SANTA LUCIAN
Protecting and Preserving the Central Coast

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

Will Health Commission Do the Right Thing?
Report on genetically engineered foods goes to the commissioners

By Mike Zelina and Teresa Campbell
SLO GE Free

Ever wonder how it happened that the engineered ingredients of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) worked their way into grocery stores years before you even knew genetic engineering existed?

A glance at the workings of the County Health Commission’s GMO Task Force helps in the understanding of how we ended up feeding GMOs to our families without ever being asked or given the choice.

The GMO Task Force released their final report at the May meeting of the Health Commission. This task force was created by the Health Commission to investigate health concerns of GMOs after Measure Q — the ballot initiative to ban the growing of genetically engineered crops in our county — garnered 49,000 votes. In the interest of forming an “unbiased” committee, the Health Commission explicitly forbade anyone who had supported Measure Q from being on the task force. However, it openly welcomed applicants if they worked against Measure Q.

Three task force members selected

Capps Saves Coast
Congresswoman beats back attempt to reverse 25 years of bipartisan protections for sensitive coastal areas

On May 18, Congresswoman Lois Capps celebrated a victory for coastal protection when the House voted to reject an amendment to an Interior Department appropriations bill that would have reversed the longstanding bipartisan Congressional ban on new offshore drilling.

Last year Capps successfully led the effort to protect the bipartisan moratorium on new offshore drilling by defeating Rep. John Peterson’s (R-PA) amendment to the 2007 Interior Appropriations bill. This amendment was replaced by a bill co-authored by Capps and Rep. Adam Putnam (R-FL) reaffirming the moratorium.

“I am pleased that my colleagues soundly defeated this ill-advised proposal to roll back protections against new drilling off our coasts,” said Capps. Rep. John Peterson’s (R-PA) amendment to the 2007 Interior Appropriations bill would have reversed the longstanding Congressional moratorium that has protected coastal areas from new oil and gas drilling on the West Coast, the entire East Coast, and the Eastern Gulf of Mexico for 25 years.

Last year Capps successfully led the effort to protect the bipartisan moratorium on new offshore drilling by defeating Rep. Peterson’s attempts to remove the protections from the 2006 Interior Appropriations bill. Earlier this year, Capps and 114 of her House colleagues sent a letter to the Appropriations Committee urging them to maintain these protections against offshore oil and gas drilling.

“Rep. Peterson just doesn’t get it,” said Capps before the vote. “We can’t drill our way to energy independence. This is another failed Republican energy policy that won’t solve our nation’s energy needs and has been repeatedly and resoundingly rejected by the House and the American pub-
A-Hunting Will We Go?

Paul Watson, who came to SLO’s Palm Theater on April 23 to address his audience, is a former marine biologist, a campaigner for the conservation of whales and marine mammals, and an advocate for sport hunting. Watson is also the driving force behind the Sierra Club’s newest anti-nuclear program - a contest called Why I Hunt!

The contest is an essay competition entitled Why I Hunt? (www.sierraclub.org/huntingfishing/whyyihunt) First prizes are a $32,700 hunting trip to the Sportsman’s Lodge in Alaska. Additional prizes totaling $3,000 will also be awarded.

"It appears to me that the Sierra Club should have better projects to spend $15,700 on than sending some hooligans to Alaska to shoot wildlife," said Watson. "Last year they turned down my request for a $15,000 grant to the rangers in the Galapagos National Park deal with poachers."

Paul Watson last promised the posting of pictures of Sierra Club leaders posing with their trophy kills to the Sierra Club website. The Club is spending some $200,000 annually on hunter outreach programs. Less than 20% of our members are hunters (www.sierraclub.org/huntingfishing/whoyouare.asp)

It may be time for a referendum on where our members stand on this issue, what resources should be devoted to it, and if current practices are reflective of Club policy.

Sierra Club Policy On Sport Hunting & Fishing

Wildlife and native plant management should emphasize maintenance and restoration of healthy, viable native plant and animal populations, their habitats, and ecological processes. Acceptable management approaches include both regulated periodic hunting and fishing when based upon sound scientific research that addresses critical data and when consistent with all other management purposes and when necessary to ensure protection of particular species or populations. Because national parks are set aside for the preservation of natural landscapes and wildlife, the Sierra Club is opposed to sport hunting in national parks.

— Adopted by the Sierra Club Board of Directors, December 10, 1994

The Atlantic Chapter asks the Board of Directors to establish a contest, ‘Why I Don’t Hurt!” The contest will be conducted within the same framework and promotion of the contest ‘Why I Hunt” sponsored by the Sierra Club in 2006.

Prizes will also be comparable in value. The contest will provide an opportunity to participate by the vast majority of Sierra Club members and Americans who had no interest in or indeed were not even eligible to enter the first contest.

— Resolution of the Atlantic Chapter Executive Committee, April 29, 2006

Forwarded to the Board of Directors May 10, 2006

PUC Slips Into Out of Town
$19 Million Asked for Diablo Canyon on the Q-T

An administrative law judge with the California Public Utilities Commission recently directed San Luis Obispo on May 4 to hold two public hearings on Pacific Gas and Electric’s request to fund a feasibility study on relicensing the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. At stake: $19 million for an in-house feasibility study could very likely result in an unacceptable for a community who, as Watson last year protested the Galapagos National Park deal with poachers."

“I contacted the radio and TV stations and they also were not interested in the matter. I then thought the thought the notice had slipped under the radar. After looking into the matter, they determined that no release had been received. I contacted the radio and TV stations and they also were not interested in the matter. This is unacceptable for a community who, as PG&E ratepayers, are being asked to fund a feasibility study of the feasibility of license renewal. The PG&E study could very likely result in an additional 20 years of high level radioactive waste produced and stored on our continually active coast."

