The Road to Sanctuary

The time is now for National Marine Sanctuary protection for the Central Coast

In 1972, exactly one hundred years after the first national park was created, the nation made a similar commitment to preserving its marine treasures by establishing the National Marine Sanctuary Program. Since then, thirteen national marine sanctuaries and one marine national monument, representing a wide variety of ocean environments, have been established.

Many of our members are aware that a bill that would have created a Central Coast National Marine Sanctuary was before Congress in 1991. Another bill creating the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary passed; the Central Coast bill failed. Ever since then, coastal activists have been trying to correct that oversight, which essentially made the Central Coast the doughnut hole in California’s National Marine Sanctuaries. Four Sanctuaries protect coastal areas between the Marin Headlands and Hearst Ranch in Cambria, and the Channel Islands off Santa Barbara. But nowhere in between.

At this year’s annual summit meeting of the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils, representing all of America’s National Marine Sanctuaries, there was an item on the agenda titled “Sanctuary Designation and Expansion.” Council chairs and representatives urged the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries “to work with partners, communities, etc. to identify and evaluate potential new sanctuaries.”

Putting the Cart Before the Cow

Will the Dept. of Fish and Game ever get it right on the Carrizo?

When Los Padres ForestWatch and the Sierra Club successfully sued the California Department of Fish and Game to prevent the destruction of the Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve by rampant, mismanaged cattle grazing (“Reserve or Feedlot?” Nov./Dec. 2008; “Lawsuit Halts Grazing in Carrizo Reserve,” February 2011), the Department agreed to terminate the grazer’s lease and prepare a long-delayed land use management plan to assure that such harms would never again be inflicted on this land entrusted to their care.

MORRO BAY continued on page 10

Morro Bay Digs Deeper Hole

One high-paid consultant and “alternative site study” later, the Morro Bay/Cayucos sewer project is still on the road to failure

In November 2010, the Morro Bay City Council overrode the judgment of the city planning commission and the pointed critiques of dozens of citizens, several environmental groups, the County Public Works Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and approved a woefully deficient plan for the new Morro Bay/Cayucos wastewater treatment plant. (See “A Tale of Two Sewers,” January.)

The citizens of Cayucos and Morro Bay were promptly handed the predicted result: an epic fail. (See “Morro Bay and Cayucos Will Have to Do Better,” April.) The most expensive public works project in the history of either community was immediately dismissed by The California Coastal Commission and returned to Mayor Bill Yates & co. for a complete re-do.

A Commission staff report spelled out in detail what the communities had to do to gain a Coastal Development Permit. The primary problem: an alternatives analysis that didn’t so much analyze alternatives as it said, in effect, “yeah, we looked at some other places, but this is the one we want — right where the current plant is, with an outfall pipe to dump the sewage into the ocean.”

Morro Bay and Cayucos staff regrouped. By late June, trouble was obviously looming when they held a series of public workshops on the new Draft Rough Screening Alternatives Site Evaluation. In our comments, the Sierra Club said “We are concerned that the City and the [Cayucos Sanitary] District may again be preparing an overly narrow alternatives analysis, essentially repeating the fatal flaw identified by the Coastal Commission.” Specifically, the draft appeared to be “ignoring the requirement to include an evaluation of alternative designs and technologies as well as alternative sites, despite directives from the Commission and staff.”

Those directives included the need to “equally evaluate against the same evaluation criteria...alternative designs that incorporate the technology and infrastructure necessary to...”
Lessons Learned from the Tortoise

by Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California

I’ve been thinking a lot about the endangered California desert tortoises and wondering what lessons they might reveal. These very private creatures have been making news lately even though their natural approach to attention is more in tune with Greta Garbo’s. First there was the revelation that construction of the Ivanpah large-scale solar plant proposed in the Mojave Desert would wipe out nearly 550 juvenile tortoises. Then there was Governor Brown’s wink-wink quip to a Fresno audience that, by siding with large-scale solar development, he planned to take care of the tortoise. “We’re going to give it a large shade,” Brown said, according to press reports. California desert tortoises have managed to adapt to some of the most brutal summer conditions on the continent and survive as a species for eons. Humans, arriving from the East, have knocked off their natural approach to attention. The tortoise is an incrementalist, slow, steady and persistent in its march. Its moves are often imperceptible—then consider the keys to the tortoise’s persistence: The tortoise is working to find a way through the smallest of openings. In the end, it will win the race.

California desert tortoises have managed to adapt to some of the most brutal summer conditions on the continent and survive as a species for eons. Humans, arriving from the East, have knocked off their natural approach to attention. The tortoise is an incrementalist, slow, steady and persistent in its march. Its moves are often imperceptible—then consider the keys to the tortoise’s persistence: The tortoise is working to find a way through the smallest of openings. In the end, it will win the race.

Bimonthly General Meeting: “Earth’s First Billion Years!”

Cal Poly geology professor Dr. Scott Ohmston describes the violent transformation of our planet from a molten mass to one with oceans and the first life, and then how the moon’s collision 4.5 billion years ago changed a helluva lot. Come and view slides of Scott’s pioneering fieldwork in East Greenland and hold one of 4.5 billion-year old rock fragments he brought back.

Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info: Joe Norris, 772-1875.

Visit us on the Web!

www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

In Memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge receipt of donations from Denise Fouri, Jesse Arnold, and Mary and Jerry Lodge in memory of Karl Krupp.
The Last, Best Hope for the Carrizo

By Sue Harvey, President, North County Watch

The birds have vanished into the sky, And the last cloud drains away. We sit together, the mountain and me, Until only the mountain remains. Li Po, 701-162.

Translated from the Chinese by Sam Hamill

Nov./Dec. 2011

Congress Blocks Mercury Protections

House leadership scores points for polluters, endangers public health

On October 13, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation that would block critical protections against toxic mercury and other dangerous chemicals and metals emitted by industrial boilers, which are among the nation’s biggest and dirtiest sources of mercury pollution. Boilers are situated in and around hospitals, schools and communities across the country, exposing Americans to toxic mercury pollution, a known brain poison that threatens the development of young children.

The bill was the latest in a series of attacks waged by House Republican Leadership on public health protections and the Clean Air Act. “By passing H.R. 2250, the House has again voted to put polluter interests over the public’s health,” said Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune. “H.R. 2250 blocks toxic mercury protections that have already been delayed more than two decades and allows industrial boilers, some of the nation’s dirtiest sources of mercury pollution, to continue spewing toxic mercury into our air and water without limits. This action will create jobs and, serve only to advance the House Leadership’s pro-polluter, anti-public health agenda.”

The Sierra Club applauds President Obama’s commitment to veto these reckless bills. We urge the Senate to reject these attacks on public health. See “Taking Issue” on page 9 for an analysis of the pollution lobby’s anti-regulatory spin, as it recently appeared in The Tribune.

Making a 2011 Donation?

Thanks…but do not wait until Christmas

Please think about including your Sierra Club chapter in your holiday giving. And when you do, there are two important things to keep in mind when you do:

1) Donations to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; donations to the Sierra Club Foundation are. To make a tax-deductible donation: Make out your check to “The Sierra Club Foundation,” and write “Santa Lucia Chapter Fund” in the memo section.

2) All offices of the Sierra Club close for the holidays. The Chapter has to process your check here, then send it to the Foundation for deposit, so it’s a good bet that if you wait to mail your check until the week before Christmas, it won’t be deposited until after New Year’s, turning your 2011 donation into a 2012 donation.

Mail your check to:
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

(If you are over 70 and have an IRA, you can meet the minimum distribution requirement by making a tax-free charitable rollover contribution of up to $100,000 directly from your IRA. Check with your tax advisor.)

Coastal Commission Tells Army Corps to Shape Up or Ship Out

Corps can’t cut corners in Cambria desal saga

The determination of the Cambria Community Services District to commit residents to the world’s most expensive form of water bit another snag in September when the California Coastal Commission told the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that the supporting documentation they had submitted in the effort to get a green light to drill desalination test wells on Santa Rosa State Beach was totally inadequate.

In a ten-page Sept. 30 letter to the Corps’ Thomas Keeney, the Commission told the Corps it needs to provide actual evidence that the project is consistent with the California Coastal Management Program, not simply claim that it is; stop contradicting itself and state the actual purpose of the project; include the results of water-quality tests for the 100+ potential contaminants they said they were going to test for (not the fewer than 20 they submitted); and address concerns about chain-of-custody for core samples tossed into the back of a truck, in open bags and allowed to sit unattended in Shamel Park.

In February 2010, Keeney fired off a notorious internal e-mail to Army Corps staff that blasted the Sierra Club for underwriting the efforts of Lynne Harkins, a retired Cambria school teacher who took water samples from the area and sent them to a lab for mercury testing on her own after the Corps failed to do so. Keeney dismissed Harkins’ efforts due to the “lack of chain of custody documentation” of the water samples.

North County Watch and Carrizo Commons have reached settlement agreements with Topaz Solar Farm and California Valley Solar Ranch. As a result, when the permits for both solar projects expire several decades hence, tens of thousands of acres of land will be permanently protected for the numerous special species found only here. But much of that land will have to be restored to create suitable native habitat.

An important aspect of both settlements is a provision for resources sources for “Vissiting the Carrizo.” The solar companies have committed money and in-kind resources for this process.

This process will answer questions such as what does a Carrizo native grassland look like? The vernal pools, the natural watercourses? How will the native plants re-inhabit the land? How will the native animals re-inhabit the land? How will the native birds re-inhabit the land? How will the native fish re-inhabit the land?

The Carrizo is the last intact remnant of the formerly vast San Joaquin Valley grasslands. According to The Nature Conservancy, it supports the highest concentration of threatened and endangered species in the continental United States. It is an important wildlife corridor connecting species in the Panoche Valley, west Kern and western San Luis Obispo.

