A Faulty Analysis

By the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility

On Oct 12, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced that “based on our review, the NRC has confirmed our preliminary conclusion that the Diablo Canyon Power Plant’s (DCPP’s) ground motions from the Shoreline fault are at or below those for which the plant was evaluated previously and demonstrated to have reasonable assurance of safety.” But the NRC’s “Confirmatory Analysis of Seismic Hazard at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant from the Shoreline Fault Zone” had some major caveats and one huge omission: the NRC based its assertion on old data, as no data from yet-to-be undertaken offshore seismic studies has been acquired or analyzed.

Buried 35 pages into the report, “faulty” assumptions rupture to the surface:

“Several other important aspects of the Shoreline fault remain poorly characterized and therefore subject to uncertainty. These uncertainties include (1) the surface or subsurface rupture length of the fault, (2) structural relationships of the Shoreline fault to other faults, in particular the faults of the San Luis Bay fault zone, and (3) whether the Shoreline fault is capable of producing large enough earthquakes to affect the hazard at the DCPP.”

PG&E was supposed to provide the NRC with a comparison of the Shoreline fault to the original Double Design Earthquake (DDE) and Safe Shutdown (SSE) earthquakes identified in the plant’s 1980s license. These earlier criteria postulated a magnitude 6.5 earthquake six miles beneath the plant. There is no evidence that PG&E ever provided this analysis to the NRC.
Sierra Club General Meeting
Tuesday, Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
Preserving SLO’s wide open spaces

Come meet the man who created SLO’s greenbelt legacy. Recently retired from his position as Natural Resources Manager for the City of San Luis Obispo, Neil Havlik spent 17 years leading the city’s effort to preserve over 5,600 acres of open space and wildlife habitat. (See “How Mr. Havlik Made Us Happy,” Sept.). So what does he think should come next? Neil will give his vision for SLO’s natural heritage—the problems and the prospects. Conservation news will begin the meeting.

Stevenson Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

What Shark?
When big money met environmental reality over the Paso Robles groundwater basin, a familiar tale unfolded

On September 25, the County Board of Supervisors heard public testimony and voted to put in place an ordinance to halt the subdivision of land over the Paso Robles groundwater basin as a way to begin addressing the emergency of the basin’s rapidly dropping water level. Banning future subdivisions over the basin is projected to conserve 250 acre-feet of water over the next twenty years.

The 3-2 vote may have been this board’s finest hour. Our favorite maxim, “the economy is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the environment,” is providing everyone with an immediate, real-world demonstration over the Paso basin. The truth of that maxim is starting to bite down, and it is being felt by property owners who are seeing their wells run dry and their homes become worthless. In dealing with this reality, Supervisors Jim Patterson, Bruce Gibson and Adam Hill were steadfast and suitably incredulous in the face of ferocious opposition to the ordinance from the county’s powerful ag interests, who tried to dismiss the need to take immediate action.

What they wanted most was the boat accident. Right next door to the County Government Center, about ninety minutes after the vote on the ordinance, the Fremont Theater screened the classic film scheduled as that evening’s installment in its “SLO Rewind” series: Jaws.

What Shark? continued on page 4
An Affront to Democracy

By Allison Chin, President, Sierra Club

Virginia, the birthplace of American democracy, recently played host to international trade negotiations that challenge democracy as we know it. Over the past year, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact could subject environmental and public interest laws and safeguards to attack by foreign corporations, threaten our air and water with toxic pollution, and lead to more American jobs being shipped overseas. Possibly most troubling, however, is that the TPP is shaping up to be a stealth affront to the principles of our democracy.

As President of the Sierra Club, elected by the membership of the nation's largest grassroots environmental organization, I value the fundamental elements of democracy—including openness, transparency, and participation—that help ensure fairness and equity in how rules are made and who they protect.

So I was bothered to learn that while the negotiations for the TPP were taking place just a short distance from my home in Leesburg, I couldn’t actually participate in—or even observe—any of the talks. In fact, none but TPP government trade negotiators, hundreds of elite business executives, and a handful of non-corporate advisors can even read any of the draft texts. It’s all hidden from the public, and negotiations are conducted behind closed doors. Members of the public who register with the U.S. Trade Representative were allowed limited face time with negotiators.

TRADE continued on page 8

NRC continued on page 3

TRADE continued on page 10

No Reply from SLO Farmers Market

August 22, 2012

Peter Jankay
SLO Farmers Market
PO Box 16058
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Dear Mr. Jankay,

We are writing out of concerns arising from the sale of genetically engineered Bt corn at the SLO Farmers Market.

