



April 2013
Volume 50 No. 4

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**Don't Miss
April 30**
A SLO premiere:
A FIERCE GREEN FIRE
THE BATTLE FOR A LIVING PLANET
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SANTA LUCIAN



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

Paso's Last Drop

Big Grape is plunging North County into overdraft as a steering committee dithers and residents and small wineries circle the drain

Paso Robles has gained international fame as a wine region known for its outstanding reds -- cabernet, Rhones and zinfandel. The warm days and cool evening breezes yield wine grapes of outstanding quality.

Paso's success has hidden from view a looming disaster. Dire facts are downplayed. Anyone who discusses the issue in public forums is admonished.

The groundwater basin that sustains the majority of this wine grape growing region is in serious jeopardy. Groundwater levels have been declining in portions of the basin for decades. Over the past fifteen years, while wine grape acreage dramatically increased, the majority of the groundwater basin went into severe decline.

Water if you can afford it

Both rural residents and agriculture depend on wells from the groundwater basin for their livelihood. Last summer, well drilling companies were busy lowering and replacing pumps and drilling new wells. In some areas of the basin, it is a regular occurrence to see drilling rigs on a neighbor's property.

New wells are not an inexpensive proposition -- they can cost \$25,000 or more. Drilling companies do not loan money; the cost must be paid up front. For homeowners with little equity in their homes, this cost can be beyond their reach. For others, it is their child's college fund that gets robbed.

And the problem is only escalating. Paso Robles is in the midst of a wine grape planting frenzy. Driven by wine brokers and vineyard consulting and management firms, new plantings this year are approaching 8,000 acres. Assuming an average of one acre-ft/yr per acre, these new plantings will put another 8,000 acre-ft/yr of demand onto a greatly stressed basin.

Looking into the owners of these new plantings -- along with the recent purchases of some large existing vineyards -- yields some disconcerting information. In an area known for its

quality, family-owned wineries, the largest vineyards are now owned by real estate investment firms, multi-national corporations, and out-of-town billionaires.

The region's top twenty wine grape growers use 40% of the water in the main basin. The largest vineyard owners in the Paso Robles area include:

- Stewart and Lynda Resnick, the new owners of Justin Winery, currently planting 600+ acres of wine grapes. In the process, the new owners of Justin have removed numerous native oak trees and started construction of enormous ponds for frost protection and irrigation management. The Resnicks are best known for Fiji Water, POM Wonderful, Teleflora, Paramount Farming (the world's largest grower of pistachios and almonds), and the Kern Water Bank, a former state-owned water banking facility that is now owned by Resnick.
- Racing magnate Gerald Forsythe is the new owner of Continental Vineyards (520 acres). Forsythe owned the Champ Car - CART PPG Indy Racing Series, owns Indeck Energy Services (with interests in eleven power plants



in U.S. and U.K.) and New Frontiers Capital, LLC (national resort and golf course development). Forsythe lives in Illinois.

- Anderson-Middleton, running timber operations out of Washington,

PASO continued on page 8

Update: 20 from 300

We love our members!

In January, we laid out the grim financial fate facing the Chapter if we do not start receiving a minimum of \$20 from 300 members every month, or the equivalent.

At press time, 22 of you are now making automatic monthly contributions via Paypal ranging from \$10 to \$50. Another 36 of you are making monthly bank bill-pay and personal check donations up to \$200. Eleven of you have already paid an entire year's worth of \$20-a-month donations in one check. This works out to an average of \$27 per month per individual, or the equivalent of 78 people at \$20 per month.

This means that we are 26% of the way toward the goal of the equivalent of \$20 per month from 300 people!

That's pretty encouraging. And it's even more encouraging to get notes like this along with those donations:

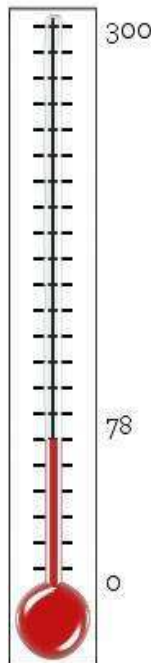
"I'm proud to belong to the Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter and I appreciate all that you do for the environment and for keeping all of us informed." – Nancy Ruhl

"Here's our donation for your office fund. Hope you survive! You do wonderful work." — Gar & Elizabeth Salzgeber

"Thank you! Your research and advocacy for ecology and the environment's well-being bring a smile to my hope for the future." – Elizabeth Bettenhausen

"We hope our pledge, along with a sustained effort by the membership, will help forestall insolvency. The Club's vital contributions to the county cannot be allowed to lapse." – Ray & Sonya Bracken.

You can help us hit the top of the thermometer by going to www.santalucia.sierraclub.org, clicking on the "Donate" button and selecting the monthly contribution option.



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 **SIERRA CLUB**
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Sierra Club Special Screening

Tuesday, April 30, 7 p.m.
A Fierce Green Fire

A new documentary about the history of the environmental movement opened in select theaters in California on March 15. It has already received accolades at a number of film festivals, and was an official selection at Sundance. It's called *A Fierce Green Fire*, and the Sierra Club naturally plays a role.

In partnership with Hopedance, the Santa Lucia Chapter is proud to bring *A Fierce Green Fire* to SLO this month, for one night only! \$10 admission.



Palm Theater, 817 Palm St., SLO. For information:
info@hopedance.org, www.afiercegreenfire.com

Now More Than Ever

The need for a Central Coast National Marine Sanctuary just gets clearer

At the November 14, 2012, meeting of the California Coastal Commission in Santa Monica, with the final permit for PG&E's potentially devastating high-energy offshore seismic survey hanging in the balance, the vote went the right way. The permit was denied.

If the commission had voted the other way that day, our coastal wildlife and economy would have been in big trouble. Every commercial and recreational fisher on the Central Coast would literally have been out of business the next day, when the project was scheduled to commence; ordered to tie up their boats at the dock for the next 42 days.

For 30 of those days, PG&E's seismic vessel would have towed air guns through their prime fishing grounds, firing 250-decibel blasts every 15 seconds, 24 hours a day. Once the testing was over, the local community would have been left with the aftermath, contributing to the scant body of scientific knowledge on the subject by finding out exactly what the short- and long-term impacts had been on the fish and other wildlife.

So how close did we come? You can now hear the idea bandied about locally that the seismic survey never had a chance of being approved.

Here's the reality: Every state and federal agency with any oversight role had signed off on the project. The federal Environmental Assessment and state Environmental Impact Report had been certified. By the time PG&E got to the California Coastal Commission, they had every other permit they needed. The Coastal Commission was the last stop on the regulatory road, and the most likely outcome was that the Commission would impose additional permit conditions to try to somewhat mitigate the survey's potential damage and issue the final permit.

Because the Sierra Club, NRDC, Surfrider, Coastal Protection Network et al intensively educated staff and commissioners for weeks before the Santa Monica hearing, that potential staff recommendation for approval with conditions ultimately changed to a recommendation for denial. Faced with that, and the public outrage in the hearing room, the commission unanimously agreed.

However, it has not gone unnoticed that the Coastal staff's recommendation for denial included wording that left open the possibility for future seismic testing proposals: "[I]t appears premature to conduct the currently proposed survey during the fall of 2012, as other ongoing data collection and analysis efforts by PG&E, the NRC, and USGS are likely to provide even better seismic characterization of the DCCP area in the near future and thereby potentially reduce the need, extent, or duration of the proposed survey."

Why is it a bad idea to depend on the Coastal Commission to save you from the next bad offshore project to come down the pike, and the one after that? For two reasons: First, assuming that a similar ad hoc coalition will come together to oppose any and all such future projects is not exactly a plan, nor a good use of our community's resources. Second, members of the Coastal Commission serve at the discretion of the governor and leaders of the state legislature. In the commission's 40-year history, there have been many Commission majorities that considered it their duty to deliver unto PG&E anything it wanted that was related to Diablo Canyon, whenever PG&E came to the commission to ask. (See "When Diablo Wins, You Lose," Jan. 2007).

To truly protect our coast from damaging seismic testing, we need national marine sanctuary protection for the central coast. It would give local stakeholders control over many coastal management decisions, permanently protecting our waters from damaging projects like 250db seismic surveys.

A highly relevant quote appeared in *The Tribune's* October 19, 2012, edition in the lead-up to the Coastal Commission hearing on the PG&E seismic survey. The story reported on a meeting of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and its discussion of the project:

"There is no way in the world it would happen in the sanctuary," advisory council member Geoffrey Shester said at the Cambria meeting, expressing frustration and disbelief that "because it's a couple miles away, all we get to do is weigh in on some concerns."

