results that actually showed (buried way down at question #28), that 75 percent of respondents felt that not being allowed to hold unlimited non-ag related events on their ag land would make "no difference" to their bottom line.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **September 10**.
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



**Stew Jenkins
Lawyer**

Trust & Estate Plans
Prenuptial Agreements
Domestic Partnerships

1336 Morro Street ♦ San Luis Obispo ♦ 541-5763

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING



NATURAL INVESTMENTS LLC

Financial Advisor
SCOTT SECREST AAMS®
(805) 235-3031

San Luis Obispo, California
www.naturalinvesting.com

Fee-only Sustainable Investment Advice

Natural Investments, LLC
An investment adviser registered with the SEC

Law Offices of Jan Howell Marx
A Client Centered Practice



Business Mediation
Environmental Law
Elder Law
Real Estate
Wills and Trusts

541-2716 janmarx@stanfordalumni.org

EcoSlo Learn Green, Work Green, Live Green.

Not a member? Join today.
www.ecoslo.org

1204 Nipomo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 544-1777
ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

slosolstice.com
green directory



Be smart... be green!
CONTACT us... to be SEEN!
ph: 805-473-5064 or email: Solstice222@aol.com

**Helmholz Consulting
Business Computer Networks**

PHONE: (805) 547-0293
E-MAIL: dave@helmholz.net

Providing personalized computer service to businesses in San Luis Obispo county

SLOGRAPHICARTS
Fresh ideas, sophisticated design and affordable rates!

(800) 814-5596

www.slographicarts.com



Bryan Bowers
Graphic Artist

Graywater
continued from page 1

and against the adoption of the new standards as the hearing roller-coastered dramatically to its conclusion. The commissioners are to be congratulated for their leadership. It is always more work to set up a new system than to fit into an existing one. It would be easier to stand aside as legal buildings continue to waste resources and pollute the environment. But, in the face of deeply

entrenched, powerful opposition, the commission is rising to the challenge of revising all California's codes to allow/require better building systems. Besides its emergency approval of the new graywater standards, the BSC is also revising California's Green Building Standards. This is a historic shift towards considering all factors — not just occupant safety but also off site and future impacts—in developing building codes that truly protect our health and welfare.

**CYNTHIA HAWLEY
ATTORNEY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
LAND USE
CIVIL LITIGATION**

**P.O. Box 29 Cambria California 93428
Phone 805-927-5102 Fax 805-927-5220**

The Shade of Trees

If my skin could smile, it would, whenever I step into you.
Your scattered oases bring relief during my warm weather walk.
Under you, the air, considerably cooler, lifts some of the sweat from my body.
Those big green umbrella leaves beam up my beads of human dew and I feel instantly soothed.
The tree is a comforting mother because in those pleasant moments, it pats me down like an overheated baby and I am renewed.

- Kalila Volkov
July 2009

Put yourself on the SLO Sierra Club E-Alert list

Get immediate news on events of environmental interest, public meeting and hearings where your attendance could make the difference, and the low-down on the issues that matter.

Drop a note to sierraclub8@gmail.com and ask to be subscribed to Sierra Club e-alerts for San Luis Obispo.

Outings and Activities Calendar

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

All our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies, or would like to be an outings leader, call the Outings Chair, Joe Morris, 772-1875. For information on a specific outing, please call the outing leader."

To Outings Leaders: E-mail your outings write-ups to Gary Felsman no later than the 10th of the preceding month. Your descriptions may be edited for space and consistency.

Wed, September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30th. 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes around San Luis Obispo, approximately 5 miles with 1200 foot elevation gain. Bring water and dress for the weather. E-mail: backpackingary1@gmail.com for details.

September 5-7, Thousand Island Lake via River Trail Backpack: Strenuous, 18 miles round trip, 2000' gain. Saturday, Day 1, hike 7.5 miles to Thousand Island Lake. Sunday, Day 2, day spend a leisure day at the camp or hike to Garnet lake and vicinity, Day 3, Return via Pacific Crest High Trail which provides 180 degree views of the mountains, lakes. Possible we will see fall colors, Golden Aspens. Bring goodies to share for Friday and Saturday happy hour. Send 2 SASE with resume of recent backpacks or conditioning and 2 checks: \$25 refundable at the trailhead and \$5 for

Fundraising Cruises in 2009

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

September 11-14

Come and explore the wild, wind-swept islands of Channel Island National Park.

Cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel Truth. \$950, includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and present evening programs. The proceeds benefit Sierra Club's political programs in California. To make a reservation mail a \$100 check payable to Sierra Club to leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leader for more information: 626-443-0706; jholtzhln@aol.com



the permit fee (non-refundable) to the leader: KULDIP DHADWAL, 420 Carnation Place, Oxnard 93036, 815-8418 (SP) (Sponsored By Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club).

Sat, September 12, 8:30 a.m., Big Sur Coastal Hike. At least 8 miles approx. 2000 foot elevation gain. Exact destination is unknown at this time, but may be Vicente Flat on the Kirk Creek Trail. It will depend on the weather. Meet at the Washburn Day Use Area, San Simeon State Park. SLO Carpools should meet at Santa Rosa Park and leave by 7:40 a.m. Bring lunch, plenty of water and non-slip shoes. There maybe poison oak and ticks along the trail. Details, call Gary (473-3694).

