



SIERRA
CLUB

- 40 Years on the SLO Coast -
Santa Lucia Chapter
1968-2008

March 2008
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General Meeting

"Return to Wilderness"

An evening with the
Ventana Wilderness
Alliance

7 p.m., Friday, March 28

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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

For the Dunes

Why We Sue II

Sierra Club legal action to remove cars from County land would place 584 acres off limits to vehicles.

On February 21, a month after filing suit to protect the Cayucos Viewshed, ("Why We Sue," February *Santa Lucian*), the Santa Lucia Chapter filed a notice of intent to sue the California Department of Parks and Recreation for allowing vehicles on land in the Oceano Dunes where vehicles should not be.

State Parks' General Development Plan for the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA) is inconsistent with San Luis Obispo County's Local Coastal Program. The LCP designates the County-owned "La Grande" tract in the Oceano Dunes as a "natural buffer area." But the ODSVRA General Plan opened the La Grande tract to off-road vehicle recreation.

The Local Coastal Program is the basic planning tool used to carry out the partnership between the State and local government as stewards of California's spectacular 1,100 mile coastline. LCPs are the ground rules for land use in the coastal zone portions of the 73 cities and counties along the coast.

"In filing suit, we are acting on behalf of our coastal dunes, one of the rarest and most fragile ecosystems in the world, of greater ecological value than Yosemite Valley," said Karen Merriam, Chair of the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter in San Luis Obispo. "For 25 years, the County's Local Coastal Plan has said that cars are not allowed on the land the County leases to State Parks. For 25 years, State Parks has ignored its responsibility to operate the Park in a manner consistent with the LCP. We are asking the court to compel the County and the State to abide by the Local Coastal Plan."

In January 2007, the Sierra Club supported a Planning Commission appeal of the proposed sale of the La Grande Tract to State Parks. The Chapter pointed out, and the County agreed, that the sale would not be in conformance with the county's General Plan due to conflict with the Local Coastal Plan.

We simply pointed to the provisions of the County's Local Coastal Plan as certified by the Coastal Commission in 1983. Throughout the LCP, as incorporated in the County's Coastal Plan Policies, the county land in the ODSVRA was repeatedly designated as buffer



Mike Baird, bairdphoto.com

between the dunes preserve and the riding area. But twenty-five years later, the ORVs are still riding in the buffer area.

The County upheld the appeal on the basis of the Sierra Club's argument, but was sued for doing so by the off-road vehicle lobby and has since been in closed-door negotiations with State Parks over the proposed sale of the

property. The county property constitutes about one-third of the total area of the ODSVRA.

State Parks wants to buy the land to secure insofar as possible a claimed right to run vehicles across that property forever. We want a judge to enforce the terms that were laid down 25 years

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Your Sierra Club Ballot is in the Mail

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive in the mail (or by Internet if you chose the electronic delivery option) your national Sierra Club ballot. Visit the Club's election website: www.sierraclub.org/bod/2008election for links to additional information about candidates, and their views on a variety of issues facing the Club and the environment.

The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club recommends a vote for:

Lane Boldman
Jeremy Doochin
Jim Dougherty
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General Meeting

Santa Lucian • Mar. 2008

Meet the Ventana Wilderness Alliance

The Ventana Wilderness Alliance was founded ten years ago by people who share an affinity and respect for the unique and sacred place that is the northern Santa Lucia mountain range, and who want to see to it that what little wilderness is left in our area remains as such in perpetuity.

This evening, the Alliance presents "Return to Wilderness," documenting the VWA's Willow Creek Restoration Project.

7 p.m., Friday, March 28
 St. Stephens Episcopal Church
 1334 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo
 - Pismo Street entrance
 parking lot off Pismo



It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

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Outings, events, and more!

Heard the One About the Neanderthal Environmentalist?

If you haven't heard it yet, you will eventually. It turned up in *New Times* the week of January 10 in a letter to the editor from frequent contributor Norman Mehl, and was quickly reprinted in a blog dedicated to arguments over evolution. It's just a matter of time before it starts coursing through the main arteries of the worldwide web, as it carries a message irresistible to a certain constituency.

The story goes like this: A University of Wisconsin researcher has determined that Neanderthals died out because they had a gene for overly cautious behavior — they conserved their resources and had minimal impact on their environment, exercising a prehistoric precautionary principle. As a result, they went extinct, unlike go-getting, innovative Cro-Magnons, who carried a gene that impelled them to go questing aggressively outward in the name of progress and are thus responsible for creating civilization.

In citing this startling scientific discovery, Mr. Mehl did not fail to hammer home the none-too-subtle message it contained: Environmentalism is the result of stray Neanderthal genes that crept into the noble Cro-Magnon lineage. Fearing progress and change — which is "necessary for the adoption of our growing population and the energy requirement we have built into transportation and the industrial world" — could drive us to extinction, too, if we listen to Neanderthal-descended environmentalists.

The most immediate problem with this theory: There is no such study and no such University of Wisconsin researcher. The story is a fabrication lifted from a Michael Crichton novel. Woe unto anyone who makes an unsupported assertion of fact that catches the eye of David Broadwater, the Atascadero public watchdog with the bite pressure of a junkyard car crusher, who pointed out to the editorial gate-keepers at *New Times* that their fact-checker seemed to be snoozing when Mr. Mehl's letter came in. This prompted an observation by The Shredder in his January 16 column that "if I were Norm (and I promise that I'm not), I'd refrain from citing any future scientific breakthroughs made by, say, Dr. Bunsen Honeydew. Muppets aren't the most reliable data gatherers."