Not to belabor the point: Had there been a Central Coast National Marine Sanctuary in existence in 2011-12, it could have weighed in at the beginning of

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

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Open

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We Are the Sierra Club

interviews with the movers and shakers of the Santa Lucia Chapter

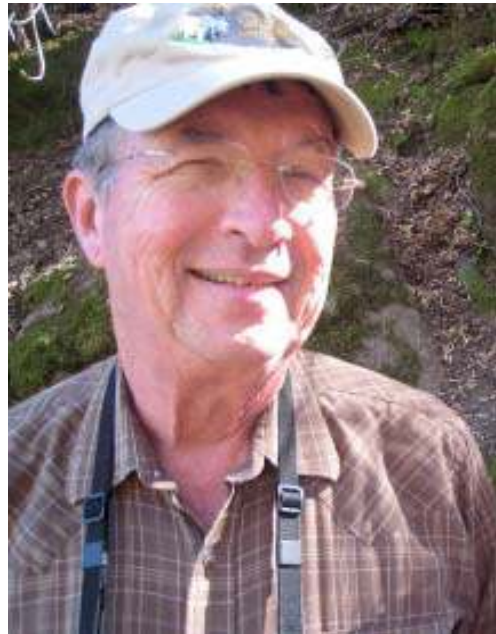
Joe Morris, Outings Chair

How and why did you become outings chair of the chapter?

In 1983, thirty years ago now, I started as an outings leader for the Angeles chapter in Los Angeles and loved the experience. During that time, I organized well over 200 events of all kinds, not only hikes, but backpacks, bus trips, sing-alongs, and car camps all over the state. I loved it as a great contrast to my university teaching job at Cal State, Northridge. On retiring a few years ago, I moved up here to an area where nature, not freeways, is dominant. Four years ago, I showed up at a “volunteer day” sponsored by the Chapter and soon was urged to head up outings by the departing chair, Karen Merriam. It continues to be a lot of fun.

What is your outing philosophy and how does it relate to the chapter’s mission?

I’ve read that the average person is inside over 90% of the time these days, and when he/she does go out, it’s usually to step into a car. We—and even more so our children—are losing touch with nature, and that is maybe the key reason why we have become desensitized about harming and polluting it. Sierra Club offers people a chance to get out into beautiful nature on a regular basis to places often they never knew about. I want our outings to have something for everyone, not only the strenuous 10-mile hikes for the tigers, but also city walks, birding trips, and evening programs



for those of any fitness level. This diversity of offerings also introduces a greater variety of people to our chapter. Our director Andrew describes the outings program as the chapter’s “best p.r.”

Our outings also have an important goal of supporting our environmental efforts. John Muir, when he initiated the outings program for the Club, realized that people are more likely to want to preserve and protect something they know and love.

Do you have a favorite place in nature you love to visit?

My favorite places are not necessarily

ones of complete wilderness but areas where human habitation exists in a harmonious relationship to the surrounding environment. I’ve traveled to Ireland seven times over the years, and oddly feel at times more at home there than anywhere else. Outside of Dublin, people live in small cities and towns, mostly free of shopping malls, freeways, and highway signs, and the surrounding green hills mix with streams, ancient castle ruins, and remote beaches.

What are your favorite outings to lead?

For the last four years, I’ve led monthly city walks of San Luis Obispo and have now planned out seven different ones, covering different historic periods and city locations. Last year, I added a Halloween cemetery walk and a nighttime Victorian Christmas stroll. I’ve been happy at their growing popularity, averaging 20 people, even exceeding 60 at times. SLO is an ideal town for guided walks, with its many attractive and well-preserved buildings concentrated in a small area. But also the walks remind people that cities—we sometimes forget—are part of the environment. For instance, San Luis Creek, threading through the city, is arguably its most important landmark, more so than the Mission. Its waters over the centuries have been a fishing spot for the Chumash, irrigation for the Mission fields, a sewer for Gold Rush pioneers, and even a hiding place for bootleggers in the twenties. It has left its mark on every era in SLO history.

Do you have an environmental hero?

It may not seem very imaginative, but my favorite would have to be John Muir. Indeed I’ve become a bit of a Muir freak, having visited his boyhood home in Scotland and traced his wanderings in Yosemite and northern California. I’ve prepared a slide show of vintage photos related to him I’ve now given to a half-dozen Sierra Club sections (and will be including our Chapter at the May fund-raiser). Muir had a number of personal qualities that many of us have neglected today. He understood our connection to nature as a deeply personal, even spiritual one that gives meaning to our lives. He gave out a heartiness and positive energy that drew people to him. Often, I think, in our wrangling over environmental regulations, we forget why, in the end, it matters. Muir understood that the earth really is our true home.

What are your desires for the future of the outings program?

Though we have a group of fine leaders, several have moved away in the last few years, and we could use some new recruits to fill their hiking boots. To me, being a Sierra Club outings leader has got to be one of the most fun ways to volunteer for anything! Consider: you walk through beautiful nature when, where, and how often you want to go, you get healthful exercise, and hang out with friendly people who share your interests. Most of my own best friends in adulthood I met on a Sierra Club outing. I encourage anyone who’d like to discuss being a leader to contact me.

Defending Public Access to Los Padres Forest

by Los Padres ForestWatch

For nearly one hundred years, the public has enjoyed access to thousands of acres of national forest land at the eastern end of the Huasna Valley in southern San Luis Obispo County. But a neighboring landowner has blocked a public road that serves as the only access route into the area, prompting



ForestWatch to launch a massive effort to keep the route open.

Huasna Road begins Arroyo Grande and passes through 25 miles of private farmland, ranches, and a historic townsite before reaching the oak-studded valleys and chaparral-covered hills in the Los Padres National Forest. For decades, visitors have flocked to the area’s two campgrounds at Stony Creek and Agua Escondido to enjoy springtime wildflower displays, unique rock outcrops, ancient Native American pictographs, abundant game, and access to hiking trails leading in all directions across thousands of acres of national forest land.

The area is featured in *California Coastal Byways: 50 of California’s Best Backcountry Drives*, and has also been described in several hiking and mountain biking guidebooks and official Forest Service and USGS maps. The area’s trails once provided the only publicly accessible route into the southern Garcia Wilderness, and the road once served as the only publicly accessible route to the national forest between Hi Mountain Road and the Santa Barbara County line.

But today, public access to the area is blocked by gates and barricades that the

Not This Trade Agreement

Santa Lucia chapter signs on to Congressional letter

March 4, 2013

Dear Member of Congress:

As U.S. trade negotiators seek to conclude a standard-setting new trade and investment pact for the Asia-Pacific region by this October and consider launching another with the European Union, we write on behalf of our 15 million members and supporters to share our expectations regarding commercial agreements in the 21st Century and the congressional oversight role needed to transform past U.S. trade policy into a tool that helps build a more just and sustainable global economy.

We find it troubling that, even as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Free Trade Agreement enters its 16th major round of negotiations this March in Singapore, U.S. negotiators still refuse to inform the American public what they have been proposing in our names. Shielding not only proposals, but agreed-upon texts from public view until after negotiations have concluded and the pact is finalized is not consistent with democratic principles. In this regard, the TPP appears to be even less transparent than some past trade negotiations. For example, in 2001, the United States joined with 33 other countries in releasing draft text of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and draft texts within the World Trade Organization are frequently made available.

Issues that must be addressed so that a TPP, a European Union-U.S. Agreement or any other U.S. trade pact actually improves the quality of life for Americans and people throughout the world include:

***Prioritizing of human and labor rights.** Too many existing trade policies go to great lengths to protect the rights of investors, while ignoring or glossing over issues of forced labor, child labor, sweatshop working conditions, political violence, environmental degradation, violations of indigenous peoples’ sovereignty and government suppression of such basic freedoms as speech, assembly, movement and the rights to form independent trade unions and bargain collectively. Human and labor rights must be front-and-center in any trade agreement if it is to help reverse the global race to the bottom in working conditions and environmental practices.

***Respect for local development goals and the procurement policies that deliver on them.** Trade agreements should not impede governments from spending taxpayer funds in ways that prioritize local development, environmen-

Trade

continued from page 3

tal or social goals. The procurement provisions of trade pacts must maintain existing “Buy American” preferences, as well as prevailing wage requirements, green preferences, sweat-free preferences, human rights preferences and policies designed to address long-standing inequalities.