PG&E's study is seeking a $19 million for an in-house feasibility study beginning May 2007 at the CPUC in San Francisco. The alliance for Nuclear Responsibility and the Sierra Club are listed as intervenors in the case.

I have requested that the CPUC hold an additional public participation hearing after the close of hearings in San Francisco and give San Luis Obispo ratepayers an opportunity to address this important issue," said Becker.

TAKE ACTION

If you did not speak at the May 4 meeting or were unable to attend, you can still let the Public Utilities Commission know your thoughts on the matter.

email: public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov phone: 866-849-8390 mail: Public Advisor, CPUC 505 Van Ness Ave. Room 2103 San Francisco, CA 94102 Communications are tallied by issue and reported to Commissioners and key staff. Written correspondence is considered input, staff then placed in the formal file.

Points you may wish to make:

- Any ratepayer money should be directed to the California Energy Commission, not PG&E, for a comprehensive study of the state’s dependence on nuclear generation past current licenses. This proposed study is formally supported by San Luis Obispo County.

- PG&E is requesting $898,000 for its membership in F.E.R.L., an office of UC’s Nuclear Institute, an lobbying group for the nuclear industry. Ratepayers should not be asked to fund entities working for greater profits for utilities. That expense should be assumed by shareholders.
By the County Coalition for Local Control

By now everyone knows that Mr. Ernie Dalidio, backed by his developer partners, Scott Dabney of Texas and Bill Magavern of Washington, D.C., is planning to place on the November ballot this November building a huge shopping mall (approximately 530,000 square feet) on the Dalidio Ranch property next to the city of San Luis Obispo. SLO City voters pushed down a proposal for a mega-mall there last April. Now, the developers are using an aggressive tactic to force the project upon city residents by going “over their heads” to county voters. Whether or not you like the project, you should be deeply concerned by the way the initiative, if approved, would undermine local control and the dangerous precedent it would set. It would mean that voters in Paso (or any community) would be making decisions about projects in Arroyo Grande (or any community), leaving local residents and local election officials with no say. This is a major reason why a county-wide group, County Coalition for Local Control (CCLC) is organizing to oppose this initiative.

If county voters are gullible enough to shut their eyes and “just vote yes,” a giant shopping mall or nuclear power plant or landfill (whatever the developer wants) could spring up next to any community, anywhere, despite the General Plan.

”I am truly disappointed that Dalidio is trying to bypass the county review….. Dalidio should be treated just like everyone else who files a request in the county. The public review process is essential to work out all the problems this project presents and make this development work in its environment.”

- Ned Rogoway, County Planning Director, 1959-1980

The Unseen Impact

Most projects of this scale benefit from the routine interactions with staff that happen as they go through the planning process. Interaction with fire professionals, environmental health professionals, traffic professionals, etc. bring about conditions of approval that ameliorate impacts to be reduced to insignificance.

With a ballot initiative, not only is the public than — what the applicants have to present themselves. Interaction with the planning process. The upshot is that most projects, when finally acted on, are different from — and better for the public than — what the applicants initially proposed.

With a ballot initiative, not only is there no environmental review and no staff-imposed conditions to protect the public interest, but even if the need for such conditions were to become obvious to all as people become more familiar with the project described in the initiative, those conditions could not be added to the project! The project that is voted on in November must be the very same project that signatures were gathered on in April.

The developers claim that the project has already been subjected to environmental review. This is not the same project that got an EIR in the city. As a new project, it has new impacts. As an example of a few big differences, there was no sewage treatment plant or housing in the old project and there was an overpass. Over the years, there have been many different designs for this project, including two in the city of San Luis Obispo. Each of those got an EIR, but there will be no county voters to have its own EIR. “Borrowing” from past environmental analysis of other projects will not give anyone a true and accurate accounting of all of the impacts of this project, let alone any mitigation, or enforcement of mitigation.

The Unseen Impact

Most projects of this scale benefit from the routine interactions with staff that happen as they go through the planning process. Interaction with fire professionals, environmental health professionals, traffic professionals, etc. bring about conditions of approval that ameliorate impacts to be reduced to insignificance.

Items not caught by staff can be dealt with during the detailed review that occurs at the Planning Commission. The upshot is that most projects, when finally acted on, are different from — and better for the public than — what the applicants initially proposed.

The proposal was Chevron’s attempt to avoid responsibility for contamination it has caused. Sierra Club California had taken an opposed position on the initiative, part of the mounting opposition from local governments and environmental groups that made it clear to Chevron that this measure was a sure loser.

“We are grateful to Senator Joe Dunn and the legislative leadership for their help in deterring this poltutron protection measures,” said Sierra Club California Senator Representa-
Morro Bay: Once-Through Cooling Headed for the Waterfall?

By Jack McCurdy

Seven years after Duke Energy unveiled plans to build a new Morro Bay Power Plant, a brand new owner reportedly wants to do what Duke failed to do, but the task appears to be more daunting than ever.

Everything imaginable — ranging from pending court decisions on power plant operations to developing new state policy limiting their impacts on marine resources — is going against the LS Power Group in its goal to replace the 52-year-old plant with a new, larger and more environmentally destructive facility.

A new plant would produce more power and cover more ground space but have lower smokestacks and be much more efficient. But it also would kill more marine life carried into the plant in water from the Morro Bay National Estuary for cooling purposes and would spew out 60% more ground-level concentrations of particulate matter, which poses a significant health risk to Morro Bay residents.

Duke obtained a license from the California Energy Commission to build a new plant on the shores of the Estuary before selling its four plants in California, but did not obtain a federal discharge permit from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, which LS Power still needs in order to build.

The core dispute in all power plant licenses and permits along the California coast is whether water should be allowed to use ocean water, called once-through cooling, or should be required to use closed-cycle cooling, such as dry-cooling, where a limited amount of fresh water is recirculated in a plant, much like in a car radiator, with no environmental impact on the water in the ocean.