Genetic engineering, unlike traditional breeding methods, breaks down the natural barriers that have protected the integrity of species for millions of years, allowing the transfer of genetic material from one organism into a host organism of an unrelated species.

Though GMO’s have been approved for human consumption in the United States without experimental tests to determine whether such consumption was safe, there is growing evidence from observations of animals that consuming GMOs may cause injury or disease.

Beyond theoretical harms, there is the immediate problem faced by organic growers when pollen drift comes from fields of GE crops planted in proximity to organic crops. The presence of antibiotic resistance in crops may become a serious threat to organic farmers, who fear their produce could be contaminated with the transgene from the GE crop. A crop grown from seed saved from what had been an organic field will contain the transgene and must be considered genetically engineered. It can no longer be certified organic.

Another serious issue for organic growers is the inevitable resistance that insect pests will develop to Bt toxin. Organic farmers have been using Bt bacteria applied to crops in a spray as an organic method of controlling damaging insects. By applying Bt bacterial sprays occasionally, and because of the naturally limited quantity of the toxin present in the bacteria, organic farmers have avoided pest resistance problems. But genetically engineered Bt crops have the gene that codes for Bt toxin production spliced in. With massive quantities of Bt toxin present in fields throughout the growing season, most of the insects susceptible to the toxin will be killed off, leaving a proportionately greater number of resistant insects alive. Bt-resistant survivors will pass resistance traits into future generations and render this organic method of insect control useless.

The Precautionary Principle is of the greatest importance when the damage from a new technology would be irreversible. This is the case with genetic engineer- ing. Under the Precautionary Principle, genetically engineered farm crops should not be released into the environment or allowed to be part of the food supply until extensive, rigorous research is done to determine the long-term environmental and health impacts of each GMO and the need for the use of each GMO.

We urge the SLO Farmers Market to support the Precautionary Principle and remove genetically engineered food products from sale as a matter of policy until such time as safeguards and monitoring procedures such as those listed above are in place.

We look forward to your response.

For the Executive Committee,

Greg McMillan, Chair

TRADE continued on page 9

NRC continued on page 10
A parade of folks stepped up to claim a non-existent “right” to the gift of subdivision, as if lot splits were in the Constitution.

wanted the ordinance squelched in favor of the Blue Ribbon Committee’s activities (such as “efforts of the education committee to produce and circulate a Water Conservation brochure to 4,000 rural landowners in the basin.”)

Big Ag lawyered up and threatened to sue the County for not evaluating the potential “environmental impacts” of conserving 350-500 feet of water. (The same abuse of the California Environmental Quality Act deployed by the plastic industry when seeking a legal pretext to challenge plastic bag bans.)

All such testimony presented a dramatic contrast to the words of North County residents:

“Little did we know that while enjoying the view s from our window of the beautiful vineyards we were not noticing the moose tightening around our necks.”

“You may not have had the experience of what it is like to turn on the hose and have nothing come out. No kink in the hose. No valve to switch. No water. At all.”

“I’m 12. I would like to get to grow up here in my home.”

The Sierra Club and North County Watch pointed out that when a basin is certified at Level of Severity III, the General Plan requires the Board of Supervisors to take specific actions, including “adopt growth management and other urgency measures to initiate whatever restrictions are necessary to minimize or halt further resource depletions,” and “a moratorium on land development.” Those are the rules, and they don’t allow any wiggle room.

North County Watch President Sue Harvey said “We challenge the ag community to come forward with enforceable amendments to the general plan that would require conservation in the ag industry. The amendments today are a minimum step.”

A letter from the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Steering Committee (aka the Blue Ribbon Committee), threatened that the subdivision ban would have a negative impact on our efforts to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to implement the Groundwater Management Plan. We have received very strong opposition of total prohibition of land divisions from the majority of our Committee.”

They

Watershed Area

**Shark continued from page 2**

imitated life next door. An existential threat with big teeth is rising up under North County, and the response to the crisis looks familiar to the discerning flingtoer — who, thanks to his or her cinematic education, should be able to provide a ready answer to the biggest question posed and felt hanging in the air at the Sept. 25 board meeting: why were the county’s most powerful economic interests and their political friends opposed to a modest measure constituting a first step in dealing with the crisis?

At the hearing, a parade of folks stepped up to the podium to claim a nonexistent “right” to the gift of subdivision, as if lot splits were in the Constitution.

A young Libertarian skinhead railed against “big government” — he didn’t know anything about the groundwater basin, he admitted, but he knew he didn’t like government.

The Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance admonished “We have continually expressed our position that these efforts are premature.”

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**Santa Lucian • Nov./Dec. 2012**
Santa Lucian • Nov./Dec. 2012

Avila Ponders Bird Sanctuary

At the October 8 meeting of the Avila Valley Advisory Council, the Sierra Club-joined Avila Beach resident Shirley Goetz in a presentation of the proposal to declare the Avila Valley a bird sanctuary.

The declaration would provide a launch pad for Goetz’s vision of building a Mission San Juan Capistrano breeding wall for the population of cliff swallows that are drawn to the area every year for its abundant food and housing resources — i.e. mosquitos and mud — and to create a haven for the outdoorsy of the community and away from clashes with some residents and businesses that their not always welcome presence brings.

We are pleased to support this worthy initiative, as we were pleased to assist a few years ago, along with Morro Coast Audubon, when the Avila Valley Community Center needed to re-install swallow netting and learn the rules about nest removal vis a vis federal law. We all worked together to achieve a good outcome. Here’s another opportunity for an excellent outcome provided by a remarkable little bird.

For the Sierra Club, our primary concern is the fact that increasing urbanization has caused the cliff swallow population in Southern California to fall in the last four decades, so we’d like to see them accommodated everywhere as much as possible to protect their role in the ecosystem, and they’re saying that a land use issue that absolutely does not affect agriculture at all would allow you to walk away from a collaborative solution. Does that make any sense to you?

MECHAM: I wish they were all here to answer that question. All I got was the letter from them that basically said that they don’t support the land use portion of this, and I don’t have the chair here.

GIBSON: Can you identify which of those interests would walk away from this committee?

MECHAM: The Farm Bureau, for one.

GIBSON: The Farm Bureau would walk away from the larger solution of agricultural water use over this basin that’s in crisis? Is that true?

MECHAM: That’s what was told to me.

GIBSON: You know, I find that really disturbing. I mean, here’s the preeminent representatives of agriculture interests over this basin that’s in crisis? Is that true?

MECHAM: That threat seems to me entirely hollow, and I’d like to explore why that is. Why is the passage of these particular land use issues, which are not the main mission of the blue ribbon committee, who’s looking for physical solutions of those much larger things, why would that disrupt their ability to collaborate? Can you give me any specific reason?

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The October 13 Santa Lucia Chapter Sustainability Strategy Meeting was ably facilitated by Naomi Blakely and attended by all current Ex-Com members, Chapter Director Andrew Christie, Conservation Committee Chair Sue Harvey, Outings Director Joe Morris, Political Committee member Richard Kranzdorf, and more than a dozen interested Chapter members who turned out on a Saturday morning to roll up their sleeves and don their thinking caps. (See “We Need You Now,” October.)

After a warm welcome by Chapter Chair Greg McMillan and a roundhouse introduction by all attendees, Treasurer Lindi Douc laid out the history of our financial situation and our current dilemma: we have bare bones monthly expenses of roughly $5,868, not including stationery, postage stamps and computer services. Monthly income is a more complicated calculation, but it's been averaging roughly $500 per month. So we are losing over $5,000 per month.

Over the eight years that we have employed our sole staff member, our Chapter has transformed from a hiking club into the most effective environmental voice in the County, benefitting all of our lives. Our finances have been buoyed temporarily by fund-raisers, grants, contribution drives, and periodic generous gifts by our members. But without a steady source of income, it has been, and is, unsustainable.

In March, we sent a letter to all our members with a plea for financial help. Response was generous, but still fell short of a sustainable level. We find ourselves now with only a month or so left before we can no longer pay our bills. So the task at hand is either to seriously downsize (as in cutting staff, switching to an electronic newsletters and closing the office) or seriously increase our income by at least $5,000 per month.

As facilitated by Naomi, the October 13 meeting resulted in a lively brainstorm of 3-minute ideas, thoughts, and comments, ranging across every possible fundraising idea. Joe Morris reminded us that our mission, as laid out by John Muir, is to “explore, enjoy, protect.” All agreed that monthly donations from many members is vital, either by monthly check, clicking “Donate to our Chapter” on our website, or setting up monthly bill pay through one’s bank.

Naomi's poster paper transcriptions of some of the ideas submitted by participants yielded the following:

**Morning Session**

**What’s Working**

* Andrew! Representing the needs of Mother Earth in SLO = better quality of life for us

**What’s Not Working**

* Our Chapter must raise its own funds & p.r: don’t expect any help from National or State Sierra Club for this
* Not enough money coming in
* Local Chapter seems too structured: Executive Committee & Conservation Committee seem isolated from member participation. Announce & open up meetings.
* When people donate to National Sierra Club, they mistakenly think our local Chapter gets the money. Be sure to push the “Donate to our Chapter” button in the center of our website’s home page if you want your money to stay with our local Chapter.