*No elevation of corporations to equal terms with governments.

Trade agreements should not grant individual corporations and investors special powers to privately enforce agreement terms by challenging laws, regulations and court decisions through tribunals that circumvent domestic judicial systems. The “investor-state” tribunal

panels of three private sector lawyers to order unlimited taxpayer compensation for foreign firms who claim that a country’s laws undermine their expected future profits must be eliminated. International investment rules must also be revised to more narrowly define terms including “investment,” “expropriation” and “minimum standard of treatment” in order to safeguard the ability of governments to regulate in the public interest.

***Protect food sovereignty.** Trade agreements should respect governments’ ability to implement programs that ensure farmers and other food workers receive fair compensation and that consumers have access to safe and affordable foods. Likewise, nations must be able to protect themselves from dumping and other unfair trade practices that force farmers off their land.

***Access to affordable medicine.** Maintaining access to affordable, generic medications is critical to reducing health care costs in the United States and to saving lives throughout the world. Trade agreements are an inappropriate vehicle for extending the length of drug patents, and U.S. policies should explicitly uphold the standards set forth in the Doha Declaration on access to medicine.

***Safeguards against currency manipulation.** Trade agreements should include measures that allow the United States and other governments to take measures to counteract trade-distorting currency manipulation. Agreements should also include strong rule of origin provisions to ensure that the benefits of the agreement go to those countries that agree to meet its rules.

***Space for robust financial regulations and public services.** Trade pacts should set floors, not ceilings, when it comes to the regulation of banks, insurance companies, hedge funds and other financial service providers. Trade agreements’ services provisions should contain clear and specific language stating that nothing in the agreement should be interpreted as requiring deregulation or privatization of any private or public service.

***Improved consumer and environmental standards.** Likewise, trade agreements should set floors, rather than ceilings, when it comes to environmental, food and product safety and consumer right-to-know measures.

We believe a much greater degree of public and congressional oversight is needed if the TPP and other pacts are to achieve these high standards. Before granting the Obama administration any special trade policy-making authority, please request that it make the draft TPP texts public.

Instead of delegating Congress’ exclusive constitutional authority to “regulate commerce with foreign nations” to the executive branch through the reinstatement of outdated and extreme procedures like Fast Track “Trade Promotion Authority,” we urge you to support a new American trade agreement negotiation and approval process that:

- Requires that the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative consult with all interested stakeholders, participate in hearings with all committees of jurisdiction over matters affected by trade agreements and provide a public assessment of what specific job creation and export expansion opportunities each prospective trade partner would provide and how a proposed agreement would impact human and labor rights, the environment, food sovereignty, access to medicine, currency manipulation and balance of trade among the countries involved, beginning this expanded engagement process with the TPP as soon as possible;
- Sets up an objective process to verify that negotiating objectives set by Congress are actually achieved in the final agreement, and includes a process by which a majority of the Congress must vote to certify that a proposed agreement is in the public interest and that Congress’ negotiating objectives have been met before the executive branch can sign the agreement and bind the United States to its terms.

Only through this type of robust oversight and public participation can we forge a new national and global consensus on trade policy that works for all.

Sincerely,

More than 400 national, regional, state and local organizations representing labor, environmental, family farm, consumer, faith, public health, Native American and human rights constituencies. Go to Citizenstrade.org.



Cochabamba to Stockton

When globalization’s privatizers came up empty

by Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

On July 17, 2007, Carlos Gutierrez, President George Bush’s Secretary of Commerce, stepped up to the microphone before an audience of business leaders and rolled out the Bush administration’s new push for its corporate free trade agenda.

“While others seek to suppress people, ideas and debate,” he said, “we seek the empowerment of the individual. While some seek state control and the nationalization of economic sectors, we seek free markets.”

Of free trade agreements, he said, “a vote against these is a vote to slow vital reforms, helping those who wish to hamper the spread of free enterprise and democracy.”

As *Congress Daily* reported the next day, Gutierrez’s remarks were “an echo of rhetoric rarely heard since the end of the Cold War,” and a sign that “the administration plans to increasingly point to trade as a weapon to block the influence of regimes

that seek to promote socialist ideas in Latin America.”

He was echoing a talking point previously laid down by U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab in an op ed two months earlier, wherein she plugged the administration’s line-up of corporate free-trade agreements as “a clear alternative to the ruinous policies advocated by self-styled anti-American populists in our own hemisphere.”

On the same day that Secretary Gutierrez delivered his comments to business officials, the city council of Stockton threw in the towel and allowed its citizens to turn into a bunch of anti-American socialists who decided the free market, as defined by the corporate profit imperative, was not all it’s cracked up to be.

Since 2001, the people of Stockton had been fighting to regain control of their water system from transnational corporations OMI and Thames, who had taken over the city’s water and sewer services in a \$600 million, twenty-year contract, the largest of its kind west of the Mississippi. Privatizing the water system had intensified harmful environmental impacts on the already beleaguered Sacramento Delta system, relieved the public of their right to determine how their water services were managed, handing that right to corporate shareholders, and exchanged public service for the profit motive. On July 17, 2007, the city council dropped its appeal of the court ruling that gave control of their municipal water systems back to the people of Stockton.

Six years earlier, as Stockton was just beginning its corporate water war, the people of Cochabamba, Bolivia, had just won theirs, having determined that privatization of their water supply by a subsidiary of Bechtel was a bad idea, primarily due to the fact that the corporation promptly hiked the price of their



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SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB

We send out an appeal in March to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter’s budget.

When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club’s work in your own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able—remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

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water by 200 percent. In a series of uprisings that became one of the key battles against economic globalization, Cochabamba eventually regained public control over its water — sooner than Stockton did but at greater cost in injury and death meted out to those protesting against their government’s sell-off of a basic human right to a multinational corporation.

The road to Cochabamba’s revolt had been paved by Bolivian president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, who, in 1993-97, presided over the imposition of privatization and economic austerity measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund which made his country into the poster child and basket case of free-market globalization — policies now repudiated throughout Latin America because, as calmly noted by *Time* magazine the week after Sanchez’s final 2003 ouster from office following a brief comeback, those policies “have so far done more harm than good for the region’s 500 million people in poverty.”

After Sanchez first made himself thoroughly unpopular with the people of Bolivia by dint of his imposition of policies dear to the hearts of Secretary Gutierrez and U.S. Trade Representative Schwab, he managed an unlikely return to power, a story told in the documentary *Our Brand is*

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Saving Seeds

SLO Seed Exchange & CalPoly SUSTAIN Team partner to create a community Seed Library

By Elizabeth Johnson

Momentum has been building to form local seed libraries across the country to protect, and encourage growing of, open-pollinated heirloom crops. Now that a few global corporations own almost all seed production, it has become crucial for gardeners and farmers to start saving their own seeds, just as we have for 10,000 years. In the past one hundred years, while we ordered seeds from commercial catalogs, 75% of edible plant varieties adapted to their local soil and climate conditions have been lost, along with our human knowledge about them. Seeds are not created in a laboratory. Organizations like Seed Savers Exchange have contributed enormously to keep varieties from extinction for the last forty years. As the world of organic seed preservation teeters on a precipice of monopoly control, a cavalry of thousands is finally showing up to support and expand the work of generations of farmers to create and maintain resilient local seed and food systems.

In San Luis Obispo, the SLO Seed Exchange has promoted seed saving

and community exchanges since 2007. Due to timing and complexity, a permanent seed library was not created. We chose instead to become individual “seed libraries,” each of us growing, harvesting, storing, then offering our seeds in an annual community exchange. This is the most frequently followed model around the world.

Ideas about seed libraries are as varied as the communities they serve. Seeds represent and reflect culture; promoting cultural diversity translates to lots of plant varieties, ways of growing and saving them, stories about them, and methods of distribution. Our goal is to create a living seed library of edible plant seeds adapted to our bioregion; these seeds may be better equipped genetically to adapt to extremes of local climate change. As our group has expanded in numbers and skill, the subject of community-accessible seed libraries is on the table again. Enter the Cal Poly SUSTAIN team, a group of non-ag major freshmen who have

partnered with SLO Seed Exchange for a January to June project to establish a local seed library. The SUSTAIN program provides an educational partnership with community organizations in order to create a different kind of learning experience, while the on-

campus academic segment focuses on rigorous project management methodology.

The SUSTAIN team jumped into this project with enthusiasm and intelligence. Their prototype will be a mobile Seed Library that will carry seeds, envelopes to package them, and information on each variety.

