



**SIERRA
CLUB**

May 2003
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URGE STRONG ACTION ON COUNTY LCP

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GENERAL MEETING

Documentary filmmaker
discusses new film!

May 27, 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

Preliminary Approval of Duke Plant Faces Stiff Opposition



BEACH SCENE--Photomontage from Duke Energy's application to the state shows how its proposed new power plant would look near the dunes and beach in Morro Bay just north of Morro Rock.

by Jack McCurdy

A preliminary decision allowing Duke Energy to build a new Morro Bay power plant that uses estuary water for cooling and kills significant numbers of fish larvae is expected to be challenged by advocates of protection for the Morro Bay National Estuary.

The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club as well as the Coastal Alliance on Plant Expansion (CAPE) will consider asking the California Energy Commission (CEC) for a review of its Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD), which was issued on April 30.

The grounds for the appeal would likely be that the decision is flawed and goes against the evidence in the CEC record that a new plant proposed by Duke Energy would harm the Estuary and that its water should not be used for cooling the plant's generators. The CEC staff and three other state and federal agencies recommended that the plant use a technology called dry cooling, which would not rely on water from the Estuary.

The Chapter has taken a strong stand in support of the CEC staff's recommendations against so-called once-through cooling of the plant with Estuary water. CAPE has taken the same

position and is an intervenor in the review of the proposed project by the CEC committee.

Both the Chapter and CAPE may file comments on the PMPD by June 13. A public hearing on the PMPD is scheduled for June 30 at the Veteran's Memorial Hall, 209 Surf St., Morro Bay. The Chapter's Executive Committee is expected to discuss any comments it intends to make when it meets on May 27.

In addition, CAPE plans to submit testimony in support of dry cooling, which would eliminate impacts to marine life in the Morro Bay National Estuary by a new plant, at a hearing next fall before the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), which would

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Showdown Set on County LCP, Coastal Protections

Will our coast get the sorely needed new protections it needs through enactment of recommended improvements to the all-important Local Coastal Program? Will the California Coastal Commission go to the state Legislature—as it is entitled to under the Coastal Act—about San Luis Obispo County's refusal to approve the recommendations adopted by the Commission?

In what could be an historic climax of more than 18 months of debate on these crucial questions, the Coastal Commission is scheduled to consider once more the Periodic Review of the Local Coastal Program (LCP) at its meeting on June 11-13 in Long Beach at the Queen Mary. The LCP had been scheduled for hearing at the Commission's meeting in Monterey this month but was postponed.

The Chapter is organizing efforts to obtain a large turnout at the meeting in Long Beach in order to show the Commission that the community is solidly behind its proposals to update the LCP and better protect our coast from unwise and inappropriate development. Chapter Chair Tarren Collins said an impressive number of supporters at

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—John Muir



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Outings, events, and more!

Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting

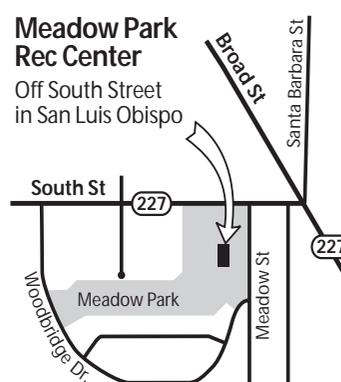
Amie S. Williams, a young, award-winning documentary filmmaker, will show her brand new film on a mysterious cancer cluster among children in Fallon, Nevada, and relate what she has learned about toxic-chemical exposure elsewhere to area residents and workers at the Santa Lucia Chapter's General Meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27, at the Meadow Park Rec Center in San Luis Obispo.

The film, "Fallon, NV: Deadly Oasis," is "sheer drama in an Erin Brockovich-like exposé," one reviewer said. She also will relate some of her harrowing filmmaking experiences, including surviving near plane crashes, food poisoning in Bangladesh, being caught in the crossfire of racial riots and coming up against an axe-wielding man.

Refreshments will be served. Please support your Chapter's efforts to present programs of current interest.

Tuesday, May 27, 7:00 p.m.
Meadow Park Rec Center
San Luis Obispo

Save the date!!



Coastal Activist Network Changes Name

CAN is now ORCA. The name of the Coastal Activist Network (CAN) has been changed to Organization of Regional Coastal Activists (ORCA).

The group's formative meeting was held in San Luis Obispo last month and is expected to enlist volunteer activists in all coastal counties in California. But a number of other groups already have CAN as their acronym, so the name was changed.

