



April 2014  
Volume 51 No. 4

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### Don't Miss:

Nature Festival at  
Wind Wolves

April 12-13

- see page 6



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# SANTA LUCIAN

*Protecting and  
Preserving the  
Central Coast*



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

## Oil Train Hits a Bump

Santa Maria Refinery rail spur project can't detour around the California Environmental Quality Act

The release of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the plan to accommodate crude oil by rail at the Santa Maria Refinery was met by a blizzard of public comments, including ours (see "Shale Oil Target: Nipomo Mesa," February), and as a result will not be heard at the Planning Commission on April 24. The hearing may be postponed up to seven months while the County and Phillips 66 re-write and recirculate the EIR.

The overwhelming response to the refinery rail spur can be attributed to two factors: the potential impacts on SLO County's environment and citizens are extremely alarming, and the Environmental Impact Report that was supposed to assess and mitigate those impacts did an extremely bad job.

The Santa Lucia Chapter zeroed in on the EIR's multiple assertions that the likely source of crude oil would be the Bakken shale formation of North Dakota – the oil that has been the cause of massive explosions and fires that have attended multiple recent oil train accidents. Such accidents have been on the rise as the industry has come to rely more and on the nation's rickety rail system for increasing U.S. crude oil output, resulting in a skyrocketing number of oil by rail shipments.

The Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, Natural Resources Defense Council, Food & Water Watch, SF BayKeeper, and the

California Nurses Association were among those who pointed out the need for that EIR re-do. Here are some, but not all, of the reasons why:

- Despite the applicant's many denials, the project is illegally piecemealed – leaving out the impacts of previous, future, and remotely located components of the project and thus eliminating their impacts from environmental review;
- The EIR fails to provide a stable, accurate and detailed project description, thus undermining every aspect of the impacts analysis;
- The EIR does not accurately evaluate numerous project impacts, including air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, public health and safety, and biological resources;
- The EIR does not provide sufficient analysis of the project's cumulative impacts;
- The EIR does not adopt feasible mitigation measures.

And finally, there is the card trick that forms the basis of virtually all the EIR's deficiencies: The environmental review does not disclose the likelihood that the primary purpose of the rail spur project would be to bring tar sands oil from Canada to the refinery. By citing only Bakken shale oil – a light crude – as a specific source, the EIR evidently sought to avoid disclosing the serious local pollution, climate impacts and chemical safety hazards that the refining of heavy, high-sulfur tar sands crude oil presents for the public and the refinery's own workers. But the series of Bakken oil train explosions had just begun at the time the EIR was being prepared. Thus the sleight-of-hand that sought to get the project out

of the tar sands frying pan dropped it into the Bakken crude oil volcano. As noted by Sierra Club et al:

It is impossible to provide any intelligent evaluation of the potential environmental effects and risks to community and worker health and safety of partially refining Canadian tar sands crudes in Santa Maria, unless the DEIR first discloses this critical component of the Project. At a minimum, the DEIR should have established whether this Project would result in the company's use of a different or lower quality crude oil feedstock, whether in Santa Maria or any foreseeable location... and evaluated such consequent impacts. Until then, the DEIR Project Description is inaccurate, incomplete and renders the analysis of significant environmental impacts inherently unreliable.

At a public meeting on the Nipomo Mesa on March 13, a standing-room-only crowd watched the YouTube video "Voices Against Oil Trains." "When we showed this video, there was a decided gasp from the audience," said Larry Shinderman, a member of local watchdog group Mesa Refinery Watch. "Up until now, they knew that the benignly named 'Rail Project' was an insidious plan by Phillips to change their business model by sending 20,800 tanker cars into the refinery rather than their current method of sourcing 'feedstock' by pipeline. But seeing the billowing fire ball drove the point home." Stay tuned.

### Board Endorsement Made in Error

Last month's *Santa Lucian* reported an endorsement of a candidate for the Club's Board of Directors. This endorsement did not follow the Club's procedures for chapters to endorse candidates and is retracted. Among other errors, we failed to notify candidates of our intent to consider endorsements so each of them could provide information about their qualifications to serve as Director. We regret this mistake. While our endorsement has been retracted, we encourage all members to vote for the candidates of their choice.



**Planning session** Representatives of the Santa Lucia and Los Padres Chapters of the Sierra Club, ForestEthics and the Center for Biological Diversity met with members of Mesa Refinery Watch in Avila Beach on February 27 to discuss the reckless growth of crude-by-rail, threatening to come to our neck of the woods.

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# Pandora Panned

## Nuclear roadshow bombs at Cal Poly

On March 11, the third anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, Cal Poly chose to mark the occasion and besmirch its academic reputation by hosting a screening of the pro-nuclear propaganda film *Pandora's Promise*.

Essentially a 90-minute commercial for nuclear power and the Breakthrough Institute, an anti-environmental think tank, the "documentary" presents the conversion stories of five people who used to have concerns about nuclear energy but have changed their minds and now embrace nukes as a low-carbon energy source and the salvation of the world.

When released theatrically last year, the film bombed at the box office and received scathing reviews ("You need to make an argument. A parade of like-minded nuclear power advocates who assure us that everything will be all right just doesn't cut it." - *New York Times*). It also got no love when CNN showed it, pulling in 345,000 viewers in a time slot that previously saw 1.36 million tune in for the CNN documentary *Blackfish*. Its producers are now making the rounds with free screenings on college campuses to try to drum up interest.

The Cal Poly screening featured co-producer Michael Shellenberger, a co-founder of the Breakthrough Institute, which exists to promote a corporations-will-save-us message. Breakthrough stumps for genetically engineered food, dismisses renewable energy and the idea that putting a price on carbon would aid the development of renewables, and derides protesters of the Keystone XL pipeline because they use fossil-fueled buses to get to protests. (In an ongoing sparring match with prominent Climateprogress blogger Joe Romm, Shellenberger has posted Romm's picture on the Breakthrough website alongside a picture of Joe McCarthy. Romm is relentless in pointing out the flaws in Breakthrough's premises and is therefore "hyper-partisan" and a "climate McCarthyite," according to Shellenberger.)

Disingenuous and intellectually insulting on multiple levels, *Pandora's Promise* downplays, dismisses or omits the drawbacks of nuclear power and gives no screen time to any critic presenting a rational critique of the industry.

Foremost among omitted facts is what the film's call for a future nuclear utopia would actually require and the cost of this alleged solution to global warming. The trillions of dollars needed to build enough nuclear power plants to reduce carbon emissions by any significant amount — 1,500 new reactors on line worldwide by 2050 — represents funds that would be sucked away from the development and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency. That money suck is well represented by the unstable white elephant known as the fast breeder reactor, which *Pandora's Promise* holds up as the all-new, improved version of nuclear energy while omitting to mention the tendency of its cooling system to burst into flames. \$100 billion has been spent on the effort to make breeder reactor technology work, an effort that, in forty years, has resulted in zero operating commercial reactors.

The financial reality of nuclear power is the reason why former Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner Peter Bradford has commented "Saying that nuclear energy can solve climate change is like saying caviar can solve world hunger."

Writing in *The Nation*, Mark Hertsgaard summed up the key failure of *Pandora's Promise* in its trashing of alternatives such as energy efficiency and renewable power. The film's dismissal of wind and solar — the fastest growing energy sectors in the world — is "an embarrassingly dated critique," he wrote, and, per the Rocky Mountain Institute, "each dollar invested in improving energy efficiency produces seven times more reduction in greenhouse gas emissions than a dollar invested in nuclear." (See "Let's Get Efficient," page 9.)

The most disingenuous aspect of *Pandora's Promise* may be its treatment of the Fukushima disaster. The film deals with Fukushima by framing it in the past tense — depicting it as an historic event whose impacts have been measured and catalogued, rather than an ongoing crisis with an unknown end point — and claiming that it wasn't really a big deal because nobody has (yet) died as a result. It fails to present an example of any other type of industrial accident that, with a single event, has the potential to turn hundreds of square miles of land into uninhabitable sacrifice zones and destroy an entire economy.

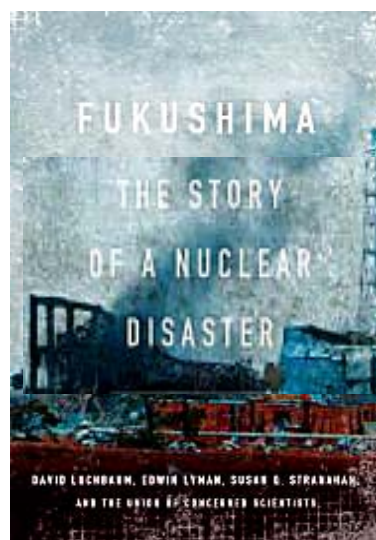
The end result, Hertsgaard notes, is a film that is the work of "a propagandist who cherry-picks 'facts' to fit his agenda."

After the screening, Gordon Thompson, executive director of the Institute for Resource and Security Studies in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was given ten minutes to present a Powerpoint presentation that quietly refuted as many of *Pandora's* whoppers as possible within that allotted time frame. Shellenberger was then given time to present his own Powerpoint — which raised the question "why?" in the minds of many in the audience, who had just seen a 90-minute pitch for Shellenberger's point of view.

For a non time-constrained response, we can thank the thoughtful folks at Beyond Nuclear, who have produced the report "Pandora's False Promises: Busting the pro-nuclear propaganda," available at [beyondnuclear.org](http://beyondnuclear.org), which addresses "virtually all of the myths, lies and omissions typically found in pro-nuclear rhetoric, and is intended to address these long after *Pandora's Promise* fades into deserved oblivion."



