**April 2008 Volume 45 No. 4**

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**Earth Day SLO 2008**

Green Living Expo Saturday, April 26 - Mission Plaza noon to 5 p.m.

For 2008, the Earth Day Alliance will unite its efforts and expand the impact of Earth Day by joining its efforts with those of the City of San Luis Obispo. The Earth Day Alliance & City of SLO will hold their Earth Day event back-to-back on April 26:

- Earth Day Expo: noon to 5 pm the mission plaza (booths will open at 11 a.m.)
- Arbor Day Celebration: 9 to noon at Laguna Lake

If you would like to learn more about Earth Day 2008 Expo, receive an application or become a volunteer, email earthdayslo@fix.net or call (805) 544-8529.

**Nuclear Nightmare Gets a Ticket to Ride**

by Rochelle Becker
Sierra Club Radiation Committee

On March 3, a 28-car train derailment 140 miles southeast of Los Angeles sent up a cloud of toxic fumes. The derailment resulted in homes being evacuated, roads nearby shut down, lives and commerce disrupted. That was bad news. Now the really bad news: The Department of Energy (DOE) proposes to transport 12% of the nation’s high-level radioactive waste on this same rail route, past your business, your home and your family.

You were not notified of the DOE’s plans, and your county representatives were not notified either, but...
General Meeting

The 2008 European Smart Energy Study Tour

The Santa Lucia Chapter just led 21 Central Coast residents on a two-week tour of what the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, and the EU have done with cutting-edge design, technology, and the world’s most visionary energy policies. See and hear what they found.

7 p.m., Friday, April 25, St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 1334 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo - Pismo Street entrance parking lot off Pismo

Make This Their Last Round-Up

The Three Amigos get busy

You may have noticed: Both the country and the county are in the midst of the crucial election in living memory.

And you may also have noticed: Every time a local election day draws near, the eyebrow-raising land use decisions of our aggressively pro-development County Supervisors seem to multiply and accelerate — stockpiling, as it were, the cutting of corners, grandfathering of exceptions, dispensing of favors and general kow-towing to special interests, grandstanding of favors and general low-owing to special interests, just in case post-electoral seat-shift may result in some insistence that rules be followed and a long spell of slim pickings for development interests ensues.

But what we’re seeing now is something else. Seldom has so much of slim pickings for development in-

of the Estrella River Vineyard decision. Supervisors Ovitt, Lenthall and Achadjian broke with three decades of Natural Resources Conservation Service mapping as the standard practice to determine soil type, and decided developers can pick their own soil scientists and pay them to determine if the soil of their land is a type of that would allow more houses to be built on it and larger profits to be reaped.

The Three Amigos chose to deviate from federal standards and, as the Tribune put it, “carved an exception in [County] land-use laws...that could allow more houses to be built on agricultural land.” In so doing, they “went against the advice of the county Planning Commission, planning staff and Agriculture Depart-

ment.”

One of the deviators in question, Supervisor Harry Ovitt, said “Maps went against the advice of the planning staff and Agriculture Depart-

ment.”

The Three Amigos get busy

There are guidelines. They’re not absolute.”

Contributions, gifts and donations to the Santa Lucia Chapter are not tax deductible, so support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Four donors in $250 or more subscriptions to Sierra Club member and C F Varey City Newsletter.

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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

Visit us on the Web!

www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

Outings, events, and more!

General Information

Santa Lucia Chapter
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Chapter Director
Andrew Christie
805-543-8717
santalaucia.chapter@sierraclub.org

Americorps Staff
Development Coordinator
Ken Smokoska
ksmokoska@hotmail.com

Volunteer Coordinator
Shaba Mohseni
shaba.sierraclub8@gmail.com

Office hours Monday-Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., 547-B Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo

Printed by University Graphic Systems
Saying “We’ve got to keep the nitrogen out of the estuary by any means necessary,” Jonathan Todd commanded an electrifying presentation of a potential solution — low cost, minimal mechanics, no chemicals, and minimal solid waste — to the Los Osos wastewater treatment saga, the longest-running wastewater problem in the state.

Todd Ecological’s CEO has been named one of the 35 Top Inventors of the 20th Century by the MIT/Lemelson Invention Program. He is the recipient of the Environmental Merit Award of the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Chrysler Design Award and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Award, among others.

Todd’s February 7 presentation to a packed house at the South Bay Community Center in Los Osos, capped two days of meetings with County Public Works’ Los Osos Wastewater Project team, site visits, and an equally heavily attended and well-received presentation at the Botanical Gardens in SLO the night before.

He ran through his company’s various and ongoing projects for international clientele featuring his “eco-machines” — totally biological, lushly landscaped water treatment systems that can feature the use of koi (a profit center) for sludge removal, tongue-in-cheek “dangerous byproducts” including wildly thriving greenhouse nursery plants (another profit center) and gourmet mushrooms (another profit center for a Todd client, sold at $9.95 a pound), with mulch from the mushrooms going to a worm farm, which goes to feed yellow perch, also part of the eco-machine system and yet another profit center, and all constituting “an amazing local food production network” for the town of Burlington, Vermont.

Todd gave Los Osos a whole new way of looking at wastewater treatment.

The two events were the first in a series of “sustainability socials,” the seed for which was planted in July 2007 when Paavo Ogren of County Public Works invited the local Surfrider chapter and SLO Green Build on a waste water system tour in Los Osos to brainstorm possible technologies and services that private residences and businesses could implement. The discussion included possible grant opportunities to educate the community on water conservation efforts such as graywater, low-impact development strategies, rainwater harvesting, dual flush toilets, Energy Star appliances and other appropriate technologies. Since then, members of Surfrider, Sierra Club and SLO Green Build have been working hard, donating many hours of work collaborating with government agencies to address health and safety issues related to these technologies.

