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Don’t  Miss:
April  19
Earth  Day  Fair
El  Chorro  Park
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SANTA
LUCIAN

It’s  Crunch  Time
for  Los  Osos

Residents  need  to  speak  up  for  a  groundwater  basin  plan  that  will  actually  save  the  basin

Underneath  all  the  skirmishes  fought  in  the  Los  Osos  Sewer  Wars  –  literally  underneath  –  was  a  larger  issue:  the  impact  of  the  project  on  the  Los  Osos  groundwater  basin,  multiple  interlocking  aquifers  that  are  rapidly  being  devoured  as  salt  water  flows  in  to  fill  the  void  because  too  much  fresh  water  is  being  pumped  out.  Residents  who  preferred  not  to  get  involved  when  the  sewer  wars  were  raging  need  to  get  involved  now  that  the  County  is  preparing  to  implement  the  Los  Osos  Basin  Plan.  Simply  put,  if  the  County  and  the  water  purveyors  get  the  Basin  Plan  wrong  –  and  they  are  currently  getting  it  wrong  –  the  only  residents  of  Los  Osos  who  will  be  served  by  the  new  water  recycling  system  will  be  those  able  to  afford  both  an  impressive  monthly  sewer  bill  and  the  cost  of  100%  imported  or  desalinated  water  to  replace  a  destroyed  groundwater  basin.  (The  Basin  Plan  estimates  it  would  cost  more  than  $100  million  to  replace  the  main  drinking  water  aquifer  with  a  desalination  facility  or  imported  water,  on  top  of  the  $180-million  sewer.)

But  people  at  that  income  level  are  unlikely  to  choose  to  live  in  a  withered  coastal  desert,  largely  bereft  of  the  natural  environment  that  is  the  chief  attraction  of  the  area.  So  if  a  Basin  Plan  is  put  in  place  that  fails  to  implement  effective  conservation  measures  and  curb  sea  water  intrusion,  the  only  future  residents  of  Los  Osos  are  likely  to  be  tumbleweeds.

Here’s  the  problem
The  new  Basin  Plan  would  be  fine,  if  this  were  1975.  If  adopted  then  and  implemented  by  the  1980’s,  it  might  have  headed  off  the  severe  problems  we  see  today  and  allowed  the  Basin  to  weather  the  drought  and  adapt  to  climate  change.  However,  with  the  major  impacts  the  Basin  now  faces,  conservation,  reuse,  and  infrastructure  mitigation  measures  must  be  maximized  immediately  to  have  a  reason-
Earth Day SLO Celebrating 25 Years

2015 marks the 25th Anniversary of Earth Day in San Luis Obispo County! The Earth Day Alliance invites you to be part of this year’s San Luis Obispo County Earth Day Fair and Music Festival on Sunday, April 19, at El Chorro Regional Park from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For 25 years, Earth Day in SLO County has educated county residents about a wide range of issues and created a forum for conversations about how we can make this a better place to live for ourselves and future generations. There are a myriad of environmental issues for which San Luis Obispo County residents have reason to be concerned: our water, air, land and ocean are all being threatened. Earth Day is when environmental and community reach out to one another and show each other these issues. Citizens and towns are able to show respect and what they have been doing to make San Luis Obispo County a better, cleaner place to live. Schools and students, from kindergarten to Cal Poly, share their projects and educate more people.

Green businesses showcase their products and services.

The event will feature Dairy Creek Zero Waste Park Tour, Clean Energy Zone, Climate Corner, Eco Marketplace, Health & Well-being Center, FirstStreet, beer & wine and SLO and Botanical Garden Tours. Enjoy live music from two stages throughout the day. The main stage will feature some of the best music on the central coast.

For free at Cuesta College. Shuttle buses will take visitors to and from the park or visitors can walk in the Earth Day Alliance, Inc. and San Luis Obispo County Parks. Go to www.earthdayalliance.com.

Hit ‘em With the “NIMBY” Stick

All sentient beings will act to defend their home. If you find a place you love, you will fight to protect it. And when you do so, it’s given that some projects and people will seek to re-frame and trivialize this fundamental tenet of time, someone will seek to re-frame love, you will fight to protect it. And their home. If you find a place you

population in the vicinity of the Rodeo Refinery in Contra Costa County – to the air quality and health impacts from the refining of highly hazardous tar sands crude oil.

New Times can serve as a local media corrective between the often pale and he said/said of The Tribune and the hyperventilating libertarian scandalmongering of Cal Coast News. But it is susceptibility to the lure of the lazy framing device.

No doubt, New Times saw tossing all contentious issues (Dubois Can- you? Agenda 21? Immigration?) into the NIMBY basket as both retaining that alternative newsweekly swainy “edge” and their journalistic objectivity. The problem with that: once you deploy the tool by the word “NIMBY,” you have taken a side.

It’s the side that believes that citizens who make use of the tools provided to protect their health and homes, tools written into law by their elected representatives to provide at least some kind of balance when faced with what would be unchecked corporate capacity off the table, giving at least some power to the people and taking some account of the need to protect the land, air, water and wildlife… well, those folks are making a fuss. They’re being cranky. They now exist inside a frame in which they can be seen as unrealistic hypocrites who like stuff, but like stuff more when it’s somewhere else. They defined NIMBYism thusly: “As Americans, we like stuff, but we like stuff more when it’s somewhere else.”

The proposals for the Las Pilas quarry and the Phillips 66 Santa Maria refinery were proffered as some of the projects and people will seek to re-frame and trivialize this fundamental tenet of time, someone will seek to re-frame love, you will fight to protect it. And when you do so, it’s given that some projects and people will seek to re-frame and trivialize this fundamental tenet of existence by calling you a NIMBY. But Kid’s Korner, Eco Marketplace, Health & Well-being Center, FirstStreet, beer & wine and SLO and Botanical Garden Tours. Enjoy live music from two stages throughout the day. The main stage will feature some of the best music on the central coast.

For free at Cuesta College. Shuttle buses will take visitors to and from the park or visitors can walk in the Earth Day Alliance, Inc. and San Luis Obispo County Parks. Go to www.earthdayalliance.com.

Visit us on the Web www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

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The Executive Committee meets the last Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. The Conservation Group meets the second Friday at 3 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 974 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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In Memoriam

Acknowledging the generous donation of Lisa Wallender in memory of Scott Reckless. Scott was a long-time Sierra Club volunteer who lived in November. He is survived by his companion of 36 years, Monica Tarzier, our Chapter webmaster.

Visit us on the Web www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

Outings, events, and more!

Sierra Club
Now on Facebook
search: “Santa Lucia” and become our friend!
An energy revolution is breaking out in California and a few other states, one that could radically increase the amount of renewable energy available to citizens and end the tyranny of fossil-fuel dragging utilities. Outside of the rapidly falling costs of solar power, it’s just about my main source of domestic optimism these days.