Times change

These are the hurdles facing LS Power:

— Pending decisions by federal and state courts on whether owners of existing power plants can replace those facilities with new ones and continue to use ocean water, killing marine life, even if habitat restoration programs are designed and financed to compensate for those impacts. The federal Second Circuit court hearing a key appeal already has issued a landmark decision that the U.S. Clean Water Act requires alternative cooling technologies for new plants.

— The possibility that the state appellate decision could overturn regulatory approval of the use of ocean water for new generating units at the Moss Landing Power Plant. The issues in that case are almost identical to those in the Morro Bay regulatory review, and if, in effect, LS Power is required to install closed-cycle cooling at Moss Landing, the handwriting would be on the wall in Morro Bay.

— An historic new state policy against the use of once-through cooling by power plants is emerging, which could directly affect the Morro Bay, Moss Landing and proposed or possible replacement projects at all the 21 coastal plants in California.

The state Ocean Protection Council in April called on the “State to implement the most protective controls to achieve a 90 to 95 percent reduction in (environmental) impacts” from power plants. Also in April, the State Lands Commission, which has jurisdiction over state tidelands where power plant facilities are often located, urged the state to “develop policies that eliminate once-through cooling from all new and existing power plants in California.”

The State Water Resources Control Board, which has jurisdiction over discharge permits for plants, is expected in June to approve a similar policy restricting use of once-through cooling.

This evolving state policy grew out of a landmark California Energy Commission report last year that, for the first time, showed that the 21 coastal plants are causing serious damage to coastal resources. Subsequently, a coalition of environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and the Coastal Alliance on Plant Expansion, have waged a strong campaign to change state policy, which has proven successful so far.

— The Environmental Protection Agency in 2004 approved new regulations for existing power plants, such as Morro Bay’s, that are much more stringent in controlling use of once-through cooling and must be followed for the first time in the Regional Board’s review of the Morro Bay case.

— The power industry in the past has formed a united front behind their demands to use once-through cooling and opposition to alternative cooling technologies, such as closed-cycle cooling, on grounds that alternatives were unreasonably costly and often infeasible on plant sites, which has been Duke’s argument in both the Morro Bay and Moss Landing cases.

Not so difficult after all

But that front is cracking. Before selling its Chula Vista plant in San Diego, Duke reportedly agreed to use dry cooling at a planned replacement plant there after a long struggle by environmentalists to stop the use of water for cooling from San Diego Bay. Whether LS Power will agree with Duke’s position has not been reported.

In April, PG&E announced it would use dry cooling at a planned replacement plant on Humboldt Bay in Eureka, which has been using once-through cooling. A PG&E official said the bidder to build the new plant determined that dry cooling would be economically feasible.

For both developments are important because the cost and site feasibility are expected to be central issues if and when the Morro Bay project is officially considered by the Regional Board — unless one or both of the court decisions are handed down and they favor alternative technologies.

Before that takes place, however, the Board is expected to require LS Power to obtain a renewed permit for the existing plant, which expired six years ago and has been on administrative extension while Duke was planning a new facility. LS Power may be required to pay for restoration to compensate for the documented significant loss of fish and crab larvage in water used by the old plant. A hearing on that permit, if LS Power seeks it, is expected to be held later this year.

Duke operated two of the generating units at the plant on a very limited basis for the past two years. Two other units were shut down in 2003.

*Southern California Edison has petitioned the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) to overturn the resolution of the State Lands Commission.

Sierra Club California Lobby Day: August 13-14, 2006

Help Sierra Club California discuss priority environmental issues such as global warming, forestry, flood control, and outdoor education with our legislators at the State Capitol — Beginners welcome!

This is a great opportunity to protect the environment by influencing the political process and to practice your advocacy skills, as well as meet people with similar issue interests from around the state.

Training for Lobby Day will take place on Sunday afternoon, August 13, in Sacramento. Sierra Club California’s lobbyists will provide helpful tools and knowledge for achieving successful meetings with legislators and their staff members. The lobbyists will also discuss the legislative process and provide talking points on the priority bills that you will discuss in the capitol.

Lobby Day Participants will attend meetings with key legislators at the State Capitol in Sacramento on Monday, August 14, throughout the day. The day will end with a briefing and wrap-up back at the Sierra Club office.

Sierra Club California will provide free hotel accommodations in double-occupancy rooms in a nearby hotel, and will also provide Sunday dinner, Monday breakfast and Monday lunch. Most transportation expenses will also be reimbursed with prior approval.

The registration deadline for Lobby Day is August 1. Please register as soon as possible as we may receive more applications than we have space preference may be given to applicants from our targeted districts. Early registration is helpful as we make appointments with legislators.

Please contact Sabrina Juarez, Sierra Club California Legislative Aide, for more information at 916-557-1100 ext.107 or at juarez@sierraclub-sac.org.
Water

Nipomo: “Paper Water” Plan Challenged

By Gordon Hensley

Environment in the Public Interest

How will our County balance water needs for the unique habitat on the Nipomo Mesa and support increasing urban needs as well? The Nipomo Community Services District has spent a good portion of last year trying to come up with an answer.

An attempt at a partial answer came in January 2006 in the form of an update to the District’s Urban Water Management Plan. However unsupported assumptions about the long-term availability of projected “paper water,” to be purchased from the City of Santa Maria, led Environment in the Public Interest, the San Luis Obispo CoastKeeper®, to challenge NCSD in court.

Every development proposal made from now on will look to this document to justify continuing the conversion of agricultural land and habitat on the mesa. The plan must provide an accurate evaluation that the District, the County, and the public can rely on with certainty to properly manage water resources for the public good and protection of the environment. Of equal concern is the availability of water to support the projected 6,000 new homes to be accommodated by the anticipated water and that water dependent habitat on the Mesa is protected.

