Everybody is in favor of increasing renewable energy and improving energy efficiency. And (almost) everyone now grasps the connection between cutting greenhouse gas emissions and curbing global warming, and more are coming to realize that the benefits of clean energy development include improved public health, reduced energy bills, enhanced energy security, more jobs and increased tax revenues for communities. Some people — generally the people who hold elected offices — just need a little encouragement to demonstrate their commitment to achieving those goals.

That’s why, last November, the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club invited the mayors of Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach and San Luis Obispo to sign onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Since the agreement was initiated by Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels in February 2005, 194 mayors representing nearly 40 million Americans in 36 states have pledged to effect the energy, transportation and land use policies necessary to reduce global warming carbon dioxide pollution in their cities 7% below 1990 levels by the year 2012. Many of those cities have already achieved savings and seen improvements in their quality of life by aiming at that target — all because their mayors signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

So far on the Central Coast, however, only the city of San Luis Obispo has agreed to take this step toward a commonsense energy future, three weeks after receiving our request. It’s not enough for your city to encourage a solar power component in new development or adherence to Green Building guidelines. It’s about setting a target and measuring your progress toward it. That’s what the Mayors Agreement does. Without it, your city’s planning and policies can never be more than random actions with unknown effects.

Sierra Club’s Cool Cities campaign is acknowledging the efforts of cities in every region of the country that have signed the Mayors Agreement and begun formulating a comprehensive energy plan, putting into place practical, cost-effective local solutions for cleaner vehicles, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

‘The ‘cool cities’ movement is catching on as news of these cities’ successful energy solutions spreads,’ said Chapter Chair Karen Merriam. ‘They’re saving the environment and saving money; they’re improving their communities.’

The Mayors Agreement is sitting on your mayor’s desk, awaiting the stroke of a pen. You can provide the necessary encouragement to start the year off right. Tell him/her why it would be a good idea to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. It couldn’t hurt to send another copy just in case they’re misplaced the first one. Go to www.santalucia.sierraclub.org click on “Has your mayor signed the climate agreement?” and follow the simple instructions on how to help your city be part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

Sierra Club’s Cool Cities Guide to Local Global Warming Solutions is on line at www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/coolcities.

On no other issue are you likely to have a better opportunity to think globally and act locally. Your mayor needs to hear from you today!
Duke Deserts Morro Bay

What’s Next?
By Jack McCurdy

After Duke Energy announced it was selling its last U.S. power plant, a movement was launched to explore replacing the old Morro Bay plant by visiting nonprofit enterprises such as a marine museum, arts and cultural center, aquarium and restored habitats—some combination of these and other ideas.

The Santa Lucia Chapter petitioned for a new look at plans for the 107-acre plant site, including existing residents of Morro Bay and other interested citizens to come to the City Council meeting on October 24 to say whether they preferred a new plant or some other use of the site, known to constitute some of the most desirable real estate on the California coast. The council heard two hours of public testimony overwhelmingly favoring uses for the site other than a power plant, heard the City Attorney’s report acknowledging that virtually no one wants to see a power plant on the site, and appointed two council members to an ad-hoc committee to explore funding mechanisms for the decommissioning of the plant (a committee you can join. See ad on page 5).

The hearing was the first time in the five years since Duke submitted its application to the state to build a new Morro Bay power plant that a majority of City council members agreed to reconsider its long-standing support for a new plant. It opened the door for possible purchase of the property, removal of the 50-year-old plant and redevelopment. It was also the first time that a range of alternatives of the site has received serious attention.

It all happened quickly. On Sept. 13, with no warning, Duke announced it would sell four power plants in California, located in Oakland, Moss Landing, Chula Vista and Morro Bay. The company said it had been losing money on its North American plants, including those in California, and keeping the plants would risk losing more money.

The revelation triggered articles in local newspapers and speculation about putting something else on the Morro Bay site.

Then proponents of a community discussion about alternative uses of the site converged on the City Council on October 10 and argued that the time was ripe for an investigation of other options. Council member Melody DeMertt took the initiative and asked the Council to conduct a public hearing on the future of the property. Vice Mayor Betty Winholte joined in support, and Mayor Janice Peters, a supporter of a new plant, welcomed Duke first announced it would build a new facility in 1999, acquiesced, creating a majority in favor of looking beyond a power plant.

Duke obtained preliminary approval of the Energy Commission last year to build a new plant, using water from the Morro Bay National Estuary in what is called once-through cooling, which kills significant numbers of fish and crab larvae swept into the plant. But Duke, as buyer intending to build a new plant, also needs a federal discharge permit from the Central Coast Regional Quality Control Board. Twice during the past year, Duke has withdrawn from planned hearings before the Board on a new permit.

If a regulated utility like PG&E were to purchase the plant and seek to replace it with a new facility, it would require approval of the California Public Utilities Commission. That would require further environmental reviews at a time when once-through cooling is being challenged by courts and other state agencies.

LNG in Morro Bay?!
Did you get this call?

Over the weekend of November 26, several residents of Morro Bay and Los Osos reported receiving a phone call from a pollster. The pollster started out saying the call was a survey of opinions on energy issues—wind, solar, nuclear, etc.—but then, after a few general questions, got down to business, asking “How would you feel about a Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) terminal located in Morro Bay?” (LNG is extremely volatile, and could cause an explosion and fireball comparable to the disaster you'd see at a terminal facility.)

The pollster also reportedly asked: “If a National Marine Sanctuary were located 15 miles away, how would that effect your support for or opposition to an LNG plant?” (The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's southern border is at Cambria.)

“How do you feel about Chevron? Gulf Oil? PG&E? etc., and ‘on a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate these companies if they were to operate an LNG plant?’”

“How do you feel about a Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) terminal located in Morro Bay?” (LNG is extremely volatile, and could cause an explosion and fireball comparable to the disaster you'd see at a terminal facility.)

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“How do you feel about a Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) terminal located in Morro Bay?” (LNG is extremely volatile, and could cause an explosion and fireball comparable to the disaster you'd see at a terminal facility.)