I’m talking about community choice, or, in the horrid legalese, “community choice aggregation.” I’ve discussed it before in passing, but it’s starting to seriously catch on, so I want to take a closer look.

Say a town, city, or county is dissatisfied with the power it gets from its utility — it’s too expensive, or too dirty. One option would be for each municipality to leave its utility and form its own “municipal utility.” That has its advantages, but it’s a pretty huge step, since the municipality would have to take over not only power procurement but grid operation and maintenance, billing, customer service, etc. In many smaller towns, it’s not practical.

The other, emerging option is community choice aggregation, whereby a county or municipality takes over only the job of buying and selling power, leaving grid management and billing to the utility.

It aggregates customers from every participating town, city, and county and uses their collective purchasing power to procure exactly the kind of electricity it wants.

The two main motivations to opt for CCA are cheaper power and cleaner power. At least to date, those two goals have come into conflict. In most cases, CCAs get power that’s cheaper and cleaner than what they were getting from their utility. (Whether those goals conflict in the future will be of keen interest.)

CCA must be enabled by legislation and it has been in six states: California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, and Rhode Island.

According to the website Local Energy Self-Determination, 5% of the U.S. population is under CCA service for electricity in 1,300 municipalities, including well-known population centers like City of Chicago, Cincinnati, Cape Cod, Sonoma County as well as hundreds of less known small towns and rural counties. CCA formation by municipal ordinance or local election is allowed and provided for under state laws governing 25% of the U.S. electricity market.

California has been particularly on the ball. Marin County started the state’s first CCA program — it now serves 125,000 customers. Sonoma County has followed suit. San Mateo County is considering it; county supervisors just voted to study a proposal. The mayor of San Francisco, who’s running for reelection this year, has reversed his previous opposition to the city joining a CCA.

Groups Mount “Epic” Energy Push

Interactive video marking Fukushima anniversary allows visitors to experience three different energy futures

The week before the fourth anniversary of the Fukushima reactor disaster, five organizations working for America’s clean-energy future — Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the National Information and Resource Service, Public Citizen, and the Sierra Club — unveiled the interactive online video, “Our Epic Future: Create It With Clean Energy.”

Available at www.MakeNuclearHistory.org, the entertaining, fact-filled video allows visitors to explore three scenarios in the “Epic Energy Labs” with very different future outcomes: one dominated by fossil fuels, another in which nuclear power is the focus, and a third relying on renewable energy.

After viewing the video, visitors can get involved in clean energy campaigns of the five groups, including urging the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to put in place post-Fukushima safety measures at U.S. reactors and petitioning Congress to reinstate the Production Tax Credit support for wind energy.

The Make Nuclear History website says: “There is a way to power our lives without fossils. There is a solution to climate change without nuclear energy. There is a future where we can solve the climate crisis and power our lives from 100 percent renewable sources and energy efficiency.”

“Choosing between clean energy and dangerous fuels like coal and nuclear isn’t difficult,” said Sierra Club Executive Director Mike Bruno. “Nuclear has proven time and time again to be too expensive, too slow to build, and far too dangerous. Meanwhile, burning fossil fuels is making our families sick and making the climate crisis worse. That’s a huge part of the reason our clean energy economy is growing by leaps and bounds, creating jobs while keeping pollution out of our air, our water, and our communities.”

How Cool is the Edna - Price Canyon Trail Online Tool?

Have you tried out SLOCOG’s Edna-Price Canyon Trail Google Map Tool? You should.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments is preparing a Master Plan for a multi-purpose Edna - Price Canyon Anza Trail between San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach through Edna Valley and Price Canyon. The long-range planning study will be used to identify biological, cultural and other considerations in the area. It will identify possible trail alignments, initial design of the trail, and segments that have potential to be built in the near future.

The Google Map tool is designed to obtain feedback from the public regarding trails or trail amenities you would like to see in the Edna-Price Canyon trail study area. The Google Map navigation tools let you identify the location of a walking, biking, or equestrian trail and/or trail amenity you would like to see in the study area. You can zoom in, pan around, upload a picture, and click on the “draw trail” button to draw the route of a walking/biking/equestrian trail that you would like to see within the study area. You can create more than one route.

Your input on the map will not be viewable to others. SLOCOG will use the input from the website and public workshops to create trail options to be presented in the study. Go to slocog.org/edna-price-canyon-trail-online-tool.

Letters send to: sierrablue@gmail.com, Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, SLO, CA 93406. Letters may be edited for space.

Dear SLO Sierra Club:

I am very concerned about the future of our children, and all life on this planet. This global warming has become a human activity, in particular the accelerating release of CO2 and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from manmade sources.

You are working toward closing down the four reactors at Diablo Canyon in California, which does not produce significant CO2 emissions. So I started working on what energy source will truly replace the energy produced by the Diablo Canyon nuclear facility. I found that renewable resources such as wind or solar are intermittent, and are not reliable as a source of baseline (sic) energy. Furthermore, existing renewable sources are already accounted for in current production, so to replace the Diablo Canyon production, additional renewable sources would have to be constructed, and it would take a very long time to construct enough to replace Diablo Canyon production. So when Diablo Canyon is shut down, the energy it replace can only be obtained from two sources: coal or natural gas, both of which emit substantial amounts of CO2.

Mark Henry
San Luis Obispo

Thank you for your letter and accompanying draft essay elaborating on it. Both documents proceed from the premise that the only alternative to nuclear power is coal-fired or natural gas-fired generation and that Diablo Canyon must remain open.

We are familiar with the argument, which remains static, that a reliance on renewable energy has declined and distributed grid and energy storage technologies have advanced. Worth of note: On March 6, an Administrative Law Judge at the California Public Utilities Commission rejected a proposal to build a natural gas plant to replace the shuttered San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. The ruling noted the need for consistency with California’s Loading order, a policy thatвал fuel demand reduction “requiring the utility to procure pre- ferred resources and energy storage to the greatest extent possible.”

As we noted in our January issue, “Continuing to keep Diablo on line, the CRC has calculated, would actually require reducing the output of renewable energy, scaling back the state’s projected renewable energy goals in order to keep from overload- ing the grid.

You argue that building new renewable sources “would take a great deal of time and money,” which some people might consider to be a healthy economy, especially residents of Germany (which met peak demand last winter at 74% renewable energy) and Denmark (on track for 30 percent renewables by 2020, aiming for 100 percent by 2050).

