People Power vs. Cell Tower
County just says “no” to Los Osos eyesore

On September 13, the County Board of Supervisors, in a stunning reversal of a County-approved project to build a 50-foot Sprint PCS cell phone antenna at the entrance to Los Osos, bowed to the will of local citizens and upheld an appeal of the coastal development permit filed by the Coastal View Protection Coalition.

The Planning Commission had recommended approval of the Sprint PCS project on the basis of a staff report that said it conformed with the county’s Local Coastal Plan. After hearing cogent arguments to the contrary from a number of residents and the Sierra Club, the Supervisors pronounced themselves satisfied that the area is already adequately served by four different carriers (contrary to subsequent statements in the press, there is no “gap” in cell phone coverage in Los Osos) and expressed concern over the unsettled and growing scientific debate over potential radiation hazards posed by the towers, especially one located in the midst of homes and businesses. Only the Sprint representative spoke in favor of the project.

The vote to uphold the appeal and deny the permit was unanimous. The Supervisors agreed the project would have had significant impacts on public views and the visual character of the surrounding area.

B. Blake Levitt, in the paper “Cell-Phone Towers and Communities: The Struggle for Local Control,” notes that the Coastal View Protection Act of 1966 was “the biggest land-grab in one industry’s favor at the federal level since the build-out of the railroads at the turn of the last century” and effectively hamstrung local communities in the siting of cell-phone towers, creating “a planning and zoning nightmare—and perhaps a public health problem, according to some scientists, journalists, and activists... The situation is dividing communities around the country, often pitting neighbor against neighbor when one is tempted by the licensing revenues of stitting such a facility on their property, while adjacent landowners raise concerns about property devaluation and health endangerment.” “What’s important to know,” says Levitt, is that although you can’t set more stringent standards at the moment, you can site installant... continued on page 7

A Chill Grows in Cambria

Once upon a time, Cambria wanted to expand its water storage tanks. It wanted to expand them very, very much—beyond the required water capacity to serve current residents and fight fires, building up “quality of life” capacity—i.e. the longed-for day when the building moratorium will lift, the growth cap will ease, and a development gold rush will wash over Cambria.

But then the neighbors complained about the idea of giant tanks in their back yard, so the Cambria Community Services District decided to move the tanks into an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESH), which would have... continued on page 3

What’s for Dinner?
And why can’t you be told?

(Comments delivered by the Santa Lucia Chapter to the County Board of Supervisors, September 20, 2005)

The Sierra Club, the largest grassroots conservation group in the United States, joins with the many environmental, consumer, religious, and community groups concerned with the safety of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), particularly in regards to their use in agriculture. Our purpose is to protect the ecosystem. We believe that the rate of application of this technology far exceeds our ability to understand the environmental and public health risks and to avoid potentially serious impacts.

The biotechnology industry makes the misleading claim that genetic engineering is a simple extension of the traditional crossbreeding that nature and farmers have been using for thousands of years. However, there... continued on page 6
From the Summit

By Steven Marx

The Sierra Summit that took place in San Francisco, September 8 to 11. My wife Jan and I had decided to attend to strengthen our connection to the national organization in this dark time and to learn from a luminary lineup of speakers. When some of our chapter representatives couldn’t go, I became a delegate in return for half price on the registration fee. The delegate’s job was to bridge a gap between leadership and grassroots and to democratically select goals guiding the Club’s actions and budget decisions over the next five years.

We drove up on Thursday morning with Chris Wassenberg, who’d agreed to become a much in-demand under-30 delegate, checked into a cheap hotel in Chinatown, and walked to the Moscone Convention Center, and fell in with thousands of well-dressed members of the California Dental Association. Finally we found our way to “Moscone North” and what was billed as “Sierra Club’s First Ever National Environmental Convention and Expo.”

The prospect of a four-hour priority session began after a long drive and no lunch in a cavernous banquet hall was not enhanced by lengthy “motivational” harangues by two professional facilitators with deep southern accents. Though the audience was put through a series of ill-conceived icebreaking exercises and endless questionnaires, and asked to prioritize vague, confusing and overlappingly phrased goals.

After three hours of this, delegates started speaking up, expressing bewilderment and frustration. Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director, convinced the audience not to give up and the facilitators to talk less and listen more. By the end of the session a general consensus did emerge: the first two priorities for future national action and budgeting were: 1) build a clean and safe energy future with improved efficiency and renewable resources, and 2) build vibrant communities assuring environmental justice and reducing sprawl.

This selection makes significant changes in sequence and wording to conclusions drawn from pre-summit surveys. It signals a shift from primary emphasis on recreation and wilderness preservation and clearly reflects the impact of Hurricane Katrina. That impact was reinforced by the surprise announcement that the Convention would be addressed at 8:30 next morning by Al Gore. He had first turned down the Club’s invitation because of a previous commitment on the same day, then reprioritized to talk about global warming to an insurance industry convention in New Orleans.

