



SIERRA  
CLUB

February 2003  
Volume 40, No. 2

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### GENERAL MEETING

All-star lineup of speakers  
on coastal protection!  
**February 25, 7:00 p.m.**



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# SANTA LUCIAN



Protecting and  
Preserving the  
Central Coast

The official newsletter of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club • San Luis Obispo County, California

## Coastal Commission Coming to San Luis Obispo in March



Santa Lucia Chapter Chair Tarren Collins (second from left) enjoys the Coastal Commission anniversary celebration with (from left to right) Annie Notthoff of NRDC, Sara Wan, a California Coastal Commissioner, and Mark Massara, director of the Sierra Club Coastal Program. See page 3 for more on the celebration. Photo by Mahala Burton.

by Tarren Collins

The California Coastal Commission is coming to town again, presenting Sierra Club members and other environmental activists a golden opportunity to show their support for the Commission and to reinforce our demands for preservation of the Hearst Ranch as part of a strong Local Coastal Plan, which is scheduled for Periodic Review at the meeting. Oceano Dunes also are on the agenda, and forceful ongoing support from members for protection of the threatened and endangered species trying to survive the destruction of tens of thousands of off-road vehicles also is needed when the Commission reviews the status of limits on off-road vehicles there.

The Local Coastal Plan Period Review is tentatively scheduled for 9 a.m. on Wednesday, March 5, and the Oceano Dunes on Friday, March 7. The Commission meeting will be held from March 4 to 7 at the Embassy Suites Hotel. The outcome of the Local Coastal Plan Periodic Review—at this meeting and probably at future ones—will literally determine whether our coast and huge

undeveloped areas like the Hearst Ranch are saved for posterity or destroyed.

"It is vitally important for large numbers to attend the meeting and tell the Commission that the people of San Luis Obispo County support the rigorous implementation of the Coastal Act," said Tarren Collins, Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter, which is coordinating presentations to the Commission. (The Review will be a main topic of discussion at the Chapter's General Meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 25.) It is a particularly important

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## Notable Speakers to Attend General Meeting

by Jack McCurdy

Coastal Commission stalwart Sara Wan along with Sierra Club leaders Mark Massara and Elizabeth Lambe—famous locally for their organizing efforts that helped us defeat the Hearst Corporation development plans at the Commission hearing here in 1998—will headline the General Meeting program on Tuesday, Feb. 25. Together, they will pull back the curtain on what lies ahead in the struggle for coastal protection in 2003, revealing the challenges that the Club and its members face.

Their appearances couldn't be more timely as the Chapter gears up for the March 4-7 meeting of the California Coastal Commission in San Luis Obispo where Hearst Ranch development is expected to be high on the agenda as part of renewed discussion of the county's critically-important Local Coastal Plan. The meeting will be at the Embassy Suites Hotel.

Massara, the Club's Coastal Program director, and Lambe, manager of the Club's Great Coastal Places Campaign, will discuss new plans for the second year of the highly-successful Campaign and ideas for continuing its growth beyond the force of 5,000 coastal activists who joined up last year. They also will devote their considerable experience and expertise to explaining the importance of speaking to the Commission and how we can have an impact just by showing up at the hearings. They will be available to

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## Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting

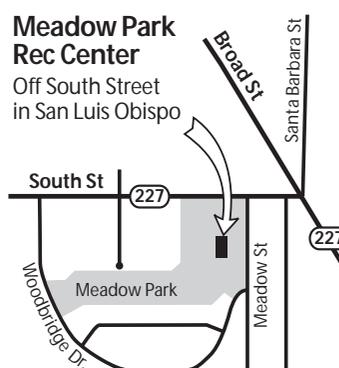
The California Coastal Commission meeting on March 4-7 at the Embassy Suites Hotel will be the focus of the General Meeting. Headlining will be former Commission Chair Sara Wan, describing how to be effective in protecting the coast, and ace Sierra Club organizers Mark Massara and Elizabeth Lambe unveiling coastal challenges we face in 2003.



Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 p.m.

Meadow Park Rec Center  
San Luis Obispo

Save the date!!



## Santa Lucia Chapter News

by Ross L. Pepper, Program Chair and temporary office manager

Your Santa Lucia Chapter is on the move, and we want you to get on board. First, our monthly General Meetings have been changed to the last Tuesday of the month. The next one is on Tuesday, Feb. 25. The meetings will still be at the Meadow Park Rec Center in San Luis Obispo. Please take note and help us support the programs we put together for your benefit and information.

Second, if you missed the announcement a few months ago, the Chapter office has moved downtown to 1204 Nipomo St., corner of Nipomo and Marsh streets. Our phone number is 543-8717, and the answering machine will continue to provide recorded information as well as take messages.

Third, we are still searching for a volunteer to take over as Office Manager. This is an extremely important position, and you would be making a wonderful contribution to your Chapter if you would be interested in either assuming the responsibility or in filling in part-time.

Our office now is staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday for several hours in the afternoon by me and on alternate Tuesdays by Janet White, while Joan O'Keefe continues to lend her expertise as needed to keep things running smoothly. The daily tasks of the office staff are to (a) pick up the mail at the Marsh Street Post Office, (b) open and route all incoming correspondence appropriately, (c) download and log messages from the telephone answering system and take action where needed or route messages to the appropriate party, and (d) enter information into a computer database system from callers leaving their names and addresses seeking information about a specific issue or to volunteer for an activity or event. This enables that future contact can be assured.

On a monthly basis, the office manager oversees labeling of the Chapter's monthly newspaper, the Santa Lucian, by a group of volunteers for mailing. In addition, the manager prepares a brief report summarizing the activities in the office before each monthly Executive Committee meeting.

Serving as office manager is a great way to help the Chapter and the Sierra Club remain effective in their mission to protect our environment. Please consider volunteering. You may contact me at the office number.