Standing Committees Political Sarah Christle Conservation Pam Hoehn

The Executive Committee meets the fourth Friday of every month at 3:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 1204 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo. All Sierra Club members are welcome to attend.

Change of Address?

Mail changes to:
Sierra Club National Headquarters
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105-3441
or e-mail:
address.changes@sierraclub.org

Outings, events, and more!

www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

Santa Lucia Chapter

www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

Santa Lucia Chapter

January 2006
Executive Committee Elected

The Elections Committee reports the following results of the November Chapter election for 2006 Executive Committee listed in the order of most votes received, and terms elected:

Karen Merriam - 2 years
Jack Morrow - 2 years
John Ashbaugh - 1 year

New Executive Committee members were seated on December 16. The Committee elected Karen Merriam Chair, Jack Morrow Vice Chair, Catherine Wassenberg Secretary, Steven Marr Treasurer, and ratified the Chair’s appointments of Juno Kincaid of Cuesta College Grassroots to the Conservation Committee.

Hang on to Your Genes

By Olga Mandrussow
Sierra Club Genetic Engineering Committee

Imagine a biotechnology corporation coming into your region, discovering a native plant, artificially injecting genes from a completely different species into that indigenous plant, and then producing a new product for its pharmaceutical, agricultural, or industrial market. Does this corporation have the right to privatize and patent that product? Yes. Consider: Ventria Bioscience was intrigued by a rice -- genetically engineered rice (pharm rice) in California. This rice — genetically engineered continued on page 8

The Magic of Volunteers

By Kim Waldo
from T.V. Advisor's newsletter of the Huron Valley Group, Michigan

At the beginning... Arlen sat behind the participants around the table at the meeting. That’s how he thought of himself.

The Let’s Review

(Continued from page 2)

Let’s Review

It’s been an unquiet year in our little county…

In our efforts to save prime ag land and habitat, we supported Save San Luis Obispo in its successful ballot fight to defeat the massive Market Place proposal and protect a 47 acre ag land in San Luis Obispo, and supported Save the Park in its ongoing fight to convince the County and the State Parks Department to protect both coastal land and habitat in park units in Morro Bay and Los Osos.

Sierra Club joined with most of the County’s conservation groups and a whole lot of other folks in telling the Board of Supervisors to eliminate the Transfer of Development Credit program and the proposed Rural Planned Development Ordinance before they end up “preserving” our agricultural land and open space right out of existence. In November, the Board put the 10-month moratorium on TDC’s in South County while the RPD grimly clung to life. In December, we told the Board that adopting Napa County’s amendment to the state Subdivision Map Act would mean we could abolish the antiquated lots being targeted for development and save a lot of fishery and wildlife habitat where the TDC and RPD don’t or make worse.

Darn near everybody in Morro Bay and Los Osos told the California Fish and Game Commission at their annual regulatory review that fifty to a hundred guys firing shotguns in the estuary next door every year — pretending they’re in the wilderness and miles away from boaties, kayakers and places where people live and work — doesn’t make a lick of sense, and even less sense for the black brant that the Game Fish and Game didn’t listen. We shall return.

After the California Coastal Commission finally persuaded the Cambria Community Services District that building an expandable water tank storage within the regulations set out by the Coastal Act makes more sense than trying to whip residents into a hysterical frenzy over fears of fire and flood and attempting to circumvent the law, the last thing we had to convince the CCSD that threatening to subpoena and depose activists who agree with the Coastal Commission was that the CCSD was a good — or democratic — idea.

We helped persuade the Regional Water Quality Control Board to increase a fine assessed solely for reimbursement of staff costs that the Board was going to levy against two L.A. land speculators who denuded rangeland and choked a blue-line creek in Creston. The proposed $50,000 in fines went up to $225,000, with $100,000 applied to local watershed restoration projects. We also helped the County Parks Foundation acquire a portion of those funds for purchase of BLMD lands at the headwaters of the Salinas River. We filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Bureau of Land Management for all documents re: an assessment of grazing at the Carrizo Plain National Monument. We didn’t get everything we wanted; filed a complaint, met with staff in their Bakersfield office, and came away with what we needed to assess the BLMD’s upcoming Resource Management Plan.

We submitted comments on the Cambria Community Services District’s thoroughly inadequate environmental analysis of drilling beach wells for Cambria’s proposed desalination plant.

Under the terms of our legal settlement with State Parks that resulted in more protected nesting areas and half a million dollars for plover protection at Oceano Dunes and in adjacent counties, we continued meeting with State Parks to monitor their progress in finding alternatives to recreational vehicles crossing the mouth of Arroyo Grande Creek, as this is not a great match with endangered steelhead and tidewater gobey. We also participated in the structuring of Parks’ public scoping meetings on the creation of a Habitat Conservation Plan for all their county units, as per our legal settlement.

We helped persuade the Former Chair of the Board Tarren Collins convinced a Cambria rancher to seek a minimum use permit and a fire trigger for land that the County Planning Commission had first told him he could develop without a permit, then that he couldn’t, then that he could. If he’d gone with the Court decision, it would’ve set a terrible precedent that would let developers turn environmentally sensitive habitat area into Swiss cheese all up and down the coast. Nice save!

We sent a delegation to the Sierra Summit in San Francisco, the largest gathering of Sierra Club members in history, and participated in setting the agenda for the future course of the Club’s conservation work.

At the Chapter’s request, the Environmental Caucus of the California Democratic Party is sponsoring the Chapter’s resolutions supporting expansion of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and opposing the relicensing of nuclear power plants in the state.

With your support, we hope to do the same -- only more so -- this year.

Goals, Principles and Strategies of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, 2006-2008

Continues on page 8

Goals, Principles and Strategies of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, 2006-2008

The members of the Executive Committee agreed in 2005 to adopt a strategic plan to guide the chapter for the next three years, understanding that events and re-evaluations may require revisions over time. The following are excerpts from that document.