**Money Ideas**

* Professional fund-raiser for suggestions/input – National will send one for free
* Need to be more pro-active
* Send “Quick Money” request to Members for urgent situation like this
* Electronic Newsletter instead of paper - save $800 per month
* Make $ from some special outings events
* March Window – Santa Lucia's only month when National Sierra Club is not soliciting funds
* Annual dinner or fundraising event
* Direct input to members as to where $ is spent
* Movie night
* Form a Financial/Development Committee
* Ongoing contributions as monthly investment in the well-being of our environment, not just annual donation

**Other Ideas**

* Encourage walk-ins and their issues
* Post times/dates of upcoming Committee meetings in Santa Lucia and website
* Increase contact with and acknowledgment of major donors
* Partner with others locally who share our issues
* Share an office with other non-profits
* Regular local contribution reminders, like dues
* Ask for input on interests/needs from members in questionnaire form on March Window envelopes

**Short Term**

* Try to re-engage major Donors
* $ to continue beyond next month
* Increase ability to contact members beyond mail: update Member lists with e-mail addresses and phone numbers

**Long Term**

* Discuss how to engage the other members of our Chapter
* Outreach to youth (under 50!)
* Generate money on a regular and recurring basis

**After Break Session**

**Money**

* Set up a Fundraising Committee
* Start a Foundation
* Host a “GMO-Free Dinner” Fundraiser, seeking produce donations from organic producers, restaurants, markets

* Ask folks to commit to phoning five friends to become monthly donors
* “Underwater Film Festival”: Include underwater photos/art for sale
  Coordinate with marine groups/businesses, guest speakers
* Special (private) location guided hikes for fee
* Schedule the National Sierra Club fundraiser to come to an ExCom meeting
* Volunteer to write personal “thank-you” notes to every donor
* Speaker fees. Special film events Special 1-3 day tours (like Sierra Club California Channel Islands trips)
* Look for local green business sponsors
* Hire a professional fundraiser willing to work on commas soon
* For monthly donors who don’t want automatic withdrawals, send packet of envelopes & reminder cards.
* Contact supporters who aren’t members for donations. Make Excel sheet of additional donors who aren’t members
* Donation of commercial space?

Thank You!

This is a great trove of ideas and directions. I am convinced that the path we need for this task lies in this information. All we need to do is organize the information and do the work to implement the great ideas.

Keeping this energy in motion is our highest priority. We hope that we can count on all of you to continue this flow of ideas and information. With such a great start, I am sure we will carry this mission out to its logical end.

Our first order of business is to form the Development Committee. It would not be a huge time commitment, but it is a great need for this group.

Beyond the hopefully continuing participation of the folks who came out and sat down with us on October 13, we were overwhelmed by the generosity of the folks who wrote a check on the spot to our website when they got home and signed up as automatic monthly donors via PayPal or their bank. It was not something we had anticipated. It is humbling and gives us great faith that we can move our Chapter forward as the most important voice for the protection of the earth in our corner of the world.

- Greg McMillan, Chapter Chair

continued next page
Morro Bay Mollusk Snags Coastal Commission Prize

The California Coastal Commission and the California Thank You Ocean Campaign have announced the winners of the 14th Annual California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest. The contest features photographs that reflect the importance that the coast and ocean has for California residents and the role that the Coastal Commission, Natural Resources Agency and Ocean Protection Council have played in preserving coastal and marine resources.

Three winners won Judges’ Choice prizes while another two won Viewers’ Choice prizes based on on-line voting by the public. The prizes were generously donated by Fairmont Hotels & Resorts of California and Hornblower Cruises & Events. The judges also recognized thirteen pictures with Honorable Mentions. The third place Judges’ Choice winner is Gary Powell, who in 2010 won first place for a photo of a nudibranch. This winning picture is also of a nudibranch, which he photographed underneath the North T-Pier in Morro Bay, where there is an abundance of sea life.

Gary Powell’s Hermissenda crassicornis nudibranch, Morro Bay.

Be Afraid

We live in troubled times. And historically troubled times have meant an upsurge in reactionary bad ideas (always in line with the corporate agenda of maximum exploitation for maximum profit), and conspiracies conjured and offered up to scared, angry people as focal points for their rage and fear.