Issues that remain unanswered in the Plan that could affect the reliability of supplemental water from Santa Maria include a clause in their Plan that could affect the unique habitat on the Mesa. EPI/San Luis Obispo CoastKeeper®, founded in 2002, is an aggressive watchdog organization dedicated to enforcement of water quality, watershed protection, and compliance with the Central Coast. A member of the international Waterkeeper Alliance, EPI/SLO CoastKeeper distributes a weekly e-mail alerting subscribers to issues of interest from state, regional, and local agencies. To join the Alert List, email your request to: g.hensley@rbglobal.net

Los Osos: Could 30 years of delay pave the way to sustainability?

By Gail McPherson

Los Osos Technical Task Force

Could the protracted 30-year battle to sewer Los Osos be a blessing in disguise? The delay has prevented Los Osos from building an antiquated ocean outfall, inefficient technology, and infrastructure. Contrary to popular perception, Los Osos is a community with a commitment to responsible water and wastewater practices that could actually turn out to be a shining example of 21st century watershed management—based on real and sustainable environmental and social interdependence.

The relationship between sustainability and responsible water management is complex. It requires a marriage of social and technological dimensions of water recycling on a watershed basis.

A bit of history: The collection and treatment of human waste using precious water as a conveyance medium was never really a good idea. Centuries ago, the use of water centuries ago was based on a paradigm “flush and forget it.” Water washed the streets where waste from chamber pots was tossed, or waste was piped along with storm flows into sewer farms and into creeks and rivers. Water is life, but the desire to flush and forget isn’t much different today, albeit we have indoor plumbing and increasing levels of waste-water treatment. The fact remains, water “disposal” is still a core industry practice, and so far the term “sustainability” only means that government can assure taxpayers have enough to pay for the outdated paradigm.

21st Century Paradigm

Want to learn about merging ethics and design, smart growth, sustain-

continued on page 8
Tribune, December 11, 2005

The Planning Commission is urged to grant PG&E’s request for coastal development permits to remove and replace the Diablo Canyon Nuclear power plant’s defective steam generators and store them on site.

Between now and 2009, about 3,600 more rooms will be added to the county’s lodging supply. That’s at least a 2 percent increase per year. But demand, at current growth rates, will grow only 1 percent per year. ... just to keep occupancy at current levels... demand needs to grow at a rate about seven times faster than current growth.

This is the classic example of unplanned, runaway growth — fast enough to jack up demand on the promotion of tourism in order to meet oversupply.

...the assessment [on tourists of an extra 1 percent on the price of each night’s stay] would generate $1.8 million annually to be spent on marketing, more than double the Visitors and Conference Bureau’s current marketing budget.

[Without this increase in tourism marketing] we’re convinced that the status quo will lead to an oversupply and quite possibly to substantially more difficulties for local hoteliers and innkeepers... which will miss out on sales tax dollars generated on the backs of visitors — dollars that would help support SLO County’s quality of life.

Another lesson from the city of SLO. In 1989, more than 70% of its voters voted for Measure G, urging that commercial growth be held to 1%, the same as residential growth. It was, alas, an advisory measure, and the city council has been “interpreting” it to death ever since. In 1992, when the City balked at incorporating Measure G’s commercial growth cap into its Land Use Element, the Tribune editorialized in favor of limits on commercial growth, saying:

What a difference 14 years makes.

The article quickly answers its headline’s question about the national obesity epidemic, excoriating the food industry: “We’re all a part of it” because “consumers are not making good choices.”

These answers come from three of the reporter’s four quoted subjects, primarily: some experts, former food industry executive James Tillotson and industry lobbyist Robert Earl, versus a lone industry critic.

The format, including the article’s "blame yourself" conclusion, is the template for dozens of similar stories that have appeared with increasing frequency in the nation’s newspapers and on local TV news programs as obesity-related annual health care costs in the U.S. have climbed past $100 billion and the threat of litigation and legislation to hold the industry responsible for its products has grown.

The obesity epidemic that began in the United States in the late 1970s is now spreading to the rest of the world, with fast food as one of its vectors. Between 1984 and 1993, the number of fast food restaurants in Great Britain doubled — and so did the obesity rate among adults. The sale of fast food in Japan more than doubled; the rate of obesity among children soon doubled, too. In China, the proportion of overweight teenagers has roughly tripled in the last decade. A study of middle-aged Japanese men who had settled in the United States found that their switch to a Western diet doubled their risk of heart disease and tripled their risk of stroke. A survey of children’s advertising in the European Union found that 95 percent of the food ads there encouraged kids to eat foods high in sugar, salt, and fat. The company running the most ads aimed at children was McDonald’s... It seems wherever America’s fast food chains go, waistlines start expanding. (FFN, pp. 242-243)

Sure, companies set the stage with cheap, calorie-dense foods. But government also has propped up aribusiness, the medical community was slow to take on obesity and good nutrition, and consumers seem determined to move less and eat more, says Tillotson.