The Santa Lucia Chapter accepts the Mission of the Sierra Club to: * Explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth. * Practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources. * Educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment. * Use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. * Diversify promotes health in the natural and human environment. * Be a source of details, but he knew the best way to use the city’s outstand-

* Diversify promotes health in the natural and human environment. * Be a source of details, but he knew the best way to use the city’s outstand-
What “Sustainable” Isn’t

By Mike Zelina
SLO GE Free

Jane Goodall has recently released a book Harvest for Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating that provides a great overview of US agriculture and possible solutions. A central theme is buying organic - and encouraging local producers to go that direction, I hope everyone gets a chance to read the book or listen to her recent interview on Democracy Now! (www.democracynow.org).

Over the last two years, agribusiness/biotech has been very busy hijacking the word “sustainable.” The “mono-crop” mentality will continue as well as the introduction of genetically engineered crops, vitamin-enhanced products, oils higher in monounsaturated fats, etc. Teresa Campbell, Mark Phillips, and myself recently spoke at the Cal Poly Biotech 101 class. Much like chemical farming, students appear to be embracing this technology with little or no question.

Unfortunately, our local Farm Bureau is busily promoting genetically engineered crops as the future. In addition, the Central Coast Vineyard team just hosted a conference that featured the pro-GMO speaker Peggy Lemaux. The first GMO wine yeast was released last November. Will local vineyards be using this in production? Unless consumers say “no” every chance they get, agribusness influence over grape crops — and further loss of small farms — is inevitable. While buying local is important, must tell producers what we want (and don’t want).

“The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, under pressure from the biotechnology industry, has decided not to require genetically engineered foods to be independently safety tested or labeled. This decision represents a particularly egregious affront to food choice, as up to 60 percent of processed foods already have some genetically engineered ingredients that many consumers would like to avoid. The FDA’s no labeling and testing policy was made even though the agency was aware that the genetic engineering of foods can make safe foods toxic, create new allergens, lower food nutrition, and create antibiotic resistance.”

— Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture (Island Press, 2002)

Dear Editor:

Enclosed is a copy of the Mission Statement and Goals of the San Luis Obispo GMO Task Force as mandated by the county Health Commission. Nowhere is there a statement or directive tasking them “with determining whether the County should support the labeling of genetically modified organisms, aka genetically engineered (GE) food…”

Including this entire Mission and Goal Statement in your next edition as well as a correction of the article (“What’s Up With the GMO Task Force,” October) would add clarity to the issue. One can only assume you did not have a copy of this information prior to including your article in the October 2005 Santa Lucian.

Robert A Robbins, M.D., D.D.S., FAOMHS
San Luis Obispo

Andrew Christie replies:

The sentence with which Dr. Robbins takes issue is from my article reporting on the September 6 meeting of the health Commission’s GMO Task Force. Dr. Robbins also took issue with the following sentence: “The task force seemed uncertain as to its mission and reason for being” — both circled with yellow highlighter on a copy of the article that he enclosed with his letter.

He is correct. I did not have a copy of the GMO Task Force’s mission statement at hand when I wrote the article in October, which I now know was incorrect. Dr. Robbins or any other member of the Task Force at their September meeting when a member of the public asked exactly what their task was supposed to be and then head-scratching. It is impossible to know that Dr. Robbins eventually located a copy of the Task Force’s mission statement (“To provide the people of San Luis Obispo County with information regarding the health implications of genetically engineered foods and crops”) and has presumably shared it with the other members of his Task Force as well as with the Santa Lucian.

The first of the five listed goals implementing the Task Force’s mission statement is “To gather reviewed scientific information on genetically engineered foods and product labeling.”

Nevertheless, I agree that journalistic shorthand can often require clarification. In this case, clarification is also required by the context in which the GMO Task Force was created: the aftermath of Measure Q, the 2004 ballot initiative that would have banned the cultivation of genetically engineered crops in San Luis Obispo County. Though vastly outspent by the corporate disinformation campaign that assured its defeat, the measure gathered 49,910 votes. GE-free activists demanded that the County acknowledge and respond to obvious public concern and the environmental and health issues raised by the measure’s proponents, and, if not ban GE crops locally, consider a requirement that GE foods be labeled as such before permitting them to be sold. The County Board of Supervisors created two GMO task forces, under the auspices of the Health and Agriculture Departments, to look into the matter and report their findings. The only action before the Board to which those findings would pertain is a request to endorse a federal labeling law for GE foods.

Thus, the GMO task forces were not created out of random curiosity or to gather data for the sake of data-gathering, but to aid the Board of Supervisors in a specific purpose. While the task forces are free to simply amass the specified information, file their reports and leave it at that, the entity that created them may not. The Board is supposed to consider the data presented and use it as the basis for an action.

Andreas L. Mapes, editor
**TDCs: Tying with Disastrous Consequences**

There are other ways to reward non-development

By Eric Greening

On November 22nd, the Board of Supervisors faced an audience most of whose members were ready to kill the present countywide Transfer of Development Credit Program (except for a few programs designed by and for individual communities) and start over (or not). But the Board, aside from a 10 1/2 month moratorium in the Santa Margarita/South Madera/Creston/Paso area, and some ameliorative changes, kept the program alive despite its having created five times more lots than it has retired, every one of which has been an auto-dependent, non-smart-growth parcel of one acre or more in the unincorporated area.

The positive changes (too more receiving sites for development credits in the Agricultural Zone, removal of villages from the list of “cities” within 5 miles of which receiver sites must be used) have yet to take effect. All the Board did was start the processing of amendments.

This program was originally intended to be a design tool to compensate landowners for retiring development rights in remote areas while encouraging higher densities in urban nodes, consistent with smart growth principles. However, sifting and receiving zones were never mapped, incorporated cities never agreed to participate, and the Board directed that the program be “incentive based and market driven” came to mean bargain rates for pur-chasing exceptions to the General Plan. The “market” is not the most sensitive design tool.

While the amendments in process may contain some of the program’s worst abuses, the program is likely to continue to aggravate neighbors of receiver sites and promote sprawl. How would you like it if your neighbor could buy the right to violate your area’s zoning by paying a few tens of thousands of dollars to amass profits an order of magnitude higher?

