



June 2015
Volume 52 No. 6

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Don't Miss:

June 23

Port San Luis Harbor
Commission Meeting

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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

Deny the Project

New federal rules won't save the county from crude oil "bomb trains"



Just Say No

Cities, counties and school districts
in the "blast zone" around the
Union Pacific main line asking SLO
County to reject the Phillips 66 oil
train project:

Richmond

Oakland

Albany

Sacramento

San Leandro

Martinez

Davis

San Jose

San Luis Obispo

Moorpark

Oxnard

Camarillo

Ventura

Simi Valley

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Monterey County

Santa Barbara County's 3rd District

Ventura County

Oakland School Board

San Leandro Unified School District

Hayward Unified School District

Ventura Unified School District

Pleasant Valley School District

Oil Trains Too Fast, New Safety Rules Too Slow

by Todd Paglia, Executive Director, ForestEthics

In the first three months of 2015, four oil train accidents sent emergency responders scrambling, crude oil spilling into drinking water supplies, and fireballs blasting into the sky. The string of accidents in February and March demonstrate the severe threat from Bakken crude and Alberta tar sands moving on mile-long oil trains. These derailments and explosions set a bar we can use to measure the new oil train standards announced on May 1 by the US and Canadian governments.

Would the new rules have prevented any of the 2015 accidents and, ultimately, will they reduce the threat of oil train catastrophes like the 2013 Lac

Groups Sue Over Weak Oil Train Rules

Following a spate of fiery derailments and toxic spills involving trains hauling volatile crude oil, a coalition of conservation organizations and citizen groups are challenging the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) weak safety standards for oil trains.

Less than a week after the DOT released its final tank car safety rule on May 1, a train carrying crude oil exploded outside of Heimdal, North Dakota. Under the current standards, the tank cars involved in the accident would not be retired from crude oil shipping or retrofitted for another five to eight years.

Earthjustice has filed suit

TOO SLOW continued on page 8

LAWSUIT continued on page 9

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

New Rare Plant Group Forms

by Bill Waycott, Outings Leader

By pooling local resources, members of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), along with students and faculty at Cal Poly, have created a rare plant working group to address the twin tasks of monitoring rare plant populations on the central coast while also identifying new ones that have gone unnoticed thus far.

On May 9, Dr. David Keil led a group of ten volunteers through a rare plant training workshop at Laguna Lake Park. At the start, each participant was handed a list of 17 rare and endangered species to search out and identify as being present in the area. The list was created from several on-line databases, prepared through thousands of personal sightings and herbarium specimens collected over many years. To view one such database, go to calflora.org.

Laguna Lake Park in San Luis Obispo is made up of two distinctly different habitats. One is alluvial soil deposited in and around Laguna Lake through centuries of erosion and flooding. The other is a 500-foot hillcock made of serpentine rock, which is mostly stone and very little soil. Many of the rare plants that are present in this park occur there because of its unique landscape, either the extremes of shifting soil humidity on the lowlands, or uncommon and nearly barren mineral deposits on the uplands. The challenge this time was to encounter the hard-to-find plants, preferably in bloom, knowing we are in the middle of a major drought.

Of the 17 species on the list, 12 have been given a designation of "1-B," meaning they are very rare, possibly endangered, localized to a few locations within SLO county or, in even fewer cases, in scarce pockets spread over a couple of counties. The five species not designed as "1-B," are listed as "4," meaning they are more abundant but placed on a watch list for review from time to time.

By the end of our 3-hour treasure hunt, the group had identified 14 of the species on the list. In some cases we found very few individuals, only one Club-haired mariposa lily (*Calochortus clavatus*, var. *clavatus*) and one Eastwood's larkspur (*Delphinium parryi*, subsp. *eastwoodiae*) in bloom, while on the other hand finding several thousand San Luis star-tulips (*Calochortus obispoensis*) and carpets of Brewer's spineflower (*Chorizanthe breweri*) ablaze with visiting butterflies and bumblebees.

The rare plant work of CNPS is just one facet of the many skills this organization brings to bear in our diverse and burgeoning state. I, for one, find it fascinating that within the very small area of Laguna Lake Park, only one square mile, there are 12 species of plants that exist there and almost nowhere else on this big, wide planet. Now that's awesome!!

Last bloom The Chorro Creek Bog Thistle, *Cirsium fontinale* var. *obispoense*, will be in bloom until the end of June. It can be found on serpentine outcrops in perennial seeps, such as those overlooking the Dog Park at Laguna Lake. Since they grow up to three feet tall, they're easy to spot. This plant has Federal protection, classified as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.



Columbine in Big Creek Preserve.

Wildflower Report

by Vicki Marchenko, Outings Leader

The Los Osos native plant walk I led on May 6 is still showing wildflowers, probably because it is protected from the wind and in a low area of dune scrub. If anyone is interested in seeing the following wildflowers, do check out this little gem.

I only recently discovered this walk, and plan to get an earlier start next year to see these and many more flowers. Right now there are blue stars, pearly everlasting, chia, spineflower, cobwebby thistle, white layia, deerweed, fiddleneck, horkelia, phacelia, popcorn flower, red catchfly, sand verbena and wall flower. In April, there were milk maids, cream cups, wild hyacinth, SLO paintbrush, hedge nettle, purple nightshade, poppy, aster, sweet pea, nuttalls milk vetch and that interesting flowery looking fungus called sand food.

To see the best of the flowers, take a left onto San Ysabel off of South Bay Blvd. (if coming from Morro Bay) and park around the corner from the dead end. A small yellow sign on a fence post shows the State Park boundary; start here and follow the main sandy trail through native shrubs until you start to see the flowers lining both sides of the trail.

The trail eventually leads to a line of Eucalyptus you will see in the distance. It's less than half a mile to the Eucs, which is a good place to stop and head back same way.

This area is called "Powell 1" according to Pete from SWAP, whom I met pulling weeds from this area and who has put many hours into removing veldt grass and other invasives. He has it looking really nice.

The other section of the park is called Powell 2, and you'll find it by taking a right at the Eucs, hiking up a short distance and then walking the perimeter of a large meadow that leads down to the Los Osos Middle School soccer field (the other entrance to this park).

I look forward to someday seeing this section of park looking as grand as Powell 1. Still, Powell 2 has great views of Cottonwoods and Arroyo Willows, flowering silver dune lupines and widespread areas of Chumash shell middens.

Happy trailing!



Bill Waycott



photo:Kevin Walsh

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

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Outings, events, and more!

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TREASURERS

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

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Anti-Marine Sanctuary Mystery Solved

You've never heard of the "Our Protected Coast Coalition" for a good reason

by Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

In May, I posted an entry to the Chapter's blog titled "The peculiar opposition to a national marine sanctuary" (www.sierraclub.org/santa-lucia).

I was curious as to who, exactly, was the "Our Protected Coast Coalition," the ostensible authors of a fact sheet on national marine sanctuaries (right) that was notably short on facts and was distributed to the Port San Luis Harbor Commission at their April 28 meeting. I noted the fact sheet's most amusing fact: The citation that was supposed to provide the factual support for their arguments consisted of the words "put the www. Here."

As Jeb Bush might say, I did not know then what I know now.

Google "Our Protected Coast Coalition" and you will get, in the vast universe of the worldwide web, exactly one hit (in addition to my blog post wondering who and what the OPCC may be): The May 2015 issue of *The Foghorn*, newsletter of the San Luis Yacht Club, with a photo on page 7 (below) of the only person in all of cyberspace whose name is linked to the OPCC: Amber Johnson.

Sierra Clubbers may recall Ms. Johnson's previous appearance in these pages in the January 2015 installment of "Taking Issue," or in the January 1 issue of *New Times* (below right), heroically inveighing against "special interests."

The status of Ms. Johnson, a political consultant, as the only hit in a web search on the "Our Protected Coast Coalition" is redolent of the kind of astro-turf operations that are Ms. Johnson's advertised stock in trade, i.e. drumming up the appearance of grassroots support for, or opposition to, any initiative for which a client would like to create that appearance.

