



September 2015
Volume 52 No. 8

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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

The Power is in the Plan



*from Coming Clean, The blog of
Executive Director Michael Brune,
August 3, 2015.*

Most of the news we read and watch about climate change is dark. Bleak, even. Depressing. Many of the tweets, posts, and stories we see reveal the consequences of government and corporate leaders' inaction on climate — in the form of more intense wildfires, droughts, extreme weather, and more.

But there's another story that rarely gets told. Our movement is growing. It is becoming more diverse and more powerful. Clean energy is becoming cheaper every month and is displacing dirty fuels at an increasing rate. All of this momentum is creating a positive feedback loop: As we become more effective at advocating for clean energy, the costs of solar, wind, and energy storage are all plummeting. As clean energy gets cheaper, it becomes easier and easier to put fossil fuels in our rearview mirror.

Today's announcement by President Obama gives our movement a shot in the arm. The EPA has at last issued its Clean Power Plan in final form. Until now, power plants faced no real limitation on how much carbon pollution they dumped into our atmosphere. For an administration with many significant climate achievements, this is the crown jewel.

The journey to get here started years ago, in the dark days of the Bush administration. Twelve states, three cities, and an array of environmental groups (including the Sierra Club) brought suit to force the administrator of the EPA to regulate carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases as pollutants under the Clean Air Act. Eventually, on April 2, 2007, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, reversed an earlier judgement and

found for the plaintiffs.

Today we reap the rewards of that legal victory. If the Clean Power Plan plays out as the

EPA expects it to, the net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from U.S. power plants by 2030 will be 30 percent or more below 2005 levels — a big step toward meeting our current international climate commitments.

The genius of the Clean Power Plan is that there really is no single plan. Instead the EPA has set individual goals for each state (except Vermont, which has no power plants that qualify for regulation; no wonder my friend Bill McKibben lives there). Each goal is calibrated for what that state can reasonably achieve in reductions through measures like retiring coal power, increasing energy efficiency, and encouraging the growth of renewable energy. Yet it's up to each state to determine how it actually will achieve its goal; the EPA will remain hands off unless the state does nothing

at all.

To be honest, the EPA has been conservative in putting this plan together. Each state is being asked to reach an attainable goal that is not just possible, but surpassable — and every state will end up in a better place than where it started. Our economy will benefit, and so will workers — provided that the federal government and the states ensure that training and funding mechanisms are in place to support workers and communities that previously depended on fossil fuels. Important as it is, though, the Clean Power Plan is only a first step in the race to stop climate pollution from power plants. This plan, by itself, does not solve climate change. It doesn't even reach the potential for carbon

POWER continued on page 4



Laetitia's Long Goodbye

Help the County say farewell on Sept. 10

For over a decade, the Laetitia Agricultural Subdivision, proposed to scatter 101 homes across the Laetitia Vineyards, has been the poster child for the biggest problem in San Luis Obispo County's land use policies: a developer can turn rangeland into irrigated cropland, then use the water rights obtained for that cropland to turn those crops into condos and ranchettes. It's not hard to see where that road leads and the ultimate fate of a once-rural county.

The Laetitia project, however, has now hit a bump in that road, one that may portend avoidance of the overdevelopment that current policies make inevitable. County Planning Staff is recommending denial of the Laetitia Agricultural Cluster, based on extensive findings that have determined the project is inconsistent with the policies of the



County's General Plan and identified fifteen Class 1 — significant and unavoidable — environmental impacts that would ensue should the project be permitted.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Sierra Club General Meeting

7 p.m., Thursday, September 17th
 Walking Across the Nation—My Story

After 40 years teaching at Cuesta College, anthropology professor Bill Fairbanks set off on a coast-to-coast trek in 2009. Over five years and 5,600 miles, he talked to hundreds of locals, visited small towns and large, attended community meetings, and viewed awesome landscapes. Bill's stories about his experiences and his reflections on how our country has changed, accompanied by slides, will make for a remarkable evening. Conservation news will begin the meeting.



Medicine Creek under Missouri State Highway 6, east of Galt, Missouri, one of many midwestern waterways carrying silt, fertilizer and pesticides to the sea.

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

Sanctuary's Foes



From late July through the first week of August, the opponents of national marine sanctuary protection for the Central Coast turned the opinion pages of the *Tribune* into fertile ground for students of sophistry, fans of fallacies and trackers of tortured logic.

The competition was tough, but, as is now customary, local pundit John Peschong took home the prize.

Mr. Peschong expressed his disappointment that the Northern Chumash Tribal Council has revised and resubmitted their nomination for a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary despite the wish of Mr. Peschong and his friends that they not do so. Starting from his customary general premise — government is bad and all government programs are tyrannical usurpations of freedom — Peschong cast about for support for specific allegations against the National Marine Sanctuary Program. He didn't do a lot of fact checking on what came to hand.

With each new burst of attempted argument by sanctuary foes, more is revealed about the nature of that opposition, in ever more stark contrast with the nature of support for the sanctuary. Basically, it's the difference between sunlight and shadow.

Let's drill down:

The opposition is ever-shifting. Not long ago, the centerpiece of all anti-marine sanctuary attacks was the claim that a national marine sanctuary will impose new regulations on fishing. While opponents dutifully followed the Propaganda 101 rule — repeat a lie

often enough and people will think it's true — the transparently obvious fact that national marine sanctuaries are not part of the regulatory regime that manages recreational and commercial fishing in state or federal waters simply became a mountain too high to climb. Opponents just looked stupid when they continued to insist on an allegation that plainly is not true.

So they stopped. Instead, they now dwell in the valley of vagueness. Their fallback position, *pace* Peschong, is to intone ominously about "regulations that could potentially be influenced" by sanctuaries, or to attempt gymnastic locutions about sanctuaries whose "influence is powerful enough to persuade over-regulation."

They're having an equally hard time trying to deny the undeniable sanctuary proscriptions against oil and gas drilling. Some have tried to float a scenario whereby Congress and the President might decide to revoke the ban against drilling in sanctuary waters, and then NOAA would initiate the legally required and very public process to revoke that ban, and the entire state of California and all the environmental groups in the country would sit back and let it happen.

Peschong avoided becoming part of that hilarity by instead pretending that Chumash Sanctuary proponents claim a sanctuary would have avoided the Refugio oil spill because "they firmly believe that a national marine

FOES continued on next page

Santa Lucian

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Santa Lucia Chapter

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CHAIR
- Patrick McGibney (12/17)
VICE CHAIR
- Linda Seeley (12/17)
SECRETARY
- Pat Veesarat (12/16)
MEMBER
- Lindi Doud (12/17)
MEMBER
- Greg McMillan (12/16)
MEMBER
- Emily Miggins (12/15)
MEMBER

Greg McMillan
 COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS
 Lindi Doud, Patrick McGibney
 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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Sue Harvey
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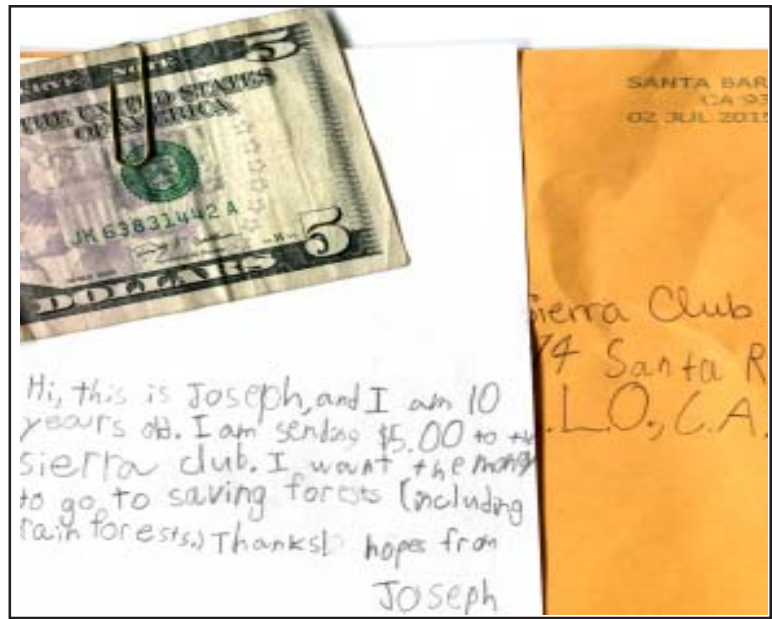
From 10-year-old Joseph's five-dollar contribution to save forests to the sustaining contributions of our Cal French Circle members, for the Santa Lucia Chapter to keep doing what we do, we need the support of all our members.

Become a member of the Cal French Circle of supporters by signing up for a monthly contribution of at least \$20 a month or one annual donation of at least \$240. Go to www.santalucia.sierraclub.org, click the "Donate" button and either donate \$240 or select an automatic monthly contribution of at least \$20. Or you can set up a monthly donation through your bank's free "bill pay" service.