“Our goal was to further the community’s knowledge of appropriate technology and at the same time celebrate positive solutions,” said Mikel Robertson of SLO Green Build. “Our coalition has made the effort to connect with and request feedback from every stakeholder; County Public Works, the Regional Water Board, TAC, Board of Supervisors, the Los Osos CSD and the community. We have been guided through this process by leading local authorities. These events are a time to socialize and celebrate the successes and opportunities of environmental and social restoration.”

From Stream to Surf

Coast & Ocean Roundtable marks first step toward a regional strategy for watersheds and local ocean

California is in need of regional strategies to connect the welter of policies and regulations that govern land use, water quality and the management of coastal watersheds and the protection of the marine ecosystem off our coast.

The lack of coordination between these two sets of policies and policy makers has meant an ongoing degrada- tion of rivers and streams and increasing impacts on the coastal waters they flow into.

On March 12, the first step to change that in San Luis Obispo County happened when the Coast and Ocean Regional Round Table — hopefully the first of several — was held at the SLO City/County Library, attended by more than two dozen local planners, resource managers and water and ocean resource conservationists.

Monica Hunter of the Planning and Conservation League opened the day and set the agenda, proclaiming the need to study and manage the coastal watershed in the context of its connection to the marine ecosystem and to identify new opportunities for collaboration between the marine and land conservation organizations.

Speaker Mary Bianchi of the UC Cooperative Extension program, who related successes in adopting a farm water quality program, aptly noted the dual focus of the event by observing that her colleagues who spoke on the impacts of inland water management on marine ecosystems were standing on the beach and looking out to sea, whereas “I stand on the beach and look uphill.”

Among the day’s speakers, Karen Worcester of Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) related the severe pollution problems in the Santa Maria watershed, the worst in the county (see “A Call to Action, March Santa Lucian”); County Senior Planner James Caruso provided the context for marine and watershed conservation issues in the update of the County’s Conservation and Open Space Element; and Matt Thompson of the Regional Water Quality Control Board discussed his agency’s ambitious mission to implement the best management practices of Low Impact Development (LID) to reduce polluted runoff to pre-develop- ment levels.

Bianchi noted that among sea ot- ters off the central coast, considered an indicator species for the general health of coastal waters, deaths from infectious diseases have recently increased by 45 percent.

Tying together all the disparate data and programs will require “a regional strategy to promote regional coastal and marine policies that are defined by local needs,” said Hunter. Such policy integration will be necessary if San Luis Obispo is to compete with other coastal counties for state Integrated Regional Watershed Management grants to protect and enhance our coastal watershed and marine environment.

“I have already begun hearing from folks in Monterey County that they have heard good things about the SLO meeting, so news travels fast,” said Hunter two days after the meet- ing. “Our speakers were all on target and helped to inspire folks to think broadly about their roles and mis- sions. There were also some folks who let me know that they want to join our work in the follow-up.”

The regional round table was convened by the Planning and Conservation League and ECOSLO and sponsored by the Morro Bay National Estuary Program, the SLO Land Conservancy and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club.
No Antelopes for Oil

Drilling into Carrizo

With the price of a barrel of oil climbing ever-skyward, the same question that has defined the long fight over drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has now become much more immediate for San Luis Obispo County: Is it worth destroying one of the Earth’s special places for a small potential amount of oil? To acquire the funds to buy those mineral rights has already been severely impacted by oil and gas operations, which is why the National Monument is so important to these species.”

Vintage proposes to use thumper trucks, which deploy seismic equipment to transmit powerful vibratory sound waves deep into the earth. Additional exploration would involve dynamiting and drilling exploratory wells, all within the known range of the endangered giant kangaroo rat — which burrows underground and thumps to communicate -- and all obviously highly destructive.

The Bureau of Land Management is tasked with protecting the natural and cultural “objects” — plants, animals, glyphs, geological features — of the Monument. “Thumper trucks, underground explosions, and all the other exploratory activities are going to disturb the objects,” said Cal French, Chair of the Sierra Club’s California-Nevada Conservation Committee. “If Vintage then finds enough to start drilling wild-cats, then a whole new round of assaults will ensue. If they do find significant oil, driving along Soda Lake Road will be like a trip from Maricopa to McKittrick.”

Vintage Production does not have a reputation as a good steward of the land. “They are responsible for last year’s oil spill in the Los Padres and nearly a dozen others in the forest over the past four years,” said Jeff Koper, Executive Director of Los Padres ForestWatch.

The Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, ForestWatch and many other local, state and national organizations are committed to the defense of Carrizo Plain, and will not permit its destruction for a negligible amount of oil. The BLM must closely scrutinize any exploration applications, finalize the update of the Resource Management Plan (see “What Carrizo Needs Now,” July 2007 Santa Lucian) and have strong wildlife standards in place before allowing any exploration.

No Sign of Oil

The Carrizo Plain is at risk as ever from oil and gas companies. It is one of the last remaining remnants of the San Joaquin grassland ecosystem providing essential habitat to these species.”

These fauna, as well as the endangered plant species and Carrizo’s status as critical habitat for the California condor and the first site in the state to host reintroduced pronghorn antelope and herds of Tule elk, make a any proposal for industrial activity there acutely problematic. Bond points out that “thousands of acres outside the Monument boundaries have already been severely impacted by oil and gas operations, which is why the National Monument is so important to these species.”