**Pandora's antidote** Three weeks after Michael Shellenberger and *Pandora's Promise* came to Cal Poly, David Lochbaum of the Union of Concerned Scientists, author of *Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster*, came to San Luis Obispo's Steynberg Gallery and delivered the real-world version of nuclear power.



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

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Outings, events, and more!

# Bishop Peak: We Get to Share It. Leaves You Baby If You Don't Care For It

## SLO's deteriorating open space is about political priorities

Wouldn't it be nice, as many bumper stickers have inquired, if schools were given all the funding they need and the Pentagon had to hold bake sales?

Or as the same sentiment is often phrased: The government can always find money for what it wants to spend money on; for everything else, the answer is "we can't afford it."

Thus we come to the City of San Luis Obispo's response to the increasingly alarmed and angry residents of the Bishop Peak neighborhood, who are watching one of the Nine Sisters being increasingly trashed, along with their neighborhood. The answer to their pleas has been: sorry, the City can't afford to adequately maintain the city's



Margaret Foster

open space. There's no money to hire enough rangers to enforce open space rules, such as no night hiking.

But in fact, the City can afford it. It has the money. But because it doesn't have the policy, that money has gone elsewhere.

Residents searching for accountability for the lack of adequate open space funding should peruse the minutes of the SLO City Council's special meeting of January 26, 2013, the 2013-15 financial plan goal-setting workshop [www.slocity.org/cityclerk/minutes/2013/012613/012613minutesWeb.pdf](http://www.slocity.org/cityclerk/minutes/2013/012613/012613minutesWeb.pdf).

Councilmembers voted on their personal priorities for city funding through 2015. On the "Open Space

Goal," they decided on how important it was to each of them to "commit funding to expand open space & provide adequate staffing, planning and other resources to maintain and enhance open space quality and amenities." On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest priority, this is how the rankings went:

- Jan Marx: 4
- John Ashbaugh: 4
- Andrew Carter: 3
- Kathy Smith: 2
- Dan Carpenter: 1

PEAK continued on page 9

# Coastal National Monument Gets New Jewel



Bruce H. Jensen

On March 11, President Obama designated Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands as part of the California Coastal National Monument.

Located along the south coast of Mendocino County, these public lands include 1,665 acres of views, tide pools and coastal wetlands.

"In his State of the Union speech, President Obama promised to use his authority to protect more of our public lands for future generations," said Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune. "We commend him for making this irreplaceable coastal refuge one of them. This special piece of America deserves to be recognized as part of the California Coastal National Monument."

The Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands area includes more than two miles of coastline, portions of the Garcia River, the Garcia estuary and a five-acre island—Sea Island Rocks. Its wildflower meadows and shifting sand dunes provide a home for otters, seals,

pelicans and a host of other wildlife.

The designation marks the first expansion onto land for the coastal monument and it will serve to protect important habitat for migratory birds, salmon, and several endangered species, including the Point Arena mountain beaver and the Behren's silverspot butterfly.

There was broad local support from the community, conservationists and business leaders for including Point Arena-Stornetta public lands in the national monument. The move was also championed by Congressmen Thompson and Huffman, and by California Senators Boxer and Feinstein, who helped lead efforts to protect the area.

"Local citizens have been working with the Bureau of Land Management to support appropriate use of the area, but the scarce resources available have been overburdened by the demands placed on this fragile, special place," said Sierra Club Redwood Chapter Chair Victoria Brandon. "Today's

designation will encourage effective management to ensure the permanent protection of Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands for the enjoyment of our children and grandchildren."

The California Coastal National Monument is comprised of more than 20,000 small islands, rocks, exposed reefs and pinnacles along 1,100 miles of coast between Mexico and Oregon. Permanently protecting Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands as part of the national monument provides significant conservation and recreation benefits, including the potential for more than ten miles of California Coastal Trail extending from the City of Point Arena to Manchester State Park.

"Once again we see President Obama listening to the widespread desire among Americans for permanently protecting our outdoor heritage for future generations. We hope he will continue to heed the call to protect other special places as national monuments," said Brune.

# Don't forget!

In March we sent out an appeal to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter's budget. When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in our own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature. Please be as generous as you are able—remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

Thank you. Send your contribution to:  
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# Dear Media: Report on the TPP

The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal has drawn heavy criticism (See "Not This Trade Agreement," April 2013, "Trade is Good When It's Fair," Nov./Dec. 2013 and "Sierra Club Opposes Fast-Track Rush on International Trade," Feb. 2014.) The Sierra Club and 500 other environmental, labor and farm groups oppose granting the White House "fast track" authority to speed the pact through Congress. TPP will enshrine corporate control of decisions previously subject to democratic processes—decisions over intellectual property, the environment, labor rights, food, finance and more.

The deal, still being negotiated in secret, has spawned protests around the world. But there's one thing that TPP hasn't generated: news.

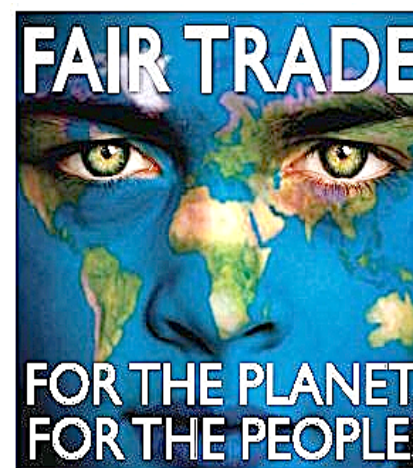
Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) has called it "the largest corporate power grab you never heard of." He's right. Per Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), over 14 months—from January 2013 through February 2014—TPP was never covered in any detail by the three major television networks.

It's time to let the news networks know that a big, secret trade deal that has mobilized thousands of activists is a story that needs to be covered.

Sign FAIR's petition now. Tell ABC, CBS and NBC that the Trans-Pacific Partnership—and the opposition to it—is news.

## TAKE ACTION

Go to [fair.org](http://fair.org), click the Action Alert tab under "Take Action," and scroll down to "Mar. 14: No More Media Silence on TPP."



from the pen of

# John Muir

Excerpts from *The Wilderness World of John Muir*, edited by Edwin Way Teale

## Mach 1868

“When I set out on the long excursion that finally led to California, I wandered, afoot and alone, from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico, with a plant-press on my back, holding a generally southward course, like the birds when they are going from summer to winter.... I decided to visit California for a year or two to see its wonderful flora and the famous Yosemite Valley. All the world was before me and every day was a holiday, so it did not seem important to which one of the world’s wildernesses I first should wander.

Arriving by Panama steamer, I stopped one day in San Francisco and then inquired for the nearest way out of town. “But where do you want to go?” asked the man to whom I had applied for this important information. “To any place that is wild,” I said. This reply startled him. He seemed to fear I might be crazy, and therefore the sooner I was out of town the better, so he directed me to the Oakland ferry.

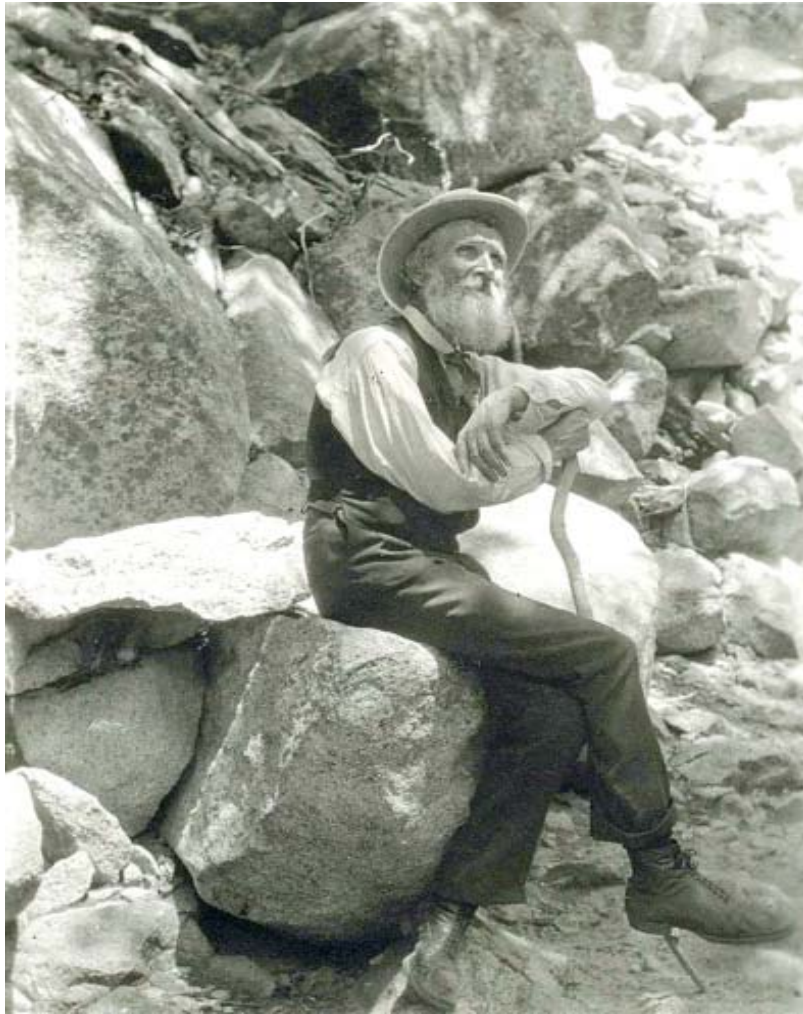
So on the 1st of April, 1868, I set out afoot for Yosemite. It was the bloom-time of the year over the lowlands and coast ranges; the landscapes of the Santa Clara Valley were fairly drenched with sunshine, all the air was quivering with the songs of the meadowlarks, and the hills were so covered with flowers that they seemed to be painted. Slow, indeed, was my progress through these glorious gardens, the first of the California flora I had seen. Cattle and cultivation were making few scars as yet, and I wandered enchanted in long, wavering curves, knowing by my pocket map that Yosemite Valley lay to the east and that I should surely find it.