If we are to have a TDC program, we need to start over, with a clean slate. Why should the retirement of lots have to be balanced by the creation of lots anyway? The Cambria community program avoids this by allowing credit purchasers work waivers instead of new lots. While this is not ideal either, leading to monster houses elbowing each other on small lots and threatening a potential firetrap, it shows that creation of new lots is not an inevitable consequence of a TDC program.

Why couldn’t a credit purchaser buy something that doesn’t show up on the land at all, like quicker processing of a stand-alone application. Preserve open space and you get to cut in line! That, too, could be resentment, but the consequence would be passing.

Or if purchasers of TDC credits are to be rewarded with new lots, why not require the same for all new lots in standard subdivisions, and avoid violating the General Plan in the first place? Subdivisions are gifts from the public to a landowner, and retirement of inappropriately lots can be a way to pay the public back.

We have yet to examine what we could accomplish if we make a fresh start on a new TDC program; battles over the old one occupy the foreground of our consciousness. But the opportunity is there. The final part of the Board’s action on November 22nd was to create a new TDC Advisory Committee. Membership categories will be decided at a future Board meeting, and then applications will be open. We need to do all we can to insure that this committee has room for fresh approaches and people serving in it who can think outside the box. Stay tuned!

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**SIERRA CLUB 2006 CALENDARS**

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

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**A Very Special Day on the Sandspit**

By Jack Beigle

I have said many times that each of our outings is a special adventure. Our picnic on the Morro Bay Sand Spit is a perfect example. We paddle leaning against the tree and a canoe resting on a beautiful fall's day. We had a clear sky and a moderate breeze, but it was a special day. The opportunity is there. The final part of the Board’s action on November 22nd was to create a new TDC Advisory Committee. Membership categories will be decided at a future Board meeting, and then applications will be open. We need to do all we can to insure that this committee has room for fresh approaches and people serving in it who can think outside the box. Stay tuned!

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**WANT TO REDEVELOP DUKE?**

City and County residents are needed to draft strategic guidelines for assessable alternatives to the Morro Bay Power Plant site. A dedicated working committee is required forthis public process, intent on balancing the needs of the City, the surrounding communities and a variety of environmental, design and economic concerns. Interested candidates should have time, patience, and a willingness to consider the views of others.

The Morro Bay Power Plant Re-Use Ad Hoc Committee will meet on the 1st and 3rd Monday each month from 4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. location to be announced. Applications may be obtained for these positions from the City Clerk’s office at 595 Harbor Street, or by calling 772-8205 during normal business hours. Closing date for submitting applications is Tuesday, January 13, 2006, at 5:00 p.m.

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**TDC Advisory Committee**

Member-
The Last Shangri-La: About Bhutan with film and local Bhutanese Karma Dorn...
Will BLM Do the Right Thing at Carrizo?  
The State stronghold for threatened and endangered species is on the line  
December 12, 2005  
Mike Pool, State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
California State Office  
2900 S. Avocado Suite W-1834  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1886  

Re: Preparation of EIS required for new Monument RMP  

Dear Pool Director:  

The Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, California Wilderness Coalition, Los Padres ForestWatch, Center for Biological Diversity, Natural Resources Defense Council, People for Envir-  

onmental Responsibility, and Western Watersheds Project are writing to express their concern with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) intention to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA), instead of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as part of completing the new Monument Management Plan for the Carrizo Plain National Monument.  

Some of the undersigned groups have previously sought to discuss this matter and convey the importance of completing an EIS in developing a management plan for this new national monument, but, to date, BLM has not changed its position.  Please be advised that failure to prepare an EIS would be contrary to NEPA and the require-  

ments of the BLM's own regulations, and it would violate the EA process.  

1. An EIS is required by BLM's regu-  

lations, guidance and NEPA stan-  

dards.  All applicable law and guidance require BLM to prepare an EIS to accompany the new RMP for the Carrizo Plain National Monument.  BLM has not identified any exceptions to these requirements.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) specifically requires preparation of environmental impact statements for any major federal action that significantly affects the quality of the environment (40 C.F.R. § 1501.4). The Federal Land and Policy Management Act (FLPMA), as implemented through BLM's land use planning regulations (43 C.F.R. § 1601.10-6 “Environmental impact statement policy”), also requires preparation of an EIS.  

In New Mexico Wilderness Coalition v. BLM (11th Cir 1994), BLM sought to rely on its previous analysis of issues, alternatives and potential impacts related to the newly-created El Malpais NCA in New Mexico and declined to prepare either a full EIS or an EA. Instead, BLM prepared an environmental assessment (EA). The IBLA held that BLM's regulations characterized preparation of an EA as “a major Federal action signifi-  

cantly affecting the quality of the human environment” and that, under NEPA, BLM must prepare an EIS for such action.  

129 IBLA at 163. The same reasoning and legal requirements mandated by NEPA required BLM to perform a sufficient assessment of the potential environmental impacts associated with the new RMP for the Carrizo Plain National Monument.  

2. Broader NEPA legal authority also supports the requirement to prepare an EIS for the Carrizo Plain National Monument RMP  

The NEPA regulations require prepara-  

tion of an EIS when the proposed action may significantly impact the environment (40 C.F.R. § 1501.4) and the definition of “significantly” (set out at 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27 and ex-  

cepted in part below) clearly re-  

quires preparation of an EIS with the Monument RMP. “Significantly” as used in NEPA and defined in the NEPA regulations requires consider-  

ations of both context and inten-  

sity.  

The establishment of the new Monu-  

ment and its management under a new RMP is very important to the context of the National Landscape Conservation System and in Califor-  

nia, as shown by the many Monument objects listed in the Proclamation. Moreover, the impacts of the Monu-  

ment RMP are of high intensity/sever-  

ity due to the precedent-setting na-  

ture of creating a plan for the new  

Monument and also because of the special characteristics of the Monument objects, many of which are of the types specifically mentioned in the regulation (as excerpted above).  

