



Jul./Aug. 2013
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Inside

Thank you, Wilderness Act	2
A better Measure Y	3
Spanish Sprung	5
Up against Monsanto	6
Lobbyist for a day	9
Classifieds	11
Outings	12

Don't Miss:

John Muir's
Yosemite

- page 2



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SANTA LUCIAN



The official newsletter of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club • San Luis Obispo County, California

Last Plant Standing

When it comes to planning our energy future, Diablo Canyon is old and in the way

On June 7, Southern California Edison announced that it would not reopen the problem-plagued San Onofre nuclear power plant.

The plant had been closed for 17 months, following discovery that its steam generating system was failing. The plant was first opened beside one of the state's most beautiful beaches more than forty years ago.

"Southern California Edison's decision to close this cranky, unpredictable and potentially very dangerous power plant is smart for its bottom line, smart for ratepayers, and smart for the environment," said Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips. "For more than forty years, many Californians who live in the broadly cast shadow of this plant have had to worry that something might go wrong — just as something went terribly wrong at the plant in Fukushima, more than two years ago. Finally closing this plant is the beginning of the end of the uncertainty."

Phillips went on to point out that "as the utilities look to grow in the future, they now have better choices than they had forty years ago. Solar, wind and other renewable energy technology have advanced dramatically in that time. We hope that the utilities will take this opportunity to help get more locally generated renewable energy, such as rooftop solar, into their portfolios."

But nuclear power proponents won't make that easy.

Baseload worship

In the wake of the closure of San Onofre, nuclear advocates are clutching at the two most obvious straws: the baseload mantra, and scarcity — i.e., with San Onofre gone, now we need Diablo Canyon more than ever.

The baseload mantra is the shibboleth that says nuclear power is one of the only sources of always-on 24/7



power, and that is essential to the stability of the power grid, and solar and wind energy can't cut it because they are intermittent and what do you do when the wind doesn't blow or the sun's not shining?

This argument is increasingly becoming the province of energy dinosaurs. Renewable energy resources including but not limited to wind, combined heat and power (CHP), biogas and geothermal all provide baseload power and can play a role in providing baseload and dispatchable generation to help balance intermittency.

In April 2009, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman Jon Wellinghoff said that no new nuclear or coal plants may ever be needed in the United States. "People talk about, 'Oh, we need baseload,'" he told the *New York Times*. "It's like people saying we need more computing power, so we need mainframes. We don't need mainframes, we have distributed computing. Most plants running all the time in your system are an impediment because they're very inflexible. You can't ramp up and ramp down a nuclear plant. If you have instead the ability to ramp up and ramp down loads in ways that can shape the entire system, then the old concept of baseload becomes an anachronism."

But what about the basic requirement of having enough energy, whatever the source? With San Onofre gone, aren't we facing the possibility of blackouts?

Chris Clarke, reporting for KCET's ReWire, interviewed San Diego-based energy consultant Bill Powers, an expert on power generation and emissions issues relating to electrical utilities. "SoCal is awash in excess natural gas-fired power plant capacity," Powers said. "That's due to a decade-long building boom that is still underway. The permanent shutdown of San Onofre will not necessitate any new construction of gas-fired plants or long-distance transmission lines."

"The real story is that California utilities have so overbuilt infrastructure in the last decade that San Onofre can be shut down permanently with essentially zero impact on grid

PLANT continued on page 8

20 from 300:
We Have a
Match!

Since we began the "20 from 300" campaign in January, we've gotten **43% of the way toward our goal**: the equivalent of \$20 per month from 300 people in automatic monthly donations, the amount of steady monthly income the Chapter needs to meet our basic obligations (rent, utilities, printing, and paying our sole part-time staff), which in turn allows us to engage the issues you read about in these pages every month.

And from now until September 1, any automatic monthly donation up to \$40 @ month will be matched by a generous donor. Your monthly \$20 donation is now worth \$40, and \$40 per month is worth \$80!

To reach our goal, we need at least 300 members to go to www.santalucia.sierraclub.org, click the "Donate" button, and sign up for an automatic contribution of at least \$20 per month. Or you can set up a monthly donation with your bank using a monthly bank check. This "Bill Pay" service is free to anyone with a bank account. All you need to give the bank besides your own account info is the date on which you want the check sent every month, and the name and address of the person or business you want it sent to (Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406).
Onward!

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

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Sierra Club General Meeting

Wednesday, July 17, 7 p.m.

John Muir's Yoosmitte

Imagine hiking with Muir 140 years ago when he was a local resident of Yosemite. We all missed out on that one, but here's a fun, vicarious way of experiencing what it may have been like. Chapter outings chair Joe Morris, a confessed Muir freak, has assembled more than 70 vintage photo slides from Yosemite National Park archives dating from that long-ago time. Tonight he will take you on a visual tour of the Park's early days, its natives and pioneers. See the first hotels and stage roads, and rare pictures of Muir, his friends, and family. Come see the scenes and hear the stories of John Muir's transformation into a wilderness visionary.



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

Happy Anniversary, Wilderness

Party all year

On September 3, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law. This historic bill established the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of wildlands for the use and benefit of the American people.

Over the past 50 years, and as a result of America's support for wilderness, Congress has added over 100 million acres to this unique land preservation system.

The 1964 Wilderness Act defines "Wilderness" as areas where the earth and its communities of life are left unchanged by people, where the primary forces of nature are in control, and where people themselves are visitors who do not remain.

The NWPS was established for the use and enjoyment of the American people and provides many direct and indirect benefits, such as those relating to ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, spiritual, economic, recreational, historical, and cultural uses and activities. The 758 wilderness areas within the NWPS are managed by all four federal land managing agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and National Park Service.

In 2014, our nation will celebrate "50 Years of Wilderness." Everyone will have an opportunity to become a part of this historical commemoration honoring the "True American Legacy of Wilderness."

The 50th Anniversary National Wilderness Planning Team (Wilderness50) is collaborating on the planning and eventual implementation of local, regional, and national events and projects, specifically designed to elevate the profile of wilderness during the 50th anniversary celebration.

Wilderness50's goals are to:

(1) Engage the public to better understand and appreciate the many benefits and values of wilderness, ultimately resulting in more people supporting responsible wildlands stewardship;

(2) Bring the wilderness community (NGOs/Agencies/International Advocates) together to efficiently and consistently steward wilderness for the use, enjoyment, and benefit of the American people;

(3) Connect with youth and with non-wilderness using groups to find the thread that ties their lives to

wild places so they can more directly relate to, understand, and value, wilderness.

Wilderness50's diversity commitment is to:

(1) Acknowledge that diverse communities celebrate and engage with wilderness in many different ways—even though their traditions have not always expressed these connections in the same way as more "orthodox" environmentalists.

(2) Realize that the assumptions of the Wilderness Act, valuable and pathbreaking in many ways for Americans, have led to a "non-inclusive" movement around the wilderness concept, and many people in non-traditional communities view wilderness as irrelevant.

(3) Reach out to and work with diverse communities to incorporate them as full participants into planning efforts.

(4) Focus on holding events in non-traditional places; develop partnerships with diverse communities and organizations, including the faith-based community; and describe the benefits of wilderness in non-traditional ways.

Planned and proposed events include but are not limited to: 300-400 community events including at least 50 Walks for Wilderness (one in each state), teacher workshops and classroom and general public wilderness educational programming, museum and visitor center exhibits (including the Smithsonian), nationally broadcast public service announcements, a national website and social media campaign, an online and radio podcast series, art and photography contests, a commemorative poster and other



WILDERNESS continued on page 9

SANTA LUCIAN

Andrew Christie
 EDITOR sierraclub8@gmail.com

Greg McMillan
 Lindi Doud
 Linda Seeley
 Thomas A. Cyr
 EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Denny Mynatt
 PRINT MEDIA COORDINATOR

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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

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

Committee Chairs

Political

Michael Jencks

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Membership

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Nuclear Power Task Force

Rochelle Becker beckers@thegrid.net
 Linda Seeley lindaseeley@gmail.com

Other Leaders

Calendar Sales

Bonnie Walters 805-543-7051

Outings

Joe Morris dpj1942@earthlink.net

Canoe/Kayak

open

Webmaster

Monica Tarzier monica@tarzier.org

Trail Guide

Gary Felsman

Chapter Director

Andrew Christie
 805-543-8717
 sierraclub8@gmail.com

Coordinator

Kim Ramos, Admin and Development
 kimramos@yahoo.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

P.O. Box 15755
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

**Office hours Monday-Friday,
 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., 974 Santa Rosa
 Street, San Luis Obispo**

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Las Pilitas Quarry Looming Over Santa Margarita

The Las Pilitas Quarry project poses the kind of land use compatibility issues for the rural community of Santa Margarita that the Death Star posed Princess Leia's home planet.