Sat, September 12, 10 a.m., Islay Hill Open Space. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of using trekking poles. 1 mile/400 feet elevation change. Join us for a hike with spectacular views of Edna Valley to the south and morros to the north. From Broad, go east on Tank Farm, turn right on Wavertree, left on Spanish Oaks and veer right onto Sweetbay and park near cul de sac. Confirm with David Georgi at 458-5575 or polecatleader@gmail.com for upcoming activities. Bipeds welcome.

September 20, 3:00pm, Sierra Singles – Valencia Peak. Sunday – Come join hike leader Stacy Talbert for this 4-mile moderate hike with an elevation gain/loss of 1200 feet. At a full elevation of 1347', Valencia Peak has spectacular views from Point Sal to Piedras Blancas. Please be sure to bring sturdy hiking shoes, hiking poles if you desire, and plenty of water. We will meet near the Montana de Oro State Park Headquarters. Take Los Osos Valley Road to Montana de Oro State Park, then go about another 2.7 miles to the parking area. Call Stacy for any questions or more details (818) 472-6827.

Wed, September 23, 7-9 pm. Bi-monthly General Meeting. The Transition Towns Movement. Begun in a small England town only three years ago, the Transition Towns movement has quickly spread to hundreds of regions around the globe. It involves systematic efforts in local communities to adapt to peak oil and climate change now, to plan ahead and make the needed economic, lifestyle, and cultural changes that will inevitably become necessary. Jim Cole, Judith Bernstein, and other local activists will present a PowerPoint program explaining the key elements and what is now happening in SLO County. Meets at Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info: Joe Morris, 772-1875.

Fri.-Sun., Sep 25-27, Service and Hiking In The Carrizo Plain. This is an opportunity to visit and to assist an outstanding and relatively unknown national monument. There will be an optional and scenic hike high in the Caliente Mountains on Friday. Others may join us for National Public Lands Day on Saturday when we will participate with other volunteers working on

improvements for the Soda Lake Overlook. On Sunday we will tour a number of the historic, prehistoric, and geologic sites in the Monument. Leader Craig Deutsche, craig.deutsche@gmail.com, (310-477-6670) CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sun, September 27, 10 a.m. Maino Open Space trail/Lemon Grove Loop. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of using trekking poles. 2.2 miles/400 feet elevation change. The trailhead is located off the Marsh Street onramp of southbound Highway 101. From downtown SLO take Higuera Street to the intersection with Marsh Street and proceed as if to take 101 South. Immediately after the freeway underpass, bear right into the parking lot. Confirm with David Georgi at 458-5575 or polecatleader@gmail.com for upcoming activities. Bipeds welcome

Sun, September 27, 1-3 p.m. Sketching Walk at Estero Bluffs. Pack your paints or pencils for a session depicting the dramatic cliffs, seascapes, and bird life of Estero Bluffs, just north of Cayucos, and co-led by professional artist, Lucia Capacchione. Beginners to highly skilled all welcome. Bring all art supplies needed, hat, water, comfortable walking shoes, and an optional stool. Meet at Cayucos Pier for short rideshare. Leader: Joe Morris, 772-1875.

Wed, October 7, 14, 21, 28, 30th. 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes around San Luis Obispo, approximately 5 miles with 1200 foot elevation gain. Bring water and dress for the weather. E-mail: backpackingary1@gmail.com for details.

Sat-Sun, October 3-4, Santa Lucia Chapter/CNRCC Desert Com O: Antelope Protection Carcamp (Nature



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.

Study/Work Party). With little rainfall and few water sources, the species that live here on the Carrizo Plain 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. We've been removing barbed wire for several years and have cleaned up the American Ranch area! Join us as we now work on the Panorama Ranch. Camp at Selby campground, bring food, water, heavy leather work gloves, and camping gear for the weekend. Potluck Sat night. Rain cancels. Meet at the Goodwin Visitors' Center at 9:00 am Sat. We are making a difference! 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 lettyfrench@gmail.com

Sponsored by other organizations

Sat, September 19, Coastal Clean Up Day. Help clean beaches around the County. Sponsored by ECOSLO. See page 6.

September 26-29, VWA Trail Work Trip. Come help us celebrate National Public Lands Day (Sept. 26) on a Ventana Wilderness Alliance Trail Work Trip! Come for the day, the weekend, or all four days. The air will be fresh, the views amazing, and this is your chance to have your own Ventana Wilderness Adventure! Bring a friend or just make some new ones! We'll meet at 8:30a.m. on Sat., Sept 26, at the Entrance to Cone Peak Road, which is at the Summit of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, between Kirk Creek Campground and Fort Hunter Liggett. We'll be hiking in from the end of Cone Peak road to Trail Springs camp - a moderate hike

of about 1.5 miles (water at Trail Springs). There are 7 trees down on the trail between the North Coast Ridge Trail and Trail Springs, and many down past Trail Springs. There is also about 1 mile of trail that needs brushing. So our goals will be: 1. Be Safe! 2. Have fun! 3. Use our crosscut saw skills to clear as many trees off the trail as we can. 4. Clear as much brush off the trail as we can using loppers and pruning saws. David Knapp will be leading the trip. RSVP to daveknapp@ventanawild.org.

Sat, October 3, 9am-12pm, Creek Cleanup Day • Sites throughout SLO County. Consider building a group of co-workers, neighbors or friends for a team cleanup. Contact Dave Rau at 544-9096 ext. 14 to reserve a site or get more info. Sponsored by the Land Conservancy of SLO.