Indigenous peoples have inhabited the Carrizo for perhaps 10,000 years. Farming and ranching have dominated its history for the last two centuries. The establishment of the National Monument was integral to restoration of the Carrizo Plain. In his 1910 book, The Painted Rock, Myron Angel described the Carrizo:

Through the eastern part of the county of San Luis Obispo stretches the Carrissa Plain… The Plain is a basin, a thousand feet or more above the level of the sea, with drainage to the center, where a shallow lake is formed, in seasons of excessive rains, which is bed of salt and soda when dry, as is usual in such formations. The Carrisa is a grassy plain, formerly abounding in wild horses, elk, deer, and antelope in countless numbers, and myriads of migratory birds of the arctic in their season, feeding upon its herbage. In the bordering hills are ever-running rivulets of purest water, and a sparse growth of trees…

It can be difficult to look out upon the battlefield and see the possibilities for recovery. Our hope is that a visioning process will help all parties take the long view for the recovery of the Carrizo.
The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500  

August 3, 2011  

President Obama:  

We are researchers at work on the science of climate change and allied fields. We are writing to add our voices to the indigenous leaders, religious leaders, and environmentalists calling on you to block the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline from Canada’s tar sands.

The tar sands are a huge pool of carbon, but one that does not make sense to exploit. It takes a lot of energy to extract and refine this resource into useable fuel, and the mining is environmentally destructive. Adding this on top of conventional fossil fuels will leave our children and grandchildren a climate system with consequences that are out of their control.

It makes no sense to build a pipeline system that would practically guarantee extensive exploitation of this resource.

When other huge oil fields or coal mines were opened in the past, we knew much less about the damage that the carbon they contained would do to the Earth’s climate system and to its oceans.

Now that we do know, it’s imperative that we move quickly to alternate forms of energy—and that we leave the tar sands in the ground. We hope those so inclined will join protests described at www.tarsandsaction.org.

If the pipeline is to be built, you as president have to declare that it is “in the national interest.”

As scientists, speaking for ourselves and not for any of our institutions, we can say categorically that it’s not only in the national interest, it’s also in the planet’s best interest.

Sincerely,

James Hansen  
Research Scientist  
The International Research Institute for Climate and Society  
The Earth Institute, Columbia University

Donald Kennedy  
President Emeritus and Bing Professor of Environmental Sciences, Emeritus  
Institute for International Studies  
Stanford University

Michael MacCracken  
Chief Scientist for Climate Change Programs  
Climate Institute

James McCarthy  
Alexander Agassiz Professor of Biological Oceanography  
Harvard University

Peter Gleick  
Senior Scientist  
The Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security

John Abraham  
Associate Professor, School of Engineering  
University of St. Thomas

Michael Oppenheimer  
Albert G. Milbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs  
Woodrow Wilson School and Department of Geosciences  
Princeton University

Jane Lubchenco  
Leona Block Professor in the Geophysical Sciences  
The University of Chicago

David Archer  
Professor Emeritus Energy & Environment Policy  
University of Minnesota

Raymond T. Pierrehumbert  
Director Emeritus, Carnegie Observatories  
Scripps Institution of Oceanography

Ken Caldeira  
Professor of Geophysical Sciences  
The Ohio State University

Michael E. Mann  
Director, Earth System Science Center  
The Pennsylvania State University

Jason Box  
Senior Scientist  
The International Research Institute for Climate and Society  
The Earth Institute, Columbia University

James McCarthy  
Senior Scientist  
The International Research Institute for Climate and Society  
The Earth Institute, Columbia University

Whose world?  

Our world!  

Our world’s students are forming a newly formed group of high school students who oppose the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. They will be seeking to make their first action on October 6: a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State, Kerri-Ann Jones.
Cows (continued from page 1)

Then DFG promptly turned around and reopened a new lease with the same grazer and said they’d get around to a management plan when they got to it. Instead of the public getting a comprehensive look at all of the management issues, we get a one-over-lightly Mitigated Negative Declaration by way of environmental review of a new grazing permit. DFG is piecemealing management of the reserve by failing to evaluate the impact of grazing on public access; failing to evaluate cumulative impacts of grazing operations on the reserve and on adjacent federal lands; failing to implement adequate monitoring; failing to conduct adequate surveys and consultation for a federally endangered species, the Kern mallow; and failure to mandate protections for other special-status plants from grazing impacts between emergence and flowering.

Acquisition of the 31,000-acre Chimeneas Ranch by the people of California occurred in two phases. The State of California created the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve in 2001, adding the Chimeneas to other lands held by DFG in the area and expanding in 2004. DFG was given $12.7 million by voters via The Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (commonly known as Proposition 50). Fish and Game got more money from the Habitat Conservation Fund, which was established for the “acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened, or fully protected species.” This represents a substantial public investment. State law requires DFG, through a public process, to develop a Land Use Management Plan — and DFG was supposed to do a decade ago. The plan must take on livestock grazing solely for its effectiveness or lack of same in the context of overall management of the reserve to achieve stated management objectives. Instead, Fish and Game, behind the public’s back, authorized a grazing lease for a grazer who had basically strip-mined the property with cows.