The fast food chains annually spend about $3 billion on television advertising, in addition to marketing alliances with the nation’s leading toy manufacturers, sports leagues and Hollywood studios. The Federal Trade Commission’s proposed 1978 ban on television ads directed at children seven years old and younger was supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Consumers Union and the Child Welfare League, among others. But it was attacked by the National Association of Broadcasters, the Toy Manufacturers of America, and the Association of National Advertisers. The industry groups lobbied Congress to prevent any restrictions on children’s ads. In April of 1981, three months after the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan, an FTC staff report argued that a ban on ads aimed at children would be impractical, effectively killing the proposal. “We are delighted by the FTC’s reasonable recommendation,” said the head of the National Association of Broadcasters. (FFN, pp. 242-243)

The flavors of childhood foods seem to leave an in-delible mark, and adults often return to them, without always knowing why, [as] a source of pleasure and reassurance, a fact that fast food chains work hard to promote.... The health risks faced by the nation’s children far outweigh the needs of its mass marketers. Congress should immediately ban all advertisements aimed at children that promote foods high in fat and sugar.... Every month, more than 90 percent of the children in the United States eat at McDonald’s. (FFN, pp. 123, 262)

A number of attempts to introduce healthy dishes have proven unsuccessful. A taste for fat developed in childhood is difficult to lose as an adult... The major chains have apparently decided that it’s much easier and much more profitable to increase the size and the fat content of their portions than to battle eating habits largely formed by years of their own mass marketing. (FFN, p. 241)

So, yes, Big Food really is the problem. No, consumers did not create and are not responsible for the woes inflicted by our industrial food system, but this article is almost right in one respect: Through our food choices, we can have an impact on the practices that harm our health, our planet, and our quality of life.

Get more information from the Sierra Club’s True Cost of Food Campaign at www.truecostoffood.org.
able technology or wastewater man-
gerage? Google the web and you'll find a goldmine of resources to aid in creating and implementing wastewater management programs that are ho-
listic, renewable, efficient, smart, sustainable, and favorable to the
environment. These aren’t buzzwords: Austin, Texas, and Los Osos, among other communities in the country have embraced the connec-
tion between the technological and social aspects of water management, and accepted that widespread water recycling and sustainable water management, merging alternative wastewater management with smart
growth is a creative combination Los Osos and neighboring regions need to
consider.

David Venhuizen, the Austin based “Water Guy,” who continues to lead
in the movement to decentralize wastewater systems, is a case study of
how Los Osos is deeming Los Osos as being a “com-
munity.” This he says, is the key in-
gredient for successful “Sustainable Communities.”

Sustainability is smart. Smart
growth is about preserving what a
community has and can be — protect-
ing resources and still planning for
the future.

And wastewater management is one of the great opportunities a
community planning says Julie Beth Hinds, director of planning and zon-
ing, looks for in Burlingame.” She urges working with wastewater
management to use technology and management programs that are there to
support desired community growth,
but not just to manage waste.

The Water Guy asks, “Who has
the benefit of wastewater manage-
ment?” and “What choices will face
communities that piped waste to behe-
ved in a manner that would cause us
to say NO — and no means no.”

Rethinking watershed protection

That’s called facilities planning, which is made up of the multi-trillion required to
make the hard and urgent choices to shift from the State’s path
forward. The American Society of Civil Engineers is forecasted to face
problems if the political divide is
continued from page 5

Capps 
continued from page 1

tic, selected to update the Waste-
water Facilities Plans for areas where
septic systems are prohibited, is re-
viewing lifecycle and sustainable sys-
tem technology based on all alterna-
tives. The team’s view of treated wastewa-
ter effluent as a resource, including the
nutrients remaining in it, is a con-
cept that would virtually eliminate
disposal to creeks, the Bay or the
groundwater as a means of managing
the effluent. Ideally all effluent is re-
used in agricultural and landscape irrigation, thus promoting effi-
ter quality and offsetting demand. Winter storage ensures all effluent is
available for reuse.

The nitrogen in the effluent would be used as fertilizer, thus reducing the
need for the farmer to apply chemical fertilizers to the soil. (Another conse-
quency of this toom-be-actualized dramatic shortage in fertilizers worldwide, Wet-
dead and natural processes may be employed, with added benefits of
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Bay in the Balance
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It’s Lyme disease season

By H. James (Jim) Holroyd, MD, FAAP

Prior, practical knowledge of Lyme Disease to prevent and treat early is the only way to avoid the risks of devastating “late stage” illness.

Background and perspective

Throughout history, there has always been some population-wide infec- tion disease brought to our attention. Plagues have menaced mankind forever, but the knowledge gained from each costly research, preventive and treatment measures, it has been pretty much controlled, particularly in the United States.

Now, worldwide concern is focused on the threat of a potential pandemic of HSER1 bird flu infections among humans. And there are many other health issues for which we are concerned and which the media keeps in front of us.

Nestled in between HIV and bird flu, at least in terms of media attention but equally as devastating and serious, is another — one which you have most likely heard but probably dismissed as more of an annoyance than a serious threat to you. It is called “Lyme Disease,” and you should be worried about it! At the very least, you need to be aware of it. More than 25,000 people in the United States contracted Lyme Disease in 2005, according to the Centers for Disease Control. They concede that the actual number of undiagnosed cases may be 10 times that number [250,000]. Fortunately, unlike either HIV or Syphilis, Lyme Disease is not infectious between humans. You can’t give it to someone else. The exception is transmission intrauterine from infected mother to her fetus, and if the infected mother breast feeds her infant. These have both been proven.

Why the term “imposter or imita- tor?” Like Syphilis, the original great imposter, Lyme Disease infection can cause symptoms of disease in multiple organ systems. It affects the joints, muscles, connective tissues, skin, nervous system, heart, liver, stomach, brain, eyes and hearing, among others. This may make it look like many other diseases, and cause some to lead the patient and physician down endless dead-end roads, missing the true diagnosis for months or even years. The end result of this is “late stage” Lyme disease illness that is very difficult to treat and cure. The result is prolonged, painful suffering and huge expenditures for doctor bills, laboratory bills and medications, as well as loss of income from work.

Lyme Disease should be a present-day serious concern to every American, including us in California, contrary to myths and misinformation most of us have heard!

Causes

Lyme is a tick-borne infectious disease, transmitted to humans, in Califor- na, by the bite of the western black-legged tick. In other parts of the country, different species of ticks are the vector. The infecting organ- ism is a spirochete bacterium called Borrelia burgdorferi [Bb]. Syphilis is also caused by a spirochete, although a different one. The spiro- chete travels through a path of infect- tion from reservoir to host to victim. The reservoir of the spiro- chete in nature is the mouse. The host for the tick is commonly deer. Other wild animals like rabbits, elk, bears and birds, as well as domestic animals like cats and dogs also can harbor ticks. The victim is US!