Looking eastward from the summit of Pacheco Pass one shining morning, a landscape was displayed that after all my wanderings still appears as the most beautiful I have ever beheld.

At my feet lay the Great Central Valley of California, level and flowery like a lake of pure sunshine, forty or fifty miles wide, five hundred miles long, one rich furred garden of yellow compositae. And from the eastern boundary of this vast golden flowerbed rose the mighty Sierra, miles in height, and so gloriously colored and so radiant, it seemed not clothed with light, but wholly composed of it, like the wall of some celestial city. Along the top and extending a good way down, was a rich pearl-gray belt of snow; below it a belt of blue and dark purple, marking the extension of the forests; and stretching along the base of the range a broad belt of rose-purple; all these colors, from the blue sky to the yellow valley smoothly blending as they do in a rainbow, making a wall of light ineffably fine.

Then it seemed to me that the Sierra should be called, not the Nevada or Snowy Range, but the Range of Light. And after ten years of wandering and wondering in the heart of it, rejoicing in its glorious floods of light, the white beams of the morning streaming through the passes, the noonday radiance on the crystal rocks, the flush of the alpenglow, and irised spray of countless waterfalls, it still seems above all other the Range of Light.” (from *The Yosemite* by John Muir)

[On this first trip to the Sierras, Muir describes exploring the San Joaquin



Valley. We get a good look at the vast San Joaquin grassland. The Carrizo Plain is the last intact remnant of this once vast grassland. The bees he describes are California native bees.]

“When California was wild, it was one sweet bee garden throughout its entire length, north and south, and all the way across from the snowy Sierra to the ocean.

Wherever a bee might fly within the bounds of this virgin wilderness – through the Redwood forests, along the banks of the rivers, along the bluffs and headlands fronting the sea, over valley and plain, park and grove, and deep, leafy glen, or far up the piny slopes of the mountains – throughout every belt and section of climate up to the timber-line, bee flowers bloomed in lavish abundance. Here they grew more or less apart in special sheets and patches of no great size, there in broad, flowing folds hundreds of miles in length – zones of polleny forest, zones of flowery chaparral, stream tangles of rubus and wild rose, sheets of golden compositae, beds of violets, beds of mint, beds of bryanthus and clover, and so on, certain species blooming somewhere all the year round.

But of late sheep have made sad havoc in these glorious pastures, destroying tens of thousands of the flowery acres like a fire, and banishing many species of the best honey plants to rocky cliffs and fence corners, while, on the other hand, cultivation thus far has given no adequate compensation, at least in kind; only acres of alfalfa for miles of the richest wild pasture, ornamental roses and honeysuckles around cottage doors for cascades of wild roses in the dells, and small, square orchards and orange



ForestWander Nature Photography

groves for broad mountain belts of chaparral.

The Great Central Plain of California, during the months of March, April, and May was one smooth, continuous bed of honey bloom, so marvelously rich that, in walking from one end of to the other, a distance of more than four hundred miles, your foot would press about a hundred flowers at every step.... The radiant, honeyful corollas, touching and overlapping, and rising above one another, glowed in the living light like a sunset sky – one sheet of purple and gold, with the bright Sacramento pouring through the midst of it from the north, the San Joaquin from the south and their many tributaries sweeping in at right angles from the mountains, dividing the plain into sections fringed with tress.

Along the rivers there is strip of bottom-land, countersunk beneath the general level, and wider toward the foot-hills, where magnificent Oaks, from three to eight feet in diameter, cast grateful masses of shade over the open, prairie-like levels. And close along the water’s edge there was a fine jungle of tropical luxuriance, composed of wild rose and bramble bushes and a great variety of climbing vines, wreathing and interlacing the branches and trunks of Willows and Alders, and swinging across from summit to summit in heavy festoons. Here the wild bees

reveled in fresh bloom long after the flowers of the drier plain had withered and gone to seed. ...But, though these luxuriant, shaggy river-beds were thus distinct from the smooth, treeless plain, they made no heavy dividing lines in general views. The whole appeared as one continuous sheet of bloom bounded only by the mountains.

When I first saw this central garden, the most extensive and regular of all the bee pastures of the State, it seemed all one sheet of plant gold, hazy and vanishing in the distance, distinct as a new map along the foot-hills at my feet....

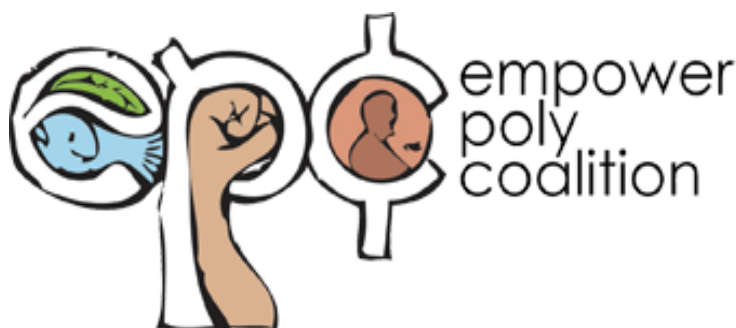
Because so long a period of extreme drought succeeds the rainy season, most of the vegetation is composed of annuals, which spring up simultaneously, and bloom together at about the same height above the ground, the general surface being but slightly ruffled by the taller phacelias, pentstemons, and groups of *Salvia carduacea*, the king of the mints.

Sauntering in any direction, hundreds of these happy sun-plants brushed against my feet at every step, and closed over them as if I were wading in liquid gold. The air was sweet with fragrance, the larks sang their blessed songs, rising on the wing as I advanced, then sinking out of sight in the polleny sod, while myriads of wild bees stirred the lower air with their monotonous hum – monotonous, yet forever fresh and sweet as everyday sunshine. Hare and spermophiles showed themselves in considerable numbers in shallow places, and small bands of antelopes were almost constantly in sight, gazing curiously from slight elevation, and then bounding away with unrivaled grace of motion. Yet I could discover no crushed flowers to mark their track, nor, indeed, any destructive action of any wild foot or tooth whatever.

The great yellow days circled by uncounted, while I drifted toward the north, observing the countless forms of life thronging about me, lying down almost anywhere on the approach of night. And what glorious botanical beds I had! Oftentimes on awaking I would find several new species leaning over me and looking me full in the face, so that my studies would begin before rising. (from *The Mountains of California* by John Muir.)



## Earth Day Sustainability Fair April 22



The Empower Poly Coalition is teaming up with the Center for Sustainability and other campus organizations to host an Earth Day Sustainability Fair to highlight the many initiatives related to sustainability and well-being across campus.

The event will bring together students, faculty, staff and community members to educate each other about the issues we care about. The event will fill the Multi-Activity Center (MAC) from 4-6:30pm with interactive demonstrations, information booths, focused hangouts, music and more.

For information about the event, visit: [http://cfs.calpoly.edu/earth\\_day.html](http://cfs.calpoly.edu/earth_day.html).

**Remarks of Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune before the U.S. Senate Committee of Foreign Relations regarding determination of the national interest of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, March 14, 2014.**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to discuss whether Keystone XL is in the national interest. I'm Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club, and the more than two million people who submitted comments last week to the State Department, know this pipeline is not in our national interest. The Keystone XL tar sands pipeline would cut through more than a thousand miles of American farms and ranches, carrying oil that is more toxic, corrosive, difficult to clean up, and more carbon intensive all the way to the Gulf, where most of the oil would be exported.

Like many of you, I am a parent, and I am deeply concerned about the world we are leaving for our children. One lesson my wife and I try to teach our kids is the need to set goals and remain focused as you strive to achieve them. Our country has a clear, science-based goal to limit climate pollution. We must keep this in mind and recognize that achieving that goal is incompatible with permitting this pipeline.

None of the scenarios in the State Department's analysis show how Keystone XL could be built in a way that insures our nation can meet those climate goals. In fact, Keystone XL would significantly exacerbate climate pollution because it would increase the development of tar sands substantially. A report from Carbon Tracker found that Keystone XL would spur additional production of roughly 500,000 barrels per day, the emissions equivalent of building 46 new coal plants.

I would like to enter this report into the record today.

Although the climate impacts of tar sands are sufficient reason to reject this project, there are others:

Any spill from this pipeline could be catastrophic.

Transporting tar sands crude into the United States poses a heightened risk to communities and their air and water than conventional oil. Diluted bitumen is heavier and more toxic than conventional crude. When it spills in a water-

**"Keystone XL jeopardizes our drinking water, farmland, climate, and health. The sad truth is that the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline is all risk and no reward." - Michael Brune**



Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune (center) and Columbia University Earth Institute adjunct professor James Hansen (right) listen to retired Marine Corps General James Jones Jr. testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during a hearing about the proposed Keystone XL pipeline project on Capitol Hill, March 13.

way, it sinks. Just one tar sands oil spill in Michigan fouled more than 35 miles of river. After three and a half years and more than a billion dollars, that spill still has not been cleaned up. Take a look at this image from a neighborhood in Mayflower, Arkansas where an ExxonMobil pipeline ruptured, spilling more than 7,000 barrels of tar sands into resident's backyards and driveways.

Even without spills, the Keystone XL would risk the health and livelihood of communities living near each stage of the project. Petcoke is a byproduct of tar sands production, and its a major health hazard for U.S. communities. Fuel-grade petcoke contains high levels of toxins, including mercury, lead, arsenic, selenium, chromium, nickel, and vanadium. Huge petcoke piles from refining processes have begun to appear in cities like Chicago and Detroit.

