



SIERRA
CLUB

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

April 2008
Volume 45 No. 4

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General Meeting

How We Spent Our European Vacation
A report from the Chapter's 2008 Smart Energy Study Tour

7 p.m., Friday, April 25
St. Stephens Episcopal Church, SLO

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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

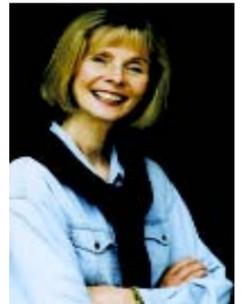
Voters Guide

Sierra Club endorsements for the June 3 ballot

Congress, 23rd District: Lois Capps.
She's running unopposed, but we should never take for granted this tireless advocate for the environment. This year alone, Capps lent her sup-

port to the fight against the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to block California's efforts to implement more stringent automobile emission standards, and she was instrumental in elevating the National Marine Sanctuary Program to "office" level status, giving the National Marine Sanctuary System higher visibility and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the system without additional costs as it goes about the business of protecting our vital ocean resources. In March, highlighting ground-breaking sustainable fishing practices, Capps toured a commercial

fishing vessel in Morro Bay enrolled in the Conservation Fishing Agreement (CFA) and promoted local and national efforts to create working waterfronts legislation and sustainable fishing practices.



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Kill This Bill ~ Take action by April 8

To: Senator Darrell Steinberg, Chair Natural Resources Committee State Capitol, Room 4035 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1295 (Ducheny) - Oppose

Sierra Club California strongly opposes SB 1295 and we urge you to reject this legislation, which would severely undermine coastal protection by removing the Coastal Commission's ability to appeal and review local development approvals in

the Coastal Zone.

SB1295, authored by Senator Ducheny, would eliminate long standing jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission over the land use and development decisions of local government by prohibiting Coastal Commissioners from appealing local coastal development permits, regardless of how reckless, damaging or destructive such decisions might be and without regard to how haphazard or dangerous a precedent such decisions may set.

SB1295 represents a Trojan Horse that if approved would be the most critical setback for California's coastal protection program in decades. SB1295 is not a technical or minor amendment to the Coastal Act - it would eliminate the only mechanism the Coastal Commission has to insure local compliance with the Coastal Act.

Because of the unique and well-established checks and balances long in place for the coastal program, local

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Earth Day SLO 2008

Green Living Expo Saturday, April 26 - Mission Plaza noon to 5 p.m.

For 2008, the Earth Day Alliance will unite its efforts and expand the impact of Earth Day by joining its efforts with those of the City of San Luis Obispo.

The Earth Day Alliance & City of SLO will hold their Earth Day event back-to-back on April 26:

Earth Day Expo: noon to 5 pm the mission plaza (booths will open at 11 a.m.)

Arbor Day Celebration: 9 to noon at Laguna Lake

If you would like to learn more about Earth Day 2008 Expo, receive an application or become a volunteer, email earthdayslo@fix.net or call (805) 544-8529.

Nuclear Nightmare Gets a Ticket to Ride

by Rochelle Becker
Sierra Club Radiation Committee

On March 3, a 28-car train derailment 140 miles southeast of Los Angeles sent up a cloud of toxic fumes. The derailment resulted in homes being evacuated, roads nearby shutdown, lives and commerce disrupted.

That was bad news. Now the really bad news: The Department of Energy



(DOE) proposes to transport 12% of the nation's high-level radioactive waste on this same rail route, past your business, your home and your family.

You were not notified of the DOE's plans, and your county representatives were not notified either, but

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photo/Karen Merriam

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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Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to:
 Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

General Meeting

The 2008 European Smart Energy Study Tour

The Santa Lucia Chapter just led 21 Central Coast residents on a two-week tour of what the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and the EU have done with cutting-edge design, technology and the world's most visionary energy policies. See and hear what they found.

**7 p.m., Friday, April 25,
 St. Stephens Episcopal Church
 1334 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo
 - Pismo Street entrance
 parking lot off Pismo**



BEZzed, UK: The world's first large-scale carbon-neutral community.

Make This Their Last Round-Up

The Three Amigos get busy

You may have noticed: Both the country and the county are in the midst of the most crucial election in living memory.

And you may also have noticed: Every time a local election day draws near, the eyebrow-raising land use decisions of our aggressively pro-development County Supervisors seem to multiply and accelerate – stockpiling, as it were, the cutting of corners, grandfathering of exceptions, dispensing of favors and general kow-towing to special interests, just in case post-electoral seat-shifting may result in some insistence that rules be followed and a long spell of slim pickings for development interests ensues.

But what we're seeing now is something else. Seldom has so much been at stake here as in this electoral season. That being the case, we can expect to see more of what we saw at the March 4 Board of Supervisors meeting: Three elected officials who have essentially gone rogue, unhooking the county from the state of California and the standards of land use policy. Their longtime default position — anything to do a favor for a developer — is being taken to new extremes.

That meeting marked the occasion

of the Estrella River Vineyard decision. Supervisors Ovitt, Lenthall and Achadjian broke with three decades of Natural Resources Conservation Service mapping as the standard practice to determine soil type, and decided developers can pick their own soil scientists and pay them to determine if the soil of their land is of a type that would allow more houses to be built on it and larger profits to be reaped.

The Three Amigos chose to deviate from federal standards and, as the *Tribune* put it, "carved an exception in [County] land-use laws...that could allow more houses to be built on agricultural land." In so doing, they "went against the advice of the county Planning Commission, planning staff and Agriculture Department."

One of the deviators in question, Supervisor Harry Ovitt, said "Maps are guidelines. They're not absolute." (Hands up, everyone who just flashed on the moment from *Pirates of the Caribbean* when the about-to-be-abducted damsel protests that, in accordance with the Pirate Code, the pirate captain must let her go free, and the buccaneer replies with a grin as she's dragged away: *Actually, darlin', they're more in the nature of guidelines.*)

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SANTA LUCIAN

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Outings, events, and more!

Wowed in Los Osos

Saying “We’ve got to keep the nitrogen out of the estuary by any means necessary,” Jonathan Todd commenced an electrifying presentation of a potential solution — low cost, minimal mechanics, no chemicals, and minimal solid waste — to the Los Osos wastewater treatment saga, the longest-running wastewater problem in the state.

Todd Ecological’s CEO has been named one of the 35 Top Inventors of the 20th Century by the MIT/Lemelson Invention Program. He is the recipient of the Environmental Merit Award of the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Chrysler Design Award and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Award, among others.

Todd’s February 7 presentation to a packed house at the South Bay Community Center in Los Osos, capped two days of meetings with County Public Works’ Los Osos Wastewater Project team, site visits, and an equally heavily attended and well-received presentation at the Botanical Gardens in SLO the night before.

He ran through his company’s previous and ongoing projects for international clientele featuring his “ecomachines” -- totally biological, lushly landscaped water treatment systems that can feature the use of koi (a profit center) for sludge removal, tongue-in-cheek “dangerous byproducts” including wildly thriving greenhouse nursery plants (another profit center) and gourmet mushrooms (another profit center for a Todd client, sold at \$9.95 @ pound), with mulch from the mushrooms going to a worm farm, which goes to feed yellow perch, also part of the eco-machine system and yet another profit center, and all constituting “an amazing local food production network” for the town of Burlington, Vermont. Todd gave Los Osos a whole new way of looking at wastewater treatment.

The two events were the first in a

series of “sustainability socials,” the seed for which was planted in July 2007 when Paavo Ogren of County Public Works invited the local Surfrider chapter and SLO Green Build on a waste water system tour in Los Osos to brainstorm possible technologies and services that private residences and businesses could implement. The discussion included possible grant opportunities to educate the community on water conservation efforts such as graywater, low-impact development strategies, rainwater harvesting, dual flush toilets, Energy Star appliances and other appropriate technologies. Since then, members of Surfrider, Sierra Club and SLO Green Build have been working hard, donating many hours of work collaborating with government agencies to address health and safety issues related to these technologies.