## SANTA LUCIAN

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Our office and phones are staffed by volunteers, and there may be a delay of up to a week to return your call. Please contact the most appropriate chapter officer for matters requiring immediate attention.

www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

# Coastal Protection Turns 30

by Jack McCurdy

The 30th anniversary of the people's initiative that produced the Coastal Act and the Coastal Commission was celebrated, and the dogged activists who over those three decades invented coastal protection and helped make it work were honored in Monterey earlier this month.

Proposition 20, the historic initiative that passed by a wide margin in 1972 and placed coastal development under public control by a statewide body, was the centerpiece of the gala dinner at the Monterey Bay Aquarium on Feb. 1, and 10 "Coastal Champions" were presented with awards—some of whom helped organize and pass the ballot measure, which led to the strongest coastal management law in the United States.

About 250 people attended the dinner, including Tarren Collins, chair of the Santa Lucia chapter. Six additional Coastal Champions received their awards in person at a companion anniversary dinner on Jan. 24 at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach.

"Thirty years later, it's important for us to remember why a citizen-based initiative like Prop. 20 was necessary," said Bill Allayaud, legislative director of Sierra Club California, lead sponsor of the events, and himself a former Commission intern, a planner and legislative liaison. "There was a legitimate concern that we would have Miami Beach-like, high-rise buildings lining the coast if we didn't act to stop irresponsible development."

"The people we honor serve as the continuing inspiration for those of us who follow their footprints in the sand," said Susan Jordan of the California Coastal Protection Network. "It is their diligence and persistence that provide the encouragement we need to carry on the never-ending battle to save the California coast."

Peter Douglas, executive director of the Coastal Commission and a legislative staff member who helped write the law that created the Commission, told the gathering that "the coast is never saved—it is always being saved." He was among those honored as a Coastal Champion. "Prop. 20 is an enduring tribute to what the environmental community can do. What we have accomplished is also a tribute to all of you. We need to fight the fight on behalf of the children." Douglas predicted that "the people who want to make the Commission history are going to strengthen it." Their legal challenge to the Commission's constitutionality will result in legislation giving members fixed terms and more independence, something "we tried to do in 1976 (when the Legislature approved the Coastal Act) but couldn't accomplish then," he said.

Michael Fischer, former Commission executive director and an award recipient, recalled that the bill creating the Coastal Act "passed in the last hours of the legislative session by one vote." Sara Wan, one of the strongest and most respected Chairs in Commission history and a recipient of a Coastal Champion award, said "the role of the activist is most critical" in making the Commission an effective bulwark for coastal protection. "The ultimate power is in our numbers," she said. "The Commission can't survive alone. You must continue to contribute and come to meetings. It's the only way to make the system work."

Jordan noted that when Wan started out as a grassroots activist, she was encouraged by Douglas to appear more often before the Commission. "She did so for seven years," Jordan said, "and then was appointed by (then state Senate President) Bill Lockyer. She became a lightning rod for the fight over the coast. She has been under siege but has stood up and fought back." She stepped down as Chair last December but remains on the Commission and, Wan added, will continue to fight for coastal protection.

Mark Massara, coastal program manager for Sierra Club California, who estimated he argues 100 cases before the Commission annually, said the Commission is surrounded by "chaos" and coastal protection is immersed in "constant crisis." But "this stuff just makes us stronger," he said. "That fact has less to do with the arguments I make before the Commission and more with how many people appear before the Commission and write letters to Commissioners."

Also honored were members of the Coastal Commission staff, some of whom were in the audience. It is often called the best of any agency in Sacramento, Douglas said "my accomplishments would not have been possible without our staff. Mine are theirs." He told them, "My success is your success. It is a tribute to you. Yours is a noble and ennobling work."

Those honored as Coastal Champions:

\* Ellen Stern Harris. Sometimes referred to as the "mother of the Coastal Act," she hosted a meeting at the kitchen table of her Los Angeles home in 1971 where the idea for an initiative came to fruition following several years of the Legislature failing to act.

\* Alan Sieroty. Former Los Angeles area member of the state Assembly who pushed early coastal protection legislation and then co-authored the Coastal Act of 1976.

\* Mel Nutter. Former member of a previous South Coast Regional Coastal Commission and chair of the Coastal Commission from 1982 to 1985.

\* Naomi Schwartz. Former Chair of the Commission and a member from 1982 to 1992.

\* Mel Lane. Chair of the Commission in 1973 and longtime environmental activist.

\* Lennie Roberts. Coastal activist from San Mateo County and former member of the Central Coast Regional Commission.

\* Phyllis Faber. Worked to get Prop. 20 on the ballot and passed and former member of the North Central Regional Commission from Marin County.

\* Warner Chabot. Worked for passage of Prop. 20 as a college student and longtime staff member of the Ocean Conservancy (formerly Center for Marine Conservation).

\* Bill Kortum. Helped write Prop. 20.

\* Ann Notthoff. Staff member of the Natural Resources Defense Council, who has worked on coastal protection since 1978.

\* Richard Charter. Campaigned against offshore oil drilling since the 1970s and led the fight against Lease Sale 53 which would have opened up oil drilling off the Central Coast.

\* Sara Wan. Appointed to the Commission in 1996, served as chair for more than three years, co-founded Vote the Coast, a political action committee dedicated to helping elect coastal-friendly candidates.

\* Bert Muhly. Professor at UC Santa Cruz who inspired many students to go into environmental planning careers and helped draft Prop. 20.

\* Joe Bodovitz. First executive director of the Commission.

\* Michael Fischer: second executive director of the Commission and later executive director of the Sierra Club.

\* Peter Douglas. Third executive director of the Commission since 1985, appointed chief deputy director in 1977, co-authored Prop. 20.

Major sponsors of the dinners were Sierra Club California and the League for Coastal Protection, and co-sponsors were the Natural Resources Defense Council, the California Coastal Protection Network, Mel Lane, the Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Long Beach Aquarium.