Furthermore, Keystone XL would not even benefit American consumers. This oil is intended for export. Keystone XL would deliver tar sands to refineries on

the Gulf Coast that already export most of their refined product, have increased their exports nearly 200 percent in the past five years and are planning to increase these exports further in the future.

Keystone XL would also be a threat to national security. Because it would facilitate the development of one of the world's most carbon intensive sources of oil, it is important to consider the impacts that these additional greenhouse gas emissions would have on people worldwide and America's national security.

Since 2010, key national security reports have indicated that floods, droughts, and rising seas brought on by a destabilized climate in places of geostrategic importance to the U.S. multiply threats and risks for Americans working in those areas.

Climate disruption directly affects our armed forces. Admiral Samuel Locklear, head of the U.S. Military's Pacific Command, believes the single greatest threat to his forces is the instability sparked by climate disruption.

Finally, clean energy will power a new American economy. Let's not delay.

America is a land of innovators. Today the factories of Detroit, the laboratories of Silicon Valley, and the next generation of American consumers are already investing in and profiting from clean technology. Thanks to fuel-efficiency standards, gasoline demand in the U.S. is decreasing and projections show decreases through 2040 and beyond.

Investing in the clean energy economy is supported by American businesses, workers, and all who care about clean air, water and a stable climate. That's a win-win-win scenario. Compared this to Keystone XL, which jeopardizes our drinking water, farmland, climate, and health. The sad truth is that the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline is all risk and no reward.

Secretary Kerry has called climate disruption "the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction," and last week, he instructed all U.S. diplomats and employees around the world to "lead by example through strong action at home and abroad" to fight the climate crisis. America can lead on climate, by saying no to this polluting pipeline, and saying yes to clean energy. Thank you.

## Signs of the Times



**Avila Bird Sanctuary: It's official** The signs proclaiming Avila Beach a bird sanctuary were installed on the morning of March 6 on Avila Beach Drive -- one by Cave Landing Road as you come off the 101, and the other between the Cal Poly pier and the creek overpass. Congratulations, Shirley Goetz! (See "Avila Bird Sanctuary is Nigh," March.)

### TAKE ACTION

## Save the Dates: April 26-27 - Reject and Protect

Ready for President Obama to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline? Us too! During the weekend of April 26-27, the Sierra Club will be joining with a coalition including Indigenous representatives, ranchers, representatives from refinery communities, and others that would be directly impacted by Keystone XL in a mobilization asking the President to "Reject and Protect." This will mark a week of events around the country alongside an encampment and march in Washington D.C.

Sierra Club is proud to support communities at this potentially final moment in the Keystone battle, and we welcome solidarity events on April 27, the culminating day. For more information, contact Zabrina Arnovitz at [zabrina.arnovitz@sierraclub.org](mailto:zabrina.arnovitz@sierraclub.org).



# Wind Wolves Preserve Nature Festival

If you want to slow down and reconnect with nature, it would be hard to do better than the magnificent Wind Wolves Preserve – 100,000 acres of pristine wildlife habitat east of Maricopa and the southern edge of Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Wind Wolves is holding its first Nature Festival the weekend of April 12. A remarkable staff of rangers, naturalists, biologists and educators host the preserve's outdoor education programs and work on restoration and science-related projects. They have brought together an astonishing array of talent who will be offering guided hikes, wildlife and wildflower viewing, preserve tours, and more. Activities are ongoing from 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Saturday, and from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Sunday. Booths and exhibits with themes including reptiles, skull identification, student art gallery, scavenger hunts and Friends of California Condors will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

Entrance to the Preserve and all activities are free. Advance registration is required for all activities and can be completed online at [www.wildlandsconservancy.org/preserve\\_windwolves.html](http://www.wildlandsconservancy.org/preserve_windwolves.html) or by calling 909-797-8507.

## Saturday, April 12th

7 am to 4 pm: BIRDING BIG DAY HIKE. Up San Emigdio Canyon and back. Slow paced with many stops for birding, but be prepared to walk up to 7 miles. Wear appropriate clothing, hat, sunscreen, comfortable hiking shoes; bring binoculars, plenty of water, a lunch and snacks.  
\* Ages 12 & up  
\* Limited to 12 participants  
\* Leader: Mike Stiles  
\* Meet at: Crossing kiosk

8 am to 1 pm  
EL CAMINO VIEJO TO CLOUDBURST CANYON. Get in the back county of the preserve. 4 miles round-trip, from San Emigdio Trailhead, through sagebrush and stream bottom. If you're up for the challenge, this hike is for you.  
\* Ages 13 & up  
\* Limited to 25 participants  
\* Leader: Suzanne Randell  
\* Meet at: Wildflower Loop pkng lot

8:30 to 9:30 am: SKULLS PRESENTATION & DISCOVERY. A few observations of an animal's skull can tell us what the animal ate, whether it was predator or prey, and which senses were most important to the animal's survival. Use your sense to match which skull corresponds to what animal at Wind Wolves Preserve.  
\* All Ages  
\* Limited to 40 kids. Parents and guardians can participate too.  
\* Leader: Jana Borba  
\* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

9 to 11 am: INSECT & OTHER ARTHROPOD HIKE. Discover the insects, spiders, pillbugs, millipedes, etc. that live at Wind Wolves Preserve. Slow-paced 1 to 2 mile hike; meander through grassland, shrubland, and riparian woodlands to look



for arthropods on the plants, dead logs, streams, ponds, leaf litter, under stones.  
\* Ages 4 & up  
\* Limited to 20 participants  
\* Leader: Mary Moreno  
\* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk  
\* Spanish translator available

9 to 11 am: WIND WOLVES PRESERVE LANDSCAPE & THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR. A drive up the canyon to learn about the Wind Wolves landscape and how it works for the California Condor. A short hike after stopping the van at the El Camino Viejo trail head with view of the Devils Kitchen Syncline on the flank of Eagle Rest peak.  
\* All Ages (no strollers)  
\* Limited to 13 participants  
\* Leader: Martin Fletcher  
\* Meet at: Bridge to Adventure  
\* May walk up to 2 miles

9 am to 12 noon: SPRING WILDFLOWERS & PLANTS HIKE. Take a leisurely hike up the trail to search for wildflowers and learn some of their names. Very slow round-trip hike, suitable for mature children and sure-footed adults. Bring water, binoculars and camera so we leave only footprints.  
\* Ages 5 & up  
\* Limited to 15 participants  
\* Leader: Ali Sheehy  
\* Meet at: Wildflower Loop  
\* May walk up to 2 miles

10 am to 12 noon: BEGINNING BIRDING WALK. Families will enjoy a fun morning exploring riparian, saltbush, and grassland habitats to discover the birds that live in these areas. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water, binoculars and spotting scopes. A few binoculars will be provided.  
\* All ages (no strollers)  
\* Limited to 20 participants  
\* Leader: Andy Lundin  
\* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

10 am to 12 noon: BASIC NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR FAMILIES. Will depend on the interests of attendees. Topics will include better design and composition of pictures, informal instruction and a nature walk. Open format with discussions and hands on help.  
\* Ages 10 & up  
\* Limited to 20 participants  
\* Leader: Dr. Navdeep Singh  
\* Meet at: Crossing Ramada

11 am to 12 noon: THE ART OF A TREE DRAWING CLASS. Drawing is the mother of all the visual arts. It is where we learn to see. We will be using drawing materials such as charcoal and pigments from vegetable tints found on the preserve.  
\* Ages 8 to 18  
\* Limited to 12 kids. Parents and guardians may participate too.  
\* Leader: Norma Neil  
\* Meet at: Crossing Ramada

11 am to 12 noon: STORYTIME & WALK IN NATURE IN SPANISH. Take a short walk in nature and then sit and listen to a story read allowed out in the fresh air.  
\* All ages  
\* Limited to 20 kids. Parents and guardians may participate too.  
\* Leader: To be determined  
\* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

1 to 2 pm: THE ART OF A TREE DRAWING CLASS. Drawing is the mother of all the visual arts. We will be using drawing materials such as charcoal and pigments from vegetable tints found on the preserve.  
\* Ages 8 to 18  
\* Limited to 12 kids. Parents and guardians may participate too.  
\* Leader: Norma Neil  
\* Meet at: Crossing Ramada

1 to 2 pm: REPTILE BOOTH. Join us at our reptile presentation to learn about some of the fascinating animals native to our preserve. See and compare a variety of snake species and learn about their behavior. Perfect for reptile lovers as well as those that want to become more comfortable with reptiles.  
\* All ages  
\* Limited to 40 kids. Parents and guardians may participate too.  
\* Leader: Sami Neymark  
\* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

1 to 3 pm: PLANT & ANIMAL CONNECTIONS HIKE. Hike along multiple habitats to discover the interrelationship between the animals and plants that live there. Learn how native plants support animal life with shelter from the elements, defense against predators, and food.  
\* All ages ok, under 10 recommended  
\* Limited to 15 participants  
\* Leader: Melissa Brashers  
\* Meet at: Bridge to Adventure

1 to 3 pm: INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES & DROUGHT IN ARID REGIONS. Hike and discussion of the ecology of the southern San Joaquin Valley, non-indigenous vs. indigenous species, problems associated with invasive species, and plant adaptations for coping with drought.  
\* Ages 12 & up  
\* Limited to 30 participants  
\* Leader: Dr. Pratt & Dr. Jacobsen  
\* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk

1 to 3 pm  
MOMMY & ME NEST BUILDING  
First Parents and children gather safe natural items off the floor, as well as, collect soil and water, and place on table, mixing all ingredients together to make Mud Nests for our bird friends. Then we take a short hike in search for birds and use our bird flipbook to identify the bird species.  
\* All ages  
\* Limited to 20 kids. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate too.  
\* Leader: Linda Vasquez  
\* Meet at: Crossing Pond  
\* Spanish translator available

2:15 to 3:15 pm: STORYTIME & WALK IN NATURE. We will be reading *The Busy Tree* and *The Lorax* outdoors, have a brief discussion, then go see what we can find in nature. Walk will be short and slow-paced.  
\* Ages 5 to 10  
\* Limited to 20 kids. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate too.  
\* Leader: Cindy Carver  
\* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

3:30 to 5 pm: AQUATIC INSECT HUNT FOR KIDS. Discover the excitement of life in the water! Hands-on program. Children will search for aquatic insects with nets, identify and examine them with bug

viewers. Our pond is an excellent opportunity to view frogs and birds. Kids will have fun while learning about adaptations, life cycles, and the world around them.  
\* Ages 5 to 15  
\* Limited to 12 kids. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate too.  
\* Leader: Mat Mendoza  
\* Meet at: Crossing Pond

3:30 to 5:30 pm: EARTH ART FOR KIDS. Celebrate the earth by creating EarthArt from natural materials found during a short guided hike. Then assemble your own unique artwork. All artwork will remain on display for future viewing.  
\* All ages  
\* Limited to 20 kids. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate too.  
\* Leader: Meag England  
\* Meet at: Crossing Ramada

3:30 to 5:30 pm: IN SEARCH OF MAMMALS AROUND THE PRESERVE. Join Ranger Nick on a back country tour in search of mammals. Wind Wolves' diverse landscape provides great opportunities to experience rare encounters. You will learn about the many mammals that make Wind Wolves their home, including mule deer, tule elk, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, ground squirrels, cottontails, jackrabbits, black bear, raccoon, kit fox and kangaroo rats.  
\* Ages 7 & up  
\* Limited to 14 participants  
\* Leader: Nick Carver  
\* Meet at: Wildflower Loop  
\* Van tour

6:30 to 7:30 pm: CAMPFIRE PROGRAM: SONGS & STORIES. Come enjoy an hour long campfire program with songs and stories.  
\* All ages  
\* Limited to 50 participants  
\* Leaders: Tara Douhan & Sherry Clendenen  
\* Meet at: Crossing Ramada

7 to 8 pm: GUIDED MEDITATION IN NATURE. Take a short walk with meditation teacher Tonya through a riparian corridor and out to an open grassland to do an hour-long guided meditation.  
\* Ages 12 & up  
\* Limited to 20 participants  
\* Leader: Tonya Bryant  
\* Meet at: Bridge to Adventure

7:30 to 9:30 pm: FAMILY NIGHT HIKE  
Two-hour moonlit hike, starts just before sunset and ends after dark. Discussion of nighttime wonders including nocturnal animals, fluorescent minerals, bioluminescent insects, and constellations.  
\* All ages (no strollers)  
\* Limited to 50 participants  
\* Leaders: Tara Douhan & Sherry Clendenen  
\* Meet at: Crossing Ramada

## Sunday, April 13th

7 to 10 am: BIRDING BIG SIT. See how many birds can be seen or heard from a 17' circle. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one, and plenty of water.  
\* Ages 12 & up  
\* Limited to 20 participants  
\* Leader: Mike Stiles  
\* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk



## Santa Lucian • April 2014

7:30 am to 12 noon: **NATURAL HISTORY HIKE.** A leisurely trek up canyon to explore the geology, discuss the Native Americans that used the area, and plants and animals we encounter. Bring water, binoculars, camera, and field note book.

- \* Ages 4 & up
- \* Limited to 15 participants
- \* Leader: Ali Sheehay
- \* Meet at: Crossing Pond

9 to 11 am: **DONOR SHUTTLE TOUR.** Wind Wolves Preserve is proud to offer a shuttle tour of our mid-slope and valley floor habitats. Upon donating blood to the mobile Houchin Blood Bank vehicle, you will punch your ticket on a majestic tour of California's scenic rolling hills, riparian corridors, and grassland prairie. Potential wildlife sightings include mule deer, tule elk, coyotes, many varieties of raptors and birds, reptiles, rodents. Houchin has particular donor requirements. Call Courtney at (661) 858-1115 to schedule your blood donation time. Let us know if you would rather cash in your shuttle tour for another date. Shuttle does not allow for car seats, family members may accompany only if there is room on the shuttle.

- \* Ages 18 & up
- \* Limited to 24 participants
- \* Leaders: Melissa Dabulamanzi and Robert Shahan
- \* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk

9 to 11 am: **GEOLOGY TOUR OF SAN EMIGDIO MOUNTAINS AND CANYON.** A two-hour excursion, 10 miles round-trip by van, traveling the length of San Emigdio Canyon. Close-up view of the development of the canyon and formations of the San Emigdio Mountains. We'll make three stops to discuss how the canyon was formed and local and regional geology and observe sediments and rocks. Half mile of walking.

- \* Ages 13 & up
- \* Limited to 13 participants
- \* Leader: Michael Toland
- \* Meet at: Wildflower Loop

10 to 11 am: **STORYTIME & WALK IN NATURE.** We will be reading *The Busy Tree* and *The Lorax* outdoors, have a brief discussion and then walking to see what we can find in nature. The walk will be short and slow-paced.

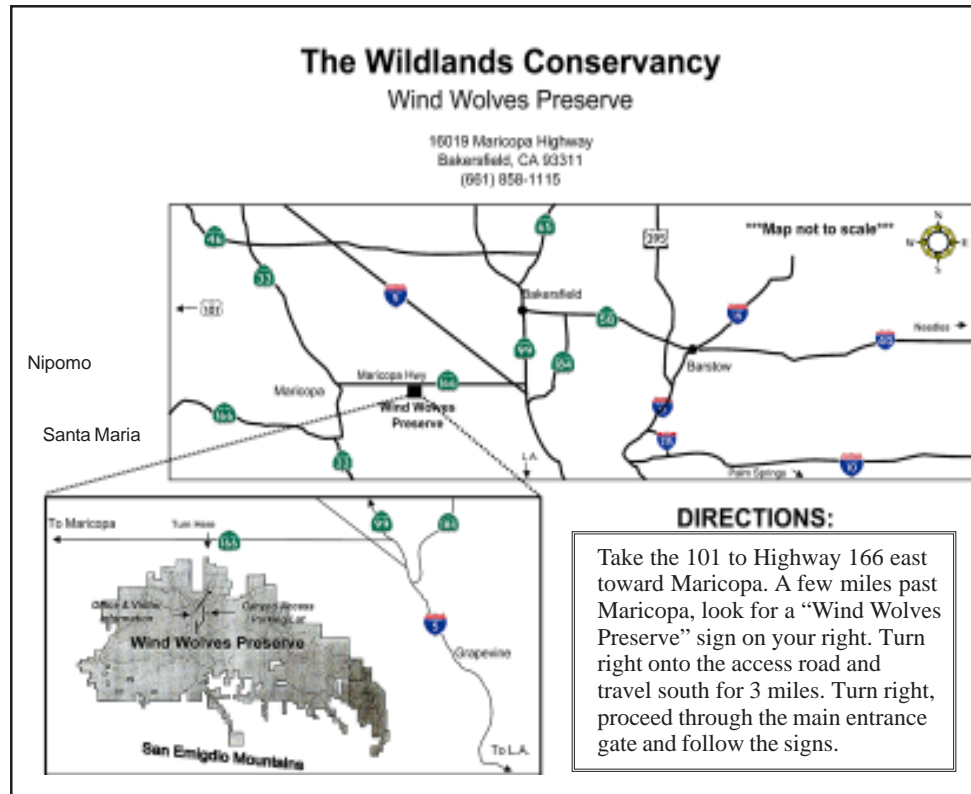
- \* Ages 5 to 10
- \* Limited to 20 kids. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate too.
- \* Leader: Cindy Carver
- \* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

10 am to 12 noon: **BEGINNING BIRDING WALK FOR FAMILIES.** A fun morning exploring riparian, saltbush, and grassland habitats to discover the birds that live in these areas. Bring sturdy shoes, water, binoculars and spotting scopes. A few binoculars will be provided.

- \* All ages (no strollers)
- \* Limited to 20 participants
- \* Leader: Andy Lundin
- \* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

10 am to 12 noon: **OUTDOOR SURVIVAL PREPAREDNESS.** Learn how to prevent getting lost when hiking through demonstration and activities. Take home a whistle, safety cards and a certificate!

- \* Ages 4 to 18
- \* Limited to 20 kids. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate too.
- \* Leader: Meag England
- \* Meet at: Crossing Ramada
- \* Spanish translator available



10 am to 12 noon: **GOING NATIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE KAWAIISU WORLD.** Jon Hammond and Kim Durham will be leading a hike focusing on native plants and wildlife and the way these have been utilized by Native Americans and early settlers, as sources of food, craft material and medicine. Hike participants will be taught how to identify some common plants and shown how some were used, such as making cordage from milkweed or dried nettle stalks. Hikers will also be shown how to understand their surroundings.

- \* All ages
- \* Limited to 30 participants
- \* Leaders: Jon Hammond & Kim Durham
- \* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk
- \* Moderate hike

11 am to 12 noon: **STORYTIME & WALK IN NATURE IN SPANISH.** Take a short walk in nature and then sit and listen to a story read allowed out in the fresh air.