The onslaught of Katrina is an apt comparison for the environmental movement. The Club to his “49 square miles surrounded by reality” by asserting that

continued on page 8
Right to subpoena: Board member Ilan Punke-Bilu, at their July meeting, memorably likened this to the necessity of investigating a terrorist. The CCSD Board has become somewhat less stout in denying their intention

習题的狂野，法律、环境和政治障碍在支点的位移动..." ...and "has a national reputation for the successful defense of large infrastructure and development projects against environmental challenges."

--- website of real estate law firm Nossaman Guthner Knox & Elliott, employers of CCSD President Greg Sanders
Diablo’s Other Problem

By Andrew Christie, Chapter Coordinator

Over five years ago, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board ordered the Diablo Canyon Nuclear-Power Plant to stop discharging hot water into the ocean. The board said the plant needed to work in the destruction of marine wildlife via the plant’s cooling system, which sucks in seawater, along with a few million fish and crab larvae and plankton, and then spews it out again, dead, in water 20 degrees hotter.

These destructive “once-through” cooling systems are now under stiff legal challenge nationwide as a violation of the Clean Water Act, and, by this time next year, the EPA is likely to bar power plants from using the antiquated technology or presuming to mitigate its damage — setting aside land in conservation easements, funding artificial reef habitat or no fishing reserves while continuing to rip a large hole in the web of near-shore marine life.

But PG&E and the Water Board drafted a settlement that purports to be precisely that kind of mitigation deal in an effort to avoid having to spend the money to install closed-cycle cooling towers at Diablo Canyon. Closed-cycle cooling wouldn’t suck in marine life or heat the water for miles around the plant.

On September 16, the Water Board met to review the situation. The Department of Fish and Game, Sierra Club, Surfrider, the Ocean Concerns for California’s nuclear plants beyond its own right, as, at PG&E’s insistence, it can be revoked at any time if the state or feds pass any regulations that “would require the Company to comply with a more stringent standard with respect to thermal effluent limitations that exists in the Plant’s current Permit...or that would require a cooling water system technology that is more costly or burdensome than the [present] cooling water intake and discharge system....”) The Chapter duly warned the Board of the trap awaiting them there.

Beyond that, the board decided to await review of two studies of just how much damage Diablo is doing — one by independent scientists and one by PG&E. The scientists concluded that PG&E is doing a lot of damage off the Central Coast. The utility concluded that it’s not, and that any compensation they are required to make should be minimal. At the meeting, their representatives testified that under the economic theory of “non-use value,” they are not destroying anything unique. That is, lakes, rivers, streams, trees, marine wildlife, and all exist in other places, and, as they are all substitutes for each other, no claim to special value can be made if they are destroyed somewhere else.

As the day wore on and it became clear that the Water Board would not accede to claims of all their nuclear plant’s present and future destruction of marine life and habitat while it continues to destroy it. We pointed out that the equivalent of the 60 to 90% reduction in impacts required by current EPA rules, and these rules were likely to get even tougher once the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals rules on a pending litigation case over the cooling system used by Diablo Canyon. The court’s ruling is expected next summer.

As the meeting at the Water Board settled for pursuing the conservation easement as mitigation for past — not future — thermal impacts of Diablo’s cooling water. (The conservation easement is highly fraught in its own right, as PG&E’s insistence, it can be revoked at any time if the state or feds pass any regulations that “would require the Company to comply with a more stringent standard with respect to thermal effluent limitations that exists in the Plant’s current Permit...or that would require a cooling water system technology that is more costly or burdensome than the [present] cooling water intake and discharge system....”) The Chapter duly warned the Board of the trap awaiting them there.

Southern California Forests Face Uncertain Future

Report Identifies Leading Threats to Region’s Last Natural Areas

A report released in September by the Sierra Club Southern California Forests Campaign takes an in-depth look at numerous challenges facing the four national forests of southern California. The report, “At Risk: Southern California’s Magnificent National Forests,” documents the damaging impacts of several proposed projects, including plans to flood a popular recreation area for a private hydroelectric plant, build a toll road through wilderness-quality lands, drill for oil in corridor habitat, and construct massive power transmission lines along a spectacular scenic vista.

The national forests of Southern California face new and rapidly growing threats to their long-term health and natural beauty. The Forest Service must act decisively so that these spectacular, unpolluted places are conserved for future generations of southern Californians,” said Doug Hansen, President of the California Chapter of REP America (Republicans for Environmental Protection — www.rep.org).

The report was issued as the Forest Service prepared to release its final Land Management Plans for the Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests.

Stretching from Monterey to Baja, the forests are visited by over eight million people a year—twice the number of visitors to Yosemite National Park. These local forests are, where many children play in snow for the first time, see their first pinecones and deer, and wade in their first creek. “So many people come up here on weekends with their kids, their bikes, to find some peace and get in touch with nature,” said Chuy Peterson, a mountain biker and resident of Silverado Canyon, which neighbors an area of the Cleveland National Forest threatened by a proposed toll road.

“What is sacred and special about this area, and so beneficial to the residents of southern California, is going to be lost forever if it’s passed over.”

