



SIERRA
CLUB

October 2003
Volume 40, No. 9

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GENERAL MEETING

City of SLO Greenspace
Protection Program
October 28, 7:00 p.m.

ExCom Meetings

October 24, November
21, 5:00 p.m.

Conservation Committee Meetings

October 14, November
11, December 9, 7:00
p.m.

Cesar Chavez Memorial Native Garden workday & celebration

Saturday, November 1
Contact ECOSLO for information: 544-1777 or
www.ecoslo.org

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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

Coastal Commission Gives Deadlines to SLO County to Update Our Local Coastal Plan

by Tarren Collins, Chapter Chair

At its September meeting in Eureka, the Coastal Commission heard Sierra Club Coastal Program Director Mark Massara, Jeff Kuyper of the Environmental Defense Center (retained by Friends of the RanchLand), and Chapter Chair Tarren Collins express their frustration to commissioners over the lack of progress and amount of foot dragging and delays related to the long running efforts of the Coastal Commission to encourage the County of San Luis Obispo to update our ancient Local Coastal Plan (LCP). "For two years San Luis Obispo County Supervisors have wasted hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars by paddling around in circles to create the illusion of LCP update activity while accomplishing nothing of any substance," Tarren Collins told the Coastal Commissioners during the hearing on September 9, 2003.

As reported previously, the Coastal Commission voted in July to continue to try to work cooperatively with our recalcitrant county, rather than sending a letter to the legislature or taking more punitive measures at this juncture. The hearing in September was to vote on the language of a letter to the county, setting forth deadlines and priorities. Working with commissioners and staff prior to the hearing, Massara, Collins and Kuyper were successful at advocating for stronger language. The final draft letter from the Coastal Commission to the County of SLO follows.

September 29, 2003

Chairperson Mike Ryan
San Luis Obispo County Board of
Supervisors
County Government Center
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Subject: San Luis Obispo County
Response to the *San Luis Obispo County
Local Coastal Program Periodic*

Review, adopted by the California
Coastal Commission on July 12, 2001

Dear Chairman Ryan and San Luis
Obispo County Supervisors:

I am writing to convey the California Coastal Commission's concerns regarding the implementation of its recommendations in the San Luis Obispo County Periodic Review. On July 12, 2001, the Coastal Commission adopted the Periodic Review of San Luis Obispo County's Local Coastal Program (LCP), which identified 165 actions the Commission determined are necessary and appropriate to fully carry out Coastal Act policies in San Luis Obispo County in light of new information and changed circumstances since certification of the LCP in 1988. Both the County and the Commission have committed significant resources towards implementing the recommended actions, and some progress has been made in carrying out the less controversial recommendations. However, in the two years that have transpired since periodic review completion, few substantive changes to the LCP have been made, and many important recommendations have yet to be addressed. The Commission reviewed the status of periodic review implementation efforts at its March and June 2003 meetings, and after considering several possible responses to the situation chose not to pursue

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California's Oak Woodlands Need Protection

by Patrick Veasart

State Chapter Liaison, Sierra Club CA

Close your eyes and picture in your mind, "California." What do you see? The snow-capped Sierra Nevada? Towering redwoods shrouded in mist? The steep cliffs and crashing waves of the Big Sur coastline? Or perhaps golden hills under a cyanic blue sky studded with grey-green oak trees? Oak woodlands are one of California's signature landscapes – a natural icon of the "Golden State."

Oak woodlands are the richest terrestrial wildlife habitat in California. Over 330 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians depend upon them. Oak woodlands are able to sustain such abundant wildlife primarily because they produce acorns, a high quality and plentiful food supply. These woodlands are also home to hundreds of species of plants and 16 species of oaks which play a critical role in protecting soils, regulating water flow in watersheds, and maintaining water quality in streams and rivers.

As a result of human activity in the last 250 years, we have lost 90% of our majestic valley oaks and one third of all species of oaks combined. Of an estimated 10-12 million acres of original oak woodlands, only some seven million remain. Of those, almost all are degraded to some degree and only about 4% enjoy protected status. Oak woodlands continue to be impacted by intensive urbanization and agriculture. The California Resources Agency projects that more than 14,000 acres of oaks are lost annually to

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—John Muir



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Outings, events, and more!

Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting

Dr. Neil Havlik, Natural Resource Manager for the City of San Luis Obispo, will provide an overview of the Greenbelt Protection Program highlighting efforts to acquire and preserve the Ahearn Ranch. He will be speaking about where the greenbelt program is going and look at how far it has come since its inception in 1995.

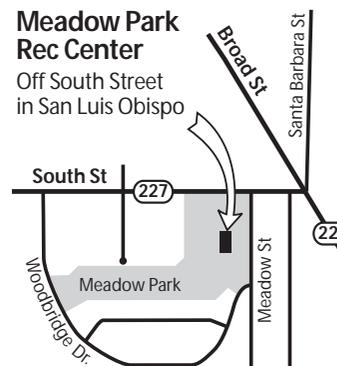
We will share pictures, methods of acquisition, how the Sierra Club is involved in this effort, how you can get involved, and what hiking options are available to get out and enjoy these properties first hand.

Sierra Club Members and the General Public are all invited to this event. Refreshments will be available.

Tuesday, October 28, 7:00 p.m.

Meadow Park Rec Center

San Luis Obispo



Save the date!!

September Program Notes--2003 California Coastal Trail Expedition

The 1972 approval of Proposition 20, the Coastal Initiative, decreed that "a hiking, bicycle and equestrian trail shall be established along or near the coast." Since 1983 Coastwalk has been working to make that intention a reality. The 2003 California Coastal Trail Expedition is one of their major efforts to forward the project (which is only half complete).