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Clouds Form Over Conservation Element

The update of our key land use policy will set the county’s course for decades. So what are we conserving?

by Eric Greening

Under California law, every local jurisdiction with land use authority (city or county) must have a General Plan, and make its land use decisions consistent with this plan. It is required that every General Plan include a “Conservation Element.” It is also required that all elements of the General Plan be periodically updated to keep up with current knowledge and public values, and with changing facts on the ground. The updating of San Luis Obispo County’s Conservation Element is long overdue; the one currently in use is over 32 years old! About a year and a half ago, the Board of Supervisors authorized the Planning Department to begin work on a thorough update of this element. It has been the understanding of the Board of Supervisors that the update would consolidate and include other General Plan elements: Energy, Offshore Agriculture, Open Space. It was also the Board’s understanding that our Master Water Plan would be updated either as part of, or in parallel to, the Conservation Element, and either included or incorporated by reference. During this time, it was given that the Conservation Element update was to be completed within three years, a relatively quick turn around compared to some elements and areas plans that have taken a decade or more to complete. James Caruso, the lead planner on the update, has compared the accelerated process to a moving train that will not stop at our convenience, but only when it reaches its destination.

Many of us in the environmental community, while always vigilant over the specifics of policy that might emerge from the process, have been encouraged by the expressed intention to include the Agriculture and Coastal Protection policies finally get the thorough environmental review they had never had before and included in the EIR on the Conservation Element. Then, on the staff level, a decision was made to remove the Agriculture policies from the Conservation Element.

Given the growing evidence of serious impacts from some of our agricultural policies, we saw hope in the promise that these policies would finally receive the environmental review they had never had before and included in the EIR on the Conservation Element. Then, on the staff level, a decision was made to remove the Agriculture policies from the Conservation Element.

The rhetoric that surrounded the original approval of those policies was based on the claim that the anti-geared parcels that overlie parts of the coastal back country would create more and more sprawl if developed where they sit; that it would be preferable to “cluster” them so that

95% of each agricultural operation could be kept intact. The claim was also made that the 100% “density bonus” did not actually increase development potential, since the two primary residences allowed on each agriculturally zoned parcel would not be increased by any growth and would simply appear on separate parcels.

What was also advertised was that the cluster policies did not just provide an alternative for reconfiguring existing parcels that were already part of the stage for a land rush to create new parcels, which would then be “clustered” to form leapfrog developments in the midst of agriculture. The policies were written and implemented such that parcels that don’t yet exist could be created and clustered based upon “base density” calculations, presumably anchored in agricultural viability. Natural Resources Conservation Service soil classification systems and maps were to be the key to these calculations, with the under-standing that by bringing the most capable soils of irrigated cultivation, one could increase the “base density” eightfold from the entitlements found in grazing land.

Now the resulting land rush is being further accelerated by the Board’s direction to prepare an ordinance allowing private consultants to propose, within the 1998 document, a clustering permits to argue for further consolidation of the County Planning Commission to issue its report. What is clear is that if the Agricultural policies are to be included in that environmental review, it is critical that they not be allowed to fall off that moving train, and if they have fallen off, it is essential for those of us in the environmental community (we wear the white hats in this “western,” “right” to gallop alongside this moving train and toss them back on board.

There will be far more to the Conservation Element EIR than just stopping the damage that has occurred from ill-considered policies. For instance, the language emerges for public review, I hope to be able to write positively about water stewardship, cultural resource protection, how to improve our air quality, use “green building” techniques to shrink our ecological footprint, and protect the lives of the other creatures who share our beautiful area. The train may be headed to an impossible destination, but its arrival here, as the credits roll, is a much later scene in this movie. Right now, ominous music is playing, and the suspense is building. Fortunately, all of us have the opportunity to put on our white hats and write ourselves into the script. Giddy-up!

TAKE ACTION

Attend the Thursday, April 10 meeting of the County Planning Commission, at the Board of Supervisor offices in the County Government Center, at 9 a.m., Thursday, April 10 County Government Center 1055 Monterrey St., San Luis Obispo
As Supervisor Patterson observed, the vote was about helping owners to “grow houses, not crops,” on ag land. At the same meeting, a Los Osos developer tried to get an extension on the approval of a tentative tract map for his project that he’d gotten eleven years ago. The Los Osos sewer building moratorium had intervened, his approval had expired, he got a one-time five-year extension, it expired again, and for the past six months, he’s been arguing that he should get another one. He has been unsuccessful because A) such approvals expire because conditions on the ground can and do change — i.e. a Level 3 Wildfire has burned a lot of Los Osos — and B) as County Counsel explained to the Board, granting another extension would violate state law: You cannot get a tract map approved extended for more than five years. In October, the board majority postponed a decision and urged County Counsel to consult with the developer’s lawyer, who — surprise — had a different interpretation of the law. County Counsel did so, came back on March 4, and told the board that the law was still the law. Having now had three chances to obey the law, but reluctant to do so, the board majority delayed a decision again — to June 13, safely after the election. That’s never a good sign. When did our elected representatives decide that their main job is to help developers game the system? The result here is outrageous, and outrage is the only appropriate response. We can’t afford this board anymore. We can’t afford any more moves to solve the housing crisis for millionaires, when Amigos threw the General Plan out the window and approved the conversion of sixty acres of Ag land in rural Templeton for the construction of million-dollar-plus estate homes.

We can’t afford more sham stakeholder decision groups whose purpose is to provide a dog-pony show version of a public process controlled by developers — right up to the moment when such a group goes off the reservation and actually presumes to vote its preference for open space and parkland rather than a planned development, at which point the group is immediately shut down. (See: Jerry Lenthall’s Fossil Pointe Discussion Group debacle.) We can’t afford this board anymore.

nominate the Carrizo Plain National Monument as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a prestigious international honor that states and nations compete for, but which the Three Amigos decided to reject, bowing to too many overeager folks who spread disinformation of the UN-will-swoop-down-in-black-helicopters-and-take-over variety, a decision that made the county a statewide laughingstock.