The report illustrates how major new developments are encircling our forests, threatening vital wildlife migration trails, increasing the risk of fire, and threatening recreation opportunities. As the amount of open space

Saving Los Padres

By Barbara Boxer

United States Senator

Los Padres National Forest stretches from Monterey County to the edge of Los Angeles County, encompassing about 1.75 million acres of central California’s most scenic areas. Residents of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Kern counties can all easily enjoy this wonderful natural area, and people come from all across the nation to enjoy the hiking, fishing, camping and other activities it offers. Besides first-class recreation, the Los Padres watershed also helps to provide California with rich, pure water resources.

I am pleased to join forces with Congressmembers Lois Capps and Sam Farr and Senator Diane Feinstein in introducing legislation to protect Los Padres National Forest from the damage that would result from mining and oil and gas drilling and development.

A proposal was recently announced that would open new sections of Los Padres to oil and gas drilling. The expansion of oil and gas claims or mining in Los Padres would result in limited supplies of natural gas or gasoline while causing permanent damage in pristine, wild areas. And the damage does not end with environmental degradation because there would also be a loss to the economic vitality of this region that depends on tourism and fishing. Our bill would bar further development of mining and oil and gas claims in all of Los Padres National Forest. Los Padres National Forest provides diverse wildlife habitat, rich water resources and priceless recreation and wilderness experiences. I am pleased to work for its protection from the damage that oil and gas drilling and mining would bring.

Energy Commission Raises Nuclear Concerns for California

Alliance calls for review of license extensions for nuclear plants

The California Energy Commission has released a report on the future of nuclear power that emphasizes the high hurdles utilities must surmount if they are to continue operating nuclear power plants in the state — and, by extension, the rest of the country.

The report examines issues such as transportation and disposal of the spent fuel, replacement of aging plant components, and potential extensions for operating licenses.

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility participated in two days of workshops in Sacramento last month that served as the basis for the Energy Commission’s report. The Alliance is pleased that its efforts to convince state regulators and legislators that the economic risks of continuing to operate California’s nuclear plants beyond their current licenses has resulted in a active and informed dialogue on continued on page 9

Patty Andreozzi, David Weissman and Rochelle Becker at a meeting of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility continued on page 9
Putting Money to Work

Worthy causes win funding

In September, the Chapter was pleased to be able to pledge a matching grant of $2,500 to Save the Park, the group of Morro Bay citizens who are suing the State Department of Parks and Recreation over unpermitted tree removal and habitat destruction in five State Park units in San Luis Obispo, in violation of the Local Coastal Plan. The suit also seeks to compel the County and the Coastal Commission to enforce the routinely ignored conditions of the Coastal Development Permits issued to the Parks Department.

For the past year, the Parks Dept. has been throwing up a barrage of “demurrs” — legal delaying tactics — requiring Save the Park to expend money and resources on filing reply briefs. The citizens’ group has raised and spent $20,000 for legal costs via bake sales and local fundraisers and is now close to getting its day in court.

“It is a shame that our citizens must sue public agencies to force them to protect public lands, just as the Chapter had to sue State Parks to buy adequate studies and some breathing room for the snowy plover,” said Chapter Chair Karen Merriam. “We commend Save the Park for seeking to compel adequate public review and enforcement of the laws that protect wildlife and habitat on our coast.”

The Chapter also pledged $500 toward the preparation of a legal opinion on the proposed Planned Development Ordinance. Paso Watch is organizing opposition to perhaps the worst land use measure ever to come down the pike. The RDPO ordinance is a developer’s brought a civil liability action against the two for allowing massive erosion and discharge of silt into a blue line creek, but sought to fine the dischargers only $25,000 each — simply reimbursement for staff costs incurred in handling the cases. We testified that that wasn’t nearly enough, and the Board agreed, directing staff to go back and try again. Staff came back with fines of $100,00 for Haig Kelegian and $125,000 for David Pierson.

Kelegian’s fine was allowed to be whisked out of the County and into a general state fund in Sacramento (an action we are appealing to the state Water Board), but Pierson was allowed to designate most of his fine for “Supplemental Environmental Projects.” A Regional Water Board program that allows fines for discharge violations damaging a watershed to go to local projects designed to restore that same watershed.

Chapter staff and volunteers participated with Water Board staff and the discharger’s representative in the process of identifying and prioritizing appropriate projects and setting funding levels for nearly $100,000 from the Pierson fine earmarked to go toward the completion of selected local projects. In negotiations, three nominees were found acceptable to the Chapter, the Water Board staff and the discharger, and their restoration projects were ratified at the Board’s September 9 meeting.

- $5,314 to the Atascadero Land Preservation Society’s Stadium Park fencing project
- $7,586 to the San Miguel Salinas River Riparian Restoration and Bank Stabilization Project (with pipe fencing to keep out determined dirt bikers intent on trespassing)
- $19,000 to the County Parks Foundation to purchase surplus Bureau of Land Management parcels around Santa Margarita Lake.

