Send a letter to Governor Brown and CPUC opposing the relicensing of California’s aging nuclear plants

By the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility

The following letter is available at www.a4nr.org. Please “copy” the text, add or modify with any of your own personal comments, and click on the link provided to open the web site for e-mail to Governor Jerry Brown. On his web site, choose “energy issues/concerns” from the drop down menu, add your personal information, and then paste the contents of the letter. AANR also provides a second link to e-mail the Public Advisor at the California Public Utilities Commission. In the “subject” box, type “A. 10-01-022 OPPOSE Settlement Agreement.” We would appreciate if you also send a cc: to rechelle@a4nr.org.

RE: RELICENSING OF CALIFORNIA’S NUCLEAR PLANTS

CPUC Application. 10-01-022 (Diablo Canyon)

Dear Governor Brown and CPUC Commissioners:

In light of the tragic events unfolding in Japan due to the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdowns, we are gravely concerned about the seismic threats at California’s nuclear power plants. As the Japanese have sadly learned, despite assurances from their regulators, the seismic risks were greatly underestimated. After the discovery of a new fault only 1800 feet from Diablo Canyon, which has yet to be independently studied, analyzed, and peer reviewed, there is no reason to delay fully implementing the studies authorized under AB 1632 for both operating nuclear reactors that produce radioactive, highly volatile waste that remains dangerous for tens of thousands of years. Instead, we should not subsidize dangerous and costly nuclear reactors that produce radiactive, highly volatile waste that remains dangerous for tens of thousands of years. Instead, we should demand that PG&E fully implement the studies mandated prior to relicensing would be the utility’s put up or shut up moment.

Bad timing is everything. The March 11 issue of Newsweek—which hit the stands about a week before an earthquake and tsunami hit Japan on March 11—published a gushing profile of Anne Lauvergeon, CEO of Areva, the French nuclear giant, entitled “Nuclear Powerhouse: France’s most powerful businesswoman believes now is the time for the next atomic boom.”

The article let us know that Lauvergeon, affectionately known as “Atomic Anne,” is “the world’s most effective proselytizer for nuclear energy.” The profile ends with Atomic Anne proudly laying out the industry’s p.r. strategy: “We have changed the dialogue with people. We have to not only speak but to listen, to understand their fears, their passions, their emotions…. When you are totally open, when you share with the people everything and accept all the criticism, you change the way people react.” And once you’ve deployed calm, logical expertise to assure all the fearful, passionate, emotional people that they needn’t fret, then you press on with the task of expanding nuclear power’s glowing future as a “clean energy.” This is the other prong in Lauvergeon’s two-part p.r. offensive: “Nuclear isn’t the only solution, but it is part of the solution.”

Sorry, Atomic Anne, but it’s not. “We can have a clean, healthy and prosperous world without nuclear energy,” says Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune. “We should not subsidize dangerous and costly nuclear reactors that produce radioactive, highly volatile waste that remains dangerous for tens of thousands of years. Instead, we should...
Dalidio's Way

For twenty years, Ernie Dalidio has tried to develop his land just beyond the city limits of San Luis Obispo. His various development proposals have been designed to reap maximum private profits, with minimum public benefit offered in exchange for the right to develop. When SLO City residents rejected his development plan at the ballot box in 2005, Dalidio wrote himself his own zoning category and put Measure J on a county ballot, powered by a million-dollar p.r. campaign depicting him as a poor farmer struggling to protect his property rights from The System. Unsurprisingly, city residents were happy to vote for Measure J, approving a project that was no skin off their noses, forcing the residents of San Luis Obispo to accept a project whose environmental impacts and economic burdens would be borne by the county. If the county had weighed in, the Measure J campaign’s one-man-show, the Dalidio property to be preserved as open space in any approved development plan. But Measure J never to come before the Board of Supervisors. The City's plan for open space angered Dalidio. He told city planners that 1) he had not been consulted (though the process had been publicly noticed and underway for 18 months before the plan was approved in March), and 2) he had no interest in annexation. Which begged the question: what was Dalidio angry about? If he doesn’t request annexation, the City’s Master Plan will never apply to his land. Even request annexation, the City's Master Plan will never apply to his land. Even if the Measure J campaign's one-man-against-the-system spin are having trouble knowing how to root for this latest bout of shadow boxing.

 Rudy's to city planning staff and four SLO City Councilmembers who crafted an Agricultural Master Plan that provides a small lesson in the difference between public interest and unbridled private interest. Instead of spending another twenty years being outraged at the suggestion that he should have to abide by the General Plan of the City of San Luis Obispo if he wants to develop in the City of San Luis Obispo, Dalidio could finally give that a try.

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

The Executive Committee meets the third Friday of every month at 2:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 974 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

SANTA LUCIAN
Andrew Christie
EDITOR
sierracub@gmail.com

Melody DalMert
Thomas A. Cyr
Steven Marx
EDITORIAL BOARD

Denny Myatt
PRINT MEDIA COORDINATOR

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send to:
Editor, Santa Lucian
c/o Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.
sierracub@gmail.com

Santa Lucia Chapter
2011 Executive Committee
Melody DeMarrit
CHAIR
Steven Marx
TREASURER
Cal French
MEMBER
Pat Vassart
VICE CHAIR
Sierra Club, Member
Cal French
SECRETARY
Liz Tracy
COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS
cal.french@gmail.com

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With Thanks

We were saddened to learn of the Feb. 17 passing of Meredith Whitaker, 83, who was active in building a stronger local environmental community for the Santa Lucian Chapter. Meredith is survived by her husband Ralph, also a longtime Sierra Club member. We acknowledge the Marx Family Fund and the Jane and Andrew Greensfelder Fund for their recent generous donations.
Sierra Club Eco-Grant Winners

The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club has announced the recipients of mini-grants in the inaugural year of the Chapter’s Local Youth Working to Heal the Planet program, which helps fund environmental projects at local schools. Students and faculty sponsors in secondary school programs throughout San Luis Obispo County were eligible to apply for funding for student projects with a budget of up to $350.