The mining operation proposed for the area at the confluence of the Salinas River and Moreno creek, just northeast of town, would turn the small community into a superhighway for gravel quarry trucks.

In our comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report, the Sierra Club noted the fundamental flaw in the EIR's traffic impact estimates and proposed mitigations, which use the estimated average of 273 truck trips per day, rather than peak traffic, even though "these average numbers of trips per day may be exceeded for short periods. Up to 800 truck trips per day may be anticipated for a large project."

Those are short periods in which residents of Santa Margarita would be very sad to be residents of Santa Margarita. Even using the lower number from the estimated average rather than the appropriate maximum figure for truck trips per day, mitigations for these impacts are deferred, inadequate, or do not address the potential impacts they purport to mitigate.

The EIR states:

The project will generate heavy truck traffic during the morning and afternoon, which could interfere with traffic and pedestrian activity at the Santa Margarita Elementary School. This is considered a potential significant impact that can be **avoided** with appropriate scheduling of truck activity



Charlie Kleemann

That seems a bit much.... The thin, diagonal black line at the bottom left is Highway 58.

associated with the project [emphasis added].

And here's the Applicant Proposed Measure to mitigate this impact:

Prior to any commercial production or sales at the quarry, the Applicant shall prepare and submit a Traffic

Control and Management Plan (TCMP) which be updated and resubmitted annually no later than July 1 of each year. The TCMP shall ensure that trucks arriving at or leaving the quarry **reduce conflicts** with peak pick-up and drop-off and bus arrival/departure times at Santa

Margarita Elementary School [emphasis added].

Did you catch the bait and switch? "Avoid," has a precise legal meaning: no impact at all; not just reduced, but eliminated. But between the promise of avoidance and the actual mitigation

QUARRY continued on page 10

Measure Y Not?!

If SLO wants to win voter approval for the extension of the Measure Y sales tax, here's how

The first time the City of SLO made the pitch to pass Measure Y, the ½-cent sales tax increase that city voters approved in 2006, it made all kinds of sense – especially because the City polled residents to ask them what their priorities were for spending the tax windfall should the measure pass. The citizens of SLO replied that the top five priorities were, in order: street repair, reducing traffic congestion, upgrading storm drains, protecting open space and hiring more firefighters and paramedics.

Those priorities were duly reproduced on the ballot description of the measure, the Sierra Club actively backed its passage due to the promise of much needed funding for the city's open space program, and Measure Y garnered the votes it needed to pass.

Then the shenanigans started.

Tough luck, voters

Open space protection started routinely disappearing from city reports and publications whenever they mentioned Measure Y and what its revenues were supposed to fund. When it did manage to show up in staff-produced city documents, "acquire and maintain open space" would invariably appear at the bottom of a list of goals or guiding principles, not in the #4 priority position assigned by residents, and "public safety" or "downtown improvements" started popping up at high rankings voters had not assigned when they were polled on Measure Y priorities.

At the end of 2011, after years of fast shuffling and re-cutting the deck, city staff, at the behest of downtown business interests, persuaded the city council to expend more than \$700,000 in Measure Y funds on the beautification of several downtown blocks of Higuera Street.

This sort of thing took the bloom off the Measure Y rose, creating a difficult

political environment in which to go back to the voters to request an extension of the measure. After the \$700k downtown beautification program blew up in the local press (see "Don't Ask Y," Jan. 2012), the city council judiciously scrapped plans for early reauthorization of Measure Y in 2012 and set its sights on 2014.

The basic problem is that sales tax revenues go into the general fund, where they can be appropriated for any purpose the city wishes. So voters' priorities were largely an exercise in self-expression, easy to ignore and override. A separate set of funding priorities — "city goals" — are shaped by staff and presented to the city council for approval, and those are most definitely not ignored and are never overridden.

Open space protection has had an equally hard row to hoe in the overall city budget process, as city staff have attempted to bury the results of a recent survey that showed the overwhelming support of residents – more than for any other category of city service — for acquiring and maintaining open space for peaks, hillsides, creeks, marshes and the greenbelt (see "Can SLO Hear You?," Jan.

Y NOT? continued on page 10

The model is at hand Vallejo has the cure for what ails Measure Y

Letter from Sacramento

Frackers Want to Keep Their Dirty Secret

June 17, 2013

Dear Sierra Club Member,

Trying to make sense of this irrational world is challenging when it comes to secrecy and the public's right to know.

Over the last few weeks, we've read press accounts of how our federal government has been secretly obtaining thousands upon thousands of telephone and on-line activity records of millions of Americans. They have done it, they say, to protect national security.

As one who was a card-carrying civil libertarian before I was eligible for a driver's license, I have many complicated thoughts about this latest news. One pertains directly to the environment and the work we do in Sacramento to protect public health and environmental quality.

That thought is this: At a time when the federal government has decided it has the right to monitor phone calls and emails of ordinary citizens, our state government is working to prevent ordinary citizens from knowing the contents of oil industry pollution that could leach into groundwater. What would the Founding Fathers think?

In the California legislature, two bills have emerged that would make it hard for the public to know about the chemicals being pumped underground in the course of hydrofracturing, or fracking, during oil and gas drilling. Fracking is a process that combines harsh chemicals, other materials, and (usually) intense pressure to help break up rock and soil for oil and gas extraction.

The bills would create in statute a path for fracking fluid makers to claim their pollution is protected by trade secrets provisions. The public could ask for the fracking fluid information, but that would be trumped if the fluid maker refuses to provide the information. Then the public would have to go to court to fight for the information.

Practically speaking, that could mean that every time a new fracking operation starts in California, someone would have to go to court to battle for information about what poisons are being spewed into the earth. There are already at least 600 fracked wells in the state. What's the likelihood that for those wells, or the next 600, the industry will voluntarily provide information?

Oh, and I almost forgot to mention: Both bills would prohibit physicians who get access to the fracking fluid information from reporting about its health impacts to medical journals or conferences.

Last week, one of those bills, AB 7 (Weickowski), couldn't get out of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee. The author was granted reconsideration, which means he has a chance to bring it back to the committee.

The other bill, SB 4 (Pavley), moved through the Senate earlier. It will likely face the same Assembly committee before the end of this month, and we're awaiting word about possible amendments.

Both bills contain other provisions that would direct better regulation of fracking. But for the Sierra Club and a handful of allies, putting trade secrets protections for fracking fluids into statute is a fundamental problem and we've opposed both bills.

I'd like to report that AB 7 failed in committee because the trade secrets provisions horrified the enlightened Democrats on the committee. In fact, two of the Democrats moved and seconded the bill. Two of the Republicans signaled they were worried the bill leaned too much toward environmental disclosure. AB 7 ultimately failed for reasons having nothing to do with the public's right to know.

The trade secrets protections for fracking fluids are promoted at the Capitol by Halliburton, the oil fields services company whose shoddy work contributed to the massive 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Is it wise to trust regulators and fracking fluid makers like Halliburton to protect our interests?

We don't think so. That's one reason why the public must have access to the chemicals being pumped into the earth during fracking. We—the public—have a right to know what may be polluting the soil beneath our farms, the groundwater we drink, and the air we breathe. We need the information to test our own waters and check the work the regulators and the frackers are doing.

It's a matter of environmental and public health security. The legislature shouldn't help the oil industry hide the facts from ordinary citizens.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Phillips, Director
Sierra Club California



Sierra Club Launches Online Electric Vehicle Guide

And you can find it at sierraclub.org/EVguide

E-car fans, we've got what you need. Type in your zip code and get information specific to your location. You can compare EV models, discover state-by-state EV incentives (tax credits, carpool lane access, discount electricity rates for EV drivers, etc.), and compare region-specific emissions among EVs, plug-in hybrids, and conventional gas guzzlers. There are even listings of plug-in cars for sale in your area on eBay.