The event advertised at right was part of a “Defend Rural America” tour wound through the rural counties of northern and central California this fall and landed in Atascadero after rolling out of Yreka a year ago. It’s promoted on the website of the Save America Foundation, which issues warnings against one-world government, one-world currency and a one-world military, and urges people to buy gold bullion and join the Tea Party.

Defend Rural America appears to be an outgrowth of the Wise Use movement of the ‘90s – aka the Sagebrush Rebellion – but with a wider range of concerns. It is not, as yet, as violent as Wise Use eventually became, earning itself a listing in the report “Domestic Terrorism and Incident Management: Issues and Tactics,” but it shares the same affinity for rolling back the Endangered Species Act and many other environmental and public health regulations; ending the concept of wilderness; drilling, mining and clear-cutting public lands; and promoting the deeply nutty “Agenda 21” U.N.-takeover conspiracy theory. Keep your eyes peeled, pilgrim.

Interested in helping out with some of the above? Drop us a note at sierryclub8@gmail.com, or P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, 93406.

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Gary Powell’s Hermissenda crassicornis nudibranch, Morro Bay.
Sierra Club Marks 40 Years of the Clean Water Act with Clean Water Voting Record

The Sierra Club marked the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act this October by releasing a Clean Water Voting Record for the U.S. House of Representatives.

The online report card features an interactive map and issues letter grades for U.S. Representatives’ voting records on clean water issues. As it turns out, this Congress has vowed to endanger the drinking water sources of 117 million Americans, allow toxic pesticide discharges into our waterways without oversight and halt strong protections for toxic coal ash and destructive mountaintop removal.

“Americans rely on clean water – we need it to drink, grow our crops and supply our food. Many of us depend on it for the things we enjoy most – swimming, boating, hunting and fishing,” said Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club.

“For forty years, the Clean Water Act has helped protect our water. But in the 112th Congress, we’ve seen an unprecedented attack from House Leadership on clean water policy.”

The Sierra Club’s Clean Water Report Card highlights which members of Congress side with Americans who care about clean water and who sides with big polluters.

“The Clean Water Act is one of America’s greatest success stories,” said Brune. “Take the Cuyahoga River in Ohio, which at one time was one of the most polluted rivers in the nation. The Cuyahoga was so polluted, that it actually caught fire multiple times in the late 1960s. Since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, the Cuyahoga – once devoid of life – now supports 44 species and is recognized as an American Heritage River.”

“Today we should celebrate that success and move forward to build on that progress to ensure that our children and our children’s children will have a clean and healthy environment to live in. View the Sierra Club’s new Clean Water Report Card at www.sierraclub.org/coal/reportcard/”

Senators Say No to Bad Trade Deal

By Ilana Solomon, Sierra Club Labor and Trade Program

A bipartisan group of 10 U.S. Senators says that a strong and binding environment chapter of the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact is critical to their support of the deal. This signals that we have firmly entered into a new era of trade in which many in Congress will only accept agreements with strong and enforceable environmental chapters.

The October 17 letter to the U.S. Trade Representative was signed by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chair of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on International Trade, and Olympia Snowe (R-ME), also on Senate Finance. Among others, it was co-signed by John Kerry (D-MA), John R. McCain (R-AZ), Tom Harkin (D-IA) and others.

A primary goal of the TPP is to facilitate and expand trade in the Pacific Rim. Unfortunately, history has shown that as overall trade expands, so does illegal and unsustainable trade. By Ilana Solomon, Sierra Club Labor and Trade Program
Farming Rain

Rainwater harvesting is a technique used for collecting, storing, and using rainwater for landscape irrigation and other uses. This ancient practice is growing in popularity due to interest in reducing the consumption of potable water and the inherent qualities of rainwater. When rainwater is collected from various man-made above-ground hard surfaces, the result is reduced flooding, storm water runoff, erosion, and contamination of surface water with pesticides, sediment, metals, and fertilizers. It reduces the need for imported water and is an excellent source of water for landscape irrigation, with no filtration system required, no chemicals such as fluoride and chlorine, and no dissolved salts and minerals from the soil. Home systems can be relatively simple to install and operate and promote both water and energy conservation. Which, of course, means lower bills.