Subsequently, Mr. Mehl's prolific letter-writing career in the pages of *New Times* — in which he often inveighed against environmentalists, promoted nuclear power, and opined that he enjoyed his critics' rebuttals as they reminded him of "freshman debating class" — appears to have come to an

abrupt halt. Ave atque vale.

The larger problem is the impulse to believe things like this, which stems from a tragic definition of progress.

While Crichton conjured a deliberate fantasy that a credulous reader mistook for reality, both men operated from a desire to believe; the notion that such a story could be true — *should* be true — because it supports their preferred reality.

That impulse comes from the cornucopian instinct. Its proponents still cannot grasp what was not apparent when the industrial era began but is now in full view: We have been guests at a 250-year party that we thought would never end, repeatedly sending the tab into the future; runners in an accelerating sprint toward the edge of a cliff that we didn't see when we started and then believed could never be reached. Every headline, every new study confirming the one before, every updated dataset, now brings the news: We're there. The scientists who predicted we would get there in another twenty years or so are horrified to see their predictions of accelerating loss being met and exceeded right now.

For Michael Crichton and his more credulous readership, this can't be true. No matter how high the mountain of evidence, how loud the warning sirens, George Will's columns will continue to decry any serious attempt to address climate change as a scheme to derail the engine of progress on which our economic miracle is based. Cal Thomas will reveal the plot to force us all to live in small houses and drive tiny cars. All will likely go on doing so for as long as they are physically able. They will do so — ironically, considering Crichton's imaginary study showing the "environmental gene" to be the source of fear of change and progress — due to their fear of change and progress; a fear rooted in the perception of the environmental ethic as the implacable foe of economic well being. That fear has been carefully fostered by the curators of the corporate ethic, who have long defined economic health as anything that makes them money regardless of the disasters visited thereby upon local economies, democratic self-determination and the environment.

In their fear, the Crichton contingent accuses environmentalists of wanting to kill off economic growth. But in reality, the model of what economic health should be — currently the post-1945 corporate model — is what's killing us. That model created industrial farming, is shutting down small farmers, destroying healthy soils and killing off rivers

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SANTA LUCIAN

Andrew Christie
 EDITOR/LAYOUT sierraclub8@gmail.com

Karen Merriam
 Cleve Nash
 Jack McCurdy
 EDITORIAL BOARD

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send to:

Editor, Santa Lucian
 c/o Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club
 P.O. Box 15755
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.
 sierraclub8@gmail.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

2007 Executive Committee

Karen Merriam
 CHAIR karen@karenmerriam.com
 Jack Morrow
 VICE CHAIR jlmorrow@earthlink.net
 Cal French
 MEMBER ccfrench@tcsn.net
 John Ashbaugh
 MEMBER jbashbaugh@charter.net
 Steven Marx
 TREASURER
 Cleve Nash
 MEMBER ccnash@charter.net

Judith Bernstein
 MEMBER

Cal French
 COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS

The Executive Committee meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 3:30 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 547-B Marsh St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

Committee Chairs

Political
 Chuck Tribbey
Conservation
 Sue Harvey lfsusan@tcsn.net
Membership
 Cal French
Acting Program Chair
 Letty French lmfrench@tcsn.net
Litigation
 Andy Greensfelder
Nuclear Power Task Force
 Rochelle Becker beckers@thegrid.net
Desal Task Force
 Jack Morrow

Other Leaders

Open Space
 Gary Felsman 805-473-3694
Calendar Sales
 Bonnie Walters 805-543-7051
Chapter History
 John Ashbaugh 805-541-6430

Activities

Outings
 Gary Felsman 805-473-3694
Canoe/Kayak
 open

Webmaster

Monica Tarzier mtarzier@sbcglobal.net

General Information

Santa Lucia Chapter
 P.O. Box 15755
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Chapter Director

Andrew Christie
 805-543-8717
 santa.lucia.chapter@sierraclub.org

Americorps Partners Development Coordinator

Ken Smokoska
 ksmokoska@hotmail.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Shaba Mohseni
 shaba.sierraclub8@gmail.com

Office hours Monday-Friday,
 11 a.m.- 5 p.m., 547-B Marsh
 Street, San Luis Obispo

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A Nation Focused

“Focus the Nation,” a national climate change educational symposium taking place simultaneously at more than 1,400 colleges and universities across the United States on January 31, was hosted locally by the Empower Poly Coalition of sustainability clubs and organizations. Thousands of educators and millions of students participated in the largest teach-in in American history.

At Cal Poly, students, faculty, staff and community members who care deeply about the future of our planet came together to learn about climate change solutions and to create a space for dialog and action. Presentations and activities covered a broad range of climate change solution topics.

Cal Poly’s Green Campus program and Facilities Services joined forces to “power down” for the duration -- roughly 500 kilowatts, enough to power 400 homes, were shed from all campus facilities to underscore the effect our energy consumption has on global climate change.

On February 22, the Sierra Club followed up with a volunteer convergence at Cal Poly’s University Union to initiate the next steps in our local “Cool Cities” climate protection program, including enrollment of the remaining four cities in the county who have not yet signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.



Empower Poly Coalition VP Nancy Cole. (The tattooed necklace reads “NO COAL.”)



Closing session: Local government roundtable



IN PERSON...

DIANE WILSON visits SLO!