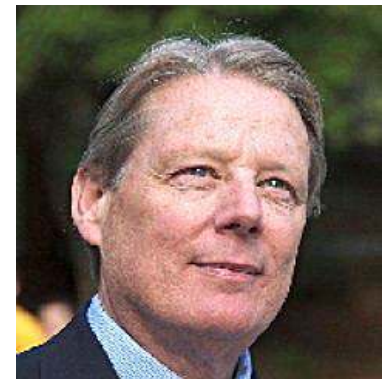
The site also includes recent EV-related blog posts, an EV fact sheet, and *Sierra* magazine's annual EV Buyers Guide.

Senator Monning Adds His Voice to Trade Deal Concerns

State officials nationwide question impacts of Trans-Pacific Partnership on the environment

Bill Monning, San Luis Obispo's representative in the state Senate, has become the first California legislator to add his name to a letter expressing deep concerns about how the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) would impact the environment, energy, and natural resources in their states and in other countries. The letter has been signed by more than 50 state legislators from 25 states and sent to the U.S. Trade Representative.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a trade pact currently being negotiated by the United States and 10 other countries across the Pacific Rim. Because the TPP is intended as a "docking agreement," other countries can join over time.



Japan has already announced its intention to join the talks. It is similar to the North American Free

FRACKING continued on page 10

Letters

send to: sierraclub8@gmail.com, or Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Dear Mr. McMillan,

I hope you are well. My name is Kathryn Francis, and three weeks ago I traveled to San Francisco and visited Muir Woods for the first time (of many, I hope). The beauty in that part of the country is severe and it made a deep impression on me. I was moved to learn more about John Muir, who I before knew very little about. Needless to say, his life and works are inspiring. In doing more research on line, I found that you are the Chair of one of the Sierra Club chapters. I wasn't sure who to reach out to, so I thought I would contact you. I just wanted to say thank you for your commitment to conserving such a magnificent part of the world. I'm only 24 and am currently a graduate student at Harvard, so I'm not in a place to contribute my thanks financially, unfortunately. But I needed to at least thank someone. So thank you. And also thank the others working alongside you. I hope to find a way to get involved in the future. If there's anything I can do from Boston, don't hesitate to reach out.

Kathryn Francis
Boston, MA

Greg McMillan replies:

Thank you so much for the kind letter, Kathryn. Muir Woods is an awe inspiring place. It makes me glad that you were prompted by the experience to send a letter. The southernmost range of the Coast Redwood was, historically, very near the northern border of San Luis Obispo County. Our chapter is the leading voice for the environment in our area. We are proactively involved in local politics, have a great outings program (hikes and short trips) and about 2,000 members. We are actively resisting the forces of local environmental degradation — fracking, development of agricultural lands, threats to wildlife habitat, water quality and depletion, nuclear power, and a litany of other issues. We do it because someone has to if we are to leave a livable environment for future generations.

If you find yourself in our part of heaven again, please let me know. I will be happy to show you around and extol the goodness of our state. There is a Sierra Club chapter near you (www.sierraclubmass.org) that needs your commitment.

Go Jump in a Spring

Pismo Beach City Council sent a message to residents with its Spanish Springs vote

The proposed Spanish Springs development has stirred up growing opposition in Pismo Beach and surrounding communities, where more and more residents have come to understand that the 961-acre development's residential units, retail, hotel, conference center and golf course in Price Canyon are a bad idea in the face of a lengthening drought and worsening traffic on the 101.

In the wee hours of June 19, after deliberations and eight hours of public testimony overwhelmingly in opposition, the Pismo Beach City Council, on a 4-1 vote, pulled off what amounted to an administrative sleight-of-hand trick on behalf of the developers: They moved the project forward while making it look like they were holding it back.

In the face of overwhelming opposition in the room, the Council certified the project's Environmental Impact Report and approved the amendments to the City's General Plan necessary to permit the project. (The council also approved a "statement of overriding considerations," a legal necessity due to the fact that they certified the EIR despite that report's identification of nine substantial impacts the project will have on the region's air, water and natural habitat which no amount of effort can significantly mitigate.)

Spanish Springs can't go forward without a certified EIR, which it now has. Approval of the specific plan for the project and the development agreement – the only things the council refrained from doing – are now essentially a *fait accompli*. In reporting the council's actions, *The Tribune* focused on the decision to send the project "back to the drawing board" and "delay...consideration of any development in that area for months" — devoting 23 paragraphs to this thesis, and exactly one sentence to the news that "the council did approve two items: the Spanish Springs environmental impact report, and some amendments to the city's general plan, which guides long-term growth."

This was akin to covering a Saturn V rocket launch at Cape Canaveral by reporting that residents of Brevard County heard a loud noise that set off all their car alarms. It's true, but it's also true that a six-million pound rocket took off, and while it did not immediately reach its destination, it is headed for the moon.

What must now be undone

Over the course of the eight-hour hearing, the legal counsel for the developer took a large portion of his three minutes at the microphone to attack the Sierra Club, complaining that our latest written comments on the deficiencies in the project's EIR were "sent last night." As we actually filed our comments five days prior to the hearing, the accuracy of the statement by the lawyer for Spanish Springs didn't say much for the general accuracy of the claims made by the developer's representatives regarding their development.

By contrast, the flaws in the project that we have pointed out are accurate and supported by regulatory agencies. These include the lack of detailed mitigation measures or steelhead relocation protocols in the open space management plan, as pointed out by the San Luis Coastal Resource Conservation District and the National



Bad plan Sierra Club attorney Babak Naficy pointed out to the Pismo Beach City Council that they were ignoring a court ruling on the failed Los Robles Del Mar development in their deliberations on Spanish Springs. The Court has rejected the City's analysis of the reliability of its water supplies and found that the City failed to demonstrate that existing supplies are capable of meeting current demand in severe drought conditions.

Marine Fisheries Service, and insufficient mitigation measures for greenhouse gas emissions and other air quality impacts, as pointed out by the APCD. The Sierra Club supports the reclamation and reuse of water, but the description of this project's water recycling plan does not meet the informational requirements of state environmental law.

The Pismo Beach City Council's decision on Spanish Springs failed to take heed of a basic truth: all the full-page ads, color brochures, neighborhood get-togethers

and "I'm OK with Spanish Springs" lapel stickers the developer had been dishing out for the previous six months did absolutely nothing to correct the issue of a problematic EIR that fails the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

The impacts of Spanish Springs would reach far beyond Pismo Beach, as do the impacts of the city council's actions. The General Plan amendments eliminate the requirement that there be no new residential development in the Planning Area without an Inland Arterial street to alleviate traffic. The Council showed that it was prepared to risk the wrath of SLOCOG and Caltrans by eliminating this requirement in order to get more residential development, without considering what this would do to traffic on the 101. Also eliminated was the General Plan requirement that any proposed developments demonstrate a new

source of water sufficient to meet future long-term demand prior to approval for annexation. Developers now need only assert that there is water available and it can be sustained.

As a result, the ultimate fate of this project will determine the fate and the future of Pismo Beach. Pismo's residents, in large numbers, have told their city council what kind of city

A six-million pound rocket took off, and while it did not immediately reach its destination, it is headed for the moon.

they want. The Sierra Club has told the city council – repeatedly — that environmental law means what it says and they would be well advised to reject the Spanish Springs EIR as inadequate to the task of fully analyzing, clearly stating and mitigating this project's environmental impacts.

At press time, Pismo Beach citizens were preparing to circulate for signatures a petition to put a referendum on the city ballot repealing the General Plan amendments that pave the way for Spanish Springs. We urge our Pismo Beach members to sign it.

The Santa Lucia chapter is in discussion with the Sierra Club Environmental Law program on options for litigation over the project's defective Environmental Impact Report. If we determine that the best course of action is to file a public interest lawsuit to roll back the EIR, we urge all our members to support it.



Wrong story *The Tribune* looked through the wrong end of a telescope in reporting the story of what the Pismo City Council actually did.