Rainwater systems come in all shapes and sizes, from a simple catchment system under a downspout to large above- and/or underground cisterns with complex filtration systems that can store thousands of gallons. Most rainwater collection systems are comprised of these basic components: catchment surface (your roof, or other raised solid surface), distribution system (gutters and downspouts), leaf screen, roof washer (a device that diverts the polluted “first flush” of rain before it enters the storage tank), delivery system (gravity-fed or pumped to the landscape or other end use areas), purification/treatment system (if for human consumption), and a storage tank. In general, the storage tank is the most expensive component of a rainwater harvesting system. There are numerous types and styles of storage tanks available. Storage can be above-ground or underground. Storage containers can be made from galvanized steel, wood, concrete, clay, plastic, fiberglass, polyethylene, masonry, etc. They can be cisterns, barrels, tanks, garbage cans, and swimming pools. Storage tank prices vary based on size, material and complexity. To inhibit the growth of algae, storage tanks should be opaque and preferably placed away from direct sunlight. The tanks should also be placed close to the areas of use and the supply line to reduce the distance over which the water is delivered. Also consider placing the storage at an elevated area to take advantage of gravity flow. The tank should always be placed on a stable and level area to prevent it from leaning or collapsing.

The San Luis Obispo Coalition of Appropriate Technology (SLO-COAT), SLO Green Build, the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club — was organized in 2007. We’ve produced local guides to Graywater Systems and Rainwater Management for Low Impact Development (see ad on page 11). Watch for the imminent release of the Guide to Rainwater Harvesting.

Here’s how: A rainwater catchment project takes shape at the September 23 SLOCOAT event at Cambria’s Camp Ocean Pines.

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Let’s Harvest Rainwater Together

Capture Collect Retain

Before

After

After a background briefing from SLO-COAT members, September 23 event attendees spent the afternoon playing with rocks, water and dirt and built a system to capture rainwater from the roof, collect it in a channel, and retain it in a catch basin to irrigate the landscaping at Camp Ocean Pines.
Seismic

Commission urging denial of the permit. We have met with Commission members to discuss our concerns and have presented the Commissioners binders of extensive information on potential environmental impacts and project alternatives, and spoken with staff.

Those concerns and the under-studied nature of project alternatives with significantly less potential for harm to the marine environment are largely ignored in two recent papers authored by Dr. Lindy Weilgart, a research associate at Dalhousie University, and an expert on undersea noise pollution from military sonar, oceanographic projects, and seismic surveys to collect Geochemical Data.

• Noise from a single seismic airgun survey can blanket an area of over 300,000 square kilometers, 4,000 km from the sound source, raising background noise levels 100-fold (20 dB), continuously for 9 hours, over 2700 hours per seismic survey. No recovery was apparent 58 days after exposure.

• In 2005, in the conclusions of the Diablo Canyon project’s environmental review, the International Whaling Commission concluded in 2005 that “repeated and persistent acoustic insults [over] a large area...should be considered enough to cause population level impacts.”

• The energy from airgun impulses is mostly concentrated in the lower frequencies, but includes substantial energy in the tens of kilohertz (kHz). Geophysicists do not make use of, nor even record, any energy over circa 100 Hz. This energy therefore needlessly impacts marine life, especially animals with mid- and high-frequency hearing.

• High peak pressure is a characteristic of sound believed to be harmful to organisms. A far-reaching and thorough alternative is marine vibrosones (MV), which uses signals of drastically lower pressure than airguns, representing a 1,000-fold reduction in intensity, and about a 16,000-fold reduction in the presumed area of impact.

• An MV system can reduce wasteful and harmful frequencies (over 100 Hz), suppressing these frequencies while still producing satisfactory and significant geophysical results.

• With MV, the necessary seismic information can be extracted using substantially lower signal levels and improved signal processing, again reducing environmental impact. MV can be used over a broader range of depths than airguns can— in deep water, shallow water, and transition zones.

• In general, MV surveys would be expected to cause less of an impact (behavioral, physiological, auditory) than airgun surveys in all habitats and environments.

• Stephen Chelmonsky, the inventor of the airgun, states that MV was “very much like to see a more benign than his invention. He states, “Though airguns have been an improvement over high explosives to the well-being of marine life, I would very much like to see a more benign sound source such as the MV come into use.”

• Deep Towed Acoustic Geophysical Systems (DTAGS) is also a controlled source, like MV, being developed at the Naval Research Laboratory, Stennis Space Center. DTAGS can achieve commercially useful sound pressure levels in the sea floor while keeping sound levels in the ocean to a minimum, especially in the shallower parts of the water column where marine life is concentrated. This technology is now known to have substantial and auditory, physiological, and behavioral effects.

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The Coastal Commission should heed Dr. Weilgart’s comments on the viability of alternative seismic survey technology with the potential for significantly reduced impacts to coastal resources.