Regardless of the cost, wind and solar power is steadily dropping, and many scientific predictions exist for each. Solar PV and wind will reach grid parity by the end of the decade. Renewable and distributed power have overturned nuclear power in terms of megawatt-hour generation worldwide. The growing consensus among energy experts that the best mix for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the near term, based on cost and level of commercialization, are renewables, energy efficiency, distributed power, demand response, and energy storage. Nukes need not apply.

Dear SLO Sierra Club:

Considering the disastrous consequences and global warming, I, like you, am very concerned about the future of our children, and all life on this planet. This global warming has become a human activity, in particular the accelerating release of CO2 and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from manmade sources.

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Cambria CSD Reaps First Installment on the Whirlwind

Desal plant hit with 11 Water Code violations out of the gate, Community Services District says everything’s fine

The editorial cartoon in the March 5 edition of The Cambrian depicted a gnarled hand clutching a note reading “Whoever is not with me is against me” — Matthew 12:30 — and was captioned “In which it is reassuring to know that the CCSD is being run with biblical guidance.”

The reference was probably to the sudden removal of Cambria’s fire chief from the Cambria Forest Committee by his boss, Cambria Community Services District General Manager Jerry Gruber. Committee co-chair Crosby Swartz told The Cambrian that Gruber “was really adamant that there’s no room for discussion. ... He feels that because this board welcomes representatives from a number of public agencies and private individuals, some members tend to be critical of what the CCSD is doing.”

That bunker mentality and sensed need to protect themselves from the citizens they are supposed to serve has long been the hallmark of the CCSD. What the CCSD now needs to protect itself from is the consequences of the construction of Cambria’s long-sought desalination plant and brine disposal pit — aka Emergency Water Supply Project — which trashed the normal oversight and review of a public permitting process and cut environmental corners in some of the most sensitive habitat on the north coast.

Those consequences began with the February citation of the CCSD by the Regional Water Board for a chlorine spill into Van Gordon Creek, unauthorized creek and waste pond reservoir discharges, sprayed waste water blowing onto San Simeon Creek Road and into surrounding habitat, and noise levels so high that wildlife fled the area and a horse was injured and had to be euthanized.

San Simeon Creek is already listed as “impaired” by the state of California due to high levels of nitrates, chloride and sodium.

These violations came after the hastily conceived public works project was hastily constructed without environmental review or mitigation for its likely impacts. The project is sending water to San Simeon Creek for the public to consume, but has never passed a required “tracer test” to prove the water is safe to drink.

Cambria Greenspace stalwart Mary Webb alerted the Coastal Commission to the chlorine discharges into the creek during the public comment section of the Commission’s February 13 Pismo Beach meeting. Commissioner Mary Shallenberger immediately instructed staff to alert the Regional Water Board to the potential violations in progress. The Water Board cited the CCSD on February 27. As it observes the arrival of the first of its chickens coming home to roost, the CCSD is maintaining that it has no idea whose chickens those are, and besides, this is surely a brief layover and they’ll be flying away soon (see “Taking Issue,” page 10).

That’s unlikely.

Last August, California Coastal Commission staff warned the CCSD that the project as proposed would likely “cause long-term harm to sensitive habitat,” recommended the District work “with the key resources agencies to identify needed changes,” and pointed out that it would behoove them to get the answers to the large environmental questions looming over the project “before locking into a long-term project and its associated liabilities.”

The same day they received that warning, the CCSD’s directors voted to proceed with a $13-million permanent facility and worry about all the environmental stuff later.

Last month, LandWatch San Luis Obispo County amended its October lawsuit against the Cambria Community Services District, adding San Luis Obispo County, the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water, and the Governor’s Office of and Planning and Research to the list of agencies being sued for failing to do their jobs and allowing the CCSD to proceed.

Cambria’s Other Emergency: Twelve Years After

Hey, all you hep kats and kittens! Remember 2004?

Michael Vick played his second Pro Bowl.

The Electric Prunes released their “California” album after a three-decade hiatus.

Hurricane Ivan generated the highest storm waves in recorded history.

And the Cambria Community Services District tried to push through a major public works water project in environmentally sensitive habitat on an “emergency” Coastal Development Permit, and wound up in court.

Yes, everything old is new again. Relive with us now this blast from the past.

“Tanks!” - from the Santa Lucian, January 2005

First, outgoing Chapter Chair Tarren Collins alerted the California Coastal Commission to the issuance of a peculiar “emergency permit” to the Cambria Community Services District.

Then, thanks to determined Commission staff and the state Attorney General’s office, the California coast dodged a bullet and a dire precedent on December 17 when a San Luis Obispo Superior Court judge upheld the Coastal Commission’s cease & desist order and issued a preliminary injunction against the District. The CCSD wants to build new water storage tanks in an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area.

The District had invoked eminent domain to seize private property in an ESHA protected by a conservation easement managed by the Nature Conservancy, and claimed it had obtained an emergency permit to cut down 60+ endangered Monterey pines in the ESHA. If this were allowed, all future developers could potentially claim an “emergency” to trump conservation covenants and/or develop on the coast.

Counsel for the Attorney General, Coastal Commission, San Luis Obispo County, and the Cambria CSD spent the day in court arguing over the legality of the Coastal Commission’s cease & desist order, the propriety of San Luis Obispo resusciting its original emergency permit at the Commission’s behest, and the nature of Cambria’s “emergency” (potential future earthquakes and fires).