They will also help design a website and logo. In addition, the team will be looking for possible locations where a stationary lending seed library can be set up, and will create one if time permits. After you borrow seeds to grow, you can replenish the library supply from your own harvest in a year or two.

Seeds are the foundation of a resilient local food system. Our SLO Seed Exchange recently helped coordinate seed donations to a brand new farm that plans to grow organic vegetables for the SLO Food Bank. First Fruits Farm was created by a collaboration of two SLO churches—Grace and Trinity, already serving as satellites of the Food Bank—intending to bring higher quality produce to the program. They asked for donations of all kinds—land, equipment, tools, volunteers, and organic open-pollinated seeds.

SLO Seed Exchange then contacted individuals and groups who usually have an abundance and came up with seeds for a number of crop varieties desired by First Fruits Farm.

A vibrant seed saving community with a healthy seed library will eventually serve future projects like the two acre First Fruits Farm along with backyard gardens and all sizes in between. With our Cal Poly SUSTAIN community partner, the SLO Seed Exchange will soon have a mobile Seed Library, and eventually a stationary library, each providing educational tools for skillful seed saving.

Growing seeds to exchange and replant is not only an act of hope; it is the act of weaving our human selves back into the great cycle of life on our planet; we reconnect to plant life that also relies on earth, water, air, and weather for health and survival, and we reconnect with each other.

Seed banks offer access to seed, education, and community. They're designed to play a long-term role in the community—safeguarding and stewarding our collective seed legacy season-to-season, generation-to-generation.



Saving the Central Coast for 45 Years

Get outdoors and get trained on bringing others with you!
Volunteer to be a Sierra Club Outings Leader!
Contact Joe Morris at 549-0355 or dpj1942@earthlink.net
Join the “20/300” campaign and the Cal French Donors Circle!
Donate online at santalucia.sierraclub.org

Help keep John Muir's vision alive

Savannah Elliot



Saving CEQA

Sierra Club California is a member of CEQA Works, a broad coalition of civic, conservation, environmental justice, historic preservation, labor, and public health groups, native tribes, business leaders, and legal experts, working together to prevent the California legislature from weakening our state's landmark environmental protection laws. We aim to:

- Protect the right of the public to

weigh in on community land-use decisions.

- Keep California's environmental laws strong to prevent air and water pollution and the public health risks they pose.
- Advocate for sensible updates to CEQA that reduce bureaucracy without weakening key environmental safeguards.

CEQA Works and Common Ground

California held a CEQA Advocacy Day on March 12 at the Capitol, including a training for environmental and environmental justice, labor, tribal, health, historic preservation, and community activists who came to Sacramento from all over the state to voice our support for CEQA. The training was followed by a press conference with key legislators and legislative office visits to make the case for CEQA.

Here's one such case, which our readers may recall:

For three years in a row (2008-2011), the California Department of Fish and Game proposed to increase the quota for the hunting of black bears and the initiation of a bear hunt in San Luis Obispo County.

Relying on CEQA provisions that require government agencies to adequately analyze and disclose the impacts on the environment associated with policy changes, the Humane Society of the United States and others provided substantive comments detailing the inadequacies of the Department's analysis, including a failure to evaluate impacts of the proposal on local bear populations or to address threats to the species from rampant poaching. Biologists demonstrated that the Department was relying on outdated and incomplete methodologies for estimating the state's bear population.

Thanks to the thorough analysis and public engagement required by the California Environmental Quality Act, the Commission chose not to pursue that policy change.

Opinion

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Commentary

BY SUSAN HARVEY

It's the environment, stupid

CEQA does need reform, but the governor's proposed changes would dismantle the valuable law

I surely came as no surprise to anyone that COLAB, in its accustomed role as handmaiden to big developers and polluting industries, recently occupied this space with a call to weaken California's flagship environmental law ("Eyes and fangs vs. jobs and prosperity," Feb. 28). Also no surprise: Every major conservation

Bill 754, strengthening the protections our premier environmental law provides for our environment and for community participation in the development approval process. SB 754 cracks down on illegal actions undertaken to change the land prior to environmental review, prohibits a developer from directly contracting for and overseeing the preparation of the environmental review, controls administrative record cuts, and provides enforcement for mitigation measures.

CEQA is a living document, and it has been updated over the years to fit the concerns of changing times. The broad changes sought by Chevron's newest executive and supported by Governor Brown and COLAB would dismantle the benefits this law has brought to Californians. Gutting the California Environmental Quality Act would effectively hand over the state to those who for decades have longed to pave it all and let God sort it out. They are betting that this is the year they win it all. We had all better make sure they're wrong. A

Susan Harvey is president of North County Watch, a 501(c)3 public benefit corporation dedicated to local and responsible

The battle is joined If you missed the March 7 edition of *New Times* featuring Sue Harvey's response to COLAB's attack on the California Environmental Quality Act the week before, it's worth seeking out on line. To help save CEQA, go to: www.ceqaworks.org.

What Can We Do About Fracking?

A Town Hall Meeting

Where: The Grange
2880 Broad St., SLO

When: 7-9 p.m.
Tuesday, April 16th

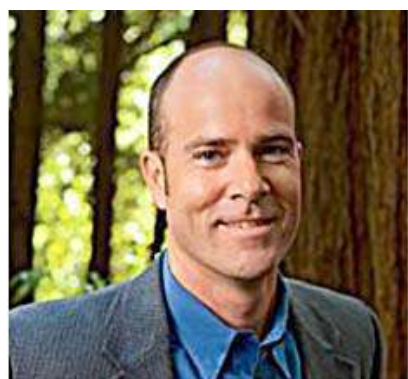
(On February 13, The Economist hosted on its website the online debate "Do the benefits derived from shale gas outweigh the drawbacks of fracking?" The debate was held between a gas industry representative taking the "yes" position, and Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune taking the "no" position. By the consensus of those following the debate, we won. Mr. Brune's closing remarks are reproduced below.)

Fossil companies don't want us to know just how much potential renewables have, but reality is catching up with them. Last year, wind energy was the number one source of new American electric generating capacity, accounting for 42% of all new capacity. Renewable energy as a whole accounted for 55% of all new American generating capacity. In Spain, wind power this winter just surpassed that from all other sources. Germany is on track to get 35% of its electricity from renewables by the end of the decade. But Germany soon will be surpassed by China as the country with the largest installed base of solar. This year China will more than double its installed solar from 4 gigawatts to 10 gigawatts.

Around the globe, the potential to develop renewable energy is limitless—if we don't allow ourselves to be seduced by the false economies of cheap shale gas. Someday, fracking or no, the shale gas will run out. Coal and oil will no longer be viable. But the wind will blow, the sun will still shine and the tides will still flow.

I'll close with a quote from the man perhaps most responsible for creating the energy infrastructure of the last century, Thomas Edison: "We are like tenant farmers chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using Nature's inexhaustible sources of energy—sun, wind and tide ... I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that."

We do not have to wait. More importantly, we cannot afford to. We should be looking for every opportunity we have to leapfrog gas rather than sinking our societal investment ever deeper into fossil fuels.



An overview of the problems with hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas, with emphasis on implementing a solution. Featured speaker: Doug Shields, former city councilman for Pittsburgh, the city that enacted the first "rights-based" ban on fracking in the nation. Ask Doug and the panel anything about the impact of fracking on a community. They have first hand info. There are 1,000 court cases of communities who are in the process of trying to recover damages caused by frackers. In nearly every case, water contamination was a key issue. Keeping our water safe, clean, healthy and protected from a process that uses unregulated, secret ingredients will be discussed. Ben Price, project director for the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, will explain the rights-based ordinance process, its success rate and how it compares to other kinds of lawmaking. **Contact Jeanne Blackwell, SLOcleanwateraction.org, at jeannewater@gmail.com, or Shannon Biggs, www.globalexchange.org, 415-575-5540.**

Stop the Dept. of Conservation's Redefinition of Protected and Beneficial Waters

By the Sierra Club Fracking Team

The Federal Clean Water Act says that discharging pollution into protected waters (e.g., dumping sewage, contaminants, or industrial pollution) or filling protected waters and wetlands (e.g., building a housing development or a parking lot) require permits.

However, the Department of Conservation (DoC) through the Division of Oil Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) has proposed new regulations for oil and gas "stimulation" ("fracking") that would relax current restrictions. If enacted, these draft regulations would define "protected waters" for the State of California and Department of Conservation as only those waters which currently have direct, beneficial uses for potable and agricultural purposes without treatment, and would remove all other waters and their reservoirs, streams, groundwater tables, and aquifers from any protection against contamination by oil and gas related activities.