In view of Ms. Johnson's petroleum-

soaked recent past (field manager of the political campaign funded by Big Oil that defeated Santa Barbara's anti-fracking initiative, defender of the Phillips 66 oil train project), the next question should be: whose interests is Ms. Johnson representing in opposing the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, which would bar future oil and gas drilling off the Central Coast?

At the April 28 Harbor Commission meeting, Commissioner Dave Kirk and several others were all set to vote on a resolution opposing designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary on the basis of the kind of "facts" on view in the OPCC fact sheet. But, as I blogged, "several of their colleagues gently suggested that it couldn't hurt to get more information than what they had before them and had been hearing from sanctuary opponents, [and] they grudgingly agreed to wait until their June meeting to make that deliberation."

At the April meeting, Commissioner Mary Matakovich commented when handed the OPCC "fact" sheet, "We don't know who this is from."

Indeed we didn't. If Commissioner Kirk knew who it was from — the woman labeled "OPCC" who he is standing next to in the photo below — he chose not to share that information.

TAKE ACTION

The Port San Luis Harbor Commission will take a position on the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary nomination at their **June 23** meeting. The Commission meets at 6 p.m. at 3900 Avila Beach Drive. If you'd like to help us tell the Commissioners the facts about national marine sanctuaries, drop us a note at sierraclub8@gmail.com.



Our Protected Coast Coalition (OPCC)
 "Good Stewards, Good Neighbors, Fishermen to Farmers"

~Loss of Local Control~
 The Central Coast does not need to add another layer of federal regulation and interaction to those already in place. The adding of sanctuary status would significantly disrupt and make activities such as harbor dredging much more costly and lengthy and likely affect fishing grounds.

~Local residents, ranchers, farmers, fishermen and business owners~
 are outstanding examples of stewardship of the coastline and ocean. Our coastal community members have taken and continue to take special care with their ocean including supporting the many efforts of the National Estuary Program, participating in beach clean-ups, adherence to stringent pesticide and herbicide regulations, fishing gear adaptation, voluntary water testing in aquaculture as well as many others.

~Existing Protections Are In Place~

United States Federal statutes and regulations: Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended; Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended; Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended; National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended; Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended; Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended; Pollution and Abatement Act, 1972; Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990; The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 2006; Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended;	California state statutes and regulations: The Marine Life Management Act of 1998; The Marine Life Protection Act of 1999; Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1967; California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended; California Coastal Act of 1976, as amended; California Native Plant Protection Act of 1977, as amended; California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3: Noise Guidelines for Implementation of California Environmental Quality Act, 2007
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~Claims of Economic Benefit~
 A recent article by a local environmental group has claimed significant economic impact tied to a sanctuary designation, however after a peer review of the report, many if not most of the claims are not able to be substantiated with facts. See (put the www. Here).

~These local groups/ organizations oppose a sanctuary designation

- Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Organization
- Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Organization
- Morro Bay Community Quota Fund
- California Marine Affairs and Navigation Conference
- City of Morro Bay (Resolutions No. 18-12, 27-03, 15/01 and 36-00)
- Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
- Southern California Trawlers Association
- Patriot Sport Fishing
- Virg's Landing and Sport Fishing

of the report, many if not most of the claims are not able to be substantiated with facts. See (put the www. Here).



Something Oily...

Loves oil co.'s, hates marine sanctuaries

"In a Dec. 15 letter in the Tribune [on the Phillips 66 oil train terminal project], SLO resident Amber Johnson took aim at the multitude of form letters from environmental groups responding to the DEIR, castigating them as 'out-of-town special interest groups who clearly have their own agenda.'

'The only special interest I pay attention to is that of the health and prosperity of San Luis Obispo County by supporting responsible businesses such as Phillips who wish to continue to contribute to our local economy,' Johnson concluded. 'This decision needs to be based on what is best for our county, not what outsiders think is best.'

Johnson is herself a political strategist who was a regional field director for the oil company-sponsored 'No on P' campaign in Santa Barbara County, a former campaign manager for newly-elected SLO County District 4 Supervisor Lynn Compton, and a former executive director of the Republican Party of SLO County."

- "A Crude Proposal," by Rhys Heyden
New Times, Jan. 1, 2015

meetings for fun, but rather to report to the members of ... maybe next month I'll figure out the webcam. —Bob

Wet Wednesday Speakers

(l-r) Butch Powers, PSL Commercial Fisherman's Association (PCFA)
 Debi Wood, Patriot Sport Fishing
 Amber Johnson, Our Protected Coast Coalition
 Director, Port San Luis Harbor Commission
 David Kirk, Harbor Commission, PCFA

Who could it be now? Amber Johnson, lone known member of the OPCC, with vocally anti-sanctuary Port San Luis Harbor Commissioner David Kirk (right).

Go Solar and Save

Ever considered going solar? If so, now is the time, because it's cheaper and easier than ever. Here's why: A new study just found that a \$0-down home solar system can cost less than the energy purchased from a residential customer's local utility.* Know what's even better? As a Sierra Club member and supporter, you get a \$750 discount off your panels. And to

sweeten the deal even more, Sungevity will give your local Sierra Club chapter \$750 to further our clean-energy work. With flexible financing through different Sungevity Energy Plans, you can get an efficient solar system without emptying your pockets. Plus you'll lock in your electricity rate for years to come. It sounds too good to be true, but it's not. Now is the time to go solar.



Go to sierraclub.org/solarhomes, or call (415) 977-5668 for a free quote.

*North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center: "Report: Solar Is Cheaper Than the Grid in 42 of the 50 Largest US Cities."



Who Knows GMOs?

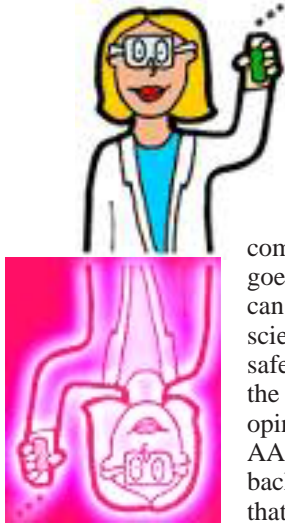
Opinion vs Science

by Jesse Arnold

According to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in the fall of 2014, 88% of the members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science believe “it is safe to eat genetically modified foods.” Pew surveyed 3,748 AAAS members for the poll.

I felt sure the industry would use the survey results to advance its point of view. Sure enough, the *New York Times* published an article by Mark Lynas on 4/26/15 titled “How I Got Converted to GMO Food.” Lynas bills himself as “someone who participated in the early anti-GMO movement” in the UK.

Says Lynas, “The environmental movement’s war against genetic



engineering has led to a deepening rift with the scientific community.” He goes on to say, “We can’t deny the science: Biotech is safe.” Then he cites the Pew Center opinion poll of AAAS members to back up his claim that biotech is safe. He does not,

however, cite a scientific test of GMO safety of any kind.

Keep in mind that what is being reported here is an opinion poll. The opinion of scientists is not a substitute for scientific safety testing of a GMO. Nor are the opinions of scientists as expressed in a poll a substitute for scientific opinion as expressed in peer-reviewed studies. The journal *Environment International* published “A literature review on the safety assessment of genetically modified plants,” a

comprehensive survey of hundreds of GMO studies in international scientific journals. It 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.” In other words, scientific opinion is 50/50, not 88/12.

Another peer-reviewed survey of the views of life scientists on the environmental risks of GMOs, as reported by the European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility, “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.”

The survey concluded: “The strong effects of training and funding might justify certain institutional changes concerning how we organize science and how we make public decisions when new technologies are to be evaluated.”

The sad news is, the safety testing for GMOs is done by the companies that produce them. Their tests last for only 90 days. As far as I know, even these short duration tests have not been replicated by scientists who are not on the payroll of the biotech companies.

Therefore, I believe there is no scientific basis to believe that GMOs have been proven to be safe. And that is probably why many members of the public don’t believe GMOs are safe.

On a positive note, one scientific organization that I know of works for the public interest and questions GMOs. That organization is the Union of Concerned Scientists. I doubt the Pew Research Center will be polling them any time soon.