This is the Board that allowed “Measure J,” the Dalidio Ranch initiative, to be placed on the ballot without preparing a report on the measure’s General Plan consistency, after having been warned of it’s clear conflicts with state law. This is the Board that allowed a small private group to hand them a “Cayucos Viewshed ordinance” that undid what minimal protections for public views existed in the Cayucos Viewshed, and approved it without Planning Commission review, ignoring the fatal flaws pointed out by planning staff and the viola-
tions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pointed out in public testimony.

The Sierra Club is doing what we can to fix this problem (see “Litiga-
tions Update,” page 9). You can take care of the largest part of the problem in a single action on June 3, when county voters will determine on which side of a line we are going to fall. That line is stark and sharp: Will we start protecting, instead of continuing to pave over, our natural heri-
tage and agricultural land? Or will we continue to suffer the consequences of decisions made by a board majority of pols from the you-scratch-my-back school of governance who pay only the dispensing of favors, accom-
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Lenthall has the edge on large donations from developers and the real estate industry. Enough said.

More important than whether or not he agrees with us on every one of the Sierra Club’s key issues, Hill is clearly his own man, and his opponent clearly is not. Hill’s election will mean we can start implementing smart growth principles for real, and not just talk about it. Ewing’s 15 years of protecting the urban forest and public transportation, with an encyclopedic grasp of water conservation, treatment and sustainability issues, is his resume. He is the founder of the Estero Bay Community Garden, coordinator for the School Recycling and composting program, restoration volunteer on the Spencer’s Market Pocket Park, and Vice Chair of the Morro Bay Public Works Advisory Board.

**Endorsements continued from page 1**

**Supervisor, 3rd District:** Adam Hill. A telling fact: Prof. Hill has been endorsed by the Empower Poly Coalition, representing over 600 Cal Poly students from 18 different campus sustainability organizations and clubs. Another telling fact: Campaign financial statements show Hill has out-funded his opponent, Supervisor Jerry Lenthall, by dint of having raised a larger number of small donations from individuals.

**Supervisor, 5th District:** Jim Patterson. There’s every reason to return our 5th District Supervisor for a second term on the Board. He recently created a new seat for organic farmers on the agricultural advisory committee, affirming his commitment to sustainable agriculture, and secured increased funding for the County Parks Department. Patterson’s first term has largely been a trial by fire on this aggressive dumb-growth/pro-development — in a race to become L.A. North.

**Mayor, Morro Bay:** Melody DeMeritt. Quiet, cool and competent, DeMeritt’s disciplined style and follow-through saw its greatest payoff in the creation of the New Futures Group, which brought together citizen volunteers to craft a comprehensive turn-key plan for the conversion and the Morro Bay power plant, completing it with a hose-to-public/private financing, ready to go whenever the owner is ready to throw in the towel on the bay-hunting eco-disaster occupying the most choice piece of real estate on the central coast. That kind of vision and tenacity makes her an apt challenger to the frequently hapless Janice Peters, whose greatest claim to fame has been her ongoing efforts to obstruct the expansion of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to protect local waters from oil drilling.

Morro Bay City Council: Noah Smukler.

The City Council is a body in need of a transfusion of new blood, and it doesn’t get any fresher and smarter than this. Smukler is a mainstay of the local Surfrider chapter, a natural organizer and champion of the urban forest and public transportation, with an encyclopedic grasp of water conservation, treatment and sustainability issues. He is the founder of the Estero Bay Community Garden, coordinator for the School Recycling and composting program, restoration volunteer on the Spencer’s Market Pocket Park, and Vice Chair of the Morro Bay Public Works Advisory Board.

Morro Bay City Council: Roger Ewing.

Ewing’s 15 years of protecting the urban forest and sturdily support of the efforts to end once-through cooling at the Morro Bay power plant should commend his candidacy to the attention of Morro Bay Sierra Club members. He is informed, intelligent and experienced in the community, as well as articulate, diplomatic and with the courage to act on behalf of the environment and the welfare of the people of Morro Bay, not just talk about it. Ewing almost ran two years ago; voters should take full advantage of their opportunity now.

NO on 99 — While Prop 98 is ostensibly about eminent domain, the fine print threatens local land use planning and environmental protections and was deliberately crafted to challenge affordable housing policies. This measure comes from many of the same special-interests who proposed Prop 90, defeated in 2006. Rejecting Prop 98 is a top priority for Sierra Club California.

YES on 99 — Prop 99 is a real emblem of the reverse consequences of Prop 98. Prop 99 will prohibit government from using eminent domain to take a home to transfer to a private developer. It is supported by a broad coalition of homeowners, environmentalists, labor, business, cities and counties who want straightforward eminent domain reform that responds to the U.S. Supreme Court’s Kelo decision.

**Endorsements continued from page 1 (See “YES on 99,” left).**

Arnold Schwarzenegger came to town on March 26 to tout his plans for big budget cuts in the face of a massive shortfall anticipated for the next fiscal year. Somehow I managed to wrangle a last-minute invitation to his talk at the SLO City Library Community Room, and, like a skunk at a garden party, I could not resist the chance to pose a question during the Q&A that followed. Identifying myself as a SLO City Planning Commissioner, I asked whether he could assure this group of mostly local government officials that he would oppose the very dangerous Proposition 98 on the June ballot. (See “NO on 98,” left.) This proposition is designed to guarantee landowners and developers the right to sue local governments (or the state) for damages whenever regulations might result in a loss of potential future profits. Every week, county supervisors and city councils enact zoning or general plan regulations that could have that effect — or that at least could be argued as such in court. Local officials operating under the terms of Proposition 98 could be exposed to billions of dollars in liability each time they regulate private land development, and fearing such “inverse condemnation” lawsuits would be increasingly reluctant to regulate private property in order to protect public interests, such as open space, solar access, noise, air quality, scenic views, traffic control, or historic preservation.

