IN THIS ISSUE: Adventures on land and sea, practical scat, the problems with petrol versus historic clean power plan and volunteers' hand.
Next issue of *Condor Call* comes out 1st of October

DEADLINES:
Editorial: Sept. 21
Advertising: Sept. 23

Send tips, pics to condorjohn@gnusman.com
Questions? Call 452-2885

**Sierra Club**
• LOS PADRES CHAPTER •
Post Office Box 31241, Santa Barbara, Ca 93130-1241
http://lospadres.sierraclub.org
Santa Barbara 965-9719 • Ventura 988-0339
Change of Address: Member Services P.O. Box 52988, Boulder, CO, 80322-2968
or address changes@sierraclub.org or call (415) 977-5653
National Office: (415) 977-5600
85 2nd St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, Ca 94105-3441
Washington Office: (202) 547-5550
408 C St., N.E., Washington, D.C., 20002

**Executive Committee**
David Gold (Chair): 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@aol.com
Jim Hines (Vice Chair): 340-9266, jhcasitas@gmail.com
Gerry Ching (Secretary): 964-5411, gching@cox.net
Fran Farina: 681-8822, farina@cox.net
Nina Danza (Ventura Sierra Club): 901-1679, prettycheapjewelry@gmail.com
Michael Stubblefield: 216-2630, motodata@roadrunner.com
Jerry Connor (Arguello Group Rep): 928-3598, connor.gd2@verizon.net
Hugh Warren (Conejo Group Rep): 341-6256, mail@hkwarren.net
Katie Davis (Santa Barbara Group Rep): 451-4574, kdavis2468@gmail.com

• Group Chairs •
Arguello: Jerry Connor, 928-3598, connor.gd2@verizon.net
Conejo: Hugh Warren, 341-6256, mail@hkwarren.net
Santa Barbara: Katie Davis, 451-4574, kdavis2468@gmail.com
Liz Lamar, 667-7617, elisabethlamar@hotmail.com

• Club Services •
Forest issues: Jim Hines, 340-9266, jhcasitas@gmail.com
Wilderness Basics Course: Teresa Norna, 524-7170, lospadreswbc@gmail.com
Air Quality: Michael Stubblefield, 216-2630, motodata@roadrunner.com
Conservation SBC: Jerry Connor, 928-3598, connor.gd2@verizon.net
Conservation VC: Jim Hines, 340-9266, jhcasitas@gmail.com
Legal: David Gold, 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@gmail.com
Legal (Alt): Fran Farina, 681-8822, farina@cox.net
Media Coordinator: Jim Hensley
Outings: Michael Stubblefield, 216-2630, motodata@roadrunner.com
Political SB: Fran Farina, 681-8822, farina@cox.net
Political VC: David Gold, 642-7748 x6, davidgold4@aol.com
Transportation: Michael Chiaoc
Treasurer: Richard Hunt, 966-4157, richardhunt@cox.net

Typography and production by Dan Fuller

**COVER PHOTO**
Geralyn Souza’s © “Marbled Water with Snowy Egret” was one of the top winners of the Wildling Museum’s annual photo competition with the theme Nature’s Patterns.” An exhibition of the 25 best shots is open at the Wildling in Solvang until Sept. 28. Another of her photos -- Elegant Fight in Flight -- was a top pick in Audubon’s 2015 contest. Contact Gery to see many other amazing photos: gerysouza@yahoo.com
Hammered Gaviota Coast gets some love

By Phil McKenna
Gaviota Coast Conservancy

Naples is back, but it fell on its face in its first public hearing. The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors withheld its consent to transfer an agreement governing the inland portion of the proposed Naples development on the Gaviota Coast to the new owner, Standard Portfolios which is represented by the original developer, Matt Osgood, whom you may remember exited the project in foreclosure in 2010. Standard Portfolios failed to provide sufficient information to the County to demonstrate that it has the financial ability and reputation to carry out its obligations. The Gaviota Coast Conservancy characterized the applicant’s information as being a dog and pony show (both are adorable creatures found on pages 12-3 of the information packet) while Supervisor Salud Carbajal described it as the very definition of an “enigma”.

Osgood will most likely return with more information on Standard Portfolios, continuing this 127-year development saga. Meanwhile, the proposal by Las Varas Ranch of an inappropriate subdivision and lot line adjustment on this large and historical Gaviota Coast working ranch was rejected by the County Planning Commission and scheduled for Sept. 1 for the Supervisors’ decision.

This project would fragment the working ranch, create estate sized development envelopes, add residential density to the coastal portion of the ranch, and would set a damaging precedent.

The Tajiguas Landfill on the Gaviota Coast is the “dump” for southern Santa Barbara County. The County, in partnership with four cities, has been investigating the construction of a conversion CPP protections, if upheld, will help clean up the air, reduce pollution-related respiratory illnesses, and curb the worst effects of climate disruption. In addition, the CPP will save money, spur innovation and accelerate the clean energy economy.

Historic Power Plan supported with ‘vigor’

The Sierra Club is planning nationwide events to support the Obama Administration’s Clean Power Plan (CPP), which was released as of Aug. 3.

The release of the CPP marks the culmination of years of work, and a first step towards finally closing one of coal’s biggest loopholes - their free pass to put 100% of their carbon pollution into our air. It also creates an opening to dramatically ramp up investments in clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency programs in the states.

Polluters will be fighting the plan with everything they’ve got, so the club is helping to ensure that it is strongly supported by the public.

ExCom’s voice resonates

Our Los Padres Chapter Executive Committee has done a lot of testifying and commenting on issues small and large to various agencies, all to help our little neck of the woods survive. Here’s some of the highlights:

~ With the bad news that the Public Utilities Commission has approved a new power plant at Mandalay Bay (Oxnard shore), the chapter is backing the Environmental Defense Center’s (EDC) petition to intervene. (See background story on page 4)

~ We wholeheartedly supported Sierra Club California’s (SCC) work towards a complete ban on clearcutting in California because it is a very destructive process to forest ecosystems.

~ In a July letter to Watershed Coalition of Ventura County, the Chapter supported that coalition’s Integrated Regional Water Management plan. Ventura Network activist Nina Danza, who testified on our behalf, said “We want a river alive with plant and animal biodiversity, especially with riparian and endangered species that have very limited habitat anywhere else in the region.”
Power industry wears out welcome

By Mike Stubblefield

Oxnard now has three power plants. No other city in Ventura County has even one. Oxnard has a long history as Ventura County’s power plant dumping ground. SoCal Edison (SCE) built a 560 megawatt (MW) plant at Mandalay Bay in the 1950s and a 1,516 MW plant at Ormond Beach in the early 1970s. When California’s energy market was deregulated in the late 1990s, Edison sold its two power plants to Reliant Energy of Texas; in 2012 Edison sold its two power plants to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

The PUC held a hearing in Oxnard on July 15 and 80 people showed up to protest, but were only given a minute each to speak, although written comments were accepted.