There are four grant recipients for 2011:

- Atascadero High School. The 120 students in the school’s “Greenhound Academy” will create a sustainable organic garden on campus, with assistance from Madrone Landscape. The produce will be used in the school’s culinary arts program. They will use their grant funds to purchase potting soil, seed packs and lumber.
- Templeton High School. Students in the Advanced Placement Environmental Studies program will use the grant funds for field trips to a local landfill and the Paso Robles Wastewater Treatment facility, and will conduct water quality testing to determine the effect of the treatment plant on the Salinas River. Students will then undertake small group projects designed to reduce solid waste or water usage in the community.
- Morro Bay High School. The school’s Environmental Club will build a compost/vermicompost bin for the school garden that can accommodate food waste from the cafeteria. They will use the grant to purchase wood, worms, sawdust and a breathable landscape tarp, supplementing the grant with additional funds from a community yard sale.
- Outside Now Nature Academy. The 120 students in the school’s “Greenhound Academy” will create a sustainable organic garden on campus, with assistance from Madrone Landscape. The produce will be used in the school’s culinary arts program. They will use their grant funds to purchase potting soil, seed packs and lumber.

We Are Wisconsin

And on April 4, We Are One

Two well-attended “Defend the Dream” events, part of a nationwide action to support working families, were held at the Sunken Gardens in Atascadero and outside the County Court House in SLO on March 15.

The events were organized by MoveOn.org in solidarity with working families throughout America during the week that Wisconsin teachers, firefighters, police officers and other public employees lost their collective bargaining rights.

The San Luis Obispo rallies also focused on getting letters to Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian and Senator Sam Blakeslee urging them to support Governor Brown’s tax extension plan in order to avoid drastic cuts to our public schools and health and social service programs.

Monday, April 4, has been designated a national Day of Action to stand in solidarity with the workers under attack in Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and elsewhere. In addition to the focus on workers’ rights, the day will showcase how we are all part of one movement, and we are all under attack by the same flawed policies and corporate interests. Different groups - including faith, students, immigrant rights, civil rights and environmental groups - are planning events and actions under the common banner We Are One.

The website for the day is http://local.we-1.org

Ill Advised

Teixeira gets cross-wise in south county

It wasn’t quite the same thing as trying to get away with an illegal vote to banish collective bargaining rights for workers and smash labor unions, but last month one of our elected officials gave SLO our own Wisconsin moment.

In 2010, when Paul Teixeira took Katcho Achadjian’s former seat on the County Board of Supervisors, he was elected on the basis of the same “business first, environment last” credo that installed Katcho in the seat, from which he served those interests who kept him fed and groomed there for twelve long years.

So it’s not hard to guess what motivated Supervisor Teixeira’s sudden “streamlining” impulse last month to dissolve the two elected South County advisory councils in his district and replace them with a single body whose members would be selected by Supervisor Teixeira.

But for anyone who did find it hard to guess, KVEC’s March 14 Dave Congalton Show cleared things up. “I could imagine there would be a lot of development that would be attempted,” said SCAC Chairman Dan Woodson in answer to a question about what the consequences would be if Teixeira’s plan was approved. “[H]e has appointed council members, they’re going to go along with what he wants to do.”

Then a caller from Nipomo phoned in to support Teixeira’s move, saying “I’d like to see Teixeira appoint some positions there so that more development can happen.”

Then a real estate broker called in to accuse SGC of being “the enemy of development.” If you think an advisory council is supposed to be mindful of available resources and appropriate limits to growth, then the SCAC has been doing a pretty good job. If, on the other hand, you think an advisory council is supposed to provide political cover for a supervisor when he votes for unsustainable development and delivers the goods to his political backers…then not so much.

Let’s recall the stacked-deck, devel- oper-orchestrated subcommittees and task forces that were the trademark of former Supervisor Jerry Lenthal when he was trying to grease the pots and grow lights for use in growing 500 vegetable seedlings, transferring them to garden beds, and offering them for sale at public events. The proceeds will go toward the continuation of the program for the next growing season.

The Sierra Club began visiting high schools and providing guest lectures throughout the county last fall.

“Teachers told us that a pressing need is finding seed money to undertake environmental projects,” said Joe Morris, the Chapter’s outings chair. “With the hits school budgets are taking, these kinds of programs are especially vulnerable.”

“Thanks to generous donors who pulled out their wallets when they heard about this program, we were able to fund every grant application we received,” said Santa Lucia Chair Chair Melody DeMeritt. “We’re very pleased that the Sierra Club was able to step in to help out with these very worthy projects, and we hope to be able to fund even more of them next year.”

The students and their teachers will be invited to report on the progress of their projects at the Sierra Club’s general meeting in May.

Dec 19, 2010

Oops Supervisor Teixeira

Santa Lucia Chapter chair Melody DeMeritt spoke up for working families at the Atascadero “Defend the Dream” rally.
At their February 28 meeting in Cal Poly’s Erb Arts building, the Sierra Student Coalition discussed their participation in the Sierra Club’s Inner City Outings program and Cal Poly’s 2011 “Polywood” open house: FocusSLO, Cal Poly’s week-long Earth Day celebration; attending Spring Break camp, a service trip with the Ventana Wilderness Alliance and the campaign to expand the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to include the waters of SLO.

SSC President Victoria Carranza, who galvanized the SLO chapter of Sierra Students last year, is one of twenty Cal Poly students who will be attending Power Shift on Washington, DC, the weekend of April 15, where they will join 10,000 other students and leaders of the environmental and social justice movements in organizing campaigns to reclaim democracy, build a green economy, and otherwise show DC what leadership looks like.

In a February organizing conference call for the event, Van Jones, co-founder of Green for All and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, told Power Shift’s student leaders “It’s your generation in the Middle East, and your generation here in the United States, that’s actually picking up the whole human family and carrying it into the new century.

“The is what you were born for,” said Jones. “You guys were not born to be put on trial by the system, you were born to put the system on trial.” The Sierra Student Coalition is a network of high school and college-aged youth, with more than 250 chapters nationwide. Its mission is to train, empower, and organize members to run effective campaigns that result in tangible environmental victories and to develop leaders for the environmental movement. Check them out at www.ssc.org.

