Public Outpouring Needed on Extending Diablo’s Life

Public support is being urgently sought by the Santa Lucia Chapter and other organizations for a complete review of the full costs of PG&E’s proposal to extend the life of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant by replacing its steam generators—before the project is allowed to go forward.

The review would include a full cost-benefit analysis—the first in the nation for an aging nuclear plant—of the safety, environmental, and economic costs of the replacement and continued operation of the Diablo Canyon plant. This analysis is required to determine what is best for the ratepayers—replacement of worn parts or replacement of Diablo Canyon as an electric source.

The request for the study has been made by the Chapter, the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, Public Citizen, Greenspace and The Utility Reform Network (TURN) to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

If the generators are not replaced, Diablo must close by 2013. If they are, it would result in increased production of high-level radioactive waste which PG&E intends to store in our earthquake active coastal zone for many decades, perhaps forever.

If approved by the PUC, it would be the first case in the nation to require a thorough cost-benefit analysis of replacement of aging components at a nuclear power plant.

PUC staffers keep tallies on numbers of public comments on high-profile and controversial issues such as Diablo for the Commissioners, which is why letters can have a significant impact on their final decision on the future of the nuclear plant.

Your own letter or a sample letter below can be sent in whole or part by email to Harriet Burts, public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov or by regular mail to Harriet Burts, PUC, Public Advisor, 565 Van Ness, Room 2103, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Sample letter:

Dear Public Advisor,

 Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant: Too Risky and Too Costly. In the past three years, Pacific Gas and Electric Company has submitted three applications regarding Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. The owners of this facility have filed to:

1. Replace eight leaking and aging steam generators;
2. Expand storage of high-level radioactive waste in casks;
3. Pass billions of dollars onto ratepayers.

It is time to scrutinize the costs and risks associated with the continued operation of this nuclear plant.

PULL COSTS OF REPLACING STEAM GENERATORS MUST BE REVIEWED.

signed (YOUR NAME)

Following is additional information to include if you choose to expand your letter.

As a resident of San Luis Obispo County, I would like to express my opposition to the replacement of steam generators at Diablo Canyon. Replacement of these and other aging components results in increased production of high-level radioactive waste which PG&E intends to store in our earthquake active coastal zone for decades, perhaps forever.

The Commission must take a hard look at the true costs of operating this nuclear plant for another ten years and look at whether this project is in the best interest of ratepayers. The Commission should conduct a full investigation of all potential impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Our community was very actively opposed when the CPUC allowed electrical production from Diablo Canyon into rates without a review of the reasonableness of costs incurred. CPUC staff had at one time issued a review of costs which outlined $4.4 billion of the $5.7 billion in costs should be disallowed (due to earthquake and retrofit issues).

The Commission must avoid making the same mistakes by looking at the costs of all potential capital improvements necessary to ensure that the plant can be operated safely and that it does not pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the people and the environment.

In addition, in 1988 the only advantage to ratepayers from the Commission settlement with PG&E was that NO costs of downtime, new NRC retrofit issues).

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**Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting**

Water, water, everywhere, will it vanish in a wink? Our county has water problems from Cambria to Carrizo, from Lake Nacimiento to Lopez Lake. What are our water resources, who is using how much, what can be done to ensure a supply, how large a population can these resources support, what is being done about these resources? Probably we won’t be able to cover all these questions in one evening, but our speakers will share their knowledge about these vital concerns.

Our speakers are Susan Litteral from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Adrianna from the Las Tablas Resources Conservation District. Sierra Club members and the General Public are all invited to this interesting and informative meeting. Bring your friends. Refreshments will be available.