Ten years have passed, we still don’t have a management plan, and, absent the light that public review of the plan would shine on this property, DFG is again proposing to authorize grazing — this time with abbreviated environmental review and reduced public scrutiny — to accommodate the same grazer. State law does not stipulate hard deadlines for development of a management plan, but the intent is clear: conservation lands acquired with public funds and managed by a state agency must have a management plan, reviewed by the public, that complies with state and federal law, in order to protect resources.

The two big issues on the Chimeneas are resource protection and public access. DFG has failed miserably on both counts. There is virtually no public access, and grazing practices have badly damaged a significant area of the reserve. Since the public has had little access and no opportunity to review a management plan, DFG is operating with very little public oversight.

The agency should not be approving more grazing on the Reserve before it has completed a land management plan and an Environmental Impact Report — the highest level of environmental review — for that plan. The plan and the EIR should address the degree to which grazing is affecting, or is likely to affect, public access and other resources.

Making the decision now to resume grazing in advance of a completed Land Use Management Plan places constraints upon future development of the plan and on the future management of natural resources and public access. The public bought and paid for this land and are entitled to have say in its management.

Driving Through Bunny Land

I call it Bunny Land

The name is sweet and the animals so precious
but traveling through it treacherous

On early misty mornings
bunnies shoot out across the road
kamikaze rabbits on a mission
to zoom over to the shangri-la
of the bushes on the other side
They escape my car wheels by just a fraction
sleeping along the tangle
tense and alert

dodging and braking
paying earnestly I won’t flatten another one
for that tragedy one day was nearly unbearable
I went from feeling cheery and joyful
to sobbing with remorse
It took me months
not to dread
the lovely morning drive
through Montana de Oro

Kahila Volkov

Sanctuary (continued from page 1)

turos and address boundary expansions, as there is “a general recognition that it was time to look at potential new sanctuaries and reevaluate the Site Evaluation List.”

This is opportunuity, knocking.

From Mill Creek in Monterey County to Point Conception, there is no such designation, despite the fact that this area is rich in the characteristics that meet the criteria for National Marine Sanctuary designation, including Chumash archaeological sites continuously occupied for 9,000 or more years, three major nutrient up-wellings vital for near-shore marine ecosystems, 52% of California’s vanishing coastal kelp forests, a coastal dune system, two estuaries, coastal wetlands, rocky intertidal resources, areas and migration lanes, rocky intertidal resources.

For links to the Marine Sanctuary Alliance and SLO Coast Journal articles on the need for Sanctuary protection for the Central Coast, see santalucia.sierraclub.org/mbnms/mbnms.html

Take action

COMMENT LETTER TEMPLATE (always best to use your own words):

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco,

I urge you to heed the strong public support in San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County, California, for Sanctuary protection of our shores and marine resources.

This is a special and unique ecosystem deserving of National Marine Sanctuary protection. Just a few of the features of these California central Coastal waters are major nutrient upwellings, kelp forest habitat, gray whale migration routes, abalone aquaculture, and the largest coastal dune habitat in California. This region is also home to the largest population of the federally threatened Western Snowy Plover, and its many miles of seabird nesting and marine mammal habitat are home to a substantial portion of the population of the threatened Southern Sea Otter.

Conferring sanctuary protection on the Central Coast will fill the gap between the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, while enhancing the protection of existing sanctuary waters, and bolster Ecosystem Based Management, minimizing hazardous impacts.

Given the positive public response to the recent addition of the Davidson Seamount to the MBNMS, providing sanctuary protection to the Central Coast will strengthen public support for the Sanctuary program locally, statewide and nationally.

I would like to see current sanctuary boundaries expanded to encompass the waters of California’s Central Coast, and the Site Evaluation List reactivated with this region made a priority for its significance as a unique ecological and biological area.

Thank you for your attention to these matters,

YOUR NAME HERE

cc:

Dan Basta, Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
National Ocean Service
1325 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282

Bill Douros, Acting Deputy Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East West Highway
NMFS, Room 1527
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Bill Douros, West Coast Regional Director
99 Pacific Street, Bldg 108K
Monterey, CA 93940

Paul E. Michel, Superintendent
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
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Monterey, CA 93940

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San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein
1 Post St., Suite 2450
San Francisco, CA 94104

U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer
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For links to the Marine Sanctuary Alliance and SLO Coast Journal articles on the need for Sanctuary protection for the Central Coast, see santalucia.sierraclub.org/mbnms/mbnms.html

5

Santa Lucian • Nov/Dec. 2011
YOU’RE INVITED

JOIN US ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, FOR A CELEBRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE, MUSIC AND ART

Readings from local authors
Book signings
A Plein Air art talk
Chamber music by musicians from the SLO Symphony
Dinner
Raffle
Silent auction

OUR FEATURED READERS:

Catherine Ryan Hyde
The author of Pay It Forward will be reading from her new, unpublished book of essays and present a multimedia show of photographs and films that she’s taken while hiking, canoeing and kayaking around the County and in National Parks.

Vicki Leon
The author of How to Mellify a Corpse will be reading from her new book, 4000 Years of Uppity Women.

Plus: Q&A, good food, great music, and an art exhibit and sale of superb local landscape paintings.

1:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.
Admission $75, $35 students.
Tickets on sale now
Seating is limited

Call to reserve: 805-543-8717
Send check to:
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
(Memo: “xx tickets, Sierra Club Benefit”)

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Bay from the Santa Lucia Chapter and get 11% off!

Wall $12.50
Desk: $13.50
50 or more: 15% off

Call Bonnie to order:: 543-7051
Is Bt Corn Safe For Human Consumption?
Evidence mounts against genetically modified organisms

By Jesse Arnold

In two separate tests, rats and mice fed corn genetically engineered to produce the pesticide Bt has shown harmful effects.

If genetically modified Bt corn was harmful to rats, it may also be harmful to humans.

French researcher Dr. Gilles-Eric Séralini at the University of Caen in the United States conducted tests on three strains of Monsanto Bt corn in which rats suffered signs of organ damage after just three months. He concluded that rats which ate the genetically engineered Bt corn had "statistically significant" signs of liver and kidney damage compared to rats given a non-genetically engineered diet. He felt these signs of toxicity and kidney damage call for further studies to check for long-term damage.

A study commissioned by the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety conducted a long-term feeding study confirming genetically engineered Bt corn seriously affects reproductive health in mice. Feeding mice Monsanto’s Bt corn led to lowered fertility in the mice. Mice fed non-genetically engineered corn reproduced more quickly. Opponents of genetically engineered crops who have warned about this infertility link, along with other health risks, now seek an immediate ban of all genetically engineered crops to protect human health and fertility.

A study conducted at the University of Sherbrooke in Canada found the Bt toxin found in genetically engineered Bt corn in human blood samples for the first time. Set to be published in Reproductive Toxicology, the study shreds the belief that Bt is broken down by the digestive system and instead shows that the toxin persists in the bloodstream. The Canadian study evaluated 30 pregnant women and 39 non-pregnant women who had come to the Quebec hospital for tubectomy. Upon taking blood samples, researchers detected Bt toxin in a shocking 93% of maternal and 80% of fetal blood samples. Sixty-nine percent of non-pregnant women tested positive. All women in the study consumed a typical Canadian diet, which, as in the U.S., is riddled with genetically engineered materials and toxins. Bt toxin was detected even in unborn babies, showing the toxin is easily passed from mother to child.

Labeling genetically engineered crops is not required because Monsanto and the proponents of ag biotech don’t want you to know what you’re eating.

For information on buying non-genetically engineered food, go to: www.HealthierEating.org

Jesse Arnold has a degree in Ornamental Horticulture from Cal Poly. He has taught a course in organic gardening at Cuesta College, and is a hobby grower of Indian corn and sweet corn in Cambria.

Make a Pledge to Gather Signatures This Fall!

WANT TO HELP MAKE GMO HISTORY?

You can help get an initiative on the California 2012 ballot that will require the labeling of genetically engineered foods. Getting an initiative on the California ballot is a long haul. Once we get the language of the initiative approved by the state we have 150 days to gather 504,760 qualifying signatures. The experts tell us we should count on gathering 750,000 -- 800,000 to make sure we have enough that make it.

We’re organizing our signature gathering campaign now so that when we get the initiative back we are ready to start running. This is one of the ways in which our people power can get this to the ballot. We need people--lots of people--who are willing to put in some hours gathering signatures after being trained in how to get them (as we need to make sure that our efforts are effectively going to pass muster).

If you sign a pledge for 1000 signatures, that means that you or a group you put together says you promise to get 10 signatures a week for 20 weeks. Or, on a good day in front of a Trader Joe’s, you could spend three or five Saturday afternoons ensuring this gets on the ballot.

1000 signatures simply too much? We still need you! Every bit helps. Maybe you can commit to 500 in 20 weeks. Or less. Please, whatever you feel you can keep a commitment to, we need you. Come join us and take a pledge to get GMO labeling on the ballot in 2012!

YES! I’LL TAKE THE PLEDGE TO GET SIGNATURES THIS FALL 2011

☑ 1,000 OR MORE SIGNATURES
☑ 500 OR MORE SIGNATURES
☑ 250 OR MORE SIGNATURES
☑ 100 OR MORE SIGNATURES

Go to: www.labelgmos.org
The Planet, Moving

It's a good kind of tired. The SLO bike run participants preparing to translate their actions into demands on Moving Planet day.

The Empower Poly Coalition, Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Central Coast Clergy & Laity for Justice and the SLO County Bicycle Coalition organized the September 24 Moving Planet Day climate rally in SLO – part of an international day of action that took place on September 24 calling for the world to go beyond fossil fuels and move the planet forward to a clean energy future.

After a bike run through the city and a Steynberg Gallery gathering, we delivered a letter with fifty signatures to the office of San Luis Obispo City Manager Katie Lichtig urging the city to accelerate its efforts “to create a complete connected network of bike paths throughout our city as a critical component of our local efforts to curb the impacts of global climate change.”

The letter called in particular for the completion of the city’s Railroad Safety and Bob Jones Trails as a local priority.