They have the floor SSC President Victoria Carranza (left) confers with Kelly Allyn and Kevin Bertolero.

Ill advised (continued from page 3)

wheels for the development of the Daldini Ranch, Paso Pointe, and the Cayucos Viewshed.)

Teixeira announced his plan in the midst of SCAC’s annual election, scheduled for March 21. As the Adobe Press reported: “They can go ahead and have the election if they want, but it’s a moot point,” Teixeira said, because supervisors’ approval March 15 will immediately dissolve SCAC. He said SCAC will meet one last time March 28, when members will be given certificates of appreciation.

Teixeira delivered a service-will-no-longer-be-needed letter to Chairman Woidson and slipped a resolution onto the supervisors’ March 15 “consent agenda” – the plan approved for non-controversial items to be passed without discussion at their weekly meeting – a resolution giving him the power to create an advisory council that would be unlike those in every other supervisory district.

It was not to be. The Sierra Club joined with North County Watch and virtually every advisory council in the county in informing Mr. Teixeira that, according to the County’s rules, citizen, not supervisors, had the authority to establish an advisory council; those councils are elected, not appointed; any proposal to amend those rules should require broad public input and vigorous discussion, and would properly be the province of an amendment to the enabling resolution and rules, not heard without comment as an item on a consent agenda.

Facing a cascade of such correspondence in the days leading up to the meeting and the prospect of about four hours of public testimony delivering more of the same, Supervisor Teixeira withdrew his proposal. After the meeting, in the lobby of the County Government Center, exhalltant advisory council members compared notes, exchanged phone numbers, and agreed it would be a good idea to establish closer ties and keep in touch with each other much more than they have heretofore.

Much as labor unions can thank Winston Churchill for creating the trade union movement, so we can thank Supervisor Scott Walker for serving as the most galvanizing organizing force they’ve had in decades. SLO county’s advisory councils, and the vitality of the role they play in encouraging grass-roots citizen participation in land use decisions impacting their communities, can thank Supervisor Teixeira for doing the same.

The take-home lesson for the Supervisor was provided some years ago by Winston Churchill: “Democracy is the worst form of government, except all those other forms that have been tried.”

Let Solar Sell: Update

Since releasing our report on the ways-too-high fees charged by three local governments to allow businesses to install solar panels (see “Let Solar Sell: February”), the Sierra Club has had met with Jon Biggs, Community Development Director for Pismo Beach (permit fee: $15,967), and heard back from Robert Perrault, City Manager of Grover Beach (permit fees: $9,509) that the city’s commercial solar permit fees are now under review;

Pismo Beach tells us they are likely to do a full-blown solar fee study in 2012. We have urged that Pismo’s commercial PV permit fee also be lowered to between $290 and $500, as it is currently $1,300, which is about $1,000 over the cost recovery. Charging more for solar permits than the reasonable costs to adminis-
ter them is a violation of California Government Code Section 69614, which provides that fees associated with building inspections and building permits “shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of provid-
ing the service for which the fee is charged.” The cost recovery limit for commercial solar PV permit fees is $2,500. Charging more than that is a significant disincentive for switching to solar.

“We are offering to share a wealth of information on computing PV permit fees for cost recovery that I am confident will assist the cities in their efforts,” said Kurt Newsick, Global Warming & Energy Committee Chair for the Sierra Club’s Loma Prieta Chapter.

Over the last five years, most of the 131 cities in the Bay Area have significantly lowered their residential solar permit fees due to the Sierra Club’s efforts, which have since expanded to many other California counties.

Here is the web site with all the info on what cities in San Luis Obispo County charge for commercial solar permit fees according to our permit fee study: www.SolarPermitFees.org/sanluisobispo.html

Officer Roger Briggs pointed out that past and present approved pesticides have been found to contaminate surface and groundwater, and “All of these finds also represent a chronic threat to human health.” Methyl iodide is soluable in water and poses a high risk of groundwater contamination. Briggs concludes, “We are
Club Appeals Carrizo Solar Project

On March 10, the Sierra Club, North County Watch, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Canyon and Streams Alliance, and a local resident filed four appeals of the County permit issued for the vast California Valley Solar Ranch Project proposed for the Carrizo Plain. The Board of Supervisors will hear the appeals on April 19.

The Sierra Club’s appeal, like the majority of the points detailed in all four appeals, focuses on the failure of the project proponents to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act by adequately accounting for and mitigating the massive cumulative impacts of three large power plants (the CVSR, Topaz, and Panoche Valley projects) that would industrialize the heart of the remaining core habitat for a suite of endangered species that exist nowhere else.

Several appeals noted that the project’s alternatives analysis was cursory and ifed in its rationale for dismissing project alternatives such as distributed solar PV and the 30,000 acres of the Westlands Solar Park, a location with little value as habitat.

Our action has disturbed our critics, who make flatly wrong assertions to the effect that no solar panels on their roofs can generate all the solar power we need.

In the face of global warming, society has a dual imperative both to shift to renewable energy sources to combat climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to preserve habitat and wildlife corridors so that species have a chance to adapt to the impacts of climate change that cannot be avoided. (See “California Coast Resilient Habitat Campaign,” page 8). That’s the big picture.

By the numbers. The California Department of Fish and Game conservatively estimates that there are 93 solar projects planned for the Central Valley, ranging from 4 to 700 megawatts each, which are not expected to cause any harm to endangered species and will either have no environmental impacts or require minor mitigation measures.

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Morro Bay and Cayucos Will Have to Do Better

Coastal Commission sends back the sewer plan

On March 11, the California Coastal Commission met in Santa Cruz and heard appeals filed by Sierra Club, Surfrider and others of the Morro Bay-Cayucos Wastewater Treatment Upgrade project.