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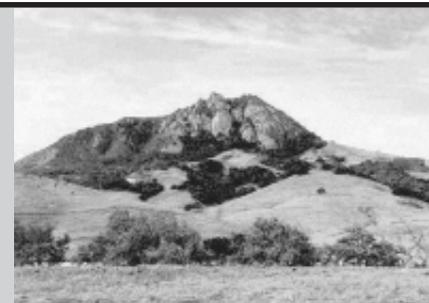
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## General Meeting

*continued from page 1*

provide assistance to members about how to make effective presentations to the Commission at its meeting.

Tarren Collins, Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter, will join them in emphasizing the importance of generating a big turnout for the Commission meeting and will review the local issues under consideration by Commissioners, especially the Periodic Review of the Local Coastal Plan. Collins is among a handful of state leaders involved in negotiations of a comprehensive conservation easement for preservation of the Hearst Ranch and stronger protections for the Oceano Dunes wildlife.

"At the meeting, activists will learn what coastal battles are before us at the local and state level and be briefed about threats to our coastline," Collins said. "And you will learn what simple steps you can take to help. I urge you to attend, meet our outstanding and inspiring guests and find out how you can play a key role in helping save our priceless coast."

The General Meeting begins at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at the Meadow Park Rec Center in San Luis Obispo. Members and friends are invited, and refreshments will be served. Doug Buckmaster, a Sierra Club member and president of the Friends of the RanchLand, will provide an update on the Periodic Review of the Local Coastal Plan and discuss the Board of Supervisors' failure to act on most of the 165 improvements that the Commission has recommended in the Plan.

It's a rare opportunity to hear five of the most informed and accomplished environmental leaders in California, and especially Wan, who drew a standing-room only crowd at the Chapter's General Meeting last July, when she analyzed the record of the Commission and what lies ahead for the main protector of California's coast. She stepped down as Chair last December when her proposed reelection divided the Commission, but she has vowed to continue as a member to be an outspoken and relentless proponent of coastal protection. She will be speaking as executive director of Vote the Coast, a political action committee dedicated to helping elect coastal-friendly candidates, and not in her capacity as a Commissioner. She will discuss how to be effective in protecting the coast.

Massara and Lambe also will report on the current status of legislative efforts in Sacramento to protect the Commission from opponents' legal challenges, one of which has led to legal decisions questioning its constitutionality. They also will discuss the ongoing record of the Commission in implementing the Coastal Act. Massara attends all Commission meetings and

comments or conveys the Club's positions on a wide variety of matters that come before the Commission, including some involving the Central Coast. He represented the Chapter at the Commission's December meeting in San Francisco where he supported the staff's recommendation for requiring dry cooling of Duke Energy's proposed new power plant in Morro Bay.

Ongoing threats to California's coast led the Sierra Club to launch the Great Coastal Places Campaign. Only now, that the very existence of the Coastal Commission has been put in jeopardy, do we realize how crucial and important the Campaign has become. In December, Great Coastal Places activists once again rose to the occasion when Wan faced opposition to her reelection and helped prevent more developer-friendly interests from electing a Chair they supported.

Over 1,000 of you turned out to the Commission hearing here to defeat Hearst's plans to develop San Simeon Point in 1998. Over 500 came to back-to-back hearings here in February, 2001, to tell the Commission to stop destruction of the Oceano Dunes, and to support Commission staff's recommendations for the Periodic Review of our county's Local Coastal Plan. And then last August, over 500 of you came to tell the Commission that we want it to protect our pristine coast from overdevelopment and pollution.

"We need you again!" Collins said. "Please attend the General Meeting to learn more—and please mark your calendar for March 5 and 7 when attendance at the Coastal Commission meeting at the Embassy Suites can make the difference in our fight to save our coast."

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## Marine Sanctuary Update

An organizing committee stemming from efforts to study marine sanctuary status for the San Luis Obispo County Coast has been created, the first formal step toward possible expansion of the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary to include the county's coastal waters. However, the Sierra Club was not represented among the 13 persons proposed for what was named the Marine Interests Group Working Committee at a closed meeting on Jan. 30 at the Morro Bay Public Library. Four representatives of elected officials also were proposed as ex-officio members.

Duke Energy, the controversial power company that is seeking to build a new Morro Bay Power Plant, was included among the 13 proposed members, although it had not been widely known that Duke was among the 66 nominations to the group. A report on the closed meeting from a facilitator hired to coordinate the Working Committee's activities said that it will consider adding more members. The Santa Lucia Chapter had nominated two of its members.

The name, Marine Interests Group (MIG), was suggested by Supervisor Shirley Bianchi, who said it is meant to show "there's no predetermined agenda here" and the committee's purpose is "broader than only the potential sanctuary issue," the report said. Robin Robinson, representing the World Wildlife Fund, which has agreed to provide some funding for MIG activities, hired the facilitator, Don Maruska, a Los Osos resident. He suggested the first committee members, who were reviewed by the committee, his report said.

The committee adopted a statement of purpose, which said the MIG seeks to:

1. Promote understanding of the marine resources off the coast of San Luis Obispo County and the needs and interests of the stakeholders involved with their use and enjoyment.
2. Openly examine potential ways to sustain and enhance the resources.
3. Recommend desirable courses of action (or no action) as appropriate to support the resources and their sustainable use.

Proposed committee members include Bill Yates, mayor, City of Morro Bay; Carolyn Moffatt, commissioner, Port San Luis Harbor; Dean Wendt, professor of Marine Biology, Cal Poly; Hugh Thomas, commercial fishing (Port San Luis); Joy Fitzhugh, County Farm Bureau; Marla Morrissey, conservation, Morro Estuary Greenbelt Alliance; Matt Fleming, chair, Surfrider Foundation; Mike Multari, director, Morro Bay National Estuary Program; Pat Mullen, Duke Energy; Pam Marshall Heatherington, executive director, Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo County; Patricia Wilmore, legislative affairs, San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce; Ron Massengil, Cambria, member, Sanctuary Advisory Council, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and Bianchi, second district Supervisor.