Earlier local efforts by oil and gas companies to downgrade existing beneficial use designations were blocked, and water agencies have maintained a greater level of protection for current and future important beneficial surface and groundwater resources within the State.

Federal hydrogeologists have reported deep groundwater contamination in the Los Angeles region associated with existing oil fields. No apparent contamination of the higher levels used for public drinking groundwater supplies has been reported. Both may be correct, as they are measuring or monitoring two very different -- shallow and deep -- but related groundwater conditions. If fracking and other oil exploration and production are "properly" conducted, there may not be either deep or shallow groundwater contamination, but the needed studies have not been done to demonstrate such protection. It seems that no one wants to know, because then they would have to take responsibility for doing something.

Recent statewide discussions regarding global warming's expected changes to California's water resources focused on increasing alternative beneficial water resource storage capacities, in light of declining snowpack and climate changes across western U.S. watersheds. Groundwater storage has been and will become an ever increasingly important and cheapest alternative in the face of dwindling winter surface storage (snowpack) and summer production throughout the state and especially near urban and agricultural centers of use: San Diego, Los Angeles, southern San Joaquin basin, Coast Range valleys, and southern Sacramento Valley areas. Protecting groundwater basins from potential and known contamination sources and restoration programs for those already compromised are becoming increasingly important.

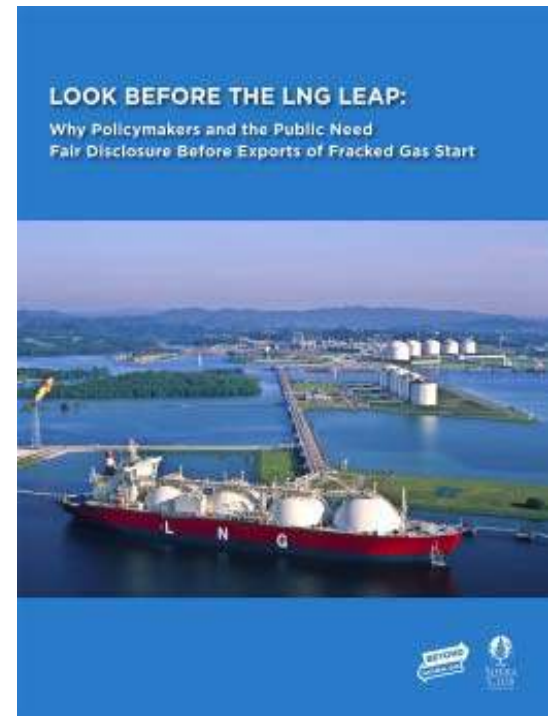
The Sierra Club Fracking Team has reviewed available information and recommends that the Sierra Club:

1. Oppose any relaxation by DoC's regulations with regard to "beneficial" groundwaters within the state;
2. Support further monitoring and protections through DOGGR's regulations for beneficial waters within 1 mile of any oil fields or exploratory wells;
3. Identify and ensure control of existing known or probable sources of groundwater contamination from any exploration and production activities;
4. Support expanded assessing and monitoring of surface and deep subsurface sources of contamination;
5. Support identification and mitigation of low-level contamination from producing groundwater sources.

Communities throughout the state need to support and maintain the most comprehensive definition of "beneficial water" sources and oppose the attempted redefinition of "protected waters."

The Sierra Club believes no community should be forced to accept the risks of fracking. ... The proposed Illinois rules tighten some of the loopholes found in other states. But here's the thing: Even these improvements do not fully protect the health and safety of the good people of Illinois. In fact, no proposed legislation in any state currently does.

- Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune
"Coming Clean" blog, March 11, 2013



Sierra Club Slams Flawed Study of Natural Gas Exports

On February 23, the Sierra Club submitted technical comments to the Department of Energy (DOE) responding to a flawed economic study of exporting natural gas conducted by NERA Consulting.

The DOE is using the NERA study to inform its decision on whether to approve 16 applications for developing export liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals. Together, the pending applications would add export capacity for immense volumes of gas equivalent to about 45 percent of current domestic production. The increased demand for natural gas in both the domestic and global markets would mean more fracking by oil and gas companies, which already exploit exemptions from major federal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

"The DOE has a responsibility to protect the public interest," said Deb Nardone, our Beyond Natural Gas campaign director. "We need DOE to redo this flawed study to ensure serious considerations are made to protect our environment, public health, and the economy before acting on LNG export proposals."

The comments include recommendations for DOE to:

- Reject NERA Consulting's flawed economic report on LNG exports, which shows that the primary effect of exporting LNG would be a transfer of wealth from the majority of Americans to a small minority of oil and gas corporations and their shareholders. NERA's study states that many wage earners would be affected by rising energy costs and loss of jobs in a variety of sectors, yet concludes that exports are in the public interest.
- Redo the economic study, taking into account the real costs of exporting

Happy Birthday to Us

Spend May 11 with the Sierra Club in Edna Valley

Come to a party and fundraiser marking the last 45 years of the Santa Lucia Chapter's work to conserve the natural treasures that make life here something special. (And since we also need to prepare for the *next* 45 years, that works out to a ticket price of \$90 at the bargain rate of a dollar a year.) From 3 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 11, we'll be celebrating with food, drink, music and more at a beautiful home and garden in the Edna Valley.

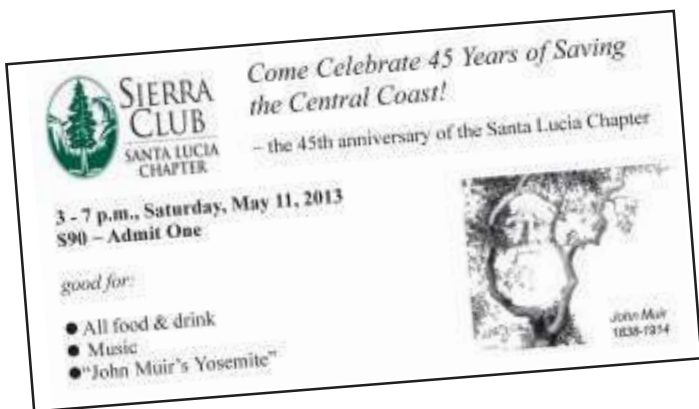
Music provided by Ranchers for Peace, food by the Sierra Club, beers and wines by local brewers and vintners.

Plus:

“John Muir’s Yosemite”

Outings Chair Joe Morris, who leads our popular SLO city walks, will take you back to Yosemite as John Muir knew it 140+ years ago. With vintage slides and music, you will take a tour of its long-lost sights and pioneers, and hear the stories of Muir’s transformation into America’s wilderness visionary.

A \$90 ticket gets you all of above plus appetizers & main course. Reserve your place(s) by April 10 and get event address & map. Send an e-mail to sierraclub8@gmail.com, or call (805) 543-8717.



With thanks to these providers of fine libations:

Ranchers for Peace are Charles & Ray Duncan, a father/daughter duo from the Central Coast of CA with a fresh take on acoustic folk-rock they've termed "neo-hippie protest music." Thoughtful songwriting, heartfelt harmonies, and jangly guitar/harmonica unite for a re-birth of that change-the-world attitude previously heard blowing in the wind during the Summer of Love. Their new EP, "Not Alone," follows up on last year's debut EP, "Tell All The World."

Over 300 acres of Certified Organic vineyards by the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) in compliance with USDA standards.



SIP Certified sustainably farmed vineyards and wines speak to the farmer's commitment to protecting both natural and human resources.



A regional craft brewery with a singular purpose – to craft the world's best beers. Passionately in pursuit of the perfect beer...and never satisfied. We are living beer.



Sanctuary

continued from page 2

the seismic survey permit process with a simple statement to the effect that the proposed activity is not allowable within Sanctuary waters.

Instead, local citizens and environmental groups, fighting a losing battle all the way through the regulatory process, had to attempt a Hail Mary pass at the end of it, pushing back against the momentum of multiple prior permit approvals.

In short, we got lucky.

