



**SIERRA
CLUB**

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GENERAL MEETING

*Bush environmental
policy--an oxymoron?
Come find out!*

March 25, 7:00 p.m.



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SANTA LUCIAN



*Protecting and
Preserving the
Central Coast*

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

Coastal Commission Wants Local Coastal Plan Updated Now

by Jack McCurdy

For more than a year and a half, the California Coastal Commission has waited for San Luis Obispo County to implement 165 recommendations for updating its Local Coastal Plan, the key planning law that protects the area's beaches, habitat, sensitive viewsheds, cultural resources, agricultural lands and other coastal assets. But now the Commission may have had enough delays.

After listening to a united contingency of environmental groups urging strong action before a supportive crowd of more than 200, the Commission asked its staff to recommend ways for dealing with the county, including a possible report to the California Legislature, a request for "legislative action necessary to assure effective implementation" of the Local Coastal Plan (LCP), or sanctions. These could involve possibly holding up the processing of future LCP amendments that the county seeks until the Commission's recommendations are addressed. The staff's recommendations and options for responding to the county's handling of the LCP update are expected to be presented to the Commission at its May 6-9 meeting in Monterey.

Meantime, the Commission by consensus offered the county a further opportunity to explain why, as a staff report put it, "few actual substantive changes to the LCP have been accomplished to date." Although county officials appeared and spoke at the March 5 meeting at the Embassy Suites Hotel, their explanations did not seem to satisfy the Commission.

Maria Elena Durazo, an alternate commissioner, remarked that she had heard the accusations of its foot-dragging, but "I didn't hear any responses from the county" as to "why the county has not responded to a number of issues and recommendations" from the Commission. All I can conclude is that we need some very strong

measures to push the county, and sooner than later."

County Planning Director Victor Holanda said updating the LCP is "extremely time-consuming because of the involvement of the public." He blamed the county's delay on a lack of staffing due to a dearth of affordable housing, even though the county routinely approves new developments without requiring affordable housing as part of them.

Later, when asked by Commission Chair Mike Reilly why the county is "silent on so many recommendations," Holanda said the county's "financial and staff resources are limited," even though state money has been provided for the update, and "if we should have been more diligent, it is our fault."

Supervisor Shirley Bianchi said the county's effort was being portrayed in "black and white—it ignores the gray in the middle. It's not that bad." Her remarks were focused not on the LCP but on extolling the conservation framework proposed by the Hearst Corporation for the Hearst Ranch, and Bianchi also unjustly chastized those critical of the Hearst Framework as simply being unable to adjust to life without fighting the Hearst Corporation. She said "the pain of a new idea"—less than total conservation of the Ranch—"is really hard for some people to handle." Although Bianchi said she still favors 100% conservation of the Ranch, she has expressed support for the

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Nuclear Regulatory Commission to Meet

*by Pete Wagner
Chair, Conservation Committee*

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will be meeting in San Luis Obispo this month, giving Sierra Club members a very rare opportunity to address their safety and economic concerns regarding PG&E's proposal to construct and operate a dry cask high-level radioactive waste facility at Diablo Canyon.

Your support is badly needed for this pivotal meeting of the NRC. Please come and speak up. Even if you choose not to speak or do not sign up in time, your presence is very important because a large turnout will serve to underscore the seriousness of the public's worries about the plant.

The Santa Lucia Chapter's concerns are contained in recommendations adopted by the Executive Committee last September, which are listed below. The most important issues are the need to harden the two spent fuel storage pools against overhead attack, and the necessity for a full analysis of terrorist threats, including preventive measures, consequences, and countermeasures.

The NRC has scheduled hearings at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Luis Obispo at the following times: Sunday, March 23, 3 to 7 p.m., and Monday, March 24, 10 a.m. to noon, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., and 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Signing up in advance is necessary to speak; otherwise, the NRC could decide to cancel the

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Outings, events, and more!

Santa Lucia Chapter General Meeting

Is the Bush White House out to destroy all environmental laws, or just selected ones? What can citizens do to effectively resist Bush environmental policy and understand his apparent "rush to war"? What will the environmental consequences be from an Iraq war? These hot topics should make for lively discussion when Emmitt (Bud) Evans, Jr., Cal Poly professor of political science, speaks at the General Meeting starting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, at the Meadow Park Rec Center in San Luis Obispo. Evans' specialties are international affairs, terrorism, and political conflict and globalization. Members and friends are invited. Please support your Chapter's efforts to present programs of current interest.

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

Meadow Park Rec Center
San Luis Obispo

Save the date!!



Housing Committee Update

by Jan Marx
Chair, Chapter Housing Committee

The Chapter's Housing Committee has been monitoring the City of San Luis Obispo's Housing Element Update Task Force, which is going through the present (1994) Housing Element program by program, policy by policy, and goal by goal to decide whether to keep, change or eliminate present language. The Committee also is working with and supporting Richard Schmidt, who was appointed by the Executive Committee as the Chapter's representative to the Task Force.