Proposed ex-officio members are Greg Haas, representing Rep. Lois Capps; Richard Macedo, Bianchi; Sandy Agalos, Assemblymember Abel Maldonado, and Vicki Janssen, Supervisor Katcho Achadjian.

The MIG grew out of requests for nominations to a stakeholders committee by an ad hoc citizens group last November, which came about after the Monterey Bay sanctuary Advisory Council voted to give priority status to consideration of expansion of that sanctuary to cover the San Luis Obispo County coast.

## Conservation Committee Report

*by Pete Wagner, Chair, Conservation Committee*

Remember caulerpa taxifolia, the kudzu of the coast? (For readers unfamiliar with southern ways, kudzu was imported as a fast growing ground cover to stabilize erosion along banks and to feed grazing cattle. Unfortunately cattle don't like it, but it does like the South where it has smothered indigenous plant life.)

Caulerpa was imported from Europe for ornamental use in aquaria. It escaped and has proliferated along the southern California coast, where it overwhelms indigenous aquatic plant life and, once established, is extremely difficult to eradicate.

In 2001, the Sierra Club supported Assembly Bill 1334, banning its use, which became law. However, a Regional Water Quality Control Board staff member recently informed me that, through ignorance, it is still being dumped into sewer and drainage systems where it can work its way into coastal waters. Further, it is moving north. Legislation (AB 120) has been introduced this year to fund a million-dollar eradication program in the Agua Hedionda Lagoon at Carlsbad where the infestation is severe. The Club intends to support this and whatever other eradication actions that will help keep this devastating species from invading our coastline.

In connection with the Duke and Diablo projects we are keeping track of the electricity supply and demand picture. The California Energy Commission recently issued new five-year projections. For normal August temperatures, the month of highest demand, they predict operating reserves ranging from 16% this year to 8.8% in 2008, which are considered adequate to prevent shortages. Even under unusually hot weather conditions there will be reserve capacity between 3% and 9% in those years. The calculations assume the addition of new power plants that are only 75% or more likely to come on line, and conservation at a very modest one-third of the 2001 level.

These figures show a much more optimistic supply/demand picture than has been previously predicted and tend to reduce the urgency for new facilities like the Duke expansion of the Morro Bay power plant. Conservation is an enormous part of the balance. In 2001 conservation lowered demand by about 4000 megawatts (MW), more than 7% of the state's capacity of roughly 55,000 MW and the equivalent of two Diablos or four Morro Bay plants!

The more energy we save through conservation, the fewer power plants with their environmental impacts that need to be built.

## Coastal Commission Meeting

continued from page 1

time to voice support because of the legal attacks on the Commission and the debate in the California Legislature over ways to modify terms of Commissioners to blunt those assaults from development interests.

County residents have established a proud tradition of turning out in large numbers for the few Commission meetings that have been held here, each time sending a clear and convincing message that Central Coast communities are united in their support of coastal preservation. "More than 1,000 county residents heeded the call to help save our coast in January, 1998, and attended Commission hearings to help stop the Hearst Corporation's plans for massive development of the Ranch, including wholesale transformation of San Simeon Point from its natural state," Collins said.

"Then we showed them again in February, 2001, when more than 500 citizens attended the Commission's hearings on a periodic review of the Local Coastal Plan as part of the Club's Great Coastal Places Campaign." Now another review is on the Commission's agenda and all the critical issues, such as Hearst Ranch, are once again up for grabs. "We need you in the meeting room, waving signs and at the microphone once more to show that our determination to save our coast is unyielding," she said.

A key part of this meeting is designed for the Commissioners to hear comments from citizens about how the county Board of Supervisors has been implementing the Local Coastal Plan, and for Commission staff to share the preliminary results of their periodic review of the Plan. "This review has far reaching implications for the future of the San Luis Obispo County coast and the Hearst Ranch because it involves the most basic plan that will guide development for many years to come," Collins explained.

A major part of the periodic review will deal with the Commission's 165 "Final Recommendations for Corrective Action" on the Local Coastal Plan, which first were submitted to the County as a preliminary report in February, 2001; resubmitted as a supplemental report in July, 2001, and adopted by unanimous vote of the Commission during its meeting in August, 2001. Adoption of the 165 recommendations was designed to bring San Luis Obispo County's Plan into compliance with the Coastal Act. The County has agreed to 33 of the 165 recommendations but in general their value is questionable because, among

other things, the county has chosen vague wording for those 33 recommendations.

"The real story here is that our Local Coastal Plan does not comply with the Coastal Act, and that results in destruction of our coast. It also imposes a hardship on innocent citizens trying to comply with the county's regulations, only to have their projects denied by the Coastal Commission because they don't comply with the Coastal Act," Collins explained. "As a result, the county leads property owners wanting to build their retirement homes down a primrose path by approving projects under a Plan that is out-of-date and out of compliance."

Collins said if the county would adopt and implement the 165 recommendations unanimously adopted by the Commission, "our coast would have a greater level of protection, and people who want to build on their property would get the clear and correct information from the county Planning Department, not a false 'green light' only to find their plans denied by the Commission." She noted that the Commission has provided funds to the county to implement the recommendations, but the county is not doing it. Instead, it has scheduled only 33 of the 165 recommendations for discussion at public hearings before the Commission's meeting here in March, and those 33 are the only ones the county ostensibly supports. The rest of the 165 include the recommendations to rezone the Hearst Ranch back to agriculture, which are in dispute.

As the most informed people—from former Commission Chair Sara Wan to

Commission Executive Director Peter Douglas to Sierra Club Coastal Program Director Mark Massara—have emphasized repeatedly, the turnout of people and their comments are what carry the force that plays a crucial role in deciding how the Commission votes on key matters, she pointed out. "I urge you to attend the hearing to implore the Coastal Commission to stop development from destroying the Coast from Oceano to the Hearst Ranch," Collins said.

To stay abreast of any late changes in times or dates of the Periodic Review and Oceano Dunes on the Commission's agenda, members should check the Commission web site (<http://www.ceres.ca.gov/coastalcomm/index.html>), the Santa Lucia Chapter site (<http://santalucia.sierraclub.org/index/index.html>) or the media.

