



SIERRA
CLUB

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

May 2008
Volume 45 No. 5

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General Meeting

Getting Clean: What our Climate Protection Plan means to you

7 p.m., Friday, May 23
St. Stephens Church
SLO

- see page 2

40th Anniversary Banquet

6:30 p.m., Saturday, May 31
- last remaining seats!

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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

Climate Protection is Coming to SLO

Air District and Sierra Club team up to implement climate protection plan

The board of directors of the SLO County Air Pollution Control District has awarded \$10,000 to the Sierra Club from the County's Green House Gas Emission Reduction Grant Program. The Santa Lucia Chapter will administer the funds to conduct oversight and maintenance of a Technical Assistance Program that will aid local governments in developing green house gas inventories and action plans for emission reductions.

The action was part of a larger grant program that will provide a total of \$137,000 to local governments to assist with the implementation of the approved GHG Reduction Plans.

The Air District is acting to fulfill the mandate of Assembly Bill 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. "Significant action is required by every sector of society statewide to meet California's targets of reducing green house gases to 1990 levels by 2020, and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050," said Larry Allen, APCD Director. "The APCD Board adopted a Climate Protection Plan in 2005 which, when put into effect, will also reduce harmful local air pollutants and provide public health benefits as well as curbing the county's green house gas emissions."

"The climate change initiatives of the Sierra Club and the APCD have been on parallel tracks for several years," said Karen Merriam, Santa Lucia Chapter Chair. "The APCD's Climate Protection Plan encourages local governments to join the Cities for Climate Protection Program, and the Sierra Club's 'Cool Cities' program seeks to sign on cities to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection



Let's do this! Left to right: Over lunch at Novo's in SLO last February, APCD Air Quality Specialist Aeron Arlin-Genet, Chapter Chair Karen Merriam, Sierra Club California Energy Committee Co-chair Ken Smokoska, and Air Pollution Control Officer Larry Allen discussed the Memo of Understanding with the Santa Lucia Chapter to implement the Climate Protection Program.

Agreement. Both programs include provisions for development of green house gas emission inventories and implementation of action plans for the reduction of GHG emissions. So this was a perfect fit."

Sierra Club will be working with Cal Poly faculty and students in the Empower Poly Coalition, consisting of over a dozen campus sustainability clubs, who will gain real-world experience in curbing global warming as

members of technical resource teams assigned to each local jurisdiction within the county under the Sierra Club's oversight. Students will receive class credit for participating in the program.

A Local Government Implementation Program will provide funding to the cities and county once final Green House Gas Reduction Plans have been adopted in the various jurisdictions.

On the European Energy Tour

By Jim Cole and Pam Stein

March 26:
London Mayors Office and
Association of Clinical Biochemistry
London, England
Hosts: Andy Deacon, Andrew Judge,
Prof. Maria Lee, Chris Church.

The London Mayors Office and
Greater London Authority (GLA) have

a clear and comprehensive action plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2025; this Climate Change Action Plan can be downloaded at:
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/environment/climate-change/ccap.

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Ag Killer at Planning Commission May 22

Your presence urgently needed!

By Elizabeth Rolph and Kim Pasciuto, co-chairs, AgTourism Coalition [ATC]

The Planning Commission's proposed Events Ordinance will be coming to the Planning Commission on May 22nd. It's time to make our voices heard! This proposal needs major revision. While portrayed as

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photo:Kevin Walsh

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.

Add your voice to protect the planet. Join the Sierra Club today.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

General Meeting

Getting Clean: A preview of the Climate Protection Program

Find out what the Sierra Club is doing to combat global warming in every city in San Luis Obispo County and get us to a clean energy economy, and learn how you can get involved.



7 p.m., Friday, May 23
St. Stephens Episcopal Church
1334 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo
- Pismo Street entrance

Bringing It All Back Home

This issue features an account of the tour the Santa Lucia Chapter led through northern Europe from March 25 through April 5. We visited cities similar to those here on the Central Coast in size or climate or both that showcase what can be done to curb climate change, pollution, and unsustainable consumption when you've got the right policies in place. After spending two weeks in places like England's Beddington Zero Energy Development, the Energy Center of the Netherlands, Denmark's "energy island" of Samsø, and the Western Harbor district of Malmö, Sweden — a model of sustainable urban development powered entirely by wind, water and sun — here's what we found: Renewable energy + energy efficiency + smart growth = cost savings + jobs + strong economy + livable planet.

The lesson was repeatedly driven home for all 21 members of our group. Across the ocean, the winds of change are blowing strong.

Over here, a breeze is picking up. Pismo Beach has switched all its traffic signals from energy-wasting incandescent bulbs to low-energy light emitting diodes. SLO has done the same, and the City Council is converting its municipal fleet to hybrid vehicles. And there's the other big story in this issue: The Sierra Club and the Air Pollution Control District are implementing the county's Climate Action Plan — taking inventories of local greenhouse gas emissions to set reduction targets. These targets will then be built in to clean energy, conservation and efficiency programs designed to meet the legal mandate of AB 32, California's 2006 Global Warming Solutions Act.

This didn't happen without laying some groundwork. In October 2006, the Strategic Energy Alliance for Change, a coalition of the business community, county agencies, educators and environmentalists, hosted the Smart Energy Solutions Summit at the SLO Vets Hall. The alliance was

so new that we didn't have a name yet (SEA Change — get it?), but we knew we were onto something when 300 people showed up on a Tuesday to hear entrepreneurs, architects, city planners and visionaries, both local and from far afield, talk about breaking our increasingly unsustainable fossil fuel dependency and getting to a low-carbon, renewable energy economy that has a chance of saving the world from the worst effects of global warming.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) — a means by which several cities or regions can band together to increase their buying power, leave the private utility serving them and purchase green energy at lower rates — is the best means we have at hand in California to bring about a green energy economy. It was a term that had never been uttered at a public gathering in this county until the Sierra Club introduced it at the County Planning Department's first public workshop on the update of the Conservation Element, five days before the October 2006 Energy Summit. At the summit, CCA was the subject of the keynote address by Paul Fenn, the author of California's Community Choice law. CCA was a hot topic again at the SEA Change Regional Energy Conference in August 2007, attended by more than a hundred elected officials, planners and city managers and staff throughout the county to start laying out the regional roadmap for how to get there from here.

We're starting to get there. For those who accompanied us to Europe last month, there's no question in our minds: We've now seen where "there" is.

We hope you'll agree when you read the account of that trip in this issue, and that you'll agree our community can do what those communities have done. We can secure a healthy future in which there is enough to go around, and the getting of it does not mean we must lay waste to the only home we have.

SANTA LUCIAN

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The *Santa Lucian* is published 10 times a year. Articles, environmental information and letters to the editor are welcome. The deadline for each issue is the 11th of the prior month.

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Outings, events, and more!

It's Too Darn Hot

Santa Margarita Ranch environmental impact report stumbles over global warming on its second try

One of the biggest and most potentially destructive proposed developments in SLO County history, the Santa Margarita Ranch project has a record number of "unmitigatable adverse environmental impacts." It also has failed to adequately assess its green house gas

emissions and potential contribution to global warming, as is required under state law.

The following comments submitted by the Santa Lucia Chapter on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report focused on this crucial failing.

March 25, 2008

Martha Miller, Project Manager
County Planning & Building .
976 Osos St., Rm. 300
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

RE: Santa Margarita Ranch Agricultural Cluster Subdivision Project /Future Development Program — Revised Draft EIR

Dear Ms. Miller,

Thank you for adding an analysis of the project's climate change impacts to the Revised DEIR per the Sierra Club's DEIR comments of April 11, 2007, on the absence of any analysis of the significant environmental impacts to and potential mitigations of Global Climate Change, which rendered the original DEIR inadequate.

The attempt in the Revised DEIR to

analyze the project's GCC impacts, however, is cursory and inadequate as it is restricted entirely to emissions "due to fuel combustion in motor vehicles" (4.2.3e).

Despite the Revised DEIR's notation that "N2O is produced by microbial processes ...which occur in fertilizer containing nitrogen" and "Anthropogenic sources of N2O include agricultural soil management, animal manure management, [and] sewage treatment," the RDEIR ignores all these components of GHG emissions, their impacts and mitigation as pertain to the proposed project.

4.2.3 Global Climate Change

d. [re 2006 California Climate Action Team Report (CCAT, 2006)] "The Climate Action Team's strategies serve as current statewide approaches to reducing the State's GHG emissions. [C]onsistency with these strategies is assessed to determine if the contribution of the Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision and/or Future Development Program to cumulative GHG emissions is considerable."

The California Climate Action Registry specifically cites the conversion of oak woodlands as a carbon emission.

The California Oak Foundation cites three GHG-related oak resource factors that must be considered where significant oak impacts occur:

1. How much carbon is sequestered in the impacted trees?
2. how much potential carbon sequestration will be lost due to oak seedling, sapling and tree impacts?
3. How much sequestered carbon will be released if the impacted oaks are burned?

The notation at 4.3 on mitigation of oak loss as an impact on Biological Resources — "Despite mitigation, impacts would remain a Class I impact in the interim period prior to establishment of mature replacement habitat because of the length of time required for replacement trees to reach maturity and have similar habitat values as those that are replaced" — pertains equally if not moreso to a discussion of Global Climate Change impacts from the direct removal, indirect impacts on and conversion of 60 acres of oak woodlands. The DEIR must include such a discussion. Discussion of GCC impacts must

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Myth and Santa Margarita

On April 17, Fifth District Supervisor candidate Debbie Arnold and Kevin Kester of the Cattlemen's Association went on KVEC's Dave Congalton show to talk about agriculture and development. They had occasion to discuss the history of the proposed Santa Margarita Ranch development. Both dodged the question of their support for the massive development and its unprecedented number of severe environmental impacts by citing the occasion ten years ago when the owner offered a conservation easement rather than exercise the property's full build-out potential. The easement, they said, had been opposed by environmentalists who insisted that it protect wildlife instead of working agriculture, causing a good deal to fall through because it was not a perfect deal. Arnold and Kester mourned the "missed opportunity."

It's a popular story. And a false one.

Like all tools, conservation easements can be made badly or well, and can be wielded in manner that is useful or does damage. The Santa Margarita Ranch conservation deal was proposed by a consortium of local developers and Southern California investors who had purchased the ranch and were trolling for free start-up capital to finance their development plans. The level of development envisioned in their "conservation easement" included converting 3,000 acres of valley oak woodland and riparian habitat to vineyards, building several wineries, a golf course, dude ranch, executive retreat and at least fifty homes. In essence, the conservation area was to be limited to the strips of land between the development and the undevelopable hillsides.

Fortunately, they did not have enough political influence to persuade funding agencies to commit public funds to their sham easement, and for that reason were forced to abandon the project. The developers blamed the environmental community as a way to save face, creating a popular local myth.

Cambria's Forest Failure

Let's not repeat inefensible practices in the name of defensible space

By Lynne Harkins
Conservation Committee

For many Cambria forest lovers, there were some very alarming, painful times last spring as many open lots got "cleared" with little apparent regard for the health of the forest itself. The relentless engine straining and rumbling cacophony of tractors equipped with gouging scoops and blades fore and aft filled the air as substantial swaths of vegetation-habitat for quail, songbirds, spring fawns and other wildlife-were scraped away and heaped up, often along the roadside, for later disposal. Some piles were left to dry -- essentially becoming roadside kindling -- for six weeks before the contractor returned with a chipper.

This draconian approach was pursued by the contractor who had the lot clearing contract from the Cambria CSD in 2007. Last year's CCSD defensible space ordinance, done without input from the Cambria Forest Committee, led to what many judged to be an ill-conceived, counter-productive approach by the Cambria CSD and Fire Dept. in dealing with forest and fire issues. At a recent community meeting, John Brannon, a retired fire chief turned writer, said that a major fire in Cambria would be dealt with by using California Dept of Forestry(CalFire) forest firefighting strategies (airborne attack/retardant etc). It appears that CCSD persists in using largely urban thinking and methods in evaluating how to deal with the forest and the potential for fire. In the local land trust's "Greenspace Insider," mailed to all Cambrians last spring, the de-

fensible space ordinance was described as "dreadful for forest health;" offering the following partial list of forest management missteps:
*Creating avenues for increased pathogen infections
*Increasing soil erosion



The wrong way: This happened in Special Project Area 2, described the CCSD as "an environmentally sensitive area requiring special open space and viewshed protection."

- *Severely degrading/eradicating native mammal and native, as well as migratory, bird habitat
- *Decreasing water retention, carbon sequestration and native plant regeneration
- *Reducing native vegetation cover by encouraging non-native weed species.

What's clear is that seasonally denuding

parts of the forest is not a sustainable way to reduce hazards from fire. The smart and responsible thing to do is to secure the services of a forest ecologist to evaluate the forest in Cambria. Such a professional could bring the knowledge and skill sets required to mediate between the needs of the forest and its creatures and the concerns of the human community and the Cambria Fire Dept.

Anyone fortunate enough to live in this naturally beautiful place will hopefully support the proposition that stewardship of the forest needs to be a paramount concern. Fortunately, there are also approaches to lot maintenance that respect the needs of the forest and that implement the Cambria Forest Management Plan.

The Cambria CSD can and must rectify it's policy in this year's defensible space ordinance and must better select and direct the performance of it's lot maintenance contractor(s). We urge that it consider the long-term

Train Day!

All aboard at SLO Amtrak station Saturday, May 10, noon to 4 p.m.

By David Weisman

All of San Luis County is invited down to the San Luis Obispo Amtrak station on Saturday, May 10, to celebrate the first National Train Day.

May 10, 1869, was the day the Golden Spike was driven to connect the first transcontinental railroad. Trains have played and important role in U.S. history. Their most important role right now is clear: Trains are 17 percent more efficient than domestic airline travel and 21 percent more efficient than auto travel on a per-passenger-mile basis. When combined with all modes of transportation, passenger railroads emit only 0.2 percent of the travel industry's

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Ag Ordinance

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an effort to help agriculture and preserve ag land, this proposal will do just the opposite. It will open the door wide, permitting new, more lucrative commercial, retail, and hospitality uses on our agricultural and rural lands. Think event and conference centers, weddings, concerts—all in the farther reaches of our rural areas. Ag land will be permanently converted to event uses; rural roads will become congested and more dangerous, prompting the county to widen them—there go the oak trees; residents will be expected to put up with amplified music weekend after weekend. Once opened, this door cannot be closed. *The county should go back to the drawing board.*

What are the problems?

Way too much in the wrong places. The proposal will greatly expand the numbers of events in rural areas. Currently, for all practical purposes, only wineries can host public events on rural and agricultural land. The new proposal gives the same or even more generous entitlements to most rural parcel owners. It will allow 20 Special Events per year on any 20 or more acre Ag-zoned parcel planted with a token amount of agriculture and up to 40 Special Events per year on any 20 or more acre Rural Land or Rural Residential parcel—with or without agriculture. Any of these sites will then be allowed up to 250 people per event with considerably less scrutiny than is currently the case. With a little extra scrutiny, the proposal allows any number of people. That's a whole lot of new rural impact.

And if it's allowed, it will happen. For example, did you know that some of our larger wine events already host well over 1,000 people? Think how a number of such events at one time might impact some of our more remote neighborhoods. There are a host of issues including emergency access, road safety and congestion, noise, air quality, trespass and protection of neighboring agriculture, and threat of fire—to name but a few. Rural areas are not the place for lots of very large events.

Happily, the issue is not whether large events or events un-related to ag occur, only *where* they occur. Events—concerts, weddings, motocross, circuses, etc.—are all terrific, but they should be located off of our valuable ag lands and where infrastructure is adequate.

Benefits matched to the wrong recipients — the proposal gives entitlements to all landowners, not just those in active agriculture. We support opportunities that will promote agriculture in the county and help our real farmers and ranchers make a living from their land. This proposal does not do that. If we are to encourage the agriculture that will preserve our ag lands and, thereby, the opportunities for locally grown food and open space for us and for future generations, we must focus all our attention on meaningful, active, commercial agriculture. New subsidies and entitlements should not be spread around to all landowners; they should assist active farmers and ranchers with their direct marketing—helping them make more money through *real* agriculture. Furthermore, in the limited instances where the proposal does require active agriculture, it only requires a token amount and that agriculture

does not have to be commercial. So, no link to direct marketing.

Proposal is basically unintelligible and unenforceable. The county is offering no statement of what this ordinance is supposed to accomplish, so there is no way to assess what they are really trying to do or how good it is. They need to preface the proposal with a statement of intent tied to our Ag Policies and Goals. It is also extremely difficult to sort out who is allowed to do what where. There are several different types of events. Different rules apply to different types. Sometimes standards apply; sometimes they don't. Important terms are not defined—for example “natural resources” when on-site “natural resources” qualify a parcel for a variety of events on ag land. And no provisions are made for long-term enforcement—already a problem with our limited event offerings. This lack of clarity is an invitation for costly permitting fights, abuse, and increasing enforcement problems.

What's a Better Option?

Our farmers and ranchers do need the help of a clear, enforceable ag tourism package that supports the direct marketing activities that make their agriculture profitable. But the provisions of that package must focus on the needs of *real* agriculturalists actively engaged in agriculture. They must also offer a balance between the needs of agriculture, the needs of neighbors, and the need to preserve our agricultural resources. Several principles, if used to develop a good ordinance, would provide that focus and promote that balance. In AG, RL, and RR zoned areas, a good ordinance will:

- Require a meaningful, commercial, active agricultural operation on site before allowing any new or accessory uses in agricultural and rural zoning categories. The purpose of the events should be to make agriculture profitable by offering better opportunities for direct marketing.
- Require new or accessory uses to *relate* to the agriculture on site. Plenty of direct marketing opportunities; no circuses, out-door concerts, for-profit wedding centers, and the like.
- Events need scale: The size of the event should have a relationship to the size of the site, the amount of ag on site, and the size of the road it is located on. Scale helps to ensure that there is adequate infrastructure (road safety, road maintenance, emergency services, trash collection) and natural resources (water in particular) to serve both residents and guests. This is also a way to offer a balance to the burden that events put on neighborhoods.

There should be only one exception to these general principals: non-profit events. These are good for our community, but they present the same burdens as any other event.



You Killed That Bill!

Thanks to the outpouring of concern from the public, including Sierra Club members (see “Kill This Bill,” April *Santa Lucian*), Senator Denise Ducheny (D-San Diego) failed in her attempt last month to gut the California Coastal Act and the Coastal Commission.

Her bill, SB 1295, would have struck down the ability of Coastal Commissioners to appeal Coastal Development Permits issued by cities and counties for projects that would violate Coastal Act provisions protecting sensitive habitat and cultural resources and assuring the public

access to the coast. The bill would have made life much easier for developers, and brought chaos to the system that assures the compliance of development projects with the Coastal Act and Local Coastal Plans.

The bill went before the Senate Natural Resources Committee in Sacramento on April 8, where, after brief discussion, it went down in a 5-3 vote. Several members of the committee mentioned the flood of calls and faxes their offices had received from constituents expressing opposition to the bill.

Take a bow!

Cambria

continued from page 3

health and safety of the entire forest community by seeking direction from a forest ecologist.

It would be a wise investment; yielding many dividends in terms of whole forest community health and viability.

There is now a draft ordinance from the Cambria Forest Committee.

The ordinance, if adhered to, allows for a more nuanced approach to “fuel modification.” It is not innovative enough and needs to be improved upon, in the view of Rick Hawley of Greenspace, who abstained when the Forest Committee voted on whether to send the draft ordinance to the CCSD. The public will have very little if any opportunity to review the draft.

Why is the Cambria CSD not using this opportunity to engage and educate the public about fire safety and forest well-being? Cambria Fire Chief Putney cited the deadline for getting names onto the tax rolls for collec-



The right way: Deftly removed plants, without the destructive intrusion of big machinery. Chipping was done within a week.

tion of District imposed fees. That's hardly an ecosystem-focused basis for forest management!

Isn't the Cambria Monterey Pine forest ecosystem -- one of only five such ecosystems on the planet -- worthy of mindful application of the best that fire and forest sciences can offer? We believe that most Cambrians are ready to answer “yes” to that question. Now it's a matter of whether the directors of the CCSD will act properly as stewards.

We'll see, as it's evident that they are being observed widely in many parts of the forest.

Non-profit events should be allowed with simplified permitting provided they are reasonable in number and size and provided they have the same safeguards for public safety, on-going agricultural operations, and neighborhood compatibility.

How can you help improve the first Ag Tourism offering?

This first piece of a six part ag tourism package will set many precedents for the pieces that follow. It is very important that this draft be sent back for a major re-write. So, please let your voice be heard; let your county officials know where you

stand. Write, email, and/or join us on May 22nd at 8:30 a.m. at the Planning Commission hearing to speak your mind. Ask the Commissioners to send the current version back for redrafting and to direct that the next version:

- Be clear, simple, and enforceable,
- Have a Statement of Intent, so goals are clear; and most important,
- Be consistent with our three key principles: In AG, RL, and RR zoning, new entitlements only go to those with meaningful, commercial agriculture on-site; new uses relate to that on-site agriculture; and new uses be appropriately scaled to the size of the parcel, the road, and the amount of agriculture.

Send your comments to the Planning Commission by emailing them to: Ramona Hedges hedges@co.slo.ca.us or Ellie Porter eporter@co.slo.ca.us **and please copy us at** agtourismcoalition@yahoo.com

THANKS FOR ANY HELP YOU CAN GIVE! See you May 22nd at the hearing.

A Planning Scandal

“There is a powerful odor of mendacity in this room.”
- Big Daddy, *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*

The Sierra Club wants the County land in the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area to be recognized as a buffer area – no vehicles allowed – as it was designated in the County’s certified Local Coastal Plan in 1988. The California Department of Parks and Recreation wants to ignore the LCP, as it has done for twenty years, and continue to keep that land open to vehicles. So do off-roaders and the off-road vehicle lobby.

It now appears that someone wants to ignore the Local Coastal Plan so badly he/she is willing to go to extreme and reckless lengths to grease the rails for the sale of the County land and keep the cars on the dunes.

Here’s what happened:
On January 25, 2007, the County Planning Commission heard a public appeal of the Planning Director’s determination that selling the County land in Oceano Dunes to State Parks would be in conformity with the County’s General Plan and LCP. Planning staff prepared a staff report supporting the Planning Director’s assurance and listing applicable land use policies in the Local Coastal Plan. One was South County Coastal Planning Area Standard 9, regulating off-road vehicle use in the dunes. The staff report told the Planning Commission that Planning Standard 9 reads as you see it here (above right). But, as is obvious when compared with the actual text of Planning Standard 9 (below right), the staff report omitted two sentences, both about the buffer: “**These areas are identified in Figure 4,**” and “**The map of ORV use areas indicates a buffer area along these critical interface areas.**”

Figure 4 (below), is the part of the LCP that State Parks and County staff want to ignore, as it graphically displays the fact that County land in the ODSVRA, currently given over to vehicular recreation, is supposed to be a no-vehicles zone. County staff said at

that January 25 meeting that Figure 4 was an anomaly that needed to be changed, and have stated since that it is an overlooked leftover from a previous draft of the Land Use Policy, and that “it now conflicted with the text of the Local Coastal Plan.”

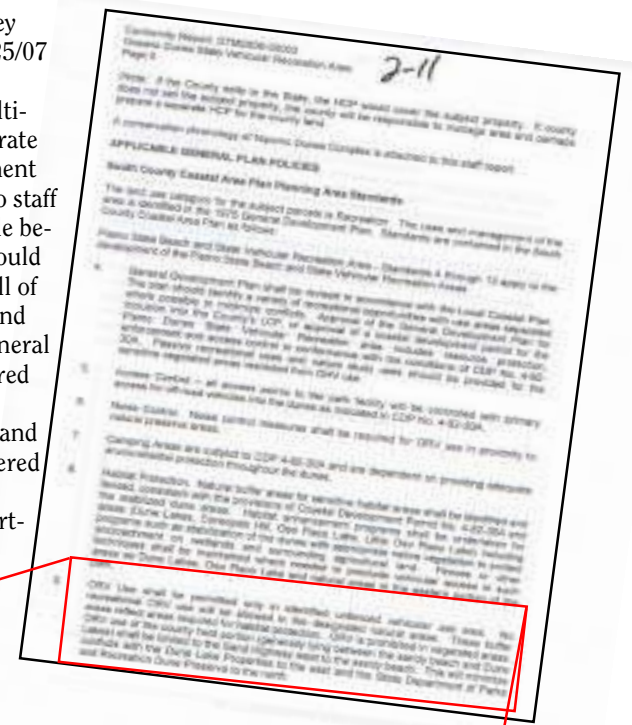
It is hard to avoid the conclusion that some person or persons – perhaps acting at the behest of another person or persons – sought to buttress that false argument with artful omissions so as to deceive the Planning Commission as to what the LCP actually says. Nowhere in the staff report was Figure 4 its specific buffer designation mentioned. And for good measure, the references to it in our land use policies were removed.

Figure 4, once we brought it to their attention, became the basis for the Planning Commission’s vote to overturn the Planning Director’s conformity determination. It is now the basis of the Sierra Club’s lawsuit against State Parks. In the course of preparing that

litigation, environmental attorney Babak Naficy discovered the 01/25/07 staff report’s sleight-of-hand.

The County Supervisors are ultimately responsible for the corporate culture in the Planning Department and the message that gets sent to staff as to what is and is not acceptable behavior. In the latter category should be any attempt to subvert the will of the voters and elected officials, and the planning process and the General Plan in an effort to secure a desired vote.

It doesn’t matter where you stand on the Oceano Dunes or endangered species or off-road recreation: Something is wrong in the Department of Planning, and it needs investigation and correction.



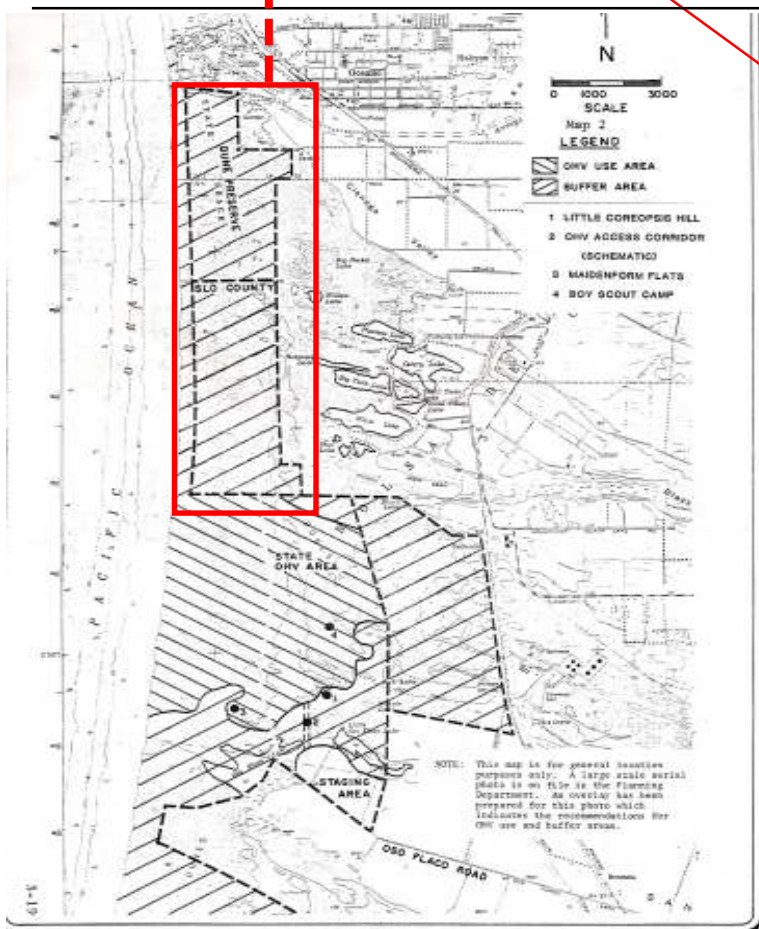
9. ORV Use shall be permitted only in identified unfenced vehicular use area. No recreational ORV use will be allowed in the designated natural areas. These buffer areas reflect areas required for habitat protection. ORV is prohibited in vegetated areas. ORV use of the county held portion (generally lying between the sandy beach and Dune Lakes) shall be limited to the Sand Highway west to the sandy beach. This will minimize conflicts with the Dune Lake Properties to the east and the State Department of Parks and Recreation Dune Preserve to the north.

Above: What the Jan. 25, 2007, Staff Report told the Planning Commission the Local Coastal Plan says.

Below: What the Local Coastal Plan really says.

9. ORV Use Area. ORV use shall be permitted only in identified unfenced vehicular use area. These areas are identified in Figure 4. No recreational ORV use will be allowed in the designated natural areas. These buffer areas reflect areas required for habitat protection and generally recognize the established lease agreement with Union Oil for the areas adjacent to the eastern portion of the park. ORV is prohibited in all vegetated areas. (LCP)

ORV use of the county held portion (generally lying between the sandy beach and Dune Lakes) shall be limited to the Sand Highway west to the sandy beach. This will minimize conflicts with the Dune Lake Properties to the east and the State Department of Parks and Recreation Dune Preserve to the north. The map of ORV use areas indicates a buffer area along these critical interface areas. (LCP)



9. ORV Use Area. ORV use shall be permitted only in identified unfenced vehicular use area. These areas are identified in Figure 4. No recreational ORV use will be allowed in the designated natural areas. These buffer areas reflect areas required for habitat protection and generally recognize the established lease agreement with Union Oil for the areas adjacent to the eastern portion of the park. ORV is prohibited in all vegetated areas. (LCP)

ORV use of the county held portion (generally lying between the sandy beach and Dune Lakes) shall be limited to the Sand Highway west to the sandy beach. This will minimize conflicts with the Dune Lake Properties to the east and the State Department of Parks and Recreation Dune Preserve to the north. The map of ORV use areas indicates a buffer area along these critical interface areas. (LCP)

“Ever since the Coastal Commission issued a permit allowing the use of the area, and the fact that we have a certified LCP and map that shows it’s a buffer area, we’ve been intending to change that map.”

-- Matt Janssen, County Planning Public Information Division Manager, Jan. 25, 2007, Planning Commission meeting.

Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

- “Nostalgic for Atascadero’s heyday,” by Chris Day, *The Tribune*, Mar. 1, 2008
- “Opposition to Wal-Mart is the main purpose itself,” by Ray Johnson, *The Tribune*, Mar. 11, 2008
- “Opposition to Wal-Mart is a wasted effort,” by Bob Cuddy, *The Tribune*, Mar. 16, 2008
- “Wal-Mart isn’t a threat,” by John Crippen, *New Times*, Mar. 20-27, 2008
- “After all, it’s just a store,” by Gordon Mullin, *The Tribune*, Apr. 11, 2008

Summary: A Wal-Mart SuperCenter is just a big store, and having one in Atascadero would be good for business, a boon to citizens and a source of revenue for the city, rather than the opposite of all those things. Several writers make the Paso Robles Wal-Mart comparison without mentioning that the Paso Wal-Mart is not a SuperCenter, dismiss studies and data on the impacts of SuperCenters on communities without citing any contrary data, and put forward anecdotes or their personal beliefs in response.

I also understand that many other desirable businesses aren't interested in locating in Atascadero as long as we continue this misguided economic development idea of growing with mom-and-pop stores.

Why can't these people find something important to worry about?... The choices we make are in most cases shaped by the forces that molded us. But for heaven's sake, what sort of mold would lead us to go through all this toil and struggle simply to keep a store from coming to town when real people need help?

I fondly remember Beno's...Williams Bros., Sprouse Reitz and Coronet.... I think we all need to set aside our differences and start thinking about what is best for our city.

It is the very basis of capitalism that the consumer is king -- not business. The retail trade is a tough industry to play in, and Wal-Mart is the 500-pound gorilla....

The foundation of capitalism is creative destruction...companies will rise and then inevitably die.

It's a fallacy to say that Wal-Mart pays poor wages and benefits. Compared to whom?

Wal-Mart does, however, offer benefits, including medical, which in this day and age is worth its weight in gold.

The tax revenue alone would be a blessing for Atascadero.

The revenue received by Wal-Mart will allow us to protect and maintain the downtown area of beauty and character that we all love.

Assemblyman Blakeslee Names “Green Goods” his Small Business of the Year

Atascadero business Green Goods has been honored by Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee as his “2007 Small Business of the Year.” The business, co-owned by Brian and Mikel Robertson, was selected by Blakeslee because of its innovative approach to promoting resource conservation.

“Green Goods has not only found a profitable commercial opportunity,” said Blakeslee, “but they’ve done so combining their passions and know-

how to provide something of value to consumers and our environment.”

At the shop in Atascadero, the two brothers provide healthy options for the homes and businesses of the Central Coast such as environmentally friendly cabinets, water conservation technologies and non toxic paints. Inspired to encourage energy efficiency and water conservation, healthy indoor air quality, and conservation of resources, Green Goods

is leading the way with their holistic business model.

“While others around the state are talking about a market for green products,” said Blakeslee, “the Central Coast is proving a leader in actually delivering.”

Blakeslee will present the award to the Robertsons at a special ceremony of the State Assembly in Sacramento on May 28th.



Mikel Robertson

Big Box Swindle: The True Cost of Mega-Retailers and the Fight for America's Independent Businesses, by Stacy Mitchell, 2006, Beacon Press, www.beacon.org

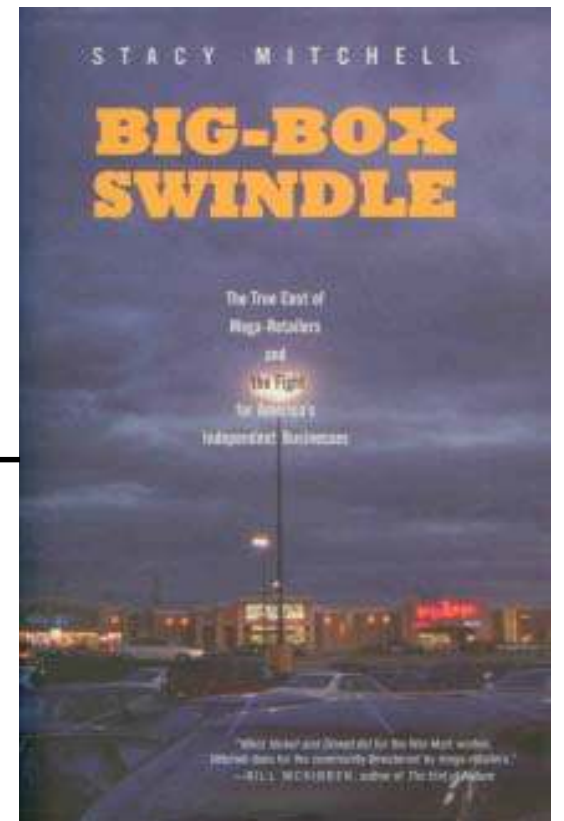
Many believe, wrote Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, author of *The Curse of Bigness* and a strong advocate of vesting both economic and political power in local communities, that "the chain store, by furthering the concentration of wealth and of power and by promoting absentee ownership, is thwarting American ideals; that it is making impossible equality of opportunity; that it is sapping the resources, the vigor and the hope of the smaller cities and towns."... In a study of 45 chains and independent grocers in ten cities, two writers for *The Nation* found that prices at the chains were 7 percent lower, but their wages were 20 percent less.

Big-box retailers are a product of public policy, not simply consumer choice. Driven by an erroneous conviction that chain retailers boost employment and expand the economy, elected officials have actively fostered and underwritten their proliferation.... Many states have provisions in their tax codes that enable chains, but not independent retailers, to skirt paying income taxes.... Abuses of market power [have] allowed Mega-retailers to force out smaller rivals, not by being better competitors, but simply by being bigger.

[On Wal-Mart's health care plan]: With a \$350 deductible, the yearly premium runs about \$2,500 for an employee and his or her spouse – hardly affordable on a wage of \$9 an hour – and many basic services are not covered, including annual checkups, childhood immunizations, and routine screenings.

[on sales tax revenues]: Consumers have only so much to spend; sales gains in one locations are mirrored by losses elsewhere....These gains are usually fleeting: it's only a matter of time before that center is eclipsed by new retail development elsewhere in the region. Some evidence suggests that big-box stores may not even produce a temporary revenue bounce. One study of 116 cities in northern California found that, in all but two cases, the presence of stores operated by Wal-Mart, Target, Costco, Kmart, or Sam's Club did not in fact correspond to increased local sales tax revenue. Yet in surveys, officials still profess a strong preference for big-box stores over other kinds of development – even high-wage industries – because of the perceived tax benefits.

While vibrant Main Streets tend to add value to nearby homes, conventional shopping centers often have the opposite effect: they reduce adjacent property values.



--- -- -- -- -- **rebuttals** ▲ --- -- -- -- -- **solutions** ▼

Many [National Main Street Center] programs undertake a market analysis of their district to help guide retail development. (Indeed, any community can do this with the help of free online tools.) A market analysis reveals the spending power of local residents and quantifies the demand for goods and services not already well supplied. These gaps are opportunities – both for established local retailers looking to expand, and for new entrepreneurs, who can use the data to help secure a bank loan.... Over time, good Main Street programs earn the trust of property owners and begin to function like retail leasing brokers, maintaining lists of available spaces, advising landlords on what businesses would work best in which locations, reviewing business plans, and recruiting entrepreneurs.

After a viable, well-managed environment, a second ingredient needed to spur local business creation is know-how. Mentoring from other local business owners, specialized training, and one-on-one guidance are often cited by entrepreneurs as crucial to their success – a fact that lends even more urgency to stemming the decline of independent retailers: as they disappear, so, too, does the nation's collective local retailing expertise.

To nurture start-ups, community groups could create business incubators by buying or leasing one or more large storefronts and dividing the space into many small spaces where new retailers could spend a year or so getting the hang of things and cultivating a customer base before scaling up and moving into a regular storefront. Such an incubator operated in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood for eighteen years and helped seed a number of the area's most successful retailers.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs)...get their initial capital funding through community development block grants, which are available for commercial development as well as housing. CLTs sell homes to low-income families, but retain ownership of the land underneath.... Retail spaces could either be sold, like condos, to local businesses under the same sort of agreement, or leased at cost. The space could be reserved only for businesses that are locally owned and provide a needed good or service.

In Plentywood, Montana...a group of residents sold stock shares for \$10,000, raising \$190,000 to finance a local department store.... Suppliers at first had a tough time believing that a community-owned corporation was a viable account. But after six months, Witzeling said, "salesmen started calling on us." Having no debt and no investors clamoring for a certain rate of return helps keep prices down. "We're probably not quite as low as Wal-Mart," said Ramos, "but we're close and we usually do better than the mall up in Billings."

Greenfield [MA] residents already have experience with community ownership through the Green Fields Market, a thriving food store that has been downtown since the early 1990s and did more than \$5 million in sales in 2005. The market operates as a membership cooperative; its thousands of members own and democratically control the store, with surplus revenue rebated to them at the end of the year.

Rather than subsidizing projects...cities could become patient equity investors. This would enable them to shape development to maximize the community benefits (by, for example, stipulating that the business be locally owned) and also, eventually, receive a direct return on their investment. Having a public-ownership stake can make all the difference. In 2004, Austin, Texas, moved to have five city-owned blocks near City Hall redeveloped with a mix of housing, offices, and retail. In its deal with the developer, the city set a goal of having at least 30 percent of the retail space go to locally owned businesses.

Upshot:

A growing number of communities are charting a different course, adopting policies and economic development strategies that actively nurture and rebuild local enterprises. Independent businesses are banding together to gain efficiencies through purchasing cooperatives and a stronger public presence through local business alliances and "buy local" campaigns. Implemented more broadly, these initiatives would usher in a future America that is not dominated by a handful of global corporate giants and is instead a place of thriving, entrepreneurial local economies and vibrant, self-reliant communities.

Europe

continued from page 1

In his presentation to the Smart Energy Team, Andy Deacon, London's Strategy Manager - Air Quality, Energy, and Climate Change, emphasized that the GLA Action Plan identified the greenhouse gas emission reduction benefits of four comprehensive programs, and that public support was obtained from business, government, university and the public for accomplishing their objectives:

- i. A Green Homes Program (existing residential homes)
- ii. A Green Organizations Program (energy efficiency programs that focus on commercial buildings)
- iii. A Green Energy Program (expanded adoption of specific renewable energy technologies)
- iv. A Green Transport Program (specific energy efficiency and congestion pricing programs).

London is a clear advocate for carbon pricing as a key component of the UK climate action plan and has established a London Sustainable Development Advisory Commission (LSDC) to assist in the implementation of the plan.

San Luis Obispo county and major local governments could follow a similar strategic approach of developing a Greater SLO Climate Change Action Plan, including a greenhouse gas emission inventory and similar component action plans appropriate for our region and to work with the local business community, universities and government at the federal state and local levels and the general public to implement these programs. -jc

March 26: BedZED 24 Helios Rd. Wallington, Surrey

BedZED is a housing complex — 82 houses, 17 apartments, and 1,405 square meters of work space built in 2000–2002 — featuring sustainable design and energy efficiency. A local architect guided us around the property explaining the details of the design, from organic gardens to features off and on the roofline.

The builder was able to plan for higher density than would normally be allowed on the property because of the reduced need for car parking spaces. A car loan program provides residents with an opportunity to borrow a car whenever needed. Thick wall construction, window placement, solar orientation, and other features keep homes comfortable throughout the year without the need for central heating or cooling. Sedum on the rooftops creates additional bio-diversity, and a garden area provides opportunities for residents to grow their own food. -ps

Our team concluded that it was technically feasible to design and construct new residential housing using many of the energy efficient and zero-energy renewable principles

incorporated in BedZED. The houses were more expensive to purchase and rent but we were told that residents enjoyed living in the community and there was a market demand for the homes and commercial space.

Additional information about ongoing efforts to incorporate BedZED design principles in other residential housing is available at www.bioregional.com/index.htm and at www.oneplanetliving.org/ -jc

March 27: Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) Brussels, Belgium Hosts: Dr. Peter Loeffler, Andrea Pascal

Although it was impressive that we gained access to the top executives



Chad Worth and Neal Bulger at BedZED

responsible for implementing programs to fulfill EU policies and law, it was even more impressive to recognize how the EU countries had come together to meet a common need.

The Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) was created by the European Union Commission to implement the community programs Intelligent Energy Europe, Enterprise Europe Network, and Eco-innovation.

Eco-Innovation involves building technologies, recycling, finding better ways to deal with wastewater, fostering green products, and management projects. Intelligent Energy Europe has been in operation for three years and climate change is at the top of its list of priorities (partially due to the damage during the heat wave in 2003).

The agency encourages competition between countries and communities to find the best energy and climate solutions. They want to stimulate the creation of jobs, green products and provide rapidly growing business opportunities.

The EU's targets for 2020 are:
20% less greenhouse gases
20% better energy efficiency
20% share of renewables in the energy mix
10% biofuels in transport fuel.

The budget (\$45m Euros) supports a selection and funding process for the projects that are selected. The agency calls for proposals, evaluates them, selects and grants money, carries out the project, and provides monitoring and support. There are currently just under 200 approved projects, including on-going renewable energy projects in heating and cooling, biofuel development, electricity, small scale appliances, and other local actions. The goal is to create "Class A" projects (the most

efficient). This scheme was developed by Energy Cities and is being implemented in public building first with plans to move towards implementing the program in private homes. These kind of innovations will increase property values. The agency also supports communities to enhance their bicycle policies. -ps

March 28: Energy Research Center (ECN) of the Netherlands Hosts: J. R. Ybema, Paul Pex, Ivo J. Opstelton

ECN is a private company employing 607 people that performs groundbreaking research in sustainable energy. The activities of ECN are primarily "demand-driven" programs, devised in close cooperation with the

Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and SenterNovem, an agency concerned with Innovation, Energy and Climate Change, Environment and Spatial Planning. SenterNovem works closely with the European Union, the International Energy Agency (IEA) and a broad network of knowledge institutes, universities, trade associations companies and government officials.

I was particularly impressed by the ECN Climate Change and Energy Policy Analysis studies summarized by J. R. Ybema and documented in the ECN Vision 2050 report. I concluded from Mr Ybema's remarks that the Dutch Ministry of Energy and European Union leaders are using this Vision 2050 Report to help set government climate change and energy policies as well as ECN research priorities.

I have made a preliminary conclusion that ECN research efforts appear to be addressing renewable energy, energy efficiency, fuel cell and related hydrogen technology research topics similar to those at US Department of Energy National Laboratories and University of California (UC) energy and environmental research centers that I have visited. I assume that ECN is publishing its research results in the peer-reviewed scientific and technical literature so there is a free flow of promising results to the global research community. As time permits, I plan to review

the ECN technical information that I collected in more detail to see if I will recommend follow-up contacts by UC and California Energy Commission representatives. -jc

March 30: Greenpeace International Amsterdam, Netherlands Host: Abbie Jabines, Solar Generation Coordinator

Abbie told us that Greenpeace has 42 offices around the planet that are working on solar generation. The goal is to prevent the global temperature increase from exceeding 2 degrees. Beyond that increase, the trend is seen as irreversible and will effect ecosystems as well as human beings.

There are currently ten active GP solar generation programs in the world: Including, Switzerland, France, Germany, Turkey, China, Philippines, and Indonesia. The strategy is to lobby and take action. Their Climate and Energy campaigns include No Nukes, Climate Impacts, Kyoto Plus, Quit Coal and Energy Revolution. Some countries emphasize a particular area over another, depending on their resources and needs. (India, Australia and the Philippines focus on "Quit Coal.")

The strategy is to "Shame and Showcase." In China, Greenpeace shames the industry by lobbying to show how melting ice sheets will effect the communities that are dependent on the water for their livelihoods. They also explain how dust will have serious health impacts. They showcase the massive opportunities that China has for



Ken Smokoska, Cal Poly student Erica Janoff, Karen Merriam, and Marin County Community Development Director Alex Hinds in Amsterdam.

wind power. They provide small grants to support local projects and educate youth. China is a focus because they are a big offender and also have the potential to make a big difference. The approach is always nonviolent. Some local ordinances are changing and some local ministers have started to listen. -ps

March 31: Symbiosis Institute Kalundborg, Denmark Hosts: Jorgen Christensen (Senior



Abbie Jabines briefs the group at Greenpeace International.

Advisor), John Kryger (Director), Kalundborg Symbiosis Institute (www.symbiosis.dk)

A collaboration among six local companies, Industrial Symbiosis works like this: A project is initiated when at least two organizations identify engineering and economic opportunities for the use of the by-product of one organization as an important resource for one or more of the others in the Kalundborg industrial complex — such as waste heat, water or a potential waste residue; i.e. scrubber wastes from the power plant or nitrogen-rich residues from the enzyme plant that could be a feedstock for fertilizer production.

The collaborating partners benefit financially from the co-operation because the individual agreement within the Symbiosis is based on commercial principles. The overall outcome is increased profits, reduced consumption of resources and a significant reduction in environmental emissions, including but not limited to greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel consumption.

Resource savings include 20,000 tonnes of oil per year, 200,000 tonnes per year of natural gypsum, 1.9 million cubic meters per year of ground water, and 1 million cubic meters of surface water.

Mr. Christiansen emphasized the importance of good communications between executive and technical management of each organization, a willingness to be innovative in exploring opportunities and success in quantifying the potential profitability and other benefits of each project. Mr. Kryger emphasized that the Kalundborg Municipality and each organization desired to retain the approximately 4,300 in total employment with these organizations in the area, given global competition. -jc

Mr. Christiansen emphasized the organic evolution of the partnership of The Industrial Symbiosis at Kalundborg. He described it as “a resource and environmental network, composed of 21 bilateral, commercial agreements.”

The word “symbiosis,” he said, was carefully chosen. The Industrial Symbiosis evolved over a period of 30 years, as a collaboration between different industries for mutual economic and environmental benefit. It evolved “spontaneously and initially as quite independent projects” that grew from the ground up and in a process of discovery: “Okay, we have interests and principles in common.”

The Principles are:
1.) Someone’s waste is another one’s raw material, 2.) economically and environmentally profitable, and 3.) partners should be independent (“across the fence”), but work together. -ps

April 1:
Samsøe Island, Denmark
Renewable Energy Project Host:
Soren Hermansen, Director

The Smart Energy Team visited the Samsøe Island Renewable Energy project and learned that this island community, with technical support and partial co-funding provided by the Danish Energy Authority, planned, funded and managed a comprehensive program over a ten-year

period that used commercially available renewable wind, solar, biomass-fired district heating, biofuels and energy efficiency technologies. They achieved carbon neutrality and a 60% reduction in fossil fuel use by the year 2007.

Project Director Hermansen guided our team through a tour of several renewable energy, energy efficiency, district heating, and bio-fuels facilities owned and operated by individual Samsøe residents, cooperative businesses, and local government entities. He summarized the major accomplishments of each project and provided us with a 37-minute video which illustrated how the Samsøe community was able to work together to plan, fund, and manage this comprehensive program and achieve a significant financial return, economic development, job creation and retention, environmental benefits and establishing a sense of community pride and can-do attitude. -jc

April 2:
Department of Traffic
Copenhagen, Denmark
Host: Sussi Skor, Project secretary

The vision is for Copenhagen to become the world’s top cycling city. They publish a Bicycle Account every 2 years that rates the city’s record on all areas related to cycling: safety, new developments, new users, and new goals to meet. There are areas that need improvement, like parking and safety. The current modes of transportation fall into the following divisions: 1/3 public transportation, 1/3 car, and 1/3 bicycle.

Bicycles are currently allowed on the public trains and metro, but not on buses. In 2005, there were more bicycles leaving town than there were cars leaving town.

The 2015 targets are: increase the



Soren Hermansen with straw biomass district heating burner on Samsøe.

cycling population to 50%, decrease cyclists KSI (killed or serious injury) by 50%, increase the proportion of Copenhagen cyclists who feel safe cycling to 80% (up from 53%).

Current plans and projects include the idea of taxing cars that come into the city, planning to expand cycle tracks from 2 to 3 meters, getting citizen input in an open forum,



Energy Academy, Samsøe Island, Denmark.

“green waves” for cyclists, where they can ride through traffic lights, and green routes for carefree riding without car traffic, and better parking. -ps

April 2:
RISO National Laboratory
Copenhagen, Denmark
Host: Senior Advisor, Leif Sonderberg, Technical University of Denmark (DTU); Hans Larsen, Systems Analysis; Soren Linderoth

In 2000, the last nuclear reactor in Denmark was decommissioned (Research reactor DR3), followed by the new national energy strategy: build a research base for sustainable energy: wind power, solar, fuel cells and hydrogen, and emerging technologies such as fusion, magnetic cooling and superconductivity.

Last year, RISO merged with DTU (Danish Technical University), consisting of five mega-universities – Aalborg, Aarhus, University of Southern Denmark, Technical University of Denmark, and University of Copenhagen). RISO DTU has 4,000 employees, more than 2,000 scientists, and 7,000 students, and is financed by government, research programs and private companies that are in line with the mission of RISO.

Denmark is the only EU country that exports energy, and at a 50% higher than consumption! -ps

April 3:
Malmo, Sweden
Hosts: Deputy Mayor Anders Rubin; Roland Zinkernagel, SECURE; Daniel Nilsson, Western Harbor Project; Anna Cornander, Solar City

Malmo is Sweden’s third largest city (pop. 265,000). Deputy Mayor Rubin provided an overview and historical context for Malmo’s sustainability programs, and in presentations by project representatives we learned about four major sustainability initiatives that are focusing on the application of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use.

In the Western Harbor redevelopment project, Malmo collaborated with 22 architectural and engineering firms and Swedish energy officials in the design and construction of homes and apartments for 10,000

residents and commercial and institutional buildings for 20,000 that are living and working in the Western Harbor area.

As part of this project, Malmo collaborated with these architects, engineers and developers in combining low energy and ecological design of Western Harbor buildings (using a target of energy use less than 105 kWh per sq meter) with locally produced renewable energy technologies including a 2MW wind turbine, 1500 sq meters of solar thermal collectors on residences, 120 sq meters of solar electric collectors on apartments, an integrated food waste collection and biogas production used to power Malmo City buses, and a district heating system that uses heat pumps to extract heat from seawater and an underground aquifer — a natural water reserve in the bedrock below the Western Harbor area that facilitates seasonal storage of hot water (charging the aquifer during the summer) and cold water (charging the aquifer during the winter).

A related SmartLIFE project funded by the EU is assisting Malmo in showcasing the technologies used in the Western Harbor project.

In a separate but related Civitas SMILE project co-funded by the European Union Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EU/EACI), Daniel Nilsson described Malmo’s implementation of a number of measures to reduce carbon emission and fossil fuel consumption in transportation applications such as expanded biogas production and use in city buses, a car sharing system used by residents and local busi-



Oliver Gehrke of RISO National Laboratory in front of electrical panels receiving data from renewable energy sources. At right is Dr. Gordon Ashley.

nesses, improved bicycle routes and many more options.

In the SECURE project, also co-funded by the EU/EACI, Malmo is collaborating with local businesses, universities, local NGOs and residents to establish Sustainable Energy Partnership and Energy Action Plans, develop a compensation system compatible with the Kyoto Protocol, and foster sustainable construction practices. More information is available at www.secureproject.org.

Anna Cornander described the Solar City Malmo project, which includes the dissemination of information about Malmo’s solar projects and to increase the use of locally generated solar power and support the development of a local solar energy industry. Anna showed the English language version of a video -- very well done -- prepared by Solar City Malmo that was being used to foster the increased use of solar energy in the local area. -jc

Join Chapter Chair Karen Merriam and European Energy Study tour participants for “Tea and talk, Tuesdays at 12”
Noon, May 13
Steynberg Gallery
1530 Monterey Street, SLO

Santa Margarita

continued from page 3

also address the fact that “there is no assurance that oak trees designated to remain on the lots will be protected in the future, (ARCS Impact B-3)” and that “valley oaks planted in a favorable site can develop to sizable trees with adequate canopies in 25 to 30 years. In contrast, blue oaks, which are a slower growing species, may require 100 years for trees to develop moderate-sized canopies.” Neither the replacement of current carbon sequestration functions in 25 years or 100 years would be considered adequate mitigation for GCC impacts under AB32.

Also unevaluated are the GCC impacts of the proposed conversion to vineyards of 2000 acres, and 500 acres of orchards, and attendant nitrogen fertilizer and pesticide use (4.3).

Also unevaluated are the GCC impacts of and mitigation for “soil and surface disturbance...through grading and other ground disturbance, and the placement of permanent residential structures and anticipated landscaping within the lots” and GCC impacts of “typical residential activities, rural residential uses such as livestock grazing....” (4.3)

4.2.3.e: “As noted in Section 4.2.2(a), a program-level analysis does not require a quantitative air emissions analysis in accordance with APCD standards. As a result, no such analysis was conducted for the Future Development Program and no CO2 emissions estimates are available.”

The RDEIR’s presumption that an exemption from APCD’s requirement for a quantitative air emissions analysis equates to a permission to perform no analysis whatsoever is in error. As the Attorney General’s office has noted, the lack of official thresholds and guidelines does not absolve the lead agency from its obligation under CEQA to determine the significance of, and adopt feasible mitigation for, the anticipated greenhouse gas emissions of a project. See the California Association of Air Pollution Control Officers (CAPCOA) white paper “CEQA & Climate Change: Evaluating and Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Projects Subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.”

“The review may be qualitative or quantitative in nature. A qualitative review would discuss the nature of GHG emissions expected and their potential effect on climate change as the district understands it. It could also include a discussion of the relative merits of alternative scenarios.” (CAPCOA, p. 24)

4.2.3.e: “the design of both the Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision and Future Development Program would result in inconsistencies with the Climate Action Team Strategy “Smart Land Use and Intelligent Transportation,” which promotes jobs/hoproximity [sic], transit-oriented development, and high density residential/commercial development along transit corridors.”

The DEIR should note that the project would also be inconsistent with the County’s “smart growth” principles as endorsed in June 2005. Smart growth is a way of directing growth to urban areas with sufficient transportation and services, creating traditional, compact, walkable and complete communities. The County is currently exploring strategies to implement the 11 smart growth principles addressing the location, amount and design of future population and commercial growth supported by public services and facilities to help achieve the county’s over-

Nukes Implode Again

Assemblyman’s 2nd attack on California’s nuclear safeguard laws defeated

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility last month led the successful effort to retain California’s nuclear safeguard laws. Assemblyman Chuck DeVore (R-Irvine) introduced two bills, in a follow-up to his unsuccessful 2007 repeal attempt.

On April 7, Rochelle Becker, Executive Director of the Alliance and a member of the Sierra Club’s national Radiation Committee, testified before California’s Assembly Natural Resource Committee in opposition to the two bills, which would have allowed new reactors to be sited in our state without the certification of an approved and demonstrated means for disposal of high-level radioactive waste.

“AB 1776 was a smokescreen that would have substituted California’s protective legislation of the last three decades with a law that assumed the state might allow construction of nuclear reactors in seismically active areas or in areas where once-through-cooling is acceptable,” Becker testified.



A permanent means for safe disposal of high-level radioactive waste does not exist. Nuclear utilities are now storing high-level radioactive waste onsite in seismically active areas, even though the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s own policy discourages such sites. Earthquake science is constantly evolving. As recently as April 1, 2008, a 15-kilometer earthquake fault previously thought by the government of Japan and it’s Atomic Energy Agency to be

all goals for safe, healthy, livable, prosperous and well-governed communities. In listing the impacts of the Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision — it would not be located in close proximity to any commercial or job center; would reduce job/housing proximity and increase vehicle trips and travel distances; would not be located along an established transit route and would be unlikely to create demand for transit facilities; would be developed at a relatively low density in a rural area — the DEIR makes clear that the project is the opposite of “smart growth.” The Future Development Program, as it “would be located in a rural area and would provide land uses that may be considered destinations for substantial vehicles, particularly the nine wineries and associated special events (with an estimated 120,000 visitors annually), golf course, and lodge and would also include residential development outside of an urban area,” is likewise wholly inconsistent with the County’s “Smart Growth” policy.

The EIR should include a map of the current ownership pattern on the ranch, so that the public can compare the current boundaries of “the ranch” with the map that describes “the ranch” in the Salinas River Area Plan. There is some question as to whether “the ranch” as the entity referred to in the EIR still exists, given the fact that nu-

merous parcels within the original boundaries are now privately held by individuals not associated with the LLC that is proposing the cluster.

3.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative

“...the No Project/Existing Zoning Alternative would not preclude future development on the Santa Margarita Ranch. The current land use designation that governs the Ranch would keep the possibility of development open, pursuant to the County’s agricultural cluster subdivision ordinance and other development regulations.”

In noting the Environmentally Superior Alternative, the DEIR should include the option of dedication of a conservation easement for the Ranch and note that this would result in the retirement of development rights, which would foreclose the possibility of development, hence no development that could result in significant environmental impacts would occur. This would constitute an alternative superior to the “Environmentally Superior Alternative” which the RDEIR notes “would keep the possibility of development open.” Hence Per CEQA Guidelines at ~15088.5(3) this is “a feasible project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed [that] would clearly lessen the environmental im-

inactive was reclassified as active. In a state as seismically active as California, a similar revelation could prove to be both costly and devastating to the state’s residents.

AB 2788 would have eliminated the state’s power to certify all energy generation sites in California. It would have removed one of the few rights of our state to address the costs, benefits and risks of nuclear reactors.

California cannot afford to again go down a nuclear path without analyzing all economic consequences of our actions. At best this bill was premature until the analysis of the full costs, benefits and risks of continued reliance on nuclear reactors—as mandated by California’s legislature—is complete, adopted and implemented. AB 1776 would have resulted in reduced funding for our state’s precedent-setting clean energy policy. Responsible energy policies are fundamental to a strong economy, and the “unknowns” surrounding this bill placed our economy and our energy supplies at risk.

acts of the project.”

We advise the County to produce another revision of the DEIR that fully addresses global climate change impacts from all emission sources involved in the Santa Margarita Ranch Agricultural Cluster Subdivision Project and Future Development Program, and which fulfills the County’s legal requirements under CEQA.

Our comments above constitute significant information not considered in the Draft EIR, requiring recirculation of the EIR. The lack of discussion of global climate change impacts in the Revised Draft EIR beyond the emissions of motorized vehicles is fundamentally inadequate to any evaluation of the project’s GCC impacts, rendering the analysis conclusory in nature and depriving the public of any meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project, or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid the effect. Should a Final EIR fail to include this adequate analysis, any project approval will be open to obvious legal challenge.

Sincerely,

Andrew Christie
Chapter Director

cc: Sandra Goldberg, Deputy Atty. General, CA DOJ

Train Day

continued from page 3

total greenhouse gases. Amtrak has committed to cutting diesel emissions 6 percent by 2010-- the largest percentage of voluntary reduction in the United States, and the first such commitment made by a transportation company.

Whether it’s reducing your carbon emissions, avoiding



the high price of gasoline or putting traffic frustrations behind you, there’s never been a better time to get on board. Amtrak has six trains a day serving San Luis Obispo, with two round-trips to Los Angeles.

The celebration on May 10th

will take place from noon to 4 p.m. at the SLO Amtrak station, 1011 Railroad Avenue at Santa Rosa. Kids: bring the parents for refreshments, cardboard engineers caps, folding paper locomotives and a display of scale model trains from the local railroad club. A volunteer host will be available to answer questions and help prospective passengers plan trips. For more information, go to: www.nationaltrainday.com,

David Weisman is the volunteer station host for SLO. Contact him at davidweisman@charter.net

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **May 10**. 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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CFLs contain 1/100 less mercury than a thermometer. It's illegal to throw CFLs in the trash. Return UNBROKEN used CFLs to a local participating "take back" store. BROKEN fluorescent bulbs, or any mercury containing products, should be disposed of with hazardous waste. If a CFL bulb breaks, treat it like any toxic product; be careful not to inhale the mercury. Use a wet rag for clean up; put all pieces, and the rag, into a plastic bag to take to a hazardous waste disposal site listed in the back of your phone book.

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

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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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Spirit, Service, and Community
In the Second Half of Life

Friday, June 20 ~ San Luis Obispo

The Longevity Revolution has added 30 years to our average life span. How do we insure our longer lives will be richer, more meaningful lives?

- ▶ How do we explore new avenues for individual growth and spiritual deepening?
- ▶ How do we open ourselves to new opportunities for an "En-core" career and meaningful work?
- ▶ How do we gather about us companions for the journey and create new models of community?

Join Second Journey founder **Bolton Anthony**, philosopher **John Sullivan**, and **Chris Kennedy** for a stimulating morning of exploration, followed by an afternoon of World Café conversation.

Location – The Kennedy Fitness Conference Center, 188 Tank Farm Road, San Luis Obispo.

Costs – The registration fee is \$75 before May 20, \$95 thereafter.

Sponsored by Second Journey and Judith Bernstein. For further information, contact Judith at (805) 698-9649 or tallulah97219@yahoo.com or see the website below:

www.SecondJourney.org/Calif.htm

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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, May 3rd, 10 a.m., SLO County WaterFest- Education Through Celebration, Location Sunken Gardens, Atascadero. People of all ages are invited to join us in celebrating the water resources on the Central Coast. Live music, theatre performances, hands-on activities and festival games make this event fun while promoting responsible water use and pollution prevention. Don't miss the fun! Visit www.slowaterfest.org for more info.

Sun. MAY 4th, 0930, BIKE NIPOMO, Meet at Nipomo Library & tour Nipomo: Native Garden, Creekside Park, new Bikeway etc. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Wed., May 7, 14, 21, 28, 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes Return. See website, or e-mail Gary Felsman for details. E-mail is on the website.

Sat.-Sun., May 10-11, Navigation Noodle in Mojave National Preserve: Join us for our fifth annual journey through this jewel of the Mojave now preserved, under the California Desert Protection Act, as a result of the efforts of Sierra Club activists and others. An intermediate cross-country navigation day-hike workshop will be conducted out of a car camp in the pinyon and juniper

forests of the Mid Hills. Potluck and social on Saturday, and also for those arriving early on Friday. Send email (preferred) or sase along with your navigation experience to: Leader: Harry Freimanis, hfreimanis@ca.rr.com, 8041 Redford Lane, La Palma CA 90623 (714) 236-9266 Assistant: Virgil Shields, vshields@alumni.caltech.edu, (818) 637-2542 Angeles Chapter-WTC & LTC and the CNRCC Desert Committee

MAY 11th, 0930, Sun, POINT SAL, Meet at the end of Brown Rd, we'll hike to ridge & then decide. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Sat.-Sun. May 17-18, Carcamp and Dayhikes in the Panamint Mountains: Join us as we explore higher desert trails near Death Valley. The first day will be a hike (2550 feet gain, 7 miles RT) up Wildrose Peak, and the second will be a longer walk (2900 feet gain, 13 miles RT) up Telescope Peak. While it will be hot and hectic at lower elevations, we should enjoy quiet and long views. Carcamping may include the civilized amenities, and Saturday evening will be a potluck meal. Limit 12 participants. Leader: Craig Deutsche, deutsche@earthlink.net, (310-477-6670). CNRCC Desert Com

Sunday, May 18, 2008 9am-11am Restoration Bike Ride, Starting location and route TBD. Fresh air, bikes galore, and a pleasant ride to Avila Beach —hop on your bike and join us for a leisurely tour as we stop at various restoration sites along the route. From streamside plantings to fish passage, we've got a lot to share with you about this fabulous section of San Luis Obispo Creek. This event is part of SLO County BikeMonth 2008; Check out additional bike-related events at: <http://rideshare.org/cm/bike/bikemonth08.html>

Sat.-Mon., May 24-26, Explore Wovoka - Proposed Nevada Wilderness Area: Just east of the Sweetwater Mountains and north of Bridgeport on the California-Nevada border are the Pine Grove Hills and the newly proposed Wovoka Wilderness Area. Memorial Day carcamp to explore this beautiful area, which includes eleven miles of the East Fork of the Walker River. Includes a hike towards (and hopefully to) the high point, Bald Mountain (9544 ft.) Central commissary. Contact Vicky, (415) 977-5527,

vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org.

Sun., MAY 25th 0930, BIKE WOODLANDS: A bicycle tour of the "instant city" with many stops. Meet at junction of Willow Rd. & Albert Way. Must wear helmet. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Sat, May 31st, 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 at 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 sac. Contact David Georgi at polecatleader@gmail.com for upcoming activities. Bipedes welcome. (805)458-5575



Photo by Joaquin Palting

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.

YOU'RE INVITED...

The Santa Lucia Chapter's Spring Benefit Banquet
Celebrating 40 Years!
Saturday May 31st, 2008

Featuring:
23rd District Congresswoman Lois Capps
A leader in Congressional environmental legislation




11th District Congressman Jerry McNerney
2006 upset victor over Richard Pamba, long-time environmental opponent

Enjoy...
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the Jazz Stylings of Lynn Manzella and her band,
the Kathleen Goddard Jones Award Ceremony,
Silent Auction and Raffles

6:30 pm at the Temple Beth David in San Luis Obispo
\$100 per person or \$900 per table
All funds support the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club
For reservations or to donate auction items,
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Bill Denneen & company in the Nipomo Dunes.

2008 Spring Benefit Banquet make check out & mail to: Sierra Club P.O. Box 15755, SLO 93406

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Email: _____

Phone: _____

Number of Tickets _____

Sierra Club Member? Y___ N___

Can we add you to Santa Lucia Chapter E-List? Y___ N___