Spanish Springs



Price Canyon

Join the SLO Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby

Use your voice to cool the planet

Monthly meetings and international conference calls on legislation, science, economics and communication. Outreach actions to Congress and other elected officials to create the political will for a sustainable climate. More at www.CitizensClimateLobby.org/
Contact: ccl.slo@att.net

GET THE LATEST

News on any Sierra Club actions on Spanish Springs will appear first on the Santa Lucia Chapter website, www.santalucia.sierraclub.org and our Facebook page:



/Santa Lucia Chapter

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Marching Against Monsanto

By Jeanne Blackwell

Saturday, May 25, was a beautiful day in the neighborhood!

Over 200 people showed up at Mitchell Park in SLO to March Against Monsanto, thanks to organizer Jules London, who got more than 6,000 hits on her Facebook page for this event.

We started at Mitchell and walked down Marsh to Chorro, over to Higuera, and back to the park. Lots of horn honking, chanting and cheering. People were snapping our pictures all

over the place. There were kids, dogs and everything in between. We were a happening.

Kudos to the Cal Poly Ag students who participated -- that is a big deal. Poly is a favorite son of Monsanto. This takes guts.

I met some old friends and made some new ones. We had a lot of fun, nobody died or got pepper sprayed. We didn't see any cops; the press wasn't there because there were no cops and that is a-okay.



Author! Ms. Blackwell prepares.

Why We March

“This Is Only the Beginning”

by Mikael Thalen Head writer, Secretsofthefed.com

After the incredible success of the grass-roots “March Against Monsanto,” which saw over 2 million protesters in more than 50 countries worldwide, the march founders now plan to keep the momentum going by organizing more events to continue to educate the public on Monsanto and genetically modified foods.

After the creation of the “March Against Monsanto” Facebook page last February, the movement quickly gained steam due to the tireless work of dedicated activists as well as the anger from citizens over the recent passage of what has been deemed the “Monsanto Protection Act,” a provision attached to a spending bill that would allow seeds deemed unsafe to be planted anyway, trumping any court rulings.

“I started the march for my daughters,” said Canal, mother of two. “I am moved beyond words over the success of the event. It is truly inspiring to see such an amazing outpouring of activism by such an array of people. We truly became citizens of the world and the issues that normally divide us, politics, religion, etc., were cast aside and we united over a tremendous issue that affects us all.”

As more independent research surfaces showing genetically modified foods to be dangerous environmentally as well as physically, the massive outcry from the public continues to grow. Monsanto, in response to the

recent increase of opposition in social media, commented by saying that those opposed to them are “reverse elitists.” The march’s founders now say this is only the beginning and supporters seem more than ready to continue the fight.

“We are going to get involved heavily with the October 12 World Food Day,” said Nick Bernabe, March Against Monsanto’s Social Media Director.

While the details of the October event are still being worked out, the march organizers are helping promote the July 4 Moms Across America March, an event where citizens plan to march in local Independence Day parades nationwide to show their support for GMO labeling.

Although the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says no more than 90 days of testing is needed to ensure GMOs safety for human consumption, independent studies of several years continue to make links to major health issues. The FDA’s Deputy Commissioner for Foods, Michael Taylor, a former Monsanto lawyer and Monsanto Vice President for Public Policy, the biggest producer of GMOs worldwide, continues to refute the studies.

Even with genetically modified soy beans being linked to sterility and infant mortality in hamsters, geneti-

MARCH continued on next page

On the Monsanto Plan



Ignacio Chapela came to San Luis Obispo on 2004 to participate in a panel discussion on genetically engineered food. It was part of the debate around Measure Q, the SLO GE-Free ballot initiative to ban cultivation of genetically engineered crops in the county. Dr. Chapela had found that genetic drift from Monsanto’s GMO corn planted in Mexico was contaminating native varieties, a threat to crop diversity in the cradle of the world’s seed stock for corn. After his findings were published in the journal Nature in 2001, he was denied tenure by UC Berkeley – then negotiating a \$50 million grant from biotech giant Novartis – his research was attacked and discredited by scientists embedded with the biotech industry, and Nature issued an apology for publishing his paper. Seven years later, Dr. Chapela was vindicated when his findings were corroborated by another research team.

Sierra Club Chapter Director Andrew Christie reported the following exchange from the 2004 SLO panel discussion featuring Dr. Chapela at the Unitarian Fellowship Center, in which Christie engaged with one of Dr. Chapela’s co-panelists, Cal Poly professor Dan Peterson:

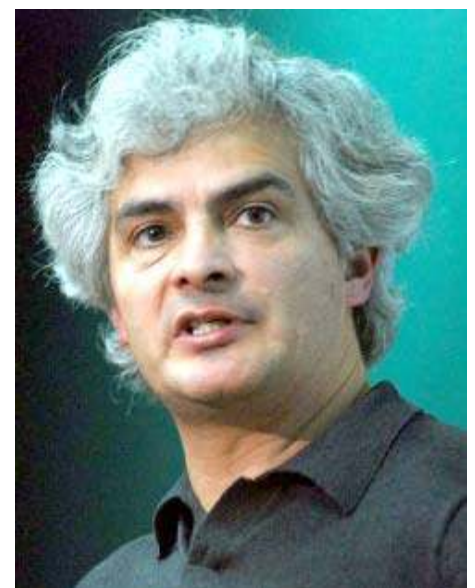
Dr. Dan Peterson made the “don’t stop the march of progress” argument, making the analogy to the early days of the automotive industry: Dangerously unsafe early vehicles gradually improved, their defects eliminated through research. We didn’t ban cars; the technology was allowed to advance. One of the audience members pointed out that a car cannot pass along the characteristics of a bad muffler to other cars....

Dr. Peterson said he was sure corporations would never come to patent and own all the seed stock used to grow the world’s food crops. When informed that this is, in fact, Monsanto’s stated business plan, he said he didn’t doubt the reality of a company *intending* to do so, but doubted they could ever actually achieve it. When pressed as to exactly what would stop a transnational giant with billions of dollars in resources — with which it is rapidly buying up seed companies — from achieving that goal, he said he hoped corporations like Monsanto would also be selling non-GE seed from the companies they purchased, even though the point of the exercise is to alter one characteristic of a seed’s DNA, patent it, own

it, and thereby charge eternally for its use.

He affirmed his faith in the marketplace, as many people clearly prefer to buy organic non-GMOs rather than Big Ag’s manipulated product; therefore consumer choice would

PLAN continued on next page



He told them so Nine years ago, a panel of Cal Poly ag professors told Ignacio Chapela he was wrong about GMO’s. He wasn’t.



Forward, march! As not seen (or mentioned) in *The Tribune*...

March

continued from previous page

cally modified corn producing tumors after two years of consumption in rats, as well as Monsanto’s herbicide Roundup being linked to Parkinson’s, cancer and other health issues, the federal government, coincidentally filled with former Monsanto employees, seems unwilling to support labeling. Even with over 80 percent of the US food supply containing genetically modified ingredients, the U.S. Senates recently rejected a bill that would have allowed states to label

such foods.

A recent ABC News poll found that 93 percent of American citizens support GMO labeling, which is likely now higher due to the outcry from citizens over the passage of the Monsanto Protection Act.

TAKE ACTION

Sign up to receive email updates at www.march-against-monsanto.com/2013/05/subscribe-to-get-march-against-monsanto.html

Plan

continued from previous page

effectively thwart the corporate plan for 100% penetration of genetically engineered foods. When asked what role consumer choice could have in the matter once GE crops had succeeded in cross-pollinating and contaminating non-GE crops, extinguishing the organic option, he held his hands up in front of his chest and said he was not going to get into a discussion of Monsanto’s business plan because that wasn’t his field. ...

About two weeks after the Unitarian Center debate, organic farmer Ryan Rich stood on the sidewalk of Higuera Street in downtown San Luis Obispo and watched an anti-Measure Q protest parade of huge, shiny new tractors and industrial agricultural machinery trundle down the street in a show of “family farmer” solidarity against the GE crop ban. (Talking points: The measure is “poorly written,” “unenforceable,” “economically devastating” and “restricts farmers’ freedom of choice.”)