The Sierra Club and Environmental Defense Center, among many other opponents, are determined to stop this senseless project. Stay apprised of it through Condor Call, Ventura Sierra Club’s Facebook page and other media.

Ex Com’s voice... continued from page 3

Highlights of the plan include: Reuse of water to capture, store, treat and use urban storm-water runoff, and expand environmental stewardship, long term water use reduction (for future droughts) and preparations for climate change.

~ Again in concert with SCC we supported a ban on the commercial trapping of bobcats, along with the sale and export of bobcat pelts. An original bill was gutted, inserting a ban in only a few locations. The CA Fish and Game Commission on a narrow 3-2 vote supported the full ban.

~ What’s in a name? Well, the existing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area was so named due to a compromise in the late 1970s, when it was supposed to be the Santa Monica Mountains National Park and Seashore.

Since then, it has grown by nearly 40,000 acres, mostly in the Ventura County portion, and Rep. Brad Sherman has introduced legislation to rename it to its original intent for a more accurate description and a higher status (and protection) of National Park. Sierra Club strongly supports it.

~ Our chapter is now part of the Santa Barbara County Chaparral Coalition which is headed up by Brian Trautwein of the EDC. Our first major victory was on July 22 when the County Planning Commission designated the chaparral ecosystem in the East Goleta Valley as an "Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area."

~ By John Hankins

Bobcats saved

BREAKING NEWS….Just minutes ago the CA Fish and Game Commission approved a ban on the trapping of bobcats in the state of California," wrote Jim Hines of the club’s Wildlife Team at 1:32pm Aug. 5 in an email blast. Our chapter and Sierra Club California actively supported a full ban on commercial trapping of bobcats after a year-long effort. This critter was spotted in the Manzana Creek area of the Los Padres National Forest, proving they are indeed here even though you may not see one often, or ever. (Photo by Jack Elliott, read his outdoor blogs at www.yankeebarbareno.com)
Frenetic pace for new oil projects

By Fran Farina

There’s a song that begins, “Summer time and the living is easy.” George Gershwin obviously didn’t have to contend with the oil industry as we do in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The pace has been positively frenetic with Sierra Club actively involved on several important energy fronts.

Deadly trains 80-cars in length carrying volatile crude oil remain a threat if San Luis Obispo County approves a project by Phillips 66 to expand a rail spur at the Santa Maria Refinery near Nipomo. The trains would travel over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. So far virtually every jurisdiction in Ventura County has sent letters opposing the project. Santa Barbara County has been slower to react but the city councils in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara and Goleta have already acted urging denial of the project. We expect the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to take the issue up in the near future.

New oil projects continue being proposed. Venoco’s South Ellwood Field Project would expand drilling from Platform Holly and use the same pipeline that caused the Refugio oil spill in May. Staff from State Lands Commission held a meeting in Goleta on June 24 to a room packed mostly with people who said they didn’t want to see any more oil drilling after what they just witnessed with the Refugio spill. That won’t stop the process.

Drilling from Vandenberg Air Force Base farther up the coast into the offshore Tranquillon Ridge is now a very real possibility as the military looks for new revenue sources. Legislation to stop this failed in 2014, but a new bill is alive that could provide the needed protection.

Senate Bill 788 by Sen. McGuire has passed the Senate and is currently on the calendar of an Assembly Committee. When the legislature reconvenes on Aug. 17, there will be three weeks left before the session ends on Sept. 11. Sierra Club is working very hard to ensure this bill will pass.

Refugio oil spill activity may be slowing down but cleanup continues at the bluff and beach where the oil first emerged onto the coastal area. About 200 birds and more than 100 marine mammals died in the spill area. These are images we will not forget.

During the height of the cleanup activity, Sierra Club participated in weekly meetings of the Environmental Coalition focusing solely on the spill and working closely with our elected officials to get more information to the public in a timely manner. This was often a frustrating effort as the Unified Command maintained a tight lid on all aspects of the response.

On a happier note, great progress has been made on Community Choice Energy. We now have a $500,000 commitment to proceed with a feasibility study that may offer people in both counties local control over their energy portfolio.

Santa Barbara Supervisors also adopted a threshold for stationary industrial greenhouse gas emissions in the unincorporated area of 1,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions per year.

Whether we’re organizing rallies or testifying at hearings, Sierra Club members are working hard to move us to a fossil-free environment.

~ Fran Farina represents the Sierra Club’s Los Padres Chapter on the Santa Barbara Environmental Coalition. The Coalition monitors all energy activity in three counties.

It’s a gas

Natural gas is now the primary source for generating electricity across the nation, overtaking coal for the first time ever this spring, according to a recently-released study.

The primary sources for electricity in order are now natural gas (31 percent), coal (30 percent) and nuclear (20 percent). Coal is being reduced due to climate change regulations requiring less pollution while natural gas prices have fallen.

The Obama Administration intends to go even further with a Clean Power Plan that would require a 30 percent reduction in such pollution sources by 2030, which is expected to be fought by Republicans in Congress, according to the Associated Press.
‘Shell No’ campaign goes local

In an event organized by the Sierra Club, activists on land and sea (kayaks) gathered at Goleta Beach on July 18 to say ‘Shell No’ to Shell Oil’s plan to drill in the Arctic this summer ... and a pitch to also stop local oil projects, literally fueled by the recent Refugio Oil Spill May 19 and a penchant for alternative energy sources.

The activists joined thousands of others around the county in recent weeks to pressure the Obama Administration to stop the drilling plans that could begin in the Arctic’s Chukchi Sea in a matter of weeks.

“The President’s own advisers have warned that there is a 75 percent likelihood of a major oil spill if anyone drills in the Arctic, and the science warns that the continued development of dirty fuels will increase the effects of climate disruption. Shell’s record of screw-ups in the Arctic would be comic if the results were not potentially tragic,” said Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club.

Since purchasing the leases, Shell has committed one mistake after another. In 2012, its rig ran aground in what the Coast Guard classified as an “inadequate assessment of management and risks,” and then recently, it put a three-foot gash in the side of a ship meant to break through ice.

“We know firsthand the environmental and economic risks of offshore oil drilling. Enough is enough. We need to put an end to the relentless push for increasingly risky oil extraction techniques and focus our efforts on developing sustainable, clean energy sources,” said local Rep. Lois Capps at the Goleta rally.