Additionally, at least two of the issues to be addressed in the Monument RMP, grazing and oil and gas devel-  

opment, are highly controversial having been consistently singled out by the public for comment, both in the scoping phase of the RMP, and during the creation of the Carrizo Plain Natural Area Management Plan.  

Since the new RMP for the Carrizo Plain National Monument will be based on the Monument Procla-  

mation, the purpose and need for the RMP and the accompanying EIS would be guided by the new priority given to the Monument objects above other multiple uses. As a result, the environmental analysis accompanying the new RMP also follows this special purpose and need, in-  

cluding the different legal require-  

ments, and would necessarily gener-  

ate a different range of alternatives. These requirements cannot be met by the existing RMP and its accompanying EA.  

3. The existing plans do not provide adequate protection for the key objects addressed in the Monument, provide ade-  

quate protection for the Monument objects or fulfill BLM's obligation to prepare a management plan for the new RMP. 

In the scoping notice, BLM indicated its intent to rely on two existing plans to “provide a comprehensive man-  

agement program which is believed to be appropriate for the new monu-  

ment” and to support its decision to prepare an EA instead of an EIS. This approach is neither supported by the content of the existing plans nor in compliance with the Monument Proc-  

lamation. The lands of the Carrizo Plain National Monument are cur-  

rently managed under the Caliente RMP (completed in 1987) and the Carrizo Plain Natural Area Manage-  

ment Plan (completed in 1996). 

The Monument Proclamation requires the BLM to manage these lands in order to protect the Monument ob-  

jects, which includes a wide range of aspects of this landscape. 

Neither the Caliente RMP nor the Carrizo Plain Natural Area Manage-  

ment Plan were prepared for the ex-  

press purpose of fulfilling the clear-  

ifying the different levels of pro-  

tection and analysis involved in the two types of designations.  

The Monument objects as identified in the Proclamation are not suffi-  

ciently protected and treated as priorities for protection in the current RMPs. Consequently, these plans address, respectively, lands managed without restriction — by the Monument Proclamation — of the permissible range of multiple uses and an A&E. The Monument Proclamation specifically directs BLM to “prepare a management plan that addresses the actions, in-  

cluding road closures or travel re-  

strictions, necessary to protect the objects identified.” The Carrizo Plain National Monument was cre-  

ated because the President deter-  

mined that a new, formal designa-  

tion was needed to protect the Monument objects and the Monu-  

ment Proclamation specifically acknowledges the need for a new RMP to formulate appropriate man-  

agement actions. Accordingly, the existence of other management plans cannot justify failing to com-  

plete an EIS for the new Carrizo Plain National Monument RMP.  

As shown by the detailed discussion presented above, BLM cannot leg-  

elly proceed to prepare an EA and must prepare an EIS in conjunction with the Carrizo Plain National Monument RMP... We urge BLM to comply with its obligations by pre-  

paring an EIS.  

We are available to discuss our concerns at your convenience. If you would like to talk with us or have any questions, please contact the person designated.  

Sincerely,  

The Wilderness Society  
George Hand  
Desert and Monuments Program Director  
California Wilderness Coalition  
Idyllwild, CA 92549  
(951) 640-3398  

AND ON BEHALF OF:  
Sierra Club  
California Wilderness Coalition  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Western Watersheds Project  
Los Padres ForestWatch  
Sierra Club  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Wilderness Society  

By Anne McMahon  

You may have been following the sad story of my friend Marlene Braun. She committed suicide last May at the Carrizo Plain National Monument. Many of us knew and loved Marlene for her tireless efforts and boundless dedication on behalf of the plants and animals of the Carrizo. A long-time em-  

ployee of the Bureau of Land Manage-  

ment, she became almost one with the Carrizo – a place she had grown to love deeply during her three and a half years there as monument manager. That deep and passionate love for the land she loved, but her passion and her management approach also put her at odds with the Bureau, leading to a clash with her leadership that ultimately led to her losing author-  

ity and control over completion of the Carrizo's yet-uncompleted Source Man-  

agement Plan, which will determine the management decisions affecting the Carrizo for years to come. That
New Educational Tool: “Coexisting with Coyotes” Door Hanger

The Animal Protection Institute is providing a new tool to help communities coexist with coyotes and reduce conflicts.

Full of useful facts about coyotes and tips on how to keep them at a distance, how to keep domestic animals safe, and what to do if you encounter a coyote, API’s coyote door hanger will help educate and inform. The door hanger is also available as a free download to print out or in a printed pack of 100 for $6.00.

Most often conflicts result from people providing coyotes (and other wildlife) with food or garbage. This can lead to habituation and ultimately the unnecessary killing of coyotes. A Fed Coyote is a Dead Coyote: holds true and, nationally, the problem is bad in the U.S. and apparent even more worse in Mexico, home to some of our migrating birds & eagles. Worldwide at least two species, Spanish Imperial Eagles and “Eagle Owls,” are in serious decline due to losses from power poles.

Existing federal laws including the Eagle Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, for all of their good intentions, have failed to eliminate the problem of ‘at risk’ poles. Traigically, these laws require neither fatality reporting nor the remedying of unprotected poles.

As one might expect, areas in the rural West with limited trees and high ridges dotted with power poles are prime locations for high mortality rates. Why then, would special regulations not require poles in such areas to be retrofitted or buried, even if only a small percentage a year in high risk areas? Rick Harness is an Environmental Specialist for EED International, a Fort Collins-based utility construction company. An expert in the field of raptor electrocutions, Rick has consulted with utility companies in Colorado and elsewhere on the subject. He has produced a 27-minute video called “Raptors at Risk,” which every bird & conservation group should consider owning and sharing with their members. Be forewarned, however, that you will see a beautiful red-tailed hawk landing on a transformer for a common power pole and electrocuted within seconds. The effect is almost electric. It cries out, however, to be spoken.

In writing this article, it is my intent to provide an overview on which to build. There are so many questions. How many are killed annually here and elsewhere? How many utility companies have a dynamic and proactive policy with specific goals to eliminate the deaths of these magnificent and important birds? All unknown. What is known is that a lot of birds are being killed.