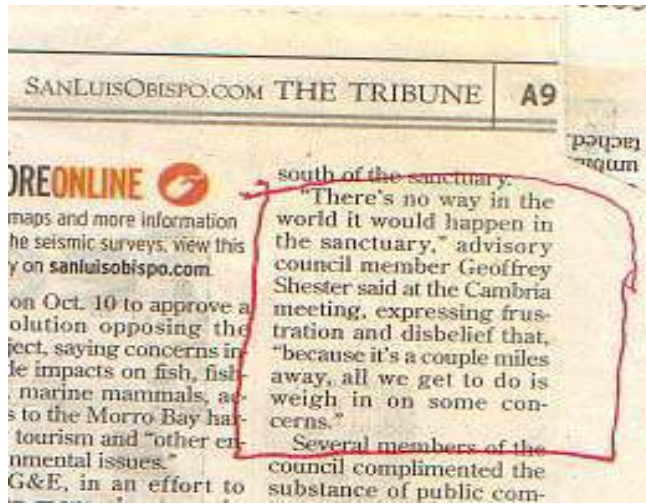
A February 22 meeting convened by Morro Bay Mayor Jamie Irons and City Councilman Noah Smukler brought Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent Maria Brown and her predecessor Ed Ueber to the Morro Bay Community Center, along with Zeke Grader, executive director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. They spoke about their first-hand experience in managing, working and living with a marine sanctuary that was established in 1981 and protects 1,250 square miles of marine habitat off San Francisco.

Grader said of his experience as the leader of commercial fishermen involved with the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries, "I don't think there's a government entity that we've had a better relationship with." The Gulf of the Farallones sanctuary, like all such sanctuaries, supports the economic growth of local coastal

communities, scientific research, and the preservation of underwater treasures — and the health of the local fishing industry — for future generations.

Some other interesting facts related by the distinguished panelists:

- The Sanctuary Advisory Council can be defined however a community wants to define it in its sanctuary charter. Historically, they have been eminently democratic: one stakeholder group, one seat, one vote.
- The Sanctuary Advisory Council is central to the hiring decision for sanctuary superintendent
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) delegates authority for managing the sanctuary to the local superintendent
- 99 percent of the recommendations made by the Gulf of the Farallones SAC are implemented
- Every marine sanctuary is different! Each has its own founding document, which outlines which activities the sanctuary will manage. San Luis



"There's no way in the world it would happen in the sanctuary" Some words for our local fishing industry to contemplate the next time something like a 250db seismic survey comes along.

Obispo could have a sanctuary that only regulates offshore oil and gas drilling.

In other words, the establishment and management of a national marine sanctuary is based on local control and input from the community.

It is up to everyone with a stake in the environmental health of the Central Coast to grasp the reality of both recent history and the future threats coming our way (see sidebar at right) and support the real bottom line: we need a permanent solution for protection along our coast.

That's why Sierra Club is advocating for the creation of a Central Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

Fracking in Coastal Watersheds

By the Environmental Defense Center

In August 2011, EDC research uncovered that Occidental Petroleum Company disclosed that on May 27, 2011, it had fracked an oil well within the Rincon field, located between the cities of Ventura and Carpinteria, and situated within steep coastal hills that drain straight into the ocean.

The fracking operation was conducted at a depth of 8,474 feet and required more than 360,000 gallons of water. In March, an oil spill from the Rincon field occurred after a landslide ruptured a pipeline, releasing approximately 210 gallons of oil on the beach between Hobson and Faria County Parks. EDC is working to determine whether more fracking operations are planned within Ventura County, and to advocate for full environmental analysis and disclosure before any future projects are approved.



Bird Sanctuary Taking Off

After many months of determined effort by a local resident (see "Sanctuary for the Swallows," Oct. 2012), the Avila Valley Advisory Council on March 11 formally voted to recommend to the County Board of Supervisors that Avila Beach be declared a bird sanctuary.

That outcome -- brought about by lobbying, networking, research, a petition drive, videos, preparation of advisory council packets and enlistment of testimony from local business owners and Dept. of Fish and Wildlife personnel over those many months -- was the work of local bird lover Shirley Goetz. Shirley first came to the Sierra Club nine years ago to ask for our help in protecting the local cliff swallow population and educating residents on the legal protections for the species under federal law (see "Saw Swallows, Saved Same," Sept. 2004).

We've been working with her ever since, as she broadened her vision and sharpened her determination to have Avila Beach emulate Morro Bay and declare itself a bird sanctuary.

All bird lovers should stay alert for the formal agendizing of the bird sanctuary declaration by the Board of Supervisors and make sure to show up at that meeting to say a few good words for the birds.

Paso

continued from page 1

owns Red Cedar Vineyards (1,731 acres).

● Other large vineyards are owned by Constellation and Treasury Wine Estates, both huge corporations.

So Paso Robles vineyards are now largely controlled by powerful interests from outside the area. Small and medium wine grape growers and the rural residents are wondering how much longer they will have water for their vineyards and homes. The deepest straw -- or deepest pocket-book -- may win.

Meanwhile, a Groundwater Basin Management Plan Steering Committee has been remarkably ineffective. In the face of the immediate emergency, it has had nothing to say about the relentless planting by the big growers, sinking their straws ever deeper, and has kept its focus resolutely on useless voluntary conservation measures for residents and capital water projects in the far distant future — a future which is looking increasingly unlikely to include a viable Paso Robles Groundwater basin.

Last October, North County Watch challenged the Steering Committee "to bring forward proposals for water conservation measures for all agricultural operations. The conservation measures must be mandatory, enforceable, and have mechanisms for oversight." That challenge has not yet been met.

The only choice left for those who stand to lose everything they have worked for is to begin the process of adjudicating the groundwater basin -- the only option under California water law.

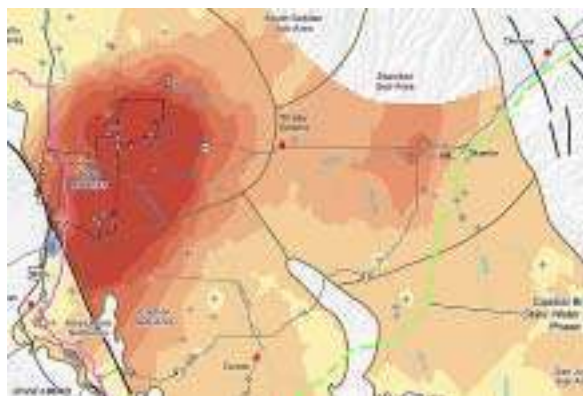
Do you feel an overdraft?

Adjudication happens when a basin is determined to be in overdraft. Per the

California Department of Water Resources, "overdraft" is the condition of a ground water basin where the amount of water extracted exceeds the amount of ground water recharging the basin "over a period of time." This describes the Paso Robles Groundwater basin -- a conclusion the County is trying hard to avoid, under pressure from major water users.

In 2012, the County released the results of a well-monitoring study for the area, including hydrographs covering a thirty-year period for representative wells in Estrella, Shandon, and Creston. Precipitation values, as North County Watch noted in a recent letter to the County, "show that the groundwater declines continue in spite of the amount of rain that is received in the basin. Basically, the majority of the groundwater basin is in decline. The fact is, it is in overdraft." NCW pointed out that the "period of time" required under the state's definition of overdraft "must be long enough to produce a record that, when averaged, approximates the long-term average hydrologic conditions for the basin. The thirty years of data from the hydrographs irrefutably supports the use of the word 'overdraft'."

Adjudication of the basin appears inevitable, but NCW points out that the County, prior to an official



Dry hole Per the city's Groundwater Management Plan, there's a large water deficit growing under Paso Robles.

determination of overdraft, still needs to take immediate action "to abate the nuisance created by its water management policies and its agricultural policies."

As the County struggles to avoid the "O" word and adjudication looms, examples of actions the County can take include:

- Enacting an urgency interim ordinance regulating new plantings and expansion of irrigated ag and other water intensive uses in the affected basin which limits per parcel use of water to a sustainable level;
- Requiring a hold harmless notification, similar to the Right to Farm notification, in the form of a recorded notice as part of the title process when land is sold in the basin noticing the buyer that the basin is in decline and the buyer should not rely on groundwater for intensive water uses;
- Enacting an urgency interim ordinance requiring new and expanded water users provide liability insurance or bonding that guarantees that residential users' water supply and wells are maintained at current levels, current water quality and quantity;
- Enacting an urgency moratorium restricting the installation on new wells to no greater than 6" casing;
- Adopting an urgency interim plan for the fair and equitable allocation of groundwater which protects the superior rights, per state law, of residential users, based on the health and safety of the residents, and their superior right to a clean, potable water supply;
- Enacting an urgency moratorium on all agricultural overhead irrigation, including for frost protection measures;
- Enacting an urgency moratorium banning construction of all reservoirs for the storage of water for irrigation purposes;
- Safeguarding public trust assets by updating its water assessment use to include environmental and natural resource requirements.