Renowned Environmentalist, co-founder Code Pink

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(Private Home, SLO)
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Reservations: 805-704-1810

CONVERSATION & INSPIRATION...The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility invites you to meet Diane Wilson, the renowned activist, environmentalist and co-founder of Code Pink. A frequent speaker at Bioneers, and winner of the Blue Planet Award in Berlin in 2006, Ms. Wilson has been at the forefront of civil disobedience with her hunger strikes and other actions supporting the environment and opposing the war in Iraq. She is also the author of "An Unreasonable Woman: A True Story of Shrimpers, Politicos, Polluters and the Fight for Seadrift, Texas" (Chelsea Green Publishing, www.chelseagreen.com).

Ms. Wilson will discuss her newest book, Holy Roller, due out this fall, which details her upbringing in a strict Pentecostal family, and her newest work with the Texas Jail Project.

Evenings with Diane are always free-wheeling and lively. Copies of "An Unreasonable Woman" will be available for purchase and autographing.

All proceeds benefit Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility
www.a4nr.org

Meet the New Team

The Chapter is delighted to greet two new additions to our office team, Development Coordinator Ken Smokoska and Volunteer Coordinator Shaba Mohseni.

Working under Chapter Director Andrew Christie, Ken and Shaba will greatly strengthen our outreach and assist us in achieving strategic goals in fulfilling the Sierra Club’s mission. Both come to us through the Americorps program and are well known to many in our community.

As former interim chair of our Conservation Committee and chair of Sierra Club’s California’s Energy/Climate Change Committee, Ken has been the inspiration for and backbone of our Cool Cities/Smart Energy Solutions campaign in SLO County, and was instrumental in bringing together representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Home Builders Association, Cal Poly University, local banks, and seven other organizations in the coalition known as the Strategic Energy Alliance for Change (SEA Change). Ken has served as a liaison to many Sierra Club chapters, linking them together in their efforts to develop energy programs and providing much needed subject-matter expertise. Last year, Ken received the Agent of Change Award from the Em-

power Poly Coalition. This year, he assisted in the creation of a Sierra Student Coalition chapter at Cal Poly. He will develop infrastructure and resources for the Chapter through fundraising activities and events.

Shaba is helping to increase the capacity of the Santa Lucia Chapter to integrate our members into projects, events and campaigns, providing opportunities through membership mixers, informal gatherings and outings. Shaba’s skills at event promotion, production and management consulting have been deployed previously as project coordinator for the 2006 SLO County Coastal Cleanup Day and several ECO-SLO New Year’s Eve galas, and as a con-

sultant to such organizations as SLO Regional Rideshare, the SLO County Bicycle Coalition, AISEC and United Cerebral Palsy. As co-founder of Nimble Creative Events, she produces and promotes musical, athletic and seasonal events such as the annual San Luis Obispo Downtown Criterium Classic Cycling Festival.

“We are thrilled to have Ken and Shaba on board,” said Chapter Chair Karen Merriam. “We are very lucky to have individuals of their caliber in our community and available to serve our partnership with Americorps. Members should feel free to drop by any Wednesday afternoon, when their office hours most closely coincide, to express their interests and ideas in Chapter activities and campaigns.”



Buying Local Made Easy

You know, of course, that it’s a good thing to buy local. You know the reasons why: You get fresher food. Dollars and jobs stay here. You’re supporting a sustainable food supply, preserving unique and heirloom crop varieties that have been discarded by corporate industrial agriculture, and helping fend off the loss of open space and agriculture to development.

There’s now one more good reason: It’s really, really easy.

The Central Coast Grown project has put up a new website based on a free database built for farmers and ranchers to aid in the marketing their goods. The CCG website provides a searchable resource for consumers looking for local options for foods that they currently purchase from out-of-town providers.

If, say, you want apples, type it in, and you’ll get a list of not only every farmer in the county who grows apples, but when they’re in season, where to go to get them, directions, and more information about each ag operation.

To our knowledge, this is the only website in the country where farmers can list their produce free of charge. They are networked with other farmers and ranchers to form a comprehensive network of county growers. The commodities produced are then inserted

Caught in the Black Web

The Nipomo watershed is an environmental scandal

By Ralph Bishop

Black Drip Tubing: it was the darling of agriculture. It conserved water and hastened the delivery of chemical nutrients to crops. But its color foretold an ominous threat to the community of both man and nature. It only lasts one season and then its proper disposal potentially erodes the monetary bottom line.

Recycling would seem to be in order. But what happens if an individual finds it more expedient to simply rototill it into the soil, or burn it into the atmosphere on foggy pre-dawn mornings? Or one can always leave it on creek banks and wait for high water. Expand that attitude to storage and mixing of chemicals, inappropriate disposal of every imaginable type of human and automotive garbage and extruded human waste.

Nipomo has found out the hard way over the past seven years what all this means, having survived two floods. Where were the regulatory agencies of the government while millions of dollars of damage was being done?

While digesting his barbecue, our Supervisor was quoted as saying "the farmers are not the problem" in the flooding of the Mallagh Street neighborhood. Instead the mantra "urban trash" was chanted, blaming the victims of the flood for the flood. The fact that there are no urban areas above the Mallagh Street area made no difference. When the photographs were secured proving everything we said was true about the 2006 flood and given to the head of the Creek Committee, he chanted "Urban trash."

Daniel Diaz and I are hardly the individuals

one would expect to take up the sword (or in this case, the camera) in this battle. No one who knows us would consider us tree-huggers. This was, in our case, an exercise in personal spiritual indignation.