The Court ruled that the Cambria Community Services District is not exempt from the requirements of the Local Coastal Plan and the Coastal Development Permit process; the County’s original emergency permit had been properly rescinded; the Cambria CSD was not entitled to a second emergency permit because its requirement for new tanks may be...
and around the footprint of the new ordinary circumstances. protected areas where development is continued to locate proposed projects in “emergency.” Past efforts were unsuccessful because the District continued to propose projects in protected areas where development is prohibited or severely limited under specific circumstances. While construction of the project over the summer and fall of 2014 adversely affected the resources in and around the footprint of the new facility, its ongoing operation will cause much more significant adverse impacts on ecological resources and nearby land uses. Extracting billions of gallons of water per minute from the San Simeon Creek aquifer, the new facility’s operation is likely to lower creek levels critical to endangered and threatened species, especially nearby campers and residents to aerosolized toxic brine waste, and violate a long list of state coastal protection policies. The 180-day emergency permit issued by the San Luis Obispo County Planning Department last May and expired in November. It required the District to submit a completed application for a permanent coastal development permit by June 14, 2014. The district failed to submit a completed application. This permanent permit process is critical because it must be accompanied by full environmental review, by a separate environmental mitigation, by public disclosure and hearings, and by an opportunity for appeal and Coastal Commission review. But the District has now begun operating the project without having completed its application for a permanent Coastal Development Permit, in violation of the California Coastal Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, and the San Luis Obispo County Code. The District’s new water supply project lies just east of Highway 1 and includes operations within 100 feet of both San Simeon Creek and Van Gordon Creek. It’s within the coastal zone and thus subject to the requirements of the Coastal Act, which was enacted to permanently protect “valuable natural resource of vital and enduring interest to all the people.” The Act required the new development to be carefully planned consistent with the Coastal Act policies. Permanent protection of the state’s natural and scenic resources is a paramount concern, based on the necessity to protect the ecological balance of the coastal zone. The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report is to alert the public and its responsible officer to potential environmental changes before they have reached the point of ecological no return. It is intended “to demonstrate to an aprehensive citizen that the agency has, in fact, analyzed and considered the ecological implications of its action.” To avoid the mandatory review requirements associated with a major public works project, the District suspended public contract bidding requirements and declared a “Stage 3 Water Shortage Condition” on January 30, 2014. In April, the District applied to the County for an “emergency” Coastal Development Permit. The District justified its need for such permit by telling the County that Cambria would very soon run out of potable water, claiming that “uncertainty over future summer creek flows could result in CSWD well levels dropping at an unacceptable rate during the late summer to early fall,” and that “the consequences of inaction or significant delay could result in this emergency project being potentially disastrous for the community of Cambria.” Based on these representations which were not supported by the evidence, as well levels were consistent with other years – the County issued a six-month emergency Coastal Development Permit to construct a brackish water treatment system. The District proceeded to construct the Project over the summer and fall and began operating the facility in January 2015 – months after the 2014 dry season. The “emergency” plant was supposed to address. The residents, visitors, and wildlife of the San Simeon Creek watershed should not be used as guinea pigs in the District’s evolving lab experiment. Water? continued from page 1 integrate environmental and commu- nity impacts and the benefits of sustainable groundwater management into decisions about basin prioritization and groundwater management plans. Members include the Sierra Club, Union of Concerned Scientists, Nature Conservancy, Center for Biological Diversity, Natural Re- sources Defense Council, Audubon, Planning and Conservation League, California League of Conservation Voters, environmental justice and clean water advocates, indigenous peoples’ organizations and other local non-profits. Representatives from about twenty organizations attended the Sacramento meeting in a dozen more participating by web confer- ence. A common concern repeatedly expressed was the need for access by small water agencies, and a process for developing Groundwater Sustainability Agencies and environ- mental mindfulness as DWR develops guidelines and policies for GSAs and Groundwater Sustainability Plans. DWR was given a budget of $100 million for various tasks associated with developing guidelines, including extensive plans for outreach and coordination. The March 13 meeting ostensibly qualified as “outreach to environmental and social justice groups,” but attendees were not very encouraged by what they heard about major areas of concern: access to the planning process by economically disadvantaged communities, protection of environmental resources, coordinating surface and groundwater use, and incorporating protection for watersheds in GSPs. When pressed for specifics on all of the above, DWR repeatedly demurred that they “do not have that authority.” By far the biggest point of contention was “DWR is all about moving water and nothing else.” The public meeting ended with DWR’s demur-ral concerning the State Water Project has pro- mised five times more water than is available to the system. It’s let us know that DWR’s culture of “big water” manage- ment and movement can be reined in by a realistic assessment of how much water California actually has and what is the best use of it. TAKE ACTION On February 25, the Cambria CSWD, feeling the heat from public complaints about potential permit violations at its desal facility, dispatched two consulting biologists into San Simeon creek, inside the State Park. They discovered them slogging through the creek with sample bags and poles, and asked to see their required Scientific Collection Permit, as must be issued either by the Califor- nia Department of Fish and Wildlife or State Parks. They didn’t have one, so the rangers escorted them out of the park. To nobel the point: While under investigation for multiple permit violations, the CSWD endeavored to engage in data collection pertaining to those permit violations without a permit. Urgent but not an emergency as defined by statute; and the Coastal Commission was entitled to a prelimi- nary injunction to halt the project. The court ordered the injunction and instructed all parties to work together to come up with an acceptable plan. The State Water Project has pro- mised five times more water than is available to the system. It’s let us know that DWR’s culture of “big water” manage- ment and movement can be reined in by a realistic assessment of how much water California actually has and what is the best use of it. TAKE ACTION DWR is seeking comments on the draft Strategic Plan for Implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Program by June 1. Send comments to: sgspw@ water.ca.gov or go to www.CalGw.org. Lynne Harkins The draft can be accessed at: http:// www.water.ca.gov/groundwater. 12 Years continued from page 4
On July 25, 2010, an Enbridge Oil pipeline carrying tar sands crude -- aka diluted bitumen or “dilbit” -- ruptured into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. Two years later, InsideClimate News reported: “The cleanup of the Kalamazoo River dilbit spill was unlike any cleanup the EPA had ever tackled before. Instead of remaining on top of the water, as most conventional crude oil does, the bitumen gradually sank to the river’s bottom, where normal cleanup techniques and equipment were useless. Meanwhile, the benzene and other chemicals that had been added to liquify the bitumen evaporated into the air.”

The cleanup was expected to take six months and cost $5 million. After five years and cleanup costs exceeding $1 billion, approximately 20 percent of the dilbit is still there and the river and wetlands are damaged beyond repair.

But Isn’t Tar Sands Crude safer that Bakken shale crude?

Phillips 66 has made two attempts to produce a legally defensible Environmental Impact Report to serve as the basis for it permit application. The biggest single difference between their first and second trials was the abandonment of Bakken shale crude oil and the inclusion of a semi-admission that the trains would be carrying Canadian tar sands crude to SLO.

At the time, it was thought that the then novel phenomenon of exploding oil trains was exclusive to Bakken. Meanwhile, bitumen -- the heavy, tar oil trains was a then novel phenomenon of exploding oil trains was exclusive to Bakken. Meanwhile, the bitumen -- the heavy, tar oil trains was a

The Chamber would like SLO - and, one must assume, everyone else -- to refrain from weighing in on the project until the County has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Chamber wants SLO to look at the proposed project “through your neighbor’s eyes.”

The question is not if but when and where an incident will occur.

The project would bring a significant increase in crude oil tanker train traffic into the county, along with an increased risk of derailment, spills and fires. In so doing, it would introduce Canadian tar sands crude oil — one of the dirtiest fuels on the planet — into the county for refining at Phillips’ Nipomo Mesa facility.

That increased risk and environmental hazard applies to all the communities the oil trains would travel through in which a substantial number of residents live within the Department of Transportation’s designated “potential impact zone,” extending a mile from either side of the Union Pacific main line. In our county, that includes San Miguel, Paso Robles, Templeton, Atascadero, Santa Margarita, San Luis Obispo, Pismo Beach (and the Pismo Preserve), Grover Beach and Ocean. It also includes all residents who would breathe the air polluted by the increased diesel emissions and the toxic tar sands crude and its diluent — which leak from the tanker cars even with no mishaps encountered — and all residents who value our local rivers and creeks that a derailment and major spill could irreparably damage.