The third project will do the most to restore the watershed, foreclosing future development and all the impacts it would bring at the headwaters of the Salinas River. In a time of scarce funding for projects seeking to improve water quality and restore habitat in the County, the Chapter was pleased to participate in a process that makes up that shortfall by collecting significant fines from the environmental gross malefactors who make such projects necessary.

**SIERRA CLUB 2006 CALENDARS**

**10-15% off for Santa Lucian readers!**

The 2006 Sierra Club calendars are now available, and they are gorgeous. Your purchase goes directly to funding the Santa Lucia Chapter’s efforts for our land, air, water, and quality of life in San Luis Obispo.

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For mail orders, write or call the Chapter office, p.o. box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406; (805) 543-8717. For in-town pick up, call Bonnie at 543-7051.
Dinner? continued from page 1

is a drastic difference. While conventional breeders face natural barriers that prevent unrestricted gene transfer between unrelated species, genetic engineers bypass this protective barrier by combining genes from totally unrelated species. Furthermore, the technology involved in transferring foreign genes is imprecise, unstable, and unpredictable, so that even when there is no way of predicting how GMOs will behave once released into the environment.

The Sierra Club calls for:

* Extensive, rigorous research on the long-term environmental and health impacts of GMOs before they are released into the environment.

* Use of the precautionary principle, whereby if there is no scientific certainty as to whether a genetically engineered product is safe, it should not be released.

* Mandatory environmental impact statements to be made for every ecosystem into which any new GMO is to be introduced. These should be based on rigorous science and open public debate.

* An end to the concept of ‘substantial equivalence’ by our regulatory agencies as a ploy to sidestep safety testing and oversight responsibilities. For example, toxins meant to kill insects are being genetically engineered into plants, yet the consequences of these toxins in the diets of humans, livestock, beneficial insects, and wildlife are unknown.

* Mandatory labeling of genetically altered products in marketplaces.

* Mandatory reporting of genetically engineered organisms to the Health Commission, the board of supervisors, and local residents.

* Support for local laws to protect the local environment from genetically engineered foods. We were told by the Chair that the group was not taking any stance on labeling genetically modified food.

* An end to the concept of ‘substantial equivalence’ by our regulatory agencies as a ploy to sidestep safety testing and oversight responsibilities. Any study or methodology that scientists perceive as an attack, nor that vested in their vocation will lose interest.

* An end to the concept of ‘substantial equivalence’ by our regulatory agencies as a ploy to sidestep safety testing and oversight responsibilities. An industry would move to produce what it perceives as a system that supports GE foods and allows producers and distributors to avoid responsibility. Our mission is to prevent this from happening.

* Support for local laws to protect the local environment from genetically engineered foods. We were told by the Chair that the group was not taking any stance on labeling genetically modified food.

Read The Sierra Club Genetic Engineering Committee’s report “Genetic Engineering at a Historic Crossroads,” at www.sierraclub.org/biotech/report.asp

Support Your Local Farm

The movement to support local agriculture in our County has gained momentum over the past few years. We are blessed in San Luis Obispo County with some of the best agricultural land in the world, a climate that supports a multi-billion dollar industry. What is being proposed is a move to prohibit the export of anything that has been genetically altered outside of our County.

The Cal Poly Organic Farm (COPF) has started working with various organic growers and has been able to produce a local network to provide food to the campus community. We hope that this network will continue to grow and that other communities can follow suit.

Engineering Consent

By Elizabeth Johnson

All those who voted for Measure Q last year — over 43,000 voters — expected those numbers would count when it came to setting future official policy on genetically modified organisms in this county. I regret to state the opposite has happened.

Under the banner of the SLO County Health Commission, the Farm Bureau and its pro-GMO friends have managed to co-opt the debate on health and safety issues in GE food in the Health Commission’s GMO Task Force. How did this happen? Measure Q was citizen/consumer-based, a people’s attempt to move local laws to protect our food security. It was completely volunteer and those of us who spent countless hours in the trenches needed to work and attend to our families after the election. Some of us applied for the Task Force. All were rejected.

In August, I started attending the Task Force meetings when Mark Phillips gave his presentation on labeling of GE food products. We were told by the Chair that the group would not take any stance on labeling, period. The mission statement included labeling as a `consideration.` Something was amiss. I got copies of Health Commission minutes and public comment statements to try to see what happened. All 43,000 of us have been had. It turns out that stakeholders are people who collect a salary while they lobby. As such, they are allowed to direct the discourse, unless too many citizens complain. This is not a small matter. As a public-accessible Task Force, this committee has weight and will be allowed to report its findings to both the Health Commission and the board of Supervisors. We hoped to enter a resolution for labeling of GE foods in this little committee and let it wind its way toward the more powerful voices, onward to state and national politics. This will never happen.

continued from page 9
Community Supported Agriculture creates a direct relationship between you and our farm – a partnership, if you will. In essence, it is a mutually beneficial arrangement, where in exchange for your commitment to buy a share in our farm’s harvest, students and staff commit to grow high quality vegetables, herbs and fruit, and deliver a bountiful portion of it to you every week of the season. All the produce is harvested the same day you receive it so freshness and nutrition is at its peak. In addition members receive a weekly newsletter with recipes and farm news.