Due largely to a lack of alternative siting and design options, the commission agreed with appellants that the project as designed raises substantial issues of conformity with Morro Bay’s Local Coastal Plan and the California Coastal Act. They returned the project with a list of deficiencies to be addressed before the Commission could conduct any further review of the project, saying:

The applicant will need to provide the information necessary to evaluate the project for consistency with the LCP and the public access and recreation policies of the LCP. Absent information regarding alternative siting and design, the Commission will not be in a position to evaluate the proposed project against these requirements, and does not intend to schedule a hearing until the City and/or the Applicant has developed and provided further information to bridge the analytic gaps that are currently present and associated with the proposed project. Such information includes the following:

—Altematives analysis
—Updated Water Reclamation Feasibility Study
—Additional Site Specific Hazard Information

At the April 14 meeting of the Morro Bay City Council and Cayucos Sanitary District board under the Powers Agreement by which the two communities jointly operate the wastewater plant, JPA staff will discuss what Morro Bay and Cayucos need to do to comply with the Coastal Commission’s requirements.

We urge residents to attend that meeting and remind Morro Bay and Cayucos officials, if necessary, of the requirements stipulated by the Coastal Commission. The meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. in the Cayucos Vets Hall.

A Good FIT

FITs feed explosive renewable-energy growth around the world

by Ray Pingle, Sierra Club California Energy and Climate Action Committee. Reprinted and abridged from The Yodeler, the newspaper of the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter, March-April 2011.

In more and more countries, FITs are getting renewables up quickly and cost-effectively.

“Feed-in tariffs are the most widely used policy in the world for accelerat- ing renewable energy deployment,” according to A Policymakers Guide to Feed-in Tariff Policy Design by Toby Couture et. al., released in July by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. They account “for a greater share of [such] development than either tax incentives or renewable portfolio standard (RPS) policies,... FITs are responsible for approximately 75% of current global PV [solar photovoltaic] and 45% of current wind deployment.” Portugal used FITs to increase its renewables from 17% to 45% in just five years! Ontario, Canada’s largest province, has the best-designed FIT program in North America. At the end of October, after just over a year in operation, its new FIT program had received close to 3,400 applications with a combined capacity of nearly 15,500 MW.

Italy’s FIT powered the installation of more solar PV in 2009 than the entire U.S. With an economy only slightly larger than California’s, Italy that year installed 720 MW (nearly all on rooftops); the U.S. installed just 435 MW, according to a draft report by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council. In 2010 Italy installed and connected 3,000 MW of solar PV and installed an additional 4,000 MW waiting for paperwork approval. Contrast that with the 655 MW installed by California private utilities.

Germany will break all records this year with a combined capacity of nearly 75% of global PV [solar photovoltaic] and 45% of global wind deployment.” Portugal used FITs to increase its renewables from 17% to 45% in just five years! Ontario, Canada’s largest province, has the best-designed FIT program in North America. At the end of October, after just over a year in operation, its new FIT program had received close to 3,400 applications with a combined capacity of nearly 15,500 MW. 

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FITs continued on page 10

FITS continued on page 10
A Message from the Mothers for Peace

San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace is monitoring information about the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the effects on the many nuclear power plants there. We share the grave concerns for the people of Japan and for the planet as we contemplate the possible consequences of radiation releases. The devastation in Japan offers a vivid reminder of the risks of nuclear power. The crisis requires us to scrutinize the safety of nuclear facilities in our own country—particularly those in seismically active zones. Since 1973, Mothers for Peace has been actively opposed to nuclear power and weapons—both locally at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant and globally. Aside from the seismic dangers, our concerns include: o the implicit hazards of nuclear waste storage, in fuel pools and dry casks; o risks of terrorism; o aging systems and components; o human error in daily operations; o the high cost of production; o emergency preparedness

This tragic earthquake in Japan comes at a time when Pacific Gas and Electric Company is attempting to renew its license for Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant—extending its operation in the two units until the years 2024 and 2045. The plant and the radioactive waste it has produced since 1984 are located in an area riddled with more than a dozen earthquake faults. In its filing to oppose the license renewal, Mothers for Peace presents five contentions, four of which relate to the potential environmental impacts of earthquakes. More information regarding this litigation can be found at: http://mothersforpeace.org/newsAndEvents/licenserenewalcontentions

The world has ignored the warnings from Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. The catastrophe in Japan now reignites the debate regarding the viability of nuclear energy. Is it worth the risk? Mothers for Peace perseveres towards the ultimate safety plan: closed and decommissioned nuclear facilities.

Mothers for Peace invites you to join us in our efforts. Educate yourself by reading our website http://mothersforpeace.org. Support our work with a donation. Take action through a myriad of websites with easy-to-access online petitions. Recommendations include the following:

- Nuclear Information Resource Service www.nirs.org
- Beyond Nuclear www.beyondnuclear.org
- Union of Concerned Scientists www.ucsusa.org/nuclear_power
- NRDC https://secure.nrdconline.org
- Sierra Club www.sierraclub.org
- CREDO Action www.creedonation.com/campaigns/say_no_to_nuclear/
- rcrc-homepage

Future generations are counting on the collective action of caring people to preserve and protect our Earth.
“It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it.”

— Upton Sinclair

On March 12, as things were starting to go very wrong at the Fukushima reactor complex, the KSBY evening news anchor team brought on Diablo Canyon VP James Becker. Becker looked lost. He began nodding whenever either of the anchors spoke, as if eager to agree with anything they might be saying. He offered one standard sound bite after another — “We always put safety first... The plant has been designed for earthquakes,” etc. He had to be prodded — twice — before he would state that Diablo Canyon was built to withstand a magnitude 7.5 earthquake: “Does that scare you,” asked co-anchor Jeanette Rompeter, “or are you just nonchalant?” “That is why we need to learn from it, um, so yeah, I mean, I mean we do need to learn from that,” Becker replied. “We are not in the same location as Japan so we are designed for the earthquake faults that are closer in to us.”

The anchor team gently ended the interview there.

Fukushima. Once you lose power, you lose control, and all safety systems are disabled. If you have not heard of the Fukushima disaster, it will be used— widespread application to its chemical processes. We urge you to reconsider registration.

The Department of Pesticide Regulation’s own scientists opposed the approval of methyl iodide. So did five Nobel Laureates in chemistry and fifty chemistry professors who are members of the National Academy of Sciences.