In completing his masters thesis, Rick studied reports from 58 utilities across the West, and compiled the following raptor mortality data for the period 1994-1996:

- 748 Eagles, including 118 Bald and 272 Golden Eagles
- 278 Hawks
- 14 Falcons, including 6 Peregrines
- 344 Owls, including 86 Great Horned
- 11 Osprey
- 18 Vultures
- 15 Unidentified raptors

Total: 1,428 birds

Think this is bad? Consider that the numbers are likely grossly under-reported. Federal laws require neither fatality reporting nor the reporting of raptor identification (e.g. not knowing that hawks are raptors, but negligence must be investigated). The concept that a federal method would allow varying utility companies to report deaths in varied ways is at the root of the question. It is also safe to assume that the utilities know where each pole is; their inventory is located. And they are at risk, and causing raptor mortality.

In completing my study, Rick relied on the following data sources:

- 133 Eagles
- 471 Hawks
- 114 Falcons
- 471 Owls
- 50 Vultures
- 1264 Miscellaneous

Total: 1,697 birds

In summary, the raptor mortality issue is ongoing, and only getting worse. It is an environmental tragedy.

For more information about API’s Coexisting with Coyotes program, contact Camilla Fox, API Director of Animal Welfare, at 916-447-3085 or chfox@earthlink.net. The door hanger is available as a free download to print out or in a printed pack of 100 for $6.00.
Sierra Club Hike to Save Monterey Pines & Coastal Protection Feb. 18

Monterey County is one of California’s greatest coastal places, offering something for everyone—surfing, hiking, quiet and relaxation. The county boasts at least 20 golf courses where you can enjoy a day on the links as well as acres of rare and undeveloped forest land where nature lovers can experience California’s rapidly disappearing “wild coast.” But this chance, delicately preserved for decades, is at risk with a golf course developer’s proposal to cut down 17,000 threatened Monterey pine trees to build what they have ironically named “The Del Monte Forest.”

Sierra Club, starting with John Muir, has worked for over 100 years to protect the Del Monte Forest—the largest natural forest of Monterey pines left in the world—and all the endangered plants and animals which call the forest home. Final decisions are expected soon, so the California Coastal Commission has scheduled a hearing on this development for February 18th.

Sadly, at risk here is more than the loss of one grove of trees—more even than the loss of one of the last stands of a tree which once covered our country’s 2nd largest forest. Monterey is one of statewide precedent. By allowing a developer to cut down these 17,000 Threatened trees, even the preservation makers could well be helping to cut down one of California’s strongest environmental protection laws.

Could we interest you in dinner and a meeting? The Chapter is looking for folks who would like to host or attend a 6 p.m. dinner in the company of those of like mind prior to our monthly meeting at 7 p.m., beginning with our talk by Rep. Lois Capps to open the evening of January 17. Interested? Contact Meredith Whitaker at 594-1133, rmwhit@partner.net.

Assault on Open Space Turned Back

SLO Planning Commission’s next decision due Jan. 18

After months of testimony and submissions by ECOSSLO, Sierra Club and concerned citizens of San Luis Obispo, the City Planning Commission on December 14 voted to retain the City’s strong existing protections for natural open space. In doing so, the Commissioners rejected the attempt by the Community Development Department to gut the policy and allow new recreational and commercial uses of land that the people of San Luis Obispo have overwhelmingly agreed should be protected.

That agreement was written into City policy in 1994 as the Land Use and Open Space Elements of the General Plan. For the last few years, City staff have been laboring over an “update” that would slash more than a hundred pages from the combined policies and redefine open space as something other than “land to be kept in a predominantly natural or in an undeveloped state.” At the meeting, Ira Winn, a retired professor of urban planning, commented “This proposal amounts to a monumental destruction of open space, and yet I’ve heard nothing on television for the radio. I’m surprised.”

Commissioners agreed to retain critical portions of the Land Use Element that had been marked for deletion and also agreed that the most onerous amendment of the proposed Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) was not necessary, COSE section 8.24.1 at. attempted to apply the less restrictive uses of the city’s greenbelt to open space. The Commission retained the strictest category of Use Element policy wherein greenbelt is greenbelt. Special thanks are due Commission Chairman Michael Rossell and Commissioner Orval Osborne for standing firm on the need to protect the City’s natural and open space.

Our concerted efforts have paid off, but we can’t afford to relax yet. The Planning Commission will hold a special meeting on January 18, where they will turn from the Land Use Element to focus on the proposed changes in the Open Space Element.

Needless to say, for every resident of the City of San Luis Obispo who values his or her quality of life: Be there!

SLO City Hall, Council Chamber 990 Palm St.
Wednesday, January 18, 6 p.m.

ECOSSLO Environmental Education Coordinator Miranda Leonard accepts the thanks of a grateful resident after the December 14 Planning Commission meeting. It was delicious.

Reef Check Docks on Central Coast

For more than six years and 90,000 nautical miles, marine biologists from Reef Check, one of the world’s leading reef monitoring and conservation organizations, have sailed around the world on a unique and ambitious surf and marine science expedition. Their colorfully-painted ship, Indians Trader, is touring the West Coast for the first time to promote their mission—to find undiscovered surf breaks and study the health of remote reef ecosystems as part of Reef Check’s global reef monitoring and conservation program.

Last year saw the launch of the California’s Skyler Reef Program on the Central Coast. “Reef Check California” is designed to become the state’s first ecosystem monitoring program with the goal of providing vital data to state and federal agencies. For the first time, citizen divers are being trained in Reef Check’s California Program to monitor our local fish and shellfish populations. In 2006, the program will expand to San Diego, Orange and Northern California. The data collected by volunteer scuba divers, continued on page 10
Volunteers
continued from page 3
outstanding natural features in the city would be treated, how they would be allowed to benefit the residents' quality of life.