ORCA is envisioned as a statewide watchdog of volunteers who will monitor development plans along the California coast and then work together to defeat destructive projects through appeals to the Coastal Commission. Organizing efforts have focused on counties from San Luis Obispo south, but the network will eventually reach northward to the Oregon border. Training sessions for volunteers about the Coastal Act and the California Coastal Commission decision-making process are being held around the state.

ORCA volunteers will function at local, county and state levels to monitor proposed developments along the coast, consult with Coastal Commission staff on the projects and meet with Commissioners to discuss the consistency of such projects with protections afforded by the Coastal Act.

As one leading environmentalist put it at a training session here last month, "We never have money, but we can be effective with numbers (of people) engaging the staff, attending Commission meetings and helping out each other."

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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

Chapter Joins National Alliance to Protect Nuclear Power Plants

by Pete Wagner

Chair, Conservation Committee

The Executive Committee of the Santa Lucia Chapter has voted to join a national alliance to advocate the development of critically needed defenses at nuclear power plants, including the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant, which governmental agencies are balking at providing.

The Chapter also agreed to urge the parent Sierra Club to encourage other chapters throughout the country to support the alliance being spearheaded by the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace and to make financial contributions.

The Mothers for Peace are taking a leading role in creating the alliance by challenging a recent decision by the Nuclear Regulation Commission (NRC) in Federal Court. As Intervenor, the Mothers have insisted that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be made to include a full security analysis by competent third parties who have no connection with either the regulatory agencies or the nuclear power industry.

The EIS is necessary before a new high level radioactive fuel storage facility, called an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI), is licensed at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant, said Rochelle Becker of the Mothers. The EIS must assess the plant's vulnerability to potential acts of terrorism and/or acts of malice or insanity, and it must consider options for improved defenses, she said. The NRC denied the petition, but the Mothers plan to file an appeal soon in the 9th Circuit Federal Court.

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, this country has focused much of its attention on the enhancement of our national security, Becker pointed out. Our nation's 103 nuclear power plants and the 43,000 tons of highly irradiated nuclear fuel, however, continue to remain lightly defended. The Bush administration has repeatedly stated that nuclear plants and storage facilities are obvious targets for terrorist attacks, yet

the NRC has rebuffed attempts by citizen groups and state governments to develop appropriate defense measures, she said.

The EIS is a vitally important tool for ensuring NRC accountability for its decisions regarding defense of nuclear facilities. Furthermore, the case will set an important precedent for four other cases in which the NRC issued virtually identical decisions.

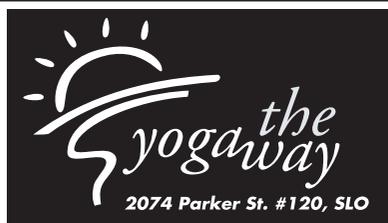
California Attorney General Bill Lockyer has stated that the NRC's decision to dismiss these five cases "is flawed and will not survive judicial scrutiny."

Becker said the security of nuclear plants must be addressed and resolved BEFORE any increase in high-level radioactive waste storage is allowed. She emphasized that the success of the appeal will depend on small and large donations from individuals.

The Chapter asks you to join in the campaign to form a nationwide alliance for developing defenses at nuclear power plants by contributing to this effort. The San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization, so donations are tax-deductible. For more information, call (805) 773-3881 or view www.mothersforpeace.org.

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program seeks volunteers to participate in an ongoing environmental field monitoring program for water quality and sediments in the Estuary and its tributaries.

Anyone interested in participating and joining as a volunteer monitor, please contact the NEP office at (805) 772-3834.



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Diablo Plant Operating Permit Hinges on Decisive Water Board Hearing

by Pete Wagner

Chair, Conservation Committee

A pivotal hearing and possible action on whether to approve a federal water quality permit to allow PG&E to continue to use ocean cooling water for Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant is scheduled before the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board on July 10.

The meeting is planned to start at 1 p.m. at the Board's offices at 895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101, off south Broad Street near the airport. Written comments to the Board or its staff are required to be submitted by June 9 for inclusion in the meeting agenda packet.

The Board's staff has proposed acceptance of an easement on land near the plant and cash as mitigation for the killing of up to 32% of the species of fish larvae drawn into the plant's water intake, a mortality rate documented by scientific studies. The plant also contributes to disruption of the marine ecosystem at the outfall where heated water from the plant is discharged into the ocean.

In a highly controversial compensation package for the severe marine impacts, the staff has agreed to accept easement rights over a 5.7-mile coastal conservation region and a cash settlement totaling about \$6 million to be spent for various projects that have been only partially specified in staff reports. At issue is extension of PG&E's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to divert water from the ocean for cooling of its generators and discharge the heated water back into the sea.