There Will Be No End to Fukushima

On March 20 in a national conference call, Arnie Gundersen, former VP of a nuclear power plant and a 40-year veteran of the nuclear industry, briefed the Sierra Club’s Nuclear Issues Activist Team on the long-term prospects of the unfolding situation at Fukushima. He dismissed the industry’s attempts to make this all about earthquakes and tsunamis. “It is about the single point of vulnerability,” he said, a condition shared by all nuclear power plants. No nuclear plant has battery backup longer than eight hours. Any flood event could wipe out the service water used to cool the diesel generators, the failure of which triggered the cascading disasters at Fukushima. Once you lose power, you lose control, and all safety systems are disabled.

Gundersen served as an expert witness in the Three Mile Island investigation. Such events, he points out, all have a beginning, but they really don’t have an end.” The Three Mile Island disaster has not ended, Chernobyl has not ended, and Fukushima hasn’t ended, said Gundersen, and the “weeks or months” prognostications of the media are naive. All of the damaged Japanese reactors were designed to withstand a magnitude 7.5 earthquake. In 1981, The Tribune broke the story that PG&E decided not to seek more information about the Horgan earthquake fault in 1967, when it was discovered 509 feet from the site of the planned Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. Seeking data about the fault could “possibly delay the project” and “would only complicate a contested hearing,” said PG&E executives in a 1967 Atomic Energy Commission memo discovered 14 years later.

Worth hearing On October 29, 2008, the Cal Poly chapter of the Sierra Student Coalition and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility brought Carbon Free and Nuclear Free author Arjun Makhijani to Cal Poly to speak on “California’s Carbon-Free Energy Future: Options and Opportunities.”

A Question of Power

A 8-minute clip from the film can be viewed on YouTube, courtesy of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility. Go to YouTube and type in “Shaky seismic history at Diablo Canyon.”

Sometimes, scientists are blindsided by earthquakes because they occur along undiscovered faults. The deadly earthquakes in New Zealand last year; in Northridge, Calif., in 1994; and in Santa Cruz, Calif., in 1989 all happened along faults that scientists were unaware of until the ground shook. “It’s shameful, but we’ve barely scratched the surface,” said Ross Stein, a geophysicist with the United States Geological Survey.

- “Blindsided by Ferocity Unleashed by a Fault”

On March 20 in a national conference call, Arnie Gundersen, former VP of a nuclear power plant and a 40-year veteran of the nuclear industry, briefed the Sierra Club’s Nuclear Issues Activist Team on the long-term prospects of the unfolding situation at Fukushima. He dismissed the industry’s attempts to make this all about earthquakes and tsunamis. “It is about the single point of vulnerability,” he said, a condition shared by all nuclear power plants. No nuclear plant has battery backup longer than eight hours. Any flood event could wipe out the service water used to cool the diesel generators, the failure of which triggered the cascading disasters at Fukushima. Once you lose power, you lose control, and all safety systems are disabled. If you have not heard of the Fukushima disaster, it will be used— widespread application to its chemical processes. We urge you to reconsider registration.

The Department of Pesticide Regulation’s own scientists opposed the approval of methyl iodide. So did five Nobel Laureates in chemistry and fifty chemistry professors who are members of the National Academy of Sciences.

There Will Be No End to Fukushima

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Cal’s Trek

A 74 year old Sierra Club leader is walking across California for wildlife and a campaign to protect and connect wild places

On March 20, Cal French, a member of the Santa Lucia Chapter’s Executive Committee and a resident of Paso Robles, began a seven-week trek across California — covering more than 500 miles from Laughlin, Nevada, to Morro Bay — to call attention to the need for protected wilderness lands. “Aside from the personal challenge, I want to demonstrate by walking across them that the ecosystems from the Eastern Mojave Desert to the Pacific Ocean are linked together by public and conservancy lands,” said Cal. “Without the protections afforded by the Tejon Ranch Conservancy, the Wind Wolves Preserve, the Mojave National Preserve, and other public lands, plants and wildlife would face a fragmented maze of development when they try to adapt to climate change. The public needs to know what a wonderful treasure has been saved.”

To highlight the need to protect wild places and connect them together, Cal and a rotating cadre of companions will trek from the Colorado River through the Tehachapi Mountains to the coast. The trek crosses some challenging landscapes, including 220 miles of desert.

“I see the desert as a demonstration of how nature can produce animals as resilient as desert tortoises, big horn sheep and kit foxes as well as colorful cactus flowers and 10,000 year-old crescent bushes,” said Cal. “My larger purpose is to show that someone can walk on public and conservancy land, avoiding roads and highways, over an area that still looks natural.

“It is through this personal connection with the land across about 530 miles that I hope to speak for the necessity of preserving and protecting what wilderness remains. If this wilderness is isolated, it will eventually die of starvation when connections are severed. Biologists have told me that the San Joaquin Valley kit fox population on the Carrizo Plain National Monument — through which the trek will pass — could die out unless it maintains connections with populations to the north and south of the Monument. Joshua trees in Joshua Tree National Park are starting to suffer from excessive summer heat; meanwhile, other groves of these picturesque spiny plants are extending west of the hottest deserts.”

Lesli Daniel, an organizer with Sierra Club California, said “As we prepare to launch the Sierra Club’s Resilient Habitats campaign here in California, Mr. French’s journey will help call attention to the essential role of protecting healthy natural systems.”

The Sierra Club’s Resilient Habitats campaign is a national effort, which seeks to protect, connect and restore wild places as healthy natural systems, not isolated pieces, to create resilient habitats where plants, animals and people

continued on next page

The California Coast Resilient Habitat Campaign

Conserve & Protect California’s Coast!

Sierra Club California has launched the California Coast Resilient Habitats Campaign (CCRHC) to address the effects of climate change on the state’s coastal regions.

The campaign will focus on protecting, connecting, and restoring California’s coastal habitats in order to allow our wildlife to adapt to their changing conditions. The most urgent issue facing us is the rising sea level (view maps: www.pacificwetlands.org/reports/sea_level_rise/maps). Even if we are able to successfully implement C02 reduction measures, sea level rise has already been set in motion.

We must now turn our attention to ways to adapt to this inevitability.