Fight the Power

Utilities are trying to take away your right to go solar.

The big utilities are launching a massive disinformation campaign to mislead the public, press and decision-makers, in the hopes of halting the trend towards rooftop solar.* First in their sights: programs that allow Californians to offset their energy bills with rooftop solar, and innovative proposals to bring those programs to renters.

California has a long way to go before everyone can use clean energy, but if utilities succeed in ending new rooftop solar programs, we're never going to get there.

Thanks to rapid innovation, rooftop solar has never been a more cost-effective solution to rising energy bills. Last year, California broke the record for most rooftop installations in a single year, the majority of them in middle-income neighborhoods.

That's great news for regular Californians, but competition is a scary prospect for boardrooms that have relied on monopoly status for 100 years. Per the *Mercury News*: "Utilities make money by getting a guaranteed rate of return on the infrastructure they build, such as transmission lines or power plants, using ratepayers' money. Building more infrastructure is better for their bottom line. Rooftop solar reduces the need to add power plants. It's good for our electricity grid, but it upsets the status quo that has boosted utilities' revenues for so long."

That's why the utilities are distorting the truth about solar programs that benefit regular working Californians, and are working overtime to stop threats to their guaranteed profits. Don't let the utilities prevent Californians from benefiting from solar, just so they can continue their guaranteed profits and monopoly over our energy.



TAKE ACTION

Tell your representatives in Sacramento: Don't buy the utility lies! We need more, not less rooftop solar in California! We are setting up a My Generation Campaign Rapid Responder listserv, in the hopes that many of you will enlist in the effort to help bring local clean energy to California. The purpose of this listserv will be to keep you apprised of the campaign's work but primarily, alert you to urgent issues – either threats to local clean energy or opportunities to promote it -- and solicit support. It seems on a nearly daily basis some opportunity arises, from the very quick and easy (letters to the editor, calls to legislators) to bigger actions like a drop by with a legislator, writing an op-ed, gathering petitions, or hosting a house party. The bottom line is this: utilities are on the march to halt the gains the state has made to expand rooftop solar and we need your help. If you want to join, send an email to evan.gillespie@sierraclub.org and julian.carmona@sierraclub.org. Feel free to introduce yourself and offer some background on who you are, why you want to join the list and how you came to the issue.

* "California utilities are fighting solar progress," by Adam Browning *San Jose Mercury News*, Jan. 25, 2013

Stockton

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Crisis. In it, we learn that the brief return of Sanchez de Lozada was engineered by the international political consulting firm of Greenberg Carville Shrum, which intervened in Bolivia's 2002 election and pulled out a razor-thin win for the hapless "Goni" by deploying the standard U.S. electoral recipe of focus groups, branding, catch phrases and negative ads, sliding their man into office with less than 22 percent of the vote. Sanchez promptly did as he had done in his previous term and sought to further bend his nation to the will of the International Monetary Fund by imposing a crushing tax on Bolivia's poorest citizens. Those citizens promptly rioted and drove him out of the country. Without Carville & co. to interfere, Evo Morales, who had been involved in the Cochabamba water protests, was elected president with an unprecedented 54 percent of the vote.

In the film, Jeremy Rosner, chief strategist for Greenberg Carville Shrum on the Sanchez campaign, is asked to comment on the way things turned out in Bolivia.

"I feel frustrated, and I feel responsible," he says. But Rosner makes it clear that he does not feel responsible for perverting the democratic process and triggering revolt in a country where his firm had no business imposing its political and economic ideology. Rosner's firm backed their candidate because they, like him, are true believers in the essential goodness of free-market economic globalization, which they consider synonymous with democracy. No, Rosner said he felt responsible for paving the way for the

subsequent election of Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president, by a majority of the country's voters.

"I think the Bolivian people are being taken for a joy-ride by a bunch of irresponsible populists," he said, "a lot of people who will promise easy solutions [that are] just blatantly false, ugly, empty myths."

The myths that Rosner crafted for his preferred candidate, while false and empty, were not necessarily ugly, as they were simply vague word combinations chosen for placement in the candidate's mouth based on how they polled with focus groups. It was only after he won the 2002 election that Gonzalez got specific, and thereby secured his ouster and exile. By non-mythological contrast, shortly after the inauguration of Evo Morales in 2006, as reported in the *Guardian*, the new president "outlawed corruption in a traditionally corrupt society...halved his salary on taking office so he could employ more teachers [and] has promised to channel more of the proceeds of Bolivia's vast oil and gas reserves to his poorest people, the poorest in all South America. And he has already taken significant steps to eradicate discrimination and exploitation."

Carville/Shrum's failure to impose its will on the people of Bolivia, like the resurrection of the Red Menace by U.S. Trade Representative Schwab and Commerce Secretary Gutierrez, bear the marks of an argument that is having increasing difficulty finding visible means of support. When viewed against the backdrop of the collapse of the World Trade Organization's last round of trade talks, it is not hard to detect a note of

Whale Gazing

You hurry across the fields
for out in the distance you spy a spout
Rushing to the edge of the bluff
you long to be closer to a whale's majesty



Larry Wan

Standing on the headlands in the biting wind
you grab binoculars, scanning back and forth
You don't want to miss a thing
Your neck and elbows ache
but you're exhilarated, and happy to keep waiting

Suddenly a seam opens in the water, adorned by a pleated wave,
and you finally catch those wispy white pillars of spray
You're mesmerized by the black gliding whale backs
and feel a similar giddiness to when you saw other worlds before,
like first discovering cells pooling under a microscope

Though the blow is gone in an instant
the addicting thrill lingers
You marvel at the profound beauty of these mighty creatures
and wonder what could possibly make your day better

You can't yet break away from the chance of seeing more
and then, a dazzling show awards you for your patience—
You see a whale breach while four flukes arc together as if on parade
Their ocean ballet moves you deeply

Grateful to have witnessed this spectacle,
you look forward to their next migration
and are reminded again of the glorious
wonders on Earth.

Kalila Volkov, Feb. 2013

LNG

continued from page 6

LNG from the U.S., including environmental and health impacts, as well as loss of jobs across many affected industries.

- Complete a full environmental impact analysis for exporting natural gas, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. As the Environmental Protection Agency has repeatedly advised, a comprehensive environmental impact statement is essential to understanding the public health and environmental implications of increased domestic fracking.

The comments were submitted by the Sierra Club—including its Colorado, Kansas, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wyoming Chapters—Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy, Center for Biological Diversity, Clean Air Council, Columbia Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, Shenandoah Riverkeeper, and Upper Green River Alliance.

For more information on why policymakers and the public need fair analysis and disclosure of the risks of LNG export before deciding whether to allow exports, read the Sierra Club's "Look Before the LNG Leap" report.

desperation in remarks by Schwab reported in the July 2, 2007, edition of the *Financial Times*. Her corporate trade-boosting task, she said, "has been made harder by 'the proliferation of television channels, cable channels, the internet, blogs' and 'un-checked communication'.... Ms. Schwab rejects calls for a new discourse on the costs and benefits of trade, saying politicians and businesses need to turn up the volume."

Susan Schwab, meet Diane Park of the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County, who joined with the Sierra Club and the Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton in the fight to return ownership of their water system to the people of Stockton.

"We are thrilled that the people will once again have a say over the way the water is managed in our city," Park said in the wake of their court win. "This decision truly is a victory for democracy."

Like Spinal Tap, the corporate globalizers can turn up the volume all the way to eleven and it won't improve the song they're singing. Thanks to unchecked communication, the notion of democracy is now abroad in the land.



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Errata

In "Deadly Analysis" (March), two quotes from scientists about the earthquake faults around the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant were misattributed due to an editing error. The quote "If the Hosgri Fault runs up to Bolinas and it's connected to the Shoreline Fault there is a possibility of a magnitude 7.7 earthquake under the plant" should have been attributed to Dr. Jeanne Hardebeck of the U.S. Geological Survey. Dr. Samuel Johnson of the USGS, discussing the possible extension of the Hosgri Fault from Point Conception to Bolinas, said "If the fault were to extend this far then that would be close to an 8.0."

Woodsman, Where's Your Permit?

By Lynne Harkins

PG&E foresters say that tree cutting trucks and teams recently converging on Cambria are just for regular, routine maintenance. This is the classification that distinguishes minor tree trimming and the removal of shrubs and saplings from the removal of major vegetation, which is considered development in the Coastal Zone and requires a Coastal Development Permit.