The Santa Lucia Chapter is opposed to the staff-recommended agreement as it stands on several grounds:

First, we object in principle to trading mortality and marine ecosystem disruption for land and money, in this case larval killing and destruction of a substantial marine area.

Second, we question the basis for determining the land value and the fairness of the trade.

Third, we question why dry cooling, an alternative cooling technology that would use no sea water and therefore have no impact on marine life, was not given fair consideration as a substitute for use of ocean water, called once-through cooling.

Fourth, we do not believe PG&E should have a blanket right to rescind the agreement, as is permitted in the proposed permit, if future restrictions were placed on use of ocean water or if an alternative cooling technology were required.

Fifth, we emphatically oppose the provision that any other organization that may be assigned to oversee the proposed land easement be required to forfeit all rights to challenge or oppose nuclear power anywhere, any time, as PG&E demands.

Finally, in opposition to PG&E's proposal to discontinue monitoring of the plant's environmental impacts, we insist that monitoring the environmental imprint of the plant should be continued for the remainder of its operating life and even beyond.

There would be important collateral value in continuing an existing long-term monitoring data base on impacts which includes not just the area affected by the outfall but a site outside this area that is closed to fishing. This has important implications for prospective closures in the State's Marine Protected Areas program.

The Chapter has status as an official party in the quasi-judicial hearing, which means it can call witnesses, testify without time limit, submit briefs for the record and cross examine. We have until June 9 to prepare our case statement, after which we will be given a short time prior to the hearing to rebut all other written submissions.

Members of the public who are not parties will not have these rights but can comment in writing by June 9 and speak at the hearing for up to three minutes each.

Please mark your calendar, attend, and speak up. Numbers are important since the Board appears to be almost evenly split on how to vote on the staff recommendations.

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LCP Showdown

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the hearing is more important than ever because this may be the last opportunity to convey to the Commission just how vital we believe the Periodic Review is to the future of our coast.

"Please show your support for strong commission action, and protection of our pristine coastline, by planning to attend the hearing in Long Beach in June, or by sending a letter to the Coastal Commission. A sample letter can be found elsewhere in this issue," Collins said.

The date and time of the hearing was to be posted on the Commission web site at <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/index.html>

earlier this month, along with the staff report on options that the Commission may decide to take on the Periodic Review. In addition, the sample letter to Commissioners as well as up-to-date information on coordination of travel plans to Long Beach will be available on the web site of the Santa Lucia chapter at <http://santalucia.sierraclub.org/index/index.html>.

Also, Collins said those interested in attending the hearing in Long Beach or writing letters or e-mails in support of the Commission's recommendations may contact Ariana Katovich, a member of the Sierra Club staff. She is providing valuable assistance in organizing a show of encouragement for strong Commission action at the hearing as well as arranging for car pools or caravans for activists. Her phone number is 805-564-7892 and her email address is Ariana.Katovich@Sierraclub.org.

At the core of the issue is the County's refusal to implement 165 recommendations for updating the LCP, which would significantly strengthen coastal protection. As a result of the County's inaction on the recommendations, the Commission for the first time may, as authorized by the Coastal Act, "report to the Legislature and recommend legislative action necessary to assure effective implementation" of the Periodic Review, which is the first such Review ever conducted by the Commission under the Coastal Act.

The Commission staff is expected to present options for the Commission to consider, including sending the letter to the Legislature describing the county's refusal to adopt and implement the Commission's recommendations as required by the Coastal Act. Another option would be to include in the

letter a request that the Legislature consider "putting teeth" in the Coastal Act by inserting a mechanism to enable the Commission to enact LCP amendments that are deemed essential for coastal protections.

The LCP is one of the most important issues to face the county because, as the key planning law, it controls coastal development for the foreseeable future and embodies protections of the area's beaches, habitat, sensitive viewsheds, cultural resources, agriculture lands and other coastal assets.

At its March meeting here, the Commission asked the staff to provide options for dealing with the county, which, a staff report said, has made "few actual substantive changes to the LCP" since the recommendations were forwarded to the county in November, 2001.

Collins told the Commission that the county's failure to implement the 165 recommendations "is inexcusable. The County of San Luis Obispo is the 'poster child' for why we need legislation to provide the Commission with the authority to force the county to come into compliance with the Coastal Act by adopting Periodic Review recommendations."

Probably the most significant issue among the 165 recommendations involves the identification and protection of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA), which the Commission wanted strengthened by identifying such areas when developments are proposed, regardless of whether they are shown on planning maps. This is particularly important on the Hearst Ranch, which contains critical habitat for several endangered species. The county has ignored the Commission's recommendation on ESHA, a staff report said.