- \* All ages
- \* Limited to 20 kids. Parents and guardians may participate too.
- \* Leader: To be determined
- \* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

12 noon to 2 pm: **DONOR SHUTTLE TOUR.** Wind Wolves Preserve is proud to offer a shuttle tour of our mid-slope and valley floor habitats. Upon donating blood to the mobile Houchin Blood Bank vehicle, you will punch your ticket on a majestic tour of California's scenic rolling hills, vigorous riparian corridors, and grassland prairie. Potential wildlife sightings include mule deer, tule elk, coyotes, many varieties of raptors and birds, reptiles, small rodents and more. Houchin has particular donor requirements. Call Courtney at (661) 858-1115 to schedule your blood donation time during the festival. If you would rather cash in your shuttle tour for another date, let us know. Shuttle does not allow for car seats, family members will only be able to accompany if there is room on the shuttle.

- \* Ages 18 & up
- \* Limited to 24 participants
- \* Leaders: Melissa Dabulamanzi and Robert Shahan
- \* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk

1 to 2 pm: **CALIFORNIA CONDOR HISTORY & RESTORATION PRESEN-**

**TATION.** Watch a presentation with spectacular photos of the California Condor. Learn about its history and biology and long road to recovery.

- \* Ages 10 & up
- \* Limited to 35 participants
- \* Leader: Martin Fletcher
- \* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

1 to 3 pm: **PLANT & WILDLIFE CONNECTIONS HIKE.** Hike along multiple habitats to discover the interrelationship between the animals and plants that live there; how native plants support animal life with shelter from the elements, defense against predators, and food.

- \* All ages (no strollers)
- \* Limited to 25 participants
- \* Leader: Megan Lundin
- \* Meet at: Bridge to Adventure

1 to 3 pm: **INSECT & OTHER ARTHROPOD HIKE.** Discover the insects and other arthropods (spiders, pillbugs, millipedes, etc.) that live at Wind Wolves. Slow-paced 1 to 2 mile hike, meander through grassland, shrubland, and riparian woodlands. Look for arthropods on plants, dead logs, ponds, streams, leaf litter, and under stones.

- \* Ages 4 & up
- \* Limited to 20 participants
- \* Leader: Mary Moreno
- \* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk

1 to 3 pm: **MOMMY & ME: NATURE THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD.** Children will be given crayons, colored pencils, paint palettes. The rest is magic. Children can express their views of the preserve coloring away in nature.

- \* All ages
- \* Limited to 15 kids. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate too.
- \* Leader: Linda Vasquez
- \* Meet at: Crossing Ramada
- \* Spanish translator available

2:15 to 3:15 pm: **ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WIND WOLVES PRESERVE.** The talk will focus on rare and endangered species in the San Joaquin Valley with emphasis on those that occur on the Wind Wolves Preserve, habitats that species are found in, why they are endangered, and the role the Preserve plays in helping conserve these species.

- \* Ages 9 & up

- \* Limited to 35 participants
- \* Leader: Brian Cypher
- \* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

3 to 4:30 pm: **TRACKING CLASS AND FIELD PRACTICE HIKE.** Learn about tracks and signs of unique North American wildlife. Identification and distinction between tracks of different types of animals, and other signs that animals leave behind as they live their daily lives. The little things in nature become the big things as tracking reveals the untold stories of what animals do for survival.

- \* All ages (no strollers)
- \* Limited to 20 participants
- \* Leader: Moses Dabulamanzi
- \* Meet at: Bridge to Adventure

3 to 6 pm: **WILDFLOWER IDENTIFICATION HIKE.** An up close and personal experience with Wind Wolves' flora. During a wet year, our grasslands can be covered with Fiddleneck, Wild Hyacinth, California Poppy and

much more. During a dry season, our perennials shine, such as Bush Lupine and Bladder Pod. We will be using the common names of the plants we find with a few scientific names thrown in for excitement. By the end of the hike we will be bursting with new knowledge and have shared a great experience.

- \* Ages 5 & up
- \* Limited to 30 participants
- \* Leader: Jana Borba
- \* Meet at: Wildflower Loop

3:30 to 4:30 pm: **REPTILE BOOTH.** Learn about some of the fascinating animals native to our preserve! See and compare a variety of snake species and learn about their behavior. Perfect for reptile lovers as well as those that want to become more comfortable with reptiles.

- \* All ages
- \* Limited to 40 kids. Parents and guardians may participate too.
- \* Leader: Sami Neymark
- \* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

3:30 to 7:30 pm: **NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY - INTERMEDIATE.** We will venture into the canyons of the preserve to do some landscape and scenic photography. All styles of cameras are welcome; for those with digital SLRs and advanced point and shoots or mirrorless systems, we will also practice high dynamic range photography, a beautiful technique for landscape photography that expands the tonal range and dramatically improves colors. A wide angle lens and tripod strongly suggested. Recommended for photographers with intermediate experience

- \* Limited to 13 participants
- \* Leader: John Harte
- \* Meet at: Administrative Office Fountain

7 to 9 pm: **NIGHT HIKE: IN SEARCH OF OWLS.** Trail dips in and out of our creek bed and under pretty big cottonwoods and dense willow and mulefat thickets. We will stop many times along the way to listen in silence for any owls calling in the night. Taped recordings will also be played in a hope to lure in some of these species.

- \* Ages 8 & up
- \* Limited to 9 participants
- \* Leader: Ross Schaefer
- \* Meet at: Crossing Kiosk

## April 6: Urban Farm Fun-Raiser

### A celebration of City Farm - San Luis Obispo

All are invited to join Central Coast Grown on opening day for City Farm San Luis Obispo, Sunday, April 6, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Join the Mayor of SLO at the groundbreaking ceremony, create memories by planting veggies on Nico Farms, City Farm's first tenant, constructing eco pots to plant at home, and taking pictures in the photo booth. You'll even get a chance to name the Nico Farms tractor. Bring your favorite homemade picnic foods to enjoy with some local snacks. Live music by Off the Griddle and puppet shows for the kids. Bike valet provided.

City Farm is located at 1221 Calle Joaquin, in the heart of the city's Calle Joaquin Ag Reserve. Head east on Los Osos Valley Road from the 101, turn right onto Calle Joaquin, and drive until you see the farm at the end of the cul-de-sac.

More info at [centralcoastgrown.org/city-farm/fun-raiser/](http://centralcoastgrown.org/city-farm/fun-raiser/)



On a tractor with no name Nico Farms' first planting at SLO City Farm, March 19.



# Let's Get Efficient

On March 5, 2014, 191 Republican and 184 Democratic members of the House joined to pass the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act of 2014 (HR 2126), sponsored by Representatives David McKinley (R-WV) and Peter Welch (D-VT). The act is focused on saving energy in buildings.

"For the last one hundred years, utilities have operated under the premise that demand for electricity would grow every year," said Jesse Berst, Chairman of the Smart Cities Council. "Then came the Great Recession, which caused growth to flatten. And now, maybe, comes the Great Intercession -- the federal government interceding to insist that federal buildings reduce energy use and to 'encourage' commercial buildings to do the same. Energy efficiency is already on a roll, but I believe this intercession will take it to a new inflection point. Do you *really* need that new power plant? Can you *really* afford to upgrade that substation? It may be time for long-range planners to rethink their assumptions."

To date, bills addressing energy efficiency have focused on how real estate owners and developers may lower energy consumption at the "whole-building" level. But in fact, owners and managers of large buildings control only about 50 percent of their structures' total energy; tenants consume at least half. The Better Buildings Act takes a holistic approach by considering office tenants' impact on energy consumption and behaviors. Notably, the act brings the Energy Star rating for whole buildings to the next level by authorizing a "Tenant Star" program to certify leased spaces in buildings as energy efficient.

Considering the overwhelming success and private sector acceptance of Energy Star for buildings – which are located in all 50 states, represent billions of square feet of commercial floorspace, and saved American businesses over \$2.7 billion in utility bills in 2012 alone – it is sound energy policy to evolve this program to the "Tenant Star" level of leased spaces.

The act also includes:

- \* A provision to encourage benchmarking and public disclosure of energy use in commercial buildings, following a strategy several cities around the country have adopted to encourage more efficiency;

- \* The Energy Efficient Government Technology Act for federal agencies to develop strategies to implement energy-saving information technologies from building energy management to telework, and to improve efficiency of federal data centers, and

- \* A provision to address concerns that recent efficiency standards for water heaters could interfere with their use in demand response programs run by rural and other utilities.

The provisions are designed to address some key barriers of lack of information and perverse incentives that prevent building owners from implementing cost-effective energy efficiency measures. These measures also are in the new version of the Senate's energy efficiency bill (S. 2074), sponsored by Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Rob Portman (R-OH), along with other important efficiency measures. If the Senate passes that bill, Americans can start reaping more of the utility bill savings, jobs, cleaner air, and more secure energy that energy efficiency can provide.

## De-Fence!

A volunteer work project to remove and replace existing four-strand barbed wire fencing with two strands of barbed wire on top and one strand of smooth wire on the bottom is ongoing in the Carrizo Plain National Monument for the benefit of the pronghorn antelope, the fastest land mammal in the western hemisphere.

The pronghorn cannot/will not jump over the wire, but they will go under, so the smooth wire is used to replace the bottom wire, and is placed higher off the ground than the original wire.

Over the weekend of February 8 and 9, Los Padres Forest Watch volunteers joined a Carrizo crew led by Sierra Club volunteer Craig Deutsche and the California/Nevada Desert Committee of the Sierra Club. The crew included "Condor John" Hankins from the Club's Los Padres Chapter, Jon McCabe and Craig Carey, author of the new book *Hiking and Backpacking Santa Barbara & Ventura*.

They made short work of some bad wire, securing safe passage for the pronghorn.