“Completing this path will lead directly to more people riding their bikes for transportation while simultaneously improving our economic and environmental health,” the letter read. “Any measure that will contribute to the goal of leaving fossil fuels in the ground is a measure that should be implemented immediately.”

The signatures on the letter were gathered at the Moving Planet bike run through the city and event at the Steynberg Gallery in SLO following. More than 2,000 Moving Planet events in 175 countries took place throughout the day, with hundreds of thousands of people putting the demand for climate action into motion while marching, biking or skating.

The planet has been stuck for too long with governments doing nothing about the biggest problem we’ve ever faced,” said Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, the international climate campaign that coordinated the global demonstrations. More at www.moving-planet.org/.

Holding forth: Current Empower Poly Coalition President Victoria Carranza (left), Former President, Sam Gross and External Vice President Yamina Pressler.

Above: The Santa Lucia Chapter funded dinner at the Steynberg Gallery for the intrepid, hungry bikers and hosted the local premiere of the educational TV series Moving Beyond the Automobile.

Left: SLO County Bike Coalition’s Brian Kurotuchi and SLO County RideShare’s Morgen Marshall addressed the throng.
The odious new rule will impose billions of dollars in compliance costs and put at risk over 200,000 jobs. It’s estimated that in the paper mill industry alone, 36 mills across the country would close because of the new regulations governing boilers, resulting in nearly 90,000 lost jobs.

By the EPA’s own estimate, the new rule [for smog regulations ordered withdrawn by President Obama] would have cost the economy $90 billion a year.

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Morro Bay
continued from page 3
accommodate both wastewater flows at build-out as well as reuse of reclaimed water" and give the Commission “clear and documented information about its current and potential benefits of alternative project locations...including with respect to the manner in which the project could be designed to accommodate such a water reclamation program, and it must evaluate the feasibility of constructing infrastructure to accommodate such a water reclamation program, including potential benefits to stream habitats and water supply, potential revenue generation from providing such water to users and offsetting the need for purchased State Water credits, and the potential for elimit nation of the existing ocean outfall?”

Instead of an updated feasibility study laying out how the project could be reconfigured, the draft alternatives analysis includes a “Wastewater Disposal and Reclamation Discussion,” which essentially restates the issues in the above paragraph extended for over four pages, and relies on a 12-year-old study — the opposite of “updated.” The “clear and documented information about the costs and benefits” required by the Commission devolved into a statement that all the studied alternative sites could theoretically produce recycled water, but it would cost more.

The Coastal Commission had spelled out the project, as the community spelled it out before the project went to the Commission the first time, but again community leaders seem not to have understood what they’ve been told. The steepness of the learning curve was indicated by this passage in the draft alternatives analysis:

“...keep it right where it is scenario. The project would reduce the availability of scarce oceanfront land for potential public recreational purposes, and it could cause adverse impacts to nearby existing ocean outfalls ordered the elimination of all existing ocean outfalls by 2025, and the potential for elimination of the wastewater ocean outfalls (Florida has prohibited the construction of new ocean outfalls, ordered the elimination of all existing outfalls by 2025, and required that any new quantity of the wastewater previously discharged be beneficially reused. But, hey: maybe the Coastal Commission will say it prefers dumping high-quality treated effluent in the sea rather than recycling it.) Someone should spell it out for the staff and officials of the City of Morro Bay and the Cayucos Sanitary District in sending back their deficient sewer permit for their project — the Coastal Commission had spelled out the project, as the community spelled it out before the project went to the Commission the first time, but again community leaders seem not to have understood what they’ve been told. The steepness of the learning curve was indicated by this passage in the draft alternatives analysis:

“In the preparation of this report, discussions with the RWQCB indicate that a salt management plan would be required to support permitting process for the WDR relative to salt and water supply, poten- tial revenue generation from agricultural irrigation inside and outside the City limits, and the way in which the project could be designed to accommodate such a water reclamation program, and it must evaluate the feasibility of constructing infrastructure to accommodate such a water reclamation program, including potential benefits to stream habitats and water supply, poten- tial revenue generation from providing such water to users and offsetting the need for purchased State Water credits, and the potential for elimination of the existing ocean outfall?”

Sierra Club National Awards
Two congressmen and two people who have written extensively about global warming were among those receiving awards from the Sierra Club this year. Most of the awards were presented September 23-24 in San Francisco.

The Club’s top award, the John Muir Award, went to Bill McKibben, who has authored 13 books and founded the international organization 350.org. McKibben’s 1989 book, The End of Nature, is regarded as the first book for a general audience about climate change, and has been printed in more than 20 languages.

Elizabeth Kolbert, a former New York Times reporter, received the David R. Brower Award, which recognizes outstanding environmental reporting. Kolbert’s 2006 book Field Notes from a Catastrophe, which was based on an award-winning three-part series for the New Yorker, is one of the most powerful commentaries to date on global climate shift.

Massachusetts Congressman Ed Markey received the club’s Edgar Wayburn Award, which honors outstanding service to the environment by a person in government. Since being elected to Congress in 1976, Rep. Markey has been at the forefront of environmental campaigns, pressing for increased fuel efficiency standards for our cars and light trucks, defending the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from proposed oil drilling, pushing for tougher clean air standards, advancing renewable energy and energy efficiency proposals, and authoring legislation to tackle global warming.