The Governor shifted uncomfortably and stammered something about looking for a “balance” in deciding which of the two competing measures to support (See “YES on 99,” left). He declined to take a stand. Let’s hope that he comes around.

Meanwhile, I urge any Sierra Club members to contact me if you would like to join me in urging local cities and the County Board of Supervisors to support Proposition 99 and oppose 98: jbashbaugh@charter.net.

**Don’t forget!**

In March we sent out an appeal to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. Those contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter’s budget. When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club work in your own backyard; you allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be generous as you are able — remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

**Thank you.** Send your contribution to: Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter P.O. Box 15755 San Luis Obispo, CA 93404
The Chance of a Lifetime

Sierra Club and Steelworkers make the climate connection with “Good Jobs, Green Jobs”

By Andrew Christie
Chapter Director

March 14: Two days before the Federal Reserve bailout of the collapsing Bear Stearns brokerage and Wall Street’s meltdown,

Van Jones, co-founder of Green for All and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, grabbed the podium on the stage of Pasadena’s David L. Lawrence Convention Center — the first “green” convention center in the U.S. — and looked out over an audience of 1,100 local, state and federal policy makers, labor and business leaders, investors, workforce development specialists, scientists and environmental and social justice activists from around the country.

In a keynote address that alternately brought the audience to tears and brought them to their feet with roars of applause, Jones said “We have an economy that’s based on hurting people and hurting the planet,” but “we have the opportunity to do something in this country that has not been done since the New Deal. We can build a green economy that, from the beginning, has opportunity in it for everybody.”

“The New Deal coalition rescued this country, defeated fascism, and created the middle class,” he said. To fashion a movement that can match that achievement, “we need the right policies, the right politics, and the right principles.”

Two days later, as if to underscore the point, the country received an obit lesson in what

Litigation Update

Cayucos Viewshed Ordinance lawsuit:
The Sierra Club has challenged the County Board of Supervisors’ approval of this ordinance due to its flagrant violations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On March 18, for the first time in modern history, the Board of Supervisors exercised their right of peremptory challenge and had Judge Charles Crandall removed from the case on the presumption of bias. Crandall is the County’s CEQA-trained judge, the most qualified jurist on the bench.

Why would the Supervisors want a judge less qualified and less versed in CEQA to hear this case? We can take a guess.

Ocean Dunes lawsuit:
SLO County’s Local Coastal Program (LCP) clearly states that the 584 acres of county land in the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area was to be designated a buffer area between the riding area and dunes preserve. The California Dept. of Parks responded to Sierra Club’s Feb. 22 notice of intent to sue (“For the Dunes,” March SLO) that it does not believe the Local Coastal Program restricts its ability to allow off-road vehicles anywhere within the ODSVAR. We replied with a second notice of intent charging Parks with failing to request an amendment to its Coastal Development Permit to bring its permit into conformance with the LCP after certification of the LCP in 1986. At press time, Parks has not responded, and we are preparing litigation.

Where the Spirits Used to Dwell

I. The Past

Silver lupine and dazzling coreopsis covered the dunes. The Dunites believed spirits dwelled in these pastures of honey.

II. The Present

Barren dunes blow in the wind, wildflowers replaced by dune buggies racing down slippages. Threatened snowy plovers desperately search for food...

Air reeks of gasoline. The noise is deafening. Children drive quads with no parents in sight. Tents jam together like refugee camps. An off-roader barrels off a dune, killing a sunbather.

A young boy is run-over by his father’s pickup.

III. The Future

The snowy plover is extinct. Violent sandstorms destroy the village of Oceano. Motorized vehicles are banned from the dunes. But it’s too late.

— Andrea Caulfield

From the anthology Poems for Endangered Places, to be published later this year, featuring the work of eight local poets, including two SLO county Poet Laureates, writing about endangered sites throughout the county.
happens when our economy is burdened by the wrong policies, politics and priorities.

The event at which Jones spoke, “Good Jobs, Green Jobs: A National Green Jobs Conference,” kicked off a dialogue on the link between economic opportunity and the necessity of environmental protection and quickly moving our country toward a leadership role in a new green economy. It had been convened the day before by Dave Foster, Executive Director of the Blue Green Alliance, who welcomed the participants with the words “This is a conference about doing what you do best: Creating solutions.”

He shared the convention center stage with Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club. The conference was coordinated by the Blue Green Alliance, the strategic partnership founded by the Sierra Club and the United Steelworkers. Working with a national coalition of over 80 organizations, the conference made the environment/economy connection vivid, obvious and urgent, and offered a sweeping vision in which we can meet the challenge of global climate change and realize the economic benefits of its solutions by investing in an economy based on clean energy, green buildings and green manufacturing that embraces renovation, brings ailing communities back to life and creates new, good paying jobs.

Speakers described how their cities or states are already on the way to all of the above. Over the course of several plenary sessions and 15 breakout groups with more than 90 speakers — including Ed Mazria of Architecture 2030, John Podesta of the Center for American Progress, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell — participants talked about the potential economic benefits of green buildings and green manufacturing and shared best practices about how they’re revitalizing American manufacturing, promoting green construction, advocate for the substitution of toxic chemicals, and address the impact of globalization on global climate change.