Our September General Meeting featured a presentation by Nancy Graves, the coordinator for the SLO County portion of the 2003 California Coastal Trail Expedition and a Board member of Coastwalk. Nancy shared images and tales of the walkers' journey through our County. They were pleasantly surprised by the warm greeting at the SeaWest property recently acquired by efforts of the American Land Conservancy. A welcome sign and representatives from the American Land Conservancy, Coastwalk, and State Parks guided them around this coastal prairie and spoke of future plans for the Coastal Trail to cross the property. The group also encountered a few obstacles along the way that forced them to travel many miles away from the coast on busy highways. These walkers started their trek at the Oregon border on June 3rd and ended up on the Mexican border on September 22; "A journey undertaken to advocate the completion of the California Coastal Trail."

You can help by contacting Nancy Graves at SLO Coastwalk. Beginning next spring they will begin GPS mapping of the California Coastal Trail and connecting trails in SLO County. SLO Coastwalk is always looking for day hike organizers and leaders. Please contact nancygraves@hotmail.com to volunteer.

Sarah Christie Joins ExCom

Sarah Christie, a 9-year resident of Creston, has joined the Sierra Club Executive Committee. She has been a Sierra Club member since 1998, and replaces former Ex-Com member Ross Pepper, who resigned in July, 2003.

Christie has been involved with county environmental issues first as a reporter for the Cambrian, the Paso Robles Daily Press and the Country News, then as aide to former District 2 Supervisor Bud Laurent. She worked as an analyst for the Environmental Defense Center before accepting her current position as Legislative Coordinator for the California Coastal Commission.

Even though she works in Sacramento, she still lives on her 25-acre ranch, where she returns every weekend. "People ask me how I handle the commute, but the truth is, I couldn't work in Sacramento if I didn't have San Luis Obispo to come home to every week," said Christie. "This is my home, and I feel an obligation to do what I can, where I can, to protect it. That's why I joined the ExCom, because I have always respected the Sierra Club's principled advocacy for environmental causes. If we don't actively protect what we love, we will lose it."

Chapter Chair Tarren Collins said she is delighted to welcome Christie to the Board. "We are always looking for ways to increase our presence in North County, and Sarah will provide a vital link," said Collins. "Her North County experience, combined with her knowledge of coastal issues and water quality brings a valuable perspective to the club."

Don't Miss the November Meeting

Jim Patterson, 5th District Supervisory Candidate, will discuss county-wide environmental issues with Sierra Club members. Patterson is also the Water Conservation Manager for the Atascadero Mutual Water Company, and will talk about how water figures into San Luis Obispo County's environmental and economic future.

SANTA LUCIAN

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The *Santa Lucian* is published 10 times a year. Articles, environmental information and letters to the editor are welcome. The deadline for each issue is the 1st of the month prior.

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The Executive Committee meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. at the chapter office. All members are welcome to attend.

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Cohousing: A Sustainable Neighborhood Option

by Neshama Abraham Paiss



Cynthia, Charles, and their son Chaz check out their future home on a recent construction site tour of the Oak Creek Commons project

When Eta Braun walked on the hiking trail leading through the oak woodlands of the Oak Creek Commons cohousing site, she knew immediately that this was where she wanted to live. "I love to take regular hikes, and having our own trail on site is wonderful because the woods and the flowing creek are everyone's backyard," says Braun, a SLO County Sierra Club member and a future resident of Oak Creek Commons. "Plus, when we move in at the beginning of the new year, I won't need to drive nearly as much for my social life. In our own community Common House, we are planning to host a book club, music nights and contra dancing in the Great Room."

Cohousing neighborhoods are environmentally sensitive communities intentionally designed to be lighter on the land. These planned neighborhoods are created by the future residents, who actively participate in the design of the site, the shared land and community building, and the individually owned homes. Many of the 70 completed cohousing projects in the U.S. and the 14 cohousing neighborhoods in California have been built in urban areas where they often have contributed to the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood and match the Sierra Club's basic mission statement to minimize urban sprawl.

In fact, over 60% of all new cohousing neighborhoods in the U.S. built in the last five years were urban infill projects, including communities in Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Pleasant Hill, Sacramento and Sebastopol. Outside of California, urban infill cohousing neighborhoods are located in Atlanta, Denver, Boston, Minneapolis, Portland, St. Louis, and Seattle.

Historically, cohousing homes are known for being exceptionally energy efficient. A yearlong EPA study of a cohousing project near Denver, Colorado, found that the houses had a 50% lower heating bill than comparably sized homes in the surrounding area.

The members of Oak Creek Commons, a 36-home cohousing community now being built in Paso Robles, have also taken a stand to build and live with an environmental consciousness. Their homes will have a long list of green features, such as whole house fans, non-toxic insulation in the homes, energy-saving double paned windows, carpets made of recycled material and ultra efficient heating and cooling systems. According to future residents, their homes will exceed California Department of Energy green-built requirements by 40% and homeowners will receive a sizable rebate from PG&E.

In addition to lower utility bills, another common thread among all cohousing neighborhoods in the U.S. is a physical design which clusters the homes around a pedestrian pathway. This design makes it easy for neighbors to informally socialize on their way to and from their homes, safer for kids to play since the cars are at the periphery of the property, and preserves the maximum amount of open space on the site for residents to enjoy.