None of the giant machines looked like it cost less than \$100,000, and all looked like they had rolled out the factory doors of International Harvester and John Deere earlier that day.

A bemused Rich pulled out his cell phone and called the organizers of the SLO GE-Free ballot initiative.

“Looks like Monsanto has arrived,” he said.

- from “The Next Green Revolution,”
by Andrew Christie
CommonDreams.org
Oct. 23, 2004



Target Introduces Non-GMO Brand

Target is introducing a “Simply Balanced” line of foods, with no artificial flavors, colors, preservatives, trans fats, and – next year— GMOs.

“As part of Target’s commitment to wellness, the Simply Balanced collection will eliminate all GMOs by the end of 2014,” per a June 10 company press release. “We know many of our guests are increasingly seeking to add wholesome and organic food options to their wellness lifestyle, inspiring us to introduce a new collection where guests can find these attributes in one place.”

The Simply Balanced collection includes 250 products across snacks, pasta, beverages, frozen seafood, dairy and cereal. Some items went on sale in June, with the full line scheduled to roll out over the next few months.



Plant

continued from page 1

reliability in Southern California and no need to build any new infrastructure,” said Powers.

And then there's CCA

Then there's the jobs argument: we need to hang on to Diablo because of the jobs it provides and the big role it plays in the local economy.

In answering that argument, we point out that the analogy FERC Chair Wellinghoff was making to distributed versus mainframe computing was a literal one. Distributed generation is power produced and consumed locally, not generated at a remote, centralized location and then transported vast distances over high-power transmission lines (or oil pipelines). It's the future of energy, the gateway to a green economy, and in California we can get there a lot quicker than a lot of other states because we have Community Choice Aggregation (CCA).

In a CCA program, local governments partner with business to boost the use of renewable energy, reduce carbon emissions, meet or beat current utility rates for customers, and manage risk and price volatility better than investor-owned utilities and their energy supply portfolios.

As the SLO Clean Energy Economy Coalition eloquently put it in a Tribune Viewpoint following the decision by the Board of Supervisors to commission a post-Diablo economic study last February, “we estimate up to \$115 million in funds would be available each year to San Luis Obispo County communities for energy investment

through a CCA program.... These funds currently leave our community's control and enter a large pool of funds that are managed by PG&E to purchase energy for their territory based on their values and priorities. With a CCA program, PG&E continues to focus on reliable delivery of power while we make choices based on our local values and priorities to decide what types of energy we invest in and where that energy is built.... CCA means local investment, local jobs, and local control of our energy and eco-

nomie destiny.”

On an ironic note, several years ago, before PG&E campaigned against and killed a CCA program that would have been governed by the San Joaquin Valley Power Authority, the County planned to bring 400 megawatts of — yes — baseload electricity on line from renewable sources by 2010, enough to power nearly 400,000 homes.

So there you have it. The next time you hear an argument for keeping Diablo Canyon around, point out that all the favorite arguments of nuclear

power advocates have been shut down and are being decommissioned.

TAKE ACTION

Bill Powers' report “Meeting California's Electricity Needs Without San Onofre or Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plants” will be released soon by Sierra Club. Be sure to get yourself a copy, and also direct it to the attention of your county supervisor, state assemblymember and senator.

Santa Lucia Chapter Presses Club on Anti-Nuclear Policy

By Linda Seeley, Secretary, Executive Committee

For the past three years, intrepid volunteer members of the Sierra Club No Nukes Team have been working to impress upon the National Sierra Club the need to vigorously implement Sierra Club policy on nuclear power.

The Sierra Club has had a policy opposing the licensing, construction and operation of new nuclear reactors since 1974. After the partial nuclear meltdown at Three Mile Island in 1979, the Club recommended the phased closure and decommissioning of commercial nuclear reactors, with many additions and changes to these fundamental policies since that time. All can be found at: www.sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/nuc-power.aspx

The Sierra Club Nuclear Free Campaign was founded in 2010, and since that time has been very active in

promoting clean, renewable energy, conservation, energy efficiency, and calling for the gradual shutdown of all nuclear power plants. I joined the team in May 2012, after attending the Sierra Club Nuclear Free Summit in Washington, D.C. At the Summit, we created five teams: The Front End (mining, milling and processing of uranium); No New Nukes; Shut Down Old Nukes; Low Level Waste; and High Level Waste. Each team has produced materials to be used for public education, and the teams continue to meet on monthly telecons.

In May, the Santa Lucia Chapter, represented by Executive Committee member Victoria Carranza, submitted a resolution to the Sierra Club California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee (CNRCC) urging the national board of directors to raise the

level of internal support for the Club's No Nukes Campaign. It reminded the board of the Club's nuclear energy policy and cites the Sierra Club's policy on progressing toward a carbon-free/nuclear free future. The resolution passed unanimously.

Now that the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station has been shut down, it's time to move on to Diablo Canyon, built on the intersection of at least 13 earthquake faults and storing over 6 million pounds of highly radioactive waste on site. It needs to stop producing a toxic legacy for the future. Nuclear power is antiquated, expensive, dirty, and dangerous, and we don't need it.

If you're interested in getting involved with the No Nukes Team, please contact me: lindaseeley@gmail.com.

Make Diablo Count the Costs

Senate Bill 418, a bill carried by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson and sponsored by the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, is making its way through the California legislature. It would require fiscal transparency when addressing foreseeable costs should a nuclear utility file for license renewal.

Foreseeable costs have not been analyzed for Diablo Canyon beyond its current license. We continue to face the risks and costs presented by an aging, earthquake fault-riddled nuclear plant. Sensible and prudent long-term planning for our energy needs is not optional, and this legislation will help achieve that goal. The bill also addresses the costs of maintaining radioactive waste indefinitely on our coast in the wake of the federal government's non-action on this issue.

An application for relicensing of a nuclear plant is an appropriate time to require fiscal transparency. Many of the assumptions and forecasts upon which the construction of Diablo Canyon's reactors were based date from the late 1960s and have become outdated.

Such as:

- The need to replace the steam generator system, reactor vessel head, digital upgrade, and cooling system before the end of current license.
- Long-term or permanent onsite storage of high level radioactive waste.
- Newly emerging seismic hazards.
- New state/federal requirements conditioning the use of ocean water for once-through cooling.
- Inadequate federal insurance policies in the event of a radioactive release.
- Population increases in areas surrounding the reactor that may result in the need to expand emergency planning zones.

The first decade of the 21st Century has provided us with many events that had previously been deemed “unthinkable.” As asking such questions as “what if?” and “how much?” for our electrical infrastructure is prudent and practical, the Sierra Club is pleased to support SB 418.

TAKE ACTION

Thank Senator Jackson for introducing SB 418:

Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson
State Capitol, Rm. 5080
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900
via email:
kelly.roberts@asm.ca.gov
matthew.montgomery@sen.ca.gov

“California is now on the verge of becoming one of the largest non-nuclear energy economies on the planet.”

- Damon Moglen, Friends of the Earth, June 7, 2013

TPP

continued from page 1

Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, only the scale and scope of the TPP could make its impacts much more severe.

In their letter, the state legislators wrote, “While we understand and appreciate that the United States is advocating for an ambitious and legally binding environment chapter of the TPP, we are deeply concerned that other parts of the agreement, including provisions on or related to investment and energy exports, threaten the environment and our responsibility, as legislators, to serve and protect our constituents.”

The state legislators' letter is part of a growing resistance to the Trans-Pacific Partnership at the state and federal level as awareness of the deal spreads (see “An Affront to Democracy” and “Senators Say No to Bad Trade Deal,” Nov. 2012).

“This monstrous 11-nation trade pact would take every scary part of previous trade deals and amplify the disastrous results, affecting every aspect of our daily lives,” said Maggie Henderson of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. “Six hundred corporate ‘advisors’ have access to the trade text, but members of Congress, the press and the public are locked out.”

In June, at his Senate confirmation hearing as U.S. Trade Representative, nominee Michael Froman refused to commit to making the contents of the TPP available to Congress and the American public. For that reason, Senator Elizabeth Warren voted against his confirmation.