“Our goal was to further the community’s knowledge of appropriate technology and at the same time celebrate positive solutions,” said Mikel Robertson of SLO Green Build. “Our coalition has made the effort to connect with and request feedback from every stakeholder; County Public Works, the Regional Water Board, TAC, Board of Supervisors, the Los Osos CSD and the community. We have been guided through this process by leading local authorities. These events are a time to socialize and celebrate the successes and opportunities of environmental and social restoration.”



Surfrider’s Noah Smukler (left) presents a commemorative T-shirt to Jonathan Todd at the Los Osos Sustainability Forum.



From Stream to Surf

Coast & Ocean Roundtable marks first step toward a regional strategy for watersheds and local ocean

California is in need of regional strategies to connect the welter of policies and regulations that govern land use, water quality and the management of coastal watersheds and the protection of the marine ecosystem off our coast. The lack of coordination between these two sets of policies and policy makers has meant an ongoing degradation of rivers and streams and increasing impacts on the coastal waters they flow into.

On March 12, the first step to change that in San Luis Obispo County happened when the Coast and Ocean Regional Round Table -- hopefully the first of several -- was held at the SLO City/County Library, attended by more than two dozen local planners, resource managers and water and ocean resource conservationists.

Monica Hunter of the Planning and Conservation League opened the day and set the agenda, proclaiming the need to study and manage the coastal watershed in the context of its connection to the marine ecosystem and to identify new opportunities for

collaboration between marine and land conservation organizations.

Speaker Mary Bianchi of the UC Cooperative Extension program, who related successes in adopting a farm water quality program, aptly noted the dual focus of the event by observing that her colleagues who spoke on the impacts of inland watershed management on marine ecosystems were standing on the beach and looking out to sea, whereas “I stand on the beach and look uphill.”

Among the day’s speakers, Karen Worcester of Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) related the severe pollution problems in the Santa Maria watershed, the worst in the county (see “A Call to Action,” March *Santa Lucian*); County Senior Planner James Caruso provided the context for marine and watershed conservation issues in the update of the County’s Conservation and Open Space Element; and Matt Thompson of the Regional Water Quality Control Board discussed his agency’s ambitious mission to implement the best management practices

of Low Impact Development (LID) to reduce polluted run-off to pre-development levels.

Bianchi noted that among sea otters off the central coast, considered an indicator species for the general health of coastal waters, deaths from infectious diseases have recently increased by 45 percent.

Tying together all the disparate data and programs will require “a regional strategy to promote regional coastal and marine policies that are defined by local needs,” said Hunter. Such policy integration will be necessary if San Luis Obispo is to compete with other coastal counties for state Integrated Regional Watershed Management grants to protect and enhance our coastal watershed and marine environment.

“I have already begun hearing from folks in Monterey County that they have heard good things about the SLO meeting, so news travels fast,” said Hunter two days after the meeting. “Our speakers were all on target and helped to inspire folks to think broadly about their roles and mis-



Mary Bianchi on farm water quality programs.

sions. There were also some folks who let me know that they want to join our work in the follow-up.”

The regional round table was convened by the Planning and Conservation League and ECOSLO and sponsored by the Morro Bay National Estuary Program, the SLO Land Conservancy and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club.

No Antelopes for Oil

Drilling into Carrizo

With the price of a barrel of oil climbing ever skyward, the same question that has defined the long fight over drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has now become much more immediate for San Luis Obispo County: Is it worth destroying one of the Earth's special places for a small potential amount of oil?

The answer to that question is heading our way in the form of a proposal by Vintage Production, a subsidiary of Occidental Petroleum, to explore for oil in the Carrizo Plain. Although Carrizo is a National Monument, the mineral rights for about half of its 250,000 acres remain in private hands.

"The Carrizo Plain National Monument is a very special place," said Alice Bond of the Wilderness Society. "It is home to the highest concentration of threatened and endangered species in California, including the giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, and the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. It is one of the last remaining remnants of the San Joaquin grassland ecosystem providing essential habitat to these species."

These fauna, as well as the endangered plant species and Carrizo's status as critical habitat for the Cali-

fornia condor and the first site in the state to host reintroduced pronghorn antelope and herds of Tule elk, make a any proposal for industrial activity there acutely problematic. Bond points out that "thousands of acres outside the Monument boundaries have already been severely impacted by oil and gas operations, which is why the National Monument is so important to these species."

Vintage proposes to use thumper trucks, which deploy seismic equipment to transmit powerful vibratory sound waves deep into the earth. Additional exploration would involve dynamiting and drilling exploratory wells, all within the known range of the endangered giant kangaroo rat -- which burrows underground and thumps to communicate -- and all obviously highly destructive.

The Bureau of Land Management is tasked with protecting the natural and cultural "objects" -- plants, animals, glyphs, geological features -- of the Monument. "Thumper trucks, underground explosions, and all the other exploratory activities are going to disturb the objects," said Cal French, Chair of the Sierra Club's California-Nevada Regional Conserva-

tion Committee. "If Vintage then finds enough to start drilling wildcats, then a whole new round of assaults will ensue. If they do find significant oil, driving along Soda Lake Road will be like a trip from Maricopa to McKittrick."

Vintage Production does not have a reputation as a good steward of the land. "They are responsible for last year's oil spill in the Los Padres and nearly a dozen others in the forest over the past four years," said Jeff Kuyper, Executive Director of Los Padres ForestWatch.

The Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, ForestWatch and many other local, state and national organizations are committed to the defense of Carrizo Plain, and will not permit its destruction for a negligible amount of oil. The BLM must closely scrutinize any exploration applications, finalize the update of the Resource Management Plan (see "What Carrizo Needs Now," July 2007 *Santa Lucian*) and have strong wildlife standards in place before allowing any exploration.



Tule elk cross Carrizo.

TAKE ACTION

1. Write a letter to:

Tim Smith, Field Office Manager
Bureau of Land Management
3801 Pegasus Drive
Bakersfield CA 93308,

and ask that the BLM prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and ensure that surface access is limited to protect the Monument's resources, protected by the proclamation that created the monument. To read a copy of that proclamation go to http://clinton5.nara.gov/library/hot_releases/January_17_2001_13.html and feel free to quote from it. Point out that you will support Congressional appropriations to acquire the subsurface mineral rights

on the Monument and urge the BLM to acquire the funds to buy those rights.

2. Send copies of your letter -- or, better, separate letters to the following members of Congress:

Kevin McCarthy, whose Congressional district includes all of the Monument. <http://kevinmccarthy.house.gov/showpage.asp?ID=69> has his contact information. His email is in the http address. When sending mail to U.S. legislators, use their local office address. Those offices fax all the letters they receive to the members' DC office. Use Mr. McCarthy's Bakersfield office for postal mail.

Send to Lois Capps, whose district used to include the Monument: <http://www.house.gov/capps/>.

She may be the only member of Congress who has actually been to the Monument -- and more than once. Her late husband, Rep. Walter Capps, had a lot to do with the Monument's creation.

Send to Rep. Raul Grijalva, who is a champion of the National Landscape Conservation System, at <http://grijalva.house.gov/>, and an environmental hero. For info on the NLCS, the BLM's "crown jewels," go to http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS.html and feel free to select quotes from this source to use in your letters and messages to the BLM and members of Congress.

Kill Bill

continued from page 1

government has only to provide 10 days written notification of final local action notice (FLAN) to the Commission. This extremely abbreviated timeline, along with onerous legal standing requirements, makes it nearly impossible for nonprofit, community and environmental organizations to effectively participate and prepare appeals for the Commission. The ability of two or more Commissioners to make such appeals when critical statewide coastal protection and development issues are at stake is the most critical tool available to insure local compliance with state coastal preservation policies.

Since the Coastal Commission has never had sufficient resources to carry out periodic review and updating of Local Coastal Plans (LCPs) and local governments are not required to regularly update LCPs, appeal to the Commission by members of the Commission is the only means by which the public can achieve statewide review of many of the most important coastal development decisions facing California. It is no exaggeration to say that loss of appeal authority would wreak havoc on the coherence of the statewide coastal protection program -- there would literally be no tool in place to insure local compliance with Local Coastal Plans and the Coastal Act.