After a while...
Arlen was greeted as a colleague (or at least co-conspirator) by the others, and he sat at the table. He had developed into an informed partici- pant. Through listening (from the back row) and then informing him- self through conversation and read- ing, he was able to speak knowledge- able on some phases of the negotiations. He had benefited from the mentoring of friends and ac- quaintances who had started earlier pursuing similar goals. He had learned that a volunteer could find support in most any endeavor. The beauty of being a volunteer is that you can advance the things you are inter- ested in.

Until finally...
Arlen called the meeting to order. As chair of the committee he was in an excellent position to influence how the city's natural features were used. His years of participation on the committee and related sub-commit- tees had made him one of the most knowledgeable people in town about how and which natural features impacted the health and beauty of life. He looked around the table. He saw other former back-row volunteers, who over time and free volunteer magic, could only be one explanation for how they had come so far: magic, volunteer magic.

This story, with slight variations, is biographical for many Sierra Club leaders. The magic of participation is available to all. Some take a bit longer to blossom. Some choose not to be up front about their ocean and coastal areas concerns in other meaningful ways. Some lead for a while and then stop — it all add up. The magic of volunteers is that they accomplish enormous change and enlightenment. Not by a profit-driven agenda, not by political ambition, but by regular folks who are interested enough to add their voice and hearts and hands and spe-

True Ocean Protection Coming to Central Coast

One hundred years ago, Americans had the foresight to develop a national parks system to protect the health of the ecosystems and resources of these special places on land. Today, we all enjoy the natural beauty and recreational opportunities provided by our national parks — which have been described as “the best idea America ever had.”

California is on the verge of adopting similar ecosystem protection for our ocean and coastal areas — starting with the Central Coast in 2006. Under the Marine Life Protection Act, California is required to set aside important areas of our coastal waters as marine protected areas to restore fish populations and protect ocean life. Areas that have been proposed for additional protection include Piedras Blancas, Point Buchon and Morro Bay.

What are Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)?
A marine protected area is a place in the ocean that has been designated by law or regulation to protect and conserve marine life and habitats. In California, the term MPA includes areas with varying levels of protection:

- marine reserves, where all marine life is protected and no species can be fished or taken;
- marine conservation areas, where one or more community of species is protected;
- marine protected areas, where commercial fishing is prohibited and managed sport fishing is allowed;
- marine park areas, where ocean recreation is allowed.

Why the Marine Life Protection Act?
By the 1990s, it was clear that California’s ocean resources were in trouble. Some fisheries had already collapsed and our state’s growing coastal population was increasing pressure on ocean wildlife and habitat.

MPAs have been used as an ocean management tool around the world for many years and have been scientifically shown to help restore fish populations, protect marine habitat and enhance recreational opportunities like wildlife watching and SCUBA diving. Although California already had some very small marine protected areas, these areas protected 1% of the State’s coastal waters and were far too small to be effective.

In response to the scientific consensus on the value of marine protected areas, the California legislature overwhelmingly passed the Marine Life Protection Act in 1999. The Act was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger and included a strong public support implementation plan. The 10-year phase of the legislation was set to begin in 2006.

Where are we now?
The MLPAs Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group, including divers, fishermen, conservationists, educators and local business people, met monthly in 2005 to develop recommendations for new and improved MPAs in the Central Coast Region. The MLPAs Blue Ribbon Task Force will review these MPA proposals in March 2006 and make recommendations to the state Fish and Game Commission. By the end of 2006, the Commission will then make the final decision on which areas of the central coast will be protected. A coalition of educators, divers, conservationists and recreational fishermen worked together to develop a scientifically supported MPA proposal (known as Package 2). Package 2 provides strong protection for areas that are important to many San Luis Obispo County residents and critical to fish populations, seabirds and marine mammals. The proposal for improved protection include Piedras Blancas, Cambria, Estero Bay and Pismo Beach. Package 2 significantly improves habitat protection on the Central Coast.
Coast, enhances recovery opportunities and still leaves most of our coastal waters open for fishing. Proposals developed by the Regional Stakeholder Groups provide far less protection than Package 2 and may not meet minimum scientific requirements.

What can I do?

To put it simply, we need your help. With at least two competing proposals, the future of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, now is the time to let your voice be heard. The ocean belongs to all of us and it is our responsibility to protect the California coast. Ocean protection can’t wait — statewide, fishermen are now catching less than half of what they caught in 1980 for many species and the average size of their fish are smaller. The character of our coastal communities depends on healthy and productive oceans. A meaningful network of MPAs is an investment in the future of these communities.

Raptors

Continued from page 9

utility company involved (if known)

3) The bird description (photos are great!) 4) The utility company involved (if known)

Utility company reporting should be mandatory, as should be fixing every at-risk pole. A little more prep work can do a lot of good.

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When two powerful politicians paved the way for the drilling of oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico in 1987, their action and the following legislation left our coastal waters open to take the same path.

When two powerful politicians paved the way for the drilling of oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico in 1987, their action and the following legislation left our coastal waters open to take the same path.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force was meeting in San Luis Obispo on Tuesday, February 2nd. The meeting location and agenda will be posted at: www.mpaconroadmap/mlpa-
meetings.html#ref.

Please take the time to come tell the Blue Ribbon Task Force what the coastal waters mean to you and why you support protecting them. The proposal developed by a broad coalition (Package 2) balances both the need for protection and the desire to leave a large part of our coastal waters open to all activities. Tell the Blue Ribbon Task Force you support Package 2.

Visit CalOceans.org today to find out more about these upcoming meetings and how you can stay involved or call Kaithlin Gaffney at (831) 425-1363 or kgaffney@oceanconservancy.org for more information.

Consider reporting every dead raptor (even the homes & remains) for the sake of the data we need. Please consider reporting the following:

1) The pole number (found on a metal tag) 2) Location - nearest address 3) The bird description (photos are great!) 4) The utility company involved (if known)

5) Your contact information 6) Copy the utility on your email

note if you can.

Contact the appropriate USFWS agent and utility company. The incident would remain open until the at-risk pole is fixed or substantiated proof offered that the pole was not at fault. The final report would go back to the person who initiated the action and the agencies involved.