As another option, if the recommendations or significant numbers of them are not approved by the county by the June meeting, the Commission could refuse to accept any LCP amendments from the county except those that conform to the recommendations. However, the Commission may not have the legal authority to do that now.

The Commission also could decide as a practice to evaluate appeals from county decisions on projects on the basis of whether they were consistent with the LCP recommendations. Whether the Commission has the authority to take these actions also is open to question.

LCP Sample Letter

Please tell the Coastal Commission how important it is that they act forcefully to support their amendments to the County's Local Coastal Program. Here is a sample letter you can send or use to compose your own.

California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street
Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

Dear Chair Mike Reilly and Members of the Coastal Commission:

As a citizen of San Luis Obispo County who strongly supports protections for our coast, I am appalled at the failure of the County of San Luis Obispo to implement all the 165 recommended amendments to the Local Coastal Program, which were unanimously adopted by your Commission more than a year and a half ago.

These amendments are the product of your hard labors and commitment to working with the County in this very first Periodic Review of a Local Coastal Program, which is the most important instrument for preserving our precious coastal beaches, lands and habitats. But the County has not cooperated as a partner as I believe it should and as the Coastal Act envisions.

Instead, it has defied your leadership to conserve the coast we cherish by piecemealing the amendments, which is inconsistent with the goal of the Local Coastal Program to serve as a long-range, unified guide for coastal development that will benefit citizens seeking to use their properties within the guidelines of the Coastal Act as well as protect the environment.

At your hearing in June, I urge you to take the strongest action possible to bring our County's Local Coastal Program into compliance with the most up-to-date policies you have recommended. Please send a letter to the State Legislature to inform it of SLO County's refusal to make substantive changes recommended in the Periodic Review of our LCP, and to ask for legislation to give the Coastal Commission the power to enforce the Periodic Review recommendations. We also urge you to suspend the processing of all county-initiated LCP amendments that do not incorporate the Periodic Review recommendations until the county submits a comprehensive update of our Local Coastal Plan.

The County cannot be allowed to disrupt this important planning process that is at the heart of the Coastal Act while other cities and counties watch and wonder about enforcement of a Periodic Review that may lie ahead for them.

Sincerely,

Your signature,
typed or printed name,
address or community you live in

The sample letter is also available on the Chapter web site at <http://santalucia.sierraclub.org/index/index.html>



Duke Plant

continued from page 1

serve to counter the CEC committee's recommendations against dry cooling before the full CEC acts.

In order to be built and operate, the Duke project must obtain both a state license from the CEC and a federal water quality permit from the RWQCB. The question of whether to allow the plant to be built and under what conditions is before both agencies, and the facts and arguments are similar in both.

A final CEC decision on a license is expected in the fall. It would come after the RWQCB decides on a permit in October. The RWQCB decision could be appealed to the California Water Resources Control Board for review, but the final CEC decision is not subject to appeal, except through the courts.

The two-member CEC Presiding Committee, which has been reviewing the Duke project for two and a half years, also recommended that Duke be required to fund a plan to buy and restore habitat in the estuary's watershed to reduce sedimentation of the bay as compensation for the marine life that would be killed in water diverted into the plant.

The plan ostensibly would serve to prevent loss of water volume for fish, although this strategy has been sharply criticized by four state agencies, including the CEC staff, as unproven and unreliable. Even some RWQCB members have indicated they remain unconvinced that it would work satisfactorily to offset the killing of marine life.

The Committee's recommendations reject the key findings of its professional staff. The staff had strongly recommended against licensing a new plant if estuary water were allowed to be used because of the toll it would take on marine life. Instead, it advocated that an alternative cooling technology, such as dry cooling, be required to completely avert any loss of marine species.

The preliminary decision rejected the recommendations of the CEC staff, the California Coastal Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the California Department of Fish and Game and supported the positions of Duke Energy and the RWQCB staff on these main points:

1. Dry cooling—the committee said it is not feasible and would be too costly compared to the benefits. The CEC staff testified it would be feasible and not excessively costly, positions which the three other agencies supported.
2. Use of estuary water—the committee said the proposed new plant would use less water than

the existing plant, thereby allowing the plant to continue using estuary water under state law. The CEC staff argued the new plant would use more water, and the other agencies concurred. The committee and CEC staff based their conclusions on different calculations of water use by the existing plant and the proposed replacement plant.