The initial focus of the CCRHC will be to foster the best planning and development policies possible at the State level through the Ocean Protection Council, California Coastal Commission, and Bay Conservation and Development Commission. These policies will influence State activities and work their way to the local level, where most land use decisions are made. In local communities, the CCRHC will show people how to protect shorelines using natural systems that protect and expand habitat. The campaign will look for areas that are ripe for positive shoreline protection policies to focus its efforts.

When the sea threatens property, the first response is often to build a seawall. Seawalls are both expensive to build and maintain and destructive to habitats and beaches. The Public Institute estimates it would cost $14 billion to armor California’s coast against sea level rise and $1.4 billion annually in maintenance costs. Seawalls cause the loss of beaches in front of and below the wall, create beach access issues, and do not support half the diversity of marine life that natural rocky areas support.

We have options. We can stop placing people and businesses in harm’s way by not allowing development in projected flood plains. We can build natural habitats that act as wave brakes to lessen beach erosion, such as kelp forests and oyster beds. We can build dunes and establish vegetation barriers to protect shorelines. We can allow for the expansion of wetlands to assure that these important ecosystems don’t drown and to provide flood buffers. And we can make choices to concede to nature and plan retreat from the shore, which is often the most cost-effective and safest option.

As the campaign raises funds and grows, it intends to expand into key conservation area protection (marine sanctuaries, wildlife corridors, wetlands preservation and expansion), updating the State Wildlife Action Plan, and protection of the upland watershed to encompass issues such as water quality, influow and fish barriers.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to explore the potential for positive shoreline protection policies in local communities; to educate public officials, Sierra Club members and community members on the use of natural systems to protect the shoreline and wildlife habitats. If you are interested in getting involved, please call Lesli at 916-557-1100 x105.

Good Read!

Sharon Janelle Smith, a SLO native and graduate of San Luis Obispo High School, has written The Young Activist’s Guide to Building a Green Movement and Changing the World. Proceeds from the sale of this book go to the Earth Island Institute Brower Youth Awards Program.

Check it out at www.buildagreenmovement.org

No more beach in Malibu? King tides event in Feb. 2011, a glimpse of sea level rise.
can survive and thrive in a changing world. Two of the ten main areas of focus for the campaign are in California: the California Coast and the Sierra Nevada.

Cal’s journey is an inspiration to everyone to explore, enjoy and protect California’s amazing wild places,” said Sarah Matsutomo, Senior Field Organizer with the Sierra Club. “With the threat of climate change, it will be even more important to preserve these natural systems so they will continue to provide us with pure drinking water, clean air, a thriving tourism economy and an unparalleled wild heritage to pass on to future generations.”

You can follow the trek on Sierra magazine’s website. To go to http://sierracub.memberpage.com/explore/across-california/.

Trek Itinerary:
20 March: Start at Colorado River in Nevada north of Needles, CA.
25 March: Arrive at Hole in the Wall, layover a day
27 March: Leave Hole in the Wall
28 March: Arrive at Kelso Depot
30 March: Arrive Zzyzx, layover a day
01 April: Leave Zzyzx
02 April: Arrive Alton Canyon
06 April: Arrive at road north of Black Mountain Wilderness (35°12’55.48” N, -117°8’13.14”W), layover a day
08 April: Leave Black Mountain Wilderness area
09 April: Arrive Highway 395 S. of Ahalia (N35 18 28, W-117 36 41)
11 April: Arrive Jawbone Canyon BLM Station on Highway 14, layover a day
13 April: Leave Jawbone Canyon BLM Station
14 April: Arrive jct. of Jawbone Canyon Rd./Pacific Crest Trail at Mile 602 (northbound)
16 April: Arrive jct. of PCT at Highway 58/Cameron Road, mile 565.5 on PCT
18 April: Arrive at mile 541-541.5 (water source) on PCT east of Tejon Ranch, layover a day
20 April: Arrive Tejon Ranch
22 April: Arrive at Interstate 5, cross, enter Wind Wolves Preserve
25 April: Arrive Carrizo Plain National Monument
28 April: Arrive Los Padres National Forest
01 May: Finish at Morro Bay

Muir’s March

A fight led by John Muir about a century ago goes on as hikers prepare for the third annual “Muir’s March” this summer to advocate for the restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. The guided treks into scenic areas — rarely experienced by tourists — provide us with pure drinking water, clean air, a thriving tourist economy and an unparalleled wild heritage to pass on to future generations.

The movement to restore Hetch Hetchy is gaining momentum as “The movement to restore Hetch Hetchy is gaining momentum as a movement to recover one of nature’s rarest and most precious mountain temples.”

Muir called Hetch Hetchy Valley “one of nature’s rarest and most precious mountain temples.” Despite his urgent pleas, in 1913 the federal government approved San Francisco’s request to clear-cut and flood the valley for use as a reservoir. The decision horrified wilderness-lovers sign up to march together this summer to advocate for the restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley.

The mission of Restore Hetch Hetchy is to return the Hetch Hetchy Valley to Yosemite National Park to its natural splendor while continuing to meet the water and power needs of all communities that depend on the Tuolumne River.

Prospective participants can register or get more information by visiting www.muirsmarch.org or by calling 415-956-0491.

*Fundraising requirements vary according to hike length, from $90 to $2,100. Hikes are 1, 4 and 7 days in length.
CEQA Killer

What’s Wrong with Senator Cannella’s CEQA Bill

Opponents of California’s environmental laws are trying to leverage the closed-door budget talks to eviscerate the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A proposed bill by Senator Anthony Cannella was leaked to the L.A. Times. Below is a brief analysis of what’s wrong with that bill. We urge the Governor and legislative leaders to use the transparent legislative process to discuss any propose changes to California’s landmark environmental laws.

Leaves Enforcement of EIR Requirements to the Attorney General

Ordinarily the Attorney General could enforce the EIR requirements of CEQA. No private enforcement of the EIR requirements would be permitted. If a state agency violates CEQA’s EIR requirements, the Attorney General may be prohibited from filing an action against a client state agency, leaving the possibility of no CEQA enforcement against client state agencies.