If you would like to learn more about the Cal Poly Organic Farm or about CSA programs please contact us at 756-6139 or visit www.calpoly.edu/~sarc/csa.htm.

30 percent less fossil energy but also conserve more water in the soil, produce less erosion, maintain soil quality and conserve more biological resources than conventional farming does,” Pimentel added.

was big because it was close to us but it seemed far away in the fog and our minds were telling us that the otter must be over six feet long.

As paddled our compass course back to the marina, we again lost sight of everything but our group. It gives you a warm feeling to see the marina materialize out of the fog. We returned with eleven boats and a lot of good memories of our adventure that we can share when friends ask “why do you enjoy going to the same place every year?”

Check the outing schedule and join us on the water.

Continued from page 1

The success of a scrappy group of Los Osos residents is an example of the power of local organizing and the difference it can make when you show up to look decision-makers in the eye when they have to vote on a contentious issue. The Coastal View Protection Coalition had no experience in lobbying or local politics; they were just local residents who knew they didn’t want a cell tower in their neighborhood and set about the task of informing themselves as to what they could do about it.

And then they did it.
Summit comes from page 2

cities can act when federal and state governments fail to address environmental issues. San Francisco has required all retired passenger vehicles to be replaced by hybrids, embarked upon an aggressive building program, and has been the first US city to adopt the Precautionary Principle as a guiding policy, Bill McDonough, the author of Cradle to Cradle and prophet of the Second Industrial Revolution, told an audience of "how do we love all the children of all species for all time?" McDonough often works with people the Sierra Club is aligned against, such as the Ford Motor Company, for which he designed a green assembly plant in Dearborn, Michigan. McDonough and his company design products, buildings, industrial processes and cities according to standards that require zero waste and zero pollution. He showed us some of his ecotopian plans for the construction of seven new cities commissioned by the government of China which he said has adopted Cradle to Cradle as their industrial policy. Less optimistically, he alerted us to the fact that the world’s oceans are, as he put it, "on the verge of collapse," and that if we don’t do something about it soon, the world’s oceans will be full of dead fish, or Popsicles, or something.

McDonough spoke to an audience of 800, six other presentations were taking place simultaneously. For the late afternoon session, I attended a small one on "engaging youth" mounted by the Sierra Student Coalition. These young people organize projects like "Victoria's Dirty Secret" exposing the practices of the catalog industry which is destroying boreal and Appalachian forests to produce junk mail. SSC will be able to help us start a local group bringing together high school, college, and university student allies. Delegates convened again Saturday morning from 7:30 to 11:30 to prioritize means to achieve goals continued from page 2

New York's Hudson River, Bobby's son spoke about his three-year-old who suffer from asthma brought on by the unpunished criminal activities of corporate polluters. He talked about the subversion of the free market by the corporations that now control government. He talked about the ignorance of what's going on caused by the corporate media's refusal to report it. He talked about his own success at awakening and converting Red-state audiences. You can find an early version of this speech at www.commondreams.org/views05/1201.htm.

A quiet and lycoda coda to this Riverkeeper's jeremiad came in a presentation by Robert Hass entitled "River of Words." Another local as well as national hero, Hass used his position as former US poet laureate to create an organization promoting environmental education for children. His objective, following Aldo Leopold, is to get them to "think like a mountain." As he does with his students at UC Berkeley Hass encourages their observations of nature, and then to have them write poems and draw pictures about their experiences. This traditional but contemporary project, known as River of Words, is available in collections, and which for turn generate more rivers of words. Hass has spent the hour showing and commenting upon exquisite examples of the children's work. For more information on this project see, www.riverofwords.org/index.html. There was much more at this amazing conference than can fit here. The impact of what I heard, and saw and felt is still not absorbed. The sensibility of simply being together with so many people of like mind, common loss and shared aspiration—people for whom I immediately felt affection and respect—will nourish me for a long time.

Resolutions

Continued from page 2

motive to fund our necessary projects. Dan Sullivan chaired the committee that slaved to produce this document and truly deserves a lot of credit. This charter still needs approval from Topay Chapter, Sierra Club California ExCom, and the national Board of Directors.

Seven resolutions were presented for approval. Many lacked details for funding or implementation and were tabled until problems could be resolved. Two resolutions proposed by our Santa Lucia chapter were approved in modified form. They support the prohibiting of re-licensing of existing nuclear plants until the problem of nuclear waste disposal is solved, and oppose the use of once-through cooling for any of the 21 existing power plants on the California coast. Cal French shepherded these resolutions to approval.

A group from Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties called Fish Friendly Farming had a Powerpoint presentation of their environmental certification program, which helps the landowners comply with water quality laws, pesticide and local regulation and the Endangered Species Act. With voluntary enrollment, the landowners get a lot of help for compliance and recognition for their efforts.