**Tuesday, April 20, 7:00 p.m.**
**Meadow Park Rec Center**
**San Luis Obispo**

**Save the date!!**

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**David Orr to Visit Cal Poly at University’s Earth Day Convocation**

by Steven Marx

Cal Poly will mark Earth Day 2004 with a public Convocation on Friday, April 23, 3:30-6 pm entitled “Education for Sustainability: Engaging the Polytechnic University.” President Warren Baker will declare Cal Poly a signatory to the Tallies Declaration, a ten point pledge to make the university an agent for practising, improving and teaching methods of sustainable resource use and environmental protection signed by over 300 university chancellors and presidents worldwide. In May of 2003 the Cal Poly Academic Senate unanimously adopted Resolution AS-598/03/TC in support of signing the Declaration, and the Associated Students adopted Resolution AS-04/05 in support of signing the Declaration.

Guest speaker is David Orr, a renowned author and lecturer on the topic of Education for Sustainability, who spearheaded the effort to design, finance and build an Environmental Studies Center at Oberlin College—a “Green Building” described by the New York Times as “the most remarkable” of a new generation of college buildings and selected as one of 30 “milestone buildings” by the U.S. Department of Energy. Dr. Orr is the author of four books: The Nature of Design (Oxford, 2002); Earth in Mind (Island, 1994); Ecological Literacy (SUNY, 1992) and co-editor of The Global Predicament (North Carolina, 1979) and The Campus and Environmental Responsibility (Jossey-Bass, 1992). He has published 120 articles in scientific journals, social science publications, and popular magazines. His latest book, The Last Refuge, will be published in early April 2004.

Orr will be introduced by R. Thomas Jones, the new Dean of Cal Poly’s College of Architecture and Environmental Design, who is Executive Director of the California Futures Network and a nationally recognized expert on “smart growth.”

Other speakers will include Alison Anderson, Associated Students President, and George Lewis, Chair of the Cal Poly Academic Senate. Peter Lee, Dean of the College of Engineering will announce plans for the formation of a University Center for Sustainable Engineering.

The Convocation takes place at Chumash auditorium located in the University Union. Exhibits of student projects, faculty research, and administration programs fostering sustainability will be on display. Admission is free and open to the public.

Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and supported by many University constituencies and organizations, this event will highlight Cal Poly’s emerging interdisciplinary and interdepartmental efforts to address problems created by outdated environmentally damaging technologies and to promote both innovative and traditional alternatives to solve them.

On Saturday, April 24 Cal Poly will host a breakfast conference with Dr. Orr for University decision makers and sustainability activists entitled “Making It Work—Formulating Sustainability Goals and Raising the Resources to Reach Them.”
Coastal Commission Overrules State Parks on Plover Protections

from Mark Massara's California Coastwatcher

The California Coastal Commission has overruled a suggestion by California State Parks that the Commission abandon efforts to save western snowy plovers at Ocean Dunes State Park.

Instead of rubber-stamping State Parks' decision not to implement the recommendations of a team of biologists studying the birds, the Commission signaled its intent to send a letter to State Park's urging them to abide by set of science-based recommendations made by a team of biological experts.

For over twenty years State Parks refused to either study or even consider limiting people and/or off-road vehicles at the Oceano Dunes. Then three years ago the Commission suggested establishing a panel of scientists to study bird biology and suggest ways to protect the birds at Oceano from the ravages of off-road vehicles.

The Coastal Commission has been having an annual review of the research for the past three years. This year State Parks asked that the Commission end its involvement at Oceano. Instead the Commission found the scientific advisors have provided an invaluable service and that all their advice and recommendations should be implemented.

Among other things the scientists have suggested that fencing to protect the birds be left up year around, that leaving the fencing up year around instead of just during nesting season results in the formation of dune habitat that attracts the birds annually.

State Parks rejected the idea, and unfortunately only one month ago an off road vehicle ran over and killed an endangered snowy plover in the area where fencing had been recommended. State Parks was unapologetic and instead took credit for recent plover successes at Oceano. Yet State Parks also refused to expand fencing, as recommended by the scientists.

Ruth Coleman, Director of State Parks, said that there were 25 nests last year, and over 60 this year. This year there were over 160 chicks, with 107 successfully fledging this year. Two years ago only 3 birds managed to fledge.

Biology Gordon Hensley told the Commission that a plover was killed on January 9 in an area that the scientists had previously recommended be fenced. Had State Parks not refused to put up the fence, the bird would not have been run over.