Good Faith

This month, Pope Francis is expected to release an encyclical on the environment – the first in the history of the Church — elaborating on comments he made in May:

“We must do what we can so that everyone has something to eat. But we must also remind the powerful of the Earth that God will call them to judgment one day. And there it will be revealed if they really tried to provide for him in every person, and if they did what they could to preserve the environment so that it could produce this food.”

While we’re waiting for this document, which is expected to transform the global discussion on climate change, there’s plenty the faithful can do right here. Faith-based environmental initiatives were highlighted by the Sierra Club in our 2008 report “Faith in Action: Communities of Faith Bring Hope for the Planet.”

Case in point: The Green Team, the SLO Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship’s active environmental committee. Over the last three years, the Green Team has been involved in many activist projects in the community, most recently initiating testimony before the SLO City Council on banning styrofoam that led to the formulation of new regulations by the City.

Last April, on Earth Day Sunday, the Green Team organized a special service with wide participation of the congregation. The choir sang songs such as Pete Seeger’s classic “God Bless the Grass.” Jane Elsdon, a past SLO Poet Laureate, read a poem composed for the occasion. Children planted a native ceanothus shrub outside the church.

Discussing how we might create a new vision of our future and tackle the seemingly impossible task of changing the world, Rev. Rod Richards gave a provocative sermon entitled “A Changing Climate,” winner of the People for Faith and Justice Sermon Contest, “Perspectives and Responses: What the Faith Community Has to Say About Climate Change.” We are pleased to be able to share it, with the Reverend Richards’ permission and slightly abridged for space, beyond his congregation.

“My hope is that celebrations like this will spread to other churches in SLO County next year and future ones,” said Green Team leader and Santa Lucia Chapter Outings Chair Joe Morris. “They can be an inspiration for others to carry on the good work!”

A Changing Climate

by Rev. Rod Richards, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Luis Obispo County, April 19, 2015.

The Miami Herald reported on March 8, 2015, that Florida Department of Environmental Protection officials had been cautioned not to use the terms “global warming” or “climate change” in their work. Further, even though 30% of Florida’s beaches are threatened by rising sea levels, using the phrase “rising sea levels” was discouraged in favor of the term “nuisance flooding.”

Let me repeat: Florida officials were ordered not to use the terms “global warming” or “climate change.” And let me say: as outrageous as I find this to be...I get it. I get it.

To fully grasp the impact that we humans have had on this planet — a single life form among so many —

coming face to face with the impact that we humans have had on our planet is an awe-inspiring and sometimes awe-ful experience. In our drive to fulfill our wishes, to realize our dreams, we have forged ahead — created and crushed; developed and destroyed; dug and planted and extracted and impacted and stripped and stolen and hacked and fracked and sprayed and pumped and cut down and blown up and spread across almost every inch of the globe. We have accomplished amazing things, but all too often heedless of the consequences of our endeavors and the effects of our inventions and innovations on the life of the planet.

We have altered the environmental conditions to which species must adapt...or not. Elizabeth Kolbert, in her book *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, points out that “life is extremely resilient but not infinitely so.”

That is a lot to take in, especially so

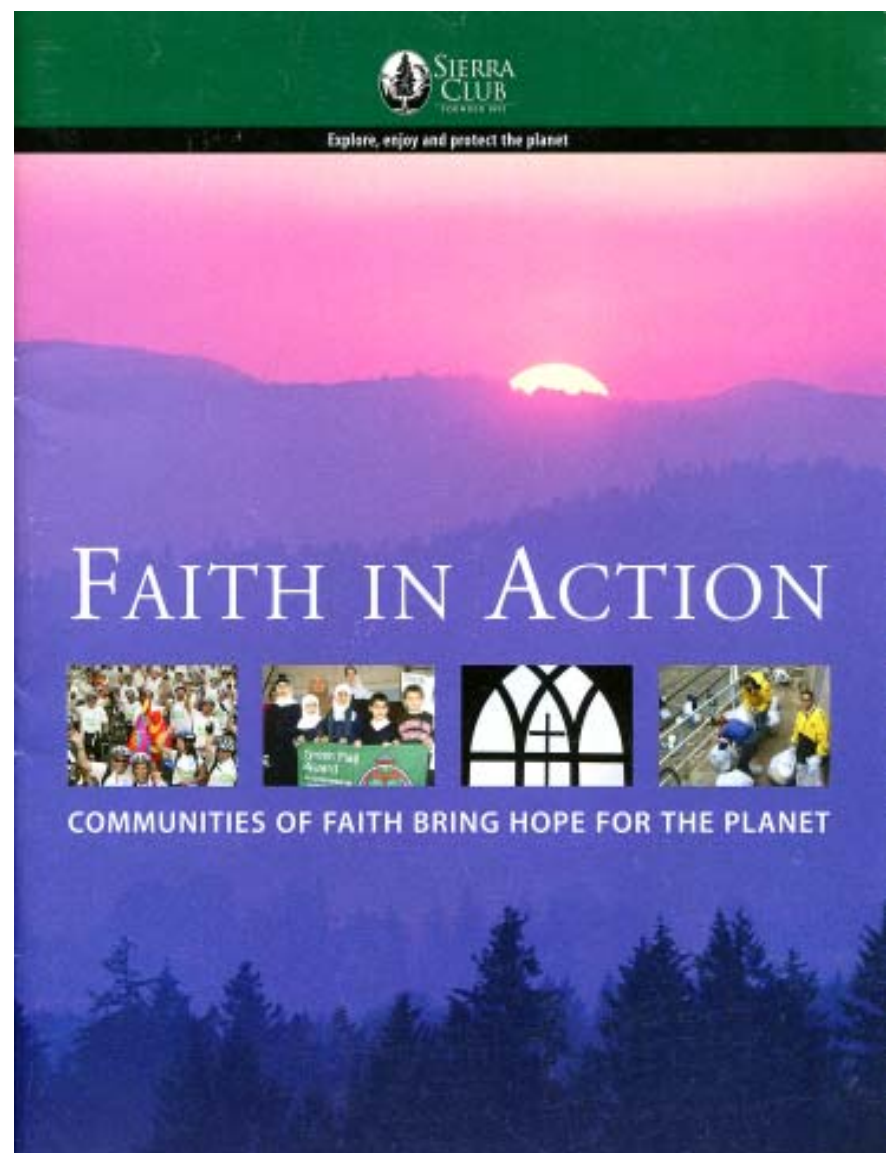
as we consider the reality of global warming — the human-caused rise in temperatures caused by excessive amounts of carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere — and climate change — the effects these higher temperatures have on the earth’s natural systems and the impacts that can result: stronger storms, deeper droughts, shifting seasons, rising sea levels, and many more.

Mark Hertsgaard writes in *Hot: Living Through the Next 50 Years on Earth*: “To oversimplify slightly, think of global warming as the equivalent of a fever and climate change as the aches, chills, and vomiting the fever can cause.” In the present situation, we caused Earth’s fever. In effect, we are the fever. And while we cannot now reverse the symptoms already triggered, we are called to keep the fever from getting worse, and that means looking closely enough at ourselves to see what we have done and what we

are doing that caused this fever and to ask ourselves how we can change it.

And change is hard. And change that requires unflinching honesty is exponentially more difficult. And change that requires adopting new disciplines; that requires sacrifice; that challenges previously-held beliefs and practices and orientations and challenges our own conceptions of ourselves and our place in the world...well, who would ask for that?

So, listen, I get it, Florida. Talking about rising sea levels feels just too big to manage; whereas nuisance flooding...that sounds manageable. Hey, we humans have dealt with nuisances before. Let’s just take these symptoms one at a time and see if we can manage them as we’ve managed problems in the past. Let’s pretend they’re happening to us rather than caused by us. And let’s just not talk about climate change and global



Quarry Collapse Saves Town

What can we learn from the denial of the Las Pilitas Quarry?

“Urban politics is above all the politics of land use.”

-Paul Peterson, *City Limits*.

The above-quoted Mr. Peterson is a political scientist, and his cited work is one of the seminal texts in the field of urban theory. In it, Peterson discusses local politics as the politics of development and growth-coalition power structures.