“I have heard the argument that transparency would undermine the Trade Representative's policy to complete the trade agreement because public opposition would be significant,” said Warren. “In other words, if

people knew what was going on, they would stop it. This argument is exactly backwards. If transparency would lead to widespread public opposition to a trade agreement, then that trade agreement should not be the policy of the United States.”

The concerns addressed in the letter from state legislators include:

1. The need for an ambitious and binding environment chapter of the TPP that protects the environment, natural resources, and U.S. jobs, including a ban on the trade of illegally harvested timber, a ban on trade in illegally taken wildlife, and binding provisions on sustainable fisheries management.

2. Provisions in the TPP allowing investor-state dispute settlement, which would undermine the ability of local elected officials to enact and enforce fair, non-discriminatory rules that protect communities, workers, and the environment.

3. Language in the TPP that would increase exports of liquid natural gas by requiring the Department of Energy (DOE) to approve all US gas exports to TPP countries — even if exports are not in the best interest of the public — essentially overriding the DOE's ability to manage natural gas exports so as to protect the interests of communities and the environment.

“The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement is NAFTA on Steroids, said Vermont Rep. Mike Yantachka, who sponsored a resolution on the TPP and the environment which recently was enacted by the Vermont House and Senate. “If provisions allow corporations to sue state and national governments over laws and regulations that negatively impact their profits, it won't matter what laws we pass to protect our citizens and our environment.”

Our Wild America

protect significant landscapes • advocate responsible land and wildlife management • reconnect Americans with the great outdoors

New Sierra Club campaign takes off

Our Wild America carries on the Sierra Club's long legacy of protecting America's wildlands. We believe that America's public lands are held in public trust for and by all Americans, providing opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors, and come together to share experiences.

With the Our Wild America campaign, the Sierra Club is doubling down in the fight to preserve our wild heritage in the face of threats from mining, drilling, and climate disruption.

BEYOND DRILLING & MINING

Protecting our public lands from mining and drilling will safeguard America's natural heritage, preserve wildlife habitat, help keep our air and water clean, and combat climate disruption. Development currently proposed on our public lands by coal, oil, and gas companies would release more than 100 billion tons of carbon pollution into the atmosphere, worsening climate disruption. We need to keep these dirty fossil fuels in the ground.

The vast majority of America's public lands remain highly vulnerable to threats from mining, drilling, fracking, and other forms of fossil-fuel extraction. Increasingly, recreation is replacing fossil-fuel extraction as an economic driver on America's public lands.

Among Our Wild America's top priorities are slowing the out-of-control development of the western coalfields, stopping oil drilling in America's Arctic, and preventing the expansion of fracking for natural gas.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND WILDERNESS

In order to leave a robust wild legacy for our children, we must significantly increase the amount of public lands and waters that are permanently protected as national monuments and wilderness. It is also crucial that we protect public lands at

the state and local levels to so they can connect with adjoining private lands that have conservation easements.

In order to protect areas of ecological, cultural, archeological, and historic significance the president is empowered to create new national monuments by executive order under the Antiquities Act, signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt. These designations not only protect special places, but also stimulate local economies and bring increased job growth. Special places such as the Grand Canyon, Grand Tetons, Zion National Park, and the Statue of Liberty were initially protected as national monuments.

Over the past 100 years presidents from both parties have designated over 130 national monuments. By channeling Roosevelt's legacy, President Obama can protect our national heritage, put Americans back to work, and help rebuild the American Dream.

The Sierra Club applauds President Obama for already designating nine new national monuments, including five in his second term. Yet there remain many special places in need of protection. In order to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy our public lands more must be done to permanently protect our most special places by designating new national monuments. You can explore areas in need of permanent protection by visiting content.sierraclub.org/mypieceofamerica/

NEARBY NATURE

Spectacular, iconic wild places like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, or the Boundary Waters get a lot of glory. But for most Americans, the bulk of our experience with nature is closer to home — the state park where we go for a Saturday afternoon picnic and walk, or the beach where we taught our kids to swim.

Protecting natural places near cities and suburbs is crucial to ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to



explore and enjoy the great outdoors. These are accessible places where we can unwind in nature and connect with our family, friends and community — and remember why it's so important to protect our forests, coasts, mountains, and other landscapes.



PROTECTING AND RESTORING FORESTS

The United States is home to more than 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands. They give Americans access to some of the most spectacular places in the world. Our national forests provide unparalleled habitat for many of our most treasured wildlife, and they include wild places and open spaces where Americans hike, camp, hunt and fish, and where we seek solace and solitude.

National forest lands are the single largest source of drinking water in the

nation. According to the Forest Service, about 124 million Americans rely on national forests and grasslands as the primary source of clean drinking water. Thousands of towns and cities depend on national forests for their water supply. In addition to serving as giant water filters, national forests also clean up the air we breathe.

America's national forests and grasslands are the single largest source of outdoor recreation opportunities in the United States. Recreational activities on national forests and grasslands contribute billions of dollars annually to the U.S. economy, according to the Forest Service. Millions of visitors support thousands of jobs in rural communities each year. About 85 percent of the revenue generated from national forests comes from recreational activities — more than five times the amount generated by logging.

Today, healthy forests are more important than ever. Yet logging, dirty energy development, and road-building continue to threaten them from within, even as climate disruption changes them from the outside. We must manage our national forests as a gift to future generations, maintaining and working toward whole and healthy natural systems — and not give our forests away to extractive industries.

Wilderness

continued from page 2

printed media, and television and studio-quality movie productions.

High-profile, nationally focused wilderness events in Washington D.C., principally held in September 2014, and a national wilderness conference scheduled for October 15-19, 2014, in Albuquerque, NM, will round out the year-long anniversary.

Local community events across the country will truly be the foundation of the 50th anniversary. You or your organization can be a leader in your state or community by participating in or organizing a local 50th anniversary celebration. Log onto the 50th Anniversary Toolbox for event planning, at www.wilderness.net/50th.

If you're interested in and have skills useful for national involvement, Wilderness50 continues to recruit people who have an interest in actively participating in national celebratory planning. If this is you, please contact vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org for more information.

Don't miss out on one of the greatest environmental events — and celebrations — in the history of this country.

We Want YOU to Sign Up for Lobby Day

To have any influence on legislation—especially on issues that try to reign in well-heeled polluters—Sierra Club California relies on its volunteer activists.

When a legislator hears from someone living in the district, that legislator pays attention.

That's why we ask Club members to join us in Sacramento each August for our lobby day. One sincere and informed environmentally concerned face from back home can trump a polluter's money and influence.

Join us in Sacramento in mid-August and be part of a team that will help Sierra Club California pass our priority legislation and defeat bad bills.

The day-and-a-half event provides an opportunity for you to watch what our staff does all year round, lobby your legislators, and meet like-minded activists from all over California.

On Sunday, August 18, starting at around noon, our advocacy team will train you on how to lobby and brief you on our priority bills so that you can effectively advocate for them.

On Monday, August 19, you will work the halls of the



Capitol as teams, with meetings scheduled from morning through the afternoon.

Sierra Club California will reserve beds at the Sacramento Hostel for members who are joining us from out of town — you will have the option to sign up to stay in the Hostel, at no cost to you, when you register for Lobby Day. As a courtesy to our participants who would prefer more private accommodations at their own expense, Sierra Club California has reserved a block of rooms at the local Best Western Hotel at a discounted rate. Additionally, limited travel

subsidies are available by request, based on need and distance traveled.

We can accommodate up to 60 lobbyists. We require \$30 deposit when you register. The deposit is refundable when you show up on August 18. If you reserve a space and don't show, you won't receive a refund—and we won't have as many lobbyists as we need. So please sign up now and show up in August.

For more information and to sign up, go to california2.sierraclub.org and click on the "Lobby Day 2013" button.

Quarry

continued from page 3

measure, a promise of avoidance of impacts became “reduce[d] conflicts” in the proposed mitigation measure, a standard that is not quantified and is thus impermissibly vague. It is telling residents that the daily gravel truck mash-up at your kid’s school will be less intense than it would have been without this cool Traffic Control and Management Plan, details to be determined. Problem solved.