Capps was also on hand at a similar demonstration in Oregon (where oil supply ships are located) when that state’s Senator, Jeff Merkley, announced the Stop Arctic Ocean Drilling Act of 2015. It would prevent any new or renewed leases for the exploration, development, or production of oil, natural gas, or any other mineral in the Arctic planning area.

Residents at the Goleta rally also spoke against increased oil production in the Santa Barbara Channel. "Venoco is trying to drill six new slant wells off of Platform Holly which would feed into the pipeline which just ruptured (Refugio Oil Spill). We’re here to say no!” said Becca Classen of Food Water Watch, which also helped organize the event.

“We had 50 people and six elected leaders gather on Goleta Beach, calling on President Obama to say ‘Shell No’ to drilling in the Arctic. But it wasn't just Santa Barbara; there were over 20 events in 15 different states. From Alaska to Florida, from Santa Barbara to Boston, Americans want to see the Arctic continue to be preserved. Santa Barbara County and the Central Coast know where dirty fuels belong -- in the ground, not on our shores or in our water and air,” said Sierra Club organizer Sam Sukaton.

The officials included Rep. Lois Capps, State Sen. Hannah Beth Jackson, Santa Barbara Supervisor Salud Carbajal, Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider, Santa Barbara School trustee Monique Limon and Carpinteria City Council member Fred Shaw and IV Recreation and Parks District Trustee Jacob Lebell.

To get involved, search for ‘Shell No’ at: www.sierraclub.org

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Club targets oil trains

Now that there is a possibility of transporting more oil by train from the Santa Maria Refinery along Santa Barbara and Ventura’s coastline (and many other areas), the Sierra Club’s take on this mode of transportation is clear and is part of a nationwide activist campaign.

To keep current on the Santa Maria Refinery affecting our chapter area, go to:
www.mesarefinerywatch.com

Want to find out if you are endangered by what the club is calling oil “bomb trains”? Go here and tap in your zip code:
www.blast-zone.org

Here’s what the club says about the issue:

Dangerous Oil Trains

Between 2005 and 2013, U.S. railways saw a 70-fold increase in the amount of explosive crude oil being shipped by train throughout the country, with more than 800,000 barrels per day (bpd) being shipped in 2013. These dangerous oil trains -- sometimes called "bomb trains" -- have been involved in dozens of accidents over the last few years, many resulting in oil spills, large explosions and forced evacuations of local residents.

It's estimated that more than 25 million Americans live within the blast zone of an oil train, and most don't even realize it. In response to a record number of explosive oil train derailments over the last few years, the U.S. Department of Transportation released new industry-friendly oil train safety standards that would allow explosive oil trains to stay on the tracks for up to 10 years. Less than a week later, another bomb train derailed and exploded in North Dakota.

That’s why it’s important that we take action to protect our communities from dangerous oil trains. To get involved, search for crude-by-rail at: www.SierraClub.org

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That’s our Rep. Lois Capps talking to activists during the “Shell No” oil protest rally July 18 at Goleta Beach, joining scores of other similar protests across the nation. Also shown (far right) are SB Supervisor Salud Carbajal and State Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson. Fran Farina from the SB Sierra Club Group was there signing up people to protest. (Photo by Carl Hunter Perry)

A handful of ‘kayaktivists’ paddled out to our clean ocean off Goleta Beach to protest more oil drilling here and in the Arctic during the “Shell No” event. (Photo by Carl Hunter Perry)
More donors: we’ll spend money wisely

Even more contributions to our local chapter are coming in since our annual March Appeal, and below is an addition to last issue’s list of generous donors … and it’s never too late and always appreciated.

A heartfelt “thank you” to all those who contributed, whether or not through money or time.

The donations support the incredible work our volunteers are doing in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, which includes hundreds of free outings per year and first-class activism keeping our air and water safe from threats like pollution, fracking, off-shore oil drilling and unrestrained development.

To add your name to the list, simply send your contribution to: Los Padres Sierra Club, PO Box 31241, Santa Barbara, CA 93130-1241.

There are two ways to contribute: To support our effective action programs (not tax-deductible), make a check out to “Los Padres Sierra Club,” and for a tax deductible donation, make it out to “Sierra Club Foundation.”

William Allard
G. W. Arnett
Daniel & Cassandra Auerbach
Marya Barr
Susan Berg
Ron & Virginia Bottorff
Rhonda Cardinal
Gerry & Beverly Ching
Karen Clark
John & Patricia Coppejans
C. T. Cote
John Edward Davis
Peter & Diane Dowler
John Evarts

ARGUELLO GROUP
~ Board usually meets first Monday of the month at various locations and times. General meetings most months on 3rd Friday at Lompoc Presbyterian Church 1600 E. Berkeley Ave., usually with conservation program 7 – 9pm or 6 – 9pm when there are potlucks.
~ Volunteers are needed as hike leaders and to monitor issues; your talents could make a difference.
~ All information on this North County Santa Barbara Group from Jerry Connor, 928-3598 or email: Connor.pd2@cox.net

CONEJO GROUP
~ Get all information on this eastern Ventura County Group from Hugh Warren, 341-6295 mail@hkwarren.net
~ On the web: www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo
~ For outings: www.sierraclub.org/los-padres/conejo/outings

SANTA BARBARA GROUP
~ Usually meets at 5:30pm on the first Monday of the month at Union Bank, 15 E. Carrillo St. View the calendar, hikes and issues and join the mailing list for the South Coast Santa Barbara area (Carpinteria to Goleta) at www.SBSierraClub.org or follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/sbsierraclub

VENTURA NETWORK
~ Up-to-date information about the western Ventura County group in Condor Call on the Los Padres Chapter website. Address: PO Box 7301, Ventura CA 93006. Also on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Ventura-Sierra-Club/152441931434825
~ Regular board meetings 1st Wed monthly at REI in Oxnard 7-8:30pm. Call Nina Danza to confirm at 901-1679.

STEERING COMMITTEE
~ Meets at 7pm on the fourth Thursday of every month, either in-person at the Carpinteria IHOP, or by conference call. Email Secretary Gerry Ching for the agenda and details: gching@cox.net

Hooked on Social Media

The Sierra Club loves social media because it’s a great way to reach hundreds and even thousands of people very quickly as we put our messages out about our campaigns, issues and calls to action. Social media is a great activist tool.

The Los Padres Chapter has two group sites on Facebook, Ventura Sierra Club and Santa Barbara Sierra Club, which have a combined total of around 1100 followers. Our Wilderness Basics Course also has a Facebook site.

There is also the Santa Clara River Confluence Facebook, administered by member-activist Nina Danza.

The Los Padres Chapter is also on Twitter; yes we tweet, follow us at: #lospressierraclick

On a statewide level, our activist arm Sierra Club California has a Facebook and our Ventura Conservation Chair, Jim Hines, administers the Sierra Club California/Nevada Wilderness Team and Sierra Club California/Nevada Wildlife Team.