An outstanding example of this clustering principle is the Oak Creek Commons cohousing neighborhood. In their project, the homes and their 4,000 square foot community building, or Common House, are being built on a 14-acre property located two miles from the downtown square. While a traditional developer would spread the buildings over the entire site, the

cohousing homes and Common House are all located on just four acres. The community is preserving the remaining 10 acres of land in its natural state.

However, what makes cohousing a green neighborhood is not just the physical buildings and site, but the residents' ongoing lifestyle and its impact on the environment. The cohousing lifestyle is described by many as sustainable because residents consciously reduce their consumption, including their dependence on the automobile, and choose to consciously share more resources as a group.

In the Oak Creek Commons project, for example, community members are planning to have edible landscaping, an organic garden, to recycle and compost, and they have chosen to landscape their site with native plants to minimize water consumption. Residents typically belong to a co-op where neighbors buy in bulk. While every private home has its own kitchen, community meals are cooked in one kitchen instead of 30, which further reduces energy consumption. In the Nomad Cohousing community where I live in Boulder, Colorado, our 25 neighbors made a community-wide agreement to only serve organic vegetables and fruits, and free-range chickens and meat without growth hormones at community meals, which take place twice a week.

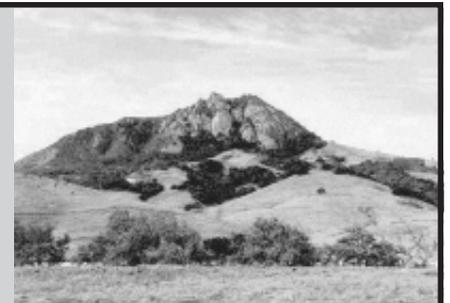
In addition, the future Paso Robles cohousing residents are making a conscious choice to keep much of their social life local. Several times a week, neighbors will soon be able to have optional community meals in their multi-purpose Common House. This resident-designed building will have a "Great Room" for community dinners, plus space for social events and meetings, play areas for kids, and guest rooms for friends and family to stay overnight.

In cohousing, neighbors take responsibility for maintaining the land and usually share one or two lawnmowers and gardening equipment for the full neighborhood. In one community, the members put up a flag when someone is going to town to shop to let others know. In another cohousing neighborhood, several cottage industries have sprung up: residents make handmade soaps, honey, and culinary herbs. Cohousing neighborhoods around the country and in San Luis Obispo County are offering a viable model of how to reduce urban sprawl by creating a thriving neighborhood that allows residents of all ages to stay connected without getting in a car.

People wanting to learn more about Oak Creek Commons, can call Mike Swettenam at 239-2872. Additional background about cohousing is available at www.OakCreekCommons.org.

Neshama Abraham Paiss is a professional writer and resident of Nomad Cohousing in Boulder, Colorado.

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Oak Woodlands

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Hikers take a well deserved break high above Avenales Ranch along the Machesna Mountain Trail.

development, rangeland “improvement,” and conversion to more intensive agricultural uses like vineyards.

But development is not the only threat. Many oak trees are not regenerating naturally (young trees are not growing to replace older trees as they die). Californians are losing their oak woodlands, even on sites that are protected from development. The causes are many and varied, but include fire suppression and overgrazing, both of which contribute to invasion of non-native grasses and cause long-term changes to habitat. Non-native grasses outcompete the native grasses and young oak seedlings for soil moisture.

The newest threat to California’s oak woodlands is Sudden Oak Death (SOD). This pathogen started attacking California oaks in 1985 and became a full-scale epidemic by 1999. Oaks of many species infected with SOD die quickly, and there are currently no known cures or preventative measures for stopping the disease. The disease is present over more than 350 miles of California coastal forests and will most likely continue to spread.

The loss of oak woodlands to expanding vineyards is accelerating. California’s wine industry enjoyed a relatively benign image until 1997 when Kendall-Jackson’s decision to convert a 1,400 acre cattle ranch in Santa Barbara County to grape production exploded into front-page headlines when it was discovered that they had ripped out over 840 mature valley oaks. A storm of protest swept the state as Californians loudly voiced their desire to protect remaining oak woodlands.

Because oak woodlands are considered “non-commercial” species, they are not subject to state laws which regulate timber harvest. Local protections through General Plans, resolutions, ordinances, and voluntary efforts have generally failed to slow the loss of California’s oak woodlands.

A bill was introduced in the State Legislature this year by Senator Sheila Kuehl (Senate Bill 711) that would *require* California’s counties to prepare Oak Woodland Management plans or ordinances that specify minimum mitigation standards for the conversion of oak woodlands. Unfortunately, SB 711 stalled in the Assembly Appropriations Committee because of opposition from development and agriculture interests. The author intends to try and move it out of committee and onto the Assembly floor for a vote next year.

A recent statewide survey conducted for the California Oaks Foundation found solid support by Californians for protecting oak trees. The survey asked respondents whether or not oak trees should be protected by environmental laws. By a wide margin, voters felt that, indeed, current laws *should* protect oak trees – a solid majority shared this opinion (53%) compared to a minority that did not agree (30%) and the remaining 17% did not have an opinion one way or the other.

California’s oak woodlands need and deserve protection. If future generations are to enjoy our unique oak-studded landscape, then it is incumbent upon this generation to take steps now to preserve them. Please get involved in this effort.

Local Oaks

A survey conducted in San Luis Obispo County by the San Luis Obispo County Oak Protection Committee found tremendous local support for protecting oaks. Ninety-two percent of county voters surveyed favor protecting oaks and 76% support the adoption of a native oak protection ordinance to accomplish that goal.

The County Oak Protection Committee was formed after the first ECO SUMMIT in 2001 when summit participants expressed that native tree protection was a top priority. The group has been meeting regularly. Earlier this year Greenspace received a grant from California ReLeaf to fund the survey. The next step is securing funding for getting the ordinance on the ballot in 2004. We need your help to make this happen. Get involved. Write a letter to the editor in support of oak tree protection, donate money, call your supervisor and let them know you think this is an important issue, volunteer your time.

Contact Pam Heatherington at ECOSLO 544-1777 or Rick Hawley at Greenspace 927-2866 for further information.

LCP Update

continued from page 1

legislative action at that time, and determined that renewed collaborative efforts between the County and the Commission, working toward effective implementation of the major recommendations, is the most productive way to proceed. In the interest of facilitating implementation of what the Commission deems to be the most important recommendations in the periodic review, we submit the following recommendations for action in Phases 1 and 2 of the County’s implementation program¹:

I. Phase 1

The Phase 1 amendments recently submitted for Commission certification partly respond to 67 of approximately 90 recommendations that the County originally agreed to consider. Notwithstanding the beneficial changes contained in the submittal, some modifications will be needed to effectively implement the corrective actions². The County should coordinate with the Commission staff regarding these adjustments so that the modified amendments can take effect before March 31, 2004.

II. Phase 2

The Phase 2 work program approved by the County should be supplemented and prioritized as follows, and the associated LCP amendments should be submitted for Commission certification by August 31, 2004:

A. Sensitive Habitat Protection

Phase 2 should complete the Phase 1 effort to replace the LCP’s reliance on outdated maps for delineation and protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA) with a process to use actual on-the-ground, site-specific ESHA determinations (Recommendations 4.1, 4.2). Similarly, Phase 2 should include the incorporation of new standards to ensure accurate delineation of wetlands (Recommendation 4.30).

Other actions needed to protect important biological resources involve updating the LCP to effectively avoid, minimize, and mitigate the adverse impacts of new development on ESHA. Accordingly, the Commission supports the County’s proposal to address Recommendations 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.9, 4.10, 4.14, 4.15, 4.18, and 4.53 during Phase 2. A related action that should be included in this effort is the establishment of an LCP requirement to record conservation easements and/or deed restrictions to permanently protect ESHA on sites where new development occurs (Recommendation 4.13). In addition to these proposals, the Commission would hope that the County could address ESHA recommendations 4.08 – 4.32, but is specifically concerned and would like to see recommendations 4.08a, 4.26, and 4.32 included in Phase 2.

B. Water Quality

The Phase 1 amendments submitted by the County propose to apply, County-wide, the water quality protection standards recently put in place for residential and commercial development in Cambria and Avila Beach through the certification of the specific plans for these areas. At the same time, the County is developing related water quality standards as part of other planning efforts such as the Estero Area Plan Update, and a separate set of water quality standards is contained in the modified Grading and Drainage Ordinance Update recently approved by the Commission. In order to avoid internal inconsistencies, and provide consistent and effective implementation of water quality standards, the County should consolidate and complete the various LCP changes currently under consideration. In particular, the County should adopt the Commission’s modifications to the Grading and Drainage Ordinance update as a means to establish baseline water quality standards, and develop complementary Phase 2 amendments that support and supplement these standards as well as eliminate redundancies and outdated language from the LCP. Ideally, this should include an update of the Chapter 9 Policies to better protect coastal water quality in accordance with periodic review Recommendation 3.7a.

With regard to broader watershed planning efforts called for by Recommendation 3.7b, the Commission has recognized that the development of watershed plans will require the involvement of multiple agencies. To facilitate these efforts, Phase 2 should incorporate a program into the LCP that will provide a framework for enhanced watershed planning. In addition, since the County is currently pursuing updates to Title 19 standards for septic systems, this update should also be coordinated with the Phase 2 amendments in response to Recommendation 3.6e.

C. Scenic Resources

Enhancing LCP protections for the highly scenic North Coast and “Morro Corridor” areas of the San Luis Obispo County coastal zone is an important component of the Periodic Review. The Commission therefore supports the County’s decision to include a response to Recommendation 8.1 (protection of North Coast and Estero critical viewsheds) as part of the Phase 2 effort, recognizing that the initial focus will be on implementing this recommendation

within the Estero Area, through the Estero Area Plan Update, as discussed below. We would expect, though, that updates to the North Coast Area Plan visual resource standards will be pursued in a timely fashion in a later phase of implementation. Phase 2 should also strengthen visual resource protection countywide by completing the Phase 1 effort to recognize and protect sensitive scenic resource areas (Recommendation 8.2), and by enhancing viewshed protection policies and ordinances in accordance with Recommendation 8.6.

D. Hazards

The Estero and North Coast Updates provide the appropriate opportunity to address coastal erosion hazard issues in the areas they are most prevalent, Cambria and Cayucos. However, an important periodic review recommendation applicable to the entire coastline is to avoid new development in areas at risk of coastal erosion by, among other ways, requiring development to assume the risk of building in hazardous areas and prohibiting future seawalls to protect new development (Recommendation 7.7). This provision should be included in the Phase 2 amendments. Among the other hazard recommendations that the County has proposed to deal with during Phase 2, an update of LCP fire clearance requirements (Recommendation 7.20) should be addressed as a priority.

E. Implementation Procedures

An essential step in the coastal development review process is determining whether a proposed development is the "principally permitted use" within the certified land use designation; this determination affects appealability, processing procedures, and the application of particular development standards. In order to enable accurate and consistent determinations, Phase 2 should include the modifications to Table O called for by Recommendations 4.4 and 12.8. Other important procedural changes that should also be addressed by Phase 2 include the need to limit Coastal Development Permit Exemptions to those authorized by Section 30610 of the Coastal Act (Recommendation 12.4), and to provide for the appeal of all LCP Variances (Recommendation 12.18).

III. Grading and Drainage Ordinance Update

As an efficient means of implementing Water Quality Recommendations 3.2b-c, 3.6b-c, 3.9 and 3.12, as well as ESHA Recommendation 4.27, the County should adopt the modifications to the grading and drainage ordinance update (LCP Amendment 1-01 Part C) suggested by the Commission on March 5, 2003. Given that the County's acceptance may be contingent upon the Commission's certification of exclusions to permit requirements for specific categories of development (e.g., grading associated with agricultural production), the County should submit the proposed Categorical Exclusions before March 1, 2004, and work for full certification of both the exclusion and the modified Grading and Ordinance Update by August 31, 2004.

IV. North Coast Area Plan Update

The Board's recent authorization to initiate Phase 2 of the North Coast Area Plan Update, focused on the urban areas, provides the appropriate opportunity to address the significant public service and natural resource constraints to future development in Cambria, among other ways, by reducing buildout levels to those that can be sustained by available services without adverse impacts to coastal resources and public access and recreation opportunities (Recommendations 2.16 – 2.20). For example, submittal of the Update should be accompanied by a detailed analysis showing the level of development allowed by the plan, and how such development can be accommodated within existing public service capacities and resource constraints.

The Update should also include a comprehensive habitat protection plan for Cambria's valuable forest habitats (Recommendations 4.6, 4.36 – 4.47), and updated standards to minimize shoreline armoring along Cambria's coastal bluffs (Recommendations 7.1-7.7). Additionally, the Update should evaluate and update the Cambria TDC program as necessary to protect Community character, preserve forest resources, and maximize buildout reduction (Recommendation 8.9). Finally, the Update should include a specific Public Access component, in partial fulfillment of Recommendation 6.1. A draft of this Update should be available for public review by May 31, 2004, and the locally approved Update should be submitted for Commission certification by December 31, 2004.

V. Estero Area Plan Update

Similarly, the Estero Area Plan Update currently underway provides the appropriate vehicle for the County to:

- implement a comprehensive habitat protection plan to protect the sensitive dune habitats of the Los Osos area (Recommendations 4.6 and 4.36 – 4.47);
- address public service constraints to the buildout of the South Bay Urban Area (Recommendations 2.16 – 2.20);
- designate the Morro Corridor as a critical viewshed and enact improved visual protection standards for this and other scenic areas such as the Irish Hills (Recommendations 8.1, 8.2, and 8.6);

- develop a Shoreline Management Plan to address shoreline erosion and armoring issues in Cayucos (Recommendation 7.8); and,
- incorporate a Public Access component within the Area Plan (Recommendation 6.1).

Submittal of the Estero Update for Commission certification should occur prior to August 31, 2004.

VI. Other Outstanding Recommendations

Coastal Act Section 30519.5 requires the County to implement the actions recommended by the Periodic Review, or submit a report setting forth its reasons for not taking recommended actions within one year of the transmittal of the recommendations. However, the County has not yet responded to approximately 30% of the recommendations contained in the Periodic Review. The County should therefore, prior to January 31, 2004, submit a report explaining the reasons why it has declined to move forward with the adoption and implementation of the recommended actions that have not yet been addressed. This report should also address any Phase 1 and 2 recommendations that have not been pursued by the County.

VII. Phase 3

The recommended schedule for submitting the various LCP amendments identified above concludes in September 2004. These submittals should be followed by the submittal of a Phase 3 Implementation Work Plan, which should be submitted for Commission review and comment by January 1, 2005. This phase should include all recommendations not previously addressed in Phase 1, 2 or the January 31, 2004 report required above. Priorities for Phase 3 should include implementation of recommendations regarding:

- Lot-line Adjustments on Agricultural Lands (Recommendation 5.4)
- Processing of Certificates of Compliance (Recommendation 5.7)
- Residential Development on Agricultural Land (Recommendation 5.8)
- Access Components for remaining Area Plans (Recommendation 6.1)
- A comprehensive update of archaeological resource protection provision, including but not limited to the changes recommended in Chapter 9 of the Periodic Review
- Critical Viewshed for North Coast Rural Area (Recommendation 8.1)
- Special Community designation for the Town of Harmony (Recommendation 8.11)

We hope that this letter, setting forth the priority recommendations of the periodic review and the timetable we think is reasonable for completion of the identified actions, is constructive and will be taken by the County in the collaborative spirit in which it is transmitted. We are confident that the County shares the Commission's goal of achieving an updated LCP that reflects our mutual experience implementing the certified LCP with new information and changed circumstances. This letter complements what was set forth in the periodic review and will, if acted upon in a timely fashion, ensure more effective protection and enhancement of the valuable natural, scenic, recreation, and cultural resources of San Luis Obispo County's coastal zone. We look forward to further cooperation in this regard.

Sincerely,

Mike Reilly
Chairman

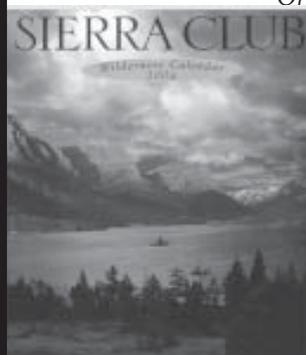
(Footnotes)

¹ The timelines contained in these recommendations were developed in coordination with County and Commission staff.

² Please refer to the Commission's staff's analysis of the draft Phase 1 amendments included in the staff report prepared for the Coastal Commission hearing of March 5, 2003.

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Canoeing and Kayaking on our Sand Spit Beach Clean Up

by Jack Beigle

I have to come up with a better title. When we schedule a work party we get 1/3 the number of boats that we get on other outings. I think I'll call it a treasure hunt next year.

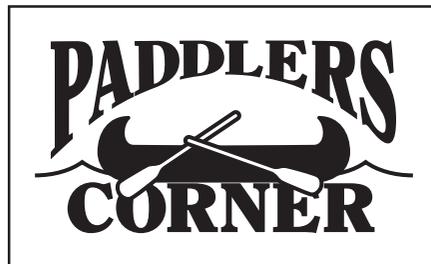
The day was cool and overcast, perfect for a work party. Our float plan was to paddle together across the estuary then split up in pairs that would each land and pick up trash on a different stretch of beach.

Shortly after we split up, I was looking at the pair of boats that were to the south of me when I saw a very large splash on the surface about 20 yards in front of their boats. With all of the talk about shark attacks I paddled closer to see what was going on. Something very big was surfacing every couple of minutes and splashing on the surface. All of a sudden a large sea lion broke the surface with a leap clear out of the water like a dolphin, right off their bows. Boy, sea lions look big when they are that close!

It was apparently feeding on a school of fish and didn't like being disturbed by our boats. We continued to the sand spit and started collecting. We didn't find anything outstanding but as we loaded the trash and recycle bags into our canoe we noticed that there was a good-sized crab living in the tire that was now in the bottom of our canoe. We returned the crab to the estuary and paddled back to the marina with a good load of trash.

We all felt good that we picked up enough to feel useful but we didn't find the spit to be heavily trashed. It was a good day, good exercise and a good deed with good friends. That is hard to beat.

Check the outings schedule and join us on the water.



Leading Hikes

by Bill Deneen

I have probably lead over 1000 hikes/kayak/campouts/bikerides/horsebacks over the past 40 years. I urge everyone to do this volunteer activity. Your life will be enriched. It is following in the tradition established by John Muir: show the people the wonders/beauty of nature and they will want to protect.

A basic rule to establish early is that if you are the leader you must be in front. Of course I make exceptions on bike rides when I have attractive young women on the rides. I am old but not so old that I do not appreciate the finer things in life.

A few of the problems that have resulted from not being in the lead are:

1. One college class two students in front stepped over what they thought was a stick--it was a rattlesnake.
2. A group of 5 in the Sierras took a wrong turn (to a lake) and ended up in a hot, dry area with no water. They were mad at me--amazing. The folks behind the leader (me) swam and enjoyed the lake while the leader (me) worried.
3. In a 5th grade class trip three students thought they knew where we were going, went ahead and got lost. Their teacher was mad: teachers for some reason want to get back on their bus with the same number that came off.

On a June 29th scheduled hike to Point Sal I had a terrible experience on this leadership leading issue. I had a 19-year-old gal from France staying at my hostel learning English as part of her schooling. Arriving late was David (54) who did NOT get the leader in the lead message. We stopped often and talked about the plants, life, world problems and everyone told about 'who they were'. Sort of standard for all my hikes.

The gal and David got ahead while I went to the 'bathroom' (behind any bush). The rest of the group waited for me. We stopped at the 'saddle' to overlook the ocean, Lion Rock, the beach and to eat lunch. We stayed at the 'saddle' for over an hour while waiting for word from the two. I didn't want to take either of two potential routes (ridge or beach) as I didn't know in which direction they had gone.

I waited, watched and talked to folks (about 15 people) on the trail asking each group if they had seen the couple. Roger waited with me for 5 hours (thanks Roger for comforting me). I had to leave to milk goats and pick up other hostellers from the train station in Guadalupe which the French hosteller knew about.

The couple returned to hostel at 7:20 that evening--8 hours after leaving the group. The gal said I exhibited "irrational behavior". I was very upset with David. I told him to never go on any of my hikes ever again. The area they vanished into is dangerous--I had been an 'expert witness' in a trial about 18 years ago when two people fell--one got a broken back & the other brain damage due to a fall from a steep cliff right where the hikers were. If they told me they were going off on their own and would get home by themselves I wouldn't have been 'irrational'--sorry. Adult behavior would have told me what they were doing.

The same area they headed off to has a known mountain lion in a cave. If they had checked in before vanishing I would have told them NOT to go in any caves as well as the steep cliffs and tides. People have drowned where they were. Sorry I worry about 19 yr. old hostellers that vanish into dangerous area---that's my nature.

I mention this not to discourage anyone from leading Sierra Club events but to suggest that you establish from the start that the 'leader' must be in front.

Conservation Committee Column

by Pete Wagner, Chair, Conservation Committee

Under Pam Heatherington's guidance the Committee continues to work on the desalination issue. We are studying two articles in addition to the Coastal Commission staff report mentioned in the September Santa Lucian: a draft staff report by the Governor's Desalination Task Force, also mentioned by Pam in her September article, and a major paper called "Thirst for Control," prepared by Steven Shrybman for the Council of Canadians. The Shrybman paper deals with the implications for domestic water supply of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) which under new rules can potentially usurp local, state, and national control over water supply and distribution within the United States and, willy nilly, place ownership of domestic water services in the hands of international corporations. We expect the Sierra Club to take a strong stand on this issue at the national level.

At a public meeting on September 22, a consulting company called Marine Research Specialists (MRS) presented the first draft of the Environmental Impact Report on PG&E's proposal to construct an outdoor facility, the Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI), for storing used nuclear fuel assemblies. MRS is under contract to SLO County to prepare the EIR which is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The presentation initiated a 60 day review period for public comment. While it is too early to reach any conclusions on the draft EIR, one conspicuous omission is the absence of any mention of a terrorist scenario in which the unprotected liquid spent fuel pools would be attacked from overhead by a ground based hand- or shoulder held missile which was launched outside the area patrolled by security personnel but close enough to pinpoint the target. Strictly speaking, the liquid pools do not fall within the purview of the EIR; however in reality it is impossible to disentangle long term dry storage from the five years of liquid storage necessary for the fuel to die down to levels that can be handled under the ISFSI scheme. In fact, an ISFSI would permit a reduction of the density with which the fuel rods are now packed together in the pools. This reduction could approach the packing density originally designed but later increased in order to alleviate a shortage of storage capacity.

It should be noted that any recommended actions coming out the analysis of security against acts of malice, not just those involving the liquid storage pools, would be preempted by the Nuclear Regulatory Agency. The NRC can overrule CEQA and any other state level of control. Only the courts have higher authority.

Life member Janice Rohn has graciously agreed to join the committee. She presented a plan to acquire for conservation a strategically located 49.5 acre plot which is contiguous to Montana de Oro and which otherwise will be privately developed. An EIR is being prepared. We suggested she contact the National Estuary Program, which has aggressively forged conservation agreements and made land purchases in the Morro Bay watershed. Any recommendation for the Chapter also to provide funds for the proposed purchase, if made by the Committee, will go forward to Excom for its consideration.

A workshop of the Marine Interest Group's Working Committee was held on September 18. MIGWC member Leslie Krinsk will report next time on this and other developments related to prospects for a marine sanctuary or an equivalent body that would protect the central coast against oil exploitation, cruise ship dumping, and other damaging activities.

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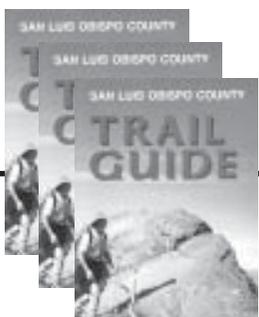
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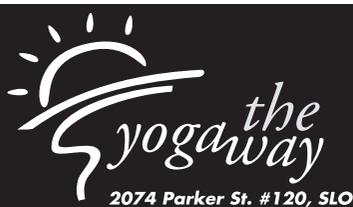
. . . is a way to protect the environment as well as yourself. If you do not have a will, the state decides how your property and other affairs are handled. Decisions made now can later provide financial security for family, friends, and the Sierra Club. You may even direct your bequest to a specific Club program or your home Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact

John Calaway
Sierra Club Planned Giving Program
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Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Leader Gary Felsman (473-3694). For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. Outings Leaders please get your outings or events in by the 10th for the next month's outings.

Hiking Classifications:

Distance: 1 = 0-2 mi., 2 = 3-5 mi., 3 = 6-9 mi., 4 = 10-12 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.

Elevation Gain: A = 500', B = 1000', C = 1500', D = 2000', E = 2500', F = 3000' or more.

Sat., Oct. 11, 8:45 a.m., MONTANA DE ORO OATS PEAK – COON CREEK LOOP: Hike from ranger station to Oats Peak, and then descend into the gently sloping Coon Creek valley to the coastal road, where we will choose our way back to the ranger station. Meet 8:45 a.m. at the Santa Barbara Government Center, Santa Maria, or at the ranger station at 9:45 a.m. Rain cancels. Hikes are always subject to change; always contact the leader: JERRY 928-3598 (AR)

Sun., Oct. 12, 9:30 a.m., PISMO DUNES PRESERVE: Meet at Melodrama in Oceano at 9:30 a.m. Hike the most beautiful dunes to a Dune Lake via a secret passageway. Listen to HDThoreau. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647 or bdenneen@slonet.org

Wed., Oct. 15, 5:30 p.m., Mystery Hike Revealed, The Felsman Loop. Meet at the Patricia Drive Trailhead in SLO. Details call Gary 473-3694

Sat.-Sun., Oct. 17-18, Silver Peak Wilderness, Cruickshank Trail Work Party. Come join Sierra Club as we continue to restore this trail high above the Pacific Ocean. On this weekend we will take a short ½-mile backpack to our camp, then hike another mile or two to the work site. Our goal is to remove many of the fallen trees along the trail. Bring water, bow saw, loppers, if you have them, gloves and your own camping gear. Reservations are required. If the weather is hot, or if we get bad weather, this trip will be cancelled. Poison oak will be present along the trail. Details and reservations call Gary (473-3694).

Sat., Oct. 18, 10 a.m., CANOE/KAYAK Morro Bay Estuary. Come

explore the Morro Bay Estuary with Jack Beigle and friends. Every day is different on the bay. It should be a beautiful fall day. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, windbreaker, warm clothing, and a picnic lunch. Meet at Morro Bay State Park Marina. For details call Jack at 773-2147.

Sun., Oct. 19, 9:30 a.m., POINT SAL HIKE: Meet at end of Brown Rd. at 9:30 a.m. Bring optional Mt. Bike for fast ride back down hill. The first 2.5 miles is uphill (1,000 ft). We'll stop a lot going uphill to botanize, solve all the planet's problems and give a GOF a rest. Bring lunch, water, fit dogs that do not chase cattle. Confirm just before event: 929-3647 or bdenneen@slonet.org

Wed., Oct. 22, 5:30 p.m., Mystery Hike Revealed, Location to be determined. Check Web Site for Details, www.santalucia.sierraclub.org. Details call Gary 473-3694

Sat., Oct. 25, 7:00 a.m., Hike the Santa Lucia Trail to Junipero Serra Peak. Join the leader on this beautiful hike to the highest peak in the Northern Los Padres National Forest. This is a great way to enjoy the last day of daylight savings time. The hike itself is a strenuous 12 miles and 3,800 ft of elevation gain. The trail begins in a meadow surrounded by impressive rock outcroppings. It winds through oak forests and chaparral to a pine forest at 5,000 ft. From there it is about another 800 ft to the summit. There is an abandoned fire tower at the summit. Meet at the north end of the WalMart parking lot in Paso Robles near the McDonalds. It is about another 11/2 hours of driving to the trailhead. This is an all day affair. Bring plenty of water, food, good hiking shoes, and dress for the weather. People who end up driving will need a driver's license, car registration, and proof of insurance to get through the gate at Fort Hunter Liggett. This is an adventure pass area. There is a campground for anyone interested in staying the night before or after or both. Please confirm with the leader and provide contact info, either phone or email. The roads through Hunter Liggett are subject to closure if it rains. For info, contact Chuck at 927-3769 or 441-7597. (5F)

Sun., Oct. 26, 8 a.m., Chris King Trail Daze. Come join the 3CMB, Horse Groups, and Sierra Club as we improve access to the Irish Hills. All participants will be treated to breakfast, lunch, afternoon barbecue, free t-shirts and much more. Meet at Laguna Lake Park in SLO and follow signs towards the Gazebo. There is no cost to

the participant, but pre-registration is requested. Local bike shops and hiking supply shops will have sign-up sheets available, or you can register by calling one of the numbers below by October 16th. This is hosted by Chris King Precision Components, Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (3CMB), and SLO City Parks. Equestrians, hikers, and cyclists and others are invited to come out and give something back to the trail systems we all use. This is also an opportunity to explore local trails and meet some of the folks dedicated to repairing, maintaining, and improving our local trail system. Wear work clothes and bring gloves and water; tools will be provided. For more information: Contact David at 438-4631, or Greg at (995-1675).

Sun., Oct. 26, 9:30 a.m., MUSSEL ROCK HIKE: Meet at end of West Main on the beach. Bring lunch, water, binoculars, inspirational reading. Dogs on a leash permitted at this time of year. It is out and back so you can turn around anytime. Confirm: 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Sat., Nov. 1, 8 a.m., MANZANA NARROWS: We will hike upstream from the Nira Campground. The sycamore trees may be showing their fall colors (10 mi. rt with 1,500 ft. elevation gain). Meet at 8 a.m. at the Lompoc Civic Center or 8:45 a.m. at the Park 'N Ride near Santa Ynez (highways 154 & 246). Hikes change, always contact the leader. DEAN 736-6685 (AR)

Sun., Nov. 2, 9:30 a.m., DANA ADOBE: A nature hike around Nipomo's historic landmark with oak woodland, birding and riparian habitat. An easy 2 mile hike of 2.5 hrs. followed by HDThoreau from the DA veranda at noon. Directions: East on Tefft from #101 south one mile on Oakglen to DA sign. Confirm a few days before: Bill 929-3647 or bdenneen@slonet.org

Sat., Nov. 8, 2 p.m., SUNSET/ MOONRISE HIKE AND POTLUCK AT SEDGWICK RANCH: Come hike and share dinner as the full moon comes up and the sun goes down almost simultaneously (4 mi. rt with 700 ft. elev. gain). Bring a daypack with food to share; as well as a plate, utensils, and water for yourself. Meet at the Lompoc Civic Center at 2 p.m., the Orcutt Long's Drugs parking lot at 2 p.m., or Mattei's Tavern in Los Olivos at 2:30 p.m. Hikes are subject to change, always contact the leader. JIM 937-6766 (AR)

Sun. Nov. 9, 9:30 a.m., COAST NATURE HIKE: We'll enjoy a remote area of the Nipomo Dunes on a 4-mile nature hike away from civilization/engines/people in the tradition of



Photo by Joaquin Palting

HDThoreau. For location check a few days before. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647 or bdenneen@slonet.org

Sun., Nov. 16, 9:30 a.m., BICYCLE NATURE TOUR: Meet east side of parking lot at Pismo Pier, ride to Avila Pier via Bob Jones Pathway and return by Pirates Cove with many nature stops and solving of world problems on the way. Must wear helmet. Confirm a few days before: Bill 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Sun., Nov. 16, 10 a.m., CANOE/KAYAK Morro Bay: Here is a chance to get a little exercise before Thanksgiving dinner. Join Jack Beigle and friends for a picnic and a short hike on the sand spit. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, binoculars, and a picnic lunch. Launch at Morro Bay State Park marina at 10 a.m. For more information call Jack Beigle at 773-2147.

Sun., Nov. 23, 9:30 a.m., KAYAK OSO FLACO LAKE: Meet at lake with kayak, PFD and mechanism to move kayak to lake. Bring binoculars for bird watching. Confirm 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Thur., Nov. 27, THANKSGIVING BLACK LAKE HIKE: Details not firm yet. Check just before: 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Sun., Nov. 30, 9:30 a.m., BICYCLE GUADALUPE to OCEAN: Meet at Dune Centre parking lot with bike and helmet. An easy, educational tour of Guadalupe and then to Pacific. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

This is a partial listing of Outings offered by our chapter.

Please check the web page at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org for the most up-to-date listing of activities.