Bardley of Ojai

## Are GMOs Like Climate Change?

by Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

Analogies can be useful. But if we try to claim that two different big, complex issues are alike, we tend to get ourselves into trouble, as a recent *Tribune* letter-writer did when presuming to assert "facts vs. beliefs" about climate change and genetically engineered food.

Those who push this analogy believe that the overwhelming scientific consensus on climate change is matched by a similar consensus on the safety of genetically modified food.

But it's not, and the repetition of this belief by GMO advocates doesn't make it so. There is no equivalency between the real scientific consensus on climate change and the claim of alleged consensus on the safety of genetically engineered food.

A comprehensive peer-reviewed 2011 survey of hundreds of GMO studies in international scientific journals found "an equilibrium in the number [of] research groups suggesting, on the basis of their studies, that a number of varieties of GM products (mainly maize and soybeans) are as safe and nutritious as the respective conventional non-GM plant, and those raising still serious concerns."

There is no comparable equilibrium to be found in peer-reviewed climate research, on one side of which there really is an overwhelming scientific consensus on the reality of human-caused climate change and only a handful of outlier studies suggesting otherwise. An insignificant number of scientists oppose the consensus on climate change. On GMOs, roughly the same number of scientists can be found on both sides of issue.

This is why the European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility concluded that "the claimed consensus on GMO safety does not exist. The claim that it does exist is misleading and misrepresents the currently available scientific evidence and the broad diversity of opinion among scientists on this issue." They also found that animal feeding studies that "have revealed toxic effects or signs of toxicity in the GM-fed animals... have not been followed up by targeted research that could confirm or refute the initial findings."

Also: "A peer-reviewed survey of the views of 62 life scientists on the environmental risks of GM crops found that funding and disciplinary training had a significant effect on attitudes. Scientists with industry funding and/or those trained in molecular biology were very likely to have a positive attitude to GM crops and to hold that they do not represent any unique risks, while publicly-funded scientists working independently of GM crop developer companies and/or those trained in ecology were more likely to hold a 'moderately negative' attitude to GM crop safety and to emphasize the uncertainty and ignorance involved."

All the more reason to support California Senate Bill 1381 to label genetically engineered foods.



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**Peak**

*continued from page 3*

Based on those rankings, maintaining and enhancing open space missed the cut as a Major City Goal by one vote.

Worthy of note: Funding to maintain and acquire Open Space for the City's peaks was ranked as the *highest priority* of residents in the City's largest recent survey (the 2012 "Land Use and Circulation Update Survey"), in which every city household was surveyed and 2,200 responses were received. But because of the council's votes, maintaining and enhancing open space is not even a major city goal. Thus, it has been funded – and

**Rolling Back Righetti Hill**

*"It's such a big county, with all those rolling hills that aren't being used. There are lots of places for development."*

- Mark Schniepp, Director, UCSB Economic Forecast  
Central Coast Economic Symposium  
*Telegram-Tribune*, Nov. 6, 1990.

Back in May 2011, we mentioned a distinction SLO had just achieved in the pages of *Men's Journal*. In a feature in the magazine entitled "The 18 Coolest Towns in America," there was San Luis Obispo, with the notation of the "stratospheric levels of emotional well-being" as recorded in the Gallup poll and the happiest-town-in-America title bestowed by the Dan Buettner book, *Thrive*.

The article cited "Ordinances [that] keep development from creeping up the city's signature hillsides" as one of the features that makes SLO so cool.

We pointed out the fact that ordinances keeping development from creeping up the city's signature hillsides didn't mean much in 2007 when a SLO city council headed by Pavin' Dave Romero was determined to green-light four annexation and development proposals that were set to bust the Urban Reserve Line and creep right up those hillsides.

Back then, Johnson Avenue neighborhood residents organized and forced the City Council to relocate to the Vets Hall to accommodate the crowds that showed up for the meeting

de-funded — accordingly.

Also worth noting: "Implement the adopted Economic Development Strategic Plan" *did* make the cut as a Major City Goal. From this came an Economic Development Committee, which has "informed" the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element of the City's General Plan. There was no Environmental Committee or strategic plan to likewise inform the update, no open space/natural resources task force tasked with coming up with anything that could be considered for the status of a major goal to be adopted and implemented.

But the 2012 resident survey provided clear information on the desires of San Luis Obispo residents. Subsequently, city staff refused to include that information in three major staff reports, continuing to omit this information after receiving specific, repeated requests to do so.

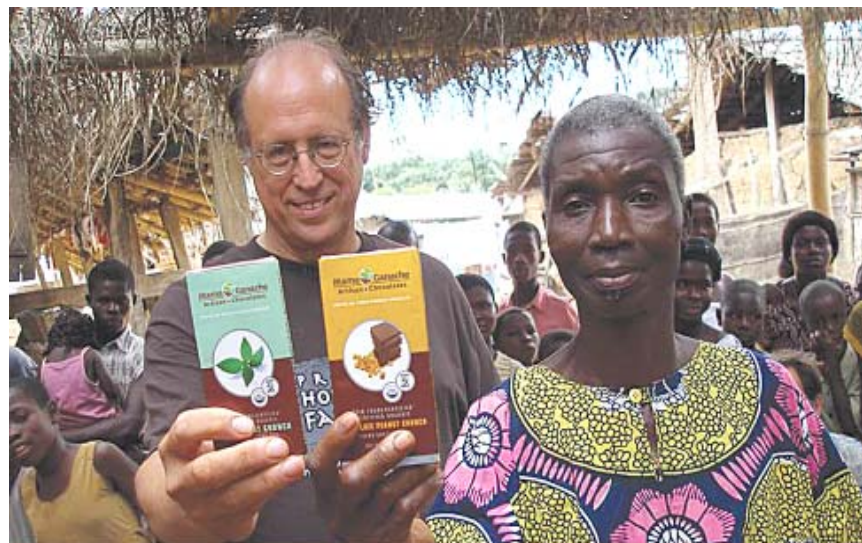
A city's general plan is commonly called the city's land use constitution because all land use decisions of the city must be consistent with it. On page 16 of the council's current draft plan, in the "Community Values" section ([www.slo2035.com/images/library/land\\_use\\_cc\\_recommended.pdf](http://www.slo2035.com/images/library/land_use_cc_recommended.pdf)), the results of that survey are reported, and the priorities of city residents are unmistakable. Only two categories of city services in the survey received a majority of responses in the affirmative in both of the listed categories "Respondents seeking more of these" and "Respondents willing to pay more for these:"

- *Acquiring and maintaining open space for peaks and hillsides* (58% and 54.1%, respectively).
- *Acquiring and maintaining open space for City greenbelt* (54% and 51.6%).

Staff and the council disregarded this mandate from the citizenry when setting the City's goals.

So just to be clear: The City can't afford to save Bishop Peak because of policy, not penury.

at which those development proposals were heard. In the face of overwhelming testimony on mudslides, giant water tanks, traffic and the destruction of the view, Pavin' Dave threw in the towel and had to vote against the developments he supported.



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Today, those who would bust the Urban Reserve Line and develop SLO's signature hillsides have learned to be more subtle. Now Righetti Hill is on the chopping block, along with the concept of development permitted to take place only inside – not outside – the area designated by the city's Urban Reserve Line.

Now it's a matter of science: The developers have new and improved measurements of the gradations between a 20 percent slope and a 30 percent slope. And, of course, SLO's projected future housing requirements must be met... and what better place to meet them than in places with million-dollar views, despite the fact that, annoyingly, City policies remove those areas from consideration as locations to be used to meet goals on housing numbers?

In 2012, on the occasion of the retirement of Neil Havlik, San Luis Obispo's first Natural Resources Manger, we pointed out that what the *Tribune* called the "messy and intense" struggle with the city's business community that was necessary to create the Natural Resources Protection Program in 1994

also resulted in the creation of the co-equal positions of Natural Resources Manager and Economic Development Manager. That's why the Natural Resources Manager was able to make the deals that preserved 6,500 acres of open space and wildlife habitat.

At the March 4 city council meeting where the pitch was made to amend the Orcutt Area Plan to bust the Urban Reserve Line and start marching development up the slopes of Righetti Hill, the council voted 4 to 1 – Mayor Jan Marx dissenting – to move the plan forward in the planning process. This despite a plea from that very same former Natural Resources Manager, Neil Havlik, the man who created the open space that the plan for Righetti Hill and the Urban Reserve Line would obliterate. "Rather than adjusting the Urban Reserve Line to accommodate housing numbers," Havlik pleaded with the council, "adjust the housing numbers to accommodate the Urban Reserve Line."

Good idea. Time will tell if this city council can grasp it.



**Going, going...** Whether it's unwillingness to pay to protect Bishop Peak or willingness to consider turning the Urban Reserve Line into Silly Putty, the SLO City Council is setting its priorities, and the city's open space -- the basis of citizens' well-being -- isn't one of them.

# Taking Issue

Reviewing problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“America’s unhealthy industrialized meat market,” by Nicholas Kristoff, *The Tribune*, March 14, 2014.

**Summary:** *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristoff ticks off everything wrong with factory farming -- from cruelty to animals to environmental destruction to the devastation of small farms -- before coming to the conclusion that you can’t beat cheap, efficiently produced industrial food so whaddaya gonna do? All responses are from the essay “Seven Deadly Myths About Industrial Agriculture,” as printed in *Fatal Harvest* (Island Press).

It’s easy to criticize the current model of industrial agriculture, far harder to outline a viable alternative. Going back to the rural structure presented by the inefficient family farm...isn’t a solution; then we’d be back to \$6.48-a-pound chicken.