If you are on Facebook please “like” our pages.

“Ah yes, social media is the way to go. The Sierra Club has come a long way since the days of John Muir traveling from town to town to spread the message of the Sierra Club,” said Jim Hines, our Ventura Conservation Chair whose personal Facebook site specializes in positive comments.
Volunteers: our life’s blood, sweat & smiles

By Jim Hines

Volunteers are the life blood of the Sierra Club. Volunteers like yourself have allowed the Sierra Club to successfully protect our environment for 123 years now.

I am so amazed at the work of our supporters and volunteers, not just in large nationwide events such as last September’s climate march in New York City, but right here at home in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, our Los Padres Chapter region. When we called for your help in attending rallies, speaking out at public hearings and communicating with elected and appointed decision makers, you were there for the Sierra Club.

You showed up to voice your concerns and help out during the recent Refugio oil spill, and you spoke out to protect gray wolves in California at a recent state hearing held in Ventura. You continue to speak out to protect gray wolves in California at a recent state hearing held in Ventura. You continue to speak out to protect gray wolves in California at a recent state hearing held in Ventura.

You have also attended workshops, hearings and written comments regarding protecting wildlife in the Santa Susana and Santa Monica Mountains, Simi Hills, and worked with us to get the process started to create a wildlife overpass over the busy 101 freeway in the Liberty Canyon area of Agoura Hills.

I could not believe the massive show of support so many of you gave when I called for emails to the state Fish and Game Commission regarding support for the Sierra Club call for a ban on trapping of bobcats in our chapter region and through the state. We have over 1000 emails into the commission in support of the ban. Each of YOU are truly making a difference.

So many of you work to save the Gaviota Coast from urban development, ensuring the health of our rivers and the years-long dream to make Ormond Beach a world-class wildlife attraction.

I wanted to take a little time this month to say a big THANK YOU to each of you, our Los Padres Chapter volunteers, supporters and activists for all of the great work you have been doing to help the Sierra Club protect our great wild places and precious wildlife.

Each one of YOU are the voices for the voiceless among us, the wildlife, land, clean water, clean air and coastal resources which the Sierra Club fights for every day.

And for those who want to get involved, check out the contacts in the Group News box. Choose your group and pick your topic!

In humble appreciation of your work and efforts …

Thanks to our fundraisers

By Nina Danza

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” –Winston Churchill

Consumers vote with their wallet, right? Well a certain retail store and ice cream restaurant vote with their wallet too.

The Refill Shoppe on Main Street in Ventura gave $277, 1 percent of their May income, to Ventura Sierra Club as a vote for their commitment. McConnell's Ice Cream (Ventura location) gave 50 percent of sales and its shop in Santa Barbara on State Street gave 10 percent of sales to the Ventura Sierra Club during scheduled dates in July.

You'll notice below that our Ventura Network activist Nina Danza thanks our fundraisers and in other places our volunteers (so does Jim Hines in the adjacent article). The thing is, both of them are amazing volunteers themselves, setting an example and making our Chapter a dynamic and successful part of the Sierra Club. There are many others, feel free to join them; contacts are on page 2. (Photo by Jim Traina of Nina in the Santa Clara River, her special project area)

You showed up to voice your concerns and help out during the recent Refugio oil spill, and you spoke out to protect gray wolves in California at a recent state hearing held in Ventura. You continue to speak out to protect gray wolves in California at a recent state hearing held in Ventura. You continue to speak out to protect gray wolves in California at a recent state hearing held in Ventura.

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Adventure, wildlife abound on our Big 4 peaks

By Stephen Bryne
Sierra Club Hike Leader

Recently, Sierra Club volunteers had the opportunity to help maintain trails while hiking to the seldom-visited Big Four peaks in the Santa Barbara County backcountry, where wildlife and history abound.

This adventure was courtesy of Project Coyote, commenting in The Week on how coyotes have learned how to coexist with us … but we’re still trying to figure out how to coexist with them.”

~ Camilla Fox of the California Project Coyote, commenting in The Week on how coyotes have extended their reach from their original habitats in the west to the east, including cities where small packs have been seen in New York, Chicago and Washington DC, and particularly in Northeast suburbs.

Sierra Club volunteers were led by Hundred Peak Section (HPS) hike leaders Peter and Ignacia Doggett. The Doggetts know these peaks well. Peter has completed the entire 279-peak list a remarkable 13 times. The indefatigable Peter once did the Big Four in a single day; that is all 45 miles and 8000 feet of ascension.

For us, this was a rare chance to experience the Big Four without the 45-mile, 3-day backpack, since we were able to drive to Alamar Saddle. This spot was once forested, but the mature trees were burned during the Zaca Fire.

That fire began northeast of Buellton on July 4, 2007, and by August 31, it had burned over 240,207 acres, making it California’s second largest fire in recorded history (after the Cedar Fire of 2003).

After making camp at Alamar Saddle, we hiked to West Big Pine and Big Pine Mountain. West Big Pine, at 6490 feet, offers excellent views of the surrounding wilderness. The USFS constructed a fire lookout here in 1934 but the tower was dismantled in the late 1970s. On the Madulce Trail we traversed through thickets of thimbleberries, which provided delicious, ripe berries.

Wildlife abounds in this part of the wilderness. Bears are commonly seen. Mike reported a close encounter with a mountain lion. Mule deer were spied. Smaller mammals included black-tailed jackrabbit and chipmunk. Bird sightings included mountain quail, spotted towhee, Western scrub jay, Steller’s jay, raven, roadrunner, and common poorwill. Some volunteers were treated to the sight of a mountain king snake.

On Sunday, we climbed Samon Peak. This peak, at 6227 feet, is reached by a 3-mile out-and-back “use” trail. This trail climbs steeply from near Chokecherry Spring to the top of a ridge then descends into a meadow before traversing four small peaks on the way to Samon Peak.

Peter reported that, on one of his trips to Samon, when he arrived at the peak, he found the summit register guarded by a rattlesnake. From this rocky summit, there are panoramic views of the nearby wild-and-scenic Sisquoc River.

Overall, this trip was literally a win-win. Sierra Club volunteers were able to provide badly needed trail maintenance while visiting four remote peaks in the Santa Barbara backcountry. A good time was had by all. Many thanks to LPFA, USFS volunteers, and trip leaders Peter and Ignacia Doggett. For those interested in that group, go to: www.hundredpeaks.org

EAVESDROPS

“Coyotes have learned how to coexist with us … but we’re still trying to figure out how to coexist with them.”