Off-road vehicle enthusiasts Friends of Oceano Dunes (FOOD) urged the Commission to take action and specifically asked that the Commission not send a letter to State Parks urging them to do more to protect plovers.

Scientists believe that if State Parks works hard enough, they can convince the birds to go to other beaches and live there so that people can drive the beach in peace.

FOOD lawyers charged that the Commission had since 1982 engaged in overreach and other aberrant behavior that is not right and has to stop.

"It is time to retire the permit and the annual review process so that State Park can operate the park as intended- as an off road vehicular area, " the dune buggy lover said.

Commissioner Mary Nichols began the discussion by supporting the Coastal staff recommendation that the Commission side with the scientists and send a letter to State Parks urging them to do the same.

Commissioner Sara Wan said she was disturbed that State Parks would refuse to implement the recommendation of the scientists. "What is the basis of the refusal?" Wan asked. "I would judge this whole process in large part a failure," Douglass said. "In looking at the work load, staff constraints, budget constraints etc. Douglas informed the Commission that he has no choice but to begin to have staff focus on other work. "We will continue to work with local governments on their own initiative. The periodic review process, however, has not resulted in improving LCPs," Douglass concluded.

Commission Chair Mike Reilly agreed in part, saying "frankly as bad as it is and as worse as it may become it would be helpful if staff could show us where we were two years ago and where we are now so we can appreciate the difficulties facing the commission staff and all the work you've done." Staff then agreed to provide a comprehensive LCP historical record at a subsequent meeting.

SLO Local Coastal Plan Update

from Mark Massara's California Coastwatcher

The California Coastal Commission once again focused on the slow torture process that is the San Luis Obispo County Local Coastal Plan (LCP) Update, which is now three years old and only 18% complete after numerous hearings and expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Specifically, the Commission debated a balancing provision proposed by the County for environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA), wherein the County suggested that safety improvements—read that: Highway 1 expansion through Harmony & Cambria—could be used to "balance" destruction of habitat.

Coastal staff said that while the County was free to balance away anything they want, all other LCP policies would still apply and that ESHA was protected in a variety of other ways.

Staff also specifically stated that Hwy 1 cannot be expanded in Cambria.

Commissioner Scott Peters moved that the Commission approve the LCP submittal with various staff modifications. The LCP Amendment passed unanimously, with Commissioners Iseman, Nichols, Nava, Peters, Reilly, Burke, Wen, Woolley, Suskind, and Hart all voting yes.

Yet it wasn't as though all the problems with the SLO LCP were resolved. For example, much discussion ensued regarding the County's proposal to limit riparian setbacks to 50 ft, when clearly 100 ft would be preferable.

Postscript; Commissioner Executive Director Peter Douglas said that the update process is a "living, evolving process." Douglass then told the Commission that the SLO process has been an incredible amount of work starting with research in 1998 that led to hundreds of recommendations in 2001. So far the County has resisted nearly every improvement. And still none of the big issues have been resolved. "I would judge this whole process as major failure," Douglass said. "In looking at the work load, staff constraints, budget constraints etc. Douglas informed the Commission that he has no choice but to begin to have staff focus on other work. "We will continue to work with local governments on their own initiative. The periodic review process, however, has not resulted in improving LCPs," Douglass concluded.

December 2003

"Yes, I would like to help the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club preserve precious lands on the Central Coast

by making a donation to the Sierra Club Morro Preservation Fund, and/or SLO Land Preservation Fund.

\[ \text{Type your donation amount here:} \quad \text{for Morro Preservation Fund} \quad \text{or for SLO Land Preservation Fund} \]

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Donations are tax-deductible.
regulations, replacement of aging components or any other unanticipated costs would be passed on to PG&E ratepayers. Now we read that proceedings are being held to pass on costs of aging steam generators and we wonder if there was ever any public notification of a change to the original Settlement Agreement. We also would like to know how Diablo Canyon ended up in cost-service ratemaking without the requisite review of prudent and reasonable costs.