Our state director, Bill Allayud, reported on the few successes and many close misses of the legislative year. The Cache Creek Wild and Scenic bill is still awaiting signing by Governor Schwarzenegger, who has proven to be less and less green. On a personal note, Bill is getting married, and looked very happy.

Harry Lowe from Bakersfield reported on the success they have been having on getting developers and solar engineers together to attempt to get solar onto every property and school built in the area. One of the biggest builders has decided to go solar. A solar conference provided information and contacts for many of businesses on how to get started. That's a short summary. The true value of this meeting is the coming together and networking of devoted Sierra Club members, sharing and working together.
City Moves to Protect Open Space from Open Space Plan

Activist watchdogs, Planning Commission ride herd on unruly General Plan update

The City of San Luis Obispo is coming down to the finish line in the effort to “streamline” portions of the City’s General Plan into the Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE), essentially a digest version of open space provisions adopted by the City in 1994.

The update process began in late 1998, halting in February 2003 as residents raised concerns over the content of the Draft Element and the way the revision was going about it. The process resumed in September 2003 with provisions for more public participation.

In seeking to cut fat, Planning staff’s scapel has frequently slipped and cut bone. Shifting definitions and inserting new language that would allow, or cutting existing language that would prevent, “active recreation” in undeveloped open space breaks the informal agreements to city parks, but which would de-grade areas meant to remain as much as possible in a state of Naité for the benefit of wildlife. When these influences have been pointed out to the Planning Commis-sion at public meetings by represen-tatives of the Sierra Club, ECOSLO

Santa Lucian "Choppy"
SLO first to enact state law, but...

San Luis Obispo is the first county in California to implement the Oak Woodlands Conservation Bill, which went into effect on the first day of 2005.

County Moves to Protect Oaks (Cheaply)

SLO first to enact state law, but...

Planning Commission’s September 8 meeting, the Sierra Club pointed out that the Conservancy’s figures were plainly labeled “Calculates costs for planting, maintenance, monitoring only. Model not intended to assign value to actual trees.”

In other words, the County has calculated what it costs to acquire land, pay for planting materials, in-stallation labor and maintenance to re-establish an oak tree, without re-ference to how much an oak tree is worth—a value which a realtor is acutely aware. Suggestion to County Planning: Watch the doughnut, not the hole!

City Moves to Protect Open Space from Open Space Plan

Activist watchdogs, Planning Commission ride herd on unruly General Plan update

Forests continued from page 4

beyond forest boundaries dwindles and the population grows, protecting the unique local environment and its re-trational opportuninwildlife is struggling to survive. So, too, is California’s natural forests provide the core refuge for many of these animals, and the Forest Service has a responsibility not only to protect the forests for wildlife but also to maintain crucial connections to other natural areas.”

The Forest Service’s final manage-ment plans affect 3,530,721 acres of forest land, guiding decisions on everything from mining and delving to off-road vehicles and hiking trails.

At the Service’s preferred land use alternative, 3% is new “closed forests” — areas on which no cutting would be allowed. In other words, the County has calculated what it costs to acquire land, pay for planting materials, installation labor and maintenance to re-establish an oak tree, without reference to how much an oak tree is worth—a value which a realtor is acutely aware. Suggestion to County Planning: Watch the doughnut, not the hole!

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City Moves to Protect Open Space from Open Space Plan

Activist watchdogs, Planning Commission ride herd on unruly General Plan update

Forests continued from page 4

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**LETTER FROM SIERRA CLUB PRESIDENT LISA RENSTROM**

The Sierra Club’s Response to the Hurricanes — Three Things Sierra Club Members Can Do

Dear Sierra Club Members,

Like the rest of the nation, we watched in horror at the death, damage, and destruction. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have caused in Louisiana and the Gulf Coast. Not only has this doble disaster taken a huge human and economic toll, it has unleashed an unprecedented environmental catastrophe.

Many Club leaders, staff, and members have contacted me with their expressions of concern and offers of help. I’m writing this memo to summarize the initial steps the Club is taking as the country is looking to recover from this tragedy. These are only initial steps — the Club will soon convene a task force to develop a longer-term rebuilding and environmental restoration plan.

By the time you receive this memo, we will be posting these steps on our public Web site. I encourage you to take action and share this message with other concerned Sierra Club members.

1) Donate to the Red Cross to help provide immediate relief. A link to the Red Cross is on the Club Web site or contact them directly.

2) Offer to house those displaced through MoveOn.org. That link is also on the Club Web site.

3) Help rebuild the Gulf Coast by contributing to the Club’s new “Gulf Coast Environmental Restoration Fund.” We will use these funds to support the work of Club staff and volunteers in the Gulf Coast states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama as they begin restoration work. This fund will be a priority for our ongoing “Building Environmental Community” program as we work with local communities to address this tragic event and seek opportunities for renewal.