There are 110 coastal cities and 15 coastal counties. No non-profit organization in California has the resources to conduct such comprehensive land use review, nor should the public be held hostage to such a chaotic regime when the current system is ideally structured to insure statewide consistency with coastal protection goals.

SB1295 incorrectly assumes the current system allowing for Commissioner appeals is broken or unfair, which is not the case. Many times, the Commission's action consists merely of technical or minor modifications, such as requiring native landscaping, which insures protection of nearby habitat.

Passage of SB1295 is the equivalent of ripping the core out of the coastal program, and would eliminate the ability of the Commission to insure consistency among local governments in approving coastal development, with no requirement that LCPs be updated or not be in direct conflict with each other. SB1295, rather than 'streamline' coastal decision making, would likely backfire and slow the system down and produce unwanted and unintended consequences to coastal protection and our coastal economy.

We respectfully request your no vote when this bill is heard in your committee on April 8.

Yours truly,
Paul Mason, Deputy Director
Sierra Club California

cc: Senator Ducheny
Members of the Committee

TAKE ACTION BEFORE APRIL 8

Fax your own letter to
**Senator Darrell Steinberg, Chair
Senate Natural Resource Committee
at 916-323-2263**

Clouds Form Over Conservation Element

The update of our key land use policy will set the county's course for decades. So what are we conserving?

by Eric Greening

Under California law, every local jurisdiction with land use authority (city or county) must have a General Plan, and make its land use decisions consistent with this plan. It is required for every General Plan to include a "Conservation Element." It is also required that all elements of the General Plan be periodically updated to keep up with current knowledge and public values, and with changing facts on the ground. The updating of San Luis Obispo County's Conservation Element is long overdue; the one currently in use is over 32 years old!

About a year and a half ago, the Board of Supervisors authorized the Planning Department to begin work on a thorough update of this element. It has been the understanding of the Board and the public that the update would consolidate and include other General Plan elements: Energy, Off-shore Energy, Agriculture and Open Space. It was also the Board's understanding that our Master Water Plan would be updated either as part of, or in parallel to, the Conservation Element, and either included or incorporated by reference. Direction was given that the Conservation Element update was to be completed within three years, a relatively quick turnaround compared to some elements and area plans that have taken a decade or more to complete. James Caruso, the lead planner on the update, has compared the accelerated process to a moving train that will not stop at our convenience, but only when it reaches its destination.

Many of us in the environmental community, while always vigilant over the specifics of policy that might emerge from the process, drew encouragement from the expressed intention to include the Agriculture and Open Space Element in the Conservation Element. As is usually the case with General Plan updates, there will be an Environmental Impact Report prepared on the Conservation Element update. The notorious exception to the practice of doing EIR's on updates had been the Agriculture and Open Space Element, approved in 1998 under a Negative Declaration. The North County organization Life on Planet Earth had challenged this cursory review as inadequate, claiming that a fair argument could be made for Class I impacts of policies therein, particularly the Ag Cluster policies. After a long struggle, involving the expensive preparation of a record in 18 huge volumes, LOPE lost the case. The decision was based on the assumption that policies with significant impacts were mitigated by protective policies in the document itself.

In practice, it has been highly questionable that this internal mitigation has worked as the judge assumed. For one thing, most of the impactful policies are in the Agricultural Element, while most of the mitigating ones are in the Open Space Element. Yet in the decade since these policies were approved, most of the Agricultural policies have been implemented into ordinances; in the meantime, *not one* Open Space policy has received such formal implementation.

The actual unfolding of these poli-

cies on the ground has also had impacts far beyond those anticipated in the court decision. Visitor serving uses related to wine tourism have gone far beyond what words like "secondary and incidental" would lead one to expect. Transfer of Development Credit programs have created far more building entitlements than they have retired. And the actual implementation of the Ag Cluster policies has failed to keep the original promise of *containing* development in the midst of agricultural land, providing instead a mechanism for *promoting* it.

The rhetoric that surrounded the original approval of those policies was based on the claim that the antiquated parcels that overlie parts of our agricultural back county would create more and more sprawl if developed where they sit; that it would be preferable to "cluster" them so that

has demonstrated that "clustered" development can look every bit as sprawly as ranchettes, albeit usually without the countrified trappings of the latter.

The leapfrog neighborhoods known as "clusters" are a perverse reversal of every "smart growth" principle to which decision-makers like to pay lip service. Totally auto-dependent, they place upper-middle class residential neighborhoods in total isolation from schools, gathering places, retail, community services and amenities, and jobs. While growing up on a farm or ranch can be a totally involving life for kids, growing up marooned in a residential neighborhood surrounded by a farm or ranch is profoundly isolating.

Given the growing evidence of serious impacts from some of our agri-



Given the growing evidence of serious impacts from some of our agricultural policies, we saw hope in the promise that these policies would finally receive the environmental review they had never had by being included in the EIR on the Conservation Element. Then, on the staff level, a decision was made to remove the Agriculture policies from the Conservation Element.

95% of each agricultural operation could be kept intact. The claim was also made that the 100% "density bonus" did not actually increase development potential, since the two primary residences allowed on each agriculturally zoned parcel would not be increased, they would simply appear on separate parcels.

What was *not* advertised was that the cluster policies did not just provide an alternative for reconfiguring existing parcels, but would set the stage for a land rush to create *new* parcels, which would then be "clustered" to form leapfrog developments in the midst of agriculture. The policies were written and implemented such that parcels that don't yet exist could be created and clustered based on "base density" calculations, presumably anchored in agricultural viability. Natural Resources Conservation Service soil classification system and maps were to be the key to these calculations, with the understanding that by bringing the most capable soils under irrigated cultivation, one could increase the "base density" eightfold from the entitlements found in grazing land.

Now the resulting land rush is being further accelerated by the Board's direction to prepare an ordinance allowing private consultants to challenge the findings of the NRCS maps, thus introducing total uncertainty as to the total buildout potential that could result from a stampede of "clustering." I put the word in quotes, because the assumption that a cluster would be contiguous and limited to a small corner of a farm or ranch has also been overtaken by the reality of on-the-ground implementation. The invention of the "scattered cluster," with the residential parcels arrayed like the holes in Swiss cheese,

cultural policies, local environmentalists had at least seen some hope in the promise that these policies, by being included in the EIR on the Conservation Element, would finally receive the environmental review they had never had. Given that scrutiny, there was the further hope that these policies could be changed to mitigate their growing impacts. Now, that hope is seriously threatened. On the staff level, a decision has been made to remove the Agriculture policies from the Conservation Element, and only incorporate the Open Space portion of the 1998 document.

The big question this raises is how staff can make such a decision without Board direction, or a public airing of the pros and cons. The Planning Commission, at the urging of Commissioner Sarah Christie, has agendized just such a discussion. They are also considering sending a letter to the Board expressing concerns about the Ag Cluster ordinance. Advocacy is needed to make sure all necessary concerns are included and the letter is sent (see "Take Action" at the end of this article). Advocacy will be needed to get the Board to respond, and to make sure that the Agricultural policies finally get the thorough environmental review they have long needed, and then are changed to avoid Class I impacts — indeed to have beneficial, rather than negative, impacts on the preservation of our agricultural land.

It is not possible at this moment to give a clear timeline of opportunities to act to improve our agricultural policies and participate in review of the Conservation Element as a whole. It is likely that the question of separation of, and environmental review on, the Agriculture policies will be before the Board in April or May. During the

same interval, the Planning Commission will likely be reviewing our Cluster policies and may be recommending changes to the Board. May is a likely month for the Blue Ribbon Committee on TDC's to issue its report, leading to the likely consideration of significant changes to that ordinance. It is also a possible time when the ordinance allowing private soil consultants to argue for further increases in base densities would be heard. Day to day vigilance and agenda scrutiny is needed on all these issues.

The Public Review Draft of the Conservation Element itself is likely to hit the streets this summer, along with its Draft EIR. Thus it is clear that, if the Agricultural policies are to be included in that environmental review, it is critical that they not be allowed to fall off that moving train, and if they have fallen off, it is essential for those of us in the environmental community (we wear the white hats in this "western," right?) to gallop alongside this moving train and toss them back on board.

There will be far more to the Conservation Element as a whole than just stopping the damage that has occurred from ill-considered policies. As actual policy language emerges for public review, I hope to be able to write positively about water stewardship, cultural resource protection, how to improve our air quality, use "green building" techniques to shrink our ecological footprint, and protect the lives of the other creatures who share our beautiful area.

The train may be headed to an inspiring destination, but its arrival there, as the credits roll, is a much later scene in this movie. Right now, ominous music is playing, and the suspense is building. Fortunately, all of us have the opportunity to put on our white hats and write ourselves into the script.

Giddyup!

TAKE ACTION

Attend the Thursday, April 10 meeting of the County Planning Commission, and tell them 1) why the County's Agricultural policies must be included in the update of the Conservation Element, and 2) what should be said to the Board of Supervisors about the Ag Cluster ordinance.

9 a.m., Thursday, April 10
County Government Center
1055 Monterrey St., San Luis Obispo

Last Roundup

continued from page 2

As Supervisor Patterson observed, the vote was about helping owners to “grow houses, not crops” on ag land.

At the same meeting, a Los Osos developer tried to get an extension on the approval of a tentative tract map for his project that he’d gotten eleven years ago. The Los Osos sewer building moratorium had intervened, his approval had expired, he got a one-time five-year extension, it expired again, and for the past six months, he’s been arguing that he should get another one. He has been unsuccessful because A) such approvals expire because conditions on the ground can and do change — i.e. a Level 3 Water Severity has been declared for Los Osos — and B) as County Counsel explained to the Board, granting another extension would violate state law: You cannot get a tract map ap-

proval extended for more than five years. In October, the board majority postponed a decision and urged County Counsel to consult with the developer’s lawyer, who — surprise — had a different interpretation of the law. County Counsel did so, came back on March 4, and told the board that the law was still the law.

Having now had three chances to obey the law, but reluctant to do so, the board majority delayed a decision again — to June 13, safely after the election. That’s never a good sign.

When did our elected representatives decide that their main job is to help developers game the system? What the board majority is doing is outrageous, and outrage is the only appropriate response.

We can’t afford this board anymore. We can’t afford any more moves to

solve the housing crisis for millionaires, as when the Amigos threw the General Plan out the window and approved the conversion of sixty acres of Ag land in rural Templeton for the construction of million-dollar-plus estate homes.

We can’t afford more sham stakeholder discussion groups whose purpose is to provide a dog-&-pony show version of a public process controlled by developers — right up to the moment when such a group goes off the reservation and actually presumes to vote its preference for open space and parkland rather than a planned development, at which point the group is immediately shut down. (See: Jerry Lenthall’s Fossil Pointe Discussion Group debacle.)

We can’t afford the kind of mentality that turns down the opportunity

to nominate the Carrizo Plain National Monument as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a prestigious international honor that states and nations compete for, but which the Three Amigos decided to reject, bowing to some overheated folks who spread disinformation of the UN-will-swoop-down-in-black-helicopters-and-take-over variety, a decision that made the county a statewide laughingstock.

This is the Board that allowed “Measure J,” the Dalidio Ranch initiative, to be placed on the ballot without preparing a report on the measure’s General Plan consistency, after having been warned of its clear conflicts with state law. This is the Board that allowed a small private group to hand them a “Cayucos Viewshed ordinance” that undid what minimal protections for public views existed in the Cayucos Viewshed, and approved it without Planning Commission review, ignoring the fatal flaws pointed out by planning staff and the violations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pointed out in public testimony.

The Sierra Club is doing what we can to fix this problem (see “Litigation Update,” page 8). You can take care of the largest part of the problem in a single action on June 3, when county voters will determine on which side of a line we are going to fall. That line is stark and sharp: Will we finally start moving toward affordable housing and smart growth? Will we start protecting, instead of continuing to pave over, our natural heritage and agricultural land? Or will we continue to suffer the consequences of decisions made by a board majority of pols from the you-scratch-my-back school of governance who pay lip service to all of the above, then vote for the exact opposite, crafting loopholes and making excuses to get around any requirement to actually do any of the those things?

That school of politics understands only the dispensing of favors, accompanied by bland homilies about “balance” and “wiggle room” and laments about how hard it is to make everybody happy. Should this philosophy continue to hold the Board of Supervisors in its iron grip, it will, in a very few years from now, drive this county over a cliff.

And if our endorsements on the facing page don’t make the point sufficiently explicit, here’s how to solve the problem and secure a livable future for San Luis Obispo County:

Adam Hill must be elected. Supervisor Patterson must retain his seat. Supervisors Lenthall and Ovitt must return to private life.

Volunteering for and donating to the Patterson and/or Hill campaigns would be a particularly constructive use of your time and money right now:

www.winwithjim.org
valene@winwithjim.org
 phone: 462-9482

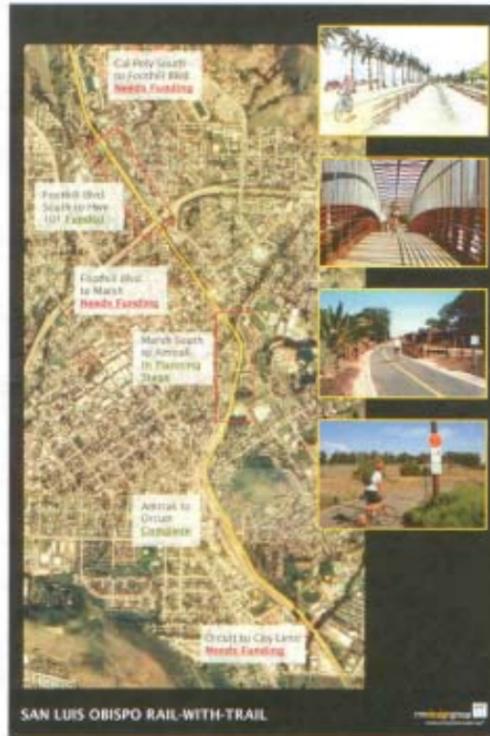
www.adamhill.us
achill29@hotmail.com
 phone: 541-2326.

Cal Poly to Downtown SLO: Take the Trail!

SLO Rotary’s first official “Clean & Green” Project will focus on providing partial funding and building community support for the City’s Railroad Safety Trail, which will accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. The completed trail will enable the community and Cal Poly students, faculty and staff to safely travel between the campus and downtown without getting into a car. This will reduce traffic congestion on campus and in the city, reduce carbon emissions, and thus help reduce global warming.

This Class I path will parallel the tracks from Cal Poly to the Amtrak Railroad Depot, and has its own bridge going over Highway 101. Two sections of this bike path are already funded and scheduled for completion in 2008-09. To make it possible to link up the three sections of the trail, the SLO Rotary Club is launching a community fund raising campaign to support the completion of this “Missing Link” trail simultaneously with the other two links. It is exciting to consider that in the very near future, this trail could allow safe, car-free ingress and egress to and from Cal Poly, over 101, to the Downtown for the first time.

The Rotary is building a coalition of other community groups and businesses to raise money toward completion of this section before the end of June 2008. The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, ECOSLO, and the SLO Land Conservancy are current sponsors, along with the City of San Luis Obispo, County Supervisor Jim Patterson, Cal Poly (Office of the President), the SLO Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Vista Hospital, the SLO Bicycle Coalition, the SLO Bicycle Club, Ride Share, Residents for Quality Neighborhoods, Roteract of Cal Poly, Cal Poly Wheelmen, and the Rotary Club of Compostela, Nayarit, Mexico. Send donations to the Railroad Safety Bicycle Trail Project, P.O. Box 1014



San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. For more information, contact Project Chair, Jan Howell Marx at 541-2716 or janmarx@stanfordalumni.org



California Coastal Commission Executive Director Peter Douglas (left) assisted friends and family of Lynn Christie in installing a memorial bench honoring Lynn at Fiscalini Ranch Preserve in Cambria on March 9. Lynn was a founding board member of the North Coast Small Wilderness Area Program, and helped raise the \$2 million needed for the community’s local share of the purchase price for the ranch, preserving it from development in perpetuity as open space and wildlife habitat. The bench will eventually accommodate plaques honoring all of Lynn’s fellow “angels” whose efforts saved the ranch.

For the Angels



Endorsements
continued from page 1

Supervisor, 3rd District: Adam Hill. A telling fact: Prof. Hill has been endorsed by the Empower Poly Coalition, representing over 600 Cal Poly students from 18 different campus sustainability organizations and clubs. Another telling fact: Campaign



financial statements shows Hill has out-fund-raised his opponent, Supervisor Jerry Lenthall, by dint of having raised a larger number of small donations from individuals.

Lenthall has the edge on large donations from developers and the real estate industry. Enough said.

More important than whether or not he agrees with us on every one of the Sierra Club's key issues, Hill is clearly his own man, and his opponent clearly is not. Hill's election will mean we can start implementing responsible land use planning and smart growth principles for real, and stop putting the pedal to the metal — and the grease to the palms — in a race to become L.A. North.

Supervisor, 5th District: Jim Patterson.

There's every reason to return our 5th District Supervisor for a second term on the Board. He recently created a new seat for organic farmers on the agricultural advisory committee, affirming his commitment to sustainable agriculture, and secured increased funding for the County Parks Department. Patterson's first term has largely been a trial by fire on this aggressively dumb-growth/pro-development board, where he has shown his mettle and proven willing to stand on principle. He deserves a chance to do that on the winning side of a board majority that's willing to haul us back to environmental sanity.



Mayor, Morro Bay: Melody DeMeritt.

Quiet, cool and competent, DeMeritt's disciplined style and follow-through saw its greatest payoff in the creation of the New Futures Group, which brought together citizen volunteers to craft a comprehensive turn-key plan for the conversion and of the Morro Bay power plant, com-



plete with a how-to on public/private financing, ready to go whenever the owner is ready to throw in the towel on the bay-busting eco-disaster occupying the most choice piece of real

estate on the central coast. That kind of vision and tenacity makes her an apt challenger to the frequently hapless Janice Peters, whose greatest claim to fame has been her ongoing efforts to obstruct the expansion of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to protect local waters from oil drilling.

Morro Bay City Council: Noah Smukler.



The City Council is a body in need of a transfusion of new blood, and it doesn't get any fresher and smarter than this. Smukler is a mainstay of the local Surfrider chapter, a natural organizer and champion of the urban forest and public transportation, with an encyclopedic grasp of water conservation, treatment and sustainability issues. His resume includes founder of the Estero Bay Community Garden, coordinator for the School Recycling and composting program, restoration volunteer on the Spencer's Market Pocket Park, and Vice Chair of the Morro Bay Public Works Advisory Board.

Morro Bay City Council: Roger Ewing.

Ewing's 15 years of protecting the urban forest and sturdy support of the efforts to end once-through cooling at the Morro Bay power plant should commend his candidacy to the attention of Morro Bay Sierra Club members. He's informed, intelligent and experienced in the community, as well as articulate, diplomatic and with the courage to act on behalf of the environment and the welfare of the people of Morro Bay, not just talk about it. Ewing almost ran two years ago; voters should take full advantage of their opportunity now.

NO on 98 — While Prop 98 is ostensibly about eminent domain, the fine print threatens local land use planning and environmental protections and was deliberately crafted to challenge affordable housing policies. This measure comes from many of the same wealthy special interests who proposed Prop 90, defeated in 2006. Rejecting Prop 98 is a top priority for Sierra Club California.

YES on 99 — Prop 99 is a real eminent domain reform measure intended to constitutionally protect home owners without the hidden agendas and adverse consequences of prop 98. Prop 99 will prohibit government from using eminent domain to take a home to transfer to a private developer. It is supported by a broad coalition of homeowners, environmentalists, labor, business, cities and counties who want straightforward eminent domain reform that responds to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision.



Save the date!

Saturday, May 31, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Santa Lucia Chapter Spring Benefit Banquet
Celebrating our 40th Birthday!

Featuring

23rd District
Congresswoman
Lois Capps

a leader in Congressional environmental legislation

and

11th District
Congressman
Jerry McNerney

2006 upset victor over long time environmental opponent Richard Pombo



The jazz stylings of Lyn Manzella and her band

Silent Auction

Location: Temple Beth David, Foothill Blvd. and Los Osos Valley Road, San Luis Obispo -- an award-winning Green Building designed by Santa Lucia chapter members Ken Haggard and Polly Cooper

\$100 per person or \$900 per table (seats 10)

All proceeds go to the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club

Call to reserve your space or table or to donate items for our benefit auction
(805) 543-8717

How's That Again, Governor?

By John Ashbaugh
Executive Committee

Arnold Schwarzenegger came to town on March 26 to tout his plans for big budget cuts in the face of a massive shortfall anticipated for the next fiscal year.

Somehow I managed to wrangle a last-minute invitation to his talk at the SLO City Library Community Room, and, like a skunk at a garden party, I could not resist the chance to pose a question during the Q&A that followed. Identifying myself as a SLO City Planning Commissioner, I asked whether he could assure this group of mostly local government officials that he would oppose the very dangerous Proposition 98 on the June ballot. (See "NO on 98," left.) This proposition is designed to guarantee landowners and developers the right to sue local governments (or the state!) for damages whenever regulations might result in a loss of potential future profits. Every week, county supervisors and city councils enact zoning or general plan regulations that could have that effect -- or that at least could be argued as such in court. Local officials operating under the terms of Proposition 98 could be exposed to billions of dollars in liability each time they regulate private land development, and fearing such "inverse condemnation" lawsuits, would be increasingly reluctant to regulate private property in order to protect public interests such as open space, solar access, noise, air quality, scenic views, traffic control, or historic preservation.

The Governor shifted uncomfortably and stammered something about looking for a "balance" in deciding which of the two competing measures

to support (See "YES on 99," left). He declined to take a stand. Let's hope that he comes around.

Meanwhile, I urge any Sierra Club members to contact me if you would like to join me in urging local cities and the County Board of Supervisors to support Proposition 99 and oppose 98: jbashbaugh@charter.net.

Don't forget!

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

Thank you. Send your contribution to:
Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93404



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Nuclear Nightmare

continued from page 1

many of our Sacramento representatives were told of the DOE's proposed routes.

The state recommended at least three hearings be held on the transport proposal. The DOE held one, in November 2007, in Lone Pine, California. The comment period on the Environmental Impact Statement closed on January 10. Not one legislator sent a letter asking the DOE who would be responsible to fund and train emergency response teams along the transport routes in their districts, or ask what the economic impacts of the DOE's proposed routes would be for California, or how would communities near these rail routes be compensated for possible loss of property values for living adjacent to radioactive rail corridors.

SLO County was equally uncurious. County supervisors were content to hear from the head of county emergency services that he was aware of the DOE process, but he let the comment deadline pass without asking a single question about waste traveling out of Avila north to a SLO rail yard somewhere and then trained south out of SLO past our homes, schools, businesses and hospitals.

The California Energy Commission, California's Attorney General and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility filed comments citing the need for further information for our state and highlighting the DOE's lack of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

It is not too late to ask our Senators to weigh in and demand the DOE's justification for sending radioactive waste from Louisiana, Texas, and Arizona into and then out of California to enter Nevada without due process for impacted communities.

California deserves answers to these and other questions relating to the DOE's proposed transport routes. Let's learn from last month's derailment and ensure that our communities have input on proposed radioactive waste rail routes near our homes and offices. Ask the Governor to ask Congress to reopen the Department of Energy's environmental review and solicit the input of all cities, counties, state officials and community leaders on proposed routes.

The Chance of a Lifetime

Sierra Club and Steelworkers make the climate connection with "Good Jobs, Green Jobs"

By Andrew Christie
Chapter Director

March 14: Two days before the Federal Reserve bailout of the collapsing Bear Stearns brokerage and Wall Street's meltdown.

Van Jones, co-founder of Green for All and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, gripped the podium on the stage of Pittsburgh's David L. Lawrence Convention Center — the first "green" convention center in the U.S. — and looked out over an audience of 1,100 local, state and federal policy makers, labor and business leaders, investors, workforce development specialists, scientists and environmental and social justice activists from around the country.

In a keynote address that alternately brought the audience to tears and brought them to their feet with



roars of applause, Jones said "We have an economy that's based on hurting people and hurting the planet," but "we have the opportunity to do something in this country that has not been done since the New Deal. We can build a green economy that, from the beginning, has opportunity in it for everybody."

"The New Deal coalition rescued this country, defeated fascism, and created the middle class," he said. To fashion a movement that can match that achievement, "we need the right policies, the right politics, and the right principles."

Two days later, as if to underscore the point, the country received an object lesson in what



Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope addresses the opening session.

Litigation Update

Cayucos Viewshed

Ordinance lawsuit: The Sierra Club has challenged the County Board of Supervisors' approval of this ordinance due to its flagrant violations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On March 18, for the first time in modern history, the Board of Supervisors exercised their right of peremptory challenge and had Judge Charles Crandall removed from the case on the presumption of bias. Crandall is the County's CEQA-trained judge, the most qualified jurist on the bench of the Superior Court to hear the case and grasp arguments relating to the intent of California's premiere environmental law.

Why would the Supervisors want a judge less qualified and less versed in CEQA to hear this case? We can take a guess.



Oceano Dunes lawsuit:

SLO County's Local Coastal Program (LCP) clearly states that the 584 acres of county land in the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area was to be designated a buffer area between the riding area and dunes preserve. The California Dept. of Parks responded to Sierra Club's Feb. 22 notice of intent to sue ("For the Dunes," March *Santa Lucian*) that it does not believe the Local Coastal Program restricts its ability to allow off-road vehicles anywhere within the ODSVRA. We replied with a second notice of intent charging Parks with failing to request an amendment to its Coastal Development Permit to bring its permit into conformance with the LCP after certification of the LCP in 1988. At press time, Parks has not responded, and we are preparing litigation.

Where the Spirits Used to Dwell

- I. The Past
Silver lupine and dazzling coreopsis covered the dunes. The Dunites believed spirits dwelled in these pastures of honey.
- II. The Present
Barren dunes blow in the wind, wildflowers replaced by dune buggies racing down slipfaces. Threatened snowy plovers desperately search for food....

Air reeks of gasoline. The noise is deafening.
Children drive quads with no parents in sight.
Tents jam together like refugee camps.
An off-roader barrels off a dune, killing a sunbather.

A young boy is run-over by his father's pickup.

- III. The Future
The snowy plover is extinct. Violent sandstorms destroy the village of Oceano. Motorized vehicles are banned from the dunes. But it's too late.

- Andrea Caulfield

From the anthology Poems for Endangered Places, to be published later this year, featuring the work of eight local poets, including two SLO county Poet Laureates, writing about endangered sites throughout the county.

happens when our economy is burdened by the wrong policies, politics and principles

The event at which Jones spoke, “Good Jobs, Green Jobs: A National Green Jobs Conference,” kicked off a dialogue on the link between economic opportunity and the necessity of environmental protection and quickly moving our country toward a leadership role in a new green economy. It had been convened the day before by Dave Foster, Executive Director of the Blue Green Alliance, who welcomed the participants with the words “This is a conference about doing what you do best: Creating solutions.”

He shared the convention center stage with Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club. The conference was coordinated by the Blue Green Alliance, the strategic partnership founded by the Sierra Club and the United Steelworkers. Working with a national coalition of over 80 organizations, the conference made the economy/environment connection vivid, obvious and urgent, and offered a sweeping vision in which we can meet the challenge of global climate change and realize the economic benefits of its solutions by investing in an economy based on clean energy, green buildings and green manufacturing that embraces innovation, brings ailing communities back to life and creates new, good paying jobs.



Van Jones



Left to right: Danielle Baussan of the House Select Committee on Global Warming; Robin Mann, Sierra Club Vice President for Conservation; Anne Hunt, St. Paul, MN, Deputy Policy Director - Environment; and Jim Hunt, Chief of Environmental Energy Services for the City of Boston, at the break-out session “The U.S. Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement: Can Climate Protection Drive Job Creation?”

Speakers described how their cities or states are already on the way to all of the above. Over the course of several plenary sessions and 15 breakout groups with more than 90 speakers — including Ed Mazria of Architecture 2030, John Podesta of the Center for American Progress, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell — participants heard about the potential economic benefits of global warming solutions and shared best practices about how to revitalize American manufacturing, promote green construction, advocate for the substitution of toxic chemicals, and address the impact of globalization on global

climate change. Minnesota Senator Ellen Anderson testified that her state’s new 25% Renewable Energy Standard is bringing 6,000 megawatts of wind power to Minnesota and at least a \$10 billion investment and 18,000 new manufacturing jobs. Boston’s Office of the Environment and Energy Services is working with schools on a \$250,000 green collar job training program and focusing the city’s green investment strategy on keeping housing affordable, targeting the most economically stressed areas. Tom Szaky, a 26-year-old Princeton graduate, related how he co-founded Terracycle, building “worm poop” into a thriving national plant food business by packaging his product in relabeled used plastic bottles shipped to him by school children, and re-selling old, unrecyclable yoghurt containers, spray painted by ex-cons and graffiti artists at his New Jersey assembly center, re-sold as planter pots.

Lois Quam, Managing Director of Alternative Investments for Piper Jaffray and a frequently seen name on *Fortune’s* “Most Powerful Women in America” list, said “driving down energy consumption growth with efficiency technology development is the opportunity of a lifetime for business, workers and investors.”

“The diverse array of leaders addressing this conference — environmentalists, industrialists, labor leaders, community organizers, elected officials and many others — underscores who stands to gain from a green jobs-driven economic renaissance: just about everyone,” said Pope. “Green jobs are helping keep the economy afloat today and this conference will explore how they can create a cleaner, stronger, and more just economy for tomorrow.”

Several policy initiatives were outlined in two major reports released at the conference: “Greener Pathways,” a plan of action for state policy makers, and “Green-Collar Jobs in America’s Cities,” a first-of-its kind city guide to training people and employing them in higher wage, family-supporting careers in the new green, energy-efficient job sectors, prepared by the Apollo Alliance, Green for All, the Workforce Alliance, the Center for American Progress and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy.

“There’s a lot of excitement across the country about our idea that the clean energy transition brings not only environmental sustainability, but also hundreds of thousands of new, family-supporting career-track jobs,” said Phil Angelides, Chairman of the Apollo Alliance. “Piece by piece we’re making progress toward a clean

energy economy and a new shared prosperity producing the good jobs of this American century.”

Perhaps the most crucial connection made at the conference was the connection between global warming and corporate globalization. “Globalization is to global warming what warm water in the Gulf of Mexico was to Hurricane Katrina,” said Les Leopold, executive director of the Labor Institute and Public Health Institute in New York. “And unless we wisely limit rapidly accelerating global trade, we will see equally disastrous and deadly results — worsening global warming and a continued chemical poisoning of our world.”

Marco Trbovich, Director of Communications for United Steelworkers, called global warming “the most pervasive form of globalization” and warned that “Free trade’s injustices must be opposed with the same moral force with which we oppose global warming,” noting that “a ton of steel produced in China has three times the carbon emissions content of a ton of steel produced in the U.S. Our rules need to be followed by all the countries we trade with.”

By the time it ended, the conference had performed as advertised: As a confluence of big ideas and innovative strategies to help jump-start a nationwide green economic renaissance. (Conspicuous by its absence: Nuclear power. The industry’s attempt to repackage itself as the solution to global warming doesn’t seem to be fooling many.)

In an article previewing “Good Jobs, Green Jobs” on to the website of *The Nation*, (“Labor’s War on Global Warming”), Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello and Brendan Smith, co-authors of *Globalization From Below*, wrote “global warming promises to be history’s most radical game-changer. While it is an unmitigated disaster, it also provides an incentive to face up to problems that the country has been avoiding for generations. It underlines the necessity to reconstruct the economy on the basis of our common needs, including our need to save the ecosystem, rather than just individual greed.”

The Fly in the Green Ointment

By the Sierra Club Responsible Trade Committee

Globalization is the most useful frame in which to address climate change. It is the source of the problem, now trying to present itself as the solution.

The World Bank, World Trade Organization and other multinational proselytizers of “free trade” are seeking to use the climate crisis as a way to bring new life to their decades-old agendas. Their traditional priorities — subsidies, market access, export-oriented development — will continue to be at the top of the list, but they have a new push: To classify remediation of climate impacts as a service under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), making environmental regulations subsidiary to trade regulations. Moreover, clean energy policies will be seen as barriers to trade, subject to WTO rules. The outcome will remain the same — the rich North will benefit the most and give lip service to the global South, which will continue to suffer under new globalization/climate policies. And the planet will suffer increasing environmental degradation due to policies that put corporations and profit first, this time in the name of fighting climate change.

This is why the WTO is precisely the wrong venue in which to make climate change policy, handing down exactly the policy decisions we don’t need on the planet-saving technology

that countries need access to.

Already, the U.S. and EU are calling to eliminate tariffs and other non-tariff trade barriers for goods and services that help protect the environment and fight climate change. It is a lucrative market — the EU states that trade in green goods and services is growing twice as fast as global merchandise trade as a whole — and scrapping tariffs on solar panels and wind turbines may sound like a good idea, but most of these items will still be made in a low-wage country and need to be shipped thousands of miles via cargo ships using tons of bunker fuel. Unless WTO investment and patent rules that limit technology transfer are changed, developing countries will get no assist in developing such capacity themselves.

As the WTO and other multilateral institutions grab for a piece of the climate pie, the Responsible Trade Committee will include corporate globalization’s aggravation of global warming as part of our educational campaign on trade and the environment. We will also build on the Blue Green Alliance and work more closely with groups such as the Apollo Alliance. These organizations are calling for climate solutions that create jobs, and these should be jobs that go beyond just installing solar panels but foster the development of domestic green manufacturing technologies.

Check out:

From SLO to Malmo

The blog of the Santa Lucia Chapter’s European Smart Energy Study Tour March 24 - April 5, 2008

www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Nuclear industry wants a reboot,” by David Whitney, *The Tribune*, Mar. 16, 2008

“Powering local economy,” by Raven J. Railey, *The Tribune*, Mar. 16, 2008

Summary: More nuclear power plants will be popping up all over the country shortly, and SLO’s economy is getting a boost from all the workers coming here to work during the Diablo Canyon plant’s re-fueling and maintenance outage. All must bow before the awesome economic benefits of nuclear power.

Media candor about Mr. Moore’s source of income is rare and refreshing. Most reports that feature Moore’s advocacy of the nuclear “renaissance” are content to simply let him trade on his former Greenpeace credentials. For a fee, Moore is also happy to promote the clear cutting of forests, genetically modified crops and pesticides, and “sustainable” mining in developing countries.

Patrick Moore was a co-founder of anti-nuclear Greenpeace. Now Moore is an advocate paid by the nuclear industry.

Diablo is also replacing four steam generators, more than doubling its contract work force.... Out-of-town workers estimate they spend between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month locally.

Lost amid talk about crowded local restaurants and full hotels — a short-term influx — are the particulars

behind this extra-large crowd of outside workers: The controversial replacement of the steam generators at a cost exceeding three-quarters of a billion dollars. These were supposed to have lasted then entire 40-year life of the plant, but failed at the halfway mark. The cost for all this work, thanks to a decision by the Public Utilities Commission and an earlier consumer-unfriendly settlement between the state and PG&E, will be paid by electric customers and rate-payers—even though at the time the plant entered service, we were told that such “down time” would be “eaten” by PG&E shareholders. So let’s hope these workers are big tippers, because their barbecue dinners are being subsidized by San Luis residents every time we throw a light switch—for years to come.

The nuclear industry and its strongest legislative supporter, outgoing

Stoked by new federal subsidies and worries over global warming, the nuclear power industry is beginning to glow brightly once again.

New Mexico senator Pete Domenici, had wanted \$50 billion in taxpayer funded loan guarantees written into the 2007 energy bill to underwrite their “renaissance.” Stymied in the attempt, the nuclear lobby managed to attach a small program to another bill, totaling \$18.5 billion over 2 years, which must still be approved by congress on an annual basis. This is equal to the current skyrocketing estimated cost of two new reactors planned for Florida, hence insufficient for a government subsidized national nuclear expansion. (P.S.: Warren Buffett just pulled out of a reactor project in Idaho.)

Two San Luis Obispo-based organizations, the Mothers for Peace and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, have opposed nuclear power because of the waste-storage problem and other dangers associated with nuclear plants.



Actually the ANR opposes nuclear power largely on economic grounds. Maybe they should have been allowed to point that out. For a local angle to this national story—printed here in a reactor community— it might have been newsworthy to have a quote or statement from one or both of those local groups, considering that quotes from Fresno and Washington DC were included. Neither group ever heard from the reporter.

Global Climate Change CO₂urse

Save money,energy, the planet.....

More and more people are awakening to the reality of our changing climate and the huge challenges ahead for us. We need to be proactive to the crisis. Everyone is looking for ways to become part of the solution. This new course from the Northwest Earth Institute— www.NWI.org—is offered in response to that need, and for a tool for change.

Participants will explore the topic of global climate change with others, evaluate possible solutions and consider what they personally can do to reduce carbon footprints.

Classes will meet at the Sierra Club office in SLO, limited to 15 participants. There are 4 weekly meetings—time TBD by office availability and the wishes of those expressing interest.

There is a \$19 charge for the course book. This is a good place to get some answers and to share what you know. Sign up ASAP so the books may be ordered. Recent course graduate Meredith Whitaker will facilitate.

Call Shaba at the office for more info at 543-8717.



Call for Volunteers

by Shaba Mohseni, Volunteer Coordinator

I invite any members interested in helping out the Santa Lucia Chapter to contact me. 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!

Want to help? Fill this out

field(s) of expertise _____

hours available to donate to the Club _____

best days _____

available to work at office in downtown SLO _____

work at home _____

when can you start? _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Mail to:
Sierra Club, Attn: Shaba
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

or e-mail:
shaba.sierraclub8@gmail.com

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **April 10**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:

Sierra Club - Santa Lucia Chapter
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Recycle mercury containing Fluorescent Tubes and CFLs at county "Take Back" locations. See complete listing of locations at Integrated Waste Management (IWMA) links below
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<http://www.iwma.com/directory-aj/fluorescent%20tubes%20and%20bulbs.html>

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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.

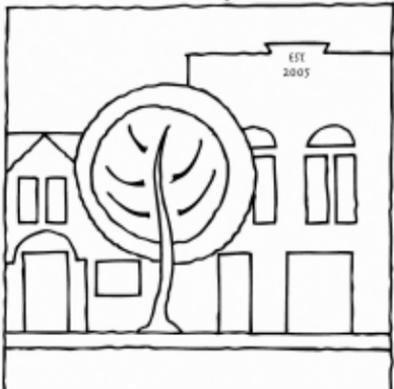
SLOCOG Board--1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

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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.

Wed., April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes. See website, or e-mail Gary Felsman for details. backpackingary1@gmail.com

Apr. 4-22, Cone Peak Trail Rehab. The Ventana Wilderness Alliance, in collaboration with the US Forest Service, has kicked off an ambitious year-long project to rehabilitate 9 back country trails in the spectacular Cone Peak area of the Los Padres National Forest, along the south end of the Big Sur coast. The Cone Peak Trails Network Project is an all-volunteer effort to improve access to some of the most rugged and ravishing wildlands in the world. Volunteers may join the trail crew for all or part of these dates: April 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Friday - Tuesday specific location TBA. April 18, 19, 20, 21, 22; Friday - Tuesday specific location TBA. Led by VWA Trail Crew Leader Mike Heard and VWA Trail Crew Chief Dave Knapp. Rain or the threat of rain cancels. Go to www.ventanawild.org or call (831) 423-3191.

Sat.-Mon. April 5-7, Birds, Flowers, and Fences in the Carrizo. An opportunity to visit and assist an outstanding and relatively unknown national monument. On Saturday, we will assist monument staff in the removal of fence wire to allow pronghorn antelope freer access to the range. Sunday is reserved for sightseeing. The views from the Caliente Mountains are spectacular; if rain has been sufficient, there will be spring flowers; the monument is known for the number and variety of raptors. Those who can



Corral Creek hike, 3/15/08

stay on Monday will continue our work with the monument staff. Contact leader Craig Deutsche, 310-477-6670, or deutsche@earthlink.net CNRCC Desert Com

April 6th, 8 a.m. TrailWerks at MdO. We'll be working on the middle section of the new Hazard Peak Trail. That is the section from essentially the Eucalyptus trees up to the intersection with Ridge. As you probably know that section has been unofficially open to hikers and bikers for a couple of months. But it obviously needs to be a LOT of work in terms of widening, accenting grade reversals and making sure it is all a full bench cut. If you haven't been out there to ride or hike the new upper section you should because all the nearly countless hours folks invested in its design and construction *really* paid off. Despite some serious storms, essentially *no* erosion occurred anywhere on the trail. That was the goal - create a trail that is fun to ride/hike and that comes as close to being self-maintaining as possible. Meet at Camp Keep at 8 a.m. for breakfast snack, lunch for those that volunteer.

Sat.-Sun., April 12-13, Carrizo Plains Camping/Hiking Weekend. We will meet at Selby Rocks Public Campground at 9am on Saturday to hike as a group at a yet to be determined place in that area. You are welcome to come out and just relax and socialize if you don't want to hike. There may be a short hike Sunday morning as well. Participants are encouraged to come out Friday evening if possible. If interested, we will have a group potluck Saturday dinner. Please contact Carlos @ 546-0317 if you are going and if you need info/directions. Please contact Cathy @ 541-6862 about the potluck.

Sat.-Sun., April 12-13, Birds and Beat the Tamarisk-Carcamp and Service Trip. Help remove the invasive salt cedar on the wetlands along the shore of Owens Lake at the base of the spectacular eastern Sierra Nevada scarp. Work several hours each day, probably, and take time to enjoy the birds and scenic attractions. We'll car camp at Diaz Lake just south of Lone Pine where birds congregate and also watch the migratory birds on the re-watered part of the Owens Lake. Bring camping essentials (though motels are close), food, water, work clothes and gloves. Plan on a happy hour and potluck dinner on Saturday evening. Resource specialist: Mike Prather. For more information and to sign up for trip contact leaders: Cal and Letty French, 14140 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446 (805-239-7338) Prefer e-mail ccfrench@tcsn.net Santa Lucia Chapter/CNRCC Desert Committee

Sat.-Sun., April 12-13, Wind Wolves, Tejon Ranch, Un-named Pk (5152'). Come learn about the campaign to create a National or State Park in the Tejon Ranch in southwestern Kern County. Spend the weekend at Wind Wolves Preserve in an environment very similar to Tejon. We will tour the proposed devel-

opment areas, as well as areas within Wind Wolves. Saturday night potluck. Bring your ideas and become part of the campaign. Group size limited to 30. Esase/sase, phones, rideshare to Ldr: Kent Schwitkis, schwitkii@earthlink.net, 4514 Lenore St., Torrance, CA 90503, (310-540-5558). Naturalist/Co-Ldr: Sherry Ross. Angeles Chapter (Tejon-Tehachapi Park Task Force; Hundred Peaks and Natural Science Sections; Santa Clarita, Palos Verdes-South Bay, and Long Beach Groups)

Sun., April 13., 0930, BLACK LAKE CANYON. Meet at junction of Leguna Negra & Guad.Rd. to hike into cyn & Xenon Rd. See erosion ditch, euke invasion and Native Oak Woodland. Dog & kids ok. bdenneen@kcbx.net

Sat., April 19th, 7:30 a.m. Hike the Santa Lucia Trail to Pimko-lam (Junipero Serra) Peak. Join the leader on this annual hike to the highest peak in the northern Los Padres National Forest. This is a very strenuous hike and not for beginners. We will cover 12 miles and gain 3800 ft in elevation. We will begin hiking through a meadow with wonderful rock formations and then transition through a forest with blue oaks, followed by manzanita, chaparral, and finally a pine forest near the summit. The view from the top is fantastic and there is an old fire tower at the top. Bring plenty of water, lunch, snacks, and dress for the weather. The weather at the top can be unpredictable. Meet at the Las Tablas park and ride in Templeton which is just west of Highway 101 at the Las Tablas exit in Templeton. Plan to be out all day. To confirm and obtain info, please call Chuck at 805-441-7597. (5F)

Sat, Apr. 19th, 10 a.m. Islay Hill. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling effective techniques for using trekking poles. Join us on April 19, 10 a.m., Islay Hill Open Space for easy hike with spectacular views of Edna Valley to the south and Morros to the north. From Broad, go east on Tank Farm, turn right on Wavertree, left on Spanish Oaks and veer right onto Sweetbay and park near the cul de

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

Sierra Club California Fundraising Cruises Scheduled for 2008

April 4-7; May 2-5; July 18-21; 4 islands (\$775)
August 23-27; September 13-17; 5 islands (\$925)

Explore the wild, windswept islands of Channel Island National Park. In spring the islands are ablaze with wildflowers. In summer, the pristine waters of the Marine Sanctuary entice swimmers, snorkelers and kayakers. All year long, enjoy unusual plants and flowers, seals and frolicking sea lions, sea and land birds.

All cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel *Turth*. Fee includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and point out interesting features.

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



Photo by Joaquin Palting

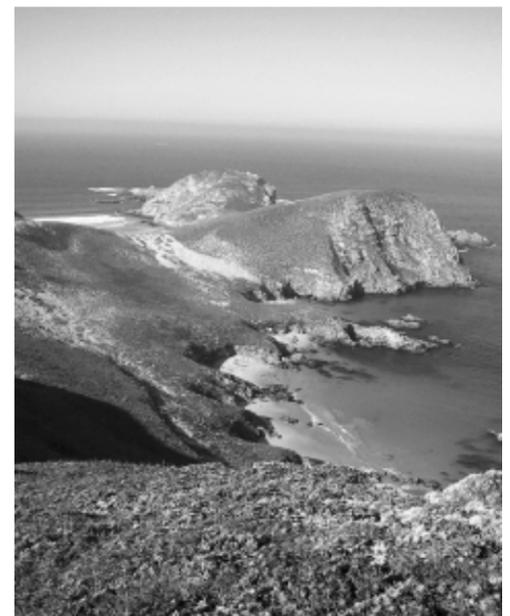
sac. Contact David Georgi at polecatleader@gmail.com for upcoming activities. Bipedes welcome. (805) 458-5575

Fri-Sun, April 25-27, Pinnacles National Monument Weekend.

Join in for a weekend of camping, hiking and potlucking at Pinnacles. Camp out Friday and Saturday nights, full day of hiking on Saturday, shorter hike on Sunday. Hopefully we will catch wildflowers still in bloom. Campground is located on the east side of the park; carpooling is encouraged. Plan for potluck on Saturday evening (optional potluck on Friday for early arrivals). Ten persons maximum, \$12 per person for the weekend; your check reserves your spot. **Please let me know before March 23rd.** Checks payable to Tess Taggart, P.O. Box 15040 SLO, CA 93406. I can be reached at 805-550-7440.

Sun., April 27, 0930, NATURE HIKE at DANA. Meet at Adobe on Oak Glen, see riparian habitat, adjacent habitat & SLO County's historical landmark. bdenneen@kcbx.net

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.



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