The 1994 Housing Element was a "constraints based" document, which took the availability of natural resources and the environment into account. This makes it quite different from the new Housing Element, which will likely ignore such constraints in obedience to the state housing quota.

The Task Force members represent various stakeholder groups and advises the city Planning Commission. It was not initially set up by City Council to decide by majority vote but rather to make clearly identified comments and recommendations, which could conflict with each other, in order to clearly express stakeholder positions. However, city staff is pressuring the Task Force to take votes and not even record who voted for or against a given proposal.

Since environmental and neighborhood representatives are vastly outnumbered by business and pro-development advocates, they will likely find themselves on the losing end of votes on issues regarding the health of the environment and quality of life in the neighborhoods.

It is crucial for the environmental representatives to let the Planning Commission and eventually the City Council know which votes they disagreed with. Otherwise, it will be easy for staff to create the illusion of total buy-in to the majority position.

The Sierra Club is an affiliate of California Futures Network (CFN), which advocates a "Smart Growth" approach to increasing housing, preserving open space and curbing sprawl. The Housing Committee is in touch with Thomas Jones, Director of CFN, and is working with them regarding Housing Element language.

The Housing Update Task Force meetings are open to the public and are held the second and fourth Thursday afternoons, starting usually around 3 p.m. in City Hall. The presence of the environmental community at these meetings is very important, so please come by, observe and become better informed. For more information or to share ideas on policies, contact me at <janmarx@fix.net>.

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The Executive Committee meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at the chapter office. All members are welcome to attend.

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Coastal Commissioners to Serve Fixed Terms

Gov. Gray Davis has signed a bill strongly supported by the Sierra Club that is designed to resolve a major constitutional question about the composition of the California Coastal Commission, and the issue is now before the state Supreme Court.

Attorney General Bill Lockyer asked the Supreme Court to review a state Court of Appeals decision that the nature of the appointments process of the Coastal Commission violates the California Constitution. It objected to the fact that eight appointments from the Legislature (four from the Assembly, four from the Senate) serve "at the pleasure" of the appointing authority rather than according to fixed terms. The current setup, according to the court, unfairly undermines the governor's authority (and his four Commission appointments) over the Commission. Under the new legislation, the four Senate and four Assembly appointees will served fixed terms of four years.

The court was less clear about its concern that the Legislature rather than the governor appoints the majority of the Commissioners. Lockyer is concerned that there are, at various state courts, at least 20 other lawsuits raising legal challenges to the Commission's constitutionality. Therefore, he believes it would be very helpful to the administration of justice and coherent coastal land use planning if the Supreme Court would either reverse the Court of Appeals or rule that the bill approved by the Legislature and signed by Davis on Feb. 20 is sufficient.

What is clear is that if the Supreme Court doesn't comment, certain developers (at Bolsa Chica), cities (Malibu), media (Santa Barbara News-Press) and lawyers and law firms (Ronald Zumbun of the Pacific Legal Foundation) will continue to claim that the Commission is unconstitutional in every lawsuit they manufacture, Sierra Club officials said.

These officials pointed out that since the Coastal Initiative, Prop. 20, was passed in 1972, which established the composition of the Coastal Commission, there has always been a small, loud minority group of aggressively anti-coastal individuals who continue to this day to work to undermine and dismantle the coastal protection program in California. It would be very helpful for the Supreme Court to advise these diehard litigants in advance that their future efforts to undermine the program will not be successful, they said.

The Commission and its composition was made permanent by the Legislature in 1976 with passage of the Coastal Act.

The bill signed by Davis, AB 1XX, moved quickly through the Assembly and Senate, with Sierra Club's Legislative Director Bill Allayaud involved in crafting the language through meetings with legislative staff and committee consultants. He also testified at hearings and communicated with the Davis administration officials to emphasize how important the legislation was to Club members.

From the grassroots side, Mark Massara, the Sierra Club's Coastal Program Manager, organized letter and phone call campaigns so that the governor and legislative leaders would understand the importance of resolving this legal issue to voters and lovers of California's coast.

In signing the bill, Davis praised the Legislature for delivering a bill to sign in short order. He also praised the Sierra Club and other environmental groups for stewarding the bill to his desk. He stressed that we must have a strong coastal program and said "the Coastal Commission is the Guardian Angel of our coast" and "this legislation will let the Coastal Commission continue to be America's environmental leader."

Reporters at the signing asked only one question of the governor, and it was about the Pacific Legal Foundation's (PLF) claim that this "fix" will not be enough, and that the real problem is the majority of the Commissioners being appointed by the Legislature. Davis replied that he and supporters of the bill think the court opinion is clear and that the bill will be enough.

This legislative response grew out of a Dec. 30, 2002, Court of Appeals ruling in the Marine Forests vs. Coastal Commission case. It involves a man in the Los Angeles area who has illegally dumped old tires and other objects in the ocean just offshore. His claim is that he is doing an experiment to show that habitat can be created from these materials. However, he failed to comply with various state laws, including the Coastal Act, which requires he obtain a permit from the Coastal Commission for such a project. Over the years, the California Department of Fish and Game has established marine habitats through their artificial reef program and has had mixed success.

The PLF took up the violator's case. This conservative non-profit litigation organization based in Sacramento has challenged, harassed, and even attempted to dismantle the Coastal Commission in every way it can, Sierra Club officials said. The PLF had won at the Superior Court level, and the Coastal Commission appealed to the Appeals Court and was represented by Lockyer.

So for now, the Legislature and governor have addressed the issue raised by the courts. But be assured, Allayaud said, that the PLF will pursue this matter endlessly because they would like nothing better than having no Coastal Commission around. But, he noted, "If the Coastal Commission was declared unconstitutional, coastal activists from Oregon to Mexico would immediately rally behind the Legislature and governor to remedy the problem, and if it comes down to doing a new coastal initiative as the only means to do so, the work would begin. People love the California coast and know that some local governments cannot withstand the pressure that developers put on them. We need the Coastal Commission to guard our coastal land, estuaries, and offshore areas."

The bill was authored by Assemblymember Hannah Beth Jackson of Santa Barbara. Sen. Sheila Kuehl of Los Angeles introduced the same bill on the Senate side, which was eventually dropped in favor of the Assembly bill. All this work was done as part of a special session called by the governor in order to speed action on a Commission bill. Legislation passed and signed in a special session takes effect in 90 days rather than the first of next year.

Hiking the Cruickshank in the Silver Peak Wilderness

by Gary Felsman

It was a beautiful day as four of us (Darlene, Chuck, Holly and Myself) headed up the Cruickshank Trail on Sunday, January 19, 2003. We started our ascent of the well graded switchbacks and noticed some work had been done on this part of the trail. Upon reaching the first crest we were treated to a field full of Star Lilies, Lupine, and vetch along the trail.

We reached the top of the switchbacks and were treated to views along the coast and the canyon along Villa Creek. Again we noticed that Jim was probably working here as there were signs of more trail work as well. The poison Oak bush that lay across the trail has since been removed. Following the trail we wound in and out of some beautiful redwoods then came to first of many small streams filled with water from the winter rains. We continued on to Upper Cruickshank Camp for a snack.

From here we headed up to Silver Camp along the well graded switchbacks. Along the way we came across a tree that had recently fallen across the trail, and we stopped to remove the tree. We then headed on up to Silver Camp, stepping over a few trees and dodging some poison oak along the way.

At Silver Camp we again paused before heading on up the trail. It is here where one needs to pay attention as the trail can be easily missed heading towards Silver Creek. The trail has been recently flagged to make the traverse easier. Reaching the canyon wall, the trail descends under one oak, then one must climb over another. Upon reaching Silver Creek, a portion of the trail has been washed away for three feet. One must climb about three feet then traverse the slope to continue along the trail.

From Silver Creek to the Rocky Outcropping the trail is in great shape. The SLO Trail volunteers have rebuilt this section of trail. At the Rocky Outcropping, we stopped for a leisurely lunch. We were treated to great views and several shooting stars in the open field.

After lunch, Chuck and I headed up the

Cruickshank Trail to survey the downed tree section. It takes about 25-30 minutes to reach the downed tree section from the Rocky Outcropping. At this point we started to count the number of trees across the trail. We found that our previous estimates were wrong, and there are about 35 trees left to be removed. Five or six are definite removal candidates and are from one to three feet in diameter. Most of the others can be stepped over. There is one major detour where one has to climb up 20 to 30 feet to get around the deadfall. It took us about 15 minutes to cover this traverse, the ¼ mile stretch of trail reaching our stopping point from our last work party in October from Lion Den. Chuck and I then turned around, heading back to the Rocky Outcropping to meet Darlene and Holly.

All in all we had a great trip and it is well worth the effort to see this beautiful canyon. There were many flowers, including Milk Maids, Shooting Stars, Star Lilies, Hounds Tongue, Currant, and Gooseberry Fuchsia, with many other flowers soon to be blooming. As with all trails there were a few ticks and some poison oak. The trail is in good shape and very pleasant to travel as compared to other Big Sur Trails.

Trail conditions are classified as follows:

Trailhead to Cruickshank Camp, Clear Cruickshank to Silver Camp, Clear, some poison oak
Silver Camp to Rocky Outcropping, Clear, one tree to climb over, and small washout at Silver Creek.
Rocky Outcropping up 25 minutes, (1 mile or so), Clear some encroaching brush and Poison Oak.
Tree Section, ¼ mile long, 35 or so trees to traverse, and some Poison oak. Takes about 15 minutes
From there to Lion Den, Clear, some encroaching brush and poison oak.

Sierra Club California Convention Coming in June

The 2003 Sierra Club California Convention will be held on Saturday and Sunday, June 7 and 8, at Camp Arroyo near Livermore, Julia Bott, Chair of Sierra Club California, announced.

Workshops will begin on Saturday morning, and there will be outings and conservation trips on Sunday. Further details on the program will be forthcoming. Chapters and Regional Conservation Committees appoint delegates to the Convention, and if you are interested in serving as a delegate, contact the Chapter office. But the Convention also is open to non-delegate members of the Club.

The cost of admission is \$35 per person, which includes sleeping accommodations and three meals—lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. The Club is paying for a portion of the set price charged by Camp Arroyo, reducing the cost to \$35 for each participant.

Registration forms and other details are expected to be available shortly. Advance reservations are required. Lori Ives, the event's registrar, can be contacted at <ivesico@earthlink.net>.

The camp is located about 45 minutes from Highway 5. Oakland has the closest airport, also approximately 45 minutes away from the camp.

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Coastal Commission Meeting

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framework, which allows development of the property, while major environmental groups have reserved judgment until the details of the very general framework are revealed.

Tarren Collins, Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, told the Commission that the "county is the poster child for why we need the Legislature to require enactment of the LCP recommendations, which are necessary to bring it into compliance with the Coastal Act." The lack of a LCP that reflects today's land uses and needs simply "endangers resources, and once destroyed, they can never be replaced."

Her strong words were echoed by Mark Massara, coastal program manager of the Sierra Club; Doug Buckmaster of the SLO Coast Alliance, a consortium of 32 environmental organizations with over 22,000 supporters, and Friends of the RanchLand; Kat McConnell of the California Coastal Protection Network; Eric Greening of Life on Planet Earth, the Environmental Defense Center and others.

In addition, Rhonda Vigil of the San Luis Obispo County Chumash Council told the Commission that the enactment of the recommendations are essential to provide a much-needed greater level of protection for Native American resources in many parts of the county. "The county is not protecting Native American resources," she said.

Buckmaster said of the Commission's 165 recommendations, the county agreed to consider just 87 for approval but refuses to discuss the other 78. Of the 87, only 33 have been processed, but even those have been watered down by, for example, substituting "should" instead of "shall" and omitting any deadlines for implementation. The staff report said the county's responses "fall short of addressing the primary intent of the Commission's recommendations."

In preparation for the periodical review of the LCP, the Commission agreed to provide the county with about \$220,000 to pay for staff work to process the recommendations in a phased-in approach. Under the Coastal Act, the county was given one year to comply, and the results are contained in the Phase One report, which the Commission had under review. But the county has only spent about half of the \$220,000, the staff said. Buckmaster said that money is "all gone with virtually nothing to show for it."

The Commission had asked that the money be used for addressing recommendations in six priority areas: new development and public service issues in Cambria, Environmentally

Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) identification and protections, post-construction runoff controls, agricultural recommendations on lot-line adjustments and non-agricultural development, scenic and critical viewsheds and improving implementation procedures. But, the report said, the county did not address most of these higher priority recommendations. "Thus, many of the more important recommendations were specifically not included in the Phase One response of the county."

For example, the Commission had recommended that in the LCP, the county "incorporate new standards and review procedures to implement ESHA and viewshed protection consistent with Coastal Act Section 30010." These changes are very important because under the current LCP, the county only recognizes ESHAs that are shown on maps in the plan, as opposed to what is found to exist at the time development is proposed. It means that endangered species habitat or wetlands that were not included in the maps, now 20 years old, are not currently protected. The staff report said the county had "no response" to this recommendation.

Buckmaster said the SLO Coast Alliance, of which the Chapter is a member and Collins is Co-Chair with Pam Marshall Heatherington of the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo County, urged the Commission "to make a full report to the Legislature" reflecting the county's "deliberate non-compliance with the Coastal Act," notify the Legislature "of the need to require this county to stop issuing all permits in the Coastal Zone" until the LCP is updated and ask conservancies that have contributed to the purchase of open space in the county "to step in and help save properties from poor planning and worse political decisions."

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Marine Sanctuary Update

A citizens committee studying marine sanctuary status for the San Luis Obispo County coastline has voted to include a Santa Lucia Chapter representative in its membership, among five persons added to the group. Leslie Krinsk, who serves on the Chapter's Conservation Committee and was nominated by the Executive Committee, was selected as a member at large to serve on what is now called the Marine Interests Group Working Committee after Chapter Chair Tarren Collins wrote a letter supporting her appointment on behalf of the 2,000-member Chapter.

Krinsk, a local resident, "would add a dimension which is not now represented and which would prove invaluable to (Working) Committee operations," Collins wrote. "Based on her background as a senior attorney for the California Air Resources Board, she can contribute her inside knowledge of the workings of governmental agencies at all levels and familiarity with their regulations as well as her governmental contacts, her experience, and her analytical ability."

Collins also noted that "her link to the Sierra Club can bring to bear the full weight of its support for the Committee's recommendations." In her letter, Collins said the Chapter "supports the Working Committee and shares its goals of protection and enhancement of marine resources in our county. We are favorably impressed with the breadth of marine interests represented on the Committee."

Ross Pepper, the Chapter's Program Chair who also was nominated by the Executive Committee, will attend meetings when Krinsk is unable to. Shoosh Crotzer, a Sierra Club member who helped spearhead efforts to study the sanctuary issue, is expected to serve in a support capacity to the Working Committee.

Also voted as new members of the Working Committee on Feb. 20 were David L. Sears, retired California state parks ranger, who served his last 15 years in this county; Dave Rymal, representing sportfishers who has been a fishing boat skipper since 1978 and on the Central Coast since 1989, and Steve Moore, who owns a sportfishing and whale watching outfit in Avila Beach. Bob Hather, a member of the Central Coast Fisheries Conservation Coalition, was added on the recommendation of Supervisor Katcho Achadjian but was not voted on. The additions bring to 23 the number of Working Committee members, including five exofficio members representing elected government officials.

At the first meeting of the 23-member group on Feb. 27, the

Committee embarked on a discussion of its goals for the future of marine resources, and each member submitted individual preferences. From that exercise emerged what seemed to be a clear consensus for a cleaner and healthier ocean, protection of its marine life and the need for research findings on the condition of these resources. For example, Ron Massengill, a member of both the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and the Working Committee, said the group should "learn the status of the resources and then determine what is needed to help them."

There was no discussion of the means of achieving such goals, such as extension of the Monterey Bay sanctuary south to include the San Luis Obispo County coastline, which was the motivating force behind creation of the Committee. That issue is expected to be taken up later after the Committee gets a clear picture of what it feels needs to be done, if anything. But Morro Bay Mayor Bill Yates said there already are too many regulations on use of marine resources, such as its fish stocks. "It is out of hand, out of control," he said, "and I would hope there are no more regulations." Hugh Thomas, representing commercial fishing interests from Port San Luis, called for "no further restrictions on public access to the ocean."



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NRC Meeting

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meeting or shorten the meeting time. You must e-mail all three of the addressees below or fax or write both addressees by March 14 in order to be allowed to speak. You also are requested to specify the date and time (afternoon or evening) you would like to speak.

E-mails should be sent to hearingdocket@nrc.gov, pah@nrc.gov, and gpb@nrc.gov. Faxes should be sent to two numbers: (301) 415-1101 and (301) 415-5599. Written requests should go to:

Office of the Secretary
Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff
U.S. NRC
Washington, DC 20555-0001
-and-
Atomic Safety & Licensing Board
Mail Stop T-3F23
U. S. NRC
Washington, DC 20555-0001.

The Chapter is co-intervener with Mothers for Peace in the regulatory review of PG&E's plans for the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant, and costs of intervention are very high. Both the Chapter and Mothers for Peace badly need any amount of financial support you can give for this effort. Checks should be written to Mothers for Peace or to the Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club.

The Executive Committee's recommendations, which raise important questions that in many cases require answers from the NRC and other regulatory agencies, follow (additional background and supporting material for the recommendations are available at the Chapter's web site, <http://santalucia.sierraclub.org/index/index.html>):

1. What are the provisions for safeguarding the liquid storage pools from overhead attack? Any shortcomings must be rectified immediately.
2. After bankruptcy, will PG&E finance the mitigation measures already adopted to compensate for the adverse effects of the cooling water discharge on marine life, as well as new mitigation and safety measures that might be required for the proposed project? No decisions on PG&E's applications to the NRC and to SLO County can reasonably be made until the financial terms of PG&E's bankruptcy application have been settled.
3. What are the regulatory and jurisdictional implications of the bankruptcy settlement? These should be specified clearly before any action is taken on the two PG&E applications.

4. How can the mandate and composition of the Diablo Canyon Independent Safety Committee be restructured to include greater public involvement and more effective dissemination of information to the public? Improvements are needed.
5. Has a risk analysis been performed that treats terrorist attacks, earthquakes, accidents, and other incidents that could breach plant security and have catastrophic consequences? If so, the results should be made available to the public. If not, such an analysis should be undertaken by a highly qualified panel whose members have no connection with the nuclear industry or the governmental regulatory apparatus.
6. Has the applicant made a comparative evaluation of the disadvantages and advantages of other means for handling the high level waste? Such an analysis is essential.
7. Will all feasible alternative methods for electricity production and demand reduction be fully evaluated and compared point by point to the applicant's proposal?
8. If no method of high level waste handling is determined to involve socially acceptable risks, should a moratorium not be called on electricity production at Diablo until a satisfactory solution is found? Operations at Diablo should not continue after the existing liquid storage space is used up in 2006 unless a safe storage option is found by that time.

DANIEL L. HAWTHORNE, Ph.D

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Chapter Wants More Details before Supporting Hearst Ranch Agreement

The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club and the SLO Coast Alliance by unanimous votes of their respective boards said they will wait and review details of the entire conservation package for the Hearst Ranch before passing judgment on a conservation option agreement signed on Feb. 19 by the American Land Conservancy and the Hearst Corporation.

The signing provided no new details on the updated "conservation framework" that was offered last December by the Hearst Corporation, which was very broad and itself provided very few specifics on how the Ranch would be developed. Most of those details will probably not be forthcoming until the Conservancy and Hearst have discussions with funding agencies.

The Chapter and the SLO Coast Alliance, composed of 32 organizations representing over 12,000 members, made these points clear in a joint statement, which said:

"The Hearst Ranch and its 83,000 acres of ocean frontage, mountains, forests, streams, lagoons, rare plants and threatened animal species is singular as one of our country's rare jewels. Our goal at the SLO Coast Alliance is to protect and preserve this majestic land for all generations in perpetuity. "We take extremely seriously our role as guardians of the land and will work with our 32 environmental-member group base to ensure that the best possible conservation package (easement and/or fee title acquisition) is achieved for the Ranch.

"To that end our team of experts will carefully review all terms in the easement and entire conservation package. It would be premature to pass judgment on the signing of the option agreement by ALC (American Land Conservancy) without first analyzing all of the details of the conservation package. Along with environmental and cultural resources on the Ranch, we will be looking at availability of water, impacts to surrounding communities and because public money will be used toward the purchase price, we will look at the value of the property and the benefits the public receives. "It would be premature to pass judgment on the signing of the option agreement by ALC without first analyzing all of the details of the conservation package."

The statement was signed by Tarren Collins, Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter, and Pam Marshall Heatherington, Executive Director of the Environmental Center of San Luis

Obispo County (ECOSLO), who are Co-Chairs of the SLO Coast Alliance.

"Steven Hearst is quoted in the Tribune saying what we have been saying all along—that many details have yet to be revealed to the public," Collins said. "It would be premature to pass judgment on the signing of the option agreement by ALC without first analyzing all of the details of the conservation package. They haven't revealed the very details we need to know to determine if it will be TRUE conservation."

The Los Angeles Times reported that the option gives the ALC a year to come up with \$100 million or more it will cost to permanently restrict development on the 128-square-mile ranch and ensure access of 18 miles of beach to the public. However, there has been no official estimate of the amount that an acceptable conservation package will ultimately cost.

Susan Jordan, director of the California Coastal Protection Network, was quoted in the Times as saying that although signing something "is a step in the right direction," the agreement is still too vague for her comfort. She said that signing the deal without an appraisal is like "buying a house and not knowing what you are paying." That is why the Santa Lucia Chapter and the SLO Coast Alliance believe it is essential that the details of any agreement be clarified and understood before environmental groups support it.

Kara Blakeslee, project manager of the conservancy, said negotiations are continuing on a variety of issues, including Hearst family desires to build as many as 27 homes on the ranch. She said it is not certain where they would be located. The Hearst Corporation also wants to erect a resort hotel in Old San Simeon.

Under the conservation option agreement, the Hearst Corporation would retain ownership of some or all of the ranch but would give up the rights to develop it for either residential or commercial use. The Hearsts would have to keep the land in agriculture, but the type of agriculture would be controlled by the final agreement. "The devil is in details like those," Collins emphasized.

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San Antonio Lake Eagle Outing

by Jack Beigle

I enjoy all of our canoe/kayak outings, but our trip to San Antonio Lake to see the eagles was truly outstanding. The day was cool with a light wind. We launched 17 boats and paddled along the north shore checking for birds. We spotted a few hawks but no eagles. Then, right in front of our group two Western Grebes gave us a demonstration of their courting display called rushing. The two birds were about four feet apart in the water and facing the same direction. They opened their wings about halfway, pointed their heads and long necks straight up, and then ran, full speed, parallel to each other on the surface of the water for about 25 feet. It was exciting to watch.

As we shore looking for a Golden Eagle at the feathers out of a large semicircle of enough to not make mature bird and the the mantle of feathers with a rich golden it was given the name piece of driftwood



approached the south good lunch spot we saw shoreline plucking recent kill. We made a boats off shore far the eagle fly off. It was a bright sunlight made around its head glow color. We could see how Golden Eagle. On a about five feet away an immature was constantly calling at the top of its voice. I am sure that it was calling, "Feed me! Feed me! Feed me!" When mother was finished she walked off, and the immature quickly flew over and got a few bites before mother decided that it was time to go.

After lunch we saw another Golden sitting on a broken tree trunk. As we were watching, a Bald Eagle flew in and bumped the Golden off of his perch. The Bald Eagle did not land on the vacated perch but instead circled and flew up to the top of the ridge and landed right on top of another Bald Eagle that was sitting in that tree. The lady in the boat next to mine said, "Did you see what I saw?" I said, "Yes. It isn't very often that you can see two Bald Eagles mating."

We saw two additional Bald Eagles as we paddled back to the cove to take out. The second one had seen a fish close to the surface. He made a couple of passes before grasping it and carrying it to shore for his afternoon snack.

It was a great group, a great day, and several great bird sightings. It all added up to a great outing. Check our outing schedule and join us on the water.

Conservation Committee Column

by Pete Wagner

Chair, Conservation Committee

A new Regional Water Quality Control Board staff report proposes allowing PG&E to continue destroying marine life by using ocean water for cooling the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant. As the staff recommended two years ago, PG&E would be required to compensate for the loss of marine life with a conservation easement on land along that section of the coast and cash.

Readers will recall that PG&E has been negotiating with the board on requirements for renewal of its NPDES permit to use once-through cooling at the plant. A reading of the latest board staff report, just completed, shows that almost no changes to a two-year-old proposal to mitigate damage to marine life caused by the cooling system. The proposal does not directly remediate the loss of entrained (carried into the plant and presumably killed) organisms and the damage to the aquatic environment at the outfall, but would trade these losses for a 5.7-mile coastal easement and \$4 million in cash, most of which would be used for projects still to be identified.

While the Conservation Committee has not yet taken a position, we are likely to object on three grounds: the failure to use dry cooling, which would completely eliminate all damage to marine life; the mismatch between the causes of environmental damage and the mitigating measures, and an escape clause that frees PG&E from the terms of the agreement if new actions are imposed by future environmental regulations.

A board hearing is scheduled for March 21 at its offices in San Luis Obispo. Although it will be too late for written comments by the time this issue of the Lucian reaches the membership, members are urged to attend and speak up. The entire file on the Diablo plant cooling issue can be found at California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region Internet Address: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb3>.

The Committee has been asked to examine a California Department of Parks and Recreation proposal for tree removal at Morro Bay State Park as part of a scheme to restore the campground to its original state. We have not yet had time to reach any conclusions on this question. A public meeting on the proposed plan had been scheduled by the Morro Bay City Council at the Morro Bay Vets Hall on March 10. The proposal will also have to go before the California Coastal Commission, which will give a second opportunity for public comment.

Cal French has been following developments at Carrizo Plains. An advisory committee formed last December was due to meet on March 8. Committee members are Michael Ryan, Creston; Dale Kuhnle, Santa Margarita; Neil Havlik, San Luis Obispo; Robert Binnewies, Arroyo Grande; Kirk Brettschneider, Taft, Raymond Watson, Ellen Cypher and Bill Vanherweg, Bakersfield, and Michael Khus-Zarate, Fresno. Cal reports that the management plan must include four features:

1. Any grazing on the Carrizo Plain National Monument must be done at the discretion of U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and then only as part of a research project that is reviewed by an independent scientific panel comprised in part by botanists and zoologists
2. All roadless areas of suitable size need to be inventoried by the BLM and recommended a Wilderness Study Areas if they meet the criteria established in National Environmental Protection Act.
3. All fencing needs to be modified or removed so that pronghorn antelope can move freely about the monument.
4. No visitor facilities requiring the payment of fees should be constructed. Interested members should contact Cal at ccfrench@tcsn.net.

The Conservation Committee has a new volunteer: Pam Marshall Heatherington, executive director of the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo County, has offered to undertake a study of desalination and report to our committee.

Chapter Supports Iraq Inspections

by Pete Wagner

Chair, Conservation Committee

The Executive Committee of the Santa Lucia Chapter has adopted a resolution opposing "unilateral armed intervention by the United States" in Iraq and instead supports reliance on "a greatly intensified inspection" program to assure Iraqi disarmament. Although it "is essential to protect against the threat of offensive military action by the present Iraqi government," the resolution said "we believe the United States should not intervene militarily unless it has been unequivocally proved that Iraq has continued a weapons buildup in violation of disarmament actions required by the UN (United Nations), and then only with UN support."

The Bush administration's declared intent to invade Iraq with or without UN sanction has provoked widespread debate within the Sierra Club. The Santa Lucia Chapter was one of several chapters that objected vigorously to a national Sierra Club position statement issued last year on grounds that it was too weak and its language might be construed as tacit acceptance of a unilateral invasion, irrespective of any UN action.

The national Sierra Club statement said: "The Sierra Club is concerned about the global dangers presented by possible Iraqi aggression and about the dire environmental consequences of war. The Sierra Club supports disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. The Sierra Club commends the US and the other United Nations Security Council members for their unanimous resolution calling for the restoration of the disarmament inspections process as a means of achieving a peaceful resolution of the Iraq issue, and it urges all nations to work through the UN to achieve this objective. The process of inspection should go forward immediately with, and pursuant to, international consensus as expressed in the UN Security Council resolution."

"Even if the UN succeeds, however, this process will be incomplete if the US and other nations fail to recognize that their continued dependence on oil and other fossil fuels is, itself, a significant de-stabilizing influence in international affairs. The Sierra Club therefore, reaffirms its urgent call for the US to move to a clean energy economy, greater efficiency, and use of renewable sources of energy."

Afterward, the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter passed a resolution stating, "It is incumbent upon environmental organizations to work to prevent the massive environmental destruction intrinsic to war. The San Francisco Bay Chapter urges the Sierra Club Board of Directors to oppose unequivocally war on Iraq."