We will showcase our vision of a re-energized, civically engaged environmental community all across this country by starting in New Orleans and in other Gulf Coast communities. We hope to help bring citizens together to rebuild their communities in ways that (a) strengthen local civic engagement, (b) restore the environmental integrity of coasts and wetlands, (c) rebuild in environmentally clean and efficient ways that use renewable energy, green-building techniques, and smart-growth policies in development and transportation.

As we embark on these and even more challenging steps ahead, we will be notifying you through various Sierra Club communications, list-serves and e-mails, and we’ll be asking for your help and feedback. If you have questions or ideas about how you can help, please feel free to contact me at renstrom@earthlink.net or contact National Field Director Bob Bingaman at bbียงaman@sierraclub.org.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

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**Find a Way to Blame Environmentalists**

As the scope of the unprecedented environmental catastrophe in the Gulf Coast widens, the Sierra Club is focusing on real solutions that could help prevent future tragedies. Sadly, our government has instead been focused on trying to pin the destruction of New Orleans on others.

The Mississippi Clarion-Ledger reported that a leaked Justice Department e-mail reveals attempts to target environmental groups and enforcement of environmental laws for blame. In reality, engineers from the Hurricane Center at Louisiana State University concluded that “catastrophic structural failure” of barriers and levees were the main culprits for the flooding of New Orleans.

It is clear that some leaders in Washington are trying to use the Gulf Coast disaster to further their own agendas rather than to identify what really went wrong and how our nation can keep people safe. Propositions have been floated that would open up America’s coastlines to oil and gas drilling, waive key environmental safeguards for oil and gas activities, and put communities at risk by building new refineries without proper environmental and safety reviews. These proposals will do nothing to help consumers at the gas pump or when they face high heating costs this winter.

What’s important now is to help the people and communities that have been devastated by the environmental negligence that compounded the hurricanes’ consequences. You can help by supporting the Sierra Club’s Gulf Coast environmental restoration project. Go to https://www2.sierraclub.org/foundation/katrina

Sioux gift will help the Sierra Club in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama work with our neighbors to rebuild local communities, clean up pollution, restore devastated wetlands, and ensure that rebuilding plans call for hurricane and flood protection, conservation, and other green building and planning approaches.

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**It’s time to think Post-Duke**

**PETITION TO SUPPORT DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVES TO A NEW MORRO BAY POWER PLANT**

Moro Bay residents have never had an opportunity to express their wishes on the future of the Morro Bay Power Plant site. They inherited the plant from the county when Morro Bay incorporated as a city in 1964 before relevant environmental protections existed.

Duke Energy announced on September 13 that it plans to sell the plant. Therefore, now is an appropriate time for Morro Bay citizens to learn about potential alternatives to a power plant that could be placed on the 107-acre site, discuss a range of options and make their priorities known to the Morro Bay City Council, which should play a central role in deciding whether a new plant should be built and whether the existing plant should continue to operate.

Therefore, the undersigned...
Classifieds

New/Dec issue ad deadline is October 14. To acquire a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
p.o. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierr8@charter.net

Local Government Meetings

City of SLO—1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
Arroyo Grande—2nd and 4th Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 473-5404
Atascadero—2nd & 4th Tues.; 466-8099
Cambria CSD—4th Thurs.; 927-6223
Grover Beach—1st & 3rd Mon.; 6:30 p.m.; 473-4567
Grover Beach Planning Commission—2nd Tues.
Morro Bay—2nd & 4th Mon.
Paso Robles—1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 237-3888
Pismo Beach—1st Tues., 5:30 p.m.; 773-4657
Los Osos CSD board—1st Tues. & 2nd Mon., varies
California Coastal Commission—3rd Tues., varies
SLO County Board of Supervisors—every Tues.; 781-5450
SLO County Council of Governments; 781-4219
SLOCOG Citizens Advisory Committee—1st Wed. every other month, 6:00 p.m.
SLOCOG Board—1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes highlights from recent Chapter meetings

Executive Committee Meeting August 26, 2005

Chair Karen Merriam called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm in San Luis Obispo, California. Present: Karen Merriam, Jack Morrow, John Ashbaugh, Cal French, Eliane Guillot, Susan Harvey, Staff. Andrew Christie; guests Letty French, Gail McPherson, Joey Racano, Judy Vick.

The minutes of the July meeting were approved.

Old Business

Cal French reported on some final issues regarding Sierra Summit, California Department of Fish and Game did not vote to limit the duck hunting in the Morro Bay estuary. Activists are organizing a hunt watch for the first day of the hunt. Andrew Christie presented information on DFG’s incorrect basis for the decision to change the start time and season start of the hunt.

It was agreed to end the Google chat room for lack of participation.

The Committee discussed the Goals and strategic plans for 2005-6 document. Cal French moved to accept the document as modified as a working plan with the understanding it can be modified. John Ashbaugh seconded and all agreed.

Chair Karen Merriam met with Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee’s representative, Christine Robertson, and with Greg Haas, representative for Representative Lois Capps. The committee agreed to have Karen ask Assemblyman Blakeslee and Representative Capps to speak at a General Meeting on environmental issues.