Here, as of this writing, are the other communities that feel they know enough about the project to weigh in on the first and second iterations of its draft EIR and have decided that the prospects of SLO County granting the Phillips 66 a project permit is so dire that the elected officials of these communities must speak out now on behalf of their citizens and ask the County to deny the project: Richmond, Oakland, Albany, Martinez, Davis, San Jose, Moorpark, Oxford, Simi Valley, Sacramento, Camarillo, San Leandro, the City of Ventura, Ventura County, Santa Cruz County and Santa Barbara County’s 3rd District.

Also asking for denial of the project permit are the San Leandro Unified School District, Ventura Unified School District, Pleasant Valley School District, and the Oakland School Board.

We urge the Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach Chamber of Commerce to pay attention to the news -- five oil train derailments and infernos nationwide in the five-week period between February 14 and March 7 -- listen to all their neighbors, and look at this project through their eyes.

What About California?

Union Pacific is one of several railroads using California to repeal a new state law requiring railroads transporting crude oil to obtain a certificate of financial responsibility from the state as proof that they have enough money to clean up oil spills and cover damages.
Now he says his only objection was that there weren’t enough local power required!

Perhaps the most interesting battle is happening in San Diego: While San Francisco represents only about 5 percent of utility giant PG&E’s customers by energy, it has about 27 percent of San Diego Gas & Electric’s. That’s a big chunk to lose! CCA is a key player in the San Diego Climate Action Plan, which among other things commits the city to a legal binding target of 100 percent renewables by 2035. There is effectively no way for it to hit that target if it has to go through SDG&E to fit for buy.

There have been various efforts to kill CCA at the state level, supported by the state chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), many of whose members work for utilities. The local San Diego chapter of IBEW, however, supports the city’s 100 percent renewable targets. The fate of the San Diego climate plan, or at least CCA’s place in the nation’s mix, could be decided if it goes through, it would represent something of a watershed for the CCA movement. OG&E’s farm is from place to place, but Cali’s share a few common features. They are opt-out rather than opt-in — consumers have choices within the utility, but they have to affirmatively indicate as much. That alone ensures participation.

There are tiers of participation: in Marin, you can choose a base level 50 percent more renewables or pay a premium for 100 percent renewables; in Sonoma, it’s 33 percent or 100 percent. Some also include a prepayment option for 100 percent local renewables. The tiered system allows low-income customers to choose affordable options while more eco-minded or well-off residents can indulge their aspirations.

It completely cuts through the utility Gordian knot — the tangle of restructured regions, corrupt PUCs and broken business models, obscure political maneuvering and big-money deals — and puts power directly in the public’s hands.

CCA can also give a huge boost to a bunch of other policies that utilities typically fight or slow-walk, including net metering, feed-in tariffs, and efficiency programs. In addition to the basic benefit — giving those consumers more choices in energy — the Sonoma County CCA also has 30 percent lower emissions than the utility, and it boasts rates that are 5 to 8 percent lower than the utility’s (depending on the tier).

So CCA represents a robust net metering program, “NetGreen,” that compensates solar customers better than the utility. It forms a key part of my own favorite policy, feed-in tariffs, in the form of “ProFIT,” which guarantees and up front compensation to customers for the power they feed into the grid. It has doubled the amount of solar in Sonoma County’s energy mix and established power purchase agreements for 70 megawatts of new solar. And it will double the level of solar in the county’s mix up to around 23 percent by 2018.

Perhaps best of all, enrollment in the plan’s phase-one rollout was much higher than expected: 84 percent of customers opted into the CCA.

Not every CCA is going to spur all those policies. But that’s kind of the point: they will enable the exact mix of policies that best expresses the needs and values of their customers. It will give consumers some power and control over the process, something they hadn’t had for some time. Is CCA power really cheap? At least in California, at least so far, yes….The Marin and Sonoma CCA charges slightly lower rates than the utilities they left behind, despite providing substantially more clean energy. How do they do it? First, CCA represents consumer interests, putting pressure on them to keep costs down and keep customers happy. (Utilities are less inclined to compete, to say the least.) An alternative energy provider behaves differently than a utility. CCA programs, for example, have used the political and legal process to advocate for lower transmission and distribution charges, utility fees and rates in general. You’re not going to see that kind of advocacy from utilities, who serve shareholders, or regulators that are struggling with proper oversight. ("Struggling with proper oversight" is a rather charitable characterization.)

In other words, CCA provides not just an economic but environmental and social value to customers. It enables electricity consumers to organize on behalf of their interests and values. Why, you could almost call it democratic.

Natural California utilities hate this. Just hate it. In all the stories I read, this was the most potent argument.

A PG&E representative did not respond to a request for comment. A 2011 law prohibits the company from using ratepayer money to market against community choice aggregation.

On September 10, 2013, at the very end of a board meeting, the County Supervisors voted to authorize a General Plan and Coastal Plan Amendment by Chevron that will change the land use category for Fossil Point and Avila Point, aka the Avila Tank Farm — from Industrial to Recreation, and add standards for future development. (See "Why Are We Still Talking About a Hotel on Fossil Point?," October 2013.)

Meanwhile, ABR Properties is moving forward on plans for visitor accommodations, including 80 RV spaces and no evaluation of visitor season traffic, has been approved by the Port San Luis Harbor Commission. The report by the County Department of Planning for the required coastal development to change the land use category for the island contains a visitor traffic study only for non-visitor season impacts.

While CCA can and does give consumers some power and control over the process, it is also imperiled. A PG&E Properties is requesting a permit for a golf course project that would allow them to “construct a lodge, hotel, cottages and amphi-theater and thereby increase the current square footage of buildings from 30,000 square feet to 260,000 square feet.” See the Avila Beach Advisory Council website under GOLE COURSE MEGA PROJECT (avila-avila.org/current-issues).

The Harbor Terrace project, with 180 visitors and Avila’s accommodations, including 80 RV spaces and no evaluation of visitor season traffic, has been approved by the Port San Luis Harbor Commission. The report by the County Department of Planning for the required coastal development to change the land use category for the island contains a visitor traffic study only for non-visitor season impacts.

If it’s Tuesday, this must be traffic reduces the number of available spots for CCA.

Not to mention the Wild Cherry Canyon proposal: 1,500 homes, plus power for 70 megawatts of new solar. And it has doubled the amount of solar in Sonoma County’s energy mix and grid. It has doubled the amount of solar in Sonoma County’s energy mix and grid. It has doubled the amount of solar in Sonoma County’s energy mix and grid. It has doubled the amount of solar in Sonoma County’s energy mix and grid.