Utility company reporting should be mandatory, as should be fixing every at-risk pole. A little more prep work can do a lot of good.
Executive Committee Meeting November 18 2005

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. Present: Karen Merriam, Cal French, Eliane Guillot, Steven Marx, John Ashbaugh, Staff: Andrew Christie. Guest: Letty French. Absent: Jack Morrow

Cal read “Backwater Pond,” a poem by W.S. Merwin, Steven read, “For All,” a poem by Gary Snyder. Cal read a poetic proclamation of appreciation for Chair Karen Merriam and presented her with a drum that he and Letty bought back from Madagascar.

Karen mentioned that plans are proceeding for a fund-raising and awards dinner to be held June 10, possibly at a Vineyard or the Monday Club.

Chapter Coordinator’s report: Andrew was elected liaison to National’s Corporate Accountability Committee, moved by John, seconded by Cal. He will gather signatures at screenings of the Wal-Mart movie arranged by HopeDance and co-sponsored by the chapter. We are assisting Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility in sponsoring a movie arranged by HopeDance and co-sponsored by the chapter.

Next meeting: December 16, 5:00 p.m., for seating and presentation of next year’s budget. A party will follow for members to meet their new ExCom. ExCom members will provide refreshments.

Meeting adjourned 6:45 p.m.
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 (473-3694). 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.

Sat., Jan. 7, 9:00 a.m., 46th Annual Sierra Club Anniversary Dunes Hike at Oso Flaco Lake. Come and take an easy, moderate or long walk on this 45th annual celebration of our Sierra Club’s first official hike in the dunes. There will be hikes for all ages and fitness levels. Meet in the Oso Flaco Lake parking lot and hear stories of the early days of our Chapter. Carpooling is advised, as there is a $5.00 car parking fee. For details call Jack Beijje 773-2147.

Sun., Jan. 8th, 9:00 a.m., Rinconada Trail to Big Falls. Celebrate the reopening of the Rinconada trailhead by joining the leader on a 3 mile hike to Big Falls. This is a great winter hike. The elevation gain is approximately 1000’. The views are fantastic from Hi Mountain Road and we should get to enjoy the water falls by then. Meet in front of the Santa Maria Argentina Beverage Co. at the east end of Santa Maria. Bring water, lunch or snacks and dress for the weather. There may be a possible refreezing stop at Puyo on the return. Rain cancels. For details contact the leader, 441-7597.

Sat., Jan. 28th, 8:30 a.m., Surfbach Walk: 3.5 MRT northward. Cross Santa Ynez river outlet into the Pacific Ocean and walk northward 3 miles along beach until blocked by cliffs. Walk features tide pools and caves. Minus 1.6 ft. tide at 3:30pm. Meet at 2pm in Ocean Park parking lot approx. 1 mile west of signed right turn off West Ocean before it heads southward toward Surf Station. Dogs welcome. Always contact the leader; hike particulars can change. CONNIE 725-2292. (AR)

Sat., Feb. 18th, 10 a.m., Birding In Morro Bay. We will tour the Chorro Creek Delta to see how many shore birds we can find. Bring your boat and equipment, PFD, windbreaker, bird book, binoculars and a picnic lunch. Launch at Morro Bay State Park Marina, High Tide 12:57 PM 2.7’, Low Tide 6:17 PM 1.5’. Dress please call Jack Beijje 773-2147.

Sat., Feb. 18, 10 A.M., HIKE TO SAVE THE MONTEREY PINES? See page 8.

Mag 20-27, VOYAGE OF THE GLAICERS. Answer the call of the wild with your pioneer spirit as we explore the land John Muir said “was still in the morning of creation.” Travel with your Angeles Chapter and Orange County Sierra Singles friends on the luxurious Sapphire Princess as we head north up the Inside Passage from Vancouver, Canada, to the Alaskan ports of Ketchikan, Juneau, and Skagway. View all the great maritime animals and active tidewater glaciers with an onboard naturalist. Join us for onboard get-togethers and brisk hikes around the promenade deck. On ports of call days, go ashore and see the totem poles of Ketchikan, the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, the Klondike Gold-Rush Trail of ’98 from Skagway or join the leaders on hikes and frontier salmon explorations. Cruise Glacier Bay National Park and College Fjord. After crossing the mighty Gulf of Alaska, we bid farewell in Whittier for transport to Anchorage and the flight home. Your cruise fare includes an astounding array of onboard facilities: ship stateroom, ocean transport, gourmet meals, quality entertainment, exercise opportunities and some beverages. Staterooms available from $584 based on occupancy. Port charges, gov’t taxes, transfers, tip, discounted airfare extra. Move fast, limited spaces in each category. Call Helen Calderon, vcalderon@montrosetravel.com, Montrose Travel’s Group Division, 800-301-9673 for a brochure and the best cabin choices or go online www.montrosetravel.com/sierrasclub. A post-cruise extension will be offered to Denali Nat’l Park. For information on either the cruise or the extension, please send a sase or e-mail to Cruise Coordinator: DONNA SPECHT, 22221 Wood Island Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, 714-963-6345 e-mail donnaspecht@iuno.com Co-Leader: ANA CASTREJON, Angeles Chapter Fundraiser, Orange County Sierra Singles.

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

CORRECTION

Sat., Feb. 4, 5:30 p.m., Black Lake Campground: We meet at junction of Leguna Negra and Guad Rd and go down closed Xenon Way, see oak-woodland, chaparral and oak-studded grassland. Past Chapter Chair Dorothea Rible reminded us that the proper name for "Madonna Mountain" is San Luis Mountain, not "San Luis." We’ll make every effort to call the mountain by its proper name in the future. Dorothea also caught an error in another “work party announcement” which incorrectly placed Highland Drive in the Irish Hills. It would be hard to know from our description of the Nov. 5 work party which side of town to go to! Fortunately we were phone numbers and website listings to check.

Our apologies for the confusion, and thanks to Dorothy for bringing these errors to our attention.

Hiking Classifications:

Distance: 1 = 0-2 mi., 2 = 2-3.5 mi., 3 = 4-6 mi., 4 = 6-9 mi., 5 = 10 mi. or more.