Prohibits Comments After Close of Comment Period Even if the Project is Changed

Comments at a public hearing on a negative declaration and mitigated negative declaration presented after the close of the public comment period — even if the proposed project is completely changed after the close of the public comment period — could be ignored by the public agency and could not be included in any lawsuit challenging the negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration.

Requires a $50,000 Bond from Anyone Challenging a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration

Individuals or organizations challenging a public agency’s decision to prepare a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration rather than an EIR would have to post a $50,000 bond. This requirement would effectively preclude private enforcement of CEQA when combined with the requirement that only the Attorney General can challenge the legal adequacy of an EIR.

Restricts Recovery of Attorney’s Fees

The proposal would restrict the attorney’s fees for enforcing the EIR requirements. These restrictions on recovering attorney’s fees combined with the other provisions mentioned above severely restrict private enforcement of CEQA.

Eliminates Fair Argument Standard for Preparing an EIR

The proposal eliminates the fair argument standard, a fundamental precept of CEQA that requires the preparation of an EIR unless there is a high degree of certainty that a project would not have a significant impact on the environment.

Exempts Evaluation of a Refinery’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposal would exclude refineries, power plants, and large industrial projects like refineries, would be prohibited if the project is consistent with an unrelated, vaguely-described state or local plan addressing greenhouse gases.

Restricts the Analysis of a Development Project’s Cumulative Effects

This provision of the Cannella draft bill is not consistent with the elimination of the fair argument standard would effectively eliminate the existing requirement that public agencies evaluate a proposed development project’s cumulative effect on the existing environment.

Expands the Existing Urban Residential Infill Exemption to Encourage Sprawl

Sections 1, 4, and 5 of the Cannella draft bill would redefine “infill site” and make other changes to existing urban residential infill exemptions in CEQA to include commercial development in urban areas and residential and commercial development in any “substantially developed” area of a county as long as the development project is consistent with the applicable local general plan. This expansion of the existing urban residential infill exemption will encourage sprawl and economic and public health costs associated with sprawl.

Additionally, the expansion of the existing infill development exemption to include commercial and residential development in rural communities will frustrate the state’s ability to reduce vehicle miles travelled in order to attain the greenhouse gas reduction goals established by the California Air Resources Board.

FITs

continued from page 5

power capacity this year as the U.S., even though its economy is only 1/5 that of the U.S. California needs to get FIT.

Here’s how

A Feed-in Tariff (FIT), or renewable-power payment policy, is a guarantee: if someone generates renewable energy, a utility will buy it at a fair standard price. A good FIT will drive the rapid, cost-effective growth of small to medium-sized renewables to produce local clean power. It will create legions of local green jobs and help reduce air pollution, while avoiding environmental damage and expensive new transmission lines. Our new governor, Jerry Brown, in his campaign’s Clean Energy Program, called for 20,000 MW (about 16% of California’s total electricity need) of new renewable energy by 2020. 12,000 MW of this is to be from small locally generated sources (also called distributed generation) directly connected to the local distribution grid. Importantly, he called for implementation of a FIT.

Last December the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) implemented a renewable-energy payment program that will help incentivize the installation of more renewables, This “Renewable Auction Mechanism” (RAM) applies to projects up to 20 MW (other tidal FIT programs in California have limited projects to 1.5 MW. A bill approved in 2009 calls for 3 MW but has not yet been implemented) and is capped at a low 1,000 MW over two years, although the issuing judge indicated that the PUC would be open to increasing the duration and/or cap.

This program is a step forward, but the complications of competitive bidding essentially eliminate small generators, and the program cap is way too low.

All of California’s various programs for the three large for-profit utilities providing 70% of California electricity only added 653 MW of new renewable capacity in 2010. Although things are starting to pick up, our progress pales throughout the world. We still cling to small, timid, incremental, under-funded, and ineffectively designed programs.

Hopefully, we are ready to step up and implement a proven policy—FITs—to really grow our renewable energy and become a true leader to the rest of the nation.

The author thanks Paul Cipe as the source for much of the information on international FIT progress.
Classifieds

Next issue deadline is April 15. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact: Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter PO Box 15735 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 sierracclub8@gmail.com

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ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
Outings and Activities Calendar

All 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 Chair Joe Morris, 722-1873. For information on a specific outing, please call the outings leader.

Fri.-Sun., Apr. 1st-3rd, Carrizo Plains Outing. Join us on our annual pilgrimage to 编辑器会将它自动放入英文。 3rd Annual Carrizo Plains Outing. Join us on our annual pilgrimage to celebrate another year of floral splendor in this special place. The plains are always worth seeing in the fall; also worth a trip to the camp; no charge, open to the public. Rendezvous there for a Saturday hike at 9 a.m. and a Sunday hike at 9:30 a.m. Bring your own food, drink, and sturdy footwear. Info: Carla, 546-9317.

Fri.-Sun., Apr. 1st-3rd, Golden Valley Wilderness Area Work Project. Work with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) in the Golden Valley Wilderness Area near Ridgecrest. Every weekend or several day workdays; Sunday will be a hike in the wilderness area, where we might see wildflowers if it turns out to be a good rain year. Call or e-mail for more details: Leader, Kate Allen, kallen@wildblue.net; 661-944-4056, CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat.-Sun., Apr. 2nd-3rd, Mojave Preserve Exploration. Meet Friday afternoon at the Sunrise primitive campground located on Cino Road, 11 miles from I-15 on the left (just past the Teutonia Peak Trailhead, which is on the right). Saturday hike to Teutonia Peak, 4 mile round trip. Sunday we will go to Hole-In-The-Wall visitor center and hike six miles on the Barber Peak Loop Trail. For those who want to spend another night, we can camp at Midhills Campground. Fees are $12 per site ($6.00 with Senior Access Pass). Bring your warm clothes, as evenings can be cold. Bring lots of water and food for the entire weekend. For reservations, contact Carol Valley at desertwild@verizon.net or 760-245-8734, CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sun-Sat., Apr. 10th-16th Escalante River Canyon. We will work with National Park Service Ranger Bill Wolverton on this ongoing Russian Olive eradication program. 40.5 miles of the Escalante River have been cleared. This project will clear more, using loppers, small hand saws, and herbicide. Meet in Escalante Sunday morning, hike to the trailhead and hike in about 7 miles. Expect knee to thigh deep river crossings, and some bushwhacking. We work 4 days, dayhike 1 day and hike out Saturday morning. Participants must follow work-clothing requirements, provide their own food and gear on the trail, and travel expenses to the trailhead. For more information contact leader, Pat Plathe at 209-476-1498, Delta-Sierra Group.