Daniel and I have recorded 260 hours of film and hundreds of photographs to prove that all we have said is true. We are continuously asking the question: How many millions of dollars of damage to the community and nature over how many years does it take for pernicious behavior to become criminal activity?

For the past seven years, we have been disappointed. Only recently have we been able to break through the County's firewall. Recently the head of the State Water Quality Board took a 2-mile creek walk with us. He was shocked by the degradation caused by the black tubing -- huge masses of rototilled black plastic "confetti" are being washed down the Santa Maria River in the direction of the West Main Beach. If one-hundredth of

the energy that was spent protecting the guilty was spent on upholding the legal mandate of the County's government, Nipomo creek would not be looking at a

silent spring. Our heartfelt thanks to the Sierra Club for their honest concern and assistance.



The goods: Daniel Diaz displays discarded drip tubing and the fused remains from the burning of a clump of tubing, retrieved from Nipomo Creek.

A Call to Action Nipomo Creek, the Santa Maria River, Oso Flaco Creek and Oso Flaco Lake need your help

by Jill Falcone

The County's southernmost watersheds urgently need your help. Water quality monitoring data conducted by the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) show that Nipomo Creek, the Santa Maria River, and Oso Flaco Creek and Lake are highly contaminated with toxic pollutants from agricultural and urban runoff. Because of this contamination, these waterbodies are listed as "impaired" on the Clean Water Act 303(d) list and the Central Coast Water Board is developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to improve water quality and restore beneficial uses. Nipomo Creek is listed as impaired for fecal coliform contamination; the Santa Maria River is listed as impaired for fecal coliform, nitrate, unionized ammonia, and chlorpyrifos, dieldrin, endrin, and DDT pesticide contamination; Oso Flaco Creek is listed as impaired for fecal coliform, nitrate and unionized ammonia contamination, and Oso Flaco Lake is listed as impaired for nitrate and dieldrin pesticide contamination. In addition to this toxic chemical stew, you will find large amounts of plastic agricultural drip tubing making its way into the ocean along with other trash and litter that comes from illegal dumping that occurs in these watersheds.

What can you do to help?

Learn more about the condition of these waterbodies and plans to improve water quality. You can access the TMDL progress reports on the Central Coast Water Board website at www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/TMDL/303dandTMDLprojects.htm and you can review the CCAMP water quality monitoring data at www.ccamp.org/. Learn more about the watershed management plans that have been developed for these watersheds and how they are being implemented.

Each of us can start to make a difference now by eliminating our use of synthetic fertilizers and toxic pesticides, by picking up livestock and pet wastes to keep it away from storm drains and out of creeks, by maintaining septic systems to ensure they function properly, and by ensuring that agricultural plastics and household wastes are recycled and trash properly disposed of to keep it out of the creeks and the ocean.

Join others in the community to find solutions to address the root causes of these problems and to get involved in volunteer activities to implement solutions. We need

volunteer educators and speakers, stream walk tour guides and monitors, community and creek clean-up organizers and workers, and watershed problem solvers of all trades. If you are interested in helping or would like more information, please call or e-mail Jill Falcone at 788-2767 or jfalcone@co.slo.ca.us

Bill Denneen/Friends of Oso Flaco Creek



Neanderthal

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and streams; the model that demands the mindless churn of trade for the sake of trade — simultaneously exporting 32,000 tons of green beans while importing 27,000 tons of green beans (FAO figures, 2002), hauling in two million tons of wild-caught fish to produce 870,000 tons of farmed salmon, writing off the externalized costs in energy drained and pollution emitted. It is the model of profligate waste and destruction. Steven Stoll, author of *The Great Delusion, underscores* the point in the March issue of *Harper's*: "Make the last 10,000 years equal to twenty-four hours, and we have been producing consumer goods and CO2 for only the last 36 minutes."

For centuries, local and regional economies have traded only for what can't be produced locally. Communities, states and nations have at least some degree of vested interest in the well being of their citizens and common property resources; absentee transnationals and global trade bureaucracies... not so much.

The nifty handbook *Alternatives to Economic Globalization* (IFG, Berrett-Koehler, 2002), in laying out ten principles for sustainability, notes that "Healthy, sustainable societies vest power in institutions that measure their performance by their contribution to the long-term well-being of people, community, and nature, and distribute

power equitably among all of society's stakeholders." That's progress.

Crichton, Will and their disciples cling fearfully to the global corporate model of economic health for a few, failing to distinguish it from a model of economic health for the many, which is also the model of environmental health.

So brace yourself for the blogospherization of a "University of Wisconsin study" proving that environmentalism killed the Neanderthals, spare a sigh for the cranky Mr. Crichton and the mischief he stirs up, and then return to the real world, where it's time for a change and where, increasingly and of necessity, and even for those who don't want to be, we are all environmentalists now.

Dunes

continued from page 1

ago. It's time to remove the off-road vehicles from this part of the dunes.

The Sierra Club previously sued State Parks in 2001 over its management of the habitat of threatened and endangered species at Oceano Dunes. In the settlement of that suit, the Club won \$500,000 in funding directed to additional protection and research of the Western snowy plover, and the closure of a half-mile of beach to provide expanded nesting habitat for the threatened species.

BIRD NEST TERRORIST TELLS ALL!

By Terry Lilley

"You are arresting me?"