We urge the Commission to consider the scientific consensus among marine biologists, who, like the inventor of the airgun, have for years been urging a transition away from airgun technology to alternative means of geophysical surveys due to the likely cumulative impacts of extremely loud sound pumped into the marine environment by airgun surveys, now ubiquitous in the world’s oceans.

In view of the above, and the unknown nature of this project’s long-term and population level impacts, we believe the Commission should deny a Coastal Development Permit and federal consistency certification, while advising PG&E to more thoroughly evaluate alternatives that can produce data on the critical seismic hazards faced by Diablo Canyon’s reactors, infrastructure and nuclear waste storage facility, while posing the lowest level of threat to marine wildlife.

Take Action

Public testimony will be taken by the Coastal Commission on November 14 at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium – East Wing, 1855 Main Street, Santa Monica. Exact time TBD. Check www.coastal.ca.gov for updates.

Send e-mail comments to pgsesimic@coastal.ca.gov.

Dear SLO: If It Ain’t Broke, Don’t Let Developers Fix It

October 16, 2012
TO: SLO City Council
FROM: Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club

Pursuant to the recommendation for “permit streamlining” in the Draft Background Report on the Land Use and Circulation Element that’s on your agenda tonight, we reiterate our comment on this issue from last August when you reviewed the Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP).

The staff report on the draft EDSP claimed that “permit streamlining” would “optimize the City’s development review process,” and that “based on community input, this would also include a review of City environmental review procedures.” On Page 43 of the EDSP, you will recall, we warned that “community input” and “public engagement” consisted of interviews with 31 individuals primarily from the business community, and that they were consulted in search of “an insider perspective.”

In Appendix A of the EDSP appeared the finding that in comparison to other regional governments, “the City appears to process permits efficiently with some of the shortest processing times.”

Hence it appears that “permit streamlining” is a solution in search of a problem. The “streamlining” of the environmental review process is of a piece with previously expressed desires to lower standards for the construction of infrastructure and “incentive” development. The EDSP has noted that the city’s permit process is efficient. We urge the Council not to allow the non-issue of permit streamlining to migrate into the LUCE update.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Andrew Christie, Director
Santa Lucia Chapter

NRC

continued from page 3

Ofoblispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) to prepare disaster plans. The development of a model greenhouse gas reduction plan includes many reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. To check the site for the location and time of the November 15 Workshop (there are two workshops—this is one, in North and South County,) go to the one nearest you, and get the message to participate in the APCD that CA needs to be in the Climate Action Plans!

owners of the Fukushima plant, for their negligence in allowing that disaster to unfold. As the Associated Press reported on October 13, 2012: “Tokyo Electric Power Co. said in a statement that it had known safety improvements were needed before last year’s tsunami triggered three meltdowns, but it had feared the political, economic and legal consequences of implementing them.” Mr. Kito, representing 1,300 Tokyo residents, is very knowledgeable about the damage that disaster caused to the fishing industry and marine life off of Japan. His video interview is at http:// wp.org/?p=2192.

Take Action

The SSSHAC (Senior Seismic Hazard Analysis Committee) will meet at the Embassy Suites, San Luis Obispo, November 6 through 8. A4NR’s seismologist and witness in our CPUC case, Dr. Douglas Hamilton, is shown to present his views on the afternoon of the 6th, time to be determined. The public is invited. Check www.a4nr.org for any updates.

CCA

continued from page 3

tour through the last six years of the Santa Lucia chapter’s CCA activism, a campaign that introduced most local residents to the concept and succeeded in getting the evaluation of CCA programs written into the County’s General Plan update and the Climate Action Plans for both the City and County of San Luis Obispo.

Take Action

Join the regional public engagement effort that’s informing the development of a model greenhouse gas reduction plan. Locate your meeting, and take the action.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Andrew Christie, Director
Santa Lucia Chapter
Classifieds

Next issue deadline is December 6.
To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
P.O. Box 15755
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ATTORNEY
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P.O. Box 29 Cambria California 93428
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Santa Lucian • Nov./Dec. 2012
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 optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within 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 Chapter’s outings policies, or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Chair Joe Morris, 549-0355. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Fri-Sun, Nov. 2-4 Death Valley Service Trip. Restoration activities, including eradication of off-road vehicle tracks, led by Death Valley NP Wilderness Coordinator Cheri Cheek. Campground check-in Friday afternoon to camp at either Texas Springs or Furnace Creek. Work part of the afternoon and on Saturday at an evening potluck. Sunday—a work day or recreational. Leader: Kelli Allen, kallen96@gmail.com, 661-944-4056. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sun., Nov. 4, 10 a.m. Los Flores Ranch Family Hike. Easy, kid-friendly 2-mile loop through a hillside of Santa Maria. Explore native plants and wildlife. Bring water, hat, sunscreen, and dress in layers. From Hwy 101, take Clark Ave. east to dead-end at Dominion Rd and turn right for 2 miles to 6271 Dominion Rd. Meet in parking lot. $3 per non-residents of Santa Maria. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 934-2792, kenvat83@msn.com.