There are many chapters in the ongoing struggle created by that particular brand of politics. One of them played out in highly instructive fashion at the May 12 Board of Supervisors hearing of the Planning Commission’s denial of the Las Pilitas Quarry project.

When a development proposal like the Las Pilitas Quarry comes before the County Board of Supervisors, carrying with it seven (7) Class I potential environmental

impacts – significant and unmitigatable – that should throw a big red flag on the field, one with the words *Don’t permit this!* printed on it in very large letters. That should be enough.

Twice in the last seven years, Santa Margarita, pop. 1100, has somehow been an epicenter for that kind of struggle – last time, with grievous results; this time, with a happy ending.

In the case of the 2008 Santa Margarita Ranch ag cluster proposal (eleven Class I impacts), despite the Planning Commission’s denial and an outpouring of community concern, thanks to Supervisors Harry Ovitt, Jerry Lenthall and Katcho Achadjian, it wasn’t enough.

In the case of the Las Pilitas Quarry last month – thanks to the Planning Commission’s denial, an outpouring of community concern, and Supervisors Bruce Gibson, Adam Hill and Frank Mecham – it was.

The tenacious citizens group Margarita Proud has a lot to be proud of. They organized their community, educated officials one-on-one, and determinedly and repeatedly set the facts before planners, supervisors and the public. (See “A Few Facts About the Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry,” May 2015, and “We Can See Clearly Now,” Sept. 2013).

Conversely, misdirection was the order of the day for project proponents.

Their claim of an urgent need for the project based on a supposed statewide 188 million ton shortfall of aggregate was, as Supervisor Gibson pointed out, incorrect (“misstated – I won’t say misrepresented” by the applicant’s representative), and the SLO County production region will remain in balance regardless of any supposed regional shortfall in any type of aggregate.

On traffic, the hottest of all the project’s hot buttons, the applicant’s presentation at the hearing made a show of offering to reduce the project’s average 270 truck trips per day to 135 *loaded* truck trips. Margarita Proud pointed out that this was simply a sleight-of-hand trick attempting to

Carve their names with pride The Margarita Proud Board of Directors, represented by environmental attorney Babak Naficy, is made up of Santa Margarita residents Roy Reeves, President; Dave Ballantyne, Vice-President; Rayleen Wight, Secretary; Tamara Kleemann, Treasurer; and Tom Smith.



obscure the Environmental Impact Report’s analysis of the impacts of 270 truck trips, which comes to exactly the same thing as the applicant’s offered cap of 135 *loaded* trucks *leaving* the quarry, omitting the second trip required to *enter* the quarry.

Give me a reason

In the end, supporters of the project struggled to find some means of support for their wish to approve the project and came up empty. Supervisor Debbie Arnold showed nostalgic family photos of turn-of-the-century mining operations in the area. Lynn Compton conducted an inquest of County Planning staff that lasted over an hour. The portion of her interrogation dedicated to the subject of scenic highways — their history, purpose, philosophy, process of designation, etc. — went on for twelve minutes, to no discernible point. (As Gibson pointed out, “The question of scenic highway designation is not relevant to

the consideration of this project.”)

Compton’s strategy was to question the entire process, and therefore the outcome, whereby County Planning staff made its recommendation for denial. In doing so, she ignored the answers she got from staff and challenged the fundamentals of land use planning, which, because

it is not chemistry or geometry, contains estimates and projections. Compton seized on this as a basis for disregarding the conclusions of the Planning Department and Planning Commission.

It was the equivalent of juggling and tap dancing. But loading a flak cannon with confetti and aluminum streamers and hoping the results will look like actual deliberations, supporting a claim of sufficient grounds to uphold the approval of an un-approvable project, doth not a claim of overriding considerations make.

In the end, the board majority agreed with the position of the Sierra Club, as summarized by Chapter Director Andrew Christie: “There are no overriding considerations available to you with which to certify the EIR, and even if there were, they would not rectify the project’s inconsistencies with the General Plan, the Community Plan and community vision.”

Following Compton’s oratory, Gibson pointed out “I’ve been listening for over an hour now and I have not heard one idea that contributes toward making the necessary findings [and] support for consistency of this specific project with our General Plan.”

There was no answer to Gibson’s question: “What findings are you intending staff to make and what aspects of the EIR and its seven Class



Don’t do it “This is worthy of being preserved”-- Sue Harvey, President, North County Watch.

One impacts [would they address]?”

Supervisor Mecham gently pointed out that “When an appeal is made to the Board, it’s incumbent upon the appellants to be convincing about the reasons why we should overturn something from the Planning Commission.... I need to see a compelling argument that says that we have solid overriding conditions that would substantiate us being on legal ground and good footing.”

Arnold called for a vote to uphold the appeal and direct staff to somehow come up with findings that would allow the Board to certify the EIR.

The motion failed.

Gibson made a motion to uphold the decision of the planning commission and deny the appeal. The motion passed.

In the aftermath, *Cal Coast News* repeated the popular claims that “the

QUARRY continued on page 7



Hard, but not impossible, to ignore The County Supervisors were faced with a stark choice on the Las Pilitas quarry: people or profits. Two were able to ignore the County’s General Plan and the California Environmental Quality Act in an effort to hand the applicant a permit. Three were not.

Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“NRC reaffirms Diablo’s safety,” by David Sneed, *The Tribune*, April 29, 2015.

Summary: Contrary to the headline and the first sentence of the story -- “During a lengthy discussion with PG&E on Tuesday, the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission reaffirmed its determination that Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant could withstand a powerful earthquake on faults surrounding the facility” -- the story offers no direct support for the idea that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has affirmed any such thing, and does not furnish any quotes from the NRC to back up the claim.



“The real question that needs to be answered is what the plant can withstand,” said Diane Jackson, a geosciences and geotechnical engineer with the NRC.

Notice the tense of the quotation: the question needs to be answered. The unanswered question of what the plant can withstand may not strike the reader as being equivalent to an “affirmation” of its seismic safety status.

The NRC has given PG&E several deadlines to meet in order to complete its seismic safety evaluations. By January 2016, PG&E must demonstrate that key pieces of safety equipment, particularly those that ensure the reactors’ radioactive core will remain cooled if a powerful earthquake strikes the plant.

Once again, behold the future tense: The NRC is not quoted as saying PG&E “has demonstrated,” no such demonstration has occurred, January 2016 has not yet arrived, and any positive affirmation of safety has yet to be demonstrated.

Lastly, the utility has until the end of 2020 to complete its seismic risk evaluations. The NRC will then determine if any additional safety actions are required.

More hopes for the future: PG&E has five years to complete its risk evaluation, then the NRC will make a determination.

Upshot: If the NRC has verified the current seismic safety at Diablo Canyon, this article contained no quoted statement to support that claim. Perhaps the phrase was uttered at some point during the discussion the story reports on, but it didn’t find its way into the local coverage. As it is, it appears all the *Tribune* is doing is putting forward PG&E’s wishful thinking and vastly overstating the NRC’s simple, conditional acceptance of the current study results. The word “safety” should be used with great caution in any reference to PG&E’s infrastructure, as the residents of San Bruno learned to their sorrow.

Paso Robles Groundwater Basin

Naci Won’t Save You

In mid May, Carollo Engineers’ Draft Technical Memorandum No. 2, Supply Options and Points of Delivery for Nacimiento Project Water, was released by the County.

It made one thing very clear: The prospects for solving the Paso basin’s woes with Nacimiento water are as bleak as the desert on Luke Skywalker’s home planet.

The tech memo is the second of three commissioned by supervisors in 2013 and looks at opportunities to use Nacimiento water to benefit the basin. The memo considers water supply options, costs, additional infrastructure needs and contractual issues.

The memo is timely. Proponents of a Paso Robles Water District have long stated their hopes that the district would become a Nacimiento partner and secure entitlement to unsubscribed water for agricultural use in the Paso basin.

The memo ends that speculation. Except for 1,200 acre feet the Nacimiento District will hold in reserve, the final 6,000 af are essentially spoken for by the current participants, who will be securing rights to the allocation soon.