## Outings

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**Sat., Apr. 12, 8:45 a.m., ADOBE TRAIL TO ROLLING GRASSLAND PLATEAU:** Moderately strenuous, with steep trail at start in a pasture, but affords high overlook down into partially intact historic adobe ranch house below in scenic Cuyama River valley. Trail steeply ascends through open oak complex to a rolling grassland plateau extending northward to Branch Creek. USFS Trailhead (Adventure Pass required on all parked vehicles) is in enclosure on Highway 166 approximately 22 miles east of Freeway 101 and a mile or two short of Twin Rocks area. Meet 8:45 a.m. at the North Santa Barbara County Government Center's easternmost (Bldg 511) parking lot, Santa Maria. Rain cancels. Hikes are always subject to change; always contact the leader: JERRY (928-3598) (AR)

**Sat.-Sun., Apr. 19-20, Panamint Valley/Briggs Gold Mine/Surprise Canyon Backpack:** What is a view worth? Join Tom Budlong and me for a weekend backpack in the beautiful threatened Panamint Valley west of Death Valley National Park. We will backpack south from Jail Canyon to Hall Canyon camping at a spring, then on to the controversial Surprise Canyon narrows. Two issues for the price of one: Briggs Mine expansion and Surprise Canyon vehicle closure. Great views will distract us as we discuss the defense of this magnificent landscape. Moderate skills needed, some on and off trail hiking required. Contact Ldr: Bob Ellis (510) 525-8742 or [bobellisds@earthlink.net](mailto:bobellisds@earthlink.net). CNRCC Desert Com/SF Bay Chap

**Fri.-Sun., Apr. 25-27, Culp Valley, Anza Borrego State Park Carcamp:** Culp Valley, in the Upper Sonoran plant zone, is our base for a hike down the old California Riding and Hiking Trail to Borrego Valley, 3,000 ft. below. We'll see a variety of chaparral community plants on the way. On shorter hikes we'll visit local springs and see effects of water sources on plant life. Primitive campground. OK for passenger cars. Send phone number and address with SASE, or send via e-mail, to Ldr: Bill Engs, Box 3248, Crestline, CA 92325. [engs@juno.com](mailto:engs@juno.com) Phone: (909) 338-1910. CNRCC Desert Com/ San Gorgonio Chap

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## 2003 Sierra Club Calendars

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**Please contact Bonnie at 543-7051**

## Support Protection of Oceano Dunes

by Tarren Collins, Chapter Chair

The next Coastal Commission hearing to renew the permit to allow continued use of the Oceano Dunes by off-road vehicles will be held on Friday, March 7, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Luis Obispo, and your attendance is urgently needed to show support for endangered species protection and condemn State Parks' mismanagement of tens of thousands of the vehicles in this critical habitat.

Last year, over 1500 Sierra Club members and other coastal activists from throughout the state sent postcards demanding greater protections for the endangered species at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. These postcards were sent to the Coastal Commission on behalf of the Santa Lucia Chapter. They were delivered by National Sierra Club Coastal Program Director Mark Massara and Chapter Chair Tarren Collins at the last hearing on renewal of the State Parks permit.

Now, we need to reinforce those demands as the Commission reviews protections for the Dunes' wildlife. In a recent letter to the Commission, Collins summarized the status of the issue and the Chapter's and Club's contentions on what needs to be done to safeguard Dunes habitat. An edited version of her letter:

The environmental impacts caused by unlimited number of vehicles on the unique and fragile Oceano Dunes ecosystem is of great concern to our Sierra Club members. The Commission is scheduled to review and determine whether or not to renew the Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA).

We will be asking the Commission to use the full extent of your legal authority under the Coastal Act, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Endangered Species Act to institute temporary emergency measures in addition to the permit conditions recommended by (your) staff.

According to the National Parks Service, the Oceano Dunes are more important, environmentally, than Yosemite Valley. Yet tens of thousands of vehicles blanket the beach and dunes on peak weekends. Despite this being one of the most damaging uses of coastal resources in all of California, vehicle limits haven't changed since 1975.

It's time for the Coastal Commission to put a stop to the dramatic adverse impact these vehicles have on this Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). The Oceano Dunes, beach, and wetland environments coexist as one of the most delicate and valuable ecosystems—habitat to rare and endangered plants, fish and animals. For years, the Oceano Dunes has been managed exclusively as a playground for off-road vehicles. However, the Oceano Dunes is home to multiple threatened species, including the threatened Western Snowy Plover, the California Least Tern (a fully protected bird under California State Law), Steelhead Trout, and Red Legged Frogs.

State Parks management violates the Coastal Act policies protecting the ESHA. In addition, State Parks has no incidental take permit nor Habitat Conservation Plan, yet its management of vehicles at the Oceano Dunes SVRA is causing take of endangered and threatened species in violation of both State and Federal Endangered Species Acts, and in violation of California Fish and Game Code section 3511 (which gives California Least Terns Fully Protected Bird status).

The California State Parks and Recreation Department currently allows off-road vehicles and intense camping to destroy this public area and along with it, irreplaceable historic nesting and foraging beach habitat that the threatened Western Snowy Plover and endangered California

Least Tern need to survive. On the brink of extinction, the Western Snowy Plover population plummeted to fewer than 1,000 individual birds. Plover chicks are precocial, foraging for food within minutes of birth, and the flightless chicks often leave fenced areas at the OSDVRA to feed right where the vehicles drive. To make matters worse, nesting season coincides with three out of four major holidays, proliferating the plovers' demise.

State Parks' resistance to implementing meaningful management measures at the OSDVRA has resulted in deaths and harassment of Snowy Plovers and loss of nesting habitat. It has also resulted in increased restrictions to pedestrian and equestrian public access at other state beaches. The fact that State Parks recently closed Morro Strand State Beach to dogs on leashes in an effort to protect the nesting Western Snowy Plover population there from disturbance flies in the face of its management of plover habitat at the Oceano Dunes. You can't walk your dog at Morro Strand State Beach, but you can put your dog in your car and drive it, or walk it, on important Western Snowy Plover habitat at the Oceano Dunes.