Adding to the seriousness of Lyme infection is the fact that ticks are little sewers of other infection-pro- ducing bacteria and parasites. Co- morbidity (simultaneous) disease symptoms can add to the multiplic- ity of symptoms to be dealt with.

Epidemiology

First, Lyme is not a disease limited to the East Coast of the U.S., particularly just New England. It is possible to become infected anywhere in the country. California has a large endemic area along its North- west Coastal region. That is why you should be con- cerned about a disease ca- using symptoms in that area! First, that area is only the primary endemic source in this State. Lyme can be contracted in any other areas within the state. Second, interest- ingly, it is not the residents of the endemic areas who are at the great- est risk. Living there, they are aware of the problems and dangers. They regularly practice preventive mea- sures and are treated early & effec- tively because they get early diagnos- is, since the disease is locally well acknowledged both by the residents and their doctors. Very savvy!

Those at highest risk, it appears, are visitors to the endemic areas. That is why we all need to be concerned. The victims are the unsuspecting tourists who yearly invade the area (just like the right time wrong) time of the year — vacation time. May through September. They trek thru the State and National Park redwood forests, fern glens and grasslands. That is you and me! The height of tick sea- son coincides exactly with this vaca- tion invasion. “Been there and done that!” Campers, scouts, bike, clubbers, and school field trip stu- dents all fall into the high-risk popu- lation. Andrews says no rule!

Identification

Further complicating the serious- ness of this tick-borne illness is the problem of early diagnosis and proper treatment. It is not within the purview of this article to get into this web or to review the microbiology of the organisms responsible for Lyme disease. Suffice it to say that it is very difficult to get an early diagnosis of Lyme, particularly in the victim who leaves the area and goes home to a place where no one thinks about Lyme Disease. Another exception would be those who are acutely aware of the problem, recognize they have been bitten, or potentially could have been and undertook proper removal of the tick and cleaning steps of their skin, then acted immediately at the first sign of illness. Some say treat before symptoms develop, just because of the bite or potent- ial. Many infected people never knew they had been bitten!

Diagnosis and treatment of late symptoms is a different ballgame. There is life-long disability and even mortality. Nothing to mess around with! Prevention

Without trying to further describe the disease, what is the “good news?” They say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of care! Sure fits this problem. You CAN prevent yourself, family, and friends from contracting Lyme Disease, and still enjoy the great outdoors.

First you must be aware. Hopefully by now you are! Then you act on the preventive measures that are proven to work.

When you are in such areas where you can contract Lyme, be alert for ticks. One problem with looking for them on your body is that they can be very small, but for the large (1/4 inch) ticks we often think of, the nymphal stage is as small as a tiny splinter. Wear gloves to keep them off your skin and hair. Light-colored clothing is best, as it is easier to spot ticks.

Spray the outside of your boots/ shoes, socks, pants, and hair (NOT YOUR SKIN) with a tick-killing spray. A permethrin product is presently the most effective agent. Several brands are available: Duranon, Permanone, and Cogroo Creek Spray. Incidentally, DEETs while helping against mosquitos is of no value in preventing tick bites or in killing ticks.

Symptoms & treatment

Last but not least, for those who even think they may have been bitten, watch over the next days and weeks for the development of any unusual illness signs or symptoms. Con- tinuously, infection can produce “out of season” flu-like symptoms within hours to a few days. These may last only a few days and go gone. Don’t become complacent.

A “bullseye” skin lesion may remain within a week at the site of the bite to a skin spot up to 5x the size of the tick. These initial, early symptoms may be your only clue. At this point, you need to urgently seek immediate medical attention and get appropri- ate treatment started. Good, easily available antibiotics are ordered by your doctor.

High Spirits at Low Tides

By Jack Beigie

Exploring Morro Bay estuary at low tide can be an interesting adventure but stay in the channels. There is lots of mud out there. In many spots, the mud is so soft that you cannot step out of your boat and walk. We launched at Tidelands Park Ramp. The concrete launching ramp is safe even at very low tide.

We paddled to the heron nesting area. The tide was falling so we paddled close to the shore to avoid the strong current in the main chan- nel. It is spring, and all of the nests were occupied. Several of the euca- lyptus trees have died because the accumulation of bird droppings has changed the soil. Some bare trees looked like high- rise apartment buildings with many nests at many different levels. It looked like a condominium tenement.

We watched the action for a while, then we paddled 100 yards out into the main channel and drifted past Grassy Island. It is a really big island at low tide. After clearing the north end of the island, we turned west and paddled to the sand spit. It was a little early for lunch so we hiked the pedestrian corridor through the fenced plover area and watched the start of a yacht race south of the harbor entrance.

We returned to the beach and en- joyed our picnic lunches and great conversation. It was almost slack water with only a slight outgoing current as we paddled back to Tidelands Park. It was another great day on the estuary! Check the outing schedule and join us on the water.
Letters

I have lead hakes/bikayak for the Sierra Club every Sunday for decades in the tradition of John Muir which basically is “thine forests wilderness like Yosemite and Heritage Health they will want to protect them.”

The May issue of the Santa Lucian had every Sierra Club and Nipomo (times ( August) but did not have my local, the Sierra Club and the Nipomo.org does there need be a change in listing local & current events that are the “urban and we that have locally that need protection right now and here?"  Elders - Responsible Westside Nipomo

You can never retire, Bill! The editorial glitch that resulted in a less-than-up-to-date listing of events and non-appearance of a number of scheduled hikes last month, including many of yours, has been corrected. Your listed hikes once again coexist peacefully on our back page to ranger and opportunity holes, equally beloved by members who cherish our local treasures and also occasionally enjoy experiencing some of those further afield.