New Business

Steven Marx gave the Treasurer’s Report and it showed that the Chapter was in better financial shape than last year. Karen Merriam will continue to explore the possibilities of a URL bike ride as a fundraiser and the possibility of a joint fundraiser with Hospice of SLO and The Chapter.

Application fee for a booth at the Green Earth Festival authorized.

Judy Vick gave a presentation for the group Coastal View Protection Coalition asking for support of their resolution opposing the proposed cell tower to be located in Los Osos. The Committee authorized Andrew Christie to speak at the upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting opposing the cell tower.

The ExCom endorsed the Conservation Committee approval of the Chapter’s inclusion in the list of opponents to oil drilling in the Los Padres National Forest.

The ExCom voted to request the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club make a commendation of the life work of the late BLM Carrizo Plain National Monument Manager Marlene Braun.

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.

Skiing, Snowboarding, Backpacking, Climbing & Clothing
(805) 528-0100 (805) 801-4444 897-SOLD AUSTRALIANGROUP.COM

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(805) 543-1676 667 Marsh Street Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter’s outing policies or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Leader Gary Felsman (473-3604). 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 = 3-5 mi., 3 = 6-10 mi., 4 = 11-15 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.

Elevation Gain
A = 100' B = 1000', C = 1500', D = 2000', E = 2500' F = 3000' or more.

Sat., Oct. 1 SURF BEACH: Celebrate the opening of Surf Beach by walking south 3.5 miles. Meet at the terminus of Pacific St. and Highland Drive in SLO. Call 781-7338 for details. Sponsored by the City of SLO.

Sat., Oct. 8th, 9 a.m., Santa Margarita Lake Exploration. We will explore the County’s biggest hike Santa Margarita Lake. We will explore the Grey Pine Trail, hike up into the Crags, and out to Vaca Point on this 6- 9 mile hike. Bring lunch, water, and dress for the weather. There is a $5.00 per car entrance fee. Meet at the Pacific Beverage Company, in Santa Margarita. Details call Gary at 473-3604 (SC).

Sun., Oct. 9th, 9:30 a.m., COAST HIKE: Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDe enhance@SLONET.org.

Sun., Oct. 10th, 12, 19, 26, 50 p.m., various hikes around San Luis Obispo. Check Website at santalucia.sierraclub.org/index.htm, or e-mail gfelsman@osburnemail.com for meetings.

Sun., Oct. 12th, 9 a.m., Tomales Bay: Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDe enhance@SLONET.org.

Sun., Oct. 15th, 9 a.m., Cerro San Luis Party. Come help the City of SLO maintain its local trails. Bring water, pants and sturdy shoes. Snacks will be provided. Meet at Maipo Overlook Space Area at the Marsh and Higuera overpass. Call 781-7330, or visit the City’s website at www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation/parkrangers.asp for more information. Sponsored by the City of SLO.

Sat., Oct. 22, 9-30 a.m., Cerro Alto. Now that the hills have cooled off a bit join us on this 7.5 mile, 1700 ft. loop hike. Carpool at 8:30am from large dirt pullout on right past Nixon. Meet at Cerro Alto campground, on Hwy 41 8 miles east of Morro Bay, 12 miles west of Atascadero. Park at headquarters parking lot at end of campground (5$ parking fee or USFS pass). Bob Schwartz, 441-9508, <cws@usaonline.com> (SD).

Sun., Oct. 23rd, 9:30 a.m., CANO/E/KAYAK OSO FLACO LAKE. Join us on this leisurely tour of Oso Flaco Lake. We will check out the local wildlife as we paddle around this beautiful freshwater lake in the dunelands. Normally the water is good enough for a $5.00 pre car and a ½ mile portage from the parking area to the lake. We will help you portage your boats. Please allow an extra ½ hour for the portage. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, binoculars and your picnic lunch that you can eat in your boat. PUTF IN 10:00 AM at Oso Flaco Lake Causeway. Please call Jack Beigie, 773-2144 for details.

Sun., Oct. 23rd, 9:30 a.m., KAYAK/OFF/FLACO Meet in parking lot with kayak, paddl and paddle. I have a extra kayak for someone to help me load and transport (I have wheels). Call or e-mail a few days before for details before 929-3647 or BDe enhance@SLONET.org.

Fri-Sun., October 25-30, Whipple Mountain Carcamp. For this trip in the far eastern San Bernardino County, we will need 4X4 vehicles. Bring all your drinking water as there is none available. We will explore Whipple Wash which is supposed to lead to the Zion Narrows. To get on the trip, send $20 made to Sierra Club to David Hardy, Box 99, Bakersfield, CA 93301. If you show up or cancel more than 10 days before the trip, you get the $20 back.

Fri-Sun., October 25-30, Antelope Protection Carcamp. With little rainfall and few water sources, the species on the Carrizo Plain are both hardy and endangered. Particu- larly beautiful are the pronghorns that evolved in these wild, open spaces. Then cattle ranching left a legacy of endless fences. In 1999, if you show up or cancel more than 10 days before the trip, you get the $20 back. Ldr: David Hardy.