



SIERRA
CLUB

August 2005
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GENERAL MEETING

No meeting in August -
come to the Picnic!

Sierra Club
Annual Picnic
August 20
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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

Slouching toward SLO

The Rigs Are Coming WHERE'S ARNOLD?

Congresswoman Lois Capps sharply criticized members of the U.S. Senate on June 21, when the Senate failed to pass an amendment to protect the nation's coast from new oil drilling.

The amendment would have removed language inserted into the federal Energy Bill mandating the "inventory" of oil and gas supplies on the Outer Continental Shelf. The House-passed Energy Bill did not include the provision to "inventory" the OCS after representatives from

coastal communities opposed its inclusion. During the last Congress, Congresswoman Capps was successful in passing an amendment to strip the same language from the House bill.

"For more than 20 years, the Administration and Congress have made their view clear - we ought not to jeopardize the sensitive areas of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) with new oil drilling," Capps said. "Make no mistake, this 'inventory' and pre-drilling activity would be



ARNOLD?

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Our Nuclear Summer

This summer, the opinion and letters pages of the *Tribune* have hosted a series of eyebrow-raising claims from representatives of the nuclear power industry -- that exposure to radiation may actually be good for you; the spent nuclear fuel generated by a plant over its lifetime can "fit nicely inside a swimming pool," therefore making it an insignificant problem; spent fuel reprocessing can "resolve the problem of nuclear waste," the high-level radioactive waste left after reprocessing of nuclear fuel rods safely "plowed into the ground;" nuclear power is economical; the federal funding and

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Lest we forget: Santa Barbara, 1969.

the first step in launching an all-out assault on our coastlines, putting thousands of communities at risk of environmental and economic disaster."

The "inventory" is also unnecessary and expensive. The Minerals Management Service already con-

Betty Beaumont

ducts a survey every five years, the latest published in 2003. That assessment reported that 81 percent of the nation's undiscovered, economically recoverable natural gas on the OCS is located in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico, where drilling is allowed and underway. MMS data also shows that a new OCS "inventory" could cost billions in taxpayer dollars.

On June 28, the federal bill was passed by the Senate with virtually nothing in it to lower our dependence on oil, funneling billions of taxpayer dollars to polluting energy industries, and giving the green light to opening up our coastlines and to destructive oil and gas activities.

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Morro Bay Hunt Decision Aug. 18-19

Fish and Game Commission meeting in SLO

After multiple efforts over many years to get the shotguns out of our estuary and off the doorstep of a bird sanctuary, San Luis Obispo may be on the verge of persuading the state to curtail the archaic waterfowl hunt in the Morro Bay National Estuary.

Though "no hunting" ordinances are in effect in every city in the County, the waters of Morro Bay not within city limits are under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Game, which has traditionally bowed to the hunting lobby in permitting the ongoing hunt in the estuary, the smallest in the National Estuary System. It has continued even as the population of the hunters' primary target plummeted, the city of Morro Bay declared itself a bird refuge, development extended to the water's edge, and hiking, bird watching and kayaking have steadily increased in the same areas where the hunters hunt.

Late last year, a grass-roots peti-

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Thanks, Audubon!

The Morro Coast Audubon Society has weighed in against the Morro Bay estuary hunt, asking the California Fish and Game Commission to observe the same types of restrictions observed in National Wildlife Refuges and Wildlife areas in the state of California and close the estuary's grassy islands to hunters and the general public. A copy of Audubon's letter provided to the Morro Bay City Council doubtless was a factor in the City's decision to seek these restrictions from Fish and Game.



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great and small,
needs defense."

— John Muir



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Outings, events, and
more!

Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting

Santa Lucia Chapter

ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC

August 20, 2005 – 3:00 p.m.
(New time -- cooler temperatures!)

Pot luck
Volley ball
Kid's games
Labyrinth walking
Guided hike through rural Arroyo Grande

At the home of Karen Merriam,
1615 Tiffany Ranch Road
Arroyo Grande (in the heart of Edna Valley)

Call Karen for directions 544-6628

Betty Schetzer remembered

Betty Schetzer, one of the mainstays in the history of the Santa Lucia Chapter, passed away July 14.

Betty was an inspiration to many Santa Lucia Chapter Sierra Clubbers. In 1979, Betty stepped up to chair a new committee to publish a Trail Guide for San Luis Obispo County – a group that eventually involved almost 100 members from throughout the community. Betty worked tirelessly to organize the volunteers and get the financial resources for that first edition of the Trail Guide in 1981...now in a revised and expanded 3rd edition and still a local bestseller. Betty will be sorely missed.

A remembrance will be held for Betty in the labyrinth at 1615 Tiffany Ranch Rd. at 5 p.m. on August 20.

Land Grab Alert!

Very bad land-use ordinance coming soon to an advisory council near you

On June 28, the Board of Supervisors considered the Rural Planned Development ordinance. This is a heavily developer-influenced proposal that would destroy the few good land use policies we have left in our General Plan, allowing new subdivisions that will not have to meet the minimum parcel size requirement.

No joke: If you live in an area where 20 acres is the minimum parcel size, if this ordinance passes, your neighbor will be able to subdivide down to 1-acre parcels.

The RPD would allow developers to build housing tracts on farmland and open space. Not surprisingly, the RPD was drafted in private, with no public participation. It is an end-run around a three-year-old state law that halted sprawl development allowed by lot line adjustments.

Overwhelming disapproval of the plan in public testimony made it impossible for the Board to approve a hugely expensive Environmental Impact Report, much less a Negative Declaration (certifying the plan would have no impacts) and move the RPD along. The public told the Board loud and clear that this ordinance should not go forward in any form...but instead of killing it, the Board voted to send it around to local advisory councils, thereby keeping it on life support.

In public comments, several pointed comparisons were made to the fate of the Transfer of Development Credit (TDC) program, which was supposed to direct development pressure away from the county's rural lands and toward existing development, but has ended up doing the opposite. (The Board has yet to agendize the Planning Commission's recommendation to terminate the TDC program.)

Watch the agenda of your community advisory council for the rest of the year: When the RPD ordinance comes up, be sure to show up and say you want the plug pulled on the RPD, pronto!

Some talking points:

- The RPD would result in the subdivision of parcels as small as one acre in agricultural and rural areas.

- The County should not be wasting our money on policies that create more urban sprawl.

- The County Ag Commissioner has rejected this ordinance because of its impact on agriculture.

- The Planning Commission staff report has identified significant impacts to biological, agricultural and scenic resources, as well as air quality and emergency response.

- This ordinance will deal a fatal blow to the General Plan by exempting certain subdivisions from minimum parcel size restrictions.

- This effort was hijacked early on, the language of the ordinance developed in private by development interests who stand to profit from it. It is not appropriate to let developers write county land use law.

- Rather than spend an estimated \$500,000 in taxpayers' money on an EIR for this misguided effort, we should move on to more important things, such as reforming the TDC program, implementing the open space policies of the Ag and Open Space Element, and amending the Subdivision Map Act.



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Nipomo Circling the Drain

On May 10, the County Board of Supervisors heard testimony on whether the County should declare a "Level of Severity III" water shortage for the Nipomo Mesa.

It was a classic case of the desire for development coming up against reality on the ground: Nipomo has discovered the limits of growth – in this case, a plummeting groundwater table – and developers are desperately trying to get around them.

The water in the ground cannot support Nipomo's existing development. A supplemental water program alone will not solve the problem as it would simply enable still more development than the land can support. (Although it won't even do that, since the proposed supplemental water project would not make up the current groundwater deficit.)

At the meeting, the Chapter agreed with the Nipomo Community Ser-



vices District, the Water Resources Advisory Council, the Resource Capacity Study, and the Resource Management System, all of which told the Supervisors one thing: Reject the supplemental water proposal for new development, endorse conservation, and declare a Level III water shortage for the Nipomo Mesa.

Reality, however, could inconvenience developers, as such a declara-

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Tanks, But No Tanks

Cambria CSD Grimly Slogs On

Residents footing the bill for Board's recreational judicial activism

Last year, the Cambria Community Services District sued the California Coastal Commission for pulling the plug on its "emergency permit" to expand its water storage tanks by seizing a conservation easement and decimating an environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA) at Pine Knolls.

They lost.

Then they claimed Coastal Commission had no jurisdiction.

They lost again.

Their County permit to build the tanks per the ESHA-killing plan was appealed at the Coastal Commission by ECOSLO and the Sierra Club.

We won.

The Commission hired an engineer to determine if the project could be built entirely on the CCSD's existing site, without condemning private property, chopping down rare native trees and undermining a conservation easement. It can.

The Commission told the CCSD to re-design the tanks so that no more than five feet of ESHA would be impacted.

The court case the CCSD board lost to the Coastal Commission was technically held open by the judge so that the court may enforce cooperation between the parties. The CCSD has appealed the judge's ruling, and is now using this case to



Capt. Ahab: Weighing a run for the CCSD Board?



pursue depositions on citizens who exercised their democratic right to speak during the public hearing process. In the view of the CCSD board, anyone who dared speak against their

now thoroughly defunct tank plan is part of an anti-tank enemy conspiracy.

Now that the CCSD has a permit from the Coastal Commission to expand the water tanks on Pine Knolls, they should get on with it. The revised project provides all of the fire fighting and emergency storage capacity they asked for, plus capacity for existing residents. What it does not include is water for new growth, or water for relaxing Cambria's water conservation standards — two elements of the originally proposed project that the CCSD has rarely mentioned.

For months, the CCSD board has

been trying to whip up a firestorm of fear, predicting Cambria would burn to the ground if they didn't get their project approved immediately. Now that they have a permit, they are appealing the lawsuit against the Coastal Commission and the County that they lost on every count. And they are moving ahead with condemnation proceedings for property they no longer need.

At press time, a legal conference between the parties was in the offing, so by the time you read this the state Attorney General may have prevailed on the board to drop the case. If so, it's some \$500,000 too late for Cambria ratepayers. If not, then the CCSD is still doing everything *but* protecting the citizens of Cambria -- who might suggest to their elected officials that they stop wasting the ratepayers' money on frivolous lawsuits, lobbyists and expensive private law firms and build the tanks.

Eat What You Know

By Mark Phillips and Mike Zelina

The arguments in favor of labeling genetically modified foods — also known as GE (genetically engineered) foods and GMOs (genetically modified organisms) — are so obvious it seems silly pointing them out.

Numerous polls indicate that most folks want labeling in order to have legitimate control over what they eat. Without labeling, there is no way to ascertain whether the GE products most of us have been consuming for years have long-term health effects (since no long-term human study on the health effects of GM foods has ever been done). Any study of that sort would have to come from among the 15 nations that make up the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand or China, since those countries *do* have GE labeling.

The benefactors of no labeling in the U.S. are agribusiness companies like Monsanto, Syngenta, and Bayer Crop Science who make GMO crops. They know that labeling would cut their profits considerably (perhaps even destroying the entire practice of seed control). Since they have an obligation to their stockholders to provide the highest possible return

on their investments, they will continue to adamantly oppose any such federal legislation.

Working at the local level, the folks at SLO GEFree (www.SloGEFree.org) have made efforts to provide for labeling. Thanks to SLO GE-Free, the North Coast Advisory Council (NCAC) has formally requested the Cambria Farmer's Market to ask its vendors to label their products so that customers will know if they're buying locally grown genetically engineered produce.



The DVD Stop Feeding Kids GMOs! is being distributed by the Sierra Club National Genetic Engineering Committee. The audio CD You're Eating WHAT?, a lecture by Jeffrey Smith describing the health risks of genetically modified foods and how industry manipulation and political collusion got them approved, is available free for wide distribution. Go to www.seedsofdeception.org or call 1-888-717-7000.

The North Coast Farmers Market Association, with markets in Templeton, Paso Robles, Atascadero and Baywood, decided to allow voluntary labeling. Hopefully folks will start to see the beautiful GE-Free butterfly at more and more stands. Support those vendors who display it and mention it to those who don't.

On the County level, SLO GE Free has drafted a resolution that urges our state and federal representatives to support labeling efforts, in particular Dennis Kucinich's HR 2916, The Genetically Engineered Food Right To Know Act. Our draft resolution was formally presented to the board

of supervisors on June 14th. The Board has stated that it will not take action on this resolution until after it hears from the two task forces that have been set up to look into GE issues. We have contacted both the Agriculture Task force and the Health Commission task force and will address them soon. After they return their recommendations (if any) to the Supervisors we will be in a position to go back and ask again that they place a discussion of our resolution on their agenda.

One ray of hope in this battle to "know what we eat" comes from understanding the history of existing food labels. Industry fought just as hard to avoid the labels we now have. These labels allow some folks to avoid foods like nuts or sodium. Consumers were victorious in that battle and we can do it again now because the issues are identical.

If you'd like to help in raising a ruckus on this issue or simply want to stay informed, please contact mark@slogefrees.org or 461-0376. If you would like to provide financial

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Stars Aligning for Central Coast Marine Reserves

After the passage of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) in 1999, it looked like California was going to be able to use a powerful new tool -- no-take marine reserves -- to protect sea life in its coastal waters from the rampant exploitation that has resulted in crashing fisheries around the world. The Merrit Island refuge off Florida's Cape Canaveral has had spectacular success since barring the take of fish or other resources, with world-record size fish found inside its waters and within 100 kilometers of its boundary area. St. Lucia's no-take reserve has seen a 300% increase in biomass inside its boundaries and a 200% spill-over just beyond, with fishermen seeing up to 90% increases in their catch since it was established.

Then, shortly after the creation of the Channel Islands Marine Reserve in 2002, the state budget crisis hit, and the MLPA fell into disuse. Now, thanks to foundation funding partnerships and a commitment from the state, the MLPA and Marine Protected Areas are back on the front burner. A Blue Ribbon Task Force of the Department of Fish and Game has picked the Central Coast as the region where the state's next set of reserves will be created. The Fish and Game Commission could adopt a Master Plan Framework for the creation of Marine Protected Areas as early as August.

For the Sierra Club and many other water quality and marine wildlife groups, the consensus is that the best possible area to study for the location of future Central Coast MPAs are the state waters between Pigeon Point and Point Conception. Pigeon Point would be a logical northern boundary because it contains the majority of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, fostering



The environmental preference: The MLPA Task Force needs to select a "big canvas" in which to study the creation of a network of Central Coast Marine Protected Areas.

a stronger partnership between those Federal and State agencies charged with protecting marine resources. Point Conception as a southern boundary connects with the Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas. This would be a large, flexible study area that would serve to protect several different diverse habitats -- upwellings, deep water, sandy bottom and submarine canyon -- a necessary "big canvas" from which to create a viable network of reserves.

Commercial and sport fishing interests think this area too large and would like to see the smallest possible study area declared. Even better, they'd like to see the MLPA go away entirely so they can fish anywhere and everywhere... until, of course, there are no more fish.

Central Coast Sierra Club members and other residents need to participate in this historic opportunity to protect our marine wildlife and habitat. Public involvement opportunities abound, at meetings of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, Science Advisory Team, Statewide Interest Group and workshops. Go to www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa to view video and live webcasts of meetings.

Expansion of Monterey Sanctuary Sought Sierra Club asking for protection of Central Coast

The Santa Lucia Chapter, along with ECOSLO and the 42 member organizations of the SLO Coast Alliance, is asking state lawmakers and federal officials to back the proposed expansion of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to include the waters off San Luis Obispo County. The Sanctuary's southern boundary is currently drawn at Cambria.

On June 24, the Chapter's 4-page resolution, an expanded version of the text of a draft resolution currently under consideration by State Senator Abel Maldonado, was sent to members of the state Assembly and Senate, California's Congressional representatives and the federal administrators of the National Marine Sanctuary program.

"This is unfinished business from the time of the Sanctuary's creation," said Chapter Conservation Committee Chair Pam Heatherington. "For over fifteen years, there has been wide public support in the community for the establishment of a sanctuary to protect the marine resources of the Central Coast. The bill stalled in Congress in 1990, and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary was created instead, with an arbitrary line cutting it off at Cambria. That southern boundary needs to be expanded to fulfill the original goal of providing protection to all of the diverse marine ecosystems off our coast."

The 1990 Central Coast Sanctuary effort was endorsed by the City Councils of San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach, Paso Robles and Atascadero, the Morro Coast Audubon Society, Northern Chumash Council, San Luis Obispo



Steve Shimek (left), Executive Director of The Otter Project, makes a point to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary officials at the June 21 Cambria meeting of the MBNMS Conservation Working Group. The Santa Lucia Chapter holds a seat on the group, which provides input to the Sanctuary Advisory

Area Coordinating Council, and the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Of primary concern then was the reactivation of offshore oil leases. No extraction of oil, gas or mineral resources is allowed within the waters of a National Marine Sanctuary.

On July 5, Senator Barbara Boxer and Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Petaluma) introduced legislation that would expand the northern boundaries of the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries to protect the Sonoma Coast, citing the threat of oil and gas exploration.

"Our state is very clear," said Boxer, "we don't want any more oil drilling. We want to be able to preserve this part of California's coast for future generations."

"Over the last fifteen years, the need for a marine sanctuary for San Luis Obispo has only grown greater," said Chapter Chair Karen Merriam. "With the return of offshore oil exploration virtually guaranteed in the new federal energy plan, the need is now urgent, and our elected representatives must respond to that need."

Think We Don't Need a Marine Sanctuary?

The Bureau of Reclamation is under court order to find a way to dispose of the billions of gallons of toxic, selenium-laden wastewater created by the industrial agricultural operations in the San Joaquin Valley. Piping it over here and dumping it in Estero Bay is one of the options being considered.

On July 6, the Bureau of Reclamation held a small briefing for local elected officials at the County Government building in SLO regarding the "San Luis Drainage Feature Re-evaluation." At one point, a question was raised about the border of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary expanding to include the waters of San Luis Obispo. Wouldn't that hinder any plan to dump toxic ag run-off here?

The representative from the Bureau's p.r. firm sweetly pointed out that the Sanctuary has not yet expanded to include SLO, therefore our waters are not protected, therefore the plan need not be impeded.

Enough said.



Don't even think about it: Morro Bay Vice Mayor Betty Winholtz -- along with some two dozen other individuals, including representatives of the Sierra Club, Surfrider, ECOSLO, the County Farm Bureau, the Board of Supervisors and the office of Congresswoman Capps -- blasted the Bureau of Reclamation's plan to dump toxic ag waste water into Estero Bay. The July 14 meeting in Cayucos saw the biggest turnout and strongest opposition of the four coastal and delta cities in which the Bureau held public meetings on the disposal plans.

Action for the Arctic Refuge

Fight to save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge enters new phase

With Congress poised to vote this fall on whether to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, a broad coalition of conservation, religious, and other organizations has launched Arctic Refuge Action, a summer-long national grassroots and media campaign to protect the Arctic Refuge. The nationwide effort integrates public events, advertising, and grassroots organizing to amplify the voices of the majority of Americans who oppose drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

A new website, www.ArcticRefugeAction.org, serves as the online nerve center for the campaign, keeping activists and allies informed on the campaign's progress, and providing newcomers with the means to make their own voices heard.

"Every day, we hear from more and more people from across the nation who are outraged that some in Congress are trying to drill in America's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge," said William H. Meadows, president of The Wilderness Society. "Arctic Refuge Action will channel that passion to ensure that Congress hears America and protects the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

The FY 2006 budget resolution passed by Congress this spring opened the door for a vote that could allow oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge through a backdoor in the budget process. It requires the pro-drilling Senate Energy and House Resources committees to pass \$2.4 billion in "savings" through the budget reconciliation process — "savings" that drilling backers have claimed could come from revenues generated by drilling leases in the Arctic Refuge.

In advance of the expected September Congressional vote on that budget reconciliation bill, an intensive organizing and communications effort by conservation groups, grassroots organizations, religious groups, businesses, and Native American groups is helping conservation-minded citizens across the country deliver a clear message to Congress that Americans do not want drilling in the Arctic Refuge.

Arctic Refuge Action member groups have sponsored events in Vermont, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey; more are scheduled throughout the Northeast and Midwest. In addition, the campaign underwrote an unprecedented live telecast and webcast of the annual caribou migration on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that was featured June 12 on *Good Morning America* and two days later on stations nationwide.

Teams of organizers will spend the summer crisscrossing the country in specially-marked and equipped "rally vans," holding public rallies and press events, helping local activists arrange meetings with members of Congress, and supporting other local visibility and advocacy efforts.

The "Don't Drill on Me" tour will cross the country with its fleet of model oil derricks, raising support for Arctic Refuge Action on the community level. The Arctic Refuge Action plans radio,

Rigs

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Harvey Wasserman, senior advisor to Greenpeace USA, notes that at July's G-8 summit in Scotland, President Bush "bullied the G-8 nations into groveling at the feet of Big Oil" even as "conservative Republicans on the American corporate right are growing nervous about the continued emission of carbon dioxide into the earth's atmosphere, which has reached apocalyptic proportions." Bush's "fossil fuel addiction," Wasserman writes, "has become a global plague."

"At a time when gas prices are skyrocketing, Americans need an energy plan that saves consumers money, creates new jobs, protects the environment, and makes America more secure by cutting our dependence on oil," said Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope, enumerating the things the energy bill doesn't do.

"We have the solutions," said Pope; "all that is missing is political leadership."

Too true. (See: "Where's Arnold?")



A study in contrasts: Congresswoman Lois Capps fought hard against the return of offshore oil; our governor remains comfortably mum.



...Where's Arnold? Action hero is MIA on offshore oil

Despite dire implications for his administration's stated goals for California's energy future and environmental protection, and a personal plea from half a dozen of our state's Congressional representatives, Governor Schwarzenegger has maintained a discrete silence on the Bush administration's new energy bill, declining to assist in the effort to strike out or curb its most onerous provisions.

A plea to the former action hero to take some

action was sent to Schwarzenegger on April 19, a week before the House voted on the bill. California Representatives Eshoo, Napolitano, Waxman, Miller, Capps and Solis asked for the governor's input on issues in the energy bill that "clearly run contrary to the interests of California, and...will undermine the policies and positions the State is pursuing under your Administration." These included provisions on siting of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities, gutting the Coastal Zone Management Act, and granting the federal government authority to permit energy-related facilities "within coastal areas currently subject to Congressional moratoria on oil and gas leasing."

"What can I say? Why bother to do environmental review when we can just use Arnold's crystal ball?"

— Susan Jordan, California Coastal Protection Network, on the Governor's assertion that Oxnard "would probably be the safest" site to locate a terminal for tankers shipping highly explosive liquefied natural gas

"This legislation is too important a matter for the nation's largest state to be silent on," our Congressional delegation told the Governor.

Yet nothing was heard from Sacramento except for a single letter of mild protest from a mid-level state official over the federal government's usurpation of the state's right to oversee siting of LNG terminals.

Sierra Club California has noted the governor's troubling environmental record to date: He supported the federal rollback of the "roadless rule," allowing road building and logging and mining in national forests; refused to impose fees on polluters during last year's fiscal crisis; and took \$28.8 million from big business and polluters last year and is on track for \$50 million this year. He vetoed out millions of dollars from next year's budget that would have helped clean California's air and water, protected the coast, and opened parks to millions of people.

"The environment accounts for less than two percent of the total budget, yet a full one third of the governor's new cuts come from environmental programs that already are on life support," said Ann Notthoff, California advocacy director for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

But looming above all is his silence on the energy bill and its implications for California. The 1969 Santa Barbara Channel blow-out galvanized the creation and passage of the nation's premiere environmental laws and made offshore oil the non-partisan environmental issue that California Republicans and Democrats could all agree on. Schwarzenegger eagerly jumped on board the "Million Solar Roofs" initiative in the state legislature, but an energy policy that promotes solar energy with one hand and accommodates intensified oil exploration with the other is no policy at all.

On July 11, the legislature got tired of waiting for the Governor to take up the fight, lead the charge, or give a sign of resistance to the oil lobby's designs on California's coast. Assembly Joint Resolution 14 declaring California's opposition to federal efforts to weaken the long-standing offshore oil drilling moratorium passed the State Senate on a bipartisan 26-9 vote.

The official legislative announcement of the resolution's passage noted that "Joint resolutions do not require the signature of the Governor."

TAKE ACTION!

At its August meeting, the California Coastal Commission is expected to hear the issue of **re-opening 36 undeveloped oil and gas leases off the central coast.**

Ten lessees have requested oil and gas lease term suspensions. A suspension actually extends a lease to allow development. Without a lease suspension, the lease's term expires and no oil and gas development can occur. The Commission will determine if extending the leases is consistent with the California Coastal Management Plan.

Go to the Coastal Commission website (www.coastal.ca.gov) and click on "Documents related to the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf Oil / Consistency Determinations submitted by the U.S. Minerals Management Service." Click on "Public Meetings" for the most current updated agenda and specific date on which this item will be heard, and plan to attend — and speak at — this meeting.

AUGUST 9-12, 2005
The Westin South Coast Plaza
686 Anton Blvd., Costa Mesa, CA
(714) 662-6614

"It's the proverbial camel's nose under the tent. The tent's going to collapse, and there's going to be drilling all off the coast of Florida and all off the eastern seaboard and all off the western Pacific coastline."

- Senator Bill Nelson



television, and print advertising in key markets nationwide to further raise awareness of September's pivotal reconciliation vote. The Arctic Refuge Action campaign will culminate after Labor Day, when thousands of Americans will converge on Washington, DC, to convey their opposition to Arctic Refuge drilling directly to Congress.

The campaign is also maintaining a special toll-free Action Line to connect citizens directly with their members of Congress: 1-888-8-WILD-AK.

Arctic Refuge Action is composed of the following member groups, with additional partner groups are being added daily: The Alaska Coalition; Alaska Wilderness League; De-

fenders of Wildlife; Earthjustice; the Episcopal Church, USA; The Gwich'in Steering Committee; The League of Conservation Voters; The National Audubon Society; The Natural Resources Defense Council; The National Wildlife Federation; The National Wildlife Refuge Association; Northern Alaskan Environmental Center; R.E.P. America; Trustees for Alaska; The Sierra Club; U.S. PIRG; The Washington Association of Churches; The Wilderness Society; and The World Wildlife Fund.

Sierra Club California invites you to

Lobby Day

August 28-29, 2005
-- Hotel, meals on us



Help Sierra Club California discuss its priority environmental issues with our state legislators at the State Capitol. This is a great opportunity to protect the environment by influencing the political process and to practice your advocacy skills, as well as meet new people with similar issue interests from around the state.

Training for Lobby Day will take place on Sunday afternoon (August 28) in Sacramento. Sierra Club California's lobbyists will provide helpful tools and knowledge for achieving successful meetings with legislators and their staff members. The lobbyists will also discuss the

legislative process and provide talking points on the priority bills that you will discuss in the capitol.

Lobby Day Participants will attend meetings with key legislators at the State Capitol in Sacramento on Monday August 29 throughout the day. The day will end with a debriefing and wrap-up back at the Sierra Club office.

Sierra Club California will provide free hotel accommodations in double-occupancy rooms in a nearby hotel in Sacramento, and will also provide Sunday dinner, Monday breakfast and Monday lunch. A portion of travel expenses will also be reimbursed with prior approval.

Chapter Leader Wins Sierra Club California Award

Congratulations to Jack Beigle on being named the 2005 recipient of Sierra Club California's William Penn Mott award!

The award recognizes a person who has made a significant contribution to state parks in California. William Penn Mott was the California State Parks Director from 1967-1975, and subsequently Director of the National Park Service. The Mott award recognizes a person who has made a significant contribution to state parks in California.

The registration deadline for Lobby Day is August 8. Please register as soon as possible. As we may receive more applications than we have space for, preference may be given to applicants from our targeted districts. Early registration is helpful as we make appointments with legislators.

Please contact Sabrina Juarez, Sierra Club California Legislative Aide, for more information at 916-557-1100 ext.107 or at Juarez@sierraclub-sac.org.

You can register for this event at www.sierraclubcalifornia.org by clicking on the "Register for Lobby Day" link.



Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter leaders Karen Merriam (left) and Letty French congratulate Jack Beigle on his Sierra Club California award at Rancho El Chorro event.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Be a part of the largest gathering of Sierra Club members in history!

Come to
Sierra Summit 2005

The
Sierra Club's
first-ever national
environmental
convention
and exposition

September 8-11, 2005
The Moscone Center
San Francisco, CA



Join us in the City by the Bay for an experience you'll never forget:



- Choose from 60 workshops full of visionary ideas and practical how-to's

- Explore an exhibition hall full of innovative products, ideas and solutions

- Discover something for everyone from the outdoor enthusiast to the environmentally-conscious consumer

- Exchange ideas with like-minded folks and top-flight keynote speakers

- Enjoy four days of fun, entertainment and personal inspiration

For registration and up-to-date information, visit www.sierrasummit2005.org

For information on exhibiting or sponsoring, contact Noreen Burke, Exhibit Manager, at 312-541-0567 or email info@coconapo.com

Heading for the Summit?

Please drop us a line & let us know so we can put together a SLO head count.

543-8717; sierra8@charter.net

Water Board Lowers Boom \$225,000 in fines assessed for dischargers' damages

One of the longest-running and most egregious environmental violation cases in County history came (hopefully) to a close on July 8. Nearly four years from the date of the original violation, the Board found land speculators David Pierson of San Diego and Haig Kelegian of Newport Beach liable for fines of \$125,000 and \$100,000, respectively, for denuding their adjacent Santa Margarita properties with non-permitted grading that caused massive erosion on 1,000 acres of former California oak grasslands and choked a tributary of Huero Huero Creek with silt.

A portion of the fines will go to local Supplemental Environmental Programs (SEPs), a Water Board program that funds efforts to undo environmental damages elsewhere in the Salinas River watershed where the discharger did the deed.

For the eight-hour duration of the hearing, witnesses and photographs testified to the massive erosion and sedimentation damages done by their having "grubbed" the land and allowed the bare soil to wash away with

the first rains. The dischargers be-moaned their fate, challenged the witnesses, the photographs, the Water Board staff report — to no avail.



Out standing in their field: The Regional Water Board took a day off in June to review the progress of the restoration of San Luis Obispo Creek, fifteen years after making the first grant in support of the SLO Creek Watershed Enhancement Program.

New Blood on Water Board

Monica Hunter has been appointed to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board by the Governor. The Water Board oversees permits, discharge and pollution issues

throughout the region, from rural subdivisions to the Diablo Canyon and Duke power plants at Morro Bay and Moss Landing.

A resident of Los Osos, Dr.

Hunter is one of the most outstanding candidates the Water Board has ever fielded, highly experienced in Central Coast issues; a genuine environmentalist and staunch proponent of public participation in government. She is Regional

Coordinator for the Planning and Conservation League and has done research or consulted for the National Science Foundation, California Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program, California Department of Agriculture, Morro Bay National Estuary Program, and the Underwater Archaeological Consortium. She has delivered college lectures on the subject of "Environmental Problem Solving in Coastal Communities."

The Governor's decision came after five months of deliberation. A lot of environmental groups and individuals, including the Santa Lucia Chapter, pressed Sacramento hard for her appointment, and our perseverance paid off.

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Eat

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assistance, donations can be mailed to SLO GE Free, PO Box 2482, Harmony CA 93435.

Resolution for the Board of Supervisors (draft)

Whereas:

Consumers have a right to know what genetically engineered (GE) foods they are eating.

And Whereas: Consumers wish to know whether the food they purchase and consume is a GE food. Concerns include the potential transfer of allergens into food and other health risks, potential environmental risks associated with the genetic engineering of crops, and religiously and ethically based dietary restrictions.

And Whereas: Adoption and implementation of mandatory labeling requirements for GE food produced in the United States would facilitate international trade.

And Whereas: Citizens from around the world have called upon their governments to label genetically engineered foods. More than two dozen industrialized nations have either passed or enacted labeling requirements. These countries include the 15 nations that make up the European Union, as well as Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand and many others. Even China has agreed to label ge-

netically engineered foods.

And Whereas: A growing number of national, regional and local organizations in the United States and around the world are calling for the mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods. These include The American Association of Retired People, Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America and the Sierra Club.

And Whereas: Public opinion polls consistently show that the great majority of Americans—both Democrats and Republicans—want genetically engineered foods to be labeled.

And Whereas: A significant portion of the citizens of San Luis Obispo County have expressed their desire for an outright ban of genetically engineered crops via Measure Q and even opponents of Measure Q have publicly expressed their support of GE labeling.

Therefore, be it resolved that: The San Luis Obispo Co. Board of Supervisors, on behalf of the citizens of San Luis Obispo County, do hereby urge our representatives at both the state and the federal level to support efforts to require mandatory labeling of GE foods. In particular, we urge our federal representatives to support Dennis Kucinich's Genetically Engineered Food Right To Know Act, otherwise known as H.R. 2916, in every way possible. We also urge the USFDA to move forward with provisions for GE labeling.

Nuclear

continued from page 1

tax breaks afforded to wind and solar energy are greater than the subsidies lavished on the nuclear industry; nuclear plants have no trouble getting adequate insurance coverage, and the Congressional act capping the liability of nuclear utilities does not constitute a subsidy.

And, of course, the refrain that those anti-nuclear folks don't have their facts straight and can't refute any of these arguments.

Suffice it to say, all these claims are false (a quick stroll through the website www.nirs.org will knock them all down). We are witnessing the local edition of a nationwide push by the nuclear lobby to

revive their moribund industry -- one into which the administration is proposing to pour another \$10 billion in federal handouts, after spending a trillion dollars over fifty years on an industry that still can't figure out what to do with its deadly waste product. It is now being touted as the solution to the problem of global warming.

Again, not so. On June 16, nearly 300 international, national, regional and local environmental, consumer, and safe energy groups reiterated their substantial concerns over nuclear energy and rejected the argument that nuclear power can solve global warming. Rather, the groups

Your Nuclear Calendar

August 9th, 7 – 9 p.m., San Luis Obispo: Mark the 20th anniversary of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant and the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in the best way possible: With the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, viewing a rare copy of the landmark documentary on the Diablo Canyon plant, A Question of Power, and getting a community update. Re-live the beginnings of the movement to halt nuclear power and help plan the

successful conclusion of this long-term campaign. At the SLO Library, 995 Palm St. Donations welcome.

August 15-16, Sacramento: The California Energy Commission is holding a public hearing on "nuclear topics."

This is the first time in nearly 30 years that the CEC has convened a public meeting on nuclear power! If you care about our energy future nationally – and at Diablo Canyon locally – you can't afford to miss this.

Contact Paula Daillak (805) 772-4253 (h) 237-3056 (w) 440-9240 (c), pdailak@hotmail.com if you're interested in joining a carpool and staying for one day or both days.



Diablo Canyon blockade, from A Question of Power, © Energon Films

urged a focus on clean and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency and conservation.

Representatives of several of the groups called on Congress to reject legislation that subsidized nuclear power plants as part of reducing global warming pollution.

"Global warming is the most serious environmental problem facing us today and we should aggressively increase energy efficiency and renewable energy to reduce carbon dioxide pollution," said Anna Aurilio, Legislative Director for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

In an environmental statement on nuclear energy and global warming, the groups outlined five key reasons why nuclear energy should not be part of a solution to global warming, stating that nuclear energy is unnecessary, too expensive, too dangerous, too polluting and that using nuclear power to address global warming would exacerbate the problems posed by the technology.

"Throwing a few billion dollars at the nuclear industry might make some utility executives happy, but would do virtually nothing to reduce carbon emissions," said Michael Mariotte, Executive Director of Nuclear Information and Resource Service. "In fact, by diverting limited resources that should be used for sustainable technologies, subsidizing nuclear power would be counterproductive."

"Instead of relapsing back into our failed nuclear experiment, let's embrace a trend towards actual clean and safe energy," said Wenonah Hauter, Director of Public Citizen's energy program. "Nuclear power is fatally flawed and we cannot overcome all of its obstacles. Renewable energy technologies already exist and have great potential and provide a real opportunity to keep our planet healthy for future generations."

To read the letter to Congress, go to www.citizen.org/documents/GroupNuclearStmnt.pdf

Hunt

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tion campaign was initiated by Mandy Davis, a naturalist who has lived on the water in Morro Bay for five years and seen first-hand the effect of the hunt on wildlife there. She finally decided to do something about it, started Citizens Allied for Reform of Established Hunting on our National Estuary (CAREHNE) and began a grass-roots ban-the-hunt petition campaign. The Sierra Club, ECOSLO, and the SLO Coast Alliance joined the campaign. Volunteers for CAREHNE, Sierra Club and ECOSLO gathered more than 2,000 signatures on petitions, and the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival and Morro Coast Audubon Society pressed for time and place restrictions on the hunt.

Finally, on June 13, the Morro Bay City Council voted to send a letter to the California Fish and Game Commission requesting that waterfowl hunting in the Morro Bay National Estuary be reduced from seven days a week to three during the November to January hunt. The City is also asking that the "grassy islands" in the middle of the estuary, the primary resting and feeding area for several species of native and migratory birds, be declared off-limits to hunting.

"I'm voting to do this because there has been such a tremendous outpouring of citizen concern on this issue," said Mayor Janice Peters before the vote to send the letter to Fish and Game.

The Commission is deliberating on changes to the state Waterfowl Regulations, with final decisions to be made at a meeting this month in San Luis Obispo or shortly thereafter. The population of the black brant — the sea goose that is the primary target of the annual hunt in



CAREHNE's Mandy Davis and Sierra Club's Andrew Christie talked about the Morro Bay hunt on the SLO Public Access show "SLO Issues" in June.

the estuary — has declined to the extent that the Commission must undertake measures to attempt to cut mortalities by 50% throughout the Pacific Flyway, the bird's migratory route from Alaska to Mexico, on which Morro Bay is a major stop.

"We're proud of the Morro Bay City Council," said Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chair Karen Merriam. "We're also proud of Sierra Club members, staff and volunteers, who have made this a priority campaign for the Chapter, and all the local residents who called, wrote, and e-mailed the City Council and made it clear that they had to take a stand."

At its June 24 meeting in Bishop, the Commission essentially thumbed its nose at Morro Bay and thousands of SLO residents, refusing to take hunt restrictions under consideration and instead accepting an amendment to move back the hunt's daily start time from 8 a.m. to 7 a.m.

That won't do. We must overwhelmingly assert the wishes of the community to the Commission.

TAKE ACTION

Support the agendizing of Morro Bay's request by the state Fish and Game Commission. Fish and Game will be meeting August 18 and 19 in SLO. If you can only come on one day, come on Thursday, the 18th, and say "I ask that my comments be incorporated into the record for the Morro Bay waterfowl hunt agenda item" for amendments to the 2005-06 state Waterfowl Regulations.

**Board of Supervisors Chambers
New County Government Ctr.
1055 Monterey St., SLO**

**Aug. 18:
10 a.m.**

**Aug. 19:
8:30 a.m.**



Black brant

Glenn and Martha Vargas © California Academy of Sciences

Life After Duke

California Energy Commission staff's damning critique of once-through cooling virtually rules out its use for California coastal power plants. CEC will consider adoption of this policy in the fall.

By Jack McCurdy

A message has gone out to power plant builders: Cooling your generators with water from the ocean, rivers, lakes or beneath the ground is a thing of the past in California, and alternative cooling technologies are becoming more efficient, effective and affordable.

That was the word from the June conference of the California Energy Commission (CEC) on advanced cooling strategies and technologies.

This signalled shift from the CEC has significant meaning for a new Morro Bay power plant. Energy engineers, experts and state consultants at the Sacramento conference agreed the growing scarcity of water in the face of a burgeoning state population, and the need to protect aquatic life from destruction by power plants using ocean water for cooling, will force the change.

Due to this new focus, alternative technologies are expected to increase. The main alternative to once-through cooling, in which fresh or ocean water is continuously channeled through power plants with a resulting loss of aquatic life, is closed-cycle cooling. One such technique is dry cooling, in which a limited amount of water is recycled in the plant through air-cooled condensers with little loss from evaporation.

CEC member John Geesman said, "We have tried to send a message to builders that we will not look with favor on the use of fresh water for energy production. We will be diligent in looking at alternatives to once-through cooling."

How firm and consistent Geesman's message will be in the future remains unclear in view of the fact that the CEC in recent years has approved three controversial projects to replace aging power plants along the California coast and licensed them to use once-through cooling instead of an alternative technology.

Those plants are in Morro Bay, Moss Landing and El Segundo. The decisions drew strong protests from state regulatory agencies, community and environmental groups, including the Santa Lucia Chapter and Sierra Club California. The CEC and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board are being sued for approving the use of ocean water for cooling in new generating units at El Segundo and Moss Landing, respectively.

One state official noted that if the California Supreme Court agrees to hear the El Segundo suit, CEC policies and new facts on closed-cycle cooling feasibility might have an impact on the Court's decision. The Moss Landing appeal to a state appellate court and the Regional Board's pending review of the Morro Bay project could be similarly influenced. The court could return the

Moss Landing decision to the Regional Board for reconsideration of closed-cycle cooling, at which point the new CEC policies and new information on alternative technologies could come into play.

Barbara Carney of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory noted a landmark federal decision last year on power plant cooling,

a decision that "didn't really say new plants must use closed-cycle cooling, but then again, it really did. Power plants will likely be challenged in the not too distant future with more stringent restrictions on water use and water quality."

Geesman acknowledged that "federal laws are changing" on power plant cooling requirements.

The Better Way

The conference produced a lot of potential ammunition and reports of forthcoming ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of alternative cooling technologies that are aimed at addressing objections by plant builders to closed-cycle cooling. As alternative cooling technologies gain favor, "the cost of equipment will come down because the market (for air-cooled condensers) is heating up," said John Maulbetsch, a CEC consultant. He predicted "a rapid acceleration of air-cooled condensers in the U.S."

He also reported on research at

five plant sites across the country showing that dry-cooling a 500-megawatt plant can save 900 million gallons of water a year, at a cost of \$21 million to \$26 million. The projected size of Duke Energy's proposed replacement plant in Morro Bay is 1200 megawatts, for which Duke has estimated the cost of dry cooling at \$200 million. Using Maulbetsch's figures, dry cooling for the Morro Bay plant



Sucking it up: Duke's Moss Landing power plant looms over Monterey Bay

could be calculated at about \$50 million—just 6% of the total capital cost of the new plant and removal of the existing one, and a cost which the CEC staff has found reasonable.

Maulbetsch also calculates the "cost of water saved" between \$1,100 and

\$1,400 per acre-foot, or \$3.50 to \$4.50 per 1,000 gallons.

Bill Powers of Powers Engineering presented a paper that analyzed a proposed plant in Wisconsin showing that the Environmental Protection Agency "overestimates the costs and impacts of air-cooled condensers (ACC)." He said those estimates are much higher than what the industry engineers would agree with.

After the meeting Powers said, "Height and noise is always presented as a problem by developers who don't want to build ACC, but it is almost never a real issue if a low-profile (75-foot high or less) ultra-low noise ACC design is specified. I call this the urban ACC design and it will be used at Otay Mesa (a CEC-approved plant near San Diego) and is used at the Crockett Cogeneration Plant (east of San Francisco)."

Another paper described how research into the effects of winds on power plant efficiency will likely allow builders to site plants in order to avoid wind interference with cooling and also to enhance performance if plants are designed to take advantage of currents.

Technical information on air-cooled conditioners has not been readily available due to the limited experiences plant operators have had with the units and the fact that many of the technologies are new, said Wilber and Kent Zammit of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a nonprofit research center funded by the power industry. As a result, there has been no single depository of performance and operations and maintenance experience.

EPRI has launched a database that will include an assessment of operating and performance issues, information for procurement specifications, and example procedures for evaluating and comparing bids and guidelines for performance and testing of units.

It is not clear whether the new research, information and imperatives to use alternative cooling technologies will reduce or end once-through cooling in California. The CEC adopted a policy report in 2003 saying it would not support use of fresh water for plant cooling, and another such report is expected to be approved later this year opposing use of ocean water.

If that policy is adopted in the fall, it could come just before a possible Regional Board hearing on Duke's application for a discharge permit to build a new Morro Bay power plant. That hearing depends on whether Duke wants to go forward, and has not been scheduled.

Peter Douglas: Environmentalism Undying

Coastal Commission Executive Director Peter Douglas came to SLO on the evening of June 21 for the Chapter's monthly general meeting, where he gave a wide-ranging talk on the subject of "undying environmentalism."

Douglas is a legend among environmentalists in California and nationwide due to his ability to bring enlightened practices and environmental awareness to a state bureaucracy while simultaneously fending off three decades of developer-orchestrated political attacks and hostile governors who have tried to oust him and curb or destroy the Coastal Commission.

Speaking a few days before the California Supreme Court handed down the decision that turned back the latest challenge to the existence of the Coastal Commission, he told the packed room at the Ludwick Community Center that the greatest threat the environment faces is ignorance and apathy, and this can be countered by activism and education.

"Our vision of environmental protection has to embrace both people and nature," he said. "The right wing has effectively demonized the environmental movement, characterizing

it as misanthropic. There is common ground between protecting the well-being of the individual and the well-being of the environment."

Douglas advised attendees that while the environmental picture may be grim at the national level right now, they should "focus on local issues, where you are able to make some headway" and take note that community is being re-defined as not necessarily place-based, but as a community of

interests. "You can take a way of thinking with you wherever you go."

Douglas refers to himself as a "radical pagan heretic," saying "'Radical' means getting to the root; 'pagan' connotes a reverence for life, and a 'heretic' engages in constructive dissent from state religion and insists on the ability to choose."



Peter Douglas dined with Chapter leaders at Novo in downtown SLO before his talk.

Join our E-mail Alert List

Get notification of important upcoming meetings and decisions on issues of environmental concern for Central Coast residents. Send your e-mail address to sierra8@charter.net (Sorry, Santa Lucia Chapter members only.)

The Fence-Busters

By Chris Wassenberg

The salt bed lake stretches far beneath me. To my right, two elk, with their babies, are grazing in the slopes. I look down, surveying our work: a thick path through tall grass, piles of t-posts, and rounds of old barbwire. Smiling, my husband and I begin to walk back down the trucks for a lunch break with a group of new friends.

Toni and Marti have returned to the Carrizo Plain for a third time to pull down fencing for the antelope. Vibrant, active people, they offer advice from past experiences. Alice relaxes into her folding chair, her Fish & Game vehicle offering the solace of shade. She explains that 130 miles of fencing have been removed or altered for native grazing animals, but 50 miles still remain.

At twenty-two, I am not the youngest volunteer. Becca, a fifth-grader, keeps us on our feet with her wit and stories — offering ice to all those who seem hot. Over lunch, we listen as people share their stories from past adventures.

The sun grows warmer...soon people are up and working again. Snip — the barbwire is snapped away from a fence post. Twist — the wire is turned into a big loop and rolled into a manageable bunch. Clank...grunt — the men, two or three at each post, break away years of metal and mineral build-up from the dirt. This last section is rough; all fifteen of us work together to free this watering area. Soon, we are back at camp, relaxing at happy hour, then dinner.

Finally, with enough energy to truly converse, Carlos explains copper elevator tops and roofs, while Susan discusses the politics of land management. We move to a great fire spit and bask in the heat of the wood fence posts we removed earlier in the day.

The conversation breaks into little litanies and observations. Soon, Cal returns from a nearby barn watch for owls and bats. The fire begins to smolder and we go back to our tent. Morning comes with a brilliant sunrise and early yoga. Within a couple

of hours, we are back at the fence posts. An antelope watches us from a far hilltop, a thanks for the work we have accomplished.

We have removed an entire cross-section of fence. At the trucks, we exchange hopes to meet again in the fall.

A golden eagle sees us off as we begin our drive home.



Sierra Club volunteer work parties go to Carrizo Plain to take down old fences and clear paths to water and food for the Plain's wildlife. Watch our Outings listings for the next work party.

HopeDance

Events for July & August

\$5 donation suggested to cover expenses and to help HopeDance with its varied activities.

July 23 (Saturday): *The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream*, Joslyn Center, Cambria, 7p.m. Amazing documentary warns us about peak oil and how to start preparing. Hosted by Barrie Zwicker. 78 minutes.

August 5th (Friday): *The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream*, in Paso Robles at the Community Center at 600 Nickerson, 7p.m.

August 19 (Friday): *Indigo*, at the SLO Library, 7p.m. Drama about a man who goes on the run with his granddaughter to protect her from would-be kidnappers after the new generation of "Indigo" (psychic and gifted) children being born into the world.

August 26th (Friday): Practical Tools to Grow EcoVillages, slideshow & talk with Diana Leafe Christian. See her article in the new issue of HopeDance #51; to be online soon.

Go to www.hopedance.org for details about the films and to "rent/loan" our other more than 200 videos and DVDs!

A Word About Trail Work

By Carlos Diaz-Saavedra

Many of us take for granted the trails we use and enjoy, and give little thought to how they are built and maintained. Trail work is not for everyone, but for those who want to give it a try, you'll find it very rewarding. To see an improvement to an existing trail that will last for years-to-come and requires less exertion to walk through gives a certain satisfaction for your labor. Blazing a new route or building a new trail altogether is even more gratifying.

For those of you who are willing to try to do some trail work, we have special outings led by Chapter volunteers which provide a great way to learn the information you'll need to have a safe and fun experience building and maintaining our local trails. Check our web site for information about current work we're doing.

The main focus of trail work is to provide a relatively flat pathway on dirt or rock and to keep it that way. We work to prevent water from washing the trail away, and to prevent gravity, animals, or people from displacing the flat, dirt tread.

There are various tasks that need to be done. Planning a new route or making improvements often requires consulting with authorities that have jurisdiction over the property. A new trail needs to be planned initially on a map, then scouted and flagged for location of the route. Cutting vegetation is a significant part of the actual hands-on business, from uprooting grass to cutting a fallen Redwood tree. This work can be done with a multitude of tools: a pick\hoe to cut roots and remove sod, weed cutters (whips) to cut through light vegetation, a scythe for heavier growth, lopping shears for brush and limbs, and axes, bow saws

or one\two man crosscut saws for cutting live and fallen trees, and Pulaskis. A Pulaski is a combination of an ax and a hoe in a forged head.

Rock moving and breaking requires some hefty hand tools. A pick can pry and break rock. A sledgeham-

mer can fracture rock for removal. A rock or pry bar can coax a stone out of the ground or into a different location. Large rocks are usually more stable, but small stone set in place properly can be as effective.

Some of the features that are incorporated into a trail to insure longevity are waterbars, grade dips, switchbacks, culverts, and crib walls. A waterbar is a barrier built on an angle across the trail that diverts the flow of water off to the low side and away from it. Grade dips are usually figured into the contour of the trail as it is routed at the very beginning, and are simply low spots along the trail that allow for drainage. Switchbacks are used to change direction of travel on hillsides to gain elevation in a limited distance. They

make a zig-zag pattern. Culverts allow water to flow under the trail. Crib walls are used to hold soil and rock in place that would otherwise slide with gravity.

This can be a good way to get exercise, but participants should know their limitations and take breaks as they see fit. Our trail work outings usually last three hours: there's no need to wear yourself out! The camaraderie of a group working together toward a common objective is a great motivator, and we're always amazed at how much we have accomplished. As we work, we take time to stop, take in our surroundings, and appreciate our contribution to the accessibility of these beautiful places.

Let me know if you have questions about our trail work or how you can participate. You can contact me at cdiazsaavedra@yahoo.com.

Nipomo

continued from page 3

tion would require Environmental Impact Reports for many proposed projects, which would in turn require time and money. Their representatives pleaded that case, with the head of the local Home-builders Association — in an apparent parody of an Exxon executive denying global warming — claiming the severity of the water shortage at Nipomo cannot be declared because its reality has "not been 100% proven." Proof, presumably, would take the form of a giant sucking sound.

In the end, the Supervisors punted. They asked staff to do more research, and postponed a decision. Two weeks later, they tried to compromise by reducing the Nipomo Mesa's growth cap from 2.3 percent to 1.8 percent. The cap does not apply to affordable housing and second-units.

"The majority of Nipomo — excluding the developers — feels we are at a level-3 water alert," says resident Cherie Dodds. "We need a 1% growth cap until we have met some of the problems that have been created by not managing our resources correctly."

Call the Board of Supervisors at 781-5450 to find out when this item will be coming back to their agenda. Make it a point to attend the meeting and call for the recognition of reality.

Water Board

continued from page 6

Chair Jeffrey Young pointed out that any measures they may have taken to keep the soil out of the creek after they let it wash off the hillsides were a case of too little, too late.

Pierson is now in negotiations on the funding of \$100,000 of SEP's from his \$125,000 in fines. Inexplicably, the Board chose to forego the opportunity of funding Supplemental Environmental Programs from the Kelegian Ranch fine, voting to let the entire amount go to the State general fund instead, a severe disappointment for all those hoping for additional funding for the restoration of the Salinas watershed.

But the overall outcome was a vast improvement over the scenario planned for the two cases last Decem-

ber: A \$25,000 fine for each man, merely reimbursing the Water Board for staff time spent on the lengthy cases.

Stay tuned to see how the \$100,000 gets spent. The Sierra Club is encouraging the board to purchase 100 acres of similar habitat in the watershed in partnership with the County Department of Parks and Recreation, revegetate an eroded hillside in a rare blue oak woodland adjacent to stadium park in Atascadero, and fence out the offroad vehicles that caused the damage. Preventing residential development in this highly sensitive and scenic area is the best environmental bang for the public's buck.

Los Padres ForestWatch

Los Padres ForestWatch is a new nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the entire Los Padres National Forest, from the Big Sur coastline to the Sespe wildlands. We invite you to spend some time at our new web site, located at www.lpfw.org.

The Los Padres is facing tremendous threats from oil and gas drilling, overgrazing, off-highway vehicle abuse, and ecosystem mismanagement. We're using community organizing, legal advocacy, and scientific collaboration to halt these threats and promote more sustainable uses of our public lands.

There are TWO things you can do right now to help us in our efforts to protect these magnificent wildlands:

1. Check out our new web site. Once there, you'll be able to sign up for our action alerts, read the latest news, and find out more about our

projects and ways to get involved. You can also become a member or donate on-line.

2. Spread the word about our group to anyone who might be interested. We are a relatively new organization that relies on people like you to spread the word about issues affecting our national forest.

Thanks, and we look forward to working with you to protect our public lands!

Jeff Kuyper, Executive Director
Los Padres ForestWatch
P.O. Box 831
Santa Barbara, CA 93102
805.252.4277
jeffk@lpfw.org

Not yet a member of LPFW? Join today at www.lpfw.org

Don't Worry, Be Happy

A delightful overnight at Santa Margarita Lake

By Jack Beigle

In the early 1930s Meher Baba, a popular guru from India, coined the phrase "Don't worry, be happy," which was much later incorporated into a popular song. I think it is good advice and it really applies to me.

When I set one foot into my canoe, my worries are all gone and I am happy.

Our overnight campout at Santa Margarita Lake is a good example. We had a group of congenial paddlers. The weather was warm, but not too hot. Our after lunch paddle was a delight with several good bird sightings. We saw a

golden eagle, several great blue herons, several green backed herons, an osprey, a couple of western grebes and the usual mallard ducks, coots and turkey vultures. After dinner we shared campfire stories and Joe Dickerson treated us to a campfire concert of Scottish music on his newly acquired bagpipes. It was a great conclusion to a great day!

The next morning, three paddlers launched at dawn. In silence we shared the joys of dawn on the lake. The unspoken communication between friends as we observed and shared the beauty of nature; the twirling swirls of the morning mist on the water, the twitter of song birds as they awoke and greeted the new day, the quail calling their families together for breakfast, the joy of paddling my canoe exactly where I wanted it to be when we were stalking a bullfrog in a large cove filled with sedges, a beautiful verbena in full bloom at the water's edge that was hit by a beam of sun-



Photo: Paul Matthies

light and the still lake reflected a perfect reversed image in the water and the classic beauty of the sun rising over the mountains and shining through the gray pines. When I have no worries, I can find joy in simple things like the dancing patterns of light that the rising sun forms as it is reflected off of the small wavelets and shines through the hull of my Kevlar canoe. It was a thrilling paddle shared with friends, and this was all before breakfast.

To say that this was a joy-filled outing just doesn't come close. We hit a high average of joy on our outings but this one was truly outstanding.

Check the outing schedule and join us on the water.

SLO Students Attend Sierra Student Training in Washington

Sierra Rose Prizybyla and four of her fellow Cuesta College and Cal Poly students traveled to Washington State in July for the summer program (Sprog) of the Sierra Student Coalition, the student-run arm of the Sierra Club.

The Washington Sprog, held July 18-24 at Lewis and Clark State Park near Portland, was one of five SSC Student Environmental Leadership Trainings held nationwide this summer. The week-long programs, led by the nation's top student activists, teach how to develop strong, effective groups that can tackle serious environmental issues. Throughout the week, the program focuses on helping attendees prepare to take what they've learned and put it to the test at their schools, including:

ORGANIZING 101: How to start and run an effective organization. Covers everything from recruiting folks to running a meeting to developing new leaders to ensure that your organization continues once you graduate.

CAMPAIGN PLANNING: How to plan, implement, and run an effective environmental campaign. The Sierra Club Matrix teaches the most essential

skills needed to effect real change.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: How to say what you mean, with confidence and persuasion – be it to the media, to fellow group members, or the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: Using those skills on an issue you would like to use them for – public lands, energy, clean water, you name it.

Of course, the program isn't all work and no play. In addition to the main focus, guest speakers from the environmental movement, delicious vegetarian cooking, hikes, games, and general hanging out with good people are all part of the agenda.

Back at school, the student activists can join together to create a strong network to help the Earth.

Yes, Cuesta or Cal Poly student: This could be you! The subsidized cost of the program is \$120, which covers tuition, room and board, and local transportation to and from the site. If you are not already a member of the Sierra Club, student membership is just \$25. Make a note to check out www.ssc.org before summer 2006, and we'll see you next year!

Thanks to All Who Gave!

We asked for contributions in March, and they're still coming in! Better late than never!

We couldn't do what we do without you, so on behalf of the land, air, water, and critters:

THANK YOU!

Don't forget!

In March we sent out an appeal to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter's budget. When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in our own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature. Please be as generous as you are able—remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

Thank you. Send your contribution to:

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 sierra8@charter.net

Local Government Meetings

- City of SLO--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
- Arroyo Grande--2nd and 4th Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 473-5404
- Atascadero--2nd & 4th Tues.; 466-8099
- Cambria CSD -- 4th Thurs.; 927-6223
- Grover Beach--1st & 3rd Mon., 6:30 p.m.; 473-4567
- Grover Beach Planning Commission-- 2nd Tues.
- Morro Bay--2nd & 4th Mon.
- Paso Robles--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 237-3888
- Pismo Beach--1st Tues., 5:30 p.m.; 773-4657
- Los Osos CSD board-- 1st Tues. & 2nd Mon., varies
- California Coastal Commission-- 3rd Tues., varies
- SLO County Board of Supervisors-- every Tues.; 781-5450
- SLO Council of Governments; 781-4219
- SLOCOG Citizens Advisory Committee--1st Wed. every other month, 6:00 p.m.
- SLOCOG Board--1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Highlights from recent Chapter meetings

Executive Committee meeting,
 June 24, 2005

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m.
 Members Present: Karen Merriam, Cal French, Eliane Guillot, Steven Marx, John Ashbaugh
 Members Absent: Sue Harvey, Jack Morrow
 Staff: Andrew Christie
 Visitor: Letty French

Morro Bay Hunting—Many club members and supporters showed up at the June 13 meeting of Morro Bay City Council and provided public testimony opposing duck and goose hunting in Estuary. Mayor Janice Peters said the overwhelming public response convinced the Council to draft a letter to Fish and Game supporting Mandy Davis's proposal to limit the hunt in duration and location. Eric, Betty and Mandy, Carrying the Chapter's letter, went to Bishop to testify before the five-member Fish and Game Commission.

SLO Land Conservancy easements—John Ashbaugh reported on his conversation with Brian Stark and Bob Hill of the SLO Land Conservancy. Brian and Bob stated they were sensitive to the need to improve enforcement of their easements and that they welcomed extra sets of eyes to observe possible violation of easement agreements. The reason given for the cutting of trees on Bonheim Ranch was to enhance wildlife habitat.

Google Chat Room—this has been set up by Monica Tarzier. Members on email have been so advised.

Chair's Report—Karen stated that the General Meeting featuring a talk by Peter Douglas, Executive Director of the Coastal Commission, drew over 40

people. Eliane stated that she is working on a Sierra Club program—the Latino Outreach Council. October 18 General Meeting featuring Mark DiMaggio will focus on ways of involving young people in environmental action.

Rural Plan Development Ordinance—This proposed County ordinance will be considered at Supervisor's meeting June 28. All members encouraged to attend and/or write urging that this developer-written effort to undermine subdivision regulation be pronounced DOA.

Chapter elections—Letty French reported that three positions on Excomm will open. Cal and Steven will run; Eliane will not. Candidates statements will be due October 8. We agreed to try to maintain continuity by inducting new Excomm at December meeting and immediately appointing officers at that time.

Water Treatment—Consider appreciation and approval of the A-B-C plan for regional sewage treatment including Cayucos, Morro Bay and Los Osos, agreed upon in principle, consistent with our earlier letter approving of considering these multiple problems on a regional rather than local basis.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.
 Next meeting: Wednesday, July 27, 5:00 p.m.

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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
 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441
 (415) 977-5538.

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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.

Sat., July 23, 11:00 a.m. CANOE/KAYAK TO A MOZART CONCERT This leisurely paddle leads to the Baywood Pier but this time we anchor off the pier, or run our bows up on the beach, to eat lunch while we listen to a Brass Ensemble play Mozart. Bring your boat and equipment, PFDs, windbreaker, warm clothing and a picnic lunch. HIGH TIDE 1:10 p.m. 4.6' LAUNCH AT MORRO BAY STATE PARK MARINA. Details call Jack Beigle (773-2147)

Sat. Aug 6th, 9:00 a.m. Valencia Peak Loop Hike. Come take a hike to the top of Valencia Peak, in Montana de Oro State. A 5-mile hike with 1300 feet elevation gain. Bring water, snack, and dress for the weather; some poison oak may be present. Meet at the Montana de Oro Visitor Center, MDO State park. Details call Gary at (473-3694)(2C)

Sierra Club Outings Launches Contest

The Sierra Club, the nation's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization, is founded on the belief that experience in the outdoors will inspire the public to protect natural lands. Through its Outings program, Sierra Club encourages the public to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet.

The Sierra Club Group and Chapter Outings Committee (GCOC) is sponsoring a contest to develop a program identifier for club outings leaders. The program identifier is a suitable design for patches, shirts, hats, etc. It will provide recognition to those individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to lead outings, and will serve to help outings participants identify outings leaders at trailheads.

Sierra Club membership is not required to submit an entry. Submis-

Sun., AUG. 7th, 9:30 a.m. BLACK LAKE CANYON: Meet at junction of Guadalupe Rd and Leguna Nigra. Hike down into the Canyon, oak woodland, euke problems, biodiversity, wildflowers and maybe some of the rare flora and fauna of the cyn. Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Aug 13-14, Vicente Flat Trailwork Overnight Trip. Join VWA Trail Crew leader Mike Heard in the ongoing effort to clear deadfalls from the popular Vicente Flat trail. Camp will be made in the beautiful redwood glade of Vicente Flat, one of the nicest places on the coastal slope. Work activities will include preparation of work sites, assisting a certified sawyer at one end of a two-person crosscut saw, helping to roll cut trees off the trail, and clean-up of damaged tread once the trees are gone. All able-bodied folks are most welcome. For more information or to reserve a place on this trip, contact Mike Heard at heard@pobox.com.

Sun., Aug. 14th, 9:30 a.m. KAYAK OSO FLACO LAKE: Bring kayak, life jacket, binos and bird book to tour OFL. An easy paddle. Have an extra kayak. Must be able to swim. Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Sun., Aug. 21, 9:30 a.m.. BICYCLE RIDE: Meet at Dune Center with bike and helmet. We'll tour Guadalupe with many stops and then head to Pacific. Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Sat, Aug 27th, 9:00 a.m., Ridge Trail-Barranca Loop. Stay cool on the coast on this moderate 7-mile, 1500 ft. loop hike in Montana de Oro SP. Meet at Ridge Trailhead, 2.3 miles past park entrance. Park in large pullout across from the trailhead. Bob Schwartz, 441-9508, <rws_usa@yahoo.com> (3C)

sions will be judged by an independent panel based on originality, content, technical quality, and visibility. Contest deadline is August 31, 2005. The winner will be announced at the Sierra Summit in San Francisco, September 8-11, 2005. **The winning entry will be awarded a cash prize of \$500.**

Send entries by email to: gco@sierraclub.org

or by postal mail to:
Group and Chapter Outings
Sierra Club
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105-3459

Entries submitted by postal mail must include both hardcopy and .jpgfile (5 mb maximum) versions of the entry.

Aug 27-28, Vicente Flat Trailwork Overnight Trip. Join VWA Trail Crew leader Mike Heard in the ongoing effort to clear deadfalls from the popular Vicente Flat trail. Camp will be made in the beautiful redwood glade of Vicente Flat, one of the nicest places on the coastal slope. Work activities will include preparation of work sites, assisting a certified sawyer at one end of a two-person crosscut saw, helping to roll cut trees off the trail, and clean-up of damaged tread once the trees are gone. All able-bodied folks are most welcome. For more information or to reserve a place on this trip, contact Mike Heard at heard@pobox.com

Aug. 28th, Sun. 9:30 a.m. COAST BIKE-RIDE: Meet at Melodrama in Oceano at 0930 with bike & helmet. Tour the Central Coast and see Coastal Com. access points. Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Sun. August 28, 10:00 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, windbreaker, binoculars and lunch money or picnic lunch. HIGH TIDE 9:05 a.m. 3.7' LAUNCH AT MORRO BAY STATE PARK MARINA. Details call Jack Beigle 773-2147

Sun, Sept. 3, 8 a.m. Valencia Peak Southern Route Conditioning Hike. This is a 2-hour, 4.5-mile hike with over 1200-foot 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 who want to maintain a high fitness level. It is not for those who want to get into shape, as they are likely to be left behind. Meet at the Coon Creek Parking are at the very end of Pecho Road in Montana de Oro. Leader Al (534-0462)(2B)

Sun., Sept. 4, 9:30 a.m.. POINT SAL: Meet at end of Brown Rd at locked gate at 0930 climb 2.5 miles to 'pass'/saddle and then decide what next. Bring water, windbreaker, lunch. A group might be hiking 'all the way' to Paradise Beach and then Guadalupe Beach (e-mail me if interested). Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Sat-Sun., September 10-11. Desert Protection and Restoration. We will participate together with an off-road vehicle group in a National Public Lands Day project sponsored by the Ridgecrest Office of the BLM. The area, lying between the Spangler Hills open OHV area to the north and the Golden Valley Wilderness to the south, has incurred considerable damage from illegal OHV activity. Projects will include general trash pickup, signing the boundary of the open area to the north, installing limited use area signs, building vehicle barriers to prevent entry to the wilderness area to the south, and camouflaging and restoring illegal vehicle trespass routes.



Photo by Joaquin Palting

Saturday will be a workday followed by a potluck dinner. On Sunday there will be options for a hike and/or a trail ride. Info and sign-up with Ldr: Craig Deutsche, (310-477-6670), deutsche@earthlink.net. CNCC Desert Com

Sun., Sept. 11th, COAST HIKE: Call or e-mail a few days before for details: 929-3647 or BDenneen@SLONET.org

Sat-Sun., September 17-18. Carcamp and Service in the Owens Valley. We'll work on removing tamarisk, and then take short hikes to view wildlife and special areas. We'll visit the lower Owens River Delta area. If the weather is hot, we can retreat to the higher mountain meadows. Camp at Diaz Lake County Park just south of Lone Pine; fee required. Meet Saturday morning at 0900 in the campground. Potluck Sat night. Bring all your food and camping gear, gloves, loppers and handsaws (if you have them.) and clothes for all kinds of weather. Mike Prather, Owens River Committee activist and outstanding birder, will be our resource specialist. For more information, contact Leaders: Cal and Letty French, 14140 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446, (805-239-7338). Prefer e-mail: cfrench@tcsn.net. CNCC/Santa Lucia Chapter

Sat, Sept. 17, 5:15 p.m., SUNSET/MOONRISE HIKE AND POTLUCK AT POINT SAL Road: Moderate 5 mi. RT hike with uphill most the way to our dinner destination and mostly downhill on the way back. Come and watch as the sun goes down and the full moon comes up a few minutes later. Bring a daypack with food to share, as well as a plate, utensils, and water for yourself. Meet at the Orcutt Long's Drugs parking lot, NE corner of Bradley and Clark, at 5:15pm. Always contact the leader; hike particulars can change. JIM 937-6766 (AR)

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