No amount of meetings, studies, committees or promises by State Parks is going to prevent the death of plovers, and the missed opportunity to expand the plover population at the OSDVRA again this nesting season. Extinction is forever. We do not have the luxury of time to ponder their fate for another year. You need to do the obvious thing, remove the vehicles and camping from the beach and foredunes as a temporary emergency measure during the plover nesting season THIS YEAR. This position is fully supported by a letter from your CCC staff: "Expansion of the enclosure area, in conjunction with strong predator management, is the best way to maximize protection of plovers and their habitat at Oceano."

It noted that "degradation and displacement of nesting habitat by human use is one of the primary causes for declines in the Pacific Coast Snowy Plover populations" and recommends that "the Superintendent of the OSDVRA expand the enclosure area..."

You need to make the policy decision to be precautionary, and thereby protect the historical nesting habitats from all sources of disturbance as a temporary emergency measure during the nesting season this year. This policy perspective will optimize resource protection at the park. In order to comply with the mandates of the Coastal Act and CEQA, you need to require additional feasible alternative measures to mitigate the intense recreational use at the park. These management measures are available but have not been incorporated.

The staff report contains the necessary findings and all of the reasons why you need to make the additional conditions of approval for renewal of the CDP. The Parks Department's mission is to "protect California's natural and cultural resources" for all Californians. Instead, they promote the use of off-road vehicles in a manner that is not only ecologically destructive, but also breaks federal and state laws!

You must prevent another year of inflicting death by committee. Close the beach and foredunes to vehicles and camping during plover nesting season this year as a temporary emergency measure while Parks obtains its incidental take permits. Please hold firm to the spirit and letter of the Coastal Act and exercise your full authority to protect the Western Snowy Plover and other threatened species, environmentally sensitive habitat, and water quality of San Luis Obispo County, by preserving the Oceano Dunes for everyone—not just off-road vehicle fanatics.

## Diablo Canyon Update

by Pete Wagner, Chair, Conservation Committee

Several important issues concerning operations at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant are approaching a critical stage. First, the Mothers for Peace, the Santa Lucia Chapter and other co-intervenors in the regulatory review of PG&E's application to build an outdoor storage facility, called the Independent Spent Fuel Installation Storage Installation (with the unpronounceable acronym ISFSI), have contended that a comprehensive study must be made of means to prevent a terrorist attack and its potential consequences at the plant.

Our Chapter and the Mothers requested this study by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Licensing Board, and we sought to suspend ISFSI proceedings until completion of an NRC comprehensive review of the terrorism question. Basing its decision on somewhat tortured arguments, the Board, and subsequently the full NRC, turned us down.

At the same time, the County is commencing an environmental impact study of the ISFSI; however, its staff has not committed to an evaluation of terrorist threats, citing preemption by higher authority—the NRC. In other words, no one has accepted responsibility for an analysis of the problem of terrorist acts of malice. This is a very troublesome and dangerous situation. The Chapter is continuing to work with the Mothers on what to do next.

Your comments on the proposed outdoor storage facility and support for a study of ways to prevent a terrorist attack at the plant are urged at the NRC meeting from 3 to 7 p.m. on March 23 and from 10 a.m. until all testimony is finished on March 24 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Luis Obispo. Public input on the ISFSI has been invited by the NRC. Your attendance is vitally important

as a demonstration of the depth of our concerns about the proposed facility and the safety issue. In preparing your comments, you may refer to the Executive Committee's recommendations that are posted on the Chapter web site at <http://santalucia.sierraclub.org/index/index.html>.

Second, the Regional Water Quality Control Board must periodically issue what is called an NPDES permit for power plants to allow them to use and discharge ocean or fresh water for cooling. As one requirement, PG&E and Water Board staff have negotiated an agreement covering compensation for the environmental impact of the cooling water discharge. The agreement could not be reviewed by the Chapter in time for this issue of the Santa Lucian. However, it was expected to mirror the draft released two years ago, which proposed that PG&E trade cash and land for the damage to marine life caused by the heated water discharge.

The Water Board will most likely take action on the proposed agreement sometime this spring or early summer. The Conservation Committee will analyze the agreement and prepare a recommendation for action by the Chapter Executive Committee. Our concern is that the so-called mitigation does not remediate the actual damage to marine life at the Diablo outfall but attempts to compensate for it with a tradeoff. This is one of three present cases in which Water Board staff has proposed not to directly remediate damage, but to concede the damage and trade it for assets of putatively equal value.

The other two are Moss Landing, where a similar arrangement was made, and Morro Bay, where the Water Board and Duke Energy are negotiating a cash payment to compensate for the 17% to 33% mortality of early marine life forms caused by the cooling water intake. The irony is that dry cooling, which is successfully employed at many other power plants, would completely and directly obviate the need for any other remedial measures. While possibly impractical at Diablo, dry cooling would work perfectly at Moss Landing and Morro Bay. The situation at Moss Landing is in litigation. The California Energy Commission (CEC) staff, the Coastal Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the California Department of Fish and Game have recommended dry cooling at Morro Bay. An important preliminary decision by a committee of the CEC on the Morro Bay project and its cooling technology is expected shortly.

The third issue is the future of the Diablo Canyon Independent Safety Committee (DCISC). This committee monitors daily operations at the plant, investigates individual problems as they arise, and follows up case by case in detail. It is an effective and competent watchdog; however, PG&E is proposing to abolish it as part of the bankruptcy settlement now in court. (This alone attests to the committee's value.)

The Chapter would like the committee not only to continue its work, which is invaluable, but also to expand its mission and become a vehicle for public liaison and education on all environmental and public safety issues related to power generation at Diablo. Even if that doesn't happen, the committee must at least be allowed to continue in its present form since it is the only existing mechanism for third-party public access to Diablo operations.