Whoa, Avila! It’s the climate plan, remains uncertain. If it did go through, it would represent something of a watershed for the CCA movement. They are opt-out rather than opt-in — consumers have choices within the utility, but they have to affirmatively indicate as much. That alone ensures participation.

There are tiers of participation: in Marin, you can choose a base level 50 percent more renewables or pay a premium for 100 percent renewables; in Sonoma, it’s 33 percent or 100 percent. Some also include a prepayment option for 100 percent local renewables. The tiered system allows low-income customers to choose affordable options while more eco-minded or well-off residents can indulge their aspirations.

It completely cuts through the utility Gordian knot — the tangle of restructured regions, corrupt PUCs and broken business models, obscure political maneuvering and big-money deals — and puts power directly in the public’s hands. It opens up opportunities for all the talk about Utilities 2.0 to become reality. It starts experimenting in the real world.

Most of all, it ensures citizens who want clean energy get it. That seems like the kind of thing Americans could rally around.

To get a clean, renewable, fossil-free future, it’s necessary to ramp up renewable energy generation without sacrificing essential wildlife habitat and threatening already threatened species.

That’s the premise behind the County’s Renewable Energy Streamlining Plan. It features comprehensive plans to ramp up renewable generation, and a focus on allowing developers to move forward in a timely manner.

The Sierra Club leaned particularly hard on the need to retain the word “potentially,” and put the word “opposed” to just “currently occupied,” because the loss of such land to any type of development could largely preclude the County’s ability to implement climate change adaptation measures, i.e. preserving land currently occupied by threatened species as those species lose their current habitat to climate change. That would be an ironic unintended consequence of a measure intended to combat climate change.
Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“How the word ‘fracking’ is used as a political scare tactic,” by John Peschong, The Tribune, Feb. 22, 2015.

Summary: A Republican political consultant with oil industry clients wants us all to know that fracking is nothing to be concerned about, aside from a mountain of evidence to the contrary.

How true. Sec, for example, “We can’t afford new regulations,” by John Peschong, in the Sept. 25, 2011, issue of The Tribune, in which Mr. Peschong attacked The EPA’s proposed smog regulations by citing, without disclosing his sources, bogus industry “studies,” discredited by serious economists, that predicted economic Armageddon as the cost of compliance by serious economists, that predicted economic Armageddon as the cost of compliance with the new regulations.

There is no way to know if fracking is happening here now. Companies that are experts in fracking have oil reserves in Central Coast counties that could only be exploited through the use of these techniques. Companies are also experimenting with high concentrations of acid in oil fields. Related techniques like high-intensity steam injection have all the same problems as fracking and are ramping up here.

Mr. Peschong was part of the oil-industry funded campaign that defeated Santa Barbara’s Measure P, which would have banned only future high-intensity oil extraction projects on unincorporated County land, including fracking, acidizing, and cyclic steam injection. It did not apply to existing operations, approved projects or conventional drilling. The false claim to the contrary was the centerpiece of the “No on P” campaign.

It is typical for the industry to threaten lawsuits in order to intimidate voters and elected officials. While lawsuits were threatened in the 206 communities in New York that banned fracking -- before it was banned statewide - - there were only four actual suits filed and all of them failed. The local communities did not have to pay anything and are now protected from the water, air and health impacts of fracking. A Colorado Supreme Court ruling supports the initiative to accomplish this goal. Cities and counties in California that have successfully banned fracking include Los Angeles, Beverly Hills and Santa Cruz. In total, 430 communities in the United States have taken action against fracking.

[In rejecting a fracking ban] amazingly, our Board of Supervisors looked at the facts: 1. There is no fracking happening in San Luis Obispo County, and 2. California already has the most stringent laws in the nation to regulate oil production.

Unamusingly, our Board of Supervisors overlooked the facts: 1. It is clear that an increase in high-intensity, high-risk oil extraction techniques to access unconventional shale oil on the Central Coast is a current and emerging threat, which is why proponents rushed to get Measure P on the ballot in Santa Barbara last year and a long list of community groups, environmental organizations and elected officials backed it, and 2. About two weeks before Mr. Peschong’s opinion piece appeared, the Associated Press discovered that California, alleged home of “the most stringent laws in the nation to regulate oil production,” has issued permits for more than 200 fracking fluid injection wells that put federally-protected aquifers at risk of being permanently contaminated, rendering the water unusable for consumption or even agricultural irrigation. Eleven of those wells are in the Price Canyon area. (See “Oil in Your Water,” March.)

About a week after Mr. Peschong’s confident claims saw print, the L.A. Times reported that oil producers in Kern County have been dumping fracking fluid waste into pits without any permits at all, and without “linings that would prevent toxic chemicals from infiltrating groundwater.” Such linings are not required by regulators. Fracking wastewater contains benzene, arsenic, chromium-6 and radioactive elements. There are 933 oil waste pits in California. The EPA has called California’s lack of oil production oversight and pollution controls “shocking” and determined that the state’s oil field wastewater injection program does not comply with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

In the past election cycle, ballot measures advertised as “fracking bans” started showing up in city and county elections throughout California. The fallacy of these ballot measures is that there wasn’t any hydraulic fracturing in these communities.

Instead of only banning fracking, these often deeply flawed ballot measures deceptively ban all oil production — including traditional methods that have been safely used in counties across California for more than a century.

Just ask San Benito County [about the potential for lawsuits against communities that ban fracking], which passed a measure in November 2014 and is currently being sued for takings (mineral rights) and damages in the amount of $1.2 billion.

Safe and regulated oil production has continued to receive bipartisan support in Sacramento as even stricter regulations are set to go into effect with Senate Bill 4 — a new law that is specifically designed to set up a regulatory structure for natural resource extraction.

The State Legislature has not enacted meaningful legislation to safeguard the public from the hazards of fracking and other high-intensity petroleum operations. SB 4 will lead to more studies of fracking. And it does nothing to address the impacts and risks posed by cyclic steam injection. Even if regulations such as water testing were put in place for all these techniques, what we learn after our water has been contaminated will be too late.

Upshot:

Mr. Peschong, a conservative political p.r. consultant, is no stranger to the task of carrying water for the oil industry, so to speak, having crafted a “public awareness campaign” for the Koch Brothers-funded organization Americans for Prosperity. Three weeks after Peschong’s extractivist world view got a workout in the Tribune, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club and Los Angeles Waterkeeper submitted 107 pages of comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Well Stimulation in California, prepared by the Department of Conservation’s Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR).