3. Marine impacts—the committee found that under a different standard in federal law, the impact on marine life would have to be mitigated because the toll would be significant, regardless of whether it would be more or less compared to the existing plant. But the committee reduced the estimated impact to 16% of larvae in the estuary, compared to a range of 17% to 33% that its technical advisers, the staff and all the agencies—including the RWQCB staff—had agreed to.
4. Mitigation—the committee decided that a "habitat enhancement plan" (HEP) would be required and funded by Duke—estimated between \$12 million and \$25 million by the RWQCB staff—to mitigate, or compensate for, the marine life destroyed in estuary water consumed by the plant. Although the RWQCB staff also supports HEP as mitigation, the CEC staff rejected it because of serious questions about its proven effectiveness to preserve water volume or fish larvae.

The committee said it "found that both (Duke Energy) and the staff of the (RWQCB) have presented HEP approaches which can comply with applicable law. In fact, based on the evidence in our record, we firmly believe that even if dry cooling were feasible and cost free, it would not offer the environmental benefits to the Morro Bay Estuary that a successful HEP will provide."

However, the CEC staff's final report on the project said HEP "lacks a clear nexus between impacts and specific mitigation opportunities in the Morro Bay and vicinity." The report said the RWQCB staff has "stressed...that any habitat enhancement proposal will need to establish specific objectives that are both feasible and can be shown to directly compensate for the type of harm caused by the project" to marine life. The RWQCB itself has not determined yet if that can be demonstrated. Given the uncertainties about a HEP, the CEC staff report said, "Staff believes that it is preferable to avoid impacts than to attempt to mitigate them after the fact."

Free Guide to Fight Sprawl

A new book designed to serve as a citizen's guide for contending with sprawl, highways, commercial and residential projects, landfills and a number of other developments has been posted on the Internet and is free. "How to Win Land Development Issues" was written by Richard D. Klein, a member of the Sierra Club National Challenge to Sprawl Committee and Chair of the Greater Baltimore (MD) Sierra Club.

Klein also is with Community and Environmental Defense Services, a nationwide network of attorneys, environmental scientists, traffic engineers, planners, political strategists, fund-raisers and many other professionals. Its mission is to help people defend their neighborhood and environment from the impact of poorly-planned development activities.

The book is available for downloading at <http://www.ceds.org/publications.html>. Klein said he wrote the 107-page book for citizens fighting sprawl and other poorly conceived forms of growth. "The book emphasizes a win-win approach utilizing *Smart Growth* principles," he said. "It begins with the *Easy Solution*, then describes how to mobilize public support if more aggressive action is needed."

The book, Klein said, explains how to identify and solve development impacts related to air quality, aquatic resources, crime, environmental justice, historic resources, noise, odor, open space, property value, schools, traffic, visual impacts and wildlife. The growth management process is described along with how citizens can utilize the process to resolve concerns. A detailed description is provided of the following strategy options for winning land development campaigns: negotiating with the applicant, working with regulatory staff, lobbying key decisionmakers, legal action, changing the law and land preservation.

Klein said that in addition to this book, many other publications are available free for downloading from the same website. He said his advice is also available free by phone to citizens at 800-773-4571, and his email address is rklein@ced.org. He asked those who find the book useful to tell other activists about it and also consider placing announcements in newsletters or other communication networks of organizations they may belong to.

Outings

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Fri., July 4, 9:30 a.m., PISMO DUNES PRESERVE: Meet at Melo-drama in Oceano. Hike the most beautiful dunes to a Dune Lake via a secret passageway. Listen to HDThoreau. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Fri.-Mon., July 4-7, 8th Annual Tubing/Camping: Richardson Grove State Park. We'll hike among giant redwoods, swim in the Eel river at the edge of our group site or go tubing. The water should be warm. Potluck dinners every night; live music. Bring your musical instruments. If you don't have all the camping gear, we have plenty of stoves and lanterns. Only \$10/vehicle plus \$6/adult member, \$8 for non-members and \$3 for kids 12 and under. Contact leader for reservation form, and mail it along with your check and SASE to Eel River Camping, P.O. Box 604, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. Reservations must be received by 6/23. Info will be mailed on 6/26. No phone reservations accepted. Full refund if cancelled by 6/25, 50% by 6/30, no refund after 6/30. Don't forget to include a SASE OR your email so you can get trip information. Leader: George Jammal, 335-7748.

Thurs.-Sun., July 17-20, Portola Redwoods State Park. Join Jack Sneddon for three nights camping at this beautiful park in the Santa Cruz Mountains, similar to Big Basin, but not as crowded. Located in a rugged, natural basin with coast redwoods, Douglas fir and live oak, there are 18 miles of trails for your hiking enjoyment. We have both group sites this year, for plenty of tent space and ALL the parking. Three nights camping, ALL MEALS and happy hours. To reserve, send a long SASE and your check for \$65 to Jack Sneddon, 1596 Claycord Ave, Concord Ca, 94521. For info, 925/676-3939, or jacks2@prodigy.net FULL REFUND WITH TWO WEEK NOTICE OF CANCELLATION.