"The Chapter also urges the Board to 1) change its November resolutions consistent with the foregoing, 2) formally endorse the January 18th mobilization to be held in San Francisco and elsewhere against war on Iraq, and 3) encourage Club members to participate in the mobilization and similar activities." Vigorous objections also were raised by Utah's Glen Canyon subchapter, the Loma Prieta chapter and several others.

In December, the national office seemed to clarify its position by joining a new coalition called Win Without War, which "represents millions of Americans and seeks to prevent bloodshed and loss of life on all sides by slowing the Bush Administration's apparent rush to war so that U.N. Arms Inspectors have time to carry out their mission."

Other members of the coalition include the National Council of Churches (NCC), the NAACP, National Organization for Women (NOW), Working Assets and MoveOn.org. Win Without War was founded on the conviction that security can be achieved through aggressive inspections, sustained monitoring and the dismantling of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Its members pledge to broaden opposition to Bush Administration calls for a unilateral invasion of Iraq.

After reviewing the controversy, the Santa Lucia Executive Committee adopted the following resolution at its February meeting: **"The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club shares the concern about the global dangers and potentially devastating environmental consequences of war with Iraq, and we believe it is essential to protect against the threat of offensive military action by the present Iraqi government. We believe that the situation can be kept under control short of unilateral armed intervention by the United States by means of a greatly intensified inspection program which includes a large increase in the number of inspectors, an indefinite period for inspections, uninterrupted overflights, and whatever methods short of armed invasion are necessary to assure Iraqi compliance with specified disarmament measures. We believe the United States should not intervene militarily unless it has been unequivocally proved that Iraq has continued a weapons buildup in violation of disarmament actions required by the UN, and then only with UN support."**

Classifieds

Classified ads are \$10 and are limited to 20 words. They are due by the 1st of the month of publication (**next deadline is April 1st**). Please submit your ad and payment to:

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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

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- Santa Lucian Distribution Manager
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If you are interested in any of the openings, please contact Jack at jmccurdy@slonet.org. If you are interested in the office manager or office staff positions, please contact Ross Pepper at rosspepper@charter.net

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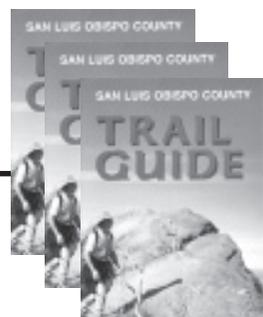
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Outings and Activities Calendar

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.

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.-Sun., Mar. 22-23, Panamint Valley vs. Briggs Gold Mine

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

Thurs., Apr. 3, 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. We meet at various locations throughout San Luis Obispo County. For more information call Steve at 543-6189.

Tentative: Sat., Apr. 12, 7:45 a.m., Machesna Mountain Hike. Come take a 12-15 mile, with 3,000 ft. elevation gain, hike through the Machesna Wilderness. Starting from American Canyon Campground, we will climb 1,500 ft. to an open meadow and pond below Machesna Mountain itself. After lunch we will climb another several hundred feet to a ridge overlooking the Carrizo Plain. We will then start our descent to a lush green valley before climbing up to our final rest stop. We should have plenty of wildflowers and pleasant weather. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes, and plan to be out all day. Most of us will go to the Pozo

Saloon after. Meet at Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. This is not a beginner's hike. Limit 20 people. For details, reservations, and meeting place call Gary (473-3694)(5F)

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

Wed., Apr. 16, 5:30 p.m., Mystery Hike Revealed Bishop Peak. Our traditional weekday hikes continue with a hike up Bishop. This is a 4.5-mile evening hike with 1,200 ft. elevation gain. Bring water and dress for the weather. Meet at the Patricia Drive Trailhead. Details call Chuck (927-3769)(2C)

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

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



Photo by Joaquin Palting

Sun., May 4, 7:00 a.m., Santa Lucia Trail to Juniperro Serra Peak. This is an opportunity to explore the eastern part of the Ventana Wilderness and to hike to the highest point in the northern Los Padres National Forest at 5,862 ft. The hike is a strenuous 12 miles with 3,800 ft. of elevation gain. The landscape is beautiful, beginning in a meadow with distinctive outcroppings, traveling through oak woodlands, and culminating in a pine forest before reaching the summit. We will be near the proposed new wilderness area of Bear Canyon. There is a possibility of ticks and poison oak. The weather can be unpredictable and vary from extremely warm to cool. Last year in April we were walking through snow on the last pitch to the summit. Bring plenty of water, a lunch, good hiking shoes, and dress in layers. Meet at the north end of the Walmart parking lot in Paso Robles near the McDonald's. It is a 1-1/2 hour drive to the trailhead so a carpool is recommended. We will be going through Fort Hunter Liggett so drivers need a license, proof of insurance, and registration. The hike will be in an Adventure Pass area which means there may be a fee. If you are interested you may camp at Indians Campground the night before or after the hike. If you are coming from north of Paso Robles, please call to arrange a meeting place. Please confirm with the leader if you are going and please, no beginners. For details and confirmation, call Chuck (927-3769) (5F)

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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listing of activities.**