The report includes some eye-popping numbers that should silence any discussion about what could have been if there was a water district. A new Participant (the proposed Paso district) would need to pay a “Buy-in-Fee” in the amount of \$21,934,212 plus

interest over a thirty year period. The annualized cost would be around \$1.4 million annually. Annual Operation and Maintenance costs and energy costs could drive the cost per acre foot of water to more than \$1,900 plus substantial infrastructure costs to get the water from an existing or a new turnout to point of use, which would have to be added to the cost per acre foot.

The memo discusses options for the temporary purchase of Nacimiento water from participants by non-subscribers. Those options would still involve a need to invest in extensive infrastructure to deliver the water and would not be a permanent source of water.

A number of complicated exchange options are suggested, but it appears they would all involve extensive infrastructure project costs. Expanding storage in Santa Margarita Reservoir would require extensive structural improvements and be cost prohibitive due to seismic retrofit requirements in addition to some water rights permitting issues. The costs for the San Antonio Intertie, being considered by Monterey County, are expected to exceed \$3,000 an acre foot, and the full benefit of extra storage will only be realized during very wet years.

From the inescapable conclusions column: if there is water available to import to solve the Paso basin’s

problems, it’s not affordable. It’s a hard fact. Irrigated ag land owners over the basin, who use 80% of the water, can’t afford imported water. Hence, the burden of that expense would rest disproportionately on the rural residential user, who uses less than 3,000 af (3%), according to the latest basin update.

Without water to import at an affordable cost, the only option for managing the basin is demand management —conservation, rate analysis, demand forecasting, modeling and metering; protecting water quantity and quality – also known as “living within our means.”

We don’t need to form a water district to do demand management. We do need big pumpers to cut back.




“The Swimming Family,” Roselene Chen, Grade 8.

The Best of the Coast

The California Coastal Commission has announce the results of its 2015 Coastal Art & Poetry Contest.

Ten winners and 45 honorable mentions were selected from more than 2,500 entries. In addition to being showcased on the Coastal Commission’s website, the work will be on exhibit at the Point Reyes Bear Valley Visitor Center in Marin County in June, the Ford House Museum in Mendocino in July and August, Channel Islands National Park Visitor

Center in Ventura in September and October; and the Birch Aquarium at Scripps in La Jolla through mid January 2016. The winning poems and a small selection of honorable mentions will be published in an upcoming issue of *TAB: A Journal of Poetry & Poetics*.



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Sierra Club Goes to Washington

Largest ocean lobby day ever held

By Katie Davis, Santa Barbara Group Chair, Los Padres Chapter

May 13 marked the largest public lobby day on ocean issues ever held in Washington DC. On that day, hundreds of citizens and conservation groups participated in 162 meetings with representatives and staff from 25 states and one territory. Lobby day was the culmination of the Blue Vision Ocean Summit, a conference dedicated to ocean advocacy.

I joined the Sierra Club Marine Action Team, a team of scientists and ocean lovers who help set and advance national marine policy for the Sierra Club. As part of the Southern California contingent, I visited with both Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer's staff and members of congress from both parties, including Representative Lois Capps, a long-time ocean advocate who may be the only person in congress with a marine ecologist on her staff. In addition to me, our area was represented by student leaders from Cal Poly and California State University, Channel Islands.

We advocated for the passage of a bill to stop illegal pirate fishing, which devastates ecosystems and takes away around two billion dollars in revenue from the legitimate fishing industry. This bill represents the rarest of things on Capitol Hill, a sensible bipartisan measure. It seems the one thing both parties can agree on: we're against pirates!

We also asked representatives to oppose the dangerous expansion in drilling off the Atlantic coast and in the deep waters of the Arctic. I pointed out the inevitability of spills, noting not only the gulf spill and the infamous Santa Barbara spill of 1969, but lesser known ongoing problems, like the 1.5 mile slick that stretched from that same oil field just a few years ago. Others noted that 56 communities on the east coast from New Jersey to Florida have passed resolutions against drilling and seismic testing, which can deafen, stress and sicken marine mammals.

At the final Ocean Awards Seminar, Enric Sala of the National Geographic imagined two different future oceans in 2050. In one, fisheries have collapsed; there is more plastic in the ocean than fish; coral reefs are dissolving faster than they can form, and the arctic is ice free, causing weather havoc and warming in North America and Europe. But he also proposed an alternate future, one in which fifty percent of the ocean is set aside in protected areas, replenishing fish and increasing resiliency; sustainable aquaculture supplies healthy seafood; plastics have stopped flowing to the seas, and renewable energy supplants fossil fuels. He challenged all of us to work toward building the future we want to see.

Indeed, "action" was the theme throughout. One speaker, quoting philosopher Henri Nouwen, said "You don't think your way into a new kind of living. You live your way into a new kind of thinking."

Healthy oceans are not guaranteed, but they can be earned through our collective efforts. Given the importance of the ocean to supporting all life on earth, it is well worth the fight.



Action! Sierra Club Marine Action Team, left to right: Dave Raney, Katie Davis, Athen Manuel, Renee Owens, Holly Parker, Doug Fetterly.

Nurses, Teachers, Students: Into the Oily Breach

They don't want the Phillips 66 Project

Starting with the May 5 meeting of the Pismo Beach City Council and continuing through the month at meetings of the Templeton and Lucia Mar School Boards, school teachers and registered nurses joined with the homeowners and environmentalists who have been urging rejection of the controversial oil train rail spur that would bring five rail shipments a week of tar sands crude oil through the center of San Luis Obispo County to the Phillips 66 Santa Maria refinery.

In Pismo Beach, all the groups opposing the project rallied in front of Pismo Beach City Hall before the council meeting and then brought their concerns directly to council members at their regular council meeting. (See "Phillips 66 Wants No Further Discussion," page 9.)

The nurses, teachers and students want our cities and schools to join with the city of San Luis Obispo and those cities, counties and school boards in blast zone communities north and

south of us (see our front page) to declare opposition to the Phillips 66 project.

They have good reasons.

"This project presents significant and unacceptable risks to the health and safety of our communities throughout California and beyond, due to toxic emissions, and the potential for oil spills," said Amber Wiehl, an RN at Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center in San Luis Obispo, at the Pismo City Council. "Our most vulnerable populations are particularly at risk. Children and infants are at greater risk due to their still-developing lungs and respiratory systems. The elderly and people with preexisting respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancer all face greater risks than the general public. As the mother of a child who has been hospitalized with respiratory issues, these concerns hit especially

NURSES continued on page 8



Foreshadowing Northern Chumash Tribal Council Administrator Fred Collins talked to Hands Across the Sand participants in Avila Beach about the importance of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary in keeping our coastal waters oil-spill free.

Hands Across the Spill

The timing of "Hands Across the Sand" this year was poignant

Hands Across The Sand is an annual worldwide gathering of people dedicated to a clean energy future and ending our dependence on filthy fuels.

At an appointed place, date and time, thousands of people in coastal areas around the globe join hands in solidarity to reject dirty fuel projects that threaten our communities and oceans and destabilize our climate. This year, locally, for SLO Surfrider, Sierra Club and the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the event was held at the Avila Pier on May 16, 12:00 p.m. PDT.

Just down the coast, citizens from Ventura County were joined by Surfrider and Ventura County Climate Hub at Surfers Point Park, Ventura.

And, of course, right in between, three days later, the Plains All-American Pipeline spill dumped at least 100,000 gallons of oil into the ocean off Refugio State Beach. It was, of course, inevitable, because we allow oil companies to drill for oil off our coast – "we" meaning those California coastal communities that don't presently adjoin a national marine sanctuary. (And yes, this land-based oil spill was the result of offshore drilling. See "Where the Refugio Oil Spill Came From," page 10.)

Clean-up efforts may still be ongoing as you read this. If so, stay away from contaminated areas to minimize scaring oiled wildlife and prevent tracking oil into otherwise clean areas. Any sightings of oiled wildlife should be reported to the Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network at 681-1080 or the Santa Barbara Marine Mammal Center at 687-3255.