Mon.-Thurs., Aug. 4-7, Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Join Jack Sneddon for three nights camping at this nearby campground, with hiking available in Pt. Reyes or within the park. On previous visits to this park, we have always had a sell-out crowd, so for this year, I have reserved BOTH group sites year to allow for more tent space and parking. To reserve your spot, send a long SASE and your check for \$65 to Jack Sneddon, 1596 Claycord Ave, Concord Ca 94521. For info 925/676-3939 or jacks2@prodigy.net. FULL REFUND WITH TWO WEEK NOTICE OF CANCELLATION.

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Santa Margarita Lake Overnight

by Jack Beigle

Boat camping at Santa Margarita Lake is always a delight. It is an easy paddle to the remote campsite that is located in a small meadow surrounded by old coast live oaks. Lupine were in full bloom around our tents at the edge of the meadow. Their fragrance was drifting through camp as we ate lunch.

When a the joys of spectacular wildflowers, good food and companions to pick out a write about, but it isn't. For me the peak experience was paddling at dawn.



weekend is full of paddling, weather, beautiful invigorating hiking, outstanding it should be difficult specific highlight to

Dawn at this campsite is always special. The cold morning air condenses the water vapor over the relatively warm lake water. The morning mist sometimes flows like a river on the lake surface, swirling like ballet dancers when conflicting air currents meet. We launched our boats and paddled into the mist as silently as the rising sun. Even a spoken word seemed out of place in this misty silence.

Visibility was about 200 feet where our visual reality disappeared into the mist. We experienced a visual analogy by seeing our future emerging from the mist ahead of us while behind us reality was disappearing into our past, leaving us only with memories. It gave us the feeling of really living in the now and enjoying every second of it.

To preserve that feeling I jotted down the following haiku.

Paddling at dawn
Gliding through the morning mist
Alone in the now

Check the outing schedule and join us on the water.

Conservation Committee Report

by Pete Wagner
Chair, Conservation Committee

Caulerpa Taxifolia, the invasive plant that has devastated fishing along large regions of the Mediterranean coast by smothering indigenous aquatic vegetation, is used as a decorative aquarium plant. It was inadvertently introduced to the Southern California coast and now is working its way northward from Orange County, overcoming all marine plant life in its path. Its possession in California was outlawed in 2001, and an organization called the Southern California Caulerpa Action Team has been created to combat the invasion. Funding is being sought under Assembly Bill 120 in the current legislative session.

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has just launched a Caulerpa watch, and the UC Cooperative Extension Service is designing a long-term eradication program. Literature which describes the plant and the threat it represents is available for wide distribution at the Water Board office in San Luis Obispo and the National Estuary Program office in Morro Bay. Sitings should be reported to Fish and Game at 1-888-DFG-CALTIP.

Please do not release any of this seaweed from aquarium residue. Only a tiny bit is needed to start an infestation. If anyone out there knows of a plastic simulation of Caulerpa, as might be used in a home aquarium, please let me know at 771-8642. It would be useful as a guide for anyone wishing to look for evidence of the plant in our region.

On April 14, I attended a public "end of cycle" hearing on the annual Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) review of operations at the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. Mothers for Peace, our cointervenor in the hearings on PG&E's proposal to construct an outdoor pad for long-term storage of used nuclear fuel assemblies, were well represented. PG&E got a passing grade in the review.

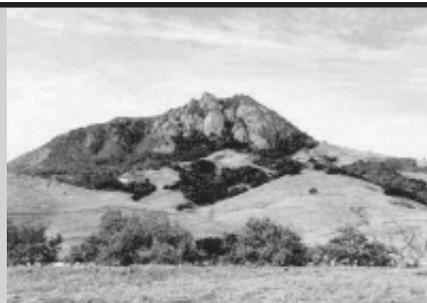
The Diablo Canyon Independent Safety Committee (DCISC), a state oversight agency, was conspicuous in its absence, though it did send its attorney. When asked, NRC responded that the DCISC could come if it chose to, and the NRC report would be made available to the DCISC. But no sensitivity was shown toward active collaboration on a common subject of great importance, plant safety.

A PG&E executive stated that, contrary to rumor, they do not intend to shut down in June and in fact have scheduled periodic maintenance shutdowns in spring and fall when demand is lowest. This is good news. PG&E engineers described an incident called a non-conservative condition, in which the level of makeup water for water consumed in the heat exchanger, fell below acceptable values but evidently caused no threat.