This letter is in response to “Immigration, Trade and the Sierra Club,” by Andrew Christie/Responsible Trade Committee (May 5, 2006). With an LTE limit of 300 words to cover this topic I will give the greatest outline of the reasons the Sierra Club needs to take a position against illegal immigration. Source material upon request.

1) If American are massive overreaching what possible justification is there that 3.3 million more of us a year?

2) Illegal immigration is a tool of globalization: free flow of capital to labor and labor to capital in order to increase profits, without regulation or regard for human and environmental impacts.

3) High levels of illegal immigration are a massive subsidy to business. Fine, jail illegal employers.

4) Cheap labor. Once it was American workers and minorities—now illegal immigrants.

5) When the RTC argues for economic enterprise in regards to illegal immigration it is akin to the Catholic insis- tence to use the same method as the only moral means of birth control. A fine moral idea, perhaps. Will it ever work? All that good does is drive the human traffic further.

6) GMO’s in our food supply over the past few years have also coincided with the release of a very bigger money. This is an issue that is now occurring. In several cases medical problems are found due to GMO’s in our food supply over the past few years. This information was used by the biotech industry to cover this topic I will give the briefest indication of involvement by the Food and Drug Administration. This fact was omitted from the GMO Task Force report. The NAS (National Academy of Sciences) recommended “Genetically Engineered Foods” was part of the NAS Task Force report. The NAS Task Force report makes it clear that given the risks involved in genetic engineering it carries a greater risk for consumer protection. It is possible that the GMO Task Force report was more concerned with the political posture of the NAS than the health implications. The NAS report makes it clear that genetic engineering carries a greater risk for unintended effects than conventional breeding. This fact was omitted from the NAS Task Force report. The Task Force report lists the recommendations of the NAS. However, two years after the publication of the NAS report, there is no indication that any of the recommendations have been implemented by industry or the government.

The message of the Health Commission’s GMO Task Force could be summed up as “don’t worry about GMOs, trust our regulatory agencies.”

As if their reports were not strong enough, the current Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has stated, “I do not believe the FDA has any moral obligation to stop the inappropriate use of biotechnology in food production.”

The County’s GMO Task Force report omitted facts that raise serious concerns with GMOs. While the report conceded the lack of regulation by the Food and Drug Administration in testing and certifying foods and admitted to several failings regardregarding this fact it failed to mention the fact that the FDA is also responsible for ensuring that the regulations the report included by Congress requiring them to verify all genetically engineered crops that their newly engineered life forms are “generally recognized as safe” (GRAS).

There is no mention (other than a link in the appendix) of a USDA audit released in December 2005 entitled “Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Controls Over Issuance of Genetically Engineered Foods, Release Permits.” This audit found grave concerns including the following:

- The precise locations of GE field test sites for crops not yet approved for human consumption planted in the United States are not tracked by the USDA.
- The USDA did not review company protocols for handling and segregation prior to approval of test crops.
- The USDA did not verify the disposal of test crops. Particularly troubling are pharmaceutical and indus-

rial crops never meant for human consumption.

An extensive summary of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report entitled "The Quality of Geneti-
cally Engineered Foods" was part of the GMO Task Force report. The NAS report makes it clear that genetic engineering carries a greater risk for unintended effects than conventional breeding. This fact was omitted from the Task Force report. The Task Force report lists the re-
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The message of the Health Commission’s GMO Task Force could be summed up as “don’t worry about GMOs, trust our regulatory agencies.” If you have a hard time swallowing that because Americans seem to be getting more unhealthy every year, try switching to an all organic diet and see if you don’t feel better.

Visit www.ctsi.uchicago.edu for the latest updates as the Task Force report is reviewed by the Health Commission. At its most basic, that means universal access to reproductive health services and education for women and girls, reducing the global environmental impacts of land-based activities, and promoting environmental protection in international agreements.

Seeds and crops, once considered "organics" or otherwise) and high fructose corn syrup. If you want to prevent the consumption of high fructose corn, soybean, and canola products. Unless a food says "GMO Free," the public will assume it is a genetically engineered product.

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Classifieds

Next issue ad deadline is June 15.
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
sierra8@charter.net

Local Government Meetings

City of SLO--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
Arroyo Grande--2nd and 4th Tues., 7:30 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 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.

$5 suggested donation. For more
information, call 544-9663 or go to
www.hopedance.org

Nobility A Look at the Future
Through the Eyes of Nobel Laureates.
Sat., June 3, 7:00pm, SLO Library

Inside Iraq: The Untold
Stories
Fri., June 9, 7:00pm, SLO
Library

Buyer Be Fair
Wed., June 14, 7:00pm, SLO
Library

Inside Iraq: The Untold
Stories
Thu., June 15, 7:30pm, New
College, Santa Rosa

Loose Change Second Edition
Exploring 9/11 Wed., June 21,
7:00pm, SLO Library

The Great War For
Civilisation: Conquest of the
Middle East, a Speech by
Robert Fisk
Wed., June 28, 7:00pm, SLO Library

Occupied Minds: A Palestinian-
Israeli Journey Beyond Hope and
Despair Thu., June 29, 7:30pm, New
College, Santa Rosa

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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 (473-3694). For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. Outings Leaders please get your outings or events in by the 1st for the next month’s outings.

Hiking Classifications:
Distance: 1 = 0–2 mi., 2 = 3–5 mi., 3 = 6–9 mi., 4 = 10–12 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.

Sat., June 3/4 SANTA MARGARITA
[53x559]<rws_usa@yahoo.com> (5E)
places. Meet at visitor center. Bob Possible ticks and poison oak in wanting a shorter hike. Lunch break 12 mi., 2500 ft. loop hike. Several habitat and scenery on this strenuous while enjoying a wide variety of Valencia, Oats, and False Alan peaks in loop in Montana de Oro SP Sat., June 3, 9am. Three peaks

NATIVE GARDEN

OVERNIGHT.