And, of course, support the nomination for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, at www.chumashsanctuary.com.



ROI Brooks

The reason why Hands Across the Sand, Belize.

Quarry

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property is currently zoned for mining, and the county does not have jurisdiction to control traffic on a state highway" — which are untrue and irrelevant, respectively. COLAB fretted that Compton and Arnold were not given enough time to "formulate reasons for approval," instead of noting what really happened: Compton and Arnold followed standard procedure and crafted a tentative motion for approval that directed staff to come back at a later date with findings and conditions that would support approval.

But given all the time in the world, findings for approval could not have been formulated, as no presumed benefit could override the significant environmental impacts the project would have inflicted on the community. As Gibson put it, "Unless the motion maker and the second can give me some evidence to speak to the reasons why we can make the findings that we must make, by law, to approve this project, I will not support this

motion." They couldn't, so he didn't.

Public policy won out over the cause of private profit at public expense.

The larger meaning

In the aforementioned academic realm of urban theory, political scientist Clarence Stone is known as the father of "regime theory," which refers to the close cooperation between local government and private business interests, and the systemic power wielded by landowners and developers — known to sociologists as "the growth elite," accustomed to winning in clashes with coalitions advocating for neighborhood and environmental protections.

You can read about regime theory in a number of academic texts. Or you can just pull up the video of the May 12 Las Pilitas Quarry appeal hearing archived on the County's website, settle in for eleven hours or so, and behold that theory in action, and a rare instance in which the growth elite couldn't quite pull it off.

You will learn what those who were at that epic all-day hearing know: The people made the system work.



Too Slow

continued from page 1

Megantic, Quebec, explosion that killed 47 people?

The answer is no, and the reason is speed: the regulations move too slow and the trains continue to move too fast.

The rules announced at a May 1 joint press conference by US and Canadian officials arrive decades late and with the sticky fingerprints of the oil and rail industry all over them. The administration has slowed down and narrowed the scope of the rules so the most dangerous tank cars stay on the rails for at least two and a half years. Other unsafe tank cars have five or seven years before they must meet new higher standards.

Not that the new standards will help much: All four 2015 accidents involved CPC-1232 cars, the newer tank cars that are supposedly safer than the dangerous DOT-111s. But to be clear, neither the upgraded cars or new cars built to the new standard will prevent an explosion if the train is moving at normal speeds.

So we can begin to look for new and upgraded cars (like the ones that exploded in recent months) in the years to come, but those living along the tracks can still expect to see the worst cars continue to roll by their homes for a very long time. The administration effectively allows rail companies to keep antiquated tank cars on the rails in trains with fewer than 35 crude oil tank cars (or 20 in a row.) That means oil trains hauling up to a million gallons of explosive crude oil in the most dangerous tank cars will keep rolling through a downtown near you forever.

The administration trumpets new electronically controlled pneumatic brakes for oil trains. While it's good news that oil and rail companies will use state-of-the-art technology, the administration is giving them until 2021 to install the new better brakes. That's six years too long to require what should be a basic minimum safety requirement.

And while these upgrades to the tank car fleet creep slowly into place, the trains will continue flying down the tracks at reckless speeds. The new rule allows oil trains to travel at more than twice the rated "puncture velocity" of even the new tank cars that they will (in some cases) eventually require. That means that oil trains carrying three million gallons of explosive crude will continue to travel at 50 mph

TOO SLOW continued on page 9



Ontario, February 14



West Virginia, February 16



Illinois, March 5



Ontario, March 7

oil change international

Who is in the Blast Zone?

These numbers, based on routing data at ForestEthics' blast-zone.org, are derived from census block data and use the Federal Department of Transportation's recommendations for evacuation zones in the event of an oil train spill and/or fire.

This number doesn't include all the people who work, go to school, visit the hospital, dine, play, shop, etc. in the blast zone. In addition, accidents in the U.S. have resulted in an evacuation radius varying from half a mile to 5 miles.

City	Population within Blast Zone	Total City Population
Paso Robles	11,324	24,998
Atascadero	13,734	26,370
Templeton	3,532	5,592
Santa Margarita	153	153
San Luis Obispo	23,509	32,730
Pismo Beach	1,821	4,948
Grover Beach	9,946	13,133
Oceano	6,457	7,369
Callender	499	1,280
SLO County (as a whole)	95,708	270,110

Nurses

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close to home"

Adding five trains per week if the Phillips 66 project is approved, substantially increases the risk of a catastrophic oil train accident for those hospitals, schools and homes in the mile-wide blast zone on either side of the tracks. Rail accidents involving tar sands crude have become increasingly common in the U.S. and Canada

"There are 29 elementary, middle and high schools in the county in the blast zone," said 30-year elementary school teacher Kathleen Minck. "Our school children at these schools are in extreme risk if there is a major oil train accident. Also, increasing air pollution from the trains will affect all our children with asthma, even in the absence of a major accident".

Noting the train runs right next to the Cal Poly campus, Soroush Aboutalebi, an Environmental Management and

Protection major, said, "We want Cal Poly President Armstrong to oppose the oil trains because of the risk they pose to our university, but so far he hasn't."

"I am concerned." Aboutalebi said, "that other educational institutions in the county have mentioned the ongoing financial support they receive from Phillips 66 as one reason for supporting Phillips 66's oil trains project in their letters to the Planning Commission."

Diana Robertson, a Pismo Beach homeowner in the blast zone said she is especially concerned that "our elected officials in the southern part of the county where Phillip 66's refinery is located have not yet joined us in opposing the project."

"Five more oil trains means tripling the risk of an oil train accident," said Robertson. "Communities in the blast zone north and south of our county are

NURSES continued next page

Lawsuit

continued from page 1

in the 9th Circuit challenging the rule on behalf of ForestEthics, Sierra Club, Waterkeeper Alliance, Washington Environmental Council, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Spokane Riverkeeper, and the Center for Biological Diversity.

“The Department of Transportation’s weak oil train standard just blew up in its face on the plains of North Dakota last week,” said Patti Goldman, Earthjustice attorney. “Pleas from the public, reinforced by the National Transportation Safety Board, to stop hauling explosive crude in these tank cars have fallen on deaf ears, leaving people across the country vulnerable to

catastrophic accidents.”

Rather than immediately banning the most dangerous tank cars — DOT-111s and CPC-1232s — that are now used every day to transport volatile Bakken and tar sands crude oil, the new standards call for a 10-year phase out. Even then the standard will allow smaller trains — up to 35 loaded tank cars in a train — to continue to use the unsafe tank cars.

The new rule fails to protect people and communities in several major ways:

- The rule leaves hazardous cars carrying volatile crude oil on the tracks for up to 10 years.

- The rule has gutted public notification requirements, leaving communities and emergency responders in the dark about the oil trains and explosive crude oil rumbling through their towns and cities.

- New cars will require thicker shells to reduce punctures and leaks, but retrofit cars are subject to a less protective standard.

- The standard doesn’t impose adequate speed limits to ensure that oil trains run at safe speeds. Speed limits have been set for “high threat urban areas,” but very few cities have received that designation.

Too slow

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across North America, except in a small number of “high threat” urban areas where they must go 40. The new speed limits offer little comfort because three of the four explosive accidents in 2015 occurred at speeds below 35 mph. (The accident in Gogama, ON, occurred at 43 mph, just three mph over the “high-priority” speed limit.) The Galena, Illinois, derailment occurred at only 23 mph, proving that the speed limits in the rule are inadequate to protect anyone.

In the final addition of insult to injury, the administration walked too quickly away from notification standards in an earlier draft of the rule, leaving citizens and emergency responders in the dark about where

these trains are running and when.

The Obama Administration took its time developing new rules for hazardous materials on trains that run through the heart of America: they looked at the threat of exploding oil trains, but heavy industry lobbying made them flinch. The administration failed to learn the lessons of Lac Megantic or the four explosive oil train accidents we’ve seen so far in 2015 alone. They have given public safety the cold shoulder, instead embracing the oil and rail industry lobbyists peddling this dangerous cargo.

We were fortunate that none of the 2015 accidents caused fatalities. But it shouldn’t be a matter of luck. Secretary Foxx and President Obama have chosen to roll the dice instead of writing strong rules that protect the 25 million of us living in the blast zone.

Phillips 66 Wants No More Discussion

Remember when Katcho Achadjian refused to debate his opponent, Heidi Harmon, when he was running for re-election to his Assembly seat last year?

As in all his successful electoral bids, our wily Assemblyman has sought to dodge the sensitive issue of his voting record. If your record is basically indefensible, it’s not a smart strategy to agree to appear in a public forum where you will have to defend that record against an opponent who is likely to bring it up — in detail — and use it to clean your clock. Thus, Katcho ducked, delayed, created excuses, added conditions, and dodged that bullet.

Phillips 66 now appears to be taking a page from that playbook.

After going head-to-head with Mesa Refinery Watch group members in dueling presentations at meetings of the Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach City Councils, Phillips 66 apparently decided that was enough of that, and pulled out of a scheduled joint presentation at the May 5 Pismo Beach City Council meeting.

At press time, no future presentation has been rescheduled.

And if we could find someone to take the bet, we’d wager some serious money that the Pismo Beach City Council chamber will never hear a presentation from Phillips 66 in defense of their project.

That is to say, even though Mesa Refinery Watch, California Nurses Association, Sierra Club and local residents all showed up at that council meeting and cleaned Phillips’ clock in absentia, the company does not seem to want any rebuttal time.

Scheduling such time would mean a net increase in public discussion of the project. Which they don’t want.

Think about that.



Fat target Every drop of the City of SLO’s main water supply -- from Santa Margarita Lake, Whale Rock Reservoir and Nacimiento Lake -- flows through the Stenner Creek Water Treatment Plant, located at the bottom of one of the most hazardous railroad grades in the state.

Nurses

continued from previous page

looking to us, the residents of San Luis Obispo County, to protect their communities too, because we can influence our local Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to deny the permit.”

“The Phillips 66 project is a recipe for disaster,” said Valerie Love with the Center for Biological Diversity. “It would bring millions of gallons of toxic, explosive crude from Canada

into populated areas of California every day, putting people, businesses and critical water supplies at risk.”

The Final Environmental Impact Report on the Phillips 66 project is expected in September. After the Planning Commission votes on the project, it is likely to be appealed to the Board of Supervisors and the California Coastal Commission.



We’re going to win The people, united, getting the point across at the May 19 Lucia Mar School Board meeting.

Anne Ollivia Eldred

Where the Refugio Beach Oil Spill Came From

The May 19 pipeline spill that despoiled Refugio State Beach and created an oil slick four miles long was classified as a terrestrial oil spill because its source was a buried pipeline.

But the pipeline is there to receive oil and gas from offshore platforms, transported through a subsea pipeline to the Las Flores Canyon Oil and Gas Plant, from which it flows to the Gaviota terminal for transport to Kern County.

The *L.A. Times* did not help the public to grasp the fact that this was essentially an offshore oil spill — with the oil that was pumped from beneath the ocean floor slightly relocated before it spilled back into the ocean — by referring to the rupture as occurring in the Plains All-American Pipeline system “that carries crude from a storage tank in Las Flores to a facility in Gaviota. The pipeline is part of a larger oil transport network that is centered in Kern County....” Yes, that’s where the oil was going. But that’s not where it came from.

Per the annual report of Plains All-American Pipeline LP to the Securities and Exchange Commission, they

operate “a common carrier crude oil pipeline system that transports crude oil produced from two outer continental shelf, or OCS, fields off-shore California via connecting pipelines to refinery markets in California.”

On August 26, 2014, the state legislature voted down a bill that would have permanently banned oil drilling in state waters off Santa Barbara. SB 1096 was killed by oil company lobbyists. The *L.A. Times* reported that “Lawmakers who spoke in opposition said they saw no need to

change current procedures.”

What would have protected Refugio? A national marine sanctuary, designated before the offshore rigs that wrecked it could be built. Only the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary can curb further exploitation of offshore oil leases lying off SLO and Santa Barbara and the proliferation of more rigs, more pipelines, and more catastrophic spills.

A marine sanctuary protects everything up to the mean high tide line and

collaborates with water quality efforts up the watershed as well. A sanctuary prohibiting offshore oil and gas development is a no-brainer for a shoreline that saw devastating damage from the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill, which launched the modern-day environmental movement.

The time for designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary could not be more appropriate.

“Refugio” offered no refuge. A sanctuary does.



County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development Dept.

Faith

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warming. After all, when I hear those terms, I feel a heaviness in my chest and a disquiet in my mind and I think, is there really anything we can do about it anyway? When I hear those terms, I feel an initial impulse to turn away.

To imagine that we have so changed environmental conditions that we are causing a mass extinction — well, to call that a sobering thought would be an understatement. More sobering still, the anthropologist Richard Leakey has warned that “*Homo sapiens* might not only be the agent of the sixth extinction, but also risks being one of its victims”

And what do we do? The things that caused the fever are now so embedded in our personal, societal, institutional lives that it will require a focused coordinated effort on an unprecedented scale for our species to cool the fever.

We are called, in effect, to “turn the world around,” and that’s a great song but a daunting task. So I understand, Florida, because I, too, want to put my fingers in my ears and lalalalalala. I, too, want to clamp my eyes shut and click the heels of my ruby slippers together — if I had ruby slippers — and hope that everything will work out if I just keep repeating that “there’s no place like home, there’s no place like home...”

Except this is our home. And this is the reality of what we face. And it is happening in Kansas... Kansas and California and Kentucky and Kenya and Canada and Korea... Climate change is a reality for us all. Our home has changed. There is no place like the home that once was. We are now called to help preserve the home that can be for future generations.

And though I understand the urge to simply not talk about it, I can say, from my experience as a recovering alcoholic, that denial — tempting as it can be — never helps. Denial, dishonesty, distraction — we must be brave enough to put all these aside. We must fashion a new relationship — a new covenant, if you will — with the earth.

Religion has traditionally given special status to humans among all of earth’s creatures, imagining a unique

connection to the Divine or Supreme Reality through the unique attribute of soul or spirit, and in some cases a non-Earthly realm in which that soul or spirit will reside upon reaching the end of this earthly existence.

My intention today is not to explore the truths of such claims, but the unintentional ramifications on our relationship to that which we celebrate today: the Earth.

This special and separate status taught by many religions has — not surprisingly — frequently led us to imagine ourselves as special and separate. A popular saying goes like this: You are not a human being having a spiritual experience. You are a spiritual being having a human experience. Jesus prays for his disciples, affirming that, like him, they are in the world but they are not of the world (John 17:14).

But as we celebrate Earth Day today and as I imagine this congregation and other congregations and religious communities and ethical societies of every kind celebrating Earth Day today and into the future, inspiring us to meet the challenges before us, leading us to create new ways of living in harmony as best we can with the interdependent web of all life — Well, we can counter that with “the Earth is our home,” but I am wondering if even that is a sufficiently powerful metaphor.

Let me explain: most of us live in homes. But you and I have probably had several homes in which we have lived throughout our lives. We leave one home and we move to another. Some of us have even known the experience of being homeless. Though challenging, dangerous, and unjust, one can live without a home...or in a makeshift home.

This makes home an imperfect metaphor for our relationship to the Earth. Earth is not simply our current residence. It is not an address. It is not even simply our shelter. It is our life. It is our sustenance. There is no living apart from it. The Earth is not simply our home; we are earthly creatures! We live in an interdependent web of all existence, but all existence is completely dependent upon the Earth and its resources. The Earth gave birth to us and will receive us when we die — “to my old brown earth,” as Pete Seeger sang.

That is the awareness that we must take into this struggle. We are of this

world. “The first imperative of moral leadership in the climate movement is to speak the hard truths about the nature of our challenge,” writes Tim DeChristopher, a Unitarian Universalist ministerial student at Harvard University, calling churches to lead on climate justice. We have to speak the truth.

This is why our UU Animal Ministry is sponsoring showings of *Cowspiracy*, to highlight the unsustainable impact of the cattle industry and meat production. This is why people are working on Derail the Spur, to bring attention to the dangerous nature of oil transport and the unsustainability of continuing fossil fuel use. This is why the Green Team has worked on banning polystyrene and unrecyclable plastics, raising awareness of all the stuff we throw away and the unsustainable nature of these practices. This is why we hold this celebration, mindful of the work that lies ahead in addressing the harm we have caused and are causing, and grateful for the life-giving resources that the Earth provides each and every day.

We hold both: the life-giving recognition of our profound connection with the Earth and the dangers of our tragic disconnection from the Earth that sustains us. We have no time for denial or deception or deflection or “I’m not a scientist, but...” answers from public officials. We have to

examine ourselves and our systems and our culture in light of the challenge before us.

We have to acknowledge a part of our human nature, a part that is all too often applauded in our society; the one that wants more and more; the one that greedily grabs and sells; the one that pursues infinite possibilities with finite resources; the one that does not know enough. We have to accept the truth. The climate is changing, and there is also changing climate in public opinion and resolve. People are more and more ready to fight for change. People are ready to explore what it takes to remake our society; to turn the world around.

Our religious communities should lead in teaching us — in the words of Kevin Danaher, the cofounder and president of Global Exchange — in teaching us how to be good ancestors.

How can we be good ancestors? A powerful question. A spiritual practice. A call to action. And we must remember, in the work, to be kind to one another. It is easy to let the panic and the frustration and the pain of it turn us against one another; to speak in harsh judgment; to act in self-righteous anger...but we will only move forward together.

It is not only what we do but how we do it. We come from the earth, living on the earth, go back to the earth and turn the world around.



The word Congresswoman Lois Capps at SLO First Presbyterian Church, August 6, 2008: “People of faith in increasing numbers are turning their attention to environmental issues. From abolition to women’s right to vote and the civil rights movement, people of faith have urged us to do the right thing.”

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **June 13**. 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., June 7th, 2 p.m. City Walk: Jazz-Age San Luis Obispo to World War II. Where is the hotel where Hearst entertained his celebrity guests, the speakeasies of the twenties, and the original French Hotel? Find out and much more on a guided downtown stroll past historic stores, theaters, and hotels. Learn about SLO city life from the years of the Model T to Prohibition, the Depression, and Pearl Harbor. Meet at corner of Marsh and Toro Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sat., June 6th, 8 a.m. High Mt. Rd to Huff's Hole Hike. Moderately strenuous, eight-mile out-and-back hike past wildflower meadows, chaparral, creeks, and mountain vistas. Option to go part way and turn back early. Bring water, sun protection, snacks, dress in layers and have sturdy shoes. Directions: From Arroyo Grande, follow signs toward Lopez Lake and cross dam. Before entering Lopez Lake Park, turn right on High Mountain Rd for 12.6 miles, bearing rt. on Upper Lopez to stay on High Mt. You will reach a second gate, parking area, and trailhead. Second option is meeting at Ridge Trail staging area, just past the Upper Lopez Canyon/High Mt. Rd. junction at 7:30 to carpool in. Information, contact Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 934-2792 or kenya683@msn.com. Rain or serious threat of rain cancels.

Sun., June 14th, 10 a.m. Eagle Rock Trekking Pole Hike. Polecats is dedicated to local Sierra Club hikes to model the benefits of using trekking poles. This hike along a nature trail is 2.2 miles round trip, 720 ft. elevation change. Trailhead located across from Cuesta College at El Chorro Regional Park. From SLO, take Hwy 1 north, turning east (right) at the first of two turn signals to El Chorro Regional

Park. Follow signs to Day Use Area, passing ball fields. More information, contact Leader, David Georgi, 458-5575 or hikingpoles@gmail.com.

Fri-Wed., June 19th-24th, Coyote Gulch Backpack. Backpack 30 miles through some of the best of Utah's red rock, with sheer high-walled canyons and cathedral-like campsites. Trip starts with obtaining permits at the Escalante visitor center. There are 4-5 miles daily hiking, most of it moderate, but some requiring back and forth wading across a creek and one steep trail to bypass waterfalls. There are side trips, so bring a small backpack. This is the warm season, but usually quite pleasant. Trip details and agenda available on sign-up. Limit of 12 participants. Leader: David Hardy, email (preferred): hardyhikers@embarqmail.com, phone 702-875-4826 S. Nevada Group/CNRC Desert Committee.

Sat. June 20th, Prewitt Loop Hike. This is a challenging trek, but worth the effort in experiencing a rugged canyon and its slopes. Strenuous all-day hike, 13 miles and about 2800 ft. elevation gain. Be prepared for exposure to poison oak. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area, about 1.5 mile north of Cambria. Call beforehand to confirm your attendance: Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Saturday, June 27th, (varying start 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 oak woodland 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 hike leader at least 24 hrs in advance is requested. Leader: Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103 or email: bill.waycott@gmail.com. The plants, animals, and the geology of the area will be topics during the hikes.

-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.

-9:00 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: 11:15 am to 12:00 pm, Throop Park, corner of Cerro Romauldo Street and Cuesta Drive, in SLO.


-12:00 p.m. Bishop Peak, 3.5 miles, 950 ft. gain, moderate. Highest of all the Morros. From Hwy. 1, go west on Highland Dr., then right on Patricia Drive. Park at trailhead on Patricia Dr. just before reaching Anacapa Circle.

-3:30 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 0.4 miles north of Turri Rd.

-6:00 p.m. Black Hill, 0.5 miles, 100 ft. gain, easy. Ocean views from



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.




The Sierra Club Needs You!

Become an Outings Leader

- Lead hikes and camping trips
- Introduce others to nature
- Explore the outdoors
- Make new friends
- Protect the environment
- Get healthy exercise

For further information contact:
Joe Morris
 Sierra Club
 (805) 549-0355
 dpj1942@earthlink.net



John Meade, a member of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

Montana de Oro north to SanSimeon. From South Bay Blvd, drive into Morro Bay State Park, turn right at first fork onto Park View Rd., then right onto Upper State Park Rd. to end.

Activities sponsored by other organizations

Sat., June 6th, and July 11, 9:30 a.m. Citizens' Climate Lobby meets at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2201 Lawton Ave, SLO. Join us and learn what you can do to slow climate change and make a difference in our community. Become a climate activist and part of the solution to the most pressing issue of our time. For more information email: citizensclimatelobbyslo@gmail.com.

Sat. June 27th, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Children's Garden. SLO City Farm is planting the Three Sisters Garden for summertime crops and seasonal favorites like sunflowers, tomatoes, peppers and pumpkins in "Our Global Family" children's garden. Bring a hat, gloves, shovel, water, snacks and closed-toe shoes \$5 donation per family suggested. More info at slobg.org/kids.



Sat., June 27th, 1-2 p.m., Preserving our Seas – All About Marine Protected Areas (MPA). An engaging presentation and docent-led field trip, hosted by the San Luis Botanical Society. Followed at 2 p.m. with a free docent-led tour. Follow the link for more information: <http://slobg.org/mpa/>.

Channel Islands Tours

This is a tour of a precious area of our state not seen by many. This spring and summer, you can experience the Channel Islands, including hiking and kayaking, with Sierra Club members and a park naturalist.

This is a gift that gives twice because your tour benefits the political work of Sierra Club California, the environment's strongest voice in the State Capitol. While you are floating about the islands, you will be helping to protect them and other natural resources found only in California.

Enticingly within view of Ventura and Santa Barbara, one of California's (and the country's) most unique environments is part of Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary. It is also one of the least visited national parks in the U.S., accessible only by boat or plane.

The trips are organized by Sierra Club member Joan Holtz. Trip tickets cost \$615 and include meals and lodging aboard the tour boat that leaves from Santa Barbara.

2015 Trip Schedule
June 14-16—A
 Bird Lovers Special!
July 19-21
August 23-25
September 27-29
 Please contact trip leader Joan Jones Holtz, for more information at jholtzhln@aol.com.