Audience comments dealt almost exclusively with safety precautions against a terrorist assault, especially an overhead attack on the spent fuel liquid storage pools for which there is no robust protection. In my opinion, both NRC and PG&E spokespersons downplayed this concern and sidestepped the whole issue of hardening the overhead structure covering the spent fuel pools.

A later communication from NRC spokesman Victor Dricks cited extensive (and impressive) measures to protect the pools at and below ground level but said nothing about vulnerability from overhead. He referred us to an upcoming article in Science and Global Security magazine, called the Alvarez Report, and an NRC rebuttal, on which we will report when they are available. His response did nothing to allay our great concerns about the vulnerability of the highly radioactive pools to attack from the air and the attendant risk to us all.

Yes, I would like to help the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club preserve precious lands on the Central Coast



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ANNOUNCEMENT

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

- Treasurer
- Membership Chair
- Santa Lucian Distribution Manager
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If you are interested in any of the openings, please contact Ross Pepper at rosspepper@charter.net

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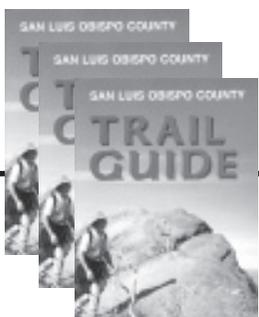
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A Will . . .

. . . is a way to protect the environment as well as yourself. If you do not have a will, the state decides how your property and other affairs are handled. Decisions made now can later provide financial security for family, friends, and the Sierra Club. You may even direct your bequest to a specific Club program or your home Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact

John Calaway
Sierra Club Planned Giving Program
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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 1st 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., May 18, 9:30 a.m., Kayak Oso Flaco Lake. Meet at lake with kayak, PFD and mechanism to move kayak to lake. Bring binoculars. Confirm and details a few days before at 929-3647 or bdenneen@slonet.org.

Sun., May 18, Chris King Trail Days Work Party Montana de Oro State Park. Come enjoy a great day working with others as we continue to build new trails somewhere in San Luis Obispo County. Trail Daze starts off with a breakfast while you sign in and organize with a work crew. Sack lunches are provided. After a few hours of trail work, return to the picnic area for an afternoon of socializing, gourmet barbecue dinner, and raffle prizes. All participants get a commemorative T-shirt. There is no cost, but pre-registration is requested. Local bike shops and hiking supply shops will have sign-up sheets available, or you can register by calling one of the numbers below. This event is hosted by Chris King Precision Components, Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (3CMB) and the Sierra Club. Wear work clothes and bring gloves and water; tools will be provided. For more information contact David at 438-4631 or Greg at 995-1675. Check the www.ccmb.org website for details on this year's event. Remember to register early.

Wed., May 21, 5:30 p.m., Mystery Hike Revealed, Up and Over the Poly "P". We will hike up and over the "P". Meet in the parking lot at the beginning of Poly Canyon on the Cal Poly Campus. There will be a small parking fee so get your pass on entering campus. Details, Chuck at 927-3769.

Sat.-Sun., May 24-25, Lion Den / Cruickshank Trail Work party. The

SLO Trail volunteers will be spending the weekend at Lion Den Camp, then work on the upper sections of the Cruickshank Trail. How much we get done depends on the number of people who attend. We may even take a hike to Silver Peak. Details call Gary at 473-3694 or e-mail:

gfelsman@onemain.com.

Sat., May 24, 4 p.m., Sierra Singles and Other Beach Walk and Dinner.

Come take a walk along Morro Bay Beach towards Cayucos and back. Dinner to follow for those interested. Bring water and dress for the weather. Meet at the end of Yerba Buena Street in Morro Bay Beach side of Highway 1. Details call Steve at 543-6189.

Sun., May 25, 9:30 a.m., Bicycle Guadalupe to Ocean. Meet at Dune Centre Parking lot with bike and helmet. An easy, educational tour of Guadalupe and then to ocean. Confirm a few days before at 929-3647 or bdenneen@slonet.org.

Mon., May 26, Memorial 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>

Wed., May 28, 5:30 p.m., Mystery Hike Revealed, Poly Canyon "P". We will hike up and over the "P". Meet in the parking lot at the beginning of Poly Canyon on the Cal Poly Campus. There will be a small parking fee so get your pass on entering campus. Details, Gary at 473-3694.

Sat., May 31/June 1, Canoe/Kayak Elkhorn Slough. This camping, boating and sightseeing outing offers many possibilities. If you wish you may drive north Friday, camp Friday night, boat Saturday, camp Saturday night, sightsee and drive home Sunday, or any combination of the above. Phone Jack Beigle for reservation, park fees and complete details. PLEASE PHONE EARLY. CAMPSITES ARE LIMITED, ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL JACK BEIGLE AT 773-2147.