Beigle 773-2147 for reservation, park fees and details.

ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE DAY TRIP AND OVERNIGHT.

June 4th, 11 a.m., Sun., NIPOMO NATIVE GARDEN A celebration of Summer, Native Plants, Non-MOM’s Day. Bill’s B-Day at Nipomo Native Garden with a tour of garden followed by pot luck BBQ at 2:30. Everyone welcome. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647, bdennen@kcbx.net

Wed., June 7, 14, 21, 28, 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes. -2 3-hour hikes around the San Luis Obispo Area. Bring water, snack, and dress for the weather. E-mail for meeting location.

June 11, 9:30 a.m., BLACK LAKE CAMP DAY TRIP OR CAMPING? Our goal for this outing is to enjoy a leisurely paddling weekend Santa Margarita Lake. We have reserved the Sapet, Ecological Campsite on the north shore of the lake. We will all eat lunch at the campsite. This Day Trip will return after lunch. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, camping gear, food and water. Phone Jack Beigle 773-2147 for reservation, park fees and details. ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE DAY TRIP AND OVERNIGHT.

JUNE 18, 9:30 a.m., FATHERS DAY POOL HIKE: Meet at west end of Brown Rd, at locked gate. We’ll hike up road to ridge, 2.5 miles, 1000 ft. elevation change then decide to 1. continue to beach, 2. hike down ridge, 3. turn around. Many stops on the way, at 8 you promise to go slow. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647, bdennen@kcbx.net

June 24-27 Annual Ruby Rendezvous-Car-camp, and Backpack Join us for one of the longest running and most enjoyable trip destinations of the year -- the Ruby Mountains in northern Nevada. Four day car-camping with day trips up various canyons. Evening entertainment by acclaimed Cowgirl Poet, Merrily Wright and Friends (TBA), and 12 course Basque feast in nearby Elko. Days 5-7 backpack with (optional) peak bagging of Mt Fitzgerald. Stunning vistas are guaranteed for the entire week. Good physical condition needed. Group share of expenses ($70-$100 apm). For more information on past trips, visit www.climer.org. For signups contact leader: Allentanner@hotmail.com, (925-439-0434), SF Bay Chap/CNRC Desert Com

Fri-Sun, June 23-25 DOMEDAL Wilderness Basecamp: In the southernmost Sierras, this wilderness includes ponderosa pines, sage meadows, and the Rowing South Park of the Kern River. On Friday we backpack four miles to Rockhouse Basin, set up camp, and explore. Saturday will be a dayhike to climb one of the prominent domes; and Sunday will be a leisurely return to our cars. This will be an easy to moderate journey for learning backpackers. Leader: Craig Deutscher, deutschc@earthlink.net, (310-477-6670), CNRC Desert Com

July 2, 9:30 a.m., Point Sal Hike: Meet at west end of Brown Rd, at locked gate. We’ll hike up road to ridge, 2.5 miles, 1000 ft elevation change then decide to 1. continue to beach, 2. hike down ridge, 3. turn around. Many stops on the way, at 8 promise to go slow. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647, bdennen@kcbx.net.

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK & MARINE SANCTUARY—FUNDRAISING CRUISES

July 21-24: 4-day, 4-islands: San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa Islands ($750)

August 25-29: September 14-18: 5-day, 5-islands: San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa, and Santa Barbara Island ($875)

All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. Participants are invited to board the boat the night before to ensure an early morning departure. Prices include assigned bunks, meals and snacks, and a ranger/naturalist who will lead hikes and help us identify whales, dolphins, sea lions, and numerous species of bird and plant life. An archeologist will travel with us to help identify artifacts left by the native Chumash who inhabited these islands for thousands of years. Each island is unique and offers its own special charm. San Miguel for its white, sandy beaches & hiconclusion of elephant seals; Santa Rosa for its rare Torrey Pine forest; Santa Cruz for high mountains, deep valleys & the famous Painted Cave; Anacapa for the west coast brown pelican rookery, steep cliffs, a picturesque lighthouse and excellent snorkeling waters. Santa Barbara Island for pristine waters and a friendly colony of frolicking sea lions. All islands have rugged shorelines, dotted with sea caves, & inhabited by an abundance of wildlife. Activities include hiking, kayaking, snorkeling, beachcombing, or just relaxing at sea. In summer, warmer pristine waters of the Marine Sanctuary will entice snorkelers and swimmers.

Proceeds benefit Sierra Club political programs in California. To make a reservation, send $100 check payable to Sierra Club to leader Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, 91732. Information: 626-443-0704 or jholzholt@aol.com

THE NATURE CORPS PRESENTS “EXPERIENCE THE REAL HAWAII”

Aug 2-9 Since 1987, The Nature Corps has offered award-winning volunteer excursions in America’s National Parks. Now, these multi-dimensional excursions allow you to experience Hawaii the way few will ever do! Go behind the scenes to see the real Hawaii and explore beautiful and rare habitat few visitors will ever see.

As part of this volunteer vacation you will help to save the endangered and rare flora in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The other half of the trip will be devoted to learning about and exploring the natural wonders of Hawaii. You will have an opportunity to visit spectacular waterfalls, lush rain forests, remote beaches, snorkel around coral reefs teeming with undaersea life, view glowing lava as it cools. Guidebook "Hawaii Natural History" is included.

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

Craig Deutscher, deutschc@earthlink.net, (310-477-6670), CNRC Desert Com

Sun., June 25th, 9 a.m., COAST HIKER FOR DETAILS CALL 502-3667 OR E-MAIL <BDennen@KCBX.net> JUST BEFORE THE NATURE HIKE.

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Photo by Joaquin Palting

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