Together with the Mothers, the Chapter is intervening in the bankruptcy court to separate the DCISC question completely from PG&E's financial proposals, which should be the only subject of the bankruptcy decision. Indeed, the burden of funding the DCISC is trivial compared to the revenues and expenses at Diablo, and the move to abolish the committee as a cost-saving measure appears to be nothing more than a pretext for avoiding needed and valuable oversight of Diablo operations by an independent agency.

### Radical Films in SLO County?

Tuesday, February 4

*Globalization and Its Solutions: Women Leaders Speak Out* with films of Amy Goodman, Vandana Shiva and Helena Norberg-Hodge at the Palm Theatre in SLO, 7pm, \$5

Wednesday, February 12

*Blood Makes The Grass Grow*, a film about Conscientious Objection to war with professor Stephen Pope speaking about the possible draft in this country. Sponsored by Central Coast Friends. Fundraiser for the Draft Counseling Center of SLO. SLO Library, 7pm, \$5.

Wednesday, February 19

*Strong Roots, Fragile Farms* (narrated by Willie Nelson), an hour length documentary on how globalization is at the core of the family farm crisis, not only in this country but all over the world. Plus an extremely important short film about Percy Schmeiser, who is suing Monsanto, will also be shown at the Lake Atascadero Pavillion in Atascadero, \$5.

Tuesday, February 25

*A Tribute to Comedian Bill Hicks* who died February 26, 1994. Come and see this powerful figure whose wisdom in the early 90s is vitally necessary today. SLO Library, 7pm, \$5.

Sponsored by HopeDance Media and The People's Video Project. Call 544-9663 for details or go to [www.hopedance.org](http://www.hopedance.org).

# Classifieds

Classified ads are \$10 and are limited to 20 words. They are due by the 10th prior to the month of publication (**next deadline is February 14th**). Please submit your ad and payment to:  
 Deborah Krueger  
 c/o Santa Lucian  
 P.O. Box 15755  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Santa Lucia Chapter is seeking to fill the following positions:

- Treasurer
- Membership Chair
- Santa Lucian Distribution Manager
- Office Manager
- Office Staff

If you are interested in any of the openings, please contact Jack at [jmccurdy@slonet.org](mailto:jmccurdy@slonet.org). If you are interested in the office manager or office staff positions, please contact Ross Pepper at [rosspepper@charter.net](mailto:rosspepper@charter.net)



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## Environmental 911

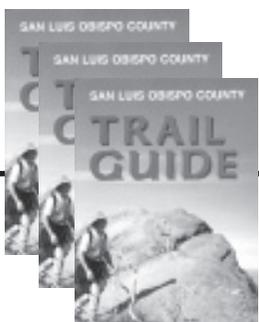
Here's an easy way to report on environmental concerns or to get information on issues affecting our ecology: Call 911! That's just a catchy title, though. The real number is. . . (drum roll):

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## A Will . . .

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For more information and confidential assistance, contact

**John Calaway**  
**Sierra Club Planned Giving Program**  
**85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441**  
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# Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Leader Gary Felsman (473-3694). For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. Outings Leaders please get your outings or events in by the 10th for the next month's outings.

## Hiking Classifications:

**Distance:** 1 = 0-2 mi., 2 = 3-5 mi., 3 = 6-9 mi., 4 = 10-12 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.

**Elevation Gain:** A = 500', B = 1000', C = 1500', D = 2000', E = 2500', F = 3000' or more.

**Sun., Feb. 16, 8:45 a.m., Prefumo Canyon Conditioning Hike.** This is a 1.5 hour, 3.5 mile RT hike with 700 ft. of elevation gain. Bring water, sturdy hiking shoes and dress for the weather. Everyone is welcome, but this is a vigorous conditioning hike. It is intended for already fit individuals who want to maintain a high fitness level. It is not for those who want to get into shape, as they will be left behind. Meet at the trailhead parking lot. After turning off the 11000 block of Los Osos Valley Road, go .9miles on Prefumo Canyon Road and turn left just beyond the Prefumo Creek Bridge. Rain Cancels. Leader Al (534-0462) (2B)

**Sun., Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., MUSSEL ROCK HIKE:** Meet at end of West Main on the beach. Bring lunch, water, binoculars, inspirational readings. Dogs on a leash permitted until first of March when Snowies start to nest. New Years' hike here had over 30 people. Details and Confirm with Bill (929-3647) <bdenneen@slonet.org>

**Mon., Feb. 17, President's Day, 9:30 a.m., DANA ADOBE:** A nature hike around Nipomo's historic landmark. Oak woodland, birding and riparian habitat. An easy 2-mile hike of 2.5 hrs. followed by HDThoreau from the DA veranda. Directions: East on Tefft from #101, south one mile on Oakglen to DA sign. Details and confirm with Bill (929-3647) <bdenneen@slonet.org>

**Sat., Feb. 22, 7:30 a.m., Tentative Hike Lion Den or Bust.** Come explore the Cruickshank Trail Bottom to top and back in the beautiful Silver peak Wilderness. This is a 13-mile, 3000 ft. elevation gain and loss along the Big

Sur Coastline. We will see great views of the coast range, redwoods, Sergeant Cypress and lots more as we hike this beautiful trail. This is a strenuous hike, and I can guarantee we will climb over a few trees, there will be some poison oak, and of course our friend the tick. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes, and dress for the weather. Meet at Spencer's Market in Morro Bay and don't be late for this all day hike. Dinner in Cambria after for those interested. Cambria residents call for meeting place and time. Details call Gary at (473-3694)(5F)

**Sun., Feb. 23, 9:30 a.m., POINT SAL HIKE:** Meet at end of Brown Rd. 9:30 a.m. Bring optional Mt. Bike for fast ride back down hill. The first 2.5 miles is uphill (1000 ft). We'll stop a lot going uphill to botanize, solve all the planet's problems and give a GOF a rest. Bring lunch, water, fit dogs that do not chase cattle. Confirm just before event (929-3647) or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