The Honor Roll: Cal French Circle Members, September 2015

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 Jesse Arnold
 John Beccia
 Valerie Bentz
 Francois & Ellen Beraud
 Elizabeth Bettenhausen
 Sheila Blake
 David & Naomi Blakely
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 Joan Carter
 David & Linda Chipping
 Philip Christie
 Sarah Christie
 Carol Chub
 Harvey & Kathy Cohon
 John Connerley
 David Cox
 Kenneth Curtis
 Thomas Cyr
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 Kathleen Deragon
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Henriette Groot
 Marvin Gross
 Marilyn Hansen
 Lynne Harkins
 Sue & Richard Harvey
 Edward & Holly Hoffer
 VL Holland
 James & Charlene Hopp
 Stacey Hunt
 Michael Jencks
 Richard & Prisila Johnson
 Jerry Kelly
 Randall & Sally Knight
 Penny Koines
 Sally & Eugene Kruger
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 Greg & Linda McMillan
 Vita Miller
 Joe Morris
 Richard & Carol Mortensen
 Christine Mulholland
 Denny & Kitty Mynatt
 Michael & Donna Phillips
 Linda Poppenheimer
 William & Deborah Power
 Barry & Dona Price



Save the date: November 7, 2015

A Dry-Farmed Fundraiser

With the water issue in North County taking a lot of space in the news -- and irrigated agriculture taking 80 percent of the water -- we think it's time to get educated on the issue. Since the growing of grapes is considered the main player in this problem, we thought a talk with those dry-farm vintners and growers who are not part of the problem would be in order. Dry land farming in the North County is seeing a growing renaissance. We're going to spend a day dropping in on these visionaries and hearing how it works.

A bus will leave San Luis Obispo mid-morning, with stops in Atascadero and Templeton to pick up you "over the hill" folks. We will spend the day visiting several of these growers and vintners, capping it off with a locally sourced dinner by Chef Spencer Johnston at Ambyth Winery (not only dry farmed but grown using biodynamic methods), just east of Templeton. The buses will then head back south.

Plan to spend the day with friends, tasting wine and enjoying a splendid dinner in an amazing place. Drop a note to sierraclub8@gmail.com and we'll put you on the list to receive more information as plans progress.

Roy Reeves
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 William & Sandra Rumbler

Gar & Elizabeth Salzgeber
 Carla & David Saunders
 John & Julia Schutz
 Linda Seeley
 Frederick Seykora
 Jerry Spruill
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 Keith & Beth Wimer
 Emily Worrell

Would You Like a Deduction with Your Donation?

As you may know -- per the wording that appears on every Sierra Club membership form and website -- contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible because they support our citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts.

However, we also do plenty of things that aren't strictly a matter of legislation or weighing in with elected officials (supporting the nomination of

a national marine sanctuary, organizing resistance to a potentially disastrous oil-by-rail project and opposing the relicensing of Diablo Canyon, to name three), which can be funded with tax-deductible dollars.

If you want to support the work of the Chapter *and* take a deduction off your taxes next April, here's how:

- Write your check to "The Sierra

Club Foundation"

- Write "Santa Lucia Chapter Fund" in the Memo section

- Mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

That's it. You have successfully made a tax-deductible donation to the Sierra Club, and you will receive the requisite acknowledgment letter to that effect for the edification of the IRS.

We thank you!

Foes

continued from previous page

sanctuary would stop accidents from occurring." But nobody believes that. We've said that if a sanctuary had been declared off Goleta before the oil rigs went in, that spill would not have happened because the rigs that pumped the oil into that ruptured pipe would not be there.

To clinch his argument against the argument that nobody's made, Mr. Peschong pointed out that a faulty valve recently resulted in a 220,000-gallon sewage spill into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. "The sanctuary status of Monterey Bay did not prevent raw sewage from reaching the ocean," he concluded, thus making the point that a national marine sanctuary is not a *magic* marine sanctuary.

Virtually all of the current crop of criticism mentions the economic study which found that our region would see a likely benefit from the establishment of a national marine sanctuary in the form of at least \$23 million added annually to the local economy and up to 600 new jobs. Sanctuary opponents must attack this report because, unless they can mount a credible challenge to it, they know it would be pretty tough

to find a local elected official anywhere who would vote against a \$23 million boost to the local economy and 600 new jobs.

So let us underscore this point: There has been no credible challenge to the study of the economic impacts of a national marine sanctuary on the central coast. The one formal attempt to challenge it was mounted by an uninformed and unqualified individual in the form an opinion piece that contained significant errors and made conclusions based on mistaken assumptions, invalid comparisons and groundless opinions.

The conclusion of the economic study stands. And that does indeed mean that if you oppose the CHNMS, you are opposing a likely \$23 million annual addition to the local economy and 600 new jobs.

The opposition says things that aren't true but sound like they might be true. It's a *national* marine sanctuary, so that means we'd lose *local control*, right? Decisions would be made by "far-flung government bureaucrats" in Washington DC, right? Wrong. Decisions would be made by the local superintendent and Sanctuary Advisory Council, comprised of a broad group of local stakeholders.

When members of a particular economic special interest group complain about "loss of local control," it is necessary to translate: they're not afraid of a loss of local control; they're afraid of too *much* local control, shared with local stakeholders other than themselves who may feel that they, too, have an interest in the ongoing health of our local ocean.

Mr. Peschong claims the livelihoods of fishermen would be somehow threatened by a marine sanctuary, and supports this claim with a citation of one of those mistaken assumptions from that aforementioned uninformed commentary attacking the economic study.

Again, the attempt is to paint a picture of fishermen thrown out of work by theoretical future fishing regulations to be imposed by a marine sanctuary that would impose no regulations on fishing.

The opposition is frequently anonymous. The report on the economic impacts of a national marine sanctuary on the central coast of California was commissioned by Sierra Club California. It says so on the first page. In the opinion piece that tried and failed to debunk it, the author coyly declined to identify who asked

her to write an attack on the economic study.

Furthering the cause of anonymity, Mr. Peschong writes that "other fishing communities all along the California coast, whose ports and harbors have fallen into national marine sanctuary waters, have spoken out about the constricting overreach in the name of preservation."

Really? Do these communities "all along the California coast" have names? Have they spoken out like Marin and Sonoma Counties did earlier this year when they successfully petitioned to expand the national marine sanctuaries off their coast because they wanted even more of what they already had?

Have they spoken out like Captain Alex Brodie, Fleet Manager for Island Packers in Ventura? He said: "The research, outreach and education provided by the dedicated employees and volunteers of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary help to put our business on the map. Businesses like ours reap direct and indirect economic benefits from the presence of Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary worth millions of dollars for our local economy."

Letters

Send to: sierraclub8@gmail.com, or Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. All letters become property of the Sierra Club and may be edited for space.



Tough room The NRC heard overwhelming public testimony against the renewal of Diablo Canyon's operating license at its August 5 meeting in SLO.

Diablo is a Trade-In

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is out of excuses

On August 5, the Santa Lucia Chapter filed comments on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the license renewal of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant Units 1 and 2.

That evening, Chapter Director Andrew Christie delivered a three-minute summary version at the NRC scoping meeting held at the SLO Courtyard Marriott.

We noted that in 2009, the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants attempted to evaluate the environmental impacts of energy sources that may serve as alternatives to license renewal.

It said "To serve as a source of commercial power, photovoltaic systems and concentrating solar power systems would need to work in conjunction with energy storage systems such as batteries."

It also said, "Historically, photovoltaic systems have not been used for commercial power generation, but have been used to power appliances and homes in remote locations that cannot be easily connected to the transmission grid."

On that basis, the NRC dismissed

renewable energy as a viable alternative to the relicensing of a nuclear power plant.

We pointed out in our comments on the 2009 GEIS what was actually happening with solar power in California at that time, that in fact California does not consist primarily of homes in remote locations that cannot be easily connected to the transmission grid, that "the GEIS's version of wind and solar power and renewable energy storage technology was cursory, severely out of date or wholly lacking, and of no use in an alternatives analysis that should evaluate the viability of nuclear power plants over a 20-year period that will be marked by increasing costs of plant maintenance and repair, simultaneously with smart grid and renewable energy storage technologies coming on line, as the price of solar and wind power continues to drop, all pointing toward the potential commercial obsolescence of nuclear power within the relicensed period."

Six years later, we had to point out essentially the same problems with the new proposed Environmental Impact Statement.

The NRC has replaced its circa-1975

DIABLO continued on page 6

Power

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savings in the electric sector — we will meet and exceed this goal.

But there's a saying among marathon runners that nothing affects your average speed like zero miles per hour.

The Clean Power Plan officially gets this country moving on the path to a carbon-free economy; we can and almost certainly will pick up the pace later. In fact, polls consistently show that, across party lines, Americans strongly support cutting carbon pollution from power plants. And a just-released poll from NextGen Climate of voters in presidential election swing states found that 70 percent of voters had a favorable reaction to a goal of at least 50 percent clean energy by 2030.