~ Camilla Fox of the California Project Coyote, commenting in The Week on how coyotes have extended their reach from their original habitats in the west to the east, including cities where small packs have been seen in New York, Chicago and Washington DC, and particularly in Northeast suburbs.

The San Rafael Wilderness, home to some of Santa Barbara County’s highest peaks. (Photo by Stephen Bryne)

Big 4 peaks author Stephen Bryne atop one of those peaks in the San Rafael Wilderness, enjoying wonderful backcountry views. (Photo by Sonia Arancibia)
By Bryan Conant

The idea of the Condor Trail started just about 20 years ago with the dream of creating a hiking route that connected trails from Lake Piru to NIRA, which is outside of Los Padres. Since then the dream has grown and the Condor Trail now spans over 410 trail miles covering the entire length of the Los Padres from Lake Piru (southern Ojai Ranger District) up to Bottchers Gap (northern Monterey Ranger District).

While hikers have done large chunks of the Condor Trail over the years, no one had ever hiked the entire thing, until now. Brittany Nielson became the first finisher of the Condor Trail in early July when she completed the hike from Lake Piru to Bottcher’s Gap.

She solo-hiked the trail and finished in 37 days. It was interesting talking with her before and after her hike. I think she gained an appreciation for the Los Padres and a respect for how challenging our forest can get. She tackled long sections with no trail, heavy bushwhacking in deep canyons, temps ranging from freezing to triple figures, 15 mile stretches with no water and day after day without seeing a single person (less than 20 people along the entire trail).

But, she also hiked under old growth redwoods, covered elevations from over 7,000 feet to sea level, saw incredible wildlife, ocean views, deep pools and got to experience the solitude that is a famous mark for the Los Padres.

Brittany basically took a crash course in Los Padres Backcountry, learning things in a month that many of us took years and years to learn. Speaking on behalf of everyone involved in supporting her journey, we’re all so proud of Brittany for her resiliency, tough skin, happy-go-lucky attitude and ability to fight through the hard times.

This is quite an accomplishment and one that will no doubt put her somewhere in the Los Padres hall of fame.

What’s next for the Condor Trail and/or Brittany? She would like to return next season and do the hike again. Perhaps when she does there will be some other through-hikers following in her footsteps.

Brittany Nielson is the first to hike the whole 410 miles of the Condor Trail starting at Lake Piru (left, photo by Bryan Conant) and finishing at Bottcher’s Gap, the northern terminus (Photo by Tim Bills).
Outdoors Ed at the ‘Gorge’

The Wheeler Gorge Visitors Center has plenty of information on animals and the Los Padres National Forest every day, but it also conducts special events. Located at 17017 Maricopa Hwy, Ojai, here’s its schedule through September, all starting at 11am.

**You Bug Me Aug. 8**
Dr. Philip Phillips of UC Riverside talks about “insects and their relationship with mankind: The good, the bad, and the ugly.” While insects are very helpful to man, providing food, medical assistance and other beneficial services, they can also cause serious damage to agriculture and spread disease.

**Live Birds of Prey Aug. 15**
A live demonstration by Kim Stroud of the Ojai Raptor Center showing birds of prey: owls, hawks, and falcons. See them online at www.ojairaptorcenter.org

**Amazing Bears Sept. 19**
Kelley Swedlow, Wheeler Gorge docent, will present information about our brown and black bears, and the many other types of bears found around the world.

**Rescuing Ocean Animals Sept. 5**
Wildlife rescuer Ron Barrett, with the Channel Island Marine and Wildlife Institute, will present information and insights on sea lions, seals, otters and other animals found sick or injured. What you should do and not do when you find an animal stranded on the beach? CIMWI’s Rescue Hotline is (805) 567-1505; put it in your cell phone.

**EAVESDROPS**
“For the true environmentalist, nothing beats an electric car charged by renewable energy sources. Homeowners with rooftop solar panels can literally drive on sunshine.”

~ Conclusion by an LA Times report trying to sort out which green vehicle is “kindest to the planet,” among hybrids, battery electrics, diesels and hydrogen fuel cells. But efficient gasoline engines are also in the mix.

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**BILLIONAIRE DEMOCRAT:**
Clean energy is the ‘jobs creator’

By Elisabeth Lamar

It was a packed crowd at California Lutheran University on July 21st when billionaire Tom Steyer took on climate deniers, asserting solar and renewable energy solutions create more jobs than the production of petroleum.

Hosted by Assembly member Jacqui Irwin, the audience was peppered with Senate District 27 candidates: Richard Mathews, David Pollock, and Henry Stern.

The audience eagerly awaited hearing about energy policy in California, and Steyer said it has long been viewed as a state that leads the way in progressive policy, setting the trend both nationally and globally.

Steyer is a former hedge fund manager turned philanthropist and a major player in the Democratic Party. In 2013, he founded the NextGen Climate Action Super PAC, campaigning against politicians who deny the science of climate change, such as Marco Rubio and Rick Scott.

Additionally, Steyer has been an aggressive advocate for clean energy on the state, federal, and international level. He spoke of his recent Washington trip to talk about the dynamic pace of renewable energy production in California, and multiple missions to China to lobby for greenhouse gas reduction.

As a business leader Steyer cited the undeniable prosperity that green growth promises. Renewable energy use in the state is skyrocketing and projected to rise even further in the near future. Put simply, the fossil fuel industry has no place in the California economy.

According to Steyer, SB 350, authored by leader of the California Senate Kevin de Leon, would mandate that 50% of the state’s energy come from clean sources by 2030, a goal easily attainable, he believes.

Passing the bill would send a powerful message to the world that fossil fuels are dead.

Steyer is a charismatic character brimming with youthful enthusiasm. He spoke optimistically about innovate technology to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as advanced farming techniques that sequester more carbon in the soil.

A question from the audience asked how we can elect firm environmentalist politicians. Steyer carefully avoided partisan rhetoric but suggested that as voters we keep aware of where the money surrounding candidates is coming from. Steyer refrained from making any statements about the presidential election. It's worth noting, however, that only three current candidates have refused to take donations from the fossil fuel industry.
Does a bear scat in the woods?

Editor’s note: Hike leader Robert Bernstein was diligent in getting expert tracker Michael Kresky to go along on a Sierra Club outing in the Santa Barbara foothills. Kresky is a co-author (along with Mark Elbroch and Jonah Evans) of the “Field Guide to Animal Tracks and Scat of California.”

In the introduction, Elbroch writes that “readers should realize that tracking skills are but tools to be wielded for some purpose and not an end in and of themselves; hunting, education, poaching detection, wildlife monitoring, research and conservation are but some of its varied applications.”

Here’s Robert’s account of the outing.