Minnesota Senator Ellen Anderson testified that her state’s new 25% Renewable Energy Standard is bringing 6,000 megawatts of wind power to Minnesota and at least a $10 billion investment and 18,000 new manufacturing jobs. Boston’s Office of the Environment and Energy Services is working with schools on a $220,000 green collar job training program and focusing the city’s green investment strategy on keeping housing affordable, targeting the most economically stressed areas. Tom Stahly, a 26-year-old Princeton graduate, related how he co-founded Terracycle, building “wurm poop” into a thriving national plant food business by packaging his product in relabeled used plastic bottles shipped to him by school children, and re-selling old, recyclable yoghurt containers, spray painted by ex-cons and graffiti artists at his New Jersey assembly center, re-sold as planter pots.

Lois Quam, Managing Director of the Green Jobs offices for the investor 4Piper Jaffray and a frequently seen name on Fortune’s “Most Powerful Women in America” list, said “driving down energy consumption growth with efficiency technology development is the opportunity of a lifetime for business workers and investors.”

“The diverse array of leaders addressing this conference included environmentalists, industrialists, labor leaders, community organizers, elected officials and many others — under scores who stands to gain from a green jobs-driven economic renaissance; just about everyone,” said Pope. “Good jobs are helping keep the economy afloat today and this conference will explore how they can create a cleaner, stronger, and more just economy for tomorrow.”

Several policy initiatives were outlined in two major reports released at the conference: “Greener Pathways,” a plan of action for state policy makers, and “Green-Collar Jobs in America’s Cities,” a first-of-its-kind city guide to training people and employing them in higher wage, family-supporting careers in the new green, energy-efficient jobs sectors, prepared by the Apollo Alliance, Green for All, the Workforce Alliance, the Center for American Progress and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy.

“There’s a lot of excitement across the country about our idea that the clean energy transition brings not only environmental sustainability, but also hundreds of thousands of new, family-supporting career-track jobs,” said Phil Angelides, Chairman of the Apollo Alliance. “Piece by piece we’re making progress toward a clean energy economy and a new shared prosperity producing the good jobs of this American century.”

Perhaps the most crucial connection made at the conference was the connection between global warming and corporate globalization. “Globalization is the most useful weapon the planet-saving technology needs on the planet-saving technology,” John Podesta said.

This is why the WTO is precisely the wrong venue in which to make climate change policy, handing down exactly the policy decisions we don’t need on the planet-saving technology that countries need access to. Already, in the U.S. and EU are calling to eliminate tariffs and other non-tariff trade barriers for goods and services that help protect the environment and fight climate change. It is a lucrative market — the EU states that trade in green goods and services is growing twice as fast as global merchandise trade as a whole — and scrapping tariffs on solar panels and wind turbines may sound like a good idea, but most of these items will still be made in a low-wage country and need to be shipped thousands of miles via cargo ships using tons of bunker fuel. Unless WTO investment and patent rules that limit technology transfer are changed, developing countries will get no assist in developing such climate change technologies.

As the WTO and other multilateral institutions grab for a piece of the climate pie, the Responsible Trade Committee will include corporate globalization’s aggravation of global warming as part of our educational campaign on trade and the environment. We will also build on the Blue Green Alliance and work more closely with groups such as the Apollo Alliance. These organizations are calling for climate solutions that create jobs, and these should be jobs that go beyond just installing solar panels but foster the development of green manufacturing technologies.

The Fly in the Green Ointment
By the Sierra Club Responsible Trade Committee

Globalization is the most useful frame in which to address climate change. It is the source of the problem, now trying to present itself as the solution.

The World Bank, World Trade Organization and other multinational prostylizers of “free trade” are seeking to use the climate crisis as a way to bring new life to their decades-old agenda. Their traditional priorities — subsidies, market access, export-oriented development — will continue to be at the top of the list, but they have a new path: To classify remediation of climate impacts as a service under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), making environmental regulations subsidiary to trade regulations. Moreover, clean energy policies are being held to the same rules need to be followed by all the countries we trade with.

By the time it ended, the conference had performed as advertised: As a culmination of big ideas and innovative strategies to help jump-start a nationwide green economic renaissance, (Construction, manufacturing, transportation, power, the industry’s attempt to repackage itself as the solution to global warming doesn’t seem to be feeling many.)

In an article previewing “Good Jobs, Green Jobs” on the website of The Nation, (“Labor’s War on Global Warming”), Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello and Brenda Smith, co-authors of Globalization Prom Be- low, wrote “global warming promises to be history’s most radical game changer. While it is an unmitigated disaster, it also provides an incentive to face up to problems that the country has been avoiding for generations. It underlines the necessity to recon struct the economy on the basis of our common needs, including our need to save the ecosystem, rather than just individual greed.”

Check out:

From SLO to Malmo
The blog of the Santa Lucia Chapter’s European Smart Energy Study Tour
March 24 - April 5, 2008
www.santalucia.sierracub.org
Taking Issue
problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Nuclear industry wants a reboot,” by David Whitney, The Tribune, Mar. 16, 2008


Summary: More nuclear power plants will be popping up all over the country shortly, and SLO's economy is getting a boost from all the workers coming here to work during the Diablo Canyon plant's refueling and maintenance outage. All must bow before the awesome economic benefits of nuclear power.

Media candor about Mr. Moore's source of income is rare and refreshing. Most reports that feature Moore's advocacy of the nuclear "renaissance" are content to simply let him trade on his former Greenpeace credentials. For a fee, Moore is also happy to promote the clear cutting of forests, genetically modified crops and pesticides, and "sustainable" mining in developing countries.

The nuclear industry and its strongest legislative supporter, outgoing New Mexico senator Pete Domenici, had wanted $50 billion in taxpayer funded loan guarantees written into the 2007 energy bill to underwrite their "renaissance." Stymied in this effort, the nuclear lobby managed to attach a small program to another bill, totaling $18.5 billion over 2 years, which must still be approved by congress on an annual basis. This is equal to the current skyrocketing estimated cost of two new reactors planned for Florida, hence insufficient for a government subsidized national nuclear expansion.