Sat., Apr. 16th, 8 a.m. Machese Mountain, Take a 12-15 mile hike, 3000 ft. elevation gain, through the Machesa Wilderness. Starting from American Canyon Campground, we will climb 1500 ft. to an open meadow and pond below Machesa Mountain itself. After lunch we will climb another several hundred feet to a ridge overlooking the Carrizo Plain, then descend the same route to the trailhead before ascending to our final rest stop. Plenty of wildflowers and pleasant weather are likely. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes, and plan to be out all day. Some of us may go to the Pozo Saloon after, if open. Meet at Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. This is not a beginner’s hike. Limit 20 people. For details, reservations and meeting place, call Gary (473-3964) (SP), Rain or threat of rain cancels.

Sat.-Sun., Apr. 16th-17th, Birds, Flowers, And Fences in The Carrizo. This is an opportunity to explore and aid an outstanding and relatively unknown national monument. On Saturday, we will assist monument staff in removing fence wires to allow pronghorn antelope free access to the range. Sunday is reserved for sightseeing. The views from the Caliente Mountains are spectacular; spring flowers should be blooming and the monument is known for the number and variety of raptors present. Contact leader Craig Deutsche, 310-477-6670, or craig.deutsche@gmail.com, CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sun., Apr. 17th, 1 p.m. City Walk of Victorian Home San Luis Obispo. Easy guided stroll past 18 lovely century-old homes and churches in the “Old Town Historic District” of downtown SLO. See the homes of mayors, the founder of Cal Poly and learn about the life of the newly wealthy who transformed this city in the early 1900’s. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet in front of Jack House, 536 Marsh St., SLO. Information: Joe Morris, 722-1873.

Sat., Apr 23rd and 24th, 10:15 a.m. Earth Day Celebration and Hike, San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, The City of SLO holds its official Earth Day Celebration at this beautiful garden with many events and activities, including a Sierra Club booth. Hike to the Eagle Rock (2 miles round trip 400 foot gain) with lovely vistas of several of the Morros and hills around the valley. Before or after the hike, you can view hundreds of Mediterranean-style plants in the Garden. A plant list will be available, and some species will be for sale at the Garden Shop. For 10:15 hike, meet at the Eagle Rock trailhead, parking at the end of the main road (Dairy Creek). Bring adequate water, snacks, and dress in layers for the weather; a hat and sturdy shoes is advised. For info, contact Bill at (805) 459-2103 or bill.santacruz@gmail.com. Jointly sponsored by SLO Botanical Gardens, California Native Plants Society, and the Sierra Club.

Sun., April 24th, 7:30 a.m. Santa Lucia Trail Hike, Spring hike to Pimolkolam Peak (Jumprope SLO Peak), highest in the northern Los Padres National Forest. This is a strenuous 12-mile hike with 3800 ft. of elevation gain, but very scenic, starting in a meadow with beautiful rock formations. The trail winds through oak woodlands and chaparral canyon wilderness. End of the trail is a parking lot on Las Tablas Rd. just west of Highway 101. We will carpool from there. It takes about 90 minutes to the trailhead. The road on the army base may be closed if there is too much rain. This is an all-day outing so plan accordingly. Please contact with the leader so he can contact you if there are changes. For info, call Chuck at 805-441-7597.

Fri.-Sun., Apr. 29th-May 1st, Service Trip: Death Valley National Park. Come help with wilderness restoration in this beautiful and remote desert national park. Current plan is to work in Saline Valley and camp at Warm Springs. Subject to change depending on weather/road conditions. Meet Friday at noon and carpool to work area. Some possible camping. Happy hour potluck Saturday night. Bring work gloves, camping equipment, and food for the weekend. Leader: Kate Allen, kallen@wildblue.net; 661-944-4056, CNRCC Desert Committee.

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

Sat., April 30th, 10 a.m. Maino Open Space trail/Lemon Grove Loop. PoleCats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of using trekking poles. 2.2 miles/400 feet elevation change. The trailhead is located off the Marsh Street on ramp of southbound Highway 101. From downtown SLO take Higuera Street to the intersection with Marsh Street and proceed as if to take 101 South. Immediately after the freeway underpass, bear right into the parking lot. Confirm with David Georgi at 458-5575 or polecatleader@mail.com for upcom- ing activities. Bipeds welcome.

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

Saturday April 1

May 8-10; July 16-19; August 6-9; September 11-13; October 16-18

VCA Channel Islands is Galapagos USA! Marvel at the sight of whales, seals, sea lions, rare birds & blazng wildflowers. Hike the wild, windswept trails. Kayak the rugged coastline. Snorkel in pristine waters. Discover remnants of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. These fundraisers benefit Sierra Club political programs in California. Cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68 Truth. The fee ($590 for May and Sept & Oct; $765 for July & August) includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks & beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and point out interesting features. To make a reservation mail a $108 check payable to Sierra Club to leaders: Joan Jones Holtz & Don Holtz, 11826 The Wye St, El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leaders for more information (626-443-0766; joholtz@jcomail.com)

Sponsored by Other Organizations

Sat.-Sun. Apr. 2nd-3rd, VWA Trail Work: Big Pines Trail, Pat Springs. Strenuous 7-mile hike from Botcher’s Gap to Pat Springs. We will remove fallen trees and brush as we go. The trail to Pat Springs is completely clear, and we may be able to work out toward Little Pines on the Double Cone Trail. This is a great chance to enjoy views from the Ventana from Pat Springs. Contact Leader for more details. Leader: Steve Bennett 394-4234 or trailcrew1@ventanawild.org.