This constitutes deferred mitigation, which is not permissible under the California Environmental Quality Act. At a minimum, the proposed measure should demonstrate how, with a potential schedule of up to 800 truck trips per day, it would be physically possible to schedule this volume of traffic so as to avoid peak pick-up and drop-off and bus arrival/departure times at the school. Lacking this, the EIR offers no plan, and no evidence of the feasibility of a plan that would mitigate this significant impact let alone cause it to be avoided. Lacking this specificity, this measure is not acceptable as mitigation.

The EIR states that heavy truck traffic has “the potential to be incompatible with surrounding land uses that generate pedestrian traffic, such as the Santa Margarita Elementary School and the downtown business district.” Rather than “potential,” the creation of such incompatibility is a certainty. Nor are proposed flashing crosswalk motion sensors, 2-way radios issued to crossing guards and the issuance of printed admonitions to drivers to obey the speed limit relevant to the ostensible purpose of the Applicant Proposed Measure, alleviating “the potential land use incompatibility of the project relative to the Santa Margarita community” represented by heavy truck traffic at this location. (We suggested that the EIR also evaluate the potential land use incompatibility of heavy truck traffic relative to the activities planned by the Santa Margarita Ranch – i.e. restaurants, wine tasting, etc.)

Traffic that goes boom

The EIR states:

On the right angle turn of SR 58 at J Street, although future traffic from the Santa Margarita Ranch Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision may cause a significant impact due to its contribution towards unsafe conditions at this location, the proposed quarry traffic will involve slower moving trucks. The project may not improve the situation at this turn, but it should not exacerbate it.

The EIR here conflates the issues of the car traffic of a subdivision with heavy truck traffic of an industrial site. The EIR should note the different safety and hazard issues presented by these two different types of traffic,

GET CLEAN
by **Shaklee**
Safe for you, your home, and your planet.
Non-Toxic
Natural
Biodegradable
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beyond the fact that trucks are “slower moving.” The EIR should provide an estimate of what percentage of trucks, based on traffic volume over the life of the project, are statistically likely to be involved in accidents, experience brake failure, or fail to make the right-angle turn at SR 58 and J Street, the safety impacts presented by a truck laden with explosives or toxic chemicals involved in this accident scenario, and the adequacy of the project’s proposed \$5 million to cover general liability for same.

The EIR concludes that with mitigation, “cumulative traffic impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.” The same conclusion is reached with regard to scenic vistas, cumulative effects on aesthetics and visual resources, emissions of Reactive Organic Gases, Nitrogen Oxides and PM10 pollutants, and noise levels from construction and traffic noise. This means that if it were to certify the EIR, the County would need to make a finding of overriding considerations to support a claim that the project’s benefits outweigh its significant environmental impacts. As most of the project’s benefits redound to the applicant, with any economic benefits to the county obtainable from a similar project that could be sited elsewhere without the significant and unavoidable impacts and land use incompatibility relative to the Santa Margarita community, there is no support for such a finding.

It’s just a phase

More deferred mitigations crop up in the EIR’s fast and loose method of dealing with potential impacts to endangered species. This technique, much favored by environmental consultants seeking to craft environmental reviews as favorably as possible for the proposed project, is best characterized as “If this turns out to be a problem, we’ll take care of it later.”

The most problematic impacts of the project are carefully segregated into different phases that will occur down the road. Then the potentially problematic phase is basically treated as though it were a different project, so it’s potential impacts need not be considered in the review of *this* project and can be deferred until that later phase begins – except that the later phase will not require an Environmental Impact Report nor otherwise need to meet the pesky requirements of CEQA for a full analysis of environmental impacts and public review, because, of course, the project already underwent that review. Neat trick.

The Las Pilitas Quarry EIR employs this device in its (non-)evaluation of potential impacts to the ringtail cat, considered a Fully Protected Species under state law, and the federally endangered California red legged frog (CRLF). In presuming to mitigate the project’s effect on the red legged frog, the EIR states that:

Prior to authorization to proceed with Phase 2 of the quarry, or any preparatory work that would impact the main drainage located in the Phase 2 area, the quarry operator shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct a habitat assessment and/or protocol survey for CRLF in accordance with guidance published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service current at the time. If CRLF is determined to be present, the quarry operator shall either modify the project design and implementation to avoid any take of the species, or obtain the appropriate permit or authorization from USFWS to

Y Not?

continued from page 3

2013). Those burial efforts resulted in “open space acquisition and protection” getting kicked down to “other priorities” rather than appearing as a Major City Goal for fiscal years 2013-15. (see “Of Surveys and Shell Games,” March 2013).

So what’s a voter to do?

Enter Vallejo

Meanwhile, several hundred miles to the north, the city of Vallejo is doing something no U.S. city has ever done: handing a portion of its sales tax revenues to its residents and letting them decide how to spend it.

“Participatory Budgeting Vallejo” will takes 30% of the sales tax collected via the city’s Measure B over the 15-month period ending June 30 and set it aside for city residents, who will vote on projects they want it spent on.

Starting in October 2012, at community meetings across the city, staff presented information on the budget funds, and Vallejo residents and stakeholders met in small groups to brainstorm project ideas and volunteer as budget delegates. Delegates and other participants are now evaluating the process and monitoring the implementation of projects.

From the PB Vallejo website (www.pbvallejo.org):

We hope to accomplish three main goals through PB Vallejo:

1. Improve our city

We aim to enhance quality of life in Vallejo by developing projects that solve real problems and create strong and healthy communities. We hope that this process will build a new spirit of civic pride and raise the profile of Vallejo on the regional, state, and national levels.

2. Engage our community

We aim to ensure that all members of our community have a voice. We will make every effort to engage those who are traditionally underrepresented in politics, who face obstacles to participating, or who feel disillusioned with the political process. Through widespread and meaningful community engagement, we hope to increase public involvement in civic life in Vallejo. To the extent applicable, public meetings will comply with the open meeting requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

3. Transform our democracy

We aim to empower Vallejo residents and stakeholders with the skills and knowledge they need to shape our city’s future. By enabling people to make real decisions, we will build new leadership from the bottom up and forge deeper ties between residents, neighborhoods, and communities.

Participatory Budgeting began in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989, and has spread to 1500 municipalities worldwide. It came to the U.S. in 2009 as an experiment in Chicago’s 49th ward. In 2011, four New York City council districts joined PBNYC, giving the community decision-making power over \$10 million in tax revenues. Vallejo is the first city-wide use of PB in the U.S. Learn more at www.participatorybudgeting.org

Take your cue, SLO. For Measure Y’s next go-round, this is the real-world way to go.

allow any specified take of the species.

What the law requires to be analyzed in a public process is thus transformed into a cozy, private matter between the quarry operator, the biologist he’s paying, and perhaps a federal agency.

We pointed out to County Planning that any habitat assessment or protocol survey should be completed as part of this project’s environmental review process -- before, not after, the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit. If the CRLF is determined to be present, the EIR should specify exactly how “the project design and implementation” will be modified so as to avoid any take, and analyze how such modifications will affect the impacts and mitigations for the project as a whole, not defer the details of this mitigation measure to a future date, with no specifics.

In connection with the Las Pilitas Quarry proposal, the Sierra Club is also challenging the attempt by the State Mining Board to play a get-out-of-CEQA-free card when declaring

areas like the Las Pilitas site to contain “mineral deposits of regional or statewide significance.” Much of the Las Pilitas EIR is based on the assumption of receiving this designation, which strongly compels local planning bodies in the direction of allowing mining operations. Even though such a designation obviously results in the creation of mines on the land thus designated, the Mining Board claims that such designation is not part of a “project,” therefore the designation has no potential environmental impacts, and hence it is exempt from CEQA review. We beg to differ.

TAKE ACTION

The County Planning Commission is scheduled to deliberate on the Las Pilitas Quarry’s Conditional Use Permit] application and certification of the Environmental Impact Report on September 26. Call County Planning at (805)788-2352 two weeks prior to that date to verify. Then show up and urge the Commission to make this one go away.