Sat., Nov. 10, 8:30 a.m. Stoney Creek Trail Hike. Eight-mile walk on seldom used trail in the Garcia Wilderness, 2,000 ft. gain. Waterproof your walking shoes. Outing will last most of day. We must pass through a locked gate to the trailhead, about Piranesi’s Cove back Ranch. Meet in front of the Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Maria. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sat., Nov. 10, 10 a.m. Shell Beach/ Ontario Ridge Trail Loop. Starting in Shell Beach, hike over Ontario Ridge, “The Backbone,” for great coastal views, then down to Cove Landing to explore bluffs and cave tunnel. Finally, a cliff walk, along Piranesi’s Cove back Ranch. This is a moderate, 4-5 mile hike, lasting 3-4 hrs. Wear good hiking shoes, and dress in layers for varying weather. Meet at trailhead in Shell Beach. From Hwy 191, exit on Avila Beach Dr, turning south on Shell Beach Rd for 1.5 miles, then turn right on El Ponto Rd and continue west for 4 miles to end of road, making a slight right on Indio Dr. Continue to the cul-de-sac outside the private Bluff Drive and then left to the parking lot. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 934-2792, kenvat83@msn.com.

Sun., Nov. 11, 9 a.m. Felsman Loop to Bishop Peak. Celebrate Veteran’s Day with a hike to one of our favorite morros. Round-trip distance is 6 miles, about 1,000 ft. gain, and duration: 3 to 3 1/2 hrs. Plants, animals, and geology of the area will be discussed. Bring adequate water, snacks, hat, and sturdy shoes, and dress in layers for varying weather. Meet at trailhead on west side of Patricia Dr in SLO, between Patricia Ct. and Amapola Circle. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Sun., Nov. 11, 10 a.m. Trekking-Pole Hike at Sycamore Springs. PoleCan is dedicated to learning local hikes and modeling the benefits of trekking poles. Hike is 2 miles, 700 ft. elevation change. Meet near entrance to Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Dr. Please confirm with Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or poleclimber@gmail.com.

Tue, Nov. 13, 7-9 p.m. Bimonthly Meeting: “Preserving SLO’s Wide-Open Spaces.” Tonight we are especially excited to have on hand the recent retired Natural Resources Manager for the City of San Luis Obispo. For 17 years, Neil spear-headed the city’s efforts to preserve over 6,000 acres. How can we, if we should be next? Neil will give his considered vision for SLO’s natural future—the pros and the prospects. Come and meet the man who created SLO’s greenbelt legacy. Conservation news will begin the meeting. Location: Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sun., Nov. 18, 4:30 p.m. Sunset Hugger’s Walk of SLO. Meet Dr. Matt Ritter. Join Cal Poly Botany Prof Matt Ritter in an exploration of the trees of San Luis Obispo, walking past about 100 species and discussing 20 of them. Dr. Ritter will share his favorite natural history stories and identification tips, and highlight SLO’s notable Heritage trees. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing for this easy walk. Rain cancel. The walk will meet at a downtown location in SLO. To avoid overcrowding sidewalks, attendees must reserve by email to the co-leader, Bill Waycott, who will reply and send you the meeting place, if you fall within the quota of 30 attendees. Deadline for reservations is Friday noon, November 30. Reservations are limited to no more than three spots per person responding. Email: billwaycott@msn.com.

Sun-Da., Dec. 1-2 Explore and Serve in the Carrizo Plain. Work on project to remove or modify fences for pronghorn antelopes, who will not jump them to escape predators. Saturday is a work day, with camping and a potluck dinner. Sunday is leader’s choice of a hike in the Carrizo Plains or a tour of viewing areas. Leader: Craig Deutsche, craig.deutsche@gmail.com, 310-477-6670. CNRCC Desert Committee.

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.

Santa Lucian • Nov./Dec. 2012

For further information contact:

Joe Norris, Outings Chair
Sierra Club, Santa Lucia Chapter
459-0355
dpj1942@carrieblink.net

John Madeleine of the Sierra Club, Santa Lucia

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• Introduce others to nature
• Explore the outdoors
• Make new friends
• Protect the environment
• Get healthy exercise

For further information contact:

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