Congressman Keith Ellison from Minneapolis received the Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes individuals in public service for strong and consistent commitment to conservation. Rep. Ellison has been a strong supporter of the environment and environmental justice since was in the Minnesota state legislature. He has carried forward legislation to protect children from lead poisoning and to ban the use of the weed-killing agricultural pesticide known as atrazine due to its documented toxicity.

The Club’s Ansel Adams Award, which honors excellence in conservation photography, went to Ian Shive of Los Angeles. Shive’s 2009 book, The National Parks: Our American Landscape, highlights the rich diversity of the American ecological landscape and Shive has used it in a “wilderness diplomacy” project designed to promote cultural understanding worldwide by sharing images of America’s national parks. Shive also has used his photos to remind lawmakers of the importance of preserving our outdoor resources and to address the environmental impact of the U.S.-Mexico border fence.

The Club’s William Douglas Award, which recognizes individuals who have made outstanding use of the legal/judicial process to achieve environmental goals, went to Sharon Duggan of Oakland. Duggan has litigated on a broad variety of issues, including state and federal forestry, water quality, endangered species and environmental quality. She was the attorney for the Sierra Club and Los Padres ForestWatch in our recent legal action to protect the Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve (see page 1). She is best known for her work on a series of cases involving the ancient redwood groves of the Headwaters Forest in Northern California. In a landmark 1983 case, EPIC v. Johnson, Duggan established that California state agencies must consider the cumulative effects of logging in a watershed on water quality, soils and wildlife habitat when reviewing logging plans. Since that victory, the Environmental Protection Information Center in Humboldt County has successfully enforced this ruling in nearly two dozen lawsuits to promote biodiversity, endangered species and the redwood ecosystem.

For information on all awards and the Sierra Club awards program, visit www.sierracub.org/awards.
Classifieds

Next issue deadline is December 12.
To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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Nature’s Reflections – Oeeisca Ridge Guest Resort
Blue Ridge Property, 9 A.M.
Outings and Activities Calendar

Outings and Activities Calendar

All our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. Please bring drinking water to all outings and appointments a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within the area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Outings policies, or would like to be an outings leader, please contact Chair Joe Morris, 772-1875. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Sat., Nov. 5th, 8:30 a.m. Beginner’s Bird Walk, Oso Flaco. Can’t tell a goose from a goose? Then come and learn the great fun of birding, co-led with Audubon Society experts Jennifer Menzie and Maggie Smith, in the Oso Flaco Natural Area. We’ll follow the boardwalk trail through riparian, dune, and shoreline habitats to look for fall migrants and overwintering birds. Snopes and some binoculars provided if you don’t have your own. Wear sturdy shoes and layered clothing. Kids with parents welcome. Meet at the Oso Flaco parking lot. 55 parking fee charged, though limited free parking outside the gate is available. Rain cancels. Info.: Joe Morris, 772-1875.

Sat., Nov. 5th, 9:00 a.m. Rinconada Trail. Hike to Bell Mountain via Rinconada trail in Los Padres National Forest, arriving at ridge top with 360 views from Paso Robles to N. Santa Barbara County. Total distance is 5 miles, elevation gain of 800 feet, and total hike time of 3 hours. Meet at trail head, approximately 10 miles east of Hwy 101 on Pozo Rd. (3 miles beyond the turnoff for Santa Margarita Lake). A map marks to turn off from Pozo Road on the right hand side. Bring adequate water, snacks, and dress for the weather; a hat and sturdy shoes are advised. For info, call Bill at (805) 459-2103, billwest29@gmail.com. Plants, animals, and geology of the area will be topics during the hike. This is a joint hike with the California Native Plants Society.

Sat., Nov. 12th, 8:30 a.m. West Cuesta Ridge Hike. Explore the far reaches of Stenner Creek drainage as we hike to the top of West Cuesta Ridge via Shooters, traverse along road to the Botanical Area, then return via Morning Glory Trail to starting Point. This is a moderately strenuous 8-mile hike with 2000 foot elevation gain. Bring water, snack and dress for the weather. Meet at the Cal Poly Ropes Course Parking Area on Stenner Creek Road, about 2 miles from Highway 1 heading towards Morro Bay. Details: call Gary (805) 473-3049, Rain Cancell.

Wed., Nov. 16th, 7-9 p.m. Bi-monthly Meeting: “Earth’s First Billion Years”. Dr. Scott Johnston, a popular Cal Poly geology professor, describes the violent transformation of our planet from a molten mass to one with oceans and the first life, and then how the moon’s collision 4.5 billion years ago changed a hollow lot. Come and hear Dr. Johnston’s pioneering fieldwork in East Greenland, and, hold one of the 3.5 billion year old rock fragments he brought back. Conservation news will begin the meeting. Location: Stenberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 772-1875.