And while cutting carbon emissions is definitely great news for our climate, it also has profound benefits for our health, the environment, and consumers. The EPA estimates that by 2030,

electricity costs under the Clean Power Plan will drop by 8 percent, owing to the greater efficiency of renewable energy. What's more, creating this more-efficient system for power generation has the potential to create thousands of new jobs in construction, manufacturing, and other sectors.

Meanwhile, the cleaner air that results from reducing our use of dirty fuels will save thousands of lives and enable millions of Americans to lead healthier, longer lives. Many of the people who will be helped the most are the ones who need it most. Power plants that emit carbon pollution and other toxic pollutants disproportionately harm nearby low-income communities and communities of color.

The real beauty of this plan is that it enables us to achieve all of these things simply by committing to do what we already know is achievable to reduce carbon pollution. That may not be the ultimate solution to climate disruption, but it certainly is a sensible place to start.

Nowhere to run

PG&E is in the process of gathering beautiful photos for next year's calendar, which they send to each household in the county. Along with this very lovely calendar is included safety information and an evacuation map letting everyone know where to exit their community just in case there might be an alert sounding.

The map looks very plausible and neat on paper, but in reality it just might pose a few problems. The map has not changed in 35 years, nor have the two-lane roads leading in or out of each coastal town. But what has changed is the population. It has probably tripled since Diablo Canyon's permits were first okayed by the NRC.

Following their evacuation plan would most probably cause total gridlock on all roads east, north and south within 15 minutes of an alarm sounding.

What to do? My first thought is to stock up on large rolls of duct tape and be prepared to seal myself in. If I'm apt to die, I'd rather be in my home than in my car with no way to flee the scene.

I say, shut it down! Now!

Nancy Ruhl, Los Osos

Who controls local control?

In the forty years I have been a Sierra Club member, I have occasionally—not often—seen the Club's leadership take the wrong stand, and support some action that is not the best choice to protect the environment.

The Santa Lucia chapter's Executive Committee has made such an error, in my judgement, by choosing to support the County Flood Control District (FCD) as the best option to balance the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin.

For 45 years, the FCD (comprised of the five County supervisors) has been half-hearted and ineffective at limiting pumping in the Basin. It has resisted asking any extractors to report their usage, let alone to cut back. Even the 2013 Urgency Ordinance, designed as a moratorium on irrigated agriculture, was gutted by the FCD with a long list of "vested rights." More than a thousand acres of irrigated crops have been planted since then.

A much better choice is the new Local Water District. Its ground-breaking nine-member board reflects the unique mix of residents and agriculture in the Basin: five board seats represent residents (both landowners and renters) and small family farmers; two seats represent owners of mid-sized properties; and two seats represent owners of larger land holdings.

The Local District board are all unpaid volunteers, and must live over the Basin. The FCD board members are professional (paid) politicians, none of whom lives in the proposed district. My neighbors—rural residents, small farmers, retirees—are strong in their convictions that this local volunteer board can stabilize the Basin, while County management will only bring more of what we have now. The County has calculated that the costs for either approach are virtually equal.

Local demand management, local supplemental water, local recycling and reuse projects—all require committed management by Basin residents who rely on a sustainable rural water supply.

Michael Baugh, Paso Robles

The Sierra Club replies:

To clarify, the Sierra Club supports several potential management options for the Paso basin, including County management, State management and adjudication. Anything, that is, but a "hybrid" water district with a built-in 6 to 3 majority for agricultural interests over non-land owning residents.

Mr. Baugh praises this "ground-breaking" district structure while neglecting to mention the reason why the Sierra Club — and a dozen other public interest groups statewide — are opposed to the proposed water district. We are all opposed because the public's right to a voice in governance should not be based on how much land you own. County Supervisors are elected based on one person, one vote. Not so, the directors of the proposed Paso Robles Groundwater Management District. Acreage-based voting is an undemocratic feudal notion that lets landowners translate their land holdings into votes.

No matter how one tries to sanitize the voting structure of the proposed district by partitioning landowners into separate classes of voters, the fact remains that the proposed voting structure will dilute and negate the voice of rural non-land owning residents.

Mr. Baugh's letter attempts to reframe that discussion as a choice between a do-nothing County and "local control." Let's review how that dynamic has played out in the recent history of this issue.

In the fall of 2012, concerned North County rural residents began attending meetings of the Board of Supervisors and the Paso Basin Blue Ribbon Committee to comment on the declining water levels in their wells and the explosive growth of irrigated agriculture over the basin. As rural residential well levels fell and implications became clear, the residents started to gain traction with the supervisors. Just as the Board was moving to deal more aggressively with falling groundwater levels in the Basin, the economic interests that would benefit the most from a lack of management jumped to propose "local control" via a Paso Robles Groundwater Management District — an irrigation district that would essentially place control of the basin in the hands of agriculture, cutting out the voice of the residents.

Pressed by residents, in August 2013 an urgency ordinance was adopted by the Board of Supervisors, but only after it had been significantly watered down under pressure from irrigated ag interests. Those same interests then pressed for last-minute state legislation to form their special water district. The public voices supporting the district since 2013 have been largely coming from the irrigated ag community, which is responsible for pumping most of the water from the basin every year.

This same power dynamic could be seen in 2007 when the county embarked on a long overdue reorganization and update of the General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element. The initial draft had numerous policies addressing water

LETTERS continued on next page

Sept. 16: Edward Abbey Documentary at the Palm

Central Coast Bioneers and the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival are collaborating on a screening of the documentary “Wrenched” which exams the colorful life of “The Monkey Wrench Gang” author Edward Abbey. Abbey was a novelist referred to as the “Thoreau of the American West.” Infamous for his views on the environment and his criticism of public land policies, Abbey emerged from the early sixties conservationist writers with a uniquely sharp wit and sardonic sense of humor. His stories warn about the consequences of over-development, particularly in the Southwest.



His fight continues to sustain the last bastion of the American wilderness - the spirit of the West.

The film will screen at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, September 16 at the Palm Theater, 817 Palm Street. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and can be purchased at the door. Advance tickets on sale at www.slofilmfest.org.

A q&a session will be held after the film.

WRENCHED

How Edward Abbey lit the flame of environmental activism and gave the movement its soul

With
 Edward Abbey Peg Millett Robert Redford
 Paul Watson Jack Loeffler Tim DeChristopher
 Doug Peacock Ken Sanders Charles Bowden
 John De Puy Katie Lee Craig Rosebaugh
 Ingrid Eisenstadter Dave Foreman Kieran Suckling
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www.wrenched-themovie.com
 Contact: vicki@wrenched-themovie.com

Screening hosted by:
Central Coast Bioneers & San Luis Obispo International Film Festival

Date and time:
Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 7:00pm

Location:
Palm Theatre, 817 Palm St. SLO / Tickets: \$10/\$8
Purchase in advance at slofilmfest.org or at door before show

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Foes

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Have they spoken out like Ted Balestreri, President of the Cannery Row Company? He said: “For the four million annual visitors to Cannery Row, the health and beauty of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is priceless. We simply would not have the vibrant economy and visitor experience we currently enjoy were it not for a clean and accessible marine environment. The hotels, restaurants, shops, and other vendors along Cannery Row understand and appreciate this connection.”

How about Captain Joe Nazar, owner of San Francisco Whale Tours at Pier 39 in San Francisco? “Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary is one of the earth’s most unique ecosystems,” says Captain Nazar. “We are incredibly blessed to not only live next door to this ocean treasure, but to run a business whose success hinges on a healthy and well protected sanctuary.”

When sanctuary opponents pop up in our local media, they like to claim that they are among “hundreds of individuals and organizations” opposed to the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Sanctuary supporters make the same claim about hundreds of supporting individuals and organizations. The difference: those hundreds of supporters can actually be listed by name, and have been (www.nominate.noaa.gov/nominations).

All sanctuary opponents like to guide the curious reader to the website of the Our Protected Coast Coalition. As we’ve previously noted, OPCC is a studiously anonymous website, a collection of links to anti-sanctuary political hit pieces going back decades. The first name ever to be publicly linked with the OPCC was that of Amber Johnson, the proprietor of Pacific Coast Strategies, Mr. Peschong’s political stablemate and fellow p.r. professional, whose main claim to fame is serving as field director of the oil industry-funded campaign that killed Santa Barbara’s anti-fracking ballot initiative.

And finally:

The opposition is inexplicable. To his credit, Peschong refers to “anecdotes” and “anecdotal accounts,” making it clear where he’s getting his factoids. To this realm belong paranoid fantasies about loss of “local control,” fishermen thrown off the water, and the torture of the English language necessary to proclaim sanctuaries “powerful enough to persuade over-regulation” of fishing...without, you know, regulating fishing.

Congress passed the National Marine Sanctuaries Act in 1972 in response to the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill. Fourteen sanctuaries have been designated in US waters since. They have everywhere fulfilled their mission of public education, increased research, and implementing ecosystem-based management of our shared ocean heritage, providing protections that no other state or federal system of regulations can provide.