By Robert Bernstein

Special thanks to animal tracking expert Michael Kresky for making the Secret Buena Vista Benches hike especially educational and enjoyable. Michael is a skilled tracker who literally wrote the book on the subject.

The highlight was when he found a perfect bear footprint after seeing bear signs on the trail.

Michael not only knows animal tracks, animal poops and signs of animal activity as he recognizes a wide range of bird calls and knows the local plants and even the invasive non-native plants.

He explained that to track animals, it is essential to use every clue available. The plants can be valuable clues about which animals may be present. He also pointed out the corridors where animals are likely to travel as vital clues.

A few poop notes: Cats are pure carnivores. If there are any seeds, it is not a cat. Lizards and birds have one opening for urine and feces. The uric acid is a white section added to the poop. Michael said that domestic dogs (and other canids such as coyotes) introduce a fungus that grows "hair" on many poops seen on the trail.

The hike was shrouded in fog, eliminating the sweeping views usually seen on this route. But the compensation was a pleasant hike on a trail that can be brutally hot. And the ethereal feel of the fog was magical!

The hike itself was fairly short, just three miles round trip, starting on the Romero Canyon Road trail and soon branching off onto the Buena Vista Trail. The elevation gain is just 700 feet, but it is really steep; most of that elevation gain happens in about half a mile. That is a 30 percent grade, as steep as the steepest street in San Francisco. It is one of the few hikes where I strongly recommend a hiking pole or stick.
Spill is gone, bills linger on

By John Hankins,
Editor Condor Call

Just as the dark oil lapped up on shores nearly 100 miles away from the source of the May 19 Refugio Oil Spill, the political and legal tides are agitating for relief from future disasters.

Already, a litany of legislation is being proposed to tighten up regulations at the local, state and national levels, and the spill is becoming yet another warning of the dangers of petroleum use.

There are also multiple investigations that are ongoing at the federal, state and county levels that may include criminal as well as civil prosecutions.

The culprit, a pipeline portion that was seriously eroded and not caught by pipeline and an undetermined amount of which reached the ocean, polluting the coast at least 100 miles southward to Manhattan Beach in Los Angeles.

At the height of the response, more than 1,400 workers were deployed for field operations and several hundred more were working at the command post and in support roles.

Wildlife officials reported nearly 200 birds and more than 100 mammals were found dead in the spill area. Approximately 60 each of birds and mammals were recovered alive and treated. Many have been released, some with tracking devices (solar powered!).

Below is a recap of the events.

Information Please
A consortium of agencies is continuing efforts to abate any impacts of the Refugio Oil Spill.

To keep apprised of these actions, sign up to get the Natural Resource Damage Assessment’s newsletter. Call Steve Hampton at (916) 323-4724 or email: Steve.Hampton@wildlife.ca.gov

Check out the current newsletter is at: www.wildlife.ca.gov/OSPR/NRDA/refugio

~ The extensive clean-up of the May 19 Refugio oil spill was declared finished two months afterward, affecting 96 miles of shoreline and costing owner Plains All-American Pipeline around $100 million. An estimated (by Plains) 101,000 gallons of crude oil spilled from a corroded pipeline and an undetermined amount of which reached the ocean, polluting the coast at least 100 miles southward to Manhattan Beach in Los Angeles.

~ At a June hearing in Santa Barbara, Plains was taken to task for its slowness to respond, while Republican Rep. David McKinney wondered how the agency would recover from “the loss of confidence of the public.”

~ Fishing grounds were closed after the spill, affecting both commercial and recreational, and reopened in late June. The affected area covered 138 square miles between Coal Oil Point and Hollister Ranch, to about six miles seaward. Commercial fishermen have sued Plains and have affected residents. AUCB team working with fishermen have sued Plains and have affected residents. AUCB team working with

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~ Seven of the eight oil platforms off the Santa Barbara coast were shut in because of the pipeline failure, and they remain so as of Aug. 1.

~ A claims hotline has been set up for those who believe they have been impacted by the spill: (866) 753-3619.
Artists present ‘Legacy & Loss’

“Summerland morning” © by Bill Dewey is one of the fascinating photos in a Wildling Museum exhibit called “Legacy and Loss: Landscapes of the Santa Barbara Region.” Attend reception at 5:30pm, Aug. 21. The exhibition illustrates the tri-counties development as well as celebrate local wilderness and natural regions. Details at: www.wildlingmuseum.org

Wright choice for CEC

After 10 years at the helm, Dave Davis will officially retired from his position as CEO of the Community Environmental Council on July 31.

Sigrid Wright, who has been an instrumental leader at CEC for 20 years, is the new CEO.

Dave, a Sierra Club member and supporter, joined the CEC Board of Directors in 2004 and became CEO in 2005. He has led the organization through more than a decade of focus on regional solutions to climate change and clean energy development.

He is looking forward to new civic challenges, such as his recent appointment to the Santa Barbara Water Commission, and will continue as Chair of the MTD Board. Send Dave your congratulations at ddavis@cecmail.org.

CEC’s 45th Anniversary Green Gala – which will be held Friday, Sept. 25 at the Lark – will honor Dave.

For tickets, contact Kathi King at 963-0583 x 108 or: kking@cecmail.org

Wright is the right choice for CEC, having served there since 1995. Her credentials are impressive, such as co-authoring “A New Energy Direction: A Blueprint for Santa Barbara County,” growing the Earth Day festival into a huge 2-day event and is now focused on moving the region toward sustainable methods, notable a food action plan.

The Wildling Museum invites the community to come to an opening reception for its new exhibit, Legacy and Loss: Landscapes of the Santa Barbara Region, on Friday, Aug. 21 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

The exhibit will show the evolving landscape of the Santa Barbara region through the artwork of historic and contemporary artists. It will illustrate the development of the area as well as celebrate local wilderness and natural regions conserved as open space.

The exhibition will be in the first floor gallery from Aug. 22 to Feb. 1, 2016.

More detail on this and other exhibitions and events are at: www.wildlingmuseum.org.

EAVESDROPS

“I don’t have that information in front of me…”

~ Plains pipeline rep Patrick Hodgins, during a June 26 hearing called by State Sen. Hannah Beth Jackson and Assembly member Das Williams, who directly asked why it took the company 3½ hours to report the Refugio oil spill to the National Response Center. He gave the same answer when asked about a report showing extensive corrosion within the pipeline.

Farmers Market welcomes club

Our Sierra Club booth at the Farmers’ Market in east Ventura gets plenty of attention. Here, kids learn about planting with Maravilla Clemens and they eagerly shared milkwood seeds. Kudos to Nina Danza who arranged for the booth and to Phil Clarke for helping out. (Photos by Nina Danza)
Islands adventure awaits

Join the Sierra Club for an 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard tour of the enchanting Channel Islands.