I could only stare at the Pismo Beach police officer. How was it possible? I was sitting on the curb talking to friends four doors up the street from my Shell Beach house. "Officer, I am just trying to save these night heron nests from being cut out of the tree by this local tree trimming service," I said. "I have not violated any laws, and Davey Tree Trimming service is violating the federal Migratory Bird Act in my opinion by removing these nests from this city-owned tree. I just called you guys to come out and hold off the operation until Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife can respond to enforce the law."

The officer responded by saying he was going to arrest me as a terrorist.

Off I went to jail in handcuffs in my shorts, no shoes, stuffed into a police car for a trip to jail, where I had to borrow \$5,000 to pay an amazing \$50,000 bail -- more than double what I make in a year of biological consulting work. The bail bondsman said she had never seen bail set that high for this type of arrest in her 20-year career.

I was hit with multiple criminal charges. After eight months of going to court, all of those charges have now been dropped, except one minor probation violation, for which I paid a small fine. Now I am free to talk about one of the most bizarre cases to ever hit the SLO courts: A wildlife biologist turned into the first SLO-Co "terrorist," all in the name of saving a few birds' nests and for love of a night heron named Nellie.

This all started three years ago when I and my research partner Sue Sloan were walking down Morro Street at 6:30 a.m. with our coffee to say hello to the ocean and all our animal buddies. We have made this morning migration almost every day for several years. Both of us noticed a large bird on a neighbor's lawn and recognized it as a fledgling night heron. We stopped, as we had seen a number of babies from the Morro

Street rookery sitting on people's roof tops, fences and trees, but we had never seen any on the ground. As we watched, the baby heron grabbed a big, juicy worm and proceeded to walk over to a pond on the lawn and wash the worm off before she gobbled it down. There were four other baby night herons watching from a roof top but none of them seemed to be interested in eating worms, as their main food in our area is small tide pool creatures they feed on at night when the tide is low. Within six months, all of these beautiful babies would die of starvation except the one who ate worms.

Every day for a month or so we saw this same heron on the lawn eating worms that came to the surface after the sprinklers came on. We decided to buy a few night crawlers and see if the baby heron would eat them if we threw them out on the lawn. Sure enough! Within a few weeks we substituted small fish for worms and she ate those aggressively. We only fed her a small amount each morning so it would not interfere with her normal feeding. None of the other baby herons were interested in our hand outs.

We named her Nellie. Day after day for three years we have seen Nellie and given her a morning fish. We have seen her grow up, change colors, grow a long white tassel, mate, have three babies, and we even have developed our own language with her that she repeats with gusto every morning.

We have also seen her nesting trees cut down, her siblings die of starvation because their tide pool feeding areas are being destroyed and her bluff top feeding areas covered up by multi-million dollar homes. Out off 15 baby night herons that left the rookery on Morro Street three years ago, Nellie is the only one left alive.

In the summer of 2006, Bunyon Brothers Tree Service cut down a full grown healthy Monterey Pine tree on the bluffs in Shell Beach. This tree was



Pismo's most wanted: Lilley, Sloan and Nellie.

used by Nellie and the herons as one of their main trees for nesting and resting in during the day. After two years, the City of Pismo finally agreed that the tree removal was not done with the needed city approval but they were not going to do anything about it! We complained several times to DFG and they said it was not their issue and we must contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in L.A. We did that, and sent many e-mails and photos, but the Service said they were too far away to investigate. KSBY came out and did a good story on the illegal tree removal and Nellie showed up for her first TV interview.

Shortly after the pine tree was cut down, Forister Tree Service cut ten long-term night heron nests out of a tree on Morro Street. Night herons go back to the same nests every year, as it takes years for them to make a nest large enough for their babies. These colony nesting trees are protected under the Migratory Bird Act even if there are no eggs in the nests. We have a memorandum from the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service outlining this law and how it protects colony nesting birds. Again we called the Police, DFG and the USFWS. The police responded again and took a report. It was obvious that they were getting upset at the lack of response from the wildlife agencies.

The breeding night herons moved out of the tree when the trimmers showed up with saws blazing. They fled down the street to one of the last remaining trees with heron nests built the year before. The owner living near this tree squirted the herons and some of the nests out of the tree. This tree is on City property, and it is where I was arrested.

I was arrested because the police were tired of responding to these wildlife issues. In the police reports from the past few years, the Pismo Police asked

DFG and the USFWS to respond to our allegations of violations of the Migratory Bird Act. One of the officers told me that they were frustrated because they could not get any help with the issue. I was arrested to get rid of the problem of reporting the problem.

Last spring, the problem started all over again. On Boeker Street behind Alexes Restaurant, an apartment owner chopped down his trees to get rid of the heron that had moved over there from Morro Street. There were a few babies in the nests, and they fell out and wandered into traffic. We complained once again. The police showed up once again. Nothing was done once again.

I called Pismo Beach Mayor Mary Anne Reiss and complained. I said that in Morro Bay or SLO, no one would be able to get away with this type of wildlife abuse. She said that people need to make money.

The City of Pismo Beach is simply horrible when it comes to wildlife or coastal protection. They allow homes to be built right on the crumbling bluffs, trees to be removed illegally, illegal fireworks to scare off the birds, and if you wish to complain about it, you may be the next Shell Beach Terrorist!

The sad thing about this whole issue is not my arrest, it is that we are failing to tell Nellie's message and convince this city that wildlife is just as important as million-dollar homes, 4-wheel drives and Hummers. There are only a few of these magnificent birds left alive in the Shell Beach area, and they were here 10,000 years before the City of Pismo arrived and decided there is no room for them.