Sun., June 1, NON-MOTHER'S DAY. A day set aside between Mother's Day and Father's Day to honor women who have NOT added to the people glut—Non-Moms now represents 20% of the all women in the US today (also vasectomy pledge day). Coast Nature Hike, followed by males-prepared 'feast' while non-moms sit in the hot tub. Confirm a

few days before at 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Thurs., June 5, 6 p.m., Sierra Singles and Others Planning Meeting and Dinner. All potential outings leaders are welcome to come out and enjoy good food and company while we plan for the next month's outings. Call Steve at 543-6189 for meeting place and information.

Sat., June 7, 9:30 a.m., NATIONAL TRAILS DAY: POINT SAL HIKE. Meet at end of Brown Rd. Bring optional Mt. Bike for fast ride back down hill. The first 2.5 miles is uphill (1,000 ft). We'll stop a lot going uphill to botanize, solve all the planet's problems and give a GOF (me) a rest. Bring lunch, water, fit dogs that do not chase cattle. Confirm with Bill at 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Sat., June 14, 8:30 a.m., Salmon Creek to Estrella Camp. Come explore the Silver Peak Wilderness, spring flow-ers, roaring creeks, and good company on this 6 mile and 1,500 ft. elevation gain hike hike. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes and dress for the weather. Poison oak may be present along the trail. Meet at Spencer's Market in Morro Bay. Eats at Main Street Grill in Cambria after. Details call Gary 473-3694.

Sun., June 15, 9:30 a.m., DANA ADOBE. A nature tour of Nipomo's own historical site followed by HDThoreau on the veranda. To get there get to Nipomo via #101, go east 50 yds to Oak Glen, south on Oak Glen about a mile to DA. We'll be crossing Nipomo Creek which is a fine riparian habitat with high species diversity. Bring binos for birding. Confirm with Bill at 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>

Sun., June 15, Hike: Tanbark Trail to Tin House. The Tanbark Trail packs a lot of scenery in a fairly short length. The trail winds up the south side of Partington Canyon, past a rushing creek and through a redwood grove, up through forests to the site of the ruined "Tin House." Ocean views. Return on a dirt road. Car shuttle. 6 miles with 2,000 ft. elevation gain. Meet behind Brinton's at 9:30 a.m. to carpool. Leaders: Cath Farrant and Mary Dainton, 372-7427 or marydainton@juno.com.

Sun., June 15, 11:00 a.m., CANOE/ KAYAK BAYWOOD FOR LUNCH. This leisurely paddle leads you to the Baywood Pier where you can enjoy an inexpensive lunch in Baywood or bring a picnic lunch and eat on the pier. Our paddle back to the marina always burns up a few of the calories. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, wind-breaker, binoculars and lunch money



Photo by Joaquin Palting

or picnic lunch. Meet at the launch ramp in Morro Bay State Park. Jack Beigle 773-2147

Thurs.-Sun., June 19-22, Malakoff Diggins State Park. Cabin space available for 6 people who can't tent camp. Not too high in the Sierra, near Nevada City, this is the site of the largest hydraulic gold mine in California. The huge, carved cliffs are still visible, remnants of our past abuse of the land, where entire mountains were washed away in the search for gold, leaving behind a scarred land and waterways filled with mud. Today, we can camp here and hike the area. Three nights camping, ALL MEALS provided plus happy hours. To reserve, send your check for \$65 and a long SASE to Jack Sneddon 1596 Claycord Ave, Concord Ca 94521. Info, 925/676-3939, or jacks2@prodigy.net. FULL REFUND WITH TWO WEEK NOTICE OF CANCELLATION.

Sun., June 22, 9:30 a.m., BICYCLE GUADALUPE to OCEAN: Meet at Dune Centre parking lot with bike and helmet. An easy, educational tour of Guadalupe seeing murals and then to ocean. Confirm 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>.

Sun., June 29, 9:30 a.m., POINT SAL HIKE: Meet at end of Brown Rd. Bring optional Mt. Bike for fast ride back down hill. The first 2.5 miles is uphill (1,000 ft). We'll stop a lot going uphill to botanize, solve all the planet's problems and give a GOF (me) a rest. Bring lunch, water, fit dogs that do not chase cattle. Confirm with Bill 929-3647 or <bdenneen@slonet.org>.

continued on page 5

This is a partial listing of Outings offered by our chapter.

Please check the web page at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org for the most up-to-date listing of activities.