**Sat., Mar. 1, 10:00 a.m., DEMONSTRATION:** First day of Snowie Plover nesting season. We'll meet at ocean end of Pier Ave with our signs and hike to Arroyo Grande Creek which is Critical Habitat for Snowies and Steelies. Details and Confirm with Bill (929-3647) <bdenneen@slonet.org>

**Sun., Mar. 2, 9:30 a.m., COAST NATURE HIKE:** See a remote area of dunes with botanizing, bird watching and poetry. Confirm and details a few days before. Details and Confirm with Bill (929-3647) <bdenneen@slonet.org>

**Fri.-Sun., Mar. 7-9, Ski Trip: Clair Tappaan Lodge.** We have a 10-person room reserved at the Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge at Donner. The cost is \$98 for members and \$109 for non-members. Children are \$31. Price includes all meals! (Vegetarian meals available) X-country ski rentals and lessons available for a fee. Free access to groomed trails right from the back door. Free shuttle bus available from the lodge to nearby cross-country and downhill ski areas. Each person must do a daily chore while staying at the lodge. For reservation and trip information, contact the leader. A check for the total amount (payable to Sierra Club) and a SASE or e-mail address can be mailed to Ski Trip, P.O. Box 604, Santa Cruz 95061. Mail-in reservations must be received by February 28. Carpooling information will be mailed to you on March 1. Refunds for cancellations are 90% before February 28, 75% by March 5,

50% after the 5th. For more details call leader, George Jammal at (408?)335-7748. (Not sure of Area Code)

**Sat., Mar. 8, 10:00 a.m., Canoe/Kayak Morro Bay:** We are a bit early for Saint Patrick's Day, but bring a green salad or a green sandwich in your canoe or kayak for a day on the bay and a picnic on the sand spit. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, binoculars, and your picnic lunch (a turkey sandwich might be appropriate). Launch at Morro Bay State Park Marina. Details call Jack (773-2147).

**Sun., Mar. 9, 9:00 a.m., OSO FLACO CREEK TO CORIOPSIS HILL:** Follow this creek to the lake and onto a flower filled hill in this Santa Maria area. Moderate 8 mile RT. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9 a.m. VICKI 563-4850 (SB)

**Sun., Mar. 9, 9:30 a.m., BICYCLE NATURE TOUR:** Meet east side of parking lot at Pismo Pier, ride to Avila Pier via Bob Jones Pathway and return by Pirates Cove with many nature stops and solving of world problems on the way. Must wear helmet. Details and Confirm with Bill (929-3647) <bdenneen@slonet.org>

**Wed., Mar. 12, 5:30 p.m., Islay Hill Hike:** One-hour, one-mile, 400-ft. elevation gain hike for a quick workout and sweeping views of SLO and Edna Valley. Trailhead is off the Sweetbay cul-de-sac in the Arbors development, by the railroad tracks. From South Broad St. take Tank Farm Rd. toward the mountains, turn right on Wavertree, left on Spanish Oaks, and right on Sweetbay. Rain cancels. Confirm with Monica (784-0644).

**Sat., Mar. 15, 8:45 a.m., CATWAY ROAD:** USFS parking area (Adventure Pass required on all parked vehicles) at trailhead. Moderate non-loop hike along a wide brush-free jeep road trail following the Figueroa Mountain main ridgeline northwestward, and wrapping around or rolling over minor peaks on the way. We may have lunch near Zaca Peak or some other viewpoint. Trail offers excellent views of very rugged parts of Los Padres National Forest wild areas and areas worthy of future protection. Meet 0845 at the North Santa Barbara County Government Center's easternmost (Bldg 511) parking lot, Santa Maria, or 0915 at Matthey's Tavern near Figueroa Mountain Road turnoff in Los Olivos. Rain cancels. Hikes are always subject to change; always contact the leader: JERRY 928-3598 (AR)

**Sun., Mar. 16, 9:30 a.m., PISMO**



Photo by Joaquin Palting

**DUNES PRESERVE:** Meet at Melodrama in Oceano. Hike the most beautiful dunes to a Dune Lake via a secret passageway. Details and Confirm with Bill (929-3647) <bdenneen@slonet.org>

**Sun., Mar. 16, 8:00 a.m., Bishop Peak Conditioning Hike.** This is a 2-hour, 4 1/2-mile roundtrip hike with over 1200 ft. of elevation gain. Bring water, sturdy hiking shoes and dress for the weather. Everyone is welcome, but this is a vigorous conditioning hike. It is intended for already fit individuals who want to maintain a high fitness level. It is not for those who want to get into shape, as they will be left behind. Meet at the Patricia Drive Trail head at the 800 Block of Patricia Drive in SLO. Rain cancels. Leader Al (534-0462) (2C)

**Sat.-Sun., Mar. 22-23, Panamint Valley Vs Briggs Gold Mine Carcamp:** What is a view worth? Join Tom Budlong and me for a weekend carcamp in the beautiful threatened Panamint Valley west of Death Valley National Park. One of the world's grandest landscapes is endangered by the Briggs Mine's expansion proposal which would forever scar a huge area of the Panamint escarpment. See the sights, walk the ground, and talk the issues with activists committed to the defense of this national treasure. The time for 1872 Mining Law reform is NOW! Contact Ldr: Bob Ellis (510) 525-8742 or bobellisds@earthlink.net. CNRCC Desert Com/SF Bay Chap

**Wed., Mar. 26, 5:30 p.m., Islay Hill Hike:** One-hour, one-mile, 400-ft. elevation gain hike for a quick workout and sweeping views of SLO and Edna Valley. Trailhead is off the Sweetbay cul-de-sac in the Arbors development, by the railroad tracks. From South Broad St. take Tank Farm Rd. toward the mountains, turn right on Wavertree, left on Spanish Oaks, and right on Sweetbay. Rain cancels. Confirm with Monica (784-0644).

continued on page 5