Patrick Moore was a co-founder of anti-nuclear Greenpeace. Now Moore is an advocate paid by the nuclear industry.

Lost amid talk about crowded local restaurants and full hotels — a short-term influx — are the particulars behind this extra-large crowd of outsider workers: The controversial replacement of the steam generators at a cost exceeding three-quarters of a billion dollars. These were supposed to have lasted then entire 40-year life of the plant, but failed at the halfway mark. The cost for all this work, thanks to a decision by the Public Utilities Commission and an earlier consumer-unfriendly settlement between the state and PG&E, will be paid by electric customers and rate-payers— even though at the time the plant entered service, we were told that such "down time" would be "eaten" by PG&E shareholders. So let's hope these workers are big tippers, because their barbecue dinners are being subsidized by San Luis residents every time we throw a light switch—for years to come.

Actually the ANR opposes nuclear power largely on economic grounds. Maybe they should have been allowed to point that out. For a local angle to this national story—printed here in a reactor light switch—for years to come.

Stoked by new federal subsidies and worries over global warming, the nuclear power industry is beginning to glow brightly once again. The Tribune, Mar. 16, 2008

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More and more people are awakening to the reality of our changing climate and the huge challenges ahead for us. We need to be proactive to the crisis. Everyone is looking for ways to become part of the solution. This new course from the Northwest Earth Institute—www.NWI.org—is offered in response to that need, and for a tool for change.

Participants will explore the topic of global climate change with others, evaluate possible solutions and consider what they personally can do to reduce carbon footprints.

Classes will meet at the Sierra Club office in SLO, limited to 15 participants. There are 4 weekly meetings—time TBD by office availability and the wishes of those expressing interest. There is a $19 charge for the course book. This is a good place to get some answers and to share what you know. Sign up ASAP so the books may be ordered. Recent course graduate Meredith Whittaker will facilitate. Call Shaba at the office for more info at 543-8717.

Global Climate Change CO2urse

Save money, energy, the planet. . . .

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Call for Volunteers
by Shaba Mohseni, Volunteer Coordinator

I invite any members interested in helping out the Santa Lucia Chapter to contact me. I look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions, and to meeting many of you and sharing the experience of enjoying, exploring, and protecting the planet!

Mathematics of Global Climate Change

Save money, energy, the planet. . . .

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Classifieds

Next issue deadline is April 10. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierralubb@gmail.com

Local Government Meetings

City of SLO--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
Arroyo Grande--2nd and 4th Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 473-5404
Atascadero--2nd & 4th Tues.; 466-8099
Cambria CSD -- 4th Thurs.; 927-6223
Grover Beach--1st & 3rd Mon., 8:30 p.m.; 473-4567
Grover Beach Planning Commission--2nd Tues.
Morro Bay--2nd & 4th Mon.
Pass 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, 8:00 p.m.
SLOCOG Board--1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

CFLs contain 1/100 less mercury than a thermometer; it’s illegal to throw CFLs in the trash. Return UNBROKEN used CFLs to a local participating “take back” store. BROKEN fluorescent bulbs, or any mercury containing products, should be disposed of with hazardous waste. If a CFL bulb breaks, treat it like any toxic product; be careful not to inhale the mercury. Use a wet rag for clean up; put all pieces, and the rag, into a plastic bag to take to a hazardous waste disposal site listed in the back of your phone book.

Recycle mercury containing fluorescent tubes and CFLs at county “take back” locations. See complete listing of locations at Integrated Waste Management (IWM) links below:
http://www.slo.gov/
http://www.iwma.com/directory-aj/
fluorescent%20tubes%20and%20bulbs.html

Building an awakened community.

For schedule, trailers, info, and reviews of films at SLO Library, go to www.hopedance.org

Call for Yosemite Valley Volunteers

The LeConte Memorial Lodge is a 104-year-old museum, library and visitor center operated by the Sierra Club in Yosemite National Park. We are looking for Sierra Club members interested in volunteering for one or two weeks between May 1 and September 28.

Hours of operation are from 10 am - 4 pm, Wed.-Sun., and 8 pm - 10 pm for weekend evening programs. Volunteers enjoy free entrance to Yosemite National Park and free camping at the group campsite during the time they volunteer. For more information visit www.sierraclub.org/education/leconte/volunteering.asp or contact Bonnie Gisel, the LeConte Lodge curator, at leconte.curator@sierraclub.org or (209) 403-6676 (before May 1). After May 1, call (209) 372-4542.

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805-541-4141
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CST # 20-10100-10

Santa Lucian • Apr. 2008
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, contact 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 = 0-0.2 mi., 2 = 0.3 - 3.5 mi., 3 = 6-9 mi., 4 = 10-12 mi., 5 = 15 mi. or more.

Stay on Monday will continue our work with the monument staff. Contact leader Craig Deutschke, 310-477-6670 or deutsch@earthlink.net CNRCC Desert Com

April 6th, 8 a.m. TrailWerks at MDO. We’ll be working on the middle section of the new MDO Peak Trail. That is the section from essentially the Eucalyptus trees up to the intersection with Bridge. As you probably know that section has been unoffcially open to hikers and bikers for a couple of months. But it obviously needs to be a LOT of work in terms of widening, accenting grade reversals and making sure it is all a full bench cut. If you haven’t been out there to ride or hike the new upper section you should because you all the nearby countless hours folks invested in its design and construction really paid off. Despite some serious storms, essentially no erosion occurred any- where on the trail. That was the goal - create a trail that is fun to ride/hike and that comes as close to being self-maintaining as possible. Meet at Camp Keep at 8 a.m., for breakfast, snack, lunch for those that volunteer.