Choose from these dates: August 24-26, Sept. 27-29 or Oct. 25-27.

You may hike the wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers, kayak rugged coastlines, and marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions.

Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds; and an occasional whale. Watch for the highly endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years … or, just relax at sea.

All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. The $615 cost 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 give evening programs.

To reserve space, send a $100 check, written to Sierra Club, to leader Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732.

For more information contact leader: (626) 443-0706 or email jholtzhln@aol.com

Ventura and Santa Barbara counties are experiencing a heat wave that feels like Florida. For the past three years we’ve been only getting 25 percent of our normal rain fall. We now have a “fire season” that is year-round.

Los Padres ForestWatch is hosting its first ever Santa Barbara Wild! event on Sunday, Sept. 27, from 2-4 pm at the Toad&Co. courtyard on the beautiful Santa Barbara Riviera.

The theme will celebrate the role that bees and other pollinators play in protecting the Los Padres National Forest. There will be an opportunity to learn about the challenges pollinators face, the positive impact they have and things everyone can do in their lives to help, like growing certain types of plants.

There will also be live music, food, silent auction, and much more. ForestWatch for eight years has conducted a similar event, Ojai Wild!, which will continue annually along with the new Santa Barbara county event.

For details, go to: www.sbwild.org

Get ‘Santa Barbara Wild’

Ventura County Health Department held a climate forum putting Climate Change as the “greatest threat to public health in the 21st Century.”

What can you do about it? A lot, beginning with signing the petition to let our Assembly members know to vote yes on clean energy and climate protection. To sign, go to: www.VCCOOL.org

Volunteers are also needed; call 641-2665 or email: action@vccool.org

Here’s the scoop: The most powerful climate bills in our nation’s history have just passed the California Senate, and are going to the Assembly floor starting Aug. 17. The top three are:

~ Senate Bill 32 (Pavley). Extends AB-32, reducing California’s carbon pollution by 80 percent from 1990 levels, by 2050.

~ Senate Bill 350 (De León). Cut fossil fuel used in cars and trucks by 50 percent, ensure 50 percent of our electricity is from renewable sources, and increases energy efficiency in buildings by 50 percent, all by 2030.

~ Senate Bill 185 (De León). Directs the two largest state pension funds (public employees and state teachers) to divest their portfolios of coal companies by July 1, 2017.

There are 11 climate bills in total. An overview plus the actual text of each bill can be found at http://focus.senate.ca.gov/climate
Ongoing Outings

Ventura Every Monday Morning

EASY WALKS: Join Pat Jump at 8:30 a.m. every Monday morning for easy to moderate walks in the Ventura and Ojai areas. A long-time tradition, the walks will last about two hours and the group sometimes goes for coffee afterward. Call Pat at 643-0270.

Ventura Every Wednesday

URBAN EVENING HIKE: Weekly hike in Ventura meets across the street from the Mission at 6:45 p.m. for a 4 1/2-mile walk up Father Serra’s Cross for spectacular scenic views of Ventura, the Channel Islands and the sunset. It continues across the hillside, down to the ocean, to the end of the pier, then along the promenade looping back to the Mission. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Contact KURT PRESSLER 643-5902. (VEN)

Santa Barbara Fridays, Wednesdays and Weekends

SOCIAL HIKE every Friday evening for an easy-to–moderate 2.4 mile roundtrip evening hike in the Santa Barbara front country, beach or back roads. Meet at 6 p.m. at the Santa Barbara Mission; bring water and a flashlight, preferably head lamp. Hike is designed for conditioning. For details, contact BERNARD MINES, 722-9000.

STRENUOUS 5-10 mile roundtrip evening hike on Wednesdays. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Santa Barbara Mission; bring water and a flashlight, preferably head lamp. Hike is designed for conditioning. For details, contact BERNARD MINES, 722-9000.

MODERATE AND STRENUOUS hikes at 9 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Meet at Bank of America at State St. and Hope Ave.

Monthly Programs

ARGUELLO GROUP offers slide shows, speakers and movies, the third Friday of each month. Call for details: 928-3598.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Help keep Highway 1 beautiful. Adopt-a-Highway trash pickup from the Lompoc ‘Y’ye to the Base boundary. Meet at Vandenberg Village Shopping Center parking lot at 9 a.m. on the fourth Saturday of odd-numbered months. Rain cancels. Contact CONNIE: 735-2292.

Outing Notes

Key to outing locations (noted in parenthesis at the end of each listing)

AR – Arguello Group (Northern SB County)
SB – Santa Barbara Group (Southern SB County)
VEN – Ventura Network (Northern Ventura County)
CJ – Conejo Group (Southern Ventura County)
LA – Los Angeles Chapter joint hikes

Welcome Hikers

The public is welcome at all outings listed, unless otherwise specified. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Study footwear is recommended. If you have any questions about a hike, please contact the leader listed. All phone numbers are area code 805, unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 14. A responsible adult must accompany an outing, unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany an outing, unless otherwise noted.

STRENUOUS 2145. (SB)

We leave at 6:15 sharp. Bring a flashlight; optional potluck or pizza afterward. AL SLADEK, 685-563-4850 (SB)

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Fines imposed for Tar Creek trespass

By Perry Van Houten

There are thousands of miles of trails leading to great hiking destinations in the Los Padres National Forest, but there is one place you must not go: Tar Creek in the Sespe Condor Sanctuary.

The sanctuary has been closed to the public for decades, but recent attention given the area on social media has caused an explosion of illegal visitation, and forced the U.S. Forest Service to reissue the order prohibiting public access. Hikers who ignore it are being fined and/or six months in jail. Since January, officers have written roughly 100 citations. Bail for each citation is $150 or a mandatory court appearance.

“It has historically been closed since the late ’40s, and it was fine and dandy until it just got blown out of proportion with everybody showing their videos of how pristine it is,” said Diane Cross, Ojai Ranger District Resource Officer. “Water is a huge attraction.”

With its series of descending pools, waterfalls and stone terraces, the Tar Creek Falls area near Fillmore has long been a beloved destination for many. Since 2012, Forest Service officers have documented over 100 people a day entering the falls area on weekends. Weekly, 100-150 pounds of trash have been left behind. People have left dozens of graffiti sites and have also started illegal bonfires.

That’s the problem, because Tar Creek is within the Sespe Condor Sanctuary. Established in 1947 to protect vital habitat for endangered California condors, the sanctuary is heavily used by the birds to mate, nest, roost and forage. Public entry to Tar Creek exposes condors to human food, micro-trash and direct contact with people. Entry into the sanctuary can now result in a $5,000 fine and/or six months in jail.