Please go to Nellie's web page to get more information and photos about her and her family at www.pbace.com/lilley. Thanks for hearing her message.

Conservation Element Update: Open House

The San Luis Obispo County Planning Department is inviting you to an open house to discuss the progress of the update of the Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan (COSE) and to advise the Department on issues that should be included in the updated document.

The importance of this document and this process to the future of San Luis Obispo cannot be overstated. The COSE will consolidate existing general plan elements that deal with such issues as water, biological resources, open space, energy and air quality into one comprehensive document.

There will be two opportunities to attend the open house:
Thursday, March 6 (3:00 p.m. – 8:30

p.m.), Paso Robles City Council Chambers.


Thursday, March 13 (3:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.) South County Regional Center (West Branch St; Arroyo Grande).

At the open houses, County Planning will seek your opinions on policies in four major issue areas:

1. Water Resources (Groundwater management, water conservation, water quality), biological resources (trees, wetlands, endangered species), air quality (greenhouse gas emissions, smart growth) and energy (transportation, alternative energy).

E-mail James Caruso at jcaruso@co.slo.ca.us if you have any questions.


Support our local chapter



We send out an appeal in March 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 your 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.



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Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Candidates’ criticisms of NAFTA are far-fetched,” editorial opinion of the *Washington Post*, printed in *The Tribune*, Dec. 4, 2007.

Summary: Democratic presidential candidates are unfairly denouncing the North American Free Trade Agreement to capitalize on voters’ “trade-related anxiety.” (All the responses below are from “Revisiting NAFTA: Still not working for North America’s workers,” Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper #173, Sept. 28, 2006.)



The impact of NAFTA seems to have been both larger and more positive in Mexico than in the United States. Mexico's gross domestic product, now more than \$875 billion, has more than quadrupled since 1987.

The *Post* is attaching seven years of pre-NAFTA boost (1987-93) to this stat and omitting to state, per the EPI, that Mexico's GDP, rebounding after the 1982 petro-dollar crisis and before NAFTA, declined again after NAFTA went into effect in 1994. Mexico's global trade deficit is growing despite its increasing trade surplus with the United

States, and the race to the bottom set off by NAFTA has meant nothing better than low-wage work for most Mexican workers, while benefiting large companies, the financial sector, and a thin layer of administrative and professional workers who are earning high salaries. Employment has become increasingly precarious overall, the agricultural sector has suffered a large and steady loss of employment, and real salaries remain below the levels of the early 1990s, as Mexico's dependence on global imports grows.

The United States had a small but relatively stable trade deficit with Canada and Mexico (combined) in the 1980s and early 1990s. After NAFTA took effect in 1994, the United States developed large and rapidly growing deficits with these trade partners.

NAFTA did not cause the current U.S. trade deficit with Mexico, nor did it cost the United States any jobs, on net, though it might have created as couple of hundred thousand.

Growth in trade deficits after NAFTA took effect reduced demand for goods produced in every region of the United States and has led to job displacement in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Jobs displaced due to growing NAFTA trade deficits ranged as high as 1.4% of total employment in states such as Michigan. Between 2004 and 2005, the U.S. goods trade deficit with Mexico and Canada increased 14% (U.S. Census Bureau 2006), likely causing double-digit growth in job displacement in 2005.

[Mexican] wage inequality remains a stubborn challenge, but pay grew most swiftly in the Mexican industries most exposed to trade.

Wages in the maquiladora sector are almost 40% lower than those in

heavy non-maquila manufacturing. 23% of the new wage-earning positions generated between 2000 and 2004 have no benefits at all, and only 37 percent of the new jobs have full social security benefits.

A final verdict on NAFTA is not possible yet, because the last deferred provisions won't be phased in until Jan. 1 ... Among them is the long-awaited elimination of all remaining barriers on American corn exports to Mexico.

Employment in [Mexico's] agricultural sector began a steady drop at the end of 1993, falling to 6.8 million employed workers by the end of

2004. The worst hit were corn producers, with a total loss of over a million jobs.

Nearly two-thirds of the jobs displaced by growing trade deficits with Mexico and Canada were in manufacturing, which is one of the best sources of good jobs with good benefits for workers with a high school degree or less. These workers were especially hard hit by job displacement associated with rising NAFTA trade deficits.

A gap between higher- and lower-paid workers has indeed developed in the NAFTA years, but the main culprit is technology, which increases demand for highly educated and trained workers.

Upshot:

Growing trade deficits with Mexico and Canada after NAFTA took effect reduced employment in high-wage, traded-goods industries, resulting in a substantial loss of wage income for such workers. This contributed to growing inequality in wages and falling demand for workers without a post-secondary education, males in trade-related production, and minorities. NAFTA has also hurt workers in Mexico and Canada in many different ways, as documented elsewhere in this report. Without major changes in NAFTA to address unequal levels of development and enforcement of labor rights and environmental standards, continued integration of North American markets will threaten the prosperity of a growing share of workers in the United States and throughout the hemisphere. Negotiation of additional NAFTA-style agreements, such as the proposed Korean, Malaysian, and Thai Free Trade Agreements, will only worsen these problems. Workers have good reasons to be concerned as NAFTA enters its second decade. -- EPI

For more information on the problems besetting “free trade” and their solutions, go to www.sierraclub.org/trade

Buy Local

continued from page 3

into the searchable listing.