In addition to the "regular" work, a PG&E forester who was involved in the 2009 decimation/removals of

mature and healthy Monterey Pines in Cambria came to my door to inform me about what he described as a "special" upcoming tree removal project. He was looking for my approval to take out two big eucalyptus trees in front of my house. He also referred to nearby mature pines, and I later saw some marked with the blue paint that means PG&E removal is in the works.

Below is a photo of the five vehicles deploying into the forest every day as I

write. How can this "regular" work not entail major vegetation removal, in addition to the "special" work? It does not seem credible that PG&E's activities aren't having a significant impact on the forest.

I informed the Cambria Forest Committee at its March 13th meeting of the possibility of another forest-unfriendly initiative coming to Cambria from PG&E. The CFC was unaware.

Forest Committee members say that PG&E's mitigation planting of 300 trees — a result of the Coastal Commission's enforcement action due to the lack of permitting in 2009 — has only just now been accomplished.

While that was good news, the fact that the trees ended up on ranch property up San Simeon Creek Road, not in the watershed where the tree removals occurred, is less than optimal.

This work is scheduled for the Cambria CSD-designated "Special Projects Area #2." No further building will be permitted in this area, an

acknowledgement of its value as a Monterey Pine forest and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area.

The 2009 PG&E forest offensive occurred in "Special Project Area #1" despite its habitat status and value.

Our best hope is that the Coastal Commission will weigh in in a timely fashion to review this project and protect the forest.



Marked out This Monterey pine in Cambria's Special Projects Area 2 is mature, healthy and has survived the plague of pine pitch canker that killed a number of nearby big pines. This native tree's resistance to the canker and its adaptation to this hotter, drier area of the forest means it has important genetic heritage to pass on.



Los Padres

continued from page 3

Messer Land & Development Company has installed across several segments of Huasna Road. The road passes through the company's vast property holdings before entering the national forest. Messer is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Queen City Investments in Long Beach, a corporation with assets exceeding \$4 billion.

Since the 1940s, Messer and prior landowners have installed a series of gates across the road to restrict public access.

Various forest user groups - hunters, hikers, campers, and equestrians - along with the Forest Service, the

County of San Luis Obispo, and members of Congress, have tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a long-term solution with the landowner.

To permanently restore public access to the area, Los Padres ForestWatch is building a legal case in the event that a mutually-agreeable resolution cannot be reached with the landowner.

Under long-standing California law dating back to the 1850s and affirmed several times by the California Supreme Court, a public right-of-way can be established by showing five years of continuous public use prior to 1972.



No admittance A young Huasna Valley Resident and his family were recently turned away from a camping trip after finding this makeshift barricade across the road, blocking public access to campgrounds and hiking trails.

TAKE ACTION

1. Pre-1972 Evidence of Access. If you visited this area prior to 1972, or know of people who did, please contact us to tell us your stories and help us restore public access to this area. Maps and photographs of the area older than 1972 will also help us build our case. Email us at info@LPFW.org, call us at (805) 617-4610 ext.1, or write to us at ForestWatch, Attn: Huasna Access, PO Box 831, Santa Barbara, CA 93102.

2. Donate to Our Huasna Access Fund. This is a long-term effort that will require a significant investment of

time to research, negotiate an easement with the landowner, and potentially file a lawsuit if we're unable to reach agreement. Donations to the Huasna Access Fund will ensure that we have the resources necessary to pursue this case.

3. Forward this to your friends. Help us get the word out to your friends who might have used the area before 1972, or who might otherwise want to help. Read more on our website at lpfw.org

Thank you for your support as we work to restore public access to this beautiful corner of the great outdoors in the Los Padres National Forest.



Hope to see you soon ForestWatch is working to ensure that the public can once again enjoy this beautiful view of Pine Ridge and the Stony Creek watershed in the Los Padres National Forest.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **April 12**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
 Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
 P.O. Box 15755
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierraclub8@gmail.com

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Outings and Activities Calendar

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

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

Fri-Sun, Apr. 5th-7th. Carrizo Plains Outing. Two nights camping at Selby Rocks car camp, free and no reserved sites, for hikes through areas of often stunning wildflowers. Gather at camp on Saturday, 9 a.m., carpool to day hike to be determined. Bring your own food, water, sturdy shoes, camping material. Info.: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sat., April 13th, 8 a.m. Hike to Machesna Mountain. 12-15 mile hike, 3000 ft. elevation gain, through the Machesna Wilderness. Starting from American Canyon Campground, we will climb 1500 ft. to an open meadow and pond below Machesna Mt. After lunch we will climb several hundred feet to ridge overlooking the Carrizo Plain, then descend to a lush green valley, before ascending to our final rest stop. Plenty of wildflowers and pleasant weather likely. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes, and plan to be out all day. Some of us may go to the Pozo Saloon after, if open. Meet at Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. This is not a beginner's hike! Hikers must RSVP as I may limit the number of people on the hike. For details call Gary (473-3694). Rain or threat of rain cancels. Bring Plenty of Water!

Sun., Apr. 14th, 2 p.m. City Walk: Victorian-Age San Luis Obispo. Guided stroll past 22 stately century-old homes and churches in the Old Town Historic District, SLO's former "Nob Hill." See residences of past mayors, newspaper editor, and founder of Cal Poly. Eavesdrop on the lives of the newly rich who transformed the city at the end of the 19th century. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet in front of Jack House, 536 Marsh St. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sun., April 21st, 10 a.m. Sycamore Springs Trekking-Pole Hike. 2-mile hike to model the benefits of using trekking poles, 700 feet elevation change. Meet near the entrance of Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Resort. Confirm with leader, David Georgi. 458-5575 or polecatleader@gmail.com.

Fri.-Sun., Apr. 26th-28th, Pinnacles National Park Campout

Explore our newest national park (est. 2013) and close to SLO. It's less than 3 hrs. drive to the east entrance and location of the main visitors' center and most scenic trails. Enjoy two nights camping plus socially-paced hikes past spectacular rock spires and gorges, profuse spring wildflowers, talus caves, and critical habitat for California condors. There will be ample leisure time and a spirited campfire sing-along. You can arrive any time after 3 p.m. on Friday; departure by noon Sunday. Tents only; no RVs. Bring all needed camp gear and food plus entree for potluck salad on Saturday night. Fee covers group campground fees, parking, and snacks on Saturday evening, children over 12 welcome with parents. Entrance fee of \$5 per car. Carpooling is essential due to limited parking—a participant list will be sent to campers beforehand. To reserve, send 2 self-addressed, stamped envelopes, H and C phones, and check for \$40 (per person) made out to "Sierra Club" to Joe Morris, 533 Pismo St., #4, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Info.: 549-0355. Limit of 18. No refunds can be given for cancellations after April 19th if replacement not found.



sponsored by the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden

Sat., May 4, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. The Art of Nature – Pine Needle Basketry Workshop

The soft crunch of pine needles under your feet releases a cool, reminiscent smell. There they are, right at your feet, the main material for your unique creation, a pine needle basket. You don't need a loom or mountains of materials for these special creations. Join artist Elizabeth Bear at the Botanical Garden as she guides budding basket weavers through the art of pine needle basket weaving. Attendees will be led through the process of creating fragrant and sustainable pieces of artwork at this intimate workshop. Each piece is as unique as the person who creates it. This is a wonderful Mother's Day activity and the baskets make wonderful gifts. If your inner artist is calling, this is the perfect time to answer! Just bring sharp scissors, imagination and a bagged lunch as Ms. Bear provides all materials and her insight. Each participant will make their own basket and start a second basket to work on at home. Ms. Bear's artwork will be displayed at the 9th Annual Art Eco show at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden. Workshop cost is \$95 for Garden members, \$120 for non-members. Limited class size. To register call 541-1400 x304, or go to slobg.org. For more information visit slobg.org.



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

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

April 7-9; May 5-7; June 2-4; July 21-23; Aug. 25-27; Sept. 15-17

Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard cruise to Channel Islands National Park. Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds. Watch for the endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who were here for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara

aboard the 68' twin diesel Truth.

The cost, \$590, includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks and beverages plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to help lead hikes, point out items of interest, and present evening programs. To make a reservation send a \$100 check, written to Sierra Club, to leader Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. For more information call or e-mail 626-443-0706 or jholtzhln@aol.com.

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For further information contact:

Joe Morris, Outings Chair
Sierra Club, Santa Lucia Chapter
(805) 549-0355
dpj1942@earthlink.net



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite