

SANTA LUCIAN



Santa Lucia Chapter

Nov./Dec. 2022
Volume 59 No. 6

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

The County Needs to Fix or Nix the Dana Reserve

First, there's the name. The "Dana Reserve" is by no stretch of the imagination a "reserve."

Then there's the size. It would be one of the largest housing developments in SLO County history; 1,289 new residential units on 288 acres outside the Urban Reserve Line on the Nipomo Mesa.

Then there are the significant, unmitigable impacts identified in six different categories by the environmental review, including air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, a widening jobs/housing imbalance (too many people and not enough jobs, thanks to unplanned population growth, contributing in turn to an increase in

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as new residents drive far from their new homes to commute to their jobs, and the proposed project's impacts to biological resources.

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She Was a Force for Nature

Comments of California Coastal Commission Executive Director Jack Ainsworth at the Sept. 7, 2022, meeting of the Coastal Commission:

"And finally, I have some sad news to share. The Coastal Commission lost one of our foundational family members last week: Sara Wan, the longest-serving Coastal Commissioner and former Chair of the Commission, passed away Sunday in Santa Monica.

Whenever I hear the term "Force of Nature," I always think of Sara. She was a tireless defender of the coast who refused to take no for an answer, a brilliant strategist and fierce coastal warrior who never backed down from a fight. But she was also a force *for* nature. She combined her scientific training with her environmental activism and



WAN Conservancy

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Sierra Club General Meeting

November 16, 7p.m.

Go Green with Greywater

Learn how to recycle household greywater from showers, sinks, and washing machines to irrigate a bountiful, beautiful landscape. As temperatures rise and droughts become more commonplace, greywater reuse can offer an affordable, low-energy solution to keep landscapes green and productive throughout the summer months—without consuming precious potable water.

Laura Allen co-founded the educational organization Greywater Action and has spent the past 20 years exploring home-scale sustainable water solutions. She is the author of *The Water-Wise Home: How to Conserve and Reuse Water in Your Home and Landscape* and *Greywater, Green Landscape*. Laura leads classes and workshops on rainwater harvesting, greywater reuse, and composting toilets, and works on water reuse policies and code development in the west.

Check it out in advance at www.greywateraction.org/.

We meet on Nov. 16 at 7p.m. To register for the Zoom link, go to sierraclub.org/santa-lucia, or email camintzer@gmail.com



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Santa Lucia Chapter

2022 Executive Committee

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Mila Vujovich-LaBarre (12/22) VICE CHAIR
Cynthia Replogle (12/24) MEMBER
John-Paul Leonardo (12/24) MEMBER
Stephanie Carlotti (12/23) MEMBER
Janine Rands (12/22) MEMBER
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Zero Waste Task Force
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CA Conservation Committee delegates
Sue Harvey, Alex Mintzer
Council of Club Leaders delegate
Carole Mintzer

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Kim Ramos

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The **Executive Committee** meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. All members are welcome to attend.

Volunteer Coordinator

John-Paul Leonardo
Legal Coordinator
Cynthia Replogle

Public Lands Task Force

Holly Sletteland

Outings

Lisa Ludovici, Charles Tribbey

Webmasters

Stephanie Carlotti, Alex Mintzer

Trail Guide

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Chapter Chair Chat

Giving Thanks and Giving Gifts

By Carole Mintzer, Chapter Chair

I was trying to think of something original to say about the approaching holiday season, but let's face it, it's all been said, many times, many ways.

The sentiments that accompany the holiday season, however, have not grown old. Thinking about all the things we have to be grateful for, giving thanks for family and friends, sharing a meal with pumpkin pie for dessert. (I'm all about the pie.)

Then we move to the gift-giving season and while, for many people, that means shopping in crowded stores for stuff people may or may not want but we're *sure they do!* For others, it's a time to give gifts that don't clutter the house, like experiences or gift cards or a Sierra Club gift membership. See how I worked that in?

And before the year ends, it's also time to think about charitable giving -- making sure you've donated to the causes you value before the end of the year. I know this was a year with more donations to political campaigns, but by the time you read this, the election will most likely be over and we'll be celebrating our wins and mourning our losses (not too many, I hope). Now there's time to think about the non-political causes that are important to you.

I'm sure it won't shock you to read that I think one of the best and most important organizations you can support is your local chapter of the Sierra Club.

Over 60% of our budget comes from people like you who donate directly to the Santa Lucia Chapter - and all of those donations stay here to support our work in San Luis Obispo County. Your donations help us pay for our staff, office space, and operating costs. Even though we are a volunteer-led grassroots organization, we are stronger and more powerful because of our staff and office.

As you read this newsletter, you will learn about some of the important conservation efforts we are working on. Among the more prominent and long-standing are the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and removal of off-road vehicles from Oceano Dunes.

We also add our voice to efforts that would preserve rather than destroy or pollute our natural habitat. We fight for an adequate, clean water supply and against allowing polystyrene to clutter our environment. We do all this with your voices, your support, and your donations.

There are many ways you can support our work (see the how-to at right). Just note that donations directly to the Chapter are not tax-deductible, but donations to the Sierra Club Foundation in support of the Santa Lucia Chapter are.

Happy holidays!

Carole



How to Support the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Now and Later

To contribute *now* - go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/santa-lucia> for links to the first five options below.

1. Become a member of the Sierra Club
2. Give a gift membership
3. Become a life member and never have to deal with annual dues for membership renewal
4. Donate to the Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter. Donations to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible, which means there is more flexibility in how the donations are spent.
 - a. Donate online or write a check payable to Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter.
 - b. Mail checks to PO Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
5. Click on the button to make your donation monthly - join our 55 other monthly donors! (Did you know you can have your monthly donation sent directly from your bank account via electronic funds transfer? This is a great way to avoid credit card or PayPal fees.)
6. Donate to the Sierra Club Foundation - Santa Lucia Chapter. Donations to the Sierra Club Foundation are tax-deductible, which means they can be used only for certain charitable or educational purposes. To make a tax-deductible donation, send a check payable to "Sierra Club Foundation - Santa Lucia Chapter" to Sierra Club Foundation, 2101 Webster Street, Suite 1250, Oakland, CA 94612. (Alternatively, the check can be payable to "Sierra Club Foundation" with "To benefit the Santa Lucia Chapter" in the memo line.)
7. If you're age 70.5 or older, make an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution to the Santa Lucia Chapter. Have your IRA Administrator make the check payable to "Sierra Club Foundation - Santa Lucia Chapter," OR "Sierra Club Foundation," with "To benefit the Santa Lucia Chapter" in the memo line.

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Vote

It's time to select your Sierra Club Chapter's Executive Committee for 2023



It's time to vote for the next members of the Santa Lucia Chapter's Executive Committee, the policy-making body of your Sierra Club chapter. There are a total of two positions open this year, for 3-year terms. All current members of the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter are eligible to vote. You may vote online or by mail. You are encouraged to vote online by going to sc.org/santaluciaelection. Online and vote by mail instructions are on your ballot below.



Vujovich-La Barre

Janine Kennel Rands
I've lived in San Luis Obispo since 2008. I moved from Oregon to California with my family in 1998, after getting a degree in Social Work, getting married, and working in rural Sahelian African countries over the next 15 years in Somalia and Mali; later in the capital cities of Niger and Rwanda. My



Rands

Gianna Patchen
I am a recent Cal Poly SLO graduate and former Santa Lucia Sierra Club intern. At Cal Poly I studied Biology and Environmental Studies, where I was able to dive into ecology course-work and research projects. In my time at the Sierra Club I helped support the Executive Committee in their various work, including on



Patchen

Mila Vujovich-La Barre
I reside in San Luis Obispo. I joyfully continue to teach both Spanish and History, as I have for the past 39 years. I have an established record of developing influential programs in our school community and being an activist for noble causes.
Currently, I serve as the Vice-Chair of the Santa

RANDS continued on next page

PATCHEN continued on next page

VUJOVICH continued on next page

2023 Santa Lucia Chapter Executive Committee Ballot

To vote online or by mail, you will need your 6 to 8-digit member ID number. It should be on the address label of this newsletter, or on the label of any issue of *Sierra* magazine. If you need help finding your Member ID, contact the Sierra Club membership office at member.care@sierraclub.org or (415) 977-5653.

To vote online: Go to sc.org/santaluciaelection any time before 5 p.m. on December 7, 2022, and follow the instructions there.

To vote by mail:

- Make an X or checkmark in the box for the candidate of your choice. Vote for no more than two candidates, including write-in candidates. Write your 8-digit member ID in the space provided.
- Your mailing label should indicate whether you have a JOINT or SINGLE membership. Joint members please use both check boxes to vote.
- Sign and date the flap of the envelope. Do not write your name on the ballot. Mail to: **Elections Committee, Santa Lucia Chapter, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406** with sufficient time to arrive by the deadline.
- Ballots must be received by **5 p.m., December 7, 2022** at the chapter office. Mail only; No drop-offs. If both a mailed and online ballot are received with the same Member ID, only the final online ballot will be counted.

Gianna Patchen

Mila Vujovich-La Barre

Janine Kennel Rands

Write-In _____

_____ member ID



Rands

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work in Community Development, women’s education, agriculture and craft development was a wakeup to the ripple effects of climate issues affecting Africa.

My passion and work is to eliminate single-use disposables and educate to reduce household waste, reuse and repurpose items before their end, the ‘circular economy.’ In 2014 I organized a grassroots group called “SLO Foam Free” and by 2018, five County cities and the County IWMA have a Polystyrene Ordinance, as well as the City of South Lake Tahoe. SLO Climate Coalition named me a Climate Champion in 2021.

In 2018, I launched “Tableware Share – Lend a Dish” with the goal of zero-waste events. Inventory can now host formal and informal events with dishes, cutlery, glassware and table linens for up to 250 guests.

My hobbies include drought tolerant gardening, preserving, knitting, caring for critters that include our poodle, six hens, meal-worms, and being the local supplier of compost worms (*Eisenia fetida*) with four bins. I’ve written a 10 page manual, “The SLO Art of Vermiculture on the Central Coast,” and teach worm bin set-up. I have two adult sons, both living back at home for now. I am the newly appointed Far West Ski Association Environment Chair 2022-24. I look forward to serving a second term on the Board as we address local environmental issues.

Patchen

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the People for the Dunes campaign, Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary campaign, and many more projects.

I now work for the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) as assistant to the NCTC board and their proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary campaign team. This position means so much to me and I am extremely grateful to get to support all the wonderful work that the NCTC does.

I am also an elementary/middle school substitute environmental educator at Camp Keep in Los Osos and SLO. I absolutely adore encouraging curiosity and environmental stewardship in the next generation.

In my free time I volunteer as a member of the UN Youth Advisory Council for UN Ocean Decade on their Movement Making working group’s 3rd cohort. This team is working to encourage youth to join ocean conservation action and uplift those already at the forefront of promoting passionate and sustainable relationships with the ocean.

I am dedicated to environmental advocacy and have been fortunate to be able to explore this in SLO County. I particularly see the importance of cultivating connections with our communities, both local and beyond, in order to create a more sustainable future together.

Vujovich-La Barre

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Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club. It is a delight to work collaboratively with everyone involved. Participating in the Executive Committee has been a good match for my skill set. I have honed my interpersonal skills and enjoy problem-solving.

San Luis Obispo County is one of the best places in the world to live due to both the natural beauty of our surroundings and the people that live here.

In the future, I will continue to support causes that preserve our environment and vital resources. I most look forward to the success of the Chumash Marine Sanctuary, to the transition of Diablo Power Plant, to help decrease the use of single-use plastics and polystyrene, and to promote the use of clean energy that comes from renewable, zero-emission sources that do not pollute the atmosphere when used, as well as energy saved by energy efficiency measures. I will also advocate to preserve our urban tree canopy. With climate change and the current drought, it is critical to stay proactive.

I also plan to enhance funds for our Chapter through in-person outreach activities and events. I will also maximize our social media to educate and involve a diverse cross-section of our community.

I would appreciate votes that will allow me to continue to serve the Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter by remaining on the Executive Committee. Thank you for your consideration.



Don’t Sign That Petition!

On Sept. 16, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 1137, which will protect California communities by requiring a health-protective, science-based 3,200-foot buffer zone between new oil and gas operations and homes, hospitals, schools, parks, and other sensitive areas. It will protect communities from adverse health effects, including respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular disease, developmental abnormalities, poor pregnancy outcomes, and cancer.

The law should take effect on Jan. 1, 2023 -- emphasis on “should.” It was opposed by Big Oil, which is now backing a referendum for the 2024 ballot that will nullify the new law. Even if the measure is defeated, just getting it onto the ballot will delay implementation of the law for two years.

