



SIERRA
CLUB

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

Nov.-Dec. 2008
Volume 45 No. 10

Inside

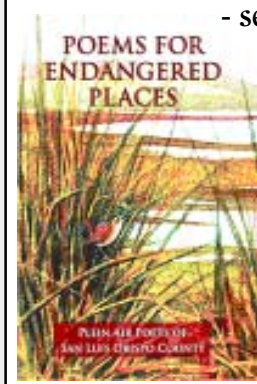
Your chapter election ballot	3
Litigation update	6
Folly and Santa Margarita	7
Let's talk sludge	9
Lights out for MB power plant	10
Classifieds	11
Outings	12

General Meeting

Poems for Endangered Places

Friday, Nov. 21
St. Stephens Church,
SLO

- see page 2



No meeting in December
Happy holidays!



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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

Paso Empowered

By Karin Johnson

One of the greatest things I have come to realize at the conclusion of my education at Cal Poly and through recent interaction with Sierra Club staff and members is that the power of community and partnership gets things done.

At a time when the economy is in shambles, our environment unstable, and corruption and greed are commonly associated with the Federal government and corporate America, our future is looking uncertain. A Gallup Poll taken at the time of the second presidential debate recorded that only 9% of Americans are satisfied with the way things are going in the United States, an all-time low. This is why action at the local level and community support play a huge role in how much we accomplish.

Right now, big strides are being made in the North County to establish greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) inventories, and I am very excited to be part of this effort, along with several volunteers. With support from city officials in Paso Robles, one of the most challenging hurdles has been cleared: moving from talk to action. To support this effort, the city joined ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) in August in order to access the software and IT support that will be used for establishing baseline greenhouse gas emissions, and later for implementing strategies to cut emissions by 7% below 1990 levels by 2012.

The software is comprised of a Community and Government Sector. We are currently working on the Government sector, which includes buildings, vehicle fleet, employee commutes, streetlights, water/sewage and waste.

I have been traveling to Paso two days per week to work on the inventory under the direction of Deputy Building Official Steve Perkins and with assistance from City Planners Susan De Carli and Mathew Fawcett. So far, data has been input for all government-owned buildings, which includes a yearly average for gas and electricity usage dating back to the year 2000.

The issue of climate change and the move to a reduction of GHG emissions has something in it for everyone. Not only will we positively impact the environment for future generations, we will create job growth and economic benefits right here in our local communities. In a 2004 study at UC Berkeley, a team directed by professor Daniel Kammen, head of the university's Renewable and Appropriate



left to right: Steve Perkins, Susan De Carli, Karin Johnson, Mathew Fawcett.

Energy Laboratory, found that, "across a broad range of scenarios, the renewable energy sector generates more jobs per average megawatt of power installed and per unit of energy produced, than the fossil fuel-based energy sector."

I look forward to continuing the progress being made with the city of Paso Robles as part of a county-wide effort -- made possible by the SLO Community Foundation, Air Pollution

Control District, Local Power, Pacific Municipal Consultants and the Sierra Club -- to lower emissions and to create a cleaner and more prosperous future.

Karin Johnson received a BA in Architecture from Cal Poly in June and is working as a subcontractor for Local Power, retained by the Santa Lucia Chapter to assist local cities in completing green house gas inventories and climate action plans.

Morro Bay is On the Way

Sierra Club funds City's effort to cut greenhouse gas emissions

In an unprecedented move on the local front in the battle against global climate change, the Sierra Club is underwriting the City of Morro Bay's membership in an international organization that will provide software and training assistance to the City in the creation of an inventory of its global warming emissions and a plan to reduce them.

The Santa Lucia Chapter has contracted with the County Air Pollution Control District and received additional funding from the SLO Community Foundation to assist cities and the County in calculating their emissions and setting reduction targets. Funding the membership of



Sierra Club contractor Jessie Holzer crunches the numbers for Morro Bay.

Morro Bay in the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), will enable the city

continued on page 10

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

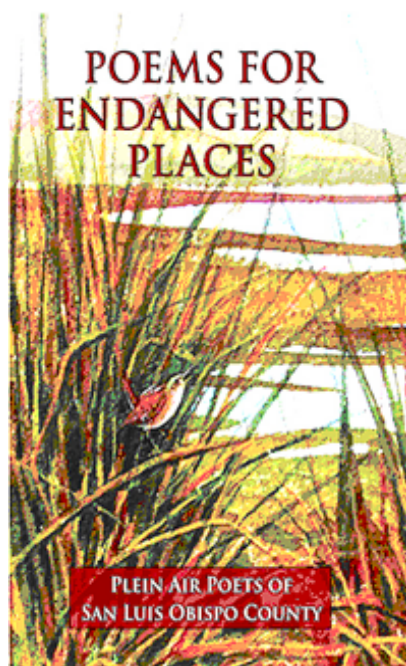
General Meeting

7 p.m. Friday, November 21

In 2007, seven local poets traveled to vulnerable places in San Luis Obispo County to write poems. Their resulting book honors eleven diverse locations on the Central Coast.

The "Plein Air Poets" are Sylvia Alcon, Marguerite Costigan, Jane Elsdon, Paula Lowe, Terry Sanville, Cal Wilvert and Rosemary Wilvert, all seasoned writers with numerous publications and awards among them. Jane Elsdon and Rosemary Wilvert have served as poet laureates of San Luis Obispo.

Come hear the tributes of San Luis Obispo's finest poets to our most beautiful and endangered places. Guitar accompaniment and the art of Marguerite Costigan will be featured. Refreshments served.



"These poems inspire us to pay attention to our precious and vulnerable coastlines, hillsides, farmlands and small towns and protect them for future generations."
 - Congresswoman Lois Capps

7 p.m., Friday, November 21
 St. Stephens Episcopal Church
 1334 Nipomo St., San Luis Obispo
 - Pismo Street entrance,
 parking lot off Pismo

Carrying Water

What did Katcho know?



The question persists: Last September, why did the Board of Supervisors even entertain the notion of carving out 5,000 acres of the county and handing it to Santa Barbara, changing the county's boundary just because a local ranch owner asked them to?

In the *Tribune*, Bob Cuddy and Bill Morem did a good job of laying out the campaign contributions lavished on Supervisors Ovitt and Lenthall by the owner of Suey Ranch and his friends, but it was clearly Supervisor Katcho Achadjian, the non lame duck among that crew, who was getting behind the proposal and pushing. This became clear when a solid wall of resistance rose up from every county agency and advisory committee involved, the *Tribune* slammed the proposal on its front page, and public outrage filled the Supervisors chamber, making the plan politically impossible. At that point, Ovitt was AWOL, and when Katcho backed down, Lenthall shrugged and changed his vote to match, explaining that he had just voted "aye" in the first place because this was something Katcho wanted to see happen, so he was helping out.

With a story like this, the only story that matters is the story behind the

story. Suey Ranch owner H.D. Perrett said he wanted the boundary change because he wanted better police protection and more convenience for his workers who live in Santa Maria. Longtime locals say that before he came here, Perrett was in Visalia, where he bought a large parcel with

a reservoir on it, which he sold for a handsome profit. He then moved to SLO and appeared to proceed to lather-rinse-repeat, buying Suey Ranch, including Twitchell Dam and the significant chunk of the water rights in the Cuyama-Santa Maria River Basin that go along with it. But a much bigger potential payday awaited than in Visalia: Perrett's ownership of those rights, if they were in Santa Barbara County, would give him carte blanche with the city of Santa Maria and enormous power over any development that happens in the Santa Maria Valley, where all his water flows.

Would Santa Maria have liked this to happen? A good indication was on view at the September 8 meeting of the SLO County Ag Liaison Advisory Board. Richard Quandt, the vegetable growers representative on the Board, argued strenuously that the boundary change was important because the City of Santa Maria has decided to designate a greenbelt with a hard line along its eastern border. Quandt said that Santa Maria looks north to the Suey Ranch as the best place to grow and expand while protecting that land

continued on page 9

SANTA LUCIAN

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 Cleve Nash
 Jack McCurdy
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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.

send to:

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 TREASURER

Cleve Nash
 MEMBER ccnash@charter.net

Judith Bernstein
 MEMBER

Cal French
 COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS

The Executive Committee meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 2:30 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 547-B Marsh St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

Committee Chairs

Political
 Chuck Tribbey

Conservation
 Sue Harvey lfsusan@tcsn.net

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 Cal French

Litigation
 Andy Greensfelder

Nuclear Power Task Force
 Rochelle Becker

Water Task Force
 Jack Morrow beckers@thegrid.net

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 Bonnie Walters 805-543-7051

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Printed by University Graphic Systems

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Outings, events, and more!

Vote for Our 2009 Executive Committee

Enclosed is your ballot and return envelope for the Santa Lucia Chapter's annual Executive Committee (ExCom) election. If there is more than one Sierra Club member in your household, you may use the printed ballot printed below or make a photocopy.

The winners of this election will start their terms when the outgoing ExCom adjourns their December meeting. The newly-elected ExCom will then convene a brief meeting to elect board officers and set the date for their January meeting.



IMPORTANT VOTING INFORMATION

- Vote for no more than 4 candidates.
- Cumulative voting (more than one vote for one candidate) is not allowed.
- Only one ballot per member. A second ballot is printed below for two-member households.
- Ballots must be received by **5:00 p.m., December 5, 2008**, at the Chapter office.
- Tear off your ballot and place it in the return envelope along with ballots of other household members, sign and date in the space provided on the envelope.
- Mail your ballot with sufficient time to arrive by the deadline, or drop it off via the door mail slot at the Chapter at 547-B Marsh St. in SLO. If you have any questions, call 543-8717



Mark Shefrin

As a longtime hiker, cyclist, and bicycle advocate I am especially appreciative of clean air and scenic environments. My background includes running a bicycle shop for over 15 years, building a home powered by solar electric that incorporated many principles of sustainability, managing commercial real estate, and obtaining a Public Policy degree with a concentration on energy and green building. Since relocating to the Central Coast, my wife Elana and I have been participating in the ongoing California Sierra Club work on Energy and Climate Change. We have contributed to policy recommendations for California climate change legislation and are currently working on comments to the US EPA for proposed regulation of the underground storage of carbon dioxide. I appreciate this opportunity to work more closely with the Santa Lucia chapter on local and regional issues that impact our families and environment.



Melody DeMeritt

Commitment, vision, and action: I offer these three qualities to the Sierra Club in my bid to become a member of the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter. During my 4-year term on the Morro Bay City Council, I made progress in protecting trees and refusing the use of City funds for plastic bottles or styrofoam containers. I also convinced the City to use electric vehicles as part of our City

fleet. During my term, we signed on to the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement and the Green Accords, and we became a member of the C5 Coalition. I worked hard for over a year on the New Futures Committee to bring forward alternative uses for the power plant property. I spent several years on the Board of the Coastal Alliance on Plant Expansion (CAPE), fighting the plan to build a new power plant in Morro Bay with continued use of once-through cooling. I've been a continuing member of ECOSLO. This position with the Sierra Club attracted my attention due to the high quality and activity of the Santa Lucia Chapter. Please vote for me and I will serve you.



Steven Marx

I am running for another term on the Executive Committee to offer my experience with the Chapter and some time and energy to the tasks it faces. I have enjoyed working with the Chapter Chair, Chapter Director, Chapter staff and fellow ExCom members. During my past term, I have coordinated two Spring Benefits and the Chapter's Open House. I am hoping that new members of the ExCom will help carry out the Fundraising and Accounting duties required to continue our expanding program of activities.



Linda Seeley

I have been a midwife for over 30 years. Seeing the effects of environmental destruction on families and children worldwide, and seeking a

wider context in which to use my skills, in 2000 I began to study intensively with systems theorist and Buddhist scholar Joanna Macy. I am an advanced facilitator of the Work that Reconnects. I am a longtime anti-nuclear activist, a board member of the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, and the director of the Terra Foundation, a local non-profit organization dealing with "Earth Care, Soul Care," and the opportunities for community resilience that arise from the great changes our world is facing. I facilitate workshops for activists and environmental leaders. I am the mother of three and the grandmother of three grandsons, and a certified nurse-midwife and women's health nurse practitioner.

Cal French

The Santa Lucia chapter of the Sierra Club is strong and dynamic. Our leadership team, headed by Karen Merriam, raises more conservation money per member than any other chapter I know of. That money supports our hard-charging chapter director Andrew Christie, our pivotal lawsuits to protect the Oceano Dunes and the Cayucos Viewshed, our newsletter, and our work on renewable energy. I want to continue as a

member of the leadership team, representing the chapter to the national organization and being our spokesperson on the Carrizo Plain National Monument, where I also lead service outings that work to restore the area to a more natural condition.

I am a native of San Luis Obispo, a Club member for 42 years, and a retired high-school teacher. Although I have been honored by national Club awards for leadership, I am still more interested in the future, in increasing the activism of our members, and in supporting and mentoring new and young leaders.



SECOND BALLOT

Santa Lucia Chapter Election - November 2008

Households with two members may return this ballot in the same envelope with the remit tear-off ballot enclosed with this newsletter. Households with more than two members may make duplicate ballots. This ballot may be used in lieu of the remit envelope and tear-off ballot. Members who subscribe to the electronic newsletter may print out this ballot.

Do not write your name on the ballot.

Sign and date the ballot envelope in the space provided.

Mark an "X" or checkmark in the box next to the candidate's name:

- Steven Marx
- Mark Shefrin
- Linda Seeley
- Cal French
- Melody DeMeritt

Place in a plain envelope or in the return envelope with tear-off ballot included with this issue, sign and date the front of the envelope, and mail to:

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



Not taking "no:" Ralph Bishop (left) and Daniel Diaz.

The Power of Two

For years, Ralph Bishop and Daniel Diaz — aka The Nipomo Creek Dogs — have been trying to draw attention to the plight of the local waterway they have known and loved all their lives, Nipomo Creek (see "Caught in the Black Web," March 2008 *Santa Lucian*). One of the main problems among the watershed's multiple ills: Discarded irrigation drip tubing, loaded with nitrate-laden ag water, dumped in the creek and churning down the Santa Maria River and out to sea, inevitably joining the vast and growing island of plastic pollution making its way around the Pacific Ocean in a traveling "trash gyre" the size of Texas.

Ralph and Dan have worked with local officials and staff from the County and our regional and state water boards, providing hundreds of photos, physical evidence, and guided tours of the creek. Their exposure of the ag drip tubing problem helped regional water board staff solve a mystery that had been vexing them — the origin of

mysterious nitrate spikes in Nipomo Creek — and got them on local TV news and brought the plight of the creek to the



Ralph Bishop indicates a snarl of drip tubing and a wayward non-biodegradable "biolog" eroding the stream bank, using a certain local eco-publication to establish the date of the photo.

attention of *New Times*. But nothing happened. Their frustration mounted.

Finally, at the Sierra Club's urging, they went to a meeting of the Regional Water Quality Control Board in SLO in order to speak directly to the members of the board, after months of conversation with Water Board staff. Both men took their allotted three minutes at the microphone to give the board an extremely candid, plain-spoken, highly informed and articulate earful on the problem of discarded irrigation tubing, illustrated with large color photos of huge, tangled piles of the stuff choking the creek. They got the board members' attention. Pointed questions for staff ensued, with Diaz summoned back to the podium to answer more questions.

It was clear that the board had not heard about the problem from its staff in all the months that Dan and Ralph had been providing them with a wealth of information on the subject and begging for some kind of corrective action.

It's safe to say that the board was unhappy to find out about they should have known about a long time ago, but didn't. It's more than safe to say that staff were unhappy with Ralph and Dan. But within a week of their eye-opening testimony, the memo you see at right was produced by the RWQCB and circulated to the local ag community, advising on "Proper Storage and Handling of Irrigation Tubing and Other Agriculture related Products."

It's a start. Ralph and Dan remain unmollified. Nipomo Creek, like all of the county's southernmost watersheds, is in serious trouble. Discarded irrigation drip tubing is turning up as a growing problem in rivers and

Notes from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board - "RWQCB says"

When to Enroll Under the Irrigated Agriculture Program

There is some confusion regarding when a grower needs to enroll under the Regional Board's irrigated agriculture program (Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands, Order No. R3-2004-0117). The Regional Board wants growers to know that they need to enroll when initial site preparation begins on fields where the crop will be irrigated and sold commercially.

Regional Board irrigated agriculture program staff can be reached at (805) 549-3147.

Proper Storage and Handling of Irrigation Tubing and Other Agriculture related Products

Plastic irrigation tubing (mostly drip tape) is making its way into our waterways. Growers need to be aware of this problem and be diligent about keeping this material out of our creeks. Growers need to ensure that the irrigation tubing is stored properly (safe distance from waterways) and disposed of properly.

Other agriculture related materials showing up in our creeks include: fertilizer bags, agriculture pellets, fumigation plastic, harvesting boxes, plastic agriculture crates, pea stakes etc. These materials also must be handled properly to make sure they are not getting into our waterways.

Irrigation Tubing Recycling Programs Available

Netafim USA has a recycling program for drip tape and drip hose. They will pick up the materials field-side free of charge as long as the location is accessible. Netafim's recycling coordinator is Steve Neo at (559) 245-6462.

Santa Maria Landfill has an ag plastic recycling program. Dirt generated from removal of the ag plastic is accepted and okay for the landfill's recycling program, but other debris (lunch trash, excess vegetative matter, worker trash, etc.) won't be accepted. The material must be bagged to qualify for the landfill's established \$36/ton prorated rate. Unbagged material will be charged at \$105.85/ton. If there is excess debris other than ag plastic, the landfill's recycler won't accept the material and the grower would have to be charged the disposal fee. The landfill's contact person is Jeff Clark at telephone (805) 925-0951 x7270.

Toro Company, Micro-Irrigation Business also has a recycling program. Toro will pick up used drip irrigation products that have been compressed for easy transportation. Toro's local contact is John Ayres (805) 343-7507.

Catching Up with the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility

By Rochelle Becker, Executive Director, ANR

On Sept 20th, a true hero of the nuclear oversight movement, Ann Harris, received the Special Service Award at the Sierra Club's annual banquet in San Francisco. Ann was instrumental in founding the Club's Radiation Committee, which she



Ann Harris

chairs, and which I have been honored to serve as vice-chair for the last two years.

Ann has protected whistleblowers at TVA nuclear sites in the Southeast and has tangled with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission over safety issues for years. I learned that she had never received an award from anyone and nominated her for this award last June.

I was not surprised she won, but was truly pleased to find she would be sharing in the award service with Cal and Letty French, who won the William Colby Award. I applauded loudly for the woman I had nominated and cheered for Santa Lucia Chapter heroes Letty and Cal.

Fall is a busy season in "the city," and just when I was wondering where I was going to sleep after the annual Sierra Club board meeting and awards ceremony, Susan and Jack Biesek donated their hotel points and booked me in a classy joint around the corner from the event so I could meet new and old friends working on the same nuclear issues around the country. Plans were made over breakfast that will benefit us all.

I was also able to attend the Sierra Club board meeting, where the

creeks statewide.

But the Nipomo Creek Dogs are examples of what you can accomplish by dint of sheer perseverance when you love something, you refuse to watch it die, and you are willing to brave the high seas of bureaucracy to save it.

Thank You,



The Santa Lucia Chapter is extremely grateful to the fourteen new REC Solar customers who checked the box directing the company to donate a generous portion of their purchase price to the Sierra Club, one of three eligible local non-profits, when they purchased their new PV panel systems throughout this summer and fall. We heartily recommend this marketing option to all local solar companies.

Reducing your electric bills, producing clean, renewable power and supporting the work of the Sierra Club at the same time? Priceless.

continued next page



Daniel Diaz with a big pile of the problem.

Toro Creek Triumphant

North county neighborhood beats odds and telecom giant



Last July, the County Planning Commission made a jaw-droppingly bad decision, on a 3-2 vote, to grant a telecommunications facility permit to an applicant who had knowingly and willfully committed an egregious code violation through massive illegal grading. The applicant had falsely claimed to be interested in growing pomegranates on the site -- up Toro Creek Road off Highway 41, eight miles west of Atascadero -- thereby gaining an agricultural exemption from permit requirements. He then submitted a request for a nest of over a dozen cell phone antennas, to be leased out to Sprint/Nextel for a king's ransom.

Rather than fine him, order the site restored and deny the permit, the Planning Commission decided to incorporate moderate site restoration measures into a permit and hand it to him.

Message sent: Unscrupulous land speculators everywhere; come to SLO! Do whatever you feel like, and lie about it! You don't need a permit, you won't pay a fine, and you'll make out like bandits!

The Toro Creek Alliance, distraught for months over the scarring of their mountain and the industrial project planned for their extremely rural neighborhood, appealed the Commission's permit approval to the Board of Supervisors.

It looked like another train wreck of a land use decision and horrible precedent was about to be stuffed into the final days of the Lenthall-Ovitt-Achadjian development dynasty. But

then something that almost never happens happened. On October 21, the Board of Supervisors turned aside the arguments of the Sprint/Nextel representatives and the dubious county staff report that supported the project and the Planning Commission's bad decision. They upheld the neighborhood group's appeal and denied the permit.

Supervisor Bruce Gibson led the charge, with a sharp, focused attack on the most questionable arguments in the staff report and an unwavering insistence on observing the letter and the spirit of our land use ordinance, backed up by Santa Lucia Chapter Director Andrew Christie, Eric Greening, and neighborhood residents.

A majority of the Board had to agree with them: The project was the wrong thing in the wrong place, too clearly out of compliance, its illegal origins too egregious for them to do anything else.

The Toro Creek Alliance had poured hundreds of hours into report preparation, and a considerable outlay of cash into expert testimony. Projecting stark before-&-after photos of the illegal grading at the hearing, showing the extent of the damage done to the hillside, made an obvious impression, with county staff admitting they'd never seen the two photos side by side before. This is what citizen activism looks like.

On December 9, the Board will hear staff's new findings as the basis of a final vote to deny the permit.

ANR

continued from page 4

Council of Club Leaders approved a resolution asking the Board of Directors to develop a work plan to commit legal and program staff and funding to a Club-wide campaign for a nuclear-free energy future, preventing the construction of new nuclear power plants, fuel chain facilities and re-licensing of aging reactors.

During this same timeframe, the presidential campaign was heating up and there had emerged a clear choice for the Alliance Legal Fund: a candidate who did *not* call for 45 new

reactors to open in the next 30 years, come hell or high water. So I decided that the Executive Director of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility Legal Fund (me) should go to a "target" state and work for Obama for a week. I chose Virginia, but then checked cost of flights and asked our board about this expense. One wonderful board member, Deidra O'Merde, the Queen of the O'Merde Charitable Golf Tournament, offered her frequent flyer miles for my campaign work.

How California Can Achieve a 33% Standard for Clean Renewable Power

By Jim Metropulos, Sierra Club California

California once led the world in renewable energy. Now we have the power to take back the lead.

As it stands, our state's three Investor-Owned-Utilities -- PG&E, Southern Edison, and San Diego Electric & Gas - probably will fall short of the state's current renewables target of 20% by 2010.

That's why Sierra Club California believes the state should reform our renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS) law. Improving this law will help us meet AB 32 climate protection goals, improve the quality of the air we breathe, and reduce our reliance on depleted fossil fuel resources.

Other states have adopted RPS laws and made significant strides in building renewable energy. In 2007, Texas reached a total installed wind capacity of over 5,000 megawatts. That same year, California only built about 60 megawatts of wind turbines -- a dismal performance. Making California a leader again will require significant reforms in the RPS law to remove current regulations that have a built-in bias against renewable energy, and replacing these with rules that support the state's goals for clean energy.

Although efforts to pass legislation to boost the RPS goal and to make reforms in the program failed this year, Sierra Club California continues to lobby for more renewable power. We are pleased that Speaker Karen Bass has appointed an RPS working group to develop legislation for 2009. Despite the end of the legislative session, this group of lawmakers, which includes Assemblymembers Krekorian, Blakeslee, and Levine, continues to meet regularly with Sierra Club California and other stakeholders in Sacramento, soliciting

our ideas and listening to our concerns about reforming the RPS law.

We have a lot to say about RPS. First, Sierra Club California believes that California needs to adopt a 33% renewable power goal now. To meet our current goal, and work to 33% by 2020 and then 50% or more renewable power generation in the future, Sierra Club California supports and advocates for the following:

Eliminate Market Price Referent. Currently, state regulators stack renewable power contracts against future natural gas prices by applying the Market Price Referent, meaning natural gas is used as the basis for competition. This outdated practice discourages capital investment in renewables by consistently underestimating future gas prices at the expense of renewable power prices.

Adopt Feed-In Tariffs. Feed-in-Tariffs, which set fixed contract terms and prices for each green technology, would provide a more stable incentive structure, freeing investors and developers from risks and uncertainties. Feed-in-tariff programs have achieved remarkable success in increasing renewable energy generation in Germany, Spain and France.

Include municipal utilities in the RPS. Municipal utilities like the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Sacramento Municipal Utility District should achieve the same renewable power levels as the Investor-Owned utilities.

Expand the RPS Definition to Allow for Innovation and Energy Recovery Systems. The RPS should include innovative, less well-known technologies to foster breakthroughs, and all thermal, kinetic, pressure, osmotic sources of electricity using little or no fossil fuel.

Expand Community Choice. Sierra Club activists favor community choice clean energy plans that would allow cities to get over half their electricity from renewables. The RPS law should help and not hinder these local efforts to increase renewable power generation.

Above all, in upgrading California's RPS law we must guard against efforts to undermine it in the name of reform. First, we oppose changing the definition to allow more hydro-power to be considered as renewable. California offers very limited protection in its current renewable law, but does restrict the size of small hydros to 30 megawatts, and forbid new impoundments of water -- hardly sufficient to protect water resources and aquatic life.

Second, we do not think utilities should get renewable power credit for their energy efficiency efforts. While we have always supported energy efficiency, we believe the RPS should instead encourage investment in new sources of clean renewable power while other programs focus on energy efficiency efforts.

We should also keep in mind that not all energy sources labeled under current law as "renewable" are equally sustainable in terms of environmental impacts or energy supply. Even renewable energy can have adverse impacts; poor environmental practices at the Altamont wind site in Northern California resulted in excessive bird kills. The impact and

The California Energy Commission has released its assessment of economic impacts of continued reliance on aging nuclear reactors. The next two years may decide if California allows twenty more years of producing and storing highly radioactive waste on our fragile coast, or if we'll lead the nation in phasing out aging reactors by the end of current licenses in 2022-2025. The initial report included the spirit of the comments filed by the Alliance.

We will closely work with the CEC and CPUC, providing information on all aspects that demonstrate the risks of continued reliance on aging reactors. The Alliance Legal Fund will work with California's state and federal legislators to ensure that the state's efforts to responsibly plan for our clean energy future include the pitfalls of relying on aging reactors, and are well-documented and included in future generation planning.

We hope ANR's supporters will consider helping the Alliance to achieve a much needed goal of raising \$24,000. I am optimistic that even in this fearsome time of financial and businesses failures, you will consider pledging a monthly, yearly, or one-time amount to help us achieve this goal. Go to www.A4NR.org.



Sierra Club President Allison Chin (center) congratulates Paso Robles' Cal and Letty French on receiving the Club's William Colby Award.

continued on page 6

Renewable Energy: Now and Tomorrow

By Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee

California's energy needs must be considered immediately and strategically. As your legislator, I'm committed to making instant changes in the state's consumption while looking ahead to shape our future energy portfolio.

I'm proud to have been recently appointed by Assembly Speaker Karen Bass to a Renewable Portfolio Standards working group. This group, comprised of myself, and two Assembly Democrats, Paul Krekorian and Lloyd Levine, will be drafting legislation along with Senate leadership to reduce California's dependence on fossil fuels and increase diversification in our energy portfolio. The aim is to advance the state from its current 20% renewable energy target to a more aggressive goal of at least 33% by 2020. We absolutely need a long-term comprehensive plan to reach this standard and I will be working diligently on solutions to this end.

But our energy consumption needs to be addressed now. That's why I authored AB 2791, which was recently signed by Governor Schwarzenegger. AB 2791 allows entities such as Cal Poly or the California Mens Colony to achieve real reductions in their energy consumption with a "pay as you save" program for clean, efficient combined heat and power systems (CHP). CHP systems use natural gas to simultaneously generate electricity and thermal energy. By using the same fuel to keep the lights on and heat hot water, combined heat and power systems can greatly reduce the energy demands at large facilities, such as hospitals, universities, and correctional facilities. State and local agencies will now utilize clean technologies reducing greenhouse gas

emissions at no additional cost to California taxpayers.

Californians want affordable renewable energy and a healthy environment. With ecological concerns, high gas prices and foreign policy matters, it's no wonder that energy ranked as the third highest concern for constituents in our district last year. As leader of the Republican Environmental Task Force, I've advanced the discussion of renewable energy among my colleagues and have made it a priority to promote policies that will address California's energy needs for today and for tomorrow.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you and the needs of the Central Coast for the good of California.

California: 33% Renewable

continued from page 5

sources of biofuels, large-scale development of solar power in the desert, toxic materials in certain types of solar panels, and other issues should be addressed and standards developed for proper use of resources. Unfortunately, utilities don't always consider those problems during environmental review.

As we power up California's standards, we need to ensure we do not lose valuable resources, and that we do nothing to harm the environment we are striving to protect and improve. As lawmakers address our concerns, we move closer to an RPS for California that leads the way toward sustainable, smart development of renewable energy.



State Climate Plan Needs Strengthening

The California Air Resources Board's (ARB) newly revised plan for addressing global warming over the next 40 years packs a powerful punch, but still needs strengthening before its final adoption in November, according to Sierra Club California Deputy Director Paul Mason.

Released a few weeks ago, ARB's proposed plan promises to boost California's economy as it reduces the pollution that causes global warming and improves air quality. Curbing greenhouse gas pollution will stimulate the creation of green jobs in industries like clean power and energy efficiency.

Notably, the new plan promises to cut more emissions than previous drafts did, and proposes the auctioning of emission allowances to polluters.

"ARB is right to acknowledge that polluters should have to pay for their emissions," Mason said. "Now we urge ARB to work with the Legislature to realize that goal."

The draft plan still allows almost half of emission reductions to come from offsets, from anywhere in the world — not just from California. This would allow pollution to continue in low-income communities that already carry a heavier burden of polluting industries. ARB still must put in place

safeguards to assure that pollution trading and offsets do not harm air quality in those communities.

That said, Sierra Club California supports ARB's newly proposed measures to reduce pollution from oil refineries. These new measures will help Californians in polluted communities breathe easier.

Mason also applauded the Air and Waste Boards for recognizing the great potential of recycling measures, even as he called on the state to enhance its emissions reductions target for land use. Gov. Schwarzenegger's Climate Action Team proposed reducing land-use-related greenhouse gas emissions by 18 million metric tons, but ARB's current plan falls far short.

"ARB just increased the emission reductions expected from recycling from one million metric tons to 10 million metric tons — that's like getting 1.5 million more cars off the road," Mason said. "If ARB followed the Climate Action Team's advice, it would be like getting rid of 3 million more cars by 2020."

The full California Air Resources Board will vote to adopt, reject or redraft the plan in December.

Pole Cats Can Turn You Into a Quadruped~ part I

By David Georgi, Pole Cats Leader
polecatleader@gmail.com
805-458-5575

"Pole Cats" is a Santa Lucia Sierra Club group dedicated to demonstrating optimal use of trekking poles on easy day hikes. Trekking poles are similar to ski poles, specially adapted for hiking. In recent years, trekking poles have gone high-tech. Shafts are made of strong, lightweight alloys or carbon fiber. Carbide tips securely grip the most slippery surfaces. Handles are made of strong, cushioned materials and ergonomically offset. Adjustable straps are designed to eliminate impact on hands and wrists. Shock absorbers reduce impact on hands, wrists and arms. Length adjusters allow quick and secure pole length adjustments to meet differing terrain requirements.

Four feet are better than two for hiking. Humans are not born knowing how to walk on two legs and take many months to develop the necessary muscles and coordination. Learning to walk on four legs also takes time and determination. The following anecdote explains why the Pole Cats group is needed.

Last year while visiting Kauai, my friend Greg and I decided to hike the Alakai Swamp. I knew it was in the ancient volcanic crater at an elevation of about 4000 feet. The map showed that the only trail then open started at the rim and descended into the crater. In planning the hike, I said to Greg, "I don't know about the trail conditions. I'm going to use my trekking poles. Would you like to use my extra set?"

Now, Greg and I have been friends for many years, yet he is wary of some of my interests. He eyed me suspiciously, "Don't you feel a bit foolish

Litigation Update

Oceano Dunes

The Sierra Club has filed a motion to intervene in the Friends of Oceano Dunes' lawsuit against the County, and the Friends (off-roaders) are likely to intervene in our lawsuit against State Parks.

Intervention is undertaken to insure that your group's views are represented in a legal action in which you have an interest. The Friends want to force the County to state that it would be in conformity with our General Plan to sell the land it currently leases to State Parks in the ODSVRA, reversing its decision last year that such a sale would not be in conformity with the General Plan due to the conflicting land use claims in State Parks' General Management Plan and Coastal Development Permit (which says it's okay to drive off-road vehicles on the County's land in the Dunes) and the county's Local Coastal Plan (which says it's not). The off-roaders are arguing that the Local Coastal Plan should be ignored and cars continue to be allowed to romp on the 584 acres of County-owned dunes because they always have — i.e. the Local Coastal Plan has been successfully ignored for 25 years, and therefore should continue to be. Our case claims the opposite.

The Friends will try their argument in the Sierra Club's case against State



Parks. We will be making the opposing case as intervenors in the Friends' suit against the County — that the Local Coastal Plan precedes and takes precedence over Parks' Coastal Development Permit, and both their permit and Parks' management plan must conform to the terms of the LCP.

Cayucos Viewshed

We believe it is unlikely that the Board of Supervisors will take up this case — the hottest political potato in the county in the lead-up to the June election — until January, after the primary perpetrators of the horrible Cayucos Viewshed Ordinance have departed and the new Board will be

seated. We will have a much more favorable environment for the terms of any potential settlement.

Eternal vigilance is still called for until then, as the worse-than-nothing ordinance passed by the outgoing Board is still in place, and still has the potential to enable unconditional ridgeline castles within a mile of Highway 1. Only reluctance to apply for a permit and begin construction on the terms of an ordinance that is under litigation is holding back those floodgates.

...All of Which Costs Money

For your end-of-the year donation to the Chapter to be tax-deductible, be sure to make out your check to the SLO Land Preservation Fund -- from which we fund our public interest litigation in defense of the environment.

Also, if you are 70.5 years old or older, you can satisfy the minimum distribution requirements of your Individual Retirement Account and take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover Provision to donate up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to the Santa Lucia Chapter.

Make your check out exactly to "TSCF SLO Land Preservation Fund" and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo CA 93406.

continued on page 12

Santa Margarita Agonistes

Planning Commission puts a rush order on holiday gift for developers

Threats, developer tantrums and due process violations have shoved the worst sprawl development in County history toward approval.

The Santa Margarita Ranch, unprecedented in its size and implications for future land use planning, by design the most environmentally destructive private development proposal in county history, has been set on greased rails and given a large push.

With hundreds of millions of dollars in potential profit riding on the approval of Santa Margarita, industrial-strength political pressure has been applied, corners were cut hard, and, as a result, the project went to the Board of Supervisors on appeal this month with its unprecedented number of environmental impacts barely analyzed.

On September 25, County Planning Commission Chairman Bob Roos, Supervisor Ovitt's appointee, did the heavy lifting for the developers and failed in his obligation and duty as a Planning Commissioner when he chose to short-circuit the process in order to get the project before the Board of Supervisors before they leave office at the end of the year. Halfway through that day's Planning Commission meeting — one in an agreed-upon series of meetings in which Commissioners were supposed to discuss specific areas of the project's environmental impacts and take public comment on same — Roos cut off discussion, junked the process the Commission had agreed to, and declared that a decision would be made that day on the massively complex project with a full discussion of only one of its unprecedented eleven Class One environmental impacts — i.e. impacts which, under



Don't let the screen door hit you: Planning Commission Chair Bob Roos, Supervisor Ovitt's appointee, will leave the Commission in January.

the California Environmental Quality Act, no amount of mitigation measures can reduce to an insignificant level.

Deputy County Counsel Joe Orton emphatically urged the Commission to cut off the hearing and vote immediately, but was unable to provide a clear legal basis for his advice. What was clear was that the development consortium had sent a nasty letter threatening to sue if the Commission didn't hurry up, and the developers had become increasingly irate at each meeting of the Commission on Santa Margarita Ranch.

Roos then cherry-picked planning staff's findings on the project's impacts that he would allow to be included in the Commission's report to the Board of Supervisors, keeping the most damaging impacts out of the legal record and thereby making any potential future case against approval of the project as weak as possible.

Roos' action raised serious questions about due process — people who had planned to speak at a future meeting on the project's separate areas of specific impacts immediately

lost their opportunity to do so — but he was just getting started.

On October 9, when staff findings came back to the Planning Commission for a final vote, Roos, at the last possible minute, switched the time of the scheduled hearing from the end of the afternoon to first thing in the morning, at the developers' request. Commissioners Meltschau and Rappa, appointed by Supervisors Achadjian and Lenthall, went along, over the vocal protests of Commissioners Christie and Wyatt, appointed by Supervisors Patterson and Gibson.

The developers were in the hearing room at the crack of dawn, obviously having gotten the word in advance. Members of the public who showed up for the publicly noticed afternoon session on Santa Margarita found they'd gotten the shaft. Again.

Local attorney Michael Jencks faxed a letter to the Commission that day that underscored the point: The Commission's "unseemly haste to conclude its review," he wrote, "will make the Commission's decision, and almost any Board of Supervisors decision based on the Commission's incomplete and partial record and limited findings, more vulnerable to legal challenge and render the

proceedings a travesty of public process... [and] ignores important state laws and policies, and serves as a dangerous precedent for the processing of other major pending County projects...."

At the end of the Commission's June 26 hearing — tired and overly candid at the end of a long day — Roos let slip his goal: "I'm trying to get it over with this year."

This throws an interesting light on his subsequent statement in the October 16 *New Times*: "You know, there's going to be people who are going to wonder 'Well did he just deny it so he could get this decision and move on?'"

Actually, we don't know anyone who's wondering.

As we write these words, the Board has not yet heard the appeal. But as you read them, they have. The hearing on the Santa Margarita Ranch Cluster Subdivision was held late in the afternoon of November 4th — Election Day, when many concerned citizens were voting, poll watching, working on get out the vote, or otherwise had their focus elsewhere on other matters of importance.

That's how this Board takes care of business.



Check Our Messages

Follow along in the pages of *New Times* every month as the Chapter gives the incoming County Board of Supervisors detailed policy prescriptions before the new Board convenes in January.

All together, these form a blueprint for turning San Luis Obispo away from the paved over & polluted dead end the old board was heading for and onto a path toward a clean, green,

sustainable future:

- Sept.:** Local political reform
- Oct.:** Affordable housing
- Nov.:** Protecting our ag land
- Dec.:** Feeding ourselves
- Jan.:** Getting energized

Check them out as they appear in print, or linked from our website at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

Green Jobs Coming

Mark your calendars for the second Good Jobs, Green Jobs National Conference, to be held in Washington, D.C., February 4-6, 2009.

Sierra Club and United Steelworkers -- the Blue Green Alliance -- will seize the moment right after a new Congress and new Administration are sworn in and work to shape the agenda for the coming green economy, to create jobs that help to solve global warming, increase our energy independence, and explore new

technologies that are safe for people and the environment.

This year's conference will also include a Green Jobs Expo that will be free and open to the public.

Get excited!

And go to: www.greenjobsconference.org



On September 27, coordinated by the Sierra Student Coalition and Empower Poly Coalition, Mitchell Park in SLO was the site of our of our local Green Jobs Now! rally, one of dozens held across the country.

Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Economics of Hunger,” by Anthony Faiola, *Washington Post*, printed in *The Tribune*, May 5, 2008

Summary: The global food crisis suddenly appeared “over the last several years” and is allegedly the result of a combination of increased demand in Asia, rising fuel prices, demand for biofuels, and new restrictions by alarmed producers on the export of rice, corn, wheat, etc. No other possible cause seems to have crossed the reporter’s mind.

“Two additional and significant factors have not been widely discussed – the impact of global trade policies on agriculture in developing countries, and the role of speculation in the global food market.... Developed nations, during the past few decades, pushed developing countries to liberalize trade in agriculture, dismantle state-run institutions like marketing boards, and specialize in exportable cash crops at the expense of staple foods. Developing countries were told they would always be able to buy their food from other countries that could produce it more cheaply. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund urged developing countries to cut government subsidies and technical assistance to small farmers, and to reduce their food import duties. Northern countries continued to subsidize their agricultural sectors and the surge of cheap subsidized imports overwhelmed developing country farmers. Developing countries were transformed from net food exporters in the 1970s to large-scale food importers today.

Access to food is a basic human right and simply too important to allow a few companies to control its availability and price. We need to ensure that our foreign aid policies support agriculture and that our international trade rules do not undermine the livelihood of small-scale farmers in developing countries. Without addressing these factors, the food crisis will deepen and lives will continue to be lost.”
-- “Trading in Human Hunger,” Stuart Clark and Cathleen Kneen, *Toronto Star*, Jun 02, 2008

No single factor can be blamed for the global food crisis. An unlucky confluence of events over the past several years contributed to soaring prices.

As supplies in the pipelines of global trade shrank, prices for corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, rice and other grains began shooting through the roof.

There’s no food shortage; I want to really underscore that. Food production has

been keeping ahead of the numbers of people on our earth. There’s no food shortage; we are creating scarcity out of plenty because of this power-concentrating model; ideology that says there is only one rule that governs an economy, and that is highest return to existing wealth. We end up preaching free market as if that were a magic cure. ... What is underneath this crisis is our acceptance of a power-centralizing, power-concentrating economy, all of the policies of the last several decades that international agencies have been pursuing, in some ways coercively, by making their aid dependent on this kind of policy. Third World countries have been encouraged to grow whatever will bring the highest price in the global market, and then import food when needed, and are therefore set up for this disaster, where we see skyrocketing food prices and the imports become unattainable, and they are on the edge of hunger or starvation.”

- Frances Moore Lappe on “Democracy Now,” July 15, 2008

Bush Calls for \$770M in Food Aid

The Bush administration has slipped a controversial ingredient into the \$770 million aid package

it recently proposed to ease the world food crisis, adding language that would promote the use of genetically modified crops in food-deprived countries. The value of genetically modified, or bio-engineered, food is an intensely disputed issue in the U.S. and in Europe, where many countries have banned foods made from genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

...Noah Zerbe, an assistant professor of government and politics at Humboldt State University in California, said that GMO crops might not be appropriate for developing countries.

“You get fantastic yields if you’re able to apply fertilizer and water at the right times, and herbicides to go along with that,” Zerbe said. “Unfortunately, most African farmers, they can’t afford these inputs.”

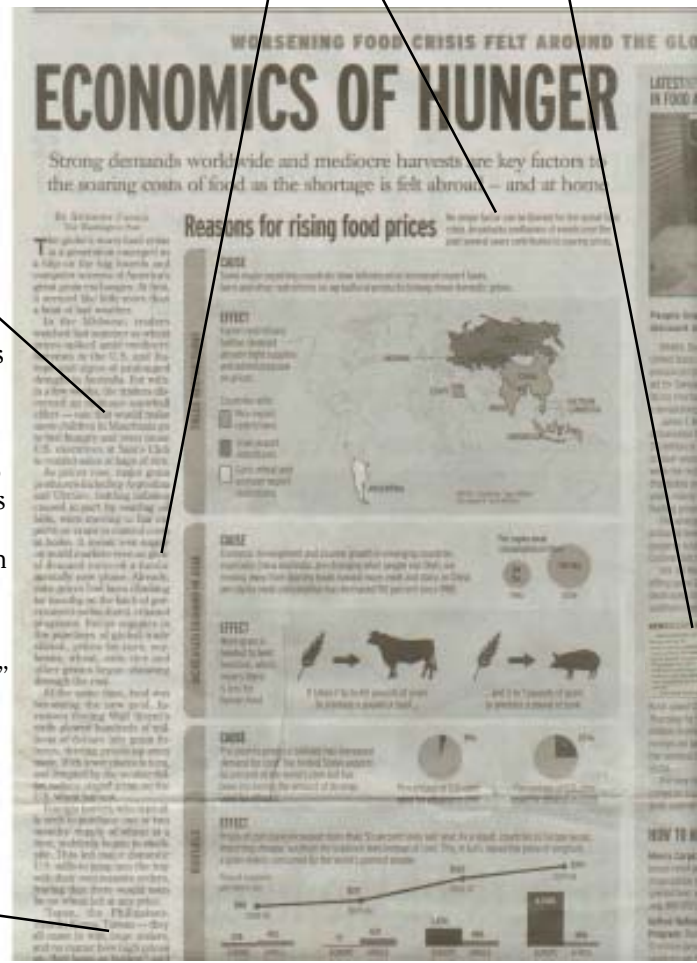
-- “US Using Food Crisis To Boost Bio-Engineered Crops,” Stephen J. Hedges, *Chicago Tribune*, May 14, 2008

[The UN World Food Program] fears the crisis will plunge more than 100 million of the world’s poorest people deeper into poverty....

“Our experiences

living with poor families in rural areas suggests that it has been the opening of their natural resources to global agribusiness, factory fishing fleets and corporate interests that often leads to real poverty.... Governments of poorer countries are pressing for changes in global trade rules that will give them more ‘space’ to set their own priorities as well as their own industrial and agriculture policies, such as favoring domestic farms and firms over global corporations.”

-- “The Hijacking of the Development Debate,” Robin Broad and John Cavanagh, *World Policy Journal*, Summer 2006



There was one big problem. The global food trade never became the kind of well-honed machine that has made the price of manufactured goods such as flat-screen TVs increasingly similar worldwide.

“People skeptical about the idea that free trade is the best way to reduce hunger point to small-scale projects...as alternatives to industrialized farming, which is based on costly energy use, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

‘The Green Revolution displaced our local resources,’ said Mr. León, referring to modern agricultural practices with hybrid crops and chemical fertilizers.

‘Our dependence on the outside, that led to our ruin.’

Mixtec farmers typically grow enough corn to feed their families and sell the excess in local markets. But the price they get has been distorted by subsidized American imports and the dominance of just a handful of large buyers. It does not cover the increase in the cost of fertilizer, which has more than doubled in the past year.”

-- “Ways of Ancient Mexico Reviving Barren Lands,” *New York Times*, May 13, 2008

Upshot:

“We have an economic system based on greed, theft, lack of accountability, exploitation, colonization, racism, homophobia, sexism. This system has done severe damage to the soul of our society. I know it sounds like a cliché, but revolution is the answer... nonviolent and based on the truth: that the land belongs to the landless, the farms to the small family farmers — who are the best stewards of the land — and our natural resources to the local communities. And this revolution does not differentiate between civil rights and economic, social, and cultural rights. It recognizes that land and liberty, jobs and justice go together. Freedom from want is as important as freedom from fear.”

-- “The True Cause of World Hunger,” Anuradha Mittal, *The Sun*, February 2002

Are We Land Mammals?

We don't act like it

By Eric Greening

If we are land mammals, why do we require clean pools of water to be piped into our homes to be fouled with our excrement? Even the hippopotamus, a largely aquatic beast, hauls itself out of its home river to deposit its feces on dry land.

Since, in this culture and many others, we don't act like land mammals, we need to have a conversation about what happens when the befouled water *leaves* our homes. If it goes into a sewer system (sometimes it goes into a septic tank, and septage raises its own huge issues, about which you will be relieved to see no more in this present article), it eventually reaches a wastewater treatment plant, from the other end of which emerges water that has been cleansed to some degree. The stuff that is left behind after cleaning is officially known as "biosolids," but speaking realistically, we might as well call it sludge.

One of the most common destinations for sewage sludge is our agricultural land. At first blush, this might sound like a worthy example of recycling. However, sewage sludge is made up not only of what emerges from us, but of everything that goes into a drain that feeds into the sewer system: household cleaning chemicals, runoff from industrial processes, and all sorts of other things you'd rather not think about. And even what comes through us is laden with dangerous pathogens and the residues of pharmaceuticals and other non-food items we may have taken in. (If you take a zinc tablet, 80% of the zinc is likely to pass right through you and become a heavy metal contaminant of the resultant sludge.) For this reason, our county, like many others, has sought to regulate the land application of sewage sludge.

The push for local control began almost a decade ago when a major land application project was proposed near San Miguel. The county forfeited CEQA lead agency status to the Regional Water Quality Control Board, which held a hearing on their staff recommended Negative Declaration in the convenient location of Salinas. A group of concerned citizens of San Miguel, ably assisted by the erudite David Broadwater of the Center for Sludge Information and two other heroes who are no longer with us, Dr. Willard Osibin and attorney Lorraine Scarpace, presented such a strong case for an EIR that the Regional Board overrode their staff's recommendation. The project proponents decided to look elsewhere for their land application site.

This showdown left our county's citizens and officials with a lot to think about. Two task forces; one an outgrowth of the County Health Commission, and a later, longer-lasting one appointed by the Board of Supervisors, made the recommendation that we have a County ordinance to regulate land application of the stuff, and went into some detail about what ought to be in said ordinance. However, these recommendations came forward at a time when the County had limited resources and other priorities, and the result was an interim ordinance whose main effect has been to set limits on quality and quantity of what could be land-applied in our County. The quality

limit is what is known as "EQ" (for "Exceptional Quality"), which, despite its name, falls well short of the standards upheld in many other countries; the quantity limit countywide in any given year is 1,500 cubic yards of sludge. The intent is to reflect historical land application of locally-generated material (although the 1,500 cubic yard figure is well beyond historic averages), and to prevent importation of vast amounts from metropolitan areas looking for vulnerable counties in which to dump their loads.

The County Environmental Health Department has finally come forward with a draft of a permanent ordinance which would replace the interim version. It is available on the Environmental Health website, and public comments are being solicited.

In my opinion, it has some solid virtues and some significant flaws. One major virtue is the continuation of a numerical limit similar to that in the interim ordinance, although it is allowed to creep upward in proportion to population growth. (It would start at 1,608 cubic yards, presumably a reflection population growth since the interim ordinance was first enacted.) Another virtue is the requirement that edible crops be spared from land application, at least insofar as edible portions could come in contact with the sludge. Still another virtue is the requirement for the preparation of a "nutrient management plan" as part of the permit process, and a permanent ceiling of 5 instances of land application on any given parcel.

Flaws include the aforementioned reliance on EQ standards, and an upward creep in the numerical limit that tracks future population growth, even though said growth is likely to *shrink* the inventory of land suitable for this use.

But the greatest flaw is the absolute lack of any *public* process and of any recognition that land application of sewage sludge is a *project* requiring compliance with CEQA. The process in the draft ordinance includes notification of the Public Health Department 30 days prior to proposed land application, and, presumably, referral to the Planning Department to check the eligibility of the site (which must be agriculturally zoned and in active production). It does not specify *any* notification of neighbors or of communities downwind or downstream.

There is no mention of a public hearing before any public body, nor of any process of appeal from the Public Health Department to any public body. It is unclear how CEQA could be complied with without a public certification hearing by the County Supervisors or by some body whose decisions can be appealed to the Supervisors.

Given the risks posed by this potentially dangerous substance, we need to make the strongest possible case for serious environmental review of each project in all its specifics, and for a process that gives the public the opportunity to confront threats to its well-being.

Until our habits and our building codes reflect our true identity as land mammals, we have to deal with the messy results of what we flush away. In truth, there is no "away." There is only land, water, and air, and the creatures who depend on them, including ourselves.

TAKE ACTION

Attend the County Health Commission's hearing on the Draft Ordinance at 6 p.m. on November 17th, in the chambers of the SLO County Board of Supervisors.

Carrying Water

continued from page 2

to be east. The gently rolling hills of Perrett's ranch, Quandt said, are where the people of Santa Maria want the city to grow.

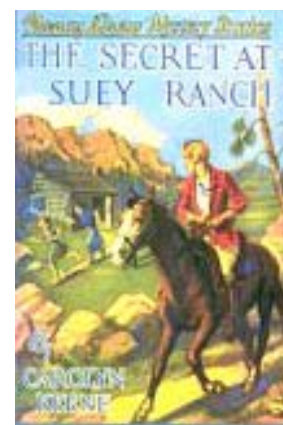
The Ag Board demurred that it wasn't really their job to be looking out for the hopes and dreams of the City of Santa Maria or further its goals by facilitating the future development of this property. Thus the Ag Liaison Advisory Board (not the Ag-Until-You-Can-Subdivide-And-Develop Advisory Board) recommended that the County Supervisors not support the boundary change proposal, a motion that passed with only one vote opposed: Richard Quandt.

It is safe to say that if the proposed boundary change ever occurs, it would be a (brief) matter of time before the City of Santa Maria moved to annex and entertain subdivision proposals.

So that may explain the primary motives involved. Or maybe Mr. Perrett really did just want to make it easier for Suey Ranch employees to access community services in Santa Maria (in which case, SLO County Planning Staff pointed out, the matter of the location of the ranch in either SLO or SB County was of absolutely no consequence). Let the reader decide.

But that still leaves the mystery of the man who tried to make it happen.

Katcho had a story, too: He voted for preliminary approval for the boundary change, he said, because he hoped to make Santa Maria feel warm and friendly towards Nipomo, and more inclined to give it more water.



Where is Nancy Drew when you need her?

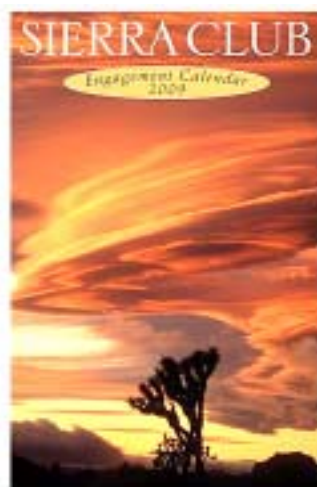
The *Tribune* scratched its head, calling Katcho's explanation "clear as mud;" Nipomo CSD reps expressed incredulity at Supervisor Achadjian's notion, and that was pretty much the end of that. Katcho's peculiar rationale was heard no more.

This leaves one free to speculate. Achadjian is widely expected not to run for reelection to the Board in 2010. His likeliest next attempted political perching: A termed-out Sam Blakeslee's State Assembly seat. If so, his greatest need: A broader base of support in the district, meaning the acquisition of generous friends in Santa Maria and northern Santa Barbara County, all grateful and indebted to Katcho, the Bringer of Water and Estate Homes.

But who can say? Life is a mystery.

One thing that's known for sure: Once again, we have had placed before us the willingness of this Very Bad Board to get up to ever more mischief as the pave-it-all majority heads for the sunset (see "Hold That Line!," July/August, and "Bullet Dodged," September), and once again the need for eternal vigilance is clear.

2009 Sierra Club Calendars



They're here, they're gorgeous, you have to have one for your desk, one for your wall, and a great many more for friends and family! And when you buy direct from the Chapter, you support our conservation work in San Luis Obispo County.

**wall calendar: \$12.50
desk calendar: \$13.50
To order, call 543-7051**

Morro Bay Power Plant Nears End of the Road

A new plant can't be built, ending the facility's 54-year life

by The Coastal Alliance on Plant Expansion

After years of sharply-reduced use and partial retirement, the 54-year-old Morro Bay Power Plant will be shut down for good in a few years and no new replacement plant can be built.

Newly revealed plans of the plant owner cite a proposed new state policy prohibiting the plant's continued use of water from the Morro Bay National Estuary, which has killed countless billions of small fish and other marine life over its lifetime.

The existing plant with its 450-foot tall smokestacks would be closed by 2015 under the new policy, but could be shut down as early as 2011. In either time frame, the two remaining operational generating units—the other two were retired several years ago—would continue to operate

occasionally and minimally in the summer, the most productive time for aquatic life, if it runs at all.

In a letter to the Morro Bay City Council dated Sept. 9, the plant's owner, Dynegy, said "continued operation of the plant is unlikely" due to a virtual ban on "the use of sea water for once-through cooling of power plants proposed by the California State Water Resources Control Board." The letter was placed on the agenda of the Council Monday night (Oct. 13) for planned discussion in closed session later this month.

For several years, the state Board has been developing a new policy restricting use by plants of "once-through cooling" (OTC)—in which a steady flow of water from the ocean or estuaries is withdrawn to cool plant generators and is then discharged as heated water back into the ocean—and is scheduled to adopt the policy as binding regulations early next year. The policy was prompted by a landmark federal appellate decision in January 2007, that ruled the U.S. Clean Water Act prevents use of once-through cooling by new or existing power plants throughout the nation.

The decision and the proposed new state policy require a cooling technology -- "closed-cycle cooling" -- that recycles a limited amount of fresh water in the plant much like a radiator and does not use sea water for cooling, avoiding destruction of the marine environment.

The Futures Group, a citizens committee appointed by the Morro Bay City Council, recommended last year that the city consider engaging in a thorough study of non-plant uses, possibly through the establishment of a redevelopment agency. The city is in the process of seeking a planning grant for this purpose. A number of visitor-serving uses of the 107-acre site have been discussed over the past several years, including a marine museum, an arts center and restored natural habitat for public use.

The plant's current outfall lease with the City expires in 2012. Dynegy proposes extending it to Dec. 31, 2014, just before the new state policy's deadline for halting the use of once-through cooling takes effect in 2015.

The proposed state policy says all "new and expanded coastal power plants using seawater for cooling" must use "the best... technology... to minimize the intake and mortality of all forms of marine life." In addition, "An existing power plant must reduce intake flow and intake velocity, at a minimum, to a level commensurate with that which can be attained by a closed-cycle cooling system."