We understand that over the past year, new generation of other nuclear plant operators around the country have sued Westinghouse for manufacturing defective steam generators, the very same generators PG&E is seeking to replace. We would like to know why PG&E did not take action to inspect the steam generators when these lawsuits were initiated and why it waited so long to start this project.

We are extremely concerned that PG&E cannot be trusted to act responsibly and instead is playing a game of hide and seek with the public. This is not just an issue of the impact on the people living near Diablo Canyon; to put it baldly, the ratepayers are not served by having to pay for PG&E’s liability in the case of a nuclear accident.

Furthermore, the state of California never planned adequate insider storage for nuclear waste when PG&E and Edison applied to build these facilities. Now that PG&E is beginning to run out of room in its already reaccelerated storage site, our state is becoming a default radioactive waste storage site, on coastal bluffs which will never meet criteria for permanent nuclear waste storage.

We believe that the Commission can better serve the ratepayers of California by insisting on an auction for replacement generation immediately and actively soliciting renewable resources. Even if PG&E’s steam generator project were approved, the ratepayers would be saddled with $70 million to extend the life of this unreliable power source for a mere ten years. The same amount of money could instead be invested in new generation that will provide electric service to Californians for decades longer than Diablo Canyon.

We are concerned that the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, Sierra Club, Public Citizen and Greenpeace and urge a comprehensive review of the full costs of extending the life of a nuclear plant. Costs of enhanced security measures related to acts of terrorism and new seismic information from the December 22, 2003 6.5 magnitude earthquake must be included.
New EPA Rules May Block Duke Plant

Duke Energy's plans to replace the existing Morro Bay Power Plant with a new and larger one was dealt a second serious blow in the form of new federal regulations that appear to rule out the use of Duke's proposed method of compensating for the billions of fish larvae that would be killed by the plant.

The regulations come on the heels of a Feb. 3 landmark decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York. It struck down programs that restore habitat to compensate for killing of fish through diversion of sea water for cooling new power plants. The decision could invalidate such mitigation methods for the proposed Duke plant in Morro Bay.

Both the regulations and the court decision also may affect whether PG&E will be able to use mitigations for fish killed by the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant that do not actually reduce or eliminate the loss of marine life in sea water that the plant uses for cooling. A federal permit for operation of the Diablo plant is under review for renewal by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

In light of the Environmental Protection Agency regulations, the water board abruptly canceled a climactic meeting scheduled for April 2 where final action on Duke Energy's proposed replacement plant was expected.

After three years of study, five regulatory agencies have agreed that the new Duke plant would kill between 16% and 33% of the crab and fish larvae in water withdrawn from the Morro Bay National Estuary to cool the new plant. In comparison, the existing plant, which also withdraws water from the Morro Estuary, contains no performance standard for offsetting the killing of larvae. But the regulations—issued in mid-February—require such plans to be held to a “performance standard” that calls for reduction of the killing of larvae by 60% to 90% by the new plant, compared to losses by the existing plant, which also withdraws water from the Morro Estuary, a water board staff member said.

Duke's HEP contains no performance standard. Instead, it is designed to reduce the buildup of sedimentation in the Estuary and thereby maintain water volume, ostensibly creating more “biomass” of marine life in the future. HEP contains no mechanism for measuring whether it produces marine life to replace the larval lost in the plant either in the short or long term. If the HEP does not meet the performance requirements for restoration plans in the new regulations, Duke would have to come up with some other such compensation plan, or be faced with installing dry cooling technology, which the energy company has flatly stated it would not do.

A notice canceling the board hearing said “Regional Board staff concluded that significant revision of the permit is necessary” in light of the new regulations. A team of experts hired by the water board has been reexamining Duke's HEP to offset the killing of larvae. But the regulations—issued in mid-February—require such plans to be held to a “performance standard” that calls for reduction of the killing of larvae by 60% to 90% by the new plant, compared to losses by the existing plant, which also withdraws water from the Morro Estuary, a water board staff member said.