Our evaluation, as well as that of two independent experts retained by NRDC, concluded that fracking and related forms of well stimulation will result in significant environmental impacts that have not been disclosed or mitigated in the state’s draft EIR, putting California communities at risk of surface and groundwater contamination, fresh water depletion, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, induced seismicity, land degradation, wildlife habitat fragmentation, and a host of other harmful consequences — the reenactments of fact-challenged p.r. hacks aside.

Taking Issue

**Summary:** As the Water Board investigated multiple permit violations by the Cambria CSD in relation to the operation of its “emergency” desal plant – including discharge of chemical additives, discharges of brine pond waste, switching discharge points, and failure to inspect, monitor and report – the CCSD’s general manager tried to explain it away in the local paper.

In its lengthy Feb. 26 article “Water Project Issues Surface,” *The Cambrian* describes everything it could find that it going wrong with the Emergency Water Supply Project.

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How dare the local newspaper actually report the news?! And even more annoying, in a “lengthy” story!

...the brief release of treated, chlorinated water upstream of the San Simeon Creek Lagoon.

Mr. Gruber’s certainty regarding the duration of the plant’s discharge of harmful levels of chlorine into environmentally sensitive habitat would have been of interest to the Water Board at the time Mr. Gruber made his public assurance of brevity. In its Feb. 27 Notice of Violation, the Water Board required the CCSD to “document the dates, durations and volumes of all discharges to Van Gordon Creek or any other surface water body...” Mr. Gruber did not share that information with readers of *The Cambrian* or otherwise document the claim that the plant’s discharge into the creek and lagoon was “brief.”

A better question: Where would Cambria’s water be coming from now if the CCSD hadn’t put a large, distorting thumb on the scales to favor desal over every other option in its Water Master Plan (see “Cambria’s Water Plan is All Wet,” Jan. 2008), and had instead spent the last seven years retrofitting their wastewater treatment plant to produce and distribute tertiary treated recycled water, a drought-proof water supply that could have taken significant pressure off the region’s aquifers?

**Upshot:**

When the Water Board was preparing to cite the CCSD for permit violations, *The Cambrian* reported that “CCSD officials characterized the situation as ‘cooperative activity’ to correct any problems” and “emphasized the cooperative relationship” with the Water Board. This looks uncannily similar to the assurances that Morro Bay city staff repeatedly conveyed to county council about their discussions with California Coastal Commission staff throughout 2012 regarding the City’s plan to build its new wastewater treatment plant on the beach — in a flood plain and a tsunami zone — right up until the issuance of a Coastal Commission staff report that recommended denial of the project due to its multiple violations of the Coastal Act.

The CCSD’s written response to the Water Board’s notice of violation concluded thus: “We want to reiterate our strong belief that the CRPWCB is our partner, not our adversary, in all matters concerning the Emergency Water Supply project.”

Note the tell-tale “you’re either with us or you’re against us” mindset (see “CCSD Reaps First Installment on the Whirlwind,” page 4). Here is the fundamental reality the Cambria CSD has never seemed to grasp: it is not the function of a public resource agency to either sign up with them as a project cheerleaders or declare war on them. Resource agencies are charged with protecting public resources from the impacts of development – impacts which, for reasons that should be clear to (almost) everyone, are best determined before construction begins.

**NIMBY** continued from page 2

shadow thrown off by those seemingly clashng narratives somehow intersected in the same place: in the realm of troublemakers. Obstructionists. The lovers of divisiveness. The irrational inhibitors of progress.

In that same NIMBY issue of the lazy frame that There Is No nuclear power.”

New In that same NIMBY issue of the lazy frame that There Is No nuclear power.”

In what was probably an act of unintentional editorial cruelty and unfortunate timing, *The Cambrian* published Mr. Gruber’s opinion piece in the same issue as their follow-up to the story he was commenting on. Subsequent to Mr. Gruber’s submission of his response to the paper’s original article, the Water Board conducted its investigation and issued the CCSD a notice of 11 violations of the state Water Code, spanning all of the CCSD’s permits – a fact available to the reader ten pages away from Mr. Gruber’s ill-fated attempt at spin.

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**Larry Galpert, PhD, ABPP**

Clinical Psychologist

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drought impacts, the EPA study of climate change impacts on the Basin, or short-term sewer impacts – all of which can destroy the Basin.

Virtually all Basin recharge is from rain, either as surface percolation or creek seepage. Seawater intrusion continues to accelerate despite a major cutback in pumping. That cutback reduced the overdraft over the last 15 years, but a reduction in recharge due to the drought means the Basin continues to be in severe overdraft.

The Basin Plan recognizes the need to maximize mitigation programs and to take “bold, decisive, and immediate” action, but it doesn’t maximize programs or commit the Parties to immediate action.

Here’s the solution:

The Los Osos Basin Plan must be significantly improved if the Los Osos Basin is to be saved. The County has a unique responsibility and a one-time opportunity and to save the Basin. Here’s how:

1. Indoor and outdoor conservation measures must be maximized within one year.
2. The recycled water program must be maximized within one year of project start, which requires infrastructure improvements now.
3. Infrastructure Programs A, C & D must be implemented within one year.
4. Special measures to deal with the drought must be included in the Basin Plan and implemented immediately.
5. Measures to address climate change impacts (sea level rise, higher temperatures, and less rainfall) must be included within one year and ongoing.
6. Conservation and wetland protection outside the wastewater service area must be mandated by County ordinance. The County is implementing mandatory conservation within the wastewater service area, and the Basin Plan says that accurate private well production is essential to avoiding harm to the Basin.
7. A lower targeted Basin yield (under 2000 AYF) must be set and achieved within one year.
8. Time specific, enforceable objectives for implementing the above measures should be set.

Despite overwhelming evidence that all reasonable actions should have been taken, including some granted by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, (mandatory well monitoring, mandatory conservation restrictions on pumping, and even a funding mechanism), the Parties have shied away from using them.

TAKE ACTION

On March 17, the Board of Supervisors agreed to a public review of the Los Osos Basin Plan. Get ready to tell the Board:

● The Basin Plan should commit the Parties to taking all reasonable actions available to save the Basin, including implementing ordinances and using the powers granted under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

● As a party to the adjudicated Basin and lead agency developing the LOWWP under a Coastal Development Permit, the County is responsible for implementation of groundwater programs that maximize the sustainability of the Basin and related resources.

● As a Party to the Basin Plan, the County has the authority to enact an ordinance that requires stronger programs, including mandatory conservation and well monitoring outside the wastewater service area.

Don’t Trade Away Climate Progress!

Tell Congress to oppose Fast Track

Beginning April 13, Congress will consider taking up “Fast Track” authorization to pass the Trans Pacific Partnership, which would weaken our environmental standards, open the floodgates to more fracking, and empower corporations to attack climate and environmental policies in secret trade tribunals.

Tell Congress “no thanks.” Send a message at www.sierraclub.org/trade.