Sat., Nov. 19th, 10:30 a.m. Cerro San Luis Picnic Viewpoint. 4-mile, 1000 ft. gain hike to the new geologically wonderful areas of the region from successions of the Nine Sisters to Laguna Lake and also enjoy potluck picnic. Bring a serving for 5 people to share, your own plate, utensils, and water. Dress appropriately for the weather and moderately rocky trail conditions. Meet in Maino Open Space Parking lot at base of the mountain. Take Marsh St. and turn off into parking lot on right, immediately before getting onto Hwy 101 South. Info.: Franca Rossi, 831-229-9062. Asst.: Joe Morris, 805-772-1875.

Sat., Dec. 10, 9:00 a.m. Anniversary hike on the Cerro Alto long loop. Join the leader on this moderate 7-mile hike which has about 1900 ft. of elevation gain. We will begin at the Cerro Alto campground and ascend to Cerro Alto Peak. From the top we will ascend through the eucalyptus grove and finish by coming down the Boy Scout trail. From the top of Cerro Alto there is a wonderful 360 degree view which includes the coastline, Bring water, lunch, or snacks, and dress for the weather. There is a possibility of poison oak. To get to the campground, travel about 7 miles east of Morro Bay on Highway 41 or about 10 miles west of Atascadero on Highway 41. Turn onto the road where you see a campground marker. Go to the end of the road. There is a $5.00 parking fee. There is a strong probability of eating at Taco Temple following the hike. Heavy rain cancels. For info, call Chuck @ 805-441-7597.

Sat., Dec. 17th, 10 a.m. City Walk of San Luis Obispo: Jazz Age to the Fifties. Where is the hotel where Hearst entertained his guests, the location of the red light district in the twenties, the USO dance hall for GIs after Pearl Harbor, and the original French Hotel? Find out and much more on a guided downtown stroll past historic stores, theaters, and hotels. Learn about SLO city life from years of the Model T to Prohibition and World War II, starting with a visit to building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Meet at corner of Santa Rosa and Pacific Sts., SLO. Rain cancels. Info.: Joe Morris, 772-1875.

Thurs-Mon, Dec. 29th, 2011-Jan. 2nd, 2012, Holiday Service in Carrion Plain. Once again we return to the Carrion Plain to celebrate the end of the year and to offer service to the prehistoric antelope in this National Monument. Lying between Bakersfield and San Luis Obispo, this vast grassland is home to pronghorn antelope, tule elk, kit fox, and a wide variety of birds. A welcome hike Dec. 29, and a half day of service modifying barbed wire fencing, and a full day for hiking and exploring are planned. Use of accommodations at Goodwin Ranch is included. Limited to 14 participants, $30 covers four dinners and breakfast on New Year’s morning. For more information, contact leader: Craig Deutsche, craig.deutsche@gmail.com (510-477-0670).

Fri-Sun, Jan 20th-22nd - Death Valley National Park Wilderness Restoration. Come help restore wilderness values in this beautiful and remote desert area. We will work with Death Valley Wilderness Coordinator Charlie Callaghan on a project in one of the parks many wilderness areas. Past project have included re-landscaping former OHV routes that are now in wilderness, trail repair and cleaning up around historic cabins. Work will start on Friday afternoon. Happy hour potluck Saturday night. Leader: Kate Allen, kallen96@gmail.com, 866-944-4056.

Outings Sponsored by other organizations

Sweet Springs Nature Preserve. The Audubon Society, which manages Sweet Springs Nature Preserve in Los Osos, has received a grant to work on pathways and restoration. Volunteers are needed on the second Saturday of the month from 12 to help with weeding, weeding, planting, etc. More info at www.morrocoastaudubon.org.

Ventana Wilderness Alliance Trail Crew Opportunities

Volunteers are needed for work in the Ventana and Silverpeak Wilderness Wilderness Areas. Rain Cancels. daveknapp@ventanawild.org; Switch to Carrizo after rain begins in earnest: E-mail Betsy MacGowan bmacgowan@hotmail.com, for info.

Nov. 4th-7th Carrizo Trail Esperanza Trail work. Needs assistant E-mail leader daveknapp@ventanawild.org for info.

Nov. 9th-17th Cone Peak CMH ACE hike on Cone Peak project. E-mail: Mike Heard at heard@pohos.com for info.

Nov. 11th-13th Puerto Suelo Robert B Trail salvation on Puerto Suelo. E-mail: Robert Barringer rob.barringer@gmail.com, for info.

Nov. 12th-13th, 19th, 20th Marble Peak bmac Trail work camp at willow springs. Rain Cancels - switch to Carrizo after rain begins in earnest: E-mail: Betsy MacGowan, bmacgowan@hotmail.com, for info.

Nov. 23rd-Dec 1st Cone Peak CMH ACE hike on Cone Peak project. E-mail: Mike Heard at heard@pohos.com for info.

Dec 2nd-Carrizo Trail Esperanza Trail work. E-mail David Knapp at daveknapp@ventanawild.org for info.

Dec. 3rd-5th Marble Peak bmac Trail work camp at willow springs. Rain Cancels - switch to Carrizo after rain begins in earnest, Betsy MacGowan, bmacgowan@hotmail.com, for info.

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