“You have both the condor and the steelhead in this area, and what are the effects of people, unfortunately,” said Heidi Anderson, Ojai Ranger District Wilderness Trails Manager. “The graffiti, the climbing ropes and just the trash they’re leaving impacts both of those species. If people just came up and used it and didn’t leave anything behind, it would be a different matter.”

Anderson believes the 2008 death of a condor strangled in rappelling lines left behind at Tar Creek was a key factor in the decision to strictly enforce the closure. In late April, she led a group of 18 volunteers who removed graffiti from 43 separate sites in the Tar Creek area.

Enforcement is handled from the Ojai Ranger District. “It’s in our backyard and we’re responsible for implementing the closure,” Cross explained. In addition to frequent patrols, two steel signs and an informational kiosk have recently been installed near the start of the user-created trail to emphasize that access is prohibited.

The crackdown is a step the U.S. Forest Service and its partners did not want to take, but Cross said it’s essential the public understand the importance of

continued next page
Outings...continued

August 23
URBAN HIKE TO FRANCHESCI PARK: Start near the Mission, walk through the Riviera, then up the "1000 steps" to a great view of the city and harbor. Return via Las Tunas Rd. Some steep sections. Moderate 4 mrt. Bring water and a snack. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ROBERT 685-1283 (SB)

Fines imposed...

continued from page 17

http://tinyurl.com/ik3qytz. No dogs please. Meet at the end of Arnold Rd. at docent trailer (go past Agromin 6859 Arnold Rd.). Questions Nina 901-1679 (VEN)

August 24
MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 9am at the corner of Park & Bard in Port Hueneme for beach and lighthouse walk. For info, call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN)

August 31
MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 9am at Mission Plaza to walk the new trail behind City Hall & the Cross. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)

EAVESDROPS

"It was like a miracle."
~ Prof. Claire Komives

after finding out that a peptide molecule from the ugly opossum could be the silver bullet that acts as an anti-venom from snake bites, quoted in National Geographic.

EAVESDROPS

continued next page

Outdoor trail guides: SB & Ventura

Hiking is such a popular activity in our Los Padres Chapter region (Santa Barbara and Ventura) that many sites offer information. They include:

www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf/

Official Los Padres Forest website details all kinds of recreation.

www.hikelospadres.com

Los Padres Forest Association’s Trail Guide.

http://santabarbaratrailguide.com

An interactive site and blog by Diane Soini.


Sponsored by the VC Star newspaper.

www.VenturaCountyTrails.org

Includes news and links by Steve.

http://www.independent.com/news/outdoors/day-hikes

Newsy site for day hikes by the Santa Barbara Independent.

www.santabarbarahikes.com

An interactive site and blog by Diane Soini.


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www.VenturaCountyTrails.org

Includes news and links by Steve.
Outings...continued

Hike your city
Ask a friend to join
www.Sierraclub.org

Yes, we hike the cities of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Here’s one on the SB Riviera. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)
The Pines, on the Horn Canyon Trail, was planted as an experiment by forest rangers in the late 1940s. A few of the trees were lost in the 1985 Wheeler Fire, but most have survived for decades—until now.

“We’ve actually seen that throughout the forest and the state, across the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests. There were some areas where trees were planted, where at the time the best science said let’s do it, let’s give it a try. And unfortunately with trees, sometimes it can take sixty years, or eighty years, for nature to tell us that trees really didn’t belong on certain sites,” explains Thompson.

Roughly three miles up Horn Canyon, at an elevation of 3,260 feet, The Pines is a spacious campsite known for its ample shade. Hiking up the trail, the trees seem to appear out of nowhere.

“The hike there is wonderful, yet especially beckoning is the grove itself, with its shade and branches rustling in the breeze,” says John Broesamle of Ojai, who’s been hiking to The Pines for forty years.

“Watching the trees die one after another during the current drought has been like losing old friends.” The camp was the first place he and his wife Kathy took their children backpacking.

Prognosis for The Pines and other forest areas is not good, given the prolonged drought. “As we progress into the drought, we’re going to continue to see trees die,” said Kevin Grant, Ojai Ranger District Fire Management Officer. “Twelve of the last fifteen years have been below average precipitation. So this is really a long term issue. It’s taken a while to get those trees stressed to the point where a pest or a problem can quickly turn their fate.”

Grant suggests campers look up into the trees and “pick a spot that doesn’t have branches dangling.”

Thompson believes all is not lost. “Forests change over time. With a certain level of bark beetle activity, they’re thinning the weaker trees. With drought, unfortunately, the normally healthy trees are also being attacked. So we might be losing a little bit more than we want right now.”

— Editor’s note: This article first appeared in the Ojai Valley News.

Outings...continued

Saturday night. Sunday we will tour a number of the historic, prehistoric, and geologic sites in the Monument with details to be determined by consensus of the group. Leader CRAIG DEUTSCHER, craig.deutsche@gmail.com, 310-477-6670. (CRNCC Desert Committee)

September 27

SALT AND SAND SIGHTS: 9am-11am Bring yourself to the edge of the continent and learn about the ecological niche at Ormond Beach. We’ll be on the lookout for notable bird species; the leader will explain plants and animals that live in the wetlands. Expect a packed earth trail, natural sand dunes and beach walk along the surf. Please wear closed shoes, bring water, sun protection. Binoculars may be useful! Total length 1.5 mi, elevation change zero. Light rain does not cancel. Great for all ages. Kids under 18 allowed with parent or guardian or other adult (must bring signed waiver if accompanied by non-parent or non-guardian, printable copy here: http://tinyurl.com/lk3qytz). No dogs please. Meet at the end of Arnold Rd. at docent trailer (go past Agromin 6859 Arnold Rd). Questions NINA 901-1679 (VEN)

October 31-November 1

GHOST TOWN EXTRAVAGANZA: Celebrate Halloween by visiting the ghosts of California’s colorful past in the eerie desert landscape near Death Valley. Camp near the historic ghost town of Ballarat. Saturday, a challenging hike to ghost town Lookout City with historian Hal Fowler who will regale us with tales of this wild west town. We’ll return to camp for Happy Hour and a potluck feast, followed by a midnight visit to Ballarat’s graveyard. On Sunday, we’ll make a quick visit to the infamous Riley townsite. Send $8 per person (check payable to Lygeia Gerard), home and work phones, email address and rideshare preferences to Leader: LYGEIA GERARD, P.O. Box 721039, Pinon Hills, CA 92372, 760-868-2179. (Mojave Group/CRNCC Desert Committee)

EAVEDROPS

“We may well be leaving coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet’s capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as is it, can only precipitate catastrophes.”

~ Pope Francis, who has a scientific background, in his encyclical about climate change.

He wrote that “technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – need to be progressively replaced without delay.”