Paid signature gatherers need to get 623,000 signatures by mid December to suspend the law, and they’ll say anything to make it happen. But the setbacks law is not an “energy shutdown,” and it won’t affect the price of gas.

Feel free to tell those signature gatherers all of the above. Or just shake your head and walk away. You just helped stop Big Oil from padding its bottom line at the expense of public health.

“Ecological Restoration” Sounds Nice....

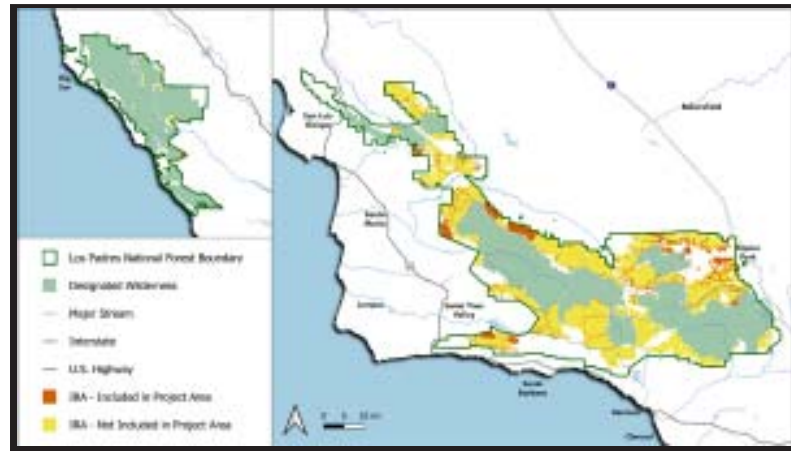
By Andrew Christie,
Chapter Director

In the hierarchy of environmental law, projects proposed by federal agencies are subject to one of two kinds of review. One kind is an Environmental Analysis (EA), a once-over-lightly that is often a straight shot to a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). That level of analysis is intended, obviously, for projects unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment.

The other kind of review is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a highly detailed, lengthy review intended for major projects that are likely to have major impacts.

The U.S. Forest Service has proposed an “Ecological Restoration Project” for the Los Padres National Forest. It intends to log trees and clear native chaparral habitat across 235,000 acres—covering the Mt. Pinos, Santa Lucia, Monterey, and Santa Barbara Ranger Districts. This has the potential for considerable significant impacts on 14 species and 64,000 acres of critical habitat protected under the Endangered Species Act. It could substantially alter 134,000 acres of Inventoried Roadless Areas and 92,000 acres of potential wilderness areas, and it will impact outdoor recreation, soil and water resources, and climate change.

And just for good measure, thousands of acres of the lands earmarked for



Okay, that's a major project is what the Forest Service needs to admit.

U.S. Forest Service regulations specifically identify actions “that would substantially alter the undeveloped character of an Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) or a potential wilderness area” as actions that “require environmental impact statements.” The “Environmental Restoration” project activities will substantially impact and alter the undeveloped character of 104,337 acres of IRAs and approximately 92,221 acres of potential wilderness areas in the Los Padres, including logging, mastication, pile burning, grazing, and other vegetation removal activities. Courts have held that logging in roadless areas is significant because roadless areas have specific attributes -- such as water resources, soils, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities -- that possess independent environmental significance and must be analyzed as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Impacts to roadless areas are also significant because of their potential for designation as wilderness areas under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

special wilderness or scenic area protections by the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act are included.

It's supposed to be all about fire protection, but wildfire research has repeatedly shown that remote vegetation removal — especially in the form of clearing chaparral and cutting mature trees—is at best ineffective as a fire mitigation strategy and at worst could increase fire risk.

“Wow,” I hear you say, “good thing they’re preparing an Environmental Impact Statement!”

You are so young and innocent. The Forest Service has made it clear that it intends to prepare an Environmental Assessment — that limited, cursory,

once-over for minor projects — and call it good. Looking at a map of the project area, you have to wonder what part of “major project” the Forest Service does not understand.

Which reminds me: In 2003 George W. Bush introduced the Healthy Forests Initiative, which my colleagues in the Sierra Club immediately dubbed “No Tree Left Behind.” A windfall for logging companies based on the false premise that landscape-wide logging — aggressively “thinning” millions of acres of backcountry forests miles away from any community — will decrease forest fires, the HFI also made sure to include a get-out-of-

environmental-review-free card: Categorical exemptions from that notoriously strict standard of review, an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Sierra Club noted that this constituted a proposal “to limit the analysis of environmental impacts, repeal the ability of the public to appeal bad projects, increase the degradation of wild forests, and turn scientific forest management back 40 years.” The Sierra Club sued over that EIS exemption provision, and the court subsequently found that the Forest Service’s assertion of a categorical exclusion from an EIS “was

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Sara

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wouldn't flinch when lecturing a decorated US Navy General about the harmful effects of underwater acoustics on marine mammals, or going toe to toe with Steven Hearst or Clint Eastwood over their proposed golf courses—neither of which got built. She even quarreled occasionally with Peter Douglas whenever she thought a staff recommendation should have been stronger, or he was being too accommodating to the politics in Sacramento. But those disagreements were always good-natured, as nobody appreciated a left flank more than Peter.

Sara read every word of every staff report, and we really had to up our game so our findings would hold up under her eagle-eyed analysis every month. She knew the Coastal Act better than most attorneys, and was instrumental to so many good outcomes over the years, like Hearst Ranch, the Orange County Toll Road, the Del Monte Forest, Soka University. She even got arrested on the beach in Malibu to make a point about public access. The Sheriff's backed down when she pulled out a copy of the Coastal Act and gave them a lecture on the public trust and OTDs. The front-page story in the LA Times the next day led to a series of training sessions with the L.A. County Sheriff's office about how to respond appropriately to beach trespassing complaints in Malibu, and ultimately, the Our Malibu Beaches app.

She also co-founded

ORCA, the Organization of Regional Coastal Activists, and "Vote the Coast," a coastal-focused PAC whose mission was to elect a governor and legislators statewide who would support the coast. After Vote the Coast helped to elect Gray Davis in 1998, and turned the Assembly back to the Democrats, the Commission got a budget increase that allowed us to re-open our North Coast Office, after 16 years of austerity measures.

But perhaps Sara's greatest contribution was what she did to invigorate public participation and encourage more citizens to get involved. Because she herself was a coastal activist before getting appointed to the Commission, she knew how important it is for members of the public to feel seen, heard and respected. The value she placed on public comment, and the weight and value she gave to independent expertise demonstrated to people month in and month out that their voices matter. It's a tradition that is central to the Commission, and it continues to this day.

Everyone who knew Sara will always remember her raucous laughter and her childlike delight in animals, whether walking her dogs on the beach in Cayucos, rescuing snakes from public markets in Africa or swimming with the beluga whales in the Arctic.

She and her beloved husband Larry founded the Western Alliance for Nature, to preserve threatened species habitat. They traveled the world photographing birds and other wildlife on every continent until Covid kept them close

to home. Even then, they found ways to stay connected to the coast. Sara's last trip was to Marin County, to celebrate the dedication of 34 acres of Northern Spotted Owl habitat that their organiza-

tion had purchased and saved from proposed development. She was larger than life, and we all owe her a debt of gratitude for her contributions. She will be deeply missed, and never replaced."



How To

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Find all the details here: <https://www.sierraclubfoundation.org/ira-qualified-charitable-distributions>

8. Donate your used car, boat, or RV to the Sierra Club Foundation in the name of the Santa Lucia Chapter at scfch.careasy.org/indexscfch.careasy.org/index or call 844-674-3772. Feel free to share this information with your neighbors, too!

Things to do NOW for Contributions LATER:

9. Remember the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club while executing your will and estate plan: <https://myplan.sierraclub.org/wills-and-living-trusts>. Any donation large or small will be used to further the protection of our local environment, combat climate change, and advance environmental justice. Call (800) 932-4270 or email gift.planning@sierraclub.org.

10. Name the Sierra Club Foundation - Santa Lucia Chapter in your will or trust or as a beneficiary of your IRA or other retirement plan. For more information on all of these giving options, go to: www.sierraclubfoundation.org/ways-give/gift-planning.

A Very Poor Ordinance

As we go to press, the proposed Planting Ordinance for the Paso Basin Land Use Management Area (PBLUMA) is heading to the County Planning Commission. At that meeting — scheduled for Oct. 27, which is in the future as we write this, but in the past as you read it — the Planning Commission will decide whether to recommend adoption of the ordinance.

Of the seventeen comment letters submitted on the ordinance’s draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), 14 organizations and agencies do not support the adoption of the ordinance. The comments cite serious flaws and shortcomings, including the designation of an unprecedented sixteen Class 1 — significant and unmitigable — impacts. (Santa Margarita Ranch, the most destructive sprawl development in County history, had eleven Class 1 impacts.) The comments of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration were candid: “We are perplexed that the County

would consider adopting an ordinance that could severely impact steelhead and its critical habitat and impede sustainable groundwater management.”

Here’s a small taste from the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report:

“The proposed planting ordinance would decrease groundwater supplies such that sustainable groundwater management of the Paso Robles Subbasin would be impeded.... The proposed planting ordinance may result in water quality impacts within the Paso Robles Subbasin that conflict with goals reducing water quality pollution, achieving water quality objectives, and maintaining beneficial uses identified in the Basin Plan....”

But, from the very same document: “The proposed ordinance would not result in adverse impacts for... Biological Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use....”

The impetus behind this train wreck — smashing into itself as it prepares to smash into the upcoming state-

mandated Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Paso Basin — is “streamlining.” By adopting a Programmatic EIR for the entire basin, no individual future proposal to plant more crops and use more water will undergo environmental review. And the ordinance — again, per the PEIR — would result in 250 new 20-acre vineyards over the next 20 years, pumping about 10,000 acre feet of water per year out of the overdrafted Paso Robles groundwater basin.

We hope the Planning Commission has declined to recommend adoption of the Ordinance. Even without all of the above, that decision

should have been made easy by surveying those DEIR comment letters, which also showed overwhelming support for extending the current 1:1 Offset Program for water use until the Groundwater Sustainability Plan is in place.

If the Commission didn’t take that advice, then the Board of Supervisors should reject the inadequate PEIR and simply extend the 1:1 Offset Program until the Groundwater Sustainability Plan is sufficiently functional to manage basin levels.

The Supervisors are scheduled to hear the ordinance on Dec. 6.

identify actions that “require environmental impact statements.” These include actions “that would substantially alter the undeveloped character of an Inventoried Roadless Area or a potential wilderness area.” The “Restoration Project” will substantially impact and alter the undeveloped character of 104,337 acres of Inventoried Roadless Areas and approximately 92,221 acres of potential wilderness areas.

● Habitat for animal species in the project area protected under the Endangered Species Act includes designated critical habitat for the arroyo toad, California condor, California red-legged frog, Conservancy fairy shrimp, least Bell’s vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and vernal pool fairy shrimp. It also includes

22.4 miles of streams designated as critical habitat for the southern California steelhead and 18.6 miles of streams designated as critical habitat for the south-central California coast steelhead.

● In 2018, the U.S. Forest Service prepared an EIS for the Monterey Ranger District Strategic Community Fuel Break Improvement Project that covered a mere 542 acres in the Ventana wilderness section of the LPNF and had a fraction of the significant impacts this project is likely to have.

The rules are there for a reason. The U.S. Forest Service must prepare an EIS because the sheer scale and known significance of the project’s impacts require it. Go to <https://p2a.co/mIxZW1V> to add your voice.

Los Padres

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arbitrary and capricious.”

That was then, this is now. On Sept. 27, Los Padres ForestWatch, Environmental Defense Center, Santa Lucia and Santa Barbara/Ventura chapters of the Sierra Club, SYV Community Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity, California Chaparral Institute, Santa Barbara

County Action Network, and Patagonia sent the Forest Service a 68-page letter detailing the highly problematic nature of its decision to pursue its “Ecological Restoration” project minus a full Environmental Impact Statement.

Some of the key take-aways:

● U.S. Forest Service regulations specifically

Dana

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CNPS in the house The California Native Plant Society laid out the problems with -- and solutions to -- the Dana Reserve project at the Sierra Club's Sept. 21 General Meeting.

That last category consists most prominently of the project's promised destruction of 4,000 coastal oaks and chaparral along with the rare and sensitive species of plants and animals that are part of those ecosystems. The mitigation of impacts to oak woodlands is usually, at best, a shell game — *we promise to protect the oak trees over there and/or plant a bunch of saplings in compensation for cutting down the mature oaks over here.* The oak tree massacre that was the Willow Road interchange promised to mitigate that impact by planting thousands of oaks in different locations. Eight years later, with a dismal survival rate, that mitigation project is an unmitigated failure.

The Dana Reserve project doesn't even try to pretend. The draft Environmental Impact Report admits that replacing the oaks and

chaparral would be extremely difficult and likely impossible — a significant, unmitigable impact.

All this and more came up at the Santa Lucia Chapter's Sept. 21 general meeting, where we were pleased to host the SLO Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. We learned that there are 13 species of oak native to California, they grow between 15 and 70 feet tall over 200 years, oak woodlands provide the greatest species variety of any type of vegetation in California, oaks provide food resources for 45 species, and that is the bigger picture of what will be lost if 4,000 oaks are obliterated for the Dana Reserve.

The project designer has tried to argue that the project need not comply with all County policies, just the ones the state of California legally requires in every general plan. And

that might be a trenchant legal argument, except for the fact that the bulk of the Dana Reserve's policy inconsistencies are with the County Land Use Plan and the Conservation and Open Space Element. Land use, conservation, and open space policies are three of the policies the state requires every county to include in its general plan.

Both CNPS and the Sierra Club support a scaled-down version of a discarded alternative project plan — the Burton Mesa Avoidance Alternative, which would avoid the destruction of a coastal oak woodland and substantially reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle miles traveled, and unplanned population growth.

We both agree that the project's promise of affordable housing --occupying 1.4% of the project site -- is a chimera. CNPS writes, "Trading the unique

bio-logical resources of the Nipomo Mesa for a project that may not achieve affordable housing goals is not a benefit and is not supportable," advocating instead for increased housing density on a smaller footprint.

Last summer, the City of SLO strengthened its affordable housing ordinance and abandoned "affordable by design," the kind of affordable housing promised by the Dana Reserve. Having put its faith in the "affordable by design" concept the City finally rejected it after getting nowhere in a years-long quest to meet its affordable housing goals.

The Final Environmental Impact Report for the Dana Reserve is expected to be released in November. The County Planning Commission will weigh certification of the document in January, and the Board of Supervisors will consider the inevitable appeal of the Planning Commission's decision in April. That schedule is subject to change. Keep your eye on www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building/.

And get involved with the Nipomo Action Committee and its Stop Dana Reserve campaign. These are Nipomo residents who want the County to do its job as spelled out in its general plan policies, and are circulating a petition to that effect. They have gathered over 1,500 signatures to Stop the Dana Reserve Development as Currently Designed. Go to: <https://chnng.it/gw7h7867Dd>


**Support Your Passion
for a Just and Sustainable World**

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.

To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.

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During this time of giving thanks, we want to make a special thank you to our monthly donors. Your ongoing support of the Santa Lucia Chapter provides a secure foundation for our advocacy to protect the Central Coast. As we monitor and call for action on local environmental issues, it's reassuring to know you are there to sustain our efforts.

Do you want to see your name here next year? Go to our website and sign up to be a monthly donor. It's an easy and much appreciated way to support the Chapter, and all your donations stay here in San Luis Obispo County.

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Chapter Treasurer Wins Kathleen Goddard Jones Award

On Oct. 9, Santa Lucia Chapter Treasurer Kevin O'Gorman was honored by the Chapter with its highest honor, the Kathleen Goddard Jones Award.

Named after our chapter's founder, the award is presented annually to an outstanding volunteer. There is probably no more challenging job for any Sierra Club volunteer than Chapter Treasurer. Not only has Kevin done

AWARD continued on next page



Jennifer Bauer

Surprise! Kevin O'Gorman accepted his award and plaque from Chapter Chair Carole Mintzer at Nautical Bean in Los Osos, after a chapter leaders hike.

Get On Line with Your Sierra Club Chapter!

This issue is our only print edition of the year. Do you want to receive notification when our newsletter is posted online? Want to get e-alerts of upcoming Sierra Club meetings and urgent environmental issues?



Go to sc.org/SantaLuciaNews (case sensitive).



The Sierra Club Needs You!

Become an Outings Leader

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



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

For further information contact:

Lisa Ludovici, Outings Chair
(310) 864-4679
l.ludovici@outlook.com

Welcome, New Members

Whether new to the Sierra Club or just new to San Luis Obispo County, welcome all to the Santa Lucia Chapter. We're very happy to have you aboard!

- Alper Koru
- Andrew Stilwell
- Barry Price
- Bonnie Byrd
- Carol Calhoun
- Charles & Liz Cecchi-Ewing
- Chelle Burdick
- Christine Burkett
- Cynthia Navarro
- David Seegers
- Debbie Schiro
- Delia Hitz
- Elise Wheeler
- Eugene Kaufman
- Frank Tarpley
- Gary Nelson
- George & Carol Pilling
- Georgia Tibbles
- Glen Baker
- James Bolt
- James Marlatt
- Jasmine Brown
- John Goetz
- Juanita Hayes

- Julia & Frederick Bockmon
- Kristine Fox
- Laura Herzberg
- Leah Bailey
- Lillis Handford
- Megan Monroe
- Nell Langford
- Olivia Collins
- Pat Clements
- Patricia Kennedy
- Randall Lee
- Raymond Egan
- Sandra Patton
- Thomas Sheldon
- Timothy Dow
- Wayne Newport
- William Bragg



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Award

continued from page 10

a spectacular job in the demanding position, he used his high level of expertise with systems and programs to assist our national organization in a pilot program to roll out a new suite of unified business management software to all Sierra Club chapters in the country.

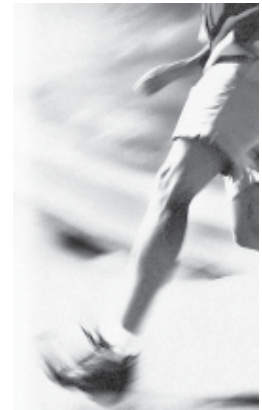
Thanks for keeping us solvent, legal, and fiscally prudent, Kevin.



Outings and Activities

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 Lisa Ludovici at 310-864-4679, l.ludovici@outlook.com. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader. Environmentally friendly outdoor adventures

farther afield are available to people of all ages and abilities, whether you're seeking lodge-based explorations or supported treks, backpack journeys or vacations nearly anywhere in the world. Go to sierraclub.org/outings, or call 415-977-5522, or contact national.outings@sierraclub.org.



We Are On Meetup!

You don't have to be a Sierra Club member to be part of our Meetup Group and see *all* our outings. Go on the Meetup website, or scan the QR code, download the app, or go to "San Luis Obispo Sierra Club," and request to join.

meetup.com/San-Luis-Obispo-Sierra-Club-Meetup-Group/



Sunday Nov. 13, 10-11:30 a.m. Nature on the Edge: Estero Bluffs walk with local naturalist Nancy Dickenson. Experience the Inspiring History, Violent Geologic Forces, and Diverse Wildlife at Estero Bluffs. One or two mile walk with little to no elevation gain on uneven terrain. We will explore the area's rich diversity of marine, intertidal and coastal habitats. Bring sunscreen, hat, layered clothing and water. Binoculars and walking stick suggested. There are no public restrooms available on this walk. Meet at the fig tree parking lot -- the large pull-out 1 mile north of Cayucos on Highway 1. Going north, it is the parking lot after the Windmill parking lot. Going south it is the parking lot after San Geronimo Rd. Sign up on the club Meetup site. Call Lisa with questions 310-864-4679.

Sunday, Nov. 13, 2-3:30 p.m. Sierra Club Historic Walk: Old San Luis Cemetery. Guided stroll past gravesites of city pioneers like Myron Angel, Walter Murray, Robert Jack, Civil War vets, and the landmark pyramid. Learn the compelling stories of SLO founders. Park and meet in south parking lot adjacent to pyramid at 2890 S. Higuera St. Free. Leader: Joe Morris, 805-549-0355.

Sunday, Nov. 20, 9:00 a.m. "Figure 8" hike from Laguna Lake Park to Cerro San Luis Mountain and back. Join the leader on this moderately strenuous 7.5 mile hike. There is about 1400 ft. of elevation gain. We will ascend the ridge above Laguna Lake Park, go around to the north side of Cerro San Luis and hike to the summit on the Rock Garden Trail. We will descend the fire road to Laguna Lake Park. There are 360 degree views from the summit. There are some risks of poison oak and ticks. Bring plenty of water, snacks/lunch, and dress for the weather. Sunscreen is suggested. There are some rocky sections so appropriate footwear is strongly recommended. Meeting place: Enter Laguna Lake Park from Madonna Rd and drive .3 miles to the end and park near the restroom. This is also where the dog park is located, so you may need to park farther down the road if the lot is full. Please no dogs on the hike. Rain cancels. Limit of 15 participants. Reserve your spot on the club Meetup site. For information call or text Chuck @ 805-441-7597.

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