Sat., Sun., April 12-13, Carrizo Plains Camping/Hiking Weekend. We will meet at Selby Rocks Public Campground at 9am on Saturday to hike as a group at a yet to be deter- mined place in that area. You are welcome to come out and just relax and socialize if you don’t want to hike. There may be a short hike Sun- day morning as well. Participants are encouraged to come out Friday evening if interested. If we have a group we may have Saturday dinner. Please contact Carlos @ 546- 0317 if you are going and if you need info/directions. Please contact Cathy @ 541-6862 about the potluck.

Sat., Sun., April 12-13, Birds, Beats the Tamarkin-Carcamp and Serv- ice Trip. Help remove the invasive wild olive along the seashore of Owens Lake at the base of the spectacular eastern Sierra Nevada scarps... Meet at the Las Tablas parking lot. Rain or the threat of rain cancels. Go to www.yeartamanwild.org or call (831) 423-3191.

Sat. - Mon., April 5-7, Birds, Flowers, and Fences in the Carrizo. An oppor- tunity to visit and assist an outstand- ing and relatively unknown national monument. On Saturday, we will assist staff in keeping the fence wire free of pronghorn antelope free access to the range... Sun- day is reserved for sightseeing. The views from the Caliente Mountains are spectacular; if rain has been suffi- cient, there will be spring flowers; the monument is known for the number and variety of raptors. Those who can play the Scout’s honor pledge, then see you on the trail.

A 501c3 organization,

Calf Folk.

April 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 23rd.

Sat., Sun., April 12-13, Wind Wolves, Tejon Ranch, Un- named Peak (5152’). Come learn about the campaign to create a National or State Park in the Tejon Ranch in southwestern Kern County. Spend the weekend at Wind Wolves Preserve in an environment very similar to Tejon. We will tour the proposed devel- opment areas, as well as areas within Wind Wolves, Saturday night potluck. Bring your ideas and a commitment to the campaign. Group size limited to 30. Essay/ase, phones, rideshare to site: Kent Schwitkis, schwitk@earthlink.net, 4514 Lenore St., Torrance, CA 90003, (310-540- 5588). Naturalist/Co-Ldr: Shawn Ross, Angeles Chapter (Tejon- Tehachapi Park Task Force: Hundred Peaks and Natural Science Sections; Santa Clarita, Palos Verdes-South Bay, and Long Beach Groups)

Sun., April 13, 9:030, BLACK LAKE CANYON. Meet at junction of Laguna Seca & Guad. Rd. to hike into cym & Xeron Rd. See erosion ditch, euke invasion and Native Oak Woodland. Dog & kids ok. hderemer@kchb.net

Sat., April 19th, 7:30a.m. Hike the Santa Lucia Trail to Pinjo Peak (Junipero Serra) Peak. Join the leader on this annual hike to the highest peak in the northern Los Padres National Forest. This is a very strenuous hike and not for beginners. We will cover 12 miles and gain 3000 ft in elevation. We will begin hiking through a meadow with wonderful rock formations and then transition through a forest with blue oaks, fol- lowed by manzanita, chaparral, and finally a pine forest near the summit. The view from the top is fantastic and there is an old fire tower at the top. Bring plenty of water, lunch, snacks, and dress for the weather. The weather at the top can be unpredict- able. Meet at the Las Tablas exit and ride in Templeton which is just west of Highway 101 at the Las Tablas exit in Templeton. Plan to be out all day. To confirm and obtain info, please call Chuck at 805-441-7587. (SF)

Sat., Apr. 19th, 10 a.m. Islay Hill. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling effective techniques for using trek- king poles. Join us on April 19, 10 a.m. Islay Hill Open Space for an easy hike with spectacular views of Edna Valley to the south and Morros to the north. From Prom, go east, then south on the Farm, turn right on Wavertree, left on Spanish Oaks and veer right onto Sweetbay and park near the cul de sac. Contact David Georgi at polcatleader@gmail.com for upcoming activities. Bishops welcome. (805) 458-5575

Fri-Sun, April 25-27, Pinnacles Na- tional Monument Weekend. Join in for a weekend of hiking, camping and potluck at Pinnacles. Camp out Friday and Saturday nights, full day of hiking on Saturday, shorter hike on Sunday. Hopefully we will catch wildflowers still in bloom. Campground is located on the east side of the park; carpooling is encour- aged. Plan for potluck on Saturday evening (optional potluck on Friday for early arrivals). Ten persons maxi- mum, $12 per person for the week- end; your check reserves your spot. Please let me know before March 23rd. Checks payable to Tesa Taggert, P.O. Box 15040 SLO, CA 93406. I can be reached at 805-550-7440.

Sun., April 27, 0930, NATURE HIKE AT DANA. Meet at Adobe on Oak Glen, see riparian habitat, ada- cent habitat & SLO County’s histori- cal landmark. hderemer@kchb.net

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

Sierra Club California Fundraising Cruises Scheduled for 2008

Island hopping is a fantastic way to explore the Channel Islands with full day cruises including a visit to Channel Islands National Park. In spring the islands are alive with wildflowers in sum- mer, the pristine waters of the Ma- rine Sanctuary entice swimmers, snorkelers and kayakers. All year long, enjoy unusual plants and flowers, seals and free swimming sea lions, sea and land birds.

All cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68’ twin diesel catamaran. Fee includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/natu- ralist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and point out interesting features.

To make a reservation mail a $100 check, payable to Sierra Club; to leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wyse St., El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leader for more information (626-413-9706; hlhtz@juno.com)

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