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Rain

by Jack Beigle

We are very thankful that we cancel few of our outings because of rain. I think that the weatherman must have a canoe or a kayak. When we lived in Pittsburgh, shut down and didn’t until the June. The rain benefited to we didn’t get we might have wheels on our.

Check the outing schedule and join us on the water.

With “Friends” Like These, Does the Environment Need Enemies?

by Ben Zuckerman

The following article and letter are in response to “Outside Interests Push to Hijack Sierra Club” by Drusha Mayhue. The article appeared in the February 2004 issue of the Santa Lucian.

It’s astonishing how the press and some Sierra Club members have been stampeded into a frenzy by mostly one-sided stories charging that an army of racist, anti-immigrant, animal-loving vegetarians is aiming to take over our venerable Sierra Club. I’ve been a target of many of these charges. But this story, like most, has two sides.

For decades, Sierra Club leadership at the national level has been unsuccessful in passing strong environmental legislation or in electing national environmental leaders — in contrast to splendid victories achieved at the local level by Club grassroots activists. The U.S. environmental movement has not managed to elect a great environmental President since Jimmy Carter, nearly 30 years ago. The combination of the current President and Congress may be the worst in history. We will never know if the Sierra Club — with a more courageous national leadership — could have made this history better. But I strongly believe, as David Brower certainly did, that we might have.

Now, with stories in the press of hostile take-overs of our Club by outsiders and right-wing racists, certain Club leaders and their supporters have shown themselves in my view to be more interested in maligning internal Sierra Club opposition than in uniting to defeat George Bush.

In my opinion and that of numerous other Club members with whom I have spoken, the Club has failed for decades to get good environmental Congresses and Presidents elected or of advance a suite of solid environmental legislation. Why vote for more of the same?

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Dear Sierra Club members:

Please permit me to address a few of the fabrications in Ms. Mayhue’s article that relate specifically to me:

1) The deception: “Zuckerman had close to zero Club experience when he was elected to the Board”.

The truth: When elected to the Board I had been a Club member continuously for 33 years and had participated in Club activist groups in Maryland and in Los Angeles. In the late 1990s, I co-founded a grassroots Sierra Club group, SUSPS, which communicates with Club members concerning overpopulation and the democratic process. SUSPS has run two national grassroots ballot initiatives and, along with David Brower, opposed an anti-democracy initiative placed on the 1999 national ballot by the Club’s Board of Directors.

2) The deception: “Zuckerman recruited candidates to run for the Sierra Club board from Diversity Alliance for a Sustainable America [DASA]”.

The truth: I occasionally quote Ed Abbey: “growth for growth’s sake is the ideology of the cancer cell”. I’ve never compared immigration to cancer, just as I’ve never compared high fertility to cancer.

3) The deception: “Zuckerman has called for halting immigration”.

The truth: I’ve never called for “halting immigration” in anything I’ve ever written or said in any context inside or outside of the Sierra Club. I do believe that reproduction and current record high levels of legal and illegal immigration should be reduced, for the sake of the environment and, as regards overimmigration, for the sake of poor people currently residing in the USA.

Thank you,
Ben Zuckerman, Sierra Club Director
Classifieds

Classified ads are $10 and are limited to 20 words. They are due by the first week of the month of publication (next deadline is April 1, 2004—no fooling). Please submit your ad and payment to: Mariko Fujinaka 1416 Vine St. Paso Robles, CA 93446 mariko1@pacbell.net

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(10% discount with Sierra Club Bequests)

541-2716
P.O. Box 1445, SLO 93406-1445
E-Mail: janmarx@fix.net

A Will...

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

For more information and confidential assistance, contact

John Calaway
Sierra Club Planned Giving Program
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441
(415) 977-5538.
Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter’s outing policies or would like to be an outing leader, call Outings Leader Gary Felsman (473-3694). For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. Outings Leaders please get your outings or events in by the 1st for the next month’s outings.