Small farms produce more agricultural output per unit area than large farms. Moreover, larger, less diverse farms require far more mechanical and chemical inputs. These ever increasing inputs are devastating to the environment and make these farms far less efficient than smaller, more sustainable farms.

Proponents of industrial agriculture claim that “bigger is better” when it comes to food production. They argue that the larger the farm, the more efficient it is. They admit that these huge corporate farms mean the loss of family farms and rural communities, but they maintain that this is simply the inevitable cost of efficient food production. And

agribusiness advocates don’t just promote big farms; they also push big technology. They typically ridicule small-scale farm technology as grossly inefficient, while heralding intensive use of chemicals, massive machinery, computerization, and genetic engineering — whose affordability and implementation are only feasible on large farms. The marriage of huge farms with “mega-technology” is sold to the public as the basic requirement for efficient food production....

Agribusiness and economists alike tend to use “yield” measurements when calculating the productivity of farms.... It is true that the highest yield of a single crop is often achieved through industrial monocultures [but] small-scale integrated farms produce far more per unit area than large farms. Though the yield per unit area of one crop — corn, for example — may be lower, the total output per unit area for small farms, often composed of more than a dozen crops and numerous animal products, is virtually always higher than that of larger farms.

As summarized by the food policy expert Peter Rosset, “Surveying the data, we indeed find that small farms almost always produce far more agricultural output per unit area than larger farms. This is now widely recognized by agricultural economists across the political spectrum, as the ‘inverse relationship between farm size and output.’” He notes that even the World Bank now advocates redistributing land to small farmers in the third world as a step toward increasing overall agricultural productivity.



Factory farming has plenty of devastating consequences, but it’s only fair to acknowledge that it has benefited our pocketbooks.

Under closer analysis, our supposedly cheap food supply becomes monumentally expensive. The myth of cheapness completely ignores the staggering externalized costs of our food, costs that do not appear on our grocery checkout receipts. Conventional analyses of the cost of food completely ignore the exponentially increasing social and environmental costs customers are currently paying and will have to pay in the future. We expend tens of billions of dollars in taxes, medical expenses, toxic clean-ups, insurance premiums, and other pass-along costs to subsidize industrial food producers. Given the ever-increasing health, environmental, and social destruction involved in industrial agriculture, the real price of this food production for future generations is incalculable.... Subsidies add almost \$3 billion to the “hidden” cost of foods to consumers....

All of these environmental, health, and social costs are not added to the price of industrial food. When we calculate the real price, it is clear that far from being cheap, our current food production system is imposing staggering monetary burdens on us and future generations. By contrast, non-industrial food production significantly reduces and can even eliminate most of these costs. Additionally, organic practices reduce or eliminate the use of many chemicals on food, substantially decreasing the threat of cancer and other diseases and thus cutting health-care costs.

Finally, small-scale sustainable agriculture restores rural communities and creates farm jobs. If the public could only see the real price tag of the food we buy, purchasing decisions would be easy. Compared to industrial food, organic alternatives are the bargains of a lifetime.

**Upshot:** If you added the real cost of industrial food — its health, environmental, and social costs — to the current supermarket price, not even our wealthiest citizens could afford to buy it.... It is indisputable that this highly touted modern system of food production is actually less efficient, less productive than small-scale alternative farming. It is time to re-embrace the virtues of small farming, with its intimate knowledge of how to breed for local soils and climates; its use of generations of knowledge and techniques like intercropping, cover cropping, and seasonal rotations; its saving of seeds to preserve genetic diversity; and its better integration of farms with forest, woody shrubs, and wild plant and animal species.

# Special Delivery



AP photo/Jae C. Hong

On February 20, a bill requiring a moratorium on fracking was introduced in the state legislature. On the weekend of March 8, despite our pro-fracking Governor’s presence at the California Democratic Party’s Convention in Los Angeles, the party included a plank in its 2014 platform endorsing an immediate moratorium on fracking.

“The shift in the prevailing political

winds has been a remarkable one,” said Sierra Club activist and Democratic delegate Richard Miller after the convention.

One week later, more than 5,000 Californians (SLO contingent at left) descended on Sacramento to tell the Governor that his “fabulous economic opportunity” needs a big time-out. Take the gentle hint, Governor.

# Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **April 12**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:  
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# Outings and Activities Calendar

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

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

**Sun., Apr. 6th, 2 p.m. SLO City Walk: San Luis Cemetery.** Guided stroll past gravesites of famous pioneers like Angel, Cass, Murray, Sinsheimer, and Civil-War vets, plus the old "potter's field" for indigents and, of course, the landmark pyramid. Learn the compelling stories of settlers in 19th-century San Luis Obispo. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet in south parking lot, adjacent to the pyramid, 2890 S. Higuera St. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

**Sat., Apr. 12th, Previt Loop Hike, 8 a.m.** A challenging, very strenuous hike of 13 miles and 2800 ft. elevation gain, but worth it for the beautiful scenery: redwood groves, great ocean views, rolling grassland, and an exploration of the Previt Creek drainage area. Expect to be out all day, and assume poison oak on the trail. Bring lunch, plenty of water, protective clothing, and dress for the weather. Meet at the Washburn Day Use Area of San Simeon State Beach, about 1 1/2 miles north of Cambria, off Hwy 1. If you are going, let leader know ahead of time. Those wishing to carpool from SLO be at Santa Rosa Park to leave at 7:15 a.m.—no guarantee others will be there to join you. Contact Carlos in case of rain. Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

**Sat.-Sun., April 12th-13th, Hot**

**Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park. 3-Days, 3-Islands: April 12-14, May 4-6, June 8-10, July 22-24, August 24-26, September 14-16.** Join us as we explore these enchanting islands! Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds. Watch for the highly endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the



Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. A ranger/naturalist will travel with us to help lead hikes, point out items of interest and present evening programs. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. The \$590 cost includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, and beverages plus the services of a ranger/naturalist.

To reserve space, send a \$100 check, written to Sierra Club to leader Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. For more information contact leader; 626-443-0706; jholtzhl@aol.com.

## Activities sponsored by other organizations

**Thurs., April 10, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, Seabird Awareness Workshop,** hosted by the Seabird Protection Network. Central Coast Aquarium, Avila Beach. This free workshop is a great opportunity to learn more about seabirds from local experts. Space is limited to the first 50 people who register. For info, contact [Robyn\\_Chase@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Robyn_Chase@parks.ca.gov) or call (805) 400-8531.



Carol Georgi

**Springs/Cold Nights in Black Rock Desert.** Visit Trego Hot Spring in BR Desert, about 100 miles north of Reno—exact itinerary depending on playa conditions (drivable as of January, but can change). May stay at one spring with good all-weather access. Primitive camping, bring water and all food. No RVs or trailers allowed. Dogs on leash OK. Bad weather cancels. Further info.: David, 775-843-6443 Great Basin Group/CNRCC Desert Committee.

**Sun., April 13th, 10 a.m. Wildflower Walk and Identification.** Easy, one-mile walk in the Elfin Forest in Los Osos to view and identify common Central-Coast wildflowers like manzanita, lupine, coffeeberry, heather, sage, and others. From South Bay Blvd., turn west on Santa Ysabel toward the ocean, then right on 11th St. to end. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, [vmarchenko57@gmail.com](mailto:vmarchenko57@gmail.com) or 528-5567.

**Sat., Apr. 19th, 9 a.m. Salmon and Spruce Creek Trails to Dutra Flat.** A moderate 8.4-mile hike in beautiful southern Big Sur area, with 2200 ft. elevation gain. Beginning at the Salmon Creek trailhead, hike ascends through Salmon Creek and Spruce Creek canyons into open brush land, with views of Silver Peak, then dropping down into Dutra Flat camp.


Meet at Washburn Day Use area of San Simeon State Beach, off Hwy 1, about 2 miles north of Cambria. Bring lunch, water, and dress for the weather. Prepare for possibility of ticks and poison oak. We will probably stop for eats after the hike. Rain cancels. Info: Leader, Chuck Tribbey, 441-7597.

**Sat.-Sun., April 19th-20th Carrizo Service and Flowers Outing** with a day of service in Carrizo Plain Nat. Monument and a day of sightseeing and/or hiking. Wildflowers can be spectacular if sufficient rain. Weather typically cool in evenings and comfortable in the day. Service is removing and modifying fences to give pronghorn antelope greater mobility; recreation determined by interests of group. Contact Leader: Craig Deutsche, [craig.deutsche@gmail.com](mailto:craig.deutsche@gmail.com) or 310-477-6670 CNRCC Desert Committee.

**Sun., Apr. 20th, 10 a.m. Sycamore Springs Trekking-Pole Hike.** "Polecats" dedicated to leading local hikes, modeling benefits of effective use of trekking poles. Hike is 2 miles, 600 ft. elevation change. Meet near the entrance of Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Drive. Confirm beforehand you are coming with Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or [hikingpoles@gmail.com](mailto:hikingpoles@gmail.com).



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




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John Malt, leader of the Sierra Club at Yosemite



## It's Time to Make Your Reservation for Ojai Wild!

**Sat., Apr. 12:** The 7th Annual Ojai Wild! is just around the corner. Join Los Padres Forest Watch in celebrating 10 years of forest conservation victories! This event helps us raise critical support for the protection of our beautiful Los Padres National Forest & Carrizo Plain. It's also great fun - and you're invited!

Whether you come for the food & drink, the great live music, the exciting auctions, the amazing surroundings, or the good company ... just come! Tickets are \$80 for adults, \$20 for kids 14 and under, and \$600 for a reserved table with priority seating (seats 8-10). Get your tickets online, or contact Diane at 805-617-4610 x2 or [diane@LPFW.org](mailto:diane@LPFW.org).