The recent designation of Avila Beach as a bird sanctuary is a perfect opportunity to make the Harford Pier safer for the Brown Pelican. The pier’s fish cleaning station is poorly designed and allows, and even encourages, fishermen to take “bold, decisive, and immediate” action, but it doesn’t maximize programs or commit the Parties to immediate action.

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The Morro Bay Harbor Department is asking for design ideas for retrofitting their fish cleaning station at Tidelands Park to make it more wildlife friendly. If you have, or know someone who has, the interest and skills to help draw up some rough design plans, please contact Mark & Susan Garman at (510) 501-7010.

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Classifieds

Next issue deadline is April 13. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierracclub8@gmail.com

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Santa Lucian • April 2015
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. 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 outing 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.

Wed., Apr. 8th, 10 a.m. • Los Osos Plant Walk. On a easy one-mile walk through a unique ancient oak forest, identify dozens of wildflowers and native plants. Meet in parking lot of Los Osos Oaks Reserve, on Los Osos Valley Rd., across from Eto Rd. Leader: Vicki Marchenko. 526-5567 or vmarchenko57@gmail.com.

Fri.-Sun., Apr. 10th-12th • Carrizo Plains Car Camp and Hike. Car camp (no charge) at Selby Camp. Saturday 9 a.m., caravan to Caliente Ridge for out-and-back, all-day hike to Caliente Peak with views of wildflowers. This is a strenuous hike of 16 miles, 1200 ft. gain, but option of going part-way and returning. Bring your own food, water, and needed camping gear. Do call leader if first time in this area. Carlos Diaz-Saavedra. 546-3837.

Fri-Mon., April 10th-13th • Mojave National Preserve Outing. Meet Friday noon at Amboy Crater for hike up crater and lunch. Primitive camping Friday night near Granite Pass. Saturday, hike at Kelso Dunes, and Sunday visit Kelso Depot and lava tube, with camping at Medhills campground. Monday, option of hiking to Cima Dome on the way out. All hikes are moderate. Saturday night, we will have a potluck. No services in the preserve. Contact leader: Carol Wiley 760-245-8734. Mojave Group/CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat., April 11th, 10 a.m. • SLO Historical Walk: San Luis Cemetery. Guided stroll past gravesites of famous pioneers like Angel, Murray, Shimeister, and Civil War vets, plus the “old potters field” for indigents and the landmark pyramid. Learn the compelling story of the 19th-century founders of San Luis Obispo. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet in south parking lot adjacent to the pyramid, 2980 S. Higuera St. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sun., April 12th, 10 a.m. • Trekking-Pole Hike at Johnson Ranch. “Polecats” dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of using trekking poles. Hike through Johnson Ranch, 2 miles, 150 ft. elevation change. Tailhead located after lower Higuera goes under Hwy 101, becoming Ontario Rd. Need to confirm beforehand with Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or hikingpoles@gmail.com.

Sat., April 18th, Machesna Wilderness Hike. 8 a.m. All-day outing, strenuous, 12-15 mile hike, 2400-3400 ft. gain from American Canyon campground to pond and Machesna Mt. cutoff, then down Coyote hole and descending Machesna. Bring lunch, plenty of water, snacks, and dress for the weather. Meet at the Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. Advance registration required, not for beginners. For details, call leader: Gary Felsman: 473-3594.

Thu.-Sat., Apr 23rd-25th • Death Valley Wilderness Restoration. Help clean up a old cabin site in the Panamint Range near Ballarat and drive up Pleasant Canyon (requires 4WD) to our camp site. Work that afternoon on an as-yet-to-be determined project. Friday, a two-mile, moderately strenuous hike to the work site, and a full day’s work there. Saturday we will either continue working or do a hike in the area. Leader: Kate Allen, kjallen96@gmail.com, 661-944-4556. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat-Sun., Apr. 25th-26th, Service in the Carrizo Plains National Monument. Our service on Saturday will remove or modify sections of fence to facilitate the mobility of pronghorn antelope. Sunday will be, at the choice of the group, either a hike in the Caliente Range or a tour of popular viewing areas in the plains. This is an opportunity to combine car camping, day-hiking, exploring, and service in a relatively unknown wilderness. Contact leader for details: Craig Deutche, craig.deutche@gmail.com, 310-477-6670. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Fri-Sun., May 1st-3rd • Manzanar/ Lone Pine Lake Trip. Creekside camp in high desert near Lone Pine. Six-mile hike, moderate from Whitney Portal to Lone Pine Lake on Saturday, followed by happy hour, potluck, and campfire. Sunday carvan to Manzanar, WW II Japanese internment camp and museum near Lone Pine. Group size limited. Send $8 per person, plus email, phone no., sase, and rideshare preferences to Leader: Lygia Gerard, P.O. Box 721039, Pinon Hills, CA 92372, 760-386-2179 or Goody2zaar@yahoo.com Mojave Group/CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat., May 2nd, 7-30 a.m. • Santa Lucia Trail to Pinnacles Juniper (Serra) Peak. Very strenuous, 12-mile out-and-back hike, 3300 ft. gain from Indian Station trailhead in Los Padres. Pass through oak and pine forest, meadow to summit. Poison oak on trail. Bring plenty of water, snacks, and lunch, and dress for the weather. Meet at rideshare point at Las Tablas Rd and Hwy 101, then 90’ carpool to trailhead. Bring ID, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance for passage through Ft. Hunter Liggett. Extreme heat cancels. Need to confirm beforehand with Leader: Chuck Tribbey, 441-7597.

Activities sponsored by other organizations

• Sat., April 4th, 9:30 a.m. and Sat., May 2nd, 9:30 a.m., Citizens’ Climate Lobby. Citizens’ Climate Lobby meets at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2201 Lawton Ave., SLO. Join us and learn what you can do to slow climate change and make a difference in our community. Become a climate activist and part of the solution to the most pressing issue of our time. For more information email: citizensclimate@slo.org.

• Sat. April 11, 9 AM-11 a.m. and Audubon Bird Walk at SLO Botanical Garden. Meet at the Garden’s purple entrance bridge for a walk through gentle terrain while learning how to identify resident and migrating birds. You’re bound to see dozens of different species. Bring binoculars, or borrow some from our birders! Walk is $5 for Garden members/ $10 for public. More info at slobg.org/bird. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd.

Sun., April 19, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Earth Day Festival, El Chorro Park. Come celebrate at the 25th annual SLO County Earth Day Festival. Enjoy live music, displays, kid-zone, great food and beverages at this fun and FREE event! Special kids’ events will take place in the Children’s Garden from 12pm – 3pm, including planting and crafting. Learn more about the fest at earthdayalliance.com or slobg.org/earthday. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd.

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.