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LAW OFFICES OF BABAK NAFICY
 Babak Naficy - Attorney at Law



1504 Marsh Street
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babaknaficy@sbcglobal.net

Outings and Activities Calendar

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

All our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies, or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Chair Joe Morris, 549-0355. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Sat., July 13th, 9:30 a.m. Historic Walk: San Luis Obispo, 1913. Travel back in time to San Luis Obispo a hundred years ago! We will stroll through the Mill Street Historic District, past its splendid century-old homes, to learn of the era of Hearst, bungalow houses, the first automobiles, and the eve of World War I. Hear the stories of the rich and powerful who shaped the city of today. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet at corner of Monterey and Johnson Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Wed., July 17th, 7-9 p.m. Bimonthly Meeting: "John Muir's Yosemite." Imagine hiking with Muir 140 years ago when he was a local resident of Yosemite! We all missed out on that one, but here's a fun, vicarious way of experiencing what it may have been like. Chapter outings chair, Joe Morris, a confessed Muir freak, has assembled over 70 vintage photo slides from Yosemite National Park archives dating from that long-ago time. Tonight he will take you on a visual tour of the Park's early days, its natives and pioneers. See images of the first hotels and stage roads, and rare pictures of Muir, his friends, and family. Come see the scenes and hear the stories of John's transformation into a wilderness visionary. Location: Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sun, July 21st, (varying times) The Morros of SLO County. Join us for a one-day ascent of the five publicly accessible morros, near San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay. All five morros can be hiked in succession (see schedule listed below) or selected to suit one's preferences and conditioning. Each has a beautiful but different vista—from city to grassland to seashore. Total round-trip distance for all five hikes is about 13 miles, with 3,500 ft. elevation gain. Bring plenty of water (store extra water in your vehicle), lunch and snacks, and dress in layers for changing weather. The day is likely to start and end cool, but be quite warm at mid-day. A hat, sunscreen, and sturdy hiking shoes are essential. Notification with leader at least 24 hrs. in advance is required. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or email: bill.waycott@gmail.com Asst.: Andrea Ortiz, 264-4527. The plants, animals, and the geology of the area will be topics during the hike.

~ 7:30 a.m. Islay Hill, 2 miles, 500 ft. gain, moderate. The easternmost of the morros, with views of five others. To trailhead, take Tank Farm Rd. east past Orcutt Rd, then south on Spanish Oaks Dr., then east on Sweet Bay Lane to end.

- 9:30 a.m. Cerro San Luis, 4 miles, 1,100 ft. gain, moderate. Has knockout views of SLO. Trailhead at the end of Marsh St., just before onramp to Hwy 101 south. Lunch: 11:45 am, Throop Park, corner of Cerro Romauldo Street and Cuesta Drive.

~ 1 p.m. Bishop Peak, 3.5 miles, 950 ft. gain, moderate. Highest of all the morros. Hike begins with lunch at 12:30, then up the trail at 1 p.m. From Hwy 1, go west on Highland Dr. (opposite Cal Poly entrance), then right on Patricia Drive. Park at trailhead on Patricia Dr. just before reaching Anacapa Circle.

~ 4:30 p.m. Cerro Cabrillo, 2.5 miles, 800 ft gain, moderate. 360-degree views from the Santa Lucia Mts. to the coastline. Meet at Quarry Trail trailhead on South Bay Blvd, 1.4 miles south of Hwy 1 or .4 mile north of Turri Rd.

~ 6:30 p.m. Black Hill, .5 mile, 100 ft. gain, easy. Ocean views from Montana de Oro north to San Simeon. From South Bay Blvd, drive into Morro Bay State Park, turn right at first fork onto Park View Rd., then right onto Black Hill Rd. to end.

Fri.-Mon, July 26-29, Eastern Nevada Wilderness Service Trip. Partner with BLM ranger John, working in the Mt. Grafton Wilderness Area, south of Ely and Great Basin Nat. Park, and Becky Pk. Wilderness Area in Schell Creek Range north of Ely. Useful, enjoyable, and hard work and pleasant camaraderie in a wild, scenic area. Central commissary offered (fee). Contact Vicky Hoover, 415-977-5527 or vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat., July 27th, 9 a.m. Mountain/Canyon/Ocean Vista Walk, Montana de Oro. Join us for an enchanting 3-mile loop hike up Rattlesnake Trail, then descending through lush willow canyon of Coon Creek. Comfortable

grade, strenuous in parts. Bring sturdy shoes, water, hat, and if desired binoculars. Meet at Coon Creek parking lot in Montana de Oro State Park, 3.8 miles from entrance. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, vmarchenko57@gmail.com or 528-5567.

Sat., Aug. 3rd, 10 a.m. San Simeon Beach and Forest Walk. Easy (2.5 miles rt) and memorable saunter at San Simeon Pt., a forested peninsula extending a half-mile toward the sea. Starting on the beach, we will follow the bluff trail through a tunnel of pines and cypresses, then take a rest stop on a grassy mount overlooking the ocean. Bring sturdy shoes, water, snacks, and if desired binoculars. Directions: continue on Hwy 1 eight miles north of Cambria, turning left on San Simeon Rd., then left again to William R. Hearst State Beach, parking near the pier. For information, contact Leader: Vicki Marchenko, vmarchenko57@gmail.com or 528-5567.


Sat., Aug. 10th, 9:30 a.m. City Walk: The SLO Railroad Historic District From the 1880s to the 1950s, Southern Pacific trains dominated public life in San Luis Obispo, employing and often providing housing to a third of the city's workers. On this guided stroll, walk past the old commercial district, depot area, and century-old boardinghouses, crossing the unique Osos-Jennifer pedestrian bridge over the tracks. Learn about the heyday and occasional scandals of the SP, which transformed SLO from a cow town to a boomtown. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet at corner of Osos and Leff Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Aug. 10-11, Sat-Sun. Moderate Backpack in Mt. Pinos Area. BP 4 miles Friday morning to Sheep Camp in the Chumash Wilderness, optional afternoon hike to Mt. Abel. Due to high elevation and steep pitches on trail, hikers should be in good condition. Group potluck on Saturday night and return to cars by 2 p.m. on Sunday. Limited to 10 backpackers. For questions and to sign up, call Leader: Sally, 689-7820. Los Padres Chapter.

Sun., Aug. 25th, 9 a.m. Muscle Rock Hike, Santa Barbara Cty. Join us for a 6-mile hike south along the shore



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.




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John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

from Guadalupe Dunes State Beach to Muscle Rock, near Point Sal. Experience the unique fusion of coastal hills, dunes, cliffs, and beaches. Hiking on sand may be strenuous for some hikers. Bring water and snacks, and dress in layers for changing weather. Hat and sunscreen recommended. Directions: from Hwy 101 in Santa Maria, take Main St./Hwy 166 west exit through town and fields to its end at the beach. Drive through gate (no fee) to parking lot past the sand dunes. We will meet by the interpretive signs and picnic tables. For further information, call Leaders: Bill Waycott, 459-2103, bill.waycott@gmail.com or Andrea, 264-4527. The plants, animals, and local geology will be topics during the hike.

Activities sponsored by other groups

Sat., July 27th, 1 p.m. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden Presents Saturday at the Garden: Plant Physiology- Discover the Mysteries of Plant Growth and Development, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., El Chorro Regional Park



Why do the same plants suffer on one side of my yard, but flourish on the other? Why are the leaves turning yellow? How can I make a plant grow faster? For the answer to these and other mystifying plant growth questions, join us in the Oak Glen Pavilion for a presentation by Garden volunteer and docent Don Gruenewald. Don will identify the internal processes of plants and how environmental

factors affect those processes, with the intent of helping you select the right plant for a site and to discern problems as they arise.

Don Gruenewald joined the Garden's docent team earlier this year and comes brings a background in hands-on horticulture. He is trained as a Utah Master Gardener (earning the honor of Master Gardener of the Year in 2003) and is certificated in Ornamental Horticulture from Utah State University. He was an active volunteer at the Utah Botanical Garden and Utah Botanical Center, and led docent tours at the Red Butte Gardens at the University of Utah.

The presentation is \$5 for members/\$10 non-members. Followed at 2 p.m. by a free docent-led tour of the Garden. For more information contact education@slobg.org or 541-1400 x304. A \$3 fee is charged for parking by San Luis Obispo County Parks in El Chorro Regional Park April through September on weekends and holidays.