In addition, the CCG website links to local restaurants that purchase their ingredients locally, giving diners an option to eat at restaurants currently purchasing from local farmers and ranchers. For those who want to stay home to eat, recipes are provided by local families. A calendar of events encourages community organizations to post their upcoming events that promote purchasing locally.

In a county of roughly 260,000 people, if each day residents found a way to divert just one dollar to locally grown goods, at the end of the year consumers would have put more than \$100 million in additional revenue back into the local economy.

There is no limit to how big the Central Coast Grown site can get; the more

farmers and restaurants and grocery stores that add their businesses, the more inclusive the site will become. “Ultimately, that’s the goal-to create a site that will provide a resource to aid in connecting local farmers with local consumers,” says CCAN President Mallory Tipple. “I hope that everyone in the community takes the time to visit the site to shop the Central Coast.”

The Central Coast Grown program was developed by the Central Coast Ag Network (CCAN), a nonprofit that supports sustainable local agriculture to ensure a wholesome, diverse and nourishing supply of food and other agriculture products for residents of the Central Coast.

That’s: www.centralcoastgrown.org

Sierra Club Outings: More and Better!

By Shaba Mohseni
Volunteer Coordinator

We would like to increase the number of certified Outings leaders and the overall number of official outings that the Santa Lucia Chapter has to offer.

Several members have expressed interest in variations on the current outings — slower hikes, a more structured, educational hike, etc. I encourage you to bring your ideas and feedback to me so we can work with the current leaders to make different things happen.

As part of being certified to lead a Sierra Club outing, we are working toward offering an official group First

Aid Training Course if there is enough interest. Getting certified is mandatory for all Sierra Club Hike Leaders, and also it is just great to have the knowledge and capability to help others should it be needed!

I invite any members interested to email me at shaba.sierraclub8@gmail.com

I look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions, and to meeting many of you and sharing the experience of enjoying, exploring, and protecting the planet!



Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **March 12**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:

Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierraclub8@gmail.com



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ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Local Government Meetings

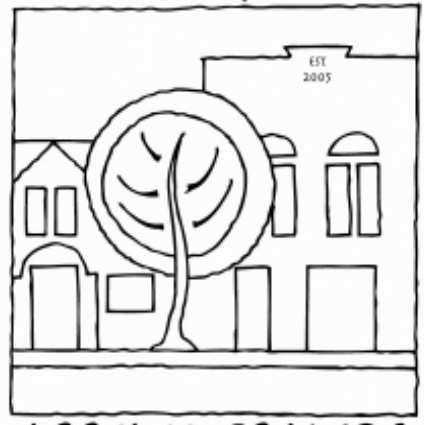
- City of SLO--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
- Arroyo Grande--2nd and 4th Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 473-5404
- Atascadero--2nd & 4th Tues.; 466-8099
- Cambria CSD -- 4th Thurs.; 927-6223
- Grover Beach--1st & 3rd Mon., 6:30 p.m.; 473-4567
- Grover Beach Planning Commission--2nd Tues.
- Morro Bay--2nd & 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.

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For schedule, trailers, info, and reviews of films at SLO Library, go to www.hopedance.org

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Call for Yosemite Valley Volunteers

The LeConte Memorial Lodge is a 104-year-old museum, library and visitor center operated by the Sierra Club in Yosemite National Park. We are looking for Sierra Club members interested in volunteering for one or two weeks between May 1 and September 28.


Hours of operation are from 10 am - 4 pm, Wed.-Sun., and 8 pm - 10 pm for weekend evening programs. Volunteers enjoy free entrance to Yosemite National Park and free camping at the group campsite during the time they volunteer. For more information visit www.sierraclub.org/education/leconte/volunteering.asp or contact Bonnie Gisel, the LeConte Lodge curator, at leconte.curator@sierraclub.org or (209) 403-6676 (before May 1). After May 1, call (209) 372-4542.



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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. Mar. 1, 8:30 AM, Stony Creek Hike. The Stony Creek trail gets very little use because it is not easily accessed from either end. We will go through a locked gate to get to the north trailhead at the old Avenales Ranger Station. Because this trail is used so infrequently it could be overgrown and there is sure to be some poison oak. The hike will be about 10 miles, but it goes in and out on the same trail, so you could go part way if you wish. There will be about 2,000 feet of elevation gain making this a moderately strenuous hike. We will meet in front of the Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita. For further info contact Carlos at 546-0317.

Sat.-Sun., March 1-2, Grass Valley Wilderness Backpack: This will be an easy to moderate journey to explore a little known area with Marty Dickes, wilderness resource specialist with the Ridgecrest office of the BLM. We will monitor ORV impacts, but our reward will be the washes, low hills, and open grassland views in early spring. At these low elevations in the Mojave, wildflowers are possible, and rain is unlikely. Carry all water. Limit 12. Leader: Craig Deutsche, (310-477-6670), deutsche@earthlink.net. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat., Mar. 15th, 8:00 a.m. Rocks Corral Exploratory Hike: Come take a 10-13 mile, with unknown elevation gain as this is an exploratory hike on the Avenales Ranch East of Pozo. We should have plenty of wildflowers, and pleasant weather. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes, and plan to be out all day. Meet at the 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) Rain or threat of rain cancels.

Sat.-Sun., March 15-16, Ghost Town Extravaganza: Come with us to this spectacular desert landscape near Death Valley to explore the ruins of California's colorful past. Camp at the historic ghost town of Ballarat (flush toilets & hot showers). On Sat, do a very challenging hike to ghost town Lookout City with expert Hal Fowler who will regale us with tales of this wild west town. Later we'll return to camp for Happy Hour, a potluck feast and campfire. On Sun, a quick visit to the infamous Riley town site before heading home. Group size strictly limited. Send \$8 per person (Sierra Club), 2 sase, H&W phones, email, rideshare info to Ldr: Lygeia Gerard, P.O. Box 294726, Phelan, CA 92329, (760) 868-2179. Co-ldr: Don Peterson (760) 375-8599 CNRCC/Desert Committee.

MARCH 16, 0930, SUN., BIKE WOODLANDS A bicycle tour of the "instant city" with many stops. Meet at junction of Willow Rd. & Albert Way. Must wear helmet. With bikes we can go on golf cart trails. Earn an award of \$10., if you can show me laundry on a line in Woodlands or even solar panels. Confirm or information a few days before at <bdenneen@kcbx.net> or 929-3547.

Wed., March 19th, 26th 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes Return. See website, or e-mail Gary Felsman for details. E-mail is located on the Website.

Fri.-Sun., March 21-23, Easter and Equinox in the California Desert: The CNRCC wilderness committee and the Mojave Group have an ongoing tradition of conducting an annual wilderness service trip with the Needles office of the BLM. We will work with Needles wilderness staffer Mona Daniels on the south side of the Whipple Mountains, not far from Parker, to do extensive signing on the wilderness boundary, as well as related work to minimize trespass into

the wilderness. Meet Friday morning, at the BLM's Needles office (new building), then caravan south to our site in the Whipples, for carcamping at the edge of wilderness. Work Friday afternoon and Saturday, then hike Sunday morning. More details on central commissary (cost \$12) and on meeting, etc. will come later to those who sign up with Vicky (415)977-5527, vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org or Carol (760)245-8734, earthlingwiley@webtv.net CNRCC Wilderness Committee/ San Gorgonio Chap Mojave Group.

Sat., March 22, 9:00 a.m. Cerro Alto-Long Hike. Join the leader on this Easter weekend hike. The 7.1 mile hike is of moderate difficulty. There is about 1700 ft. of elevation gain. Meet at the Cerro Alto campground which is about 8 miles east of Morro Bay and 12 miles west of Atascadero. Drive to the day use parking area at the back of the campground. There probably is a day use fee unless you have an Adventure Pass. The views of Chorro Valley and the coastline from the top of Cerro Alto are spectacular. There is a possibility of ticks and poison oak. Bring lunch/snacks, water and dress for the weather. There will be a refueling stop at Taco Temple after the hike. For info, contact Chuck at 441-7597 (3C).

Sat., March 29th, 8:00 a.m. Machesna Mountain Hike: Come take a 12 - 15 mile, with 3000 foot elevation gain, hike through the Machesna Wilderness. Starting from American Canyon Campground, we will climb 1500 to an open meadow and pond below Machesna Mountain itself. After lunch we will climb another several hundred feet to a ridge over looking the Carrizo Plain. We will soon 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. Some of us may go to the Pozo Saloon after if open. Meet at Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. This is not a beginner's hike. Limit 20

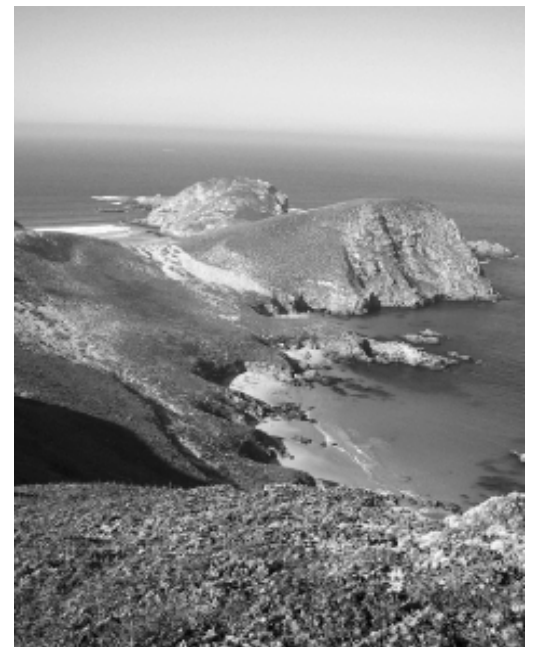
Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

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To make a reservation mail a \$100 check, payable to Sierra Club, to leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St.,



El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leader for more information (626-443-0706; jholtzhln@aol.com)



Hiking the Nipomo Creekside preserve.



Photo by Joaquin Palting

people. For details, reservations and meeting place call Gary (473-3694) (5F). Rain or threat of rain cancels.

March 30, 0930, Sun., Easter, COASTAL DUNES HIKE, 3 mile hike. Call or e-mail a few days before for details : <bdenneen@kcbx.net>, 929-3647.

Sat.-Mon. April 5-7, Birds, Flowers, and Fences in the Carrizo: This is an opportunity to visit and to assist an outstanding and relatively unknown national monument. On Saturday, we will assist monument staff in the removal of fence wires to allow pronghorn antelope freer access to the range. Sunday is reserved for sight-seeing. The views from the Caliente Mountains are spectacular; if rain has been sufficient, there will be spring flowers; and the monument is known for the number and variety of raptors present. Those who can stay on Monday will continue our work with the monument staff. Contact leader Craig Deutsche, 310-477-6670, or deutsche@earthlink.net CNRCC Desert Committee.

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.