Hiking Classifications:
Distance: 1 = 0-2 mi., 2 = 2-3 mi., 3 = 3-6 mi., 4 = 10-12 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.
Elevation Gain: A = 0’/mi., B = 1000’/mi., C = 1500’, D = 2000’, E = 2500’, F = 3000’ or more.

Sat., Apr. 10, 8:00 a.m., MARCH MOUNTAIN HIKE. Take a 10-15 mile, 3,000 foot elevation gain, hike through the San Simeon Campground. Good for beginning and active seniors. Bring water, hiking shoes, serpentinite, balsam, poison oak area. This trail is in Washburn Creek parking area. Rain cancels. Call Leaders: Jack and Bea Morrow 927-5785 for info.

Fri., Apr. 16, 15, 17, PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT Campout. This is a 1-2 day, 15-mile roundtrip hike with 1000’ of elevation gain. We will begin at the east side of the park, spend an entire day in the park, and return to the east side for dinner. This is for those who are already in decent physical shape and who are ready to accept the physical challenge of the hike. Call Leaders: Gary (805)473-3694, or email: gfelsman@onemain.com

Sat., Apr. 24, 8:00 a.m., ELFIN FOREST FLOWER WALK. This is a 2-hour, 1 mile nature walk through the Elfin Forest. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Ecological Campsite on the north end of the Park. We will set out slowly, allowing time for the plants to be identified and for the group to enjoy the flowers. Bring your boots and hiking poles. Bring a picnic lunch and drinks. Call Leaders: Jack Beigle 773-2147 for further information.

Sun., May 1, CERRO ALTO:

POLARIS DUNES PRESERVE. This is a 2-hour, 6-mile roundtrip hike with 200’ of elevation gain. This is a beautiful hike through an area of dunes with Chumash middens, coreopsis, flowers at their peak. Call Leaders: Gary (805)473-3694, or email: gfelsman@onemain.com

Sun., May 8, 15, 16, CAYUCOS CANYON. This is a 4-hour hike through a beautiful canyon with a variety of habitats and a variety of wildflowers. Call Leaders: Jack Beigle 773-2147 for further information.

Sun., May 15, 22, 29, SANTA MARGARITA LAKE DAY TRIP OR CAMPOUT. Our goal for this outing is to enjoy a leisurely weekend plus check out the spring wildflowers at Santa Margarita Lake. We have reserved the Sapwi Ecological Campsite on the north end of the Park. We will begin by driving to the campsite, then the Day Trip will return after lunch. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, camping gear, food and water. Phone Jack Beigle 773-2147 for reservation, park fees and details.

Sun., May 22, 8:00 a.m., ELFIN FOREST FLOWER WALK. This is a 2-hour, 1 mile nature walk through the Elfin Forest. Meet at the Ecological Campsite on the north end of the Park. We will set out slowly, allowing time for the plants to be identified and for the group to enjoy the flowers. Bring your boots and hiking poles. Bring a picnic lunch and drinks. Call Leaders: Jack Beigle 773-2147 for further information.

Sun., May 29, 8:00 a.m., CAYUCOS CANYON. This is a 4-hour hike through a beautiful canyon with a variety of habitats and a variety of wildflowers. Call Leaders: Jack Beigle 773-2147 for further information.

Sun., June 5, 12, 19, CANOE/KAYAK MORRO BAY. This is a 1-hour trip to Morro Bay State Park. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, and lunch and binoculars. HIKING: 11:44 A.M. 3.2’ LAUNCH AT MORRO BAY STATE PARK MARINA, LOW TIDE 5:30 P.M. 12’ PUT IN 10:00 AM Details call Jack Beigle 773-2147.

Sun., June 12, 19, 26, MARCH MOUNTAIN HIKE. This is a 10-12 mile roundtrip hike with 2,000’ of elevation gain. We will hike through the San Simeon Campground, see the San Simeon Peak and the Central Coast. Call Leaders: Jack Beigle 773-2147 for further information.

Sun., June 26, 7:00 a.m., Hike to Pinebowl Peak (Jim Pepper Saddle)