The facts about national marine sanctuaries are clear, plentiful and readily available. The national marine sanctuary system has been a boon and a benefit across the socio-economic board. A strong case can be made that the primary recipients of these benefits have been commercial fishermen. Sanctuaries have protected marine habitat and assured the viability and continuance of fisheries. Coast to coast, the catch of fishing fleets in the waters of national marine sanctuaries has brought hundreds of millions of dollars to local coastal economies.

But the likes of Mr. Peschong and the folks pulling the strings at the OPCC can reliably count on an ability to whip up a number of commercial fishermen by preying on ignorance and phantom fears and selling the notion that a national marine sanctuary would mean the end of them.

And their most amazing trick of all: The Refugio Beach oil spill shut down the fishing industry in two counties. Fishermen were thrown off the water. They have sued the oil company for lost income. In other words, the oil spill did in reality what marine sanctuaries do only in Peschongian fantasies, and has also likely permanently altered the marine environment off the coast of Santa Barbara. Only a marine sanctuary can stop new oil and gas development off our coast and protect our fisheries from another Refugio.

And yet. Even after this very recent real-world example of what can happen in the absence of marine sanctuary protections, some of the people who should be fighting hardest to gain that protection for the fisheries they depend on are fighting the hardest against it. This remains a mystery.

We will continue to cite the facts about national marine sanctuaries and the fact of communities and businesses that feel incredibly blessed to have one. Mr. Peschong and his cohort will surely continue citing anecdotes, hurling charges, making vague, sweeping statements with nothing to back them up, and dropping old arguments and switching to new ones without acknowledging that they are doing so.

En el Camino



Hiking the Camino de Santiago At our July general meeting, Outings Leader Mike Sims and fellow *peregrinos* told a packed house at the Steynberg Gallery what it's like to hike Spain's 12th-century pilgrimage trail.

Letters

continued from previous page

management and metering groundwater pumping, which would have laid the foundation for sustainable basin management. Most of those safeguards were deleted or seriously weakened at the urging of many of the same voices that are now pushing for “local control” as a panacea for a “do-nothing County.” For the most part, it was those “local control” folks who turned out en masse to gut any effective provisions in the 2013 Urgency Ordinance and extort a long list of “vested rights” with threats of lawsuits. They got crucial oversight and safeguards deleted from the ag water offset program requiring that water use for new plantings be offset by conservation of the same amount of water elsewhere.

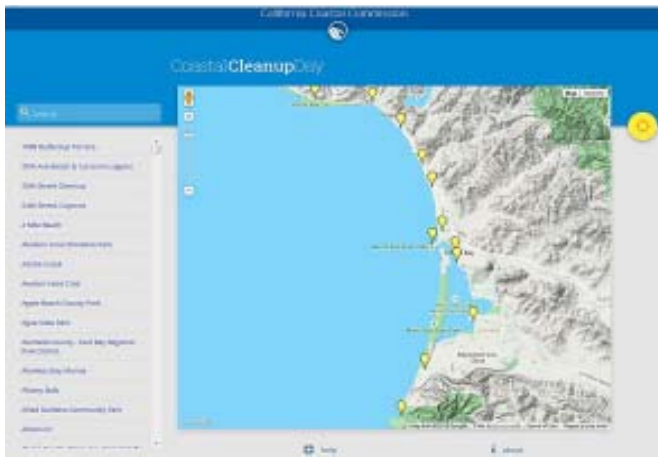
There is little evidence that the big pumpers pushing for the Paso Robles Water District, once having achieved that goal, would do anything differently than what they have been doing all along: lobbying to minimize oversight and management.

It is naïve to deny the realities of electoral politics. Control of water in California is a high-stakes game. More than half the land owners over the Paso basin don’t live there but will gain a substantial voice in management of water there with an acreage-based vote under the banner of “local control.” An acreage-based pie relegates rural residents to a permanent underclass. Real local control is based on one-person, one vote. Supporters of local control for real should be pressing for a one-person, one-vote water district that levels the playing field for the rural resident and small landowners.

The “do-nothing” County has been doing plenty: it’s been acting at the behest of the same powers that are proposing a water district as the solution to the Paso basin’s problems. The fact is that if the local irrigated ag community went to the Supervisors right now and pleaded for metering, well monitoring and demand management policies, a majority of supervisors would vote for those policies.

Ultimately, we expect it will be up to the State of California and vigorous enforcement of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to save the county from itself.

Coastal Cleanup Day is Sept. 19



Santa Lucian • September 2015

The California Coastal Commission will sponsor the 31st Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 19, from 9 a.m. to noon. In San Luis Obispo County, the day's efforts will be

coordinated by the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo (ECOSLO). The 31st Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day will bring hundreds of volunteers out to the beaches, shorelines, and inland waterways of San Luis Obispo County to clear away debris deposited over the past year. Statewide last year, 66,844 Coastal Cleanup volunteers collected 1.1

CLEANUP continued on page 8

Diablo

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assessment of renewable energy with a new exclusionary strategy: A requirement that any replacement for Diablo Canyon's power be just like Diablo Canyon: A utility-scale, stand-alone source of always-on baseload power. Dr. Mark Cooper, in the new report *Power Shift: The Deployment of a 21st Century Electricity Sector and the Nuclear War to Stop It* (see "New Report: It's Time for Nukes to Go," July), notes this "failure of the NRC to adjust to the changes in the electricity sector," and states that "in the current technological and economic environment this focus is tantamount to an irrational baseload bias and a utility-scale fetish that is out of touch with reality."

Dr. Cooper points out that PG&E echoes the NRC's utility-scale baseload fetish in its own Amended Environmental Report, with a focus on "stand-alone" energy sources.

"PG&E also assumes that a significant amount of natural gas generation will be needed to replace the amount of electricity generated by Diablo Canyon. But there are a large number of possible combinations of many resources that can meet the need for electricity in a low carbon environment. PG&E has chosen a single combination that relies on a large amount of gas, which increases the environmental impact of

that alternative. More renewables, distributed generation, geothermal, and efficiency would achieve the same outcome with a much more environmental and consumer-friendly impact."

Dr. Cooper notes that: "one need only compare PG&E's Amended Environmental Report with the California Energy Commission documents PG&E relies on. PG&E rejects the option of geothermal energy based on the assumption that a single new geothermal plant would be built in PG&E's service territory. Making the conservative assumption that the PG&E service territory includes half the geothermal resources in the state, geothermal resources are twice as large as Diablo Canyon's capacity. Adding in efficiency and other distributed resources, the alternative energy capacity would be four times the capacity of Diablo Canyon."

Further, "PG&E's analysis of the supply-side of the California electricity sector also obscures a simple fact: non-hydro renewables, i.e. wind and solar, have increased dramatically and are poised to surpass nuclear generation, which has been in decline."

We trust the EIS alternatives analysis will take note of this fact, as well as the

fact noted in *Power Shift* that "nuclear power and central station generation are at a severe economic disadvantage as the technologies of distributed generation continue to develop and deploy."

The EIS should analyze and contrast "short-term operating costs, long term total resource costs, including efficiency as a resource, identify the implications of the dramatically declining cost of renewables, and recognize the economic problems of aging reactors in wholesale markets where renewables and efficiency are putting downward pressure on prices."

The EIS should incorporate *Power Shift's* assessment that the economics and necessity of Diablo's reactors are being undermined by a:

- 40 percent increase in the operating cost of aging reactors;
- 40 percent decrease in the cost of wind;
- 60 percent decrease in the cost of solar;
- low-cost energy efficiency technologies that have taken a bite out of load growth;
- demand response that has become an increasingly valuable and effective resource;
- huge investments in storage technologies that are on the brink of redefining the value of intermittent resources; and
- advanced information and control technologies that transform the

approach to reliability.

The NRC's alternatives analysis should incorporate Dr. Cooper's findings that "aging reactors are more costly than

efficiency, wind, gas, and some solar in the near-term. In the mid-term, more solar becomes competitive with aging reactors as do several other generation sources, including biomass, geothermal, micro-turbines, and even offshore wind."

In view of the fact that the NRC's 2009 GEIS insisted that "to serve as a source of commercial power, photovoltaic systems and concentrating solar power systems would need to work in conjunction with energy storage systems such as batteries," the alternatives analysis in the EIS should acknowledge the April 2015 introduction of affordable residential and industrial battery storage systems; the implications of this technology's immediate, widespread demand and acceptance; and its projected growth to become a \$19 billion industry by 2017, the year the final EIS is scheduled to be released.

If the EIS does not incorporate an analysis of this new information, we will know that the NRC has again chosen to remain strategically out of date so as to exclude viable alternatives to license renewal.

Finally, the EIS should dispense with PG&E's argument that Diablo Canyon is needed to meet the goals of carbon reduction. Recent projections by the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA) based on multiple scenarios for carbon emission reductions found that nuclear power does not help achieve greater carbon emission reductions.

Per Dr. Cooper, "pointing out that 60% of our current low carbon generation comes from nuclear as a basis for suggesting that nuclear must play a central role in the future decarbonization of the electricity sector is simply wrong as a matter of fundamental economics and totally irrelevant to policy making. The existence of nuclear power is a very old sunk cost... In the mid- to long-term, none of the existing nuclear reactors will make any contribution to decarbonization. They will all have to be replaced, and their future costs, compared to the available alternatives, are all that matters."

In its Clean Power Plan, the EPA concurred, rejecting a proposal to allow states to count six percent of existing nuclear generation toward clean energy goals. In its final rule, EPA states "We believe it is inappropriate to base the BSER (Best System of Emission Reduction) on elements that will not reduce CO2 emissions from affected electric generating units

below current levels.... Existing nuclear generation helps make existing CO2 emissions lower than they would otherwise be, but will not further lower CO2 emissions below current levels.

Accordingly... the EPA is not finalizing preservation of generation from existing nuclear capacity as a component of the BSER."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission must replace its dated alternatives assessment with the current state of the art in renewable energy when it drafts its Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed relicensing of Diablo Canyon.



Tesla trauma triggers nuclear nullity The NRC is hoist on its own petard and its 2009 attempt to dismiss renewables as an alternative to nukes because "to serve as a source of commercial power, photovoltaic systems... would need to work in conjunction with energy storage systems such as batteries." Now they do.

Santa Barbara Says No to Oil by Rail

Atascadero, Paso, Pismo, Grover, Arroyo Grande: Are you listening?

On June 28, the City of Santa Barbara became the latest California municipality asking the County of San Luis Obispo to deny the Phillips 66 oil by rail project.

The first speaker at that city council meeting turned out to be the first and last person at the hearing who spoke in

“we just had a devastating spill on our coast, and that was a pipeline, and pipelines are safer than trains. Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson’s representative concurred that the project poses a direct risk to Santa Barbara’s public safety and environment, and the Refugio Beach oil spill “has reminded us how vulnerable we are.”

Fred Shaw, Vice Mayor of Carpinteria, told the council why his city had decided to oppose the project. Ken Huff (left) of the Santa Barbara County Action Network delivered a 15-page report delineating the risks posed by the project throughout the county.

Aside from the “you’ll get sued” guy, the only other project supporters in the room appeared to be councilmembers Dale Francisco and Frank Hotchkiss.

Hotchkiss allowed that “it’s true this kind of oil is more explosive; that probably contributes to its value,” but his constituents should “take some solace in knowing the risks are absolutely minimal.” And: “We shouldn’t tell other planning commissions what to do.”

Francisco assured attendees that the feds have total control because this project involves interstate rail transport; cities and counties have no say. He offered the encouraging word that new safety rules were put in place by the Department of Transportation earlier this year, assuring “newer and stronger” tank cars and mandatory

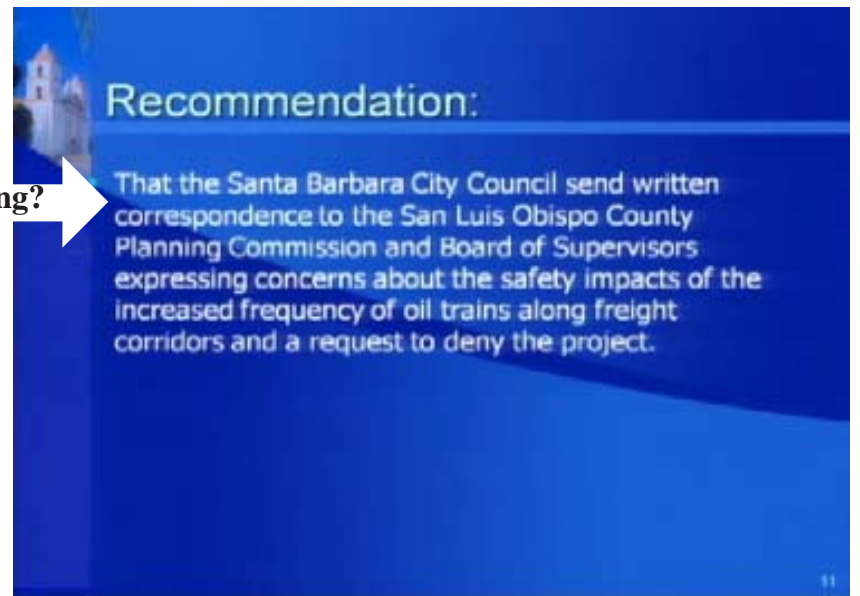


favor of the project.

He ticked off the Phillips 66/Barnett Cox p.r. talking points, then introduced the specter of legal action against the City should the council make a “hasty decision” to opposed the project.

Mayor Helene Schneider turned to the city attorney for clarification of this eyebrow-raising remark. The city attorney assured the council that the law provides “overwhelming support for public agencies that wish to exercise their First Amendment rights,” including by such means as sending a letter to county planners.

Assemblyman Das Williams’ representative urged denial, noting that



speed limits in urban areas Also, “the San Luis Obispo Planning Commission will be very hard pressed to turn this down, as there would be no justification in land use law.”

To help out councilmembers Hotchkiss and Francisco: Tar sands oil trains explode because the chemicals needed to dilute the crude sufficiently to pour it into a tank car are highly volatile. Far from being an indicator of value, this is a graphic illustration of just why tar sands crude has earned its rep as cheap and dirty “extreme oil:” it’s barely even oil.

Per those “absolutely minimal” risks, at current levels of oil transport, the Department of Transportation estimates 15 derailments and spills per year, and one “Lac Megantic level event” (a large portion of a city incinerated, mass casualties) every two years.

As for councilmember Francisco’s assurances that the new rules will save us: Old tank cars won’t be off the rails and retrofits will not be complete for 8 to 10 years. Retrofits will have thinner walls than new tank cars. The new speed limits apply only to a few “high-threat urban areas” (i.e. not us). And the new rules gutted requirements for giving the public and emergency

responders advance notification of oil shipments and routes.

As far as how the SLO County Planning Commission could justify turning down this project, it will have available to it at least eleven justifications under land use law. They are called Class I environmental impacts — significant and unavoidable — and they are all listed in the project’s Environmental Impact Report. Even more justification can be found in the fact that the EIR minimizes or simply omits other significant impacts altogether in an attempt to obscure the full scope of the project’s harms. Any deliberative body that issued a permit for a project based on an EIR as deficient as this one would be in violation of state law.

And then there’s the ultimate justification, as articulated by Sierra Club Santa Barbara Chapter Chair Katie Davis in her remarks to the city council: “There would be zero benefit to us from oil trains moving through Santa Barbara to prepare crude oil to be refined for export.”

As another speaker put it, and as all other speakers — with one exception — agreed, the council “should place the health and safety of residents over the profits of private industry.” So they did.

Send a Message to Your City Council

Take action: Protect SLO County from explosive oil trains

Oil giant Phillips 66 wants to start moving more explosive oil trains through California communities to their polluting Santa Maria refinery on our pristine California coastline.

If this expansion is approved, it would bring a mile-long oil train through California five days a week, carrying millions of gallons of explosive and toxic crude oil.

The risks to California go beyond the danger of a train derailment and explosion. Volatile toxic chemicals leak out of tank cars into the air as they move through communities. Phillips 66 even admitted that its proposed oil train facility will create “significant and unavoidable” levels of air pollution, including toxic sulfur dioxide and cancer-causing chemicals. Studies have cited increased health risks — particularly for children and the elderly — of cancer, heart disease, asthma, and premature death. This carbon-intensive tar sands crude will also contribute to global climate change.

Use your city council members to get off the sidelines:

1. Complete the form below with your information.
2. Personalize your message.
3. Click the third button.

sc.org/Phillips66

Send Your Message

Enter Your Information:

- Required fields
- Title
- First Name
- Last Name
- Your Email
- Address 1
- Address 2

Personalize Your Message:

- Subject: Speak out against the Phillips 66 Santa Maria refinery proposal
- Dear City Council Members,
- Personalize your message: I'm writing to urge you to oppose the Phillips 66 crude-by-rail expansion project at the Santa Maria refinery.
- This project will significantly degrade our air quality and, in the event of a derailment, could result in a catastrophic air spill and fire. As reported on the front page of the July 12 issue of The Tribune, more than a dozen California cities and counties facing the impact from this project have stood up for the safety of their residents. I am disappointed and dismayed that my city council has chosen not to weigh in with the County Planning Commission to urge rejection of this project.
- The information on the potentially devastating impacts of the Phillips 66 project is

What does the Santa Barbara City Council know that your city council doesn’t? Quite a lot, it would seem, if you live in Pismo Beach, Grover Beach or Arroyo Grande. They still haven’t managed to make a peep on the Phillips 66 project, but they’ve finally agreed to discuss it: Pismo on Sept. 1, Grover on Sept. 21 and Arroyo Grande on Sept. 22.

Attending those meetings to let your council members know they need to do more than just talk about the project, they need to ask the County to deny it. If you’ve already used this handy Sierra Club alert to sent them that message, feel free to do so again. Go to: sc.org/Phillips66.

Civil Rights in the Blast Zone

The County should be required to notify everyone within one mile of the rail line of the potential dangers associated with oil trains

By Charles Varni, Ph.D., South SLO County coordinator for protectslo.org. This is an abridged version of an article that appeared in the Santa Maria Sun.

The Phillips 66 oil train terminal project proposes to bring mile-long oil tanker trains, each carrying 2.4 million gallons of toxic, flammable, explosive tar-sands crude oil from Alberta, Canada, through our county and communities, five times a week for the next 20 years. The imported oil is refined primarily for export sale to Asia.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has formally designated a “blast and evacuation zone” of 1 mile running parallel to the tracks in case of an oil train derailment (six so far this year in the U.S. with five of them exploding): 30 percent of the population of SLO County and 40-plus public and private schools are in this blast zone. In some communities it is much more (Paso Robles, 45 percent; San Luis Obispo, 71 percent; Grover Beach, 78 percent; Oceano, 88 percent). More than 95,000 people in the county are directly impacted, yet very few of them even know it. The populations of Santa Barbara County and all the other counties along the rail line will be affected as well, yet there has been no formal notification to blast-zone residents by any governmental agency.

Why? Because the Phillips 66 project, for government purposes, only consists of the oil train terminal at the Nipomo Mesa refinery. It doesn’t include the many thousands who every week for the next 20 years will be subjected to the threat of derailment, fires, explosions, massive amounts of new air pollution from diesel engine exhaust and toxic, carcinogenic fumes vented from the tank cars carrying the dirtiest crude oil on earth.

Local citizens have taken it upon themselves to begin canvassing the blast zones throughout SLO County with factual information fliers, which inform people of the potential dangers to themselves and their property. What we are finding is that typically upward of 90 percent of residents and business owners we talk to have never heard any specifics about the Phillips 66 project. A colleague and I recently canvassed within one block of the train tracks running through Oceano. Only four of the approximately 100 persons we contacted knew anything about the project. Not surprisingly, after we briefly shared the facts of the project, the majority of them were opposed to it. It is easy to see when your community is being put at

Taking Issue: the Pope vs. David Brooks

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Fracking and the Franciscans,” by David Brooks, *The Tribune*, June 25, 2015.

Summary: On June 18, Pope Francis issued his historic encyclical making the moral case against climate change and in defense of the planet. Because he took aim at the mindset for which “maximizing profits is enough,” conservative pundits arose as one to tell the pope to shut up. None rushed to the defense of the status quo with more fervor than the *New York Times*’ David Brooks.

A few years ago, a team of researchers led by Daniel Esty of Yale looked at the environmental health of 150 countries. The nations with higher income per capita had better environmental ratings. As countries get richer they invest to tackle environmental problems that directly kill human beings (though they don’t necessarily tackle problems that despoil the natural commons).

“The biggest despoiler of the natural commons, of course, is our constant pumping of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, which the pope acknowledges in scientifically backed detail.”

Brooks ignores it to a comical fault.” -- Lindsay Abrams, Salon.com, 6/23/15.

You would never suspect, from the encyclical, that over the past decade, one of the most castigated industries produced some of the most important economic and environmental gains. I’m talking, of course, about fracking.

“And thus begins the most confusing and ill-informed part of a very confusing and ill-informed rant: in the pope’s critique of an economy that ‘accepts every advance in

technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings,’ Brooks reads an implicit condemnation of hydraulic fracturing. And yet the EPA, Brooks informs us, found that fracking isn’t causing widespread harm to the nation’s water supply — an incredibly limited interpretation of an incredibly limited study that actually had the agency confirming, for the first time, that fracking can pollute drinking water.” -- Lindsay Abrams, Salon.com, 6/23/15.

...there’s some evidence that fracking is a net environmental plus.

“What he’s referring to is the conception of natural gas as a “bridge fuel”: the idea that, leaving aside the water and air

pollution and the earthquakes and the other potential health risks arising from the drilling process, gas is a net good because it’s better than coal. It is true, as he writes, that when burned, natural gas contributes less to global warming than does coal, although that equation quickly changes when natural gas leaks straight into the atmosphere — methane, as a greenhouse gas, is many times more potent than carbon dioxide. Even if we could prevent all of those leaks, one recent study found, natural gas is still likely to have minimal impact on our emissions over the coming decades; worse still, it can prevent us from investing in truly green energy (one technology the pope absolutely does endorse). It’s a strategy that the study’s author likened to “dieting by eating reduced-fat cookies.” -- Lindsay Abrams, Salon.com, 6/23/15.



Hardest to accept, though, is the moral premise implied throughout the encyclical: that the only legitimate human relationships are based on compassion, harmony and love, and that arrangements based on self-interest and competition are inherently destructive.

“Brooks cites an entire one sentence from the religious leader’s sweeping, 138-page encyclical on ‘care for our common home’ and deems the entire document too...Catholic.”

-- Lindsay Abrams, Salon.com, 6/23/15.

[The pope] neglects the obvious truth that the qualities that do harm can often, when carefully directed, do enormous good... Moral realists, including Catholic ones, should be able to worship and emulate a God of perfect love and still appreciate systems, like democracy and capitalism, that harness self-interest.

“That includes you, leader of the Roman Catholic Church! Add some balance into your religious teachings, for God’s sake. And just to be sure that we aren’t overlooking the irony, this is David Brooks, the anointed preacher of How to Live and How to Think, telling you not to speak from an exclusively moralistic standpoint — apparently, it’s only okay to do that if Brooks agrees with what you’re saying.” -- Lindsay Abrams, Salon.com, 6/23/15.

A raw and rugged capitalism in Asia has led, ironically, to a great expansion of the middle class and great gains in human dignity.... Pope Francis is a wonderful example of how to be a truly good person. But if we had followed his line of analysis...there’d be no awareness that although industrialization can lead to catastrophic pollution in the short term (China), over the long haul both people and nature are better off with technological progress....

“Has it really come to this? Is it now conventional wisdom to admonish the Catholic Church for under-appreciating the contributions of Chinese totalitarianism toward ‘human dignity’? It’s nauseating enough when Western economists laud the Chinese ‘economic miracle,’ as if there’s some deep secret involved in using slave labor to hoard mountains of manufacturing profits. But asking us to appreciate the ‘gains in human dignity’ offered by a society without freedoms of speech, assembly, political choice, religion or labor organization is beyond absurd.” -- Matt Taibbi, Rolling Stone, 6/27/15.

“The ‘catastrophic pollution’ caused by China’s industrialization, he writes, is a ‘short term’ problem. It’s strange, because Brooks isn’t a climate denier. And yet there’s really no way to make that argument with a straight face unless you’re somehow unaware that the very same coal-fired industry that’s making it hard for people in China to breathe has also made it so that the country is responsible for some 30 percent of the world’s emissions (or that the U.S., despite having more breathable air, is the world’s second-highest emitter). Far from short-term, some have gone so far as to call that existential.” -- Lindsay Abrams, Salon.com, 6/23/15.

Cleanup

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million pounds of trash and recyclables. In San Luis Obispo County, volunteers clear 30 beach sites and pick up thousands of pounds of trash each year.

ECOSLO provides supplies at every site (gloves, buckets, bags, pick up sticks). However, if Cleanup volunteers bring their own bucket or reusable bag and gloves from home, this assures everyone will have the equipment they need.

When: Saturday, September 19th, 2015 from 9 AM to noon at a beach near you!

Where: Cleanups will take place at

over 800 sites on California beaches, bays, rivers, and creeks. In SLO County, you can choose one of the 30 sites that ECOSLO manages. Call ECOSLO, The Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo, at (805) 544-1777 for exact locations and other site-specific information. For further detail, visit the ECOSLO web site at www.ecoslo.org.

How: To sign up to volunteer for Coastal Cleanup Day, go to <http://theecoslo.ivolunteer.com/>. If interested in helping lead this event, sign up as a Site Captain. There are just a few spots left and we need your help! Call or email ECOSLO for available locations and Site Captain Orientation dates: (805) 544-1777 or programs@ecoslo.org.

Upshot: David Brooks’ theory of the virtues of greed was refuted 23 years ago at the very end of a documentary film on the career and influence of a very different public intellectual, who addressed the idea that “Individual material gain... is accepted as legitimate, even praiseworthy, on the grounds that private vice yields public benefits, in the classic formulation. It’s long been understood very well that a society that is based on this principle will destroy itself in time. It can only persist, with whatever suffering and injustice that entails, as long as it’s possible to pretend that the destructive forces that humans create are limited, that the world is an infinite resource, and that the world is an infinite garbage can. At this stage of history, either one of two things is possible: Either the general population will take control of its own destiny and will concern itself with community interests, guided by values of solidarity and sympathy and concern for others, or alternatively there will be no destiny for anyone to control... The conditions of survival, let alone justice, require rational social planning in the interests of the community as a whole, and by now that means the global community. In this possibly terminal phase of human existence, democracy and freedom are more than values to be treasured; they may well be essential to survival.” -- Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Zeitgeist Films, 1992

Taking Issue: Diablo vs. Email

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Diablo Canyon can endure quakes, latest study finds” by David Sneed, *The Tribune*, September 11, 2014.

Summary: On July 14, 2015, the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility (A4NR) filed testimony in a case before the California Public Utilities Commission in which PG&E will attempt to claim the remainder of the ratepayer funds taken for its “AB 1632” seismic studies. The studies were released on September 10, 2014, as the California Central Coast Seismic Imaging Project. A4NR’s testimony, relying on 2,400 internal PG&E emails, paints a picture of obfuscation and stonewalling in the course of preparing the \$64 million study. In short, had these emails been available when the study was released last fall, the headline in the Sept. 11 *Tribune* might have looked very different.

Laetitia
continued from page 1

Those impacts include loss of important farmland, air pollution, peak traffic on Highway 101, land use conflicts with existing agricultural operations, and damage compromising 169 coast live oak trees and 14 acres of native oak woodland.

Looming over all is the debate over the accuracy of the developer’s estimate of how much water the project would need, and where that water’s going to come from.

The Sierra Club has commented that the applicant’s claim of sustainable water use is based on the assertion that each home will not use more than 0.44 acre feet of water per year, but the project plan lacks enforceable conditions to limit water use. Monitors are proposed to gauge water use, but monitoring is not mitigation.

The nature of the local aquifer is also problematic. County agricultural resource specialist Lynda Auchinachie has pointed out that “It does seem uncertain that there is enough water to sustain agricultural production.”

The County Planning Commission held their first session on the project on August 13. They will resume deliberations, and vote to permit or deny the project, on September 10.

“I would hope that, if the Laetitia Agricultural Cluster can be disposed of, staff and decision-makers would feel empowered to challenge the current policies and ordinances under which such clusters come forward,” wrote local land use watchdog Eric Greening. “Although Agricultural Cluster Subdivisions were sold to the public as a way to contain the damage of developing sprawling ‘antiquated subdivisions’ in their original locations, the ordinance was written not only to allow moving old parcels around, but to allow the creation and clustering of new parcels, based on minimum parcel sizes for various agricultural uses. This creates an incentive for putting rangeland under irrigation to increase building entitlements.”

So said Chief Nuclear Officer Ed Halpin. But internal emails tell another story. From a June 24, 2014, email between the geoscience directors:

“Nothing exceeds the engineering and other designs of the plant,” he said.

... [Mr. Halpin] reviewed the Executive Summary that was presented in the recent webcast... He specifically asked about the last set of ground motion curves in the presentation where it shows us using the 86th percentile for a deterministic evaluation that links Hosgris [sic], San Simeon, and Shoreline and shows exceedance both at low frequency and high frequency.

Halpin was still concerned on September 2, 2014, just a week before the report was released:

...as I reread the executive summary section of the report and go to the last page that summarizes old vs new data/assumptions, it seems the majority of the data has worsened and not improved. The optics look bad. If I was to color code the summary sheet and show all data in red that’s worse in regard to assumptions it would not look good....

At issue is the matter of deterministic evaluations—i.e., the worst that could happen. This is what the California Energy Commission specifically requested from the AB 1632 report—and PG&E found that the deterministic news was grim. Instead, Halpin chose to report on the probabilistic results—i.e., how likely is it to happen? It’s been determined that if the earthquakes occur, they will be stronger. Of course, the “probability” of the Fukushima disaster was one in a million.

Dr. Gibson’s chagrin at PG&E’s bypassing of review by the CPUC’s appointed Independent Peer Review Panel was justified, and is now documented. A March 19, 2014, email from a top PG&E legal advisor verifies that PG&E has promised they would share drafts of the report with the IPRP:

[Gibson] said it is unfortunate that PG&E chose to release the study to the public before releasing it to the panel. “It was our expectation that the data sets would be released to the IPRP, so we would have a chance to analyze them before releasing them to the public, but I guess that was not PG&E’s plan” he said.

“See slide 3 from Feb 2013 presentation that says we’re sending draft technical reports on Irish Hills to the IPRP in February 2014. I’ve rec’d nothing to send them... but clearly we indicated we were going to share drafts.

Two days later, a top PG&E geoscience manager lays out the plan:

No meeting is currently scheduled. We are issuing a final report June 30th. I expect meetings after we issue the report based on when the CPUC/IPRP requests them. If a meeting is scheduled for any reason, I will let you know.

Less than two weeks later, the IPRP staff liaison asks PG&E again to see a draft of the report:

I’m hearing that PG&E plans on submitting a report of its results and findings to the NRC in June 2014. The IPRP would like to see a draft before then ... the sooner the better ... so that any comments or suggestions we might have could be incorporated into your report. (ellipses in original)

And an engineering director then explains PG&E’s refusal to Ed Halpin:

...Our sense is they [IPRP] will not be happy not getting an advanced review before we issue but we really have no choice at this point...

Halpin issued an internal report on July 3, 2014, that stated “We believe we have answered all of the questions posed by the IPRP of the PUC but will work with them to answer additional questions throughout the summer once the report is issued.”

Summary: It took filing as legal intervenors for A4NR to discover the trail of emails that contradict PG&E’s claims in the *Tribune* when the study was originally released. It validates Dr. Gibson’s concerns that the IPRP was ignored. And it can only reinforce in the public’s mind that PG&E is continuing to show the kind of bad corporate behavior that earned them a federal indictment for obstructing the investigation that followed the San Bruno explosion. The entire A4NR testimony, with all emails, can be read at: <http://a4nr.org/?p=3476>



Of Brickbats, Bouquets & Pelicans

In June, the Sierra Club filed a Coastal Commission appeal of the Harbor Terrace project in Avila Beach due to its likely impacts on the Harford Pier fish cleaning station — where fish oil rains down on hungry pelicans, producing the same effect on their life expectancy as an oil slick. (See “One For the Pelicans,” April.) The *Tribune* soundly scolded us for potentially holding up the beloved Harbor Terrace project and heaved a brickbat our way.

In August, when we withdrew our appeal of the Harbor Terrace project, the *Tribune* bestowed a bouquet upon us because it believed we withdrew the appeal due to a sudden realization that Port San Luis is “taking steps to make fish cleaning stations safer for marine life.”

Yes, it is. Right after we filed the appeal, the Port San Luis Harbor Commission, which had previously been in no great hurry on this issue -- mostly spending its time arguing with representatives of the Sierra Club, SLO Coastkeeper, Morro Coast Audubon, Willow Tree Wildlife and Pacific Wildlife Care -- suddenly snapped into action, accelerating the pace of short-term protective measures at the station. Our appeal became the only topic of conversation at the Port’s ad hoc committee meetings on the fish cleaning station. We got near daily phone calls and emails from staff seeking withdrawal of the appeal. When the Port finally took the step of approving a full suite of near- and long-term measures, with dates and dollar amounts attached, we withdrew our appeal.

Coastal Commission staff, who were unaware of the problem prior to our appeal, reported to the Coastal Commission at their August 14 meeting that they will now be engaging in active encouragement and support of efforts to resolve the issues around the Harford Pier fish cleaning station.

Thanks to our brick-batted appeal, matters were expedited, the Coastal Commission was alerted, and the Port now must deliver on the promises it’s made.





Stop Oil Trains: The Week of Action

By Ethan Buckner, ForestEthics

What a week it was. Throughout the week of July 6, more than 5,000 people participated in 100 events during this year's #StopOilTrains Week of Action, amounting to the largest protest against oil trains in history.

Across the US and Canada, communities took to the streets, held memorial vigils, blockaded the tracks, hosted educational events, hung banners, canvassed neighborhoods, and spoke out at public hearings. This effort - led by grassroots leaders and communities most impacted by oil train transport - sent ripples across North America.

Highlights from the week of action are too numerous to count. National press coverage included pieces in MSNBC, Democracy Now, EcoWatch, The Hill, AP, & VICE - alongside dozens of local print, TV, and radio pieces.

In Lac-Mégantic, Ontario, site of the

first and worst oil train disaster, the week started with a beautiful, bold and somber march that drew hundreds of people to the tracks. The week continued with a banner hang and guerrilla projection actions in California, powerful infrastructure blockades in New York and Oregon, creative rallies in Albany, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Richmond, Minneapolis and DC -- just to name a few. Over the weekend, action picked up with a jazz funeral procession in Philadelphia and a die-in in Seattle. On Saturday, thousands attended coordinated protests across California, including rallies that drew hundreds each in San Luis Obispo, Richmond, Los Angeles and San Jose to call on decision-makers across the state to reject new oil train infrastructure proposals and shut down existing operations. There are countless more to name, and every action



Speaking out SLO Mayor Jan Marx told a crowd of 500 in Mitchell Park why the Phillips 66 rail spur project must be denied at the local Week of Action event, July 11.

had an impact, from gatherings of 5 to 500. No matter where or how you participated, you were a part of something extraordinary.

We've come a long way, but we know we can't and won't stop here. across North America, big oil will continue to push for new extreme oil

infrastructure despite its impact on community health and safety and the climate. Our movement will continue to grow and fight for our communities and our climate, so thanks to all who made the 2015 Stop Oil Trains Week of Action a powerful step along the way.



get involved at protectslo.org

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Custom built, lovingly cared for home in Lopez Canyon. Rustic redwood exterior, elegant interior with lots of mahogany cabinetry and trim. 32 acres of California as it was with towering sycamores, magnificent oaks, lots of spring wildflowers, and lovely garden. Seasonal spring and stream. Plentiful private well-water. Backs into National Forest with Santa Lucia Wilderness and Lopez Lake nearby. Animals and birds galore. Hiking and riding trails abound. Nearest neighbors a quarter mile away. Yet only 25 minutes from downtown San Luis Obispo, Arroyo Grande, French Hospital, and the SLO airport. Contact Byron Grant at Century 21 Hometown Realty. (805)481-4297.

Rights

continued from page 7

great risk simply for the profits of the seventh biggest corporation in the U.S. There's no significant benefit to us; just a lot of huge risks and, for sure, negative health consequences (not to mention huge economic and environmental risks).

When a multinational oil-refining corporation proposes a project that puts your health, property, businesses, schools, economy, and environment at risk, do you think you have a right to know about it? Why was Phillips 66 not directed to send a letter to every

residence and business in the blast zone across the entire county? The county is requiring Phillips 66 to inform every parcel within 300 feet of a new oil pipeline being laid along Old Oak Park road in Arroyo Grande and Pismo—and oil pipelines are the relative safest mode to transport crude oil. The most dangerous mode is mile-long oil trains, but the many thousands impacted by these disasters waiting to happen get no official word. The county planner in charge of the oil train project said the local media and county website provide sufficient publicity, and they will do no more than the minimum required by their attorneys.

A quick search of the *Tribune* shows six news stories regarding the P66 project in 2015. Local television stations have had virtually nothing to say about the project and featured a brief and distorted piece, about the July 11 rally and march in SLO.

This is a civil and human rights issue—the right to know that something of this magnitude and impact is planned for your neighborhood should not be the responsibility of citizen volunteers. This is a fundamental responsibility of government—to inform us of significant risks to life and property so we can be part of the decision-making process if we so choose. To not require specific public notification of all persons living in the blast/evacuation zone is a clear dereliction of duty and keeps the public uninformed and thus, uninvolved. Who likely benefits from that?



Stone Soup Gets a Dash of Activism



Staffing the marketplace of ideas Sierra Club and Mesa Refinery Watch Group teamed up to get the word out on the Phillips 66 oil train project to attendees of the Stone Soup Street Faire in Grover Beach over the weekend of August 22.

Phillips 66 is Spending Big in Sacramento

Wonder what that's about?



On August 3, the *Sacramento Bee* published a list of who's been spending the most money lobbying Sacramento officials this year, according to disclosures filed with the California Secretary of State's office.

Phillips 66 is spending slightly less than Comcast and slightly more than the City of Los Angeles:

COMCAST CORPORATION AND AFFILIATED ENTITIES, INCLUDING NBC UNIVERSAL MEDIA, LLC: \$523,722.96

PHILLIPS 66 COMPANY: \$506,780.16

LOS ANGELES; CITY OF: \$506,373.33

Read all about it at <http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article29886748.html#storylink=cpy>.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **September 14**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierraclub8@gmail.com

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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.

Sat., Sep. 5th, 10 a.m. City Walk: SLO's Secret Past. A guided, exploratory stroll to reveal the original site of the Mission, the 1860s stagecoach stop, home of SLO's first millionaire, the last remaining city gas light, a forgotten WPA project, and other hidden landmarks in the historic core of SLO. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet at NW corner of Nipomo and Dana Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sun., Sep. 6th, 10 a.m. Quarry Trail Trekking Pole Hike. "Polecats" hike to model and practice the benefits of using trekking poles. This hike near Cerro Cabrillo is 2 miles long, with 320 ft. of elevation change. Meet at trailhead for Quarry Trail. From Hwy 1 in Morro Bay, take Los Osos/Baywood Park exit, driving 1.4 miles south on South Bay Blvd to trailhead parking lot on the left. Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or hikingpoles@gmail.com.

Thurs., Sep. 17th, 7-9 p.m. Bi-monthly Meeting: Walking Across the Nation—My Story. After 40 years teaching at Cuesta College, anthropology professor Bill Fairbanks set off on a coast-to-coast trek in 2009. Over five years and 5,600 miles, he talked to hundreds of locals, visited small towns and large, attended community meetings, and viewed awesome scenery. Bill's stories, accompanied by slides, about his experiences and his reflections on how our land has changed will make for a remarkable evening. Conservation news will begin the meeting. Meets at Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355,

Sat., Sep. 26th, 8:30 a.m. Cruikshank to Soda Springs Hike. Strenuous, nine-mile, 2,500 ft. gain, hike in southern Big Sur, with stunning coastal views from upper elevations. Poison



Gary Felsman

All 5 Morros Hike On top of Islay Hill.

oak on trail. Meet at Washburn Day Use area in San Simeon State Park, about one mile north of Cambria, for a car shuttle between the trailheads. Extreme heat will postpone hike to a later date. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sat.-Sun. Sep. 26th-27th Service and Hiking in the Carrizo Plains. Opportunity to visit and assist at an outstanding, lesser known national monument. Saturday is National Public Lands Day, and we will join other volunteers on several maintenance projects. Car camp with potluck and campfire on Saturday night with Sunday tour of historic, prehistoric, and geological sites in the Monument—details to be determined by group consensus. Leader: Craig Deutsche, craig.deutsche@gmail.com or 310-477-6670 CNRCC Desert Committee.

Advance notice: October 2015


Sat., Oct. 3rd, 9 a.m. Bird and Plant Walk and ID at Montana de Oro

Join with leaders of Audubon and California Native Plant Society to look for shorebirds and coastal dune plants, featuring a look at Snowy Plover habitat and discussion of this species recovery. Walk is 4 miles, along ocean side of the dunes, then crossing to the estuary side. Bring water, snacks/lunch, binoculars, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat, and jacket. Meet at parking lot at the end of Sand Spit Road in Montana de Oro State Park—the first road on the right, 3/4 mile from park entrance. Restrooms are there. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.



Thur.-Sat., Oct. 8th-10th Death Valley Wilderness Restoration. Help to restore wilderness values in this beautiful and remote national park by cleaning up a marijuana grow site in Hunter Mt. area. 4WD is required, though carpooling is possible (contact leader for info). Meet Thursday afternoon at junction of Hwy 190 and South Saline Valley Rd. Work Thursday afternoon and all day Friday. Saturday, we will do either



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
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- Explore the outdoors
- Make new friends
- Protect the environment
- Get healthy exercise

For further information contact:
 Joe Morris, Outings Chair
 Sierra Club, Santa Lucia Chapter
 (805) 778-1875
 dj1942@earthlink.net

John Maki, founder of the Sierra Club in Yosemite

more cleanup or be free to enjoy the park. Camping is primitive, so you need to bring all the food and water you will need for the weekend, plus a trowel for personal needs. Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com or 661-944-4056. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Activities sponsored by other organizations

Sat., Sep. 12th, 1-2:30 p.m. Favorite Fruits of the Central Coast at SLO Botanical Garden. The central coast is a rich and diverse area for agriculture. The California Rare Fruit Growers share their favorite unique fruits to grow in the central coast without a greenhouse. Find the perfect fruit for your yard! Enjoy refreshments and mingling with CRFG members. Presentation at 1:30 p.m., docent led tour of the Garden at 2:30. \$5 Garden members / \$10 public. More info at slobg.org/fruit.

Sat., Sep. 26, 1-3 p.m. Family Herbal Laboratory at SLO Botanical Garden. Discover the uses of herbs growing in the SLO Botanical Garden and central coast. This class will incorporate herbal knowledge, as well as, a hands on harvesting and



creating workshop where you will get to take home your creation. We'll learn and make basic herbal preparations, herbal blending, infusions, syrups, and

more. For students 9 years old and up. Limited class size. \$5 Garden members / \$10 public. More info and RSVP at slobg.org/herb-lab.

**Sat., Sep. 19;
Sat., Oct. 17,
12:30-2 p.m.
Learn to Cook
with the Sun!**



Solar Cooking is a fun, easy, nutritious, efficient and cost effective way to prepare home-cooked meals even while you're away all day at work or play! Come to learn about this exciting method now used all over the world. Solar cooking saves trees, saves lives and builds communities! Free. There are the last two monthly demonstration classes of the year. Watch for additional demonstrations offered around the county or request a demonstration for your group of 6 or more. Volunteers and donations always appreciated. Davies Farm, 5015 Jespersion in SLO. Contact: Marcia Alter 458-1241, MAlter1011@aol.com, or Phyllis Davies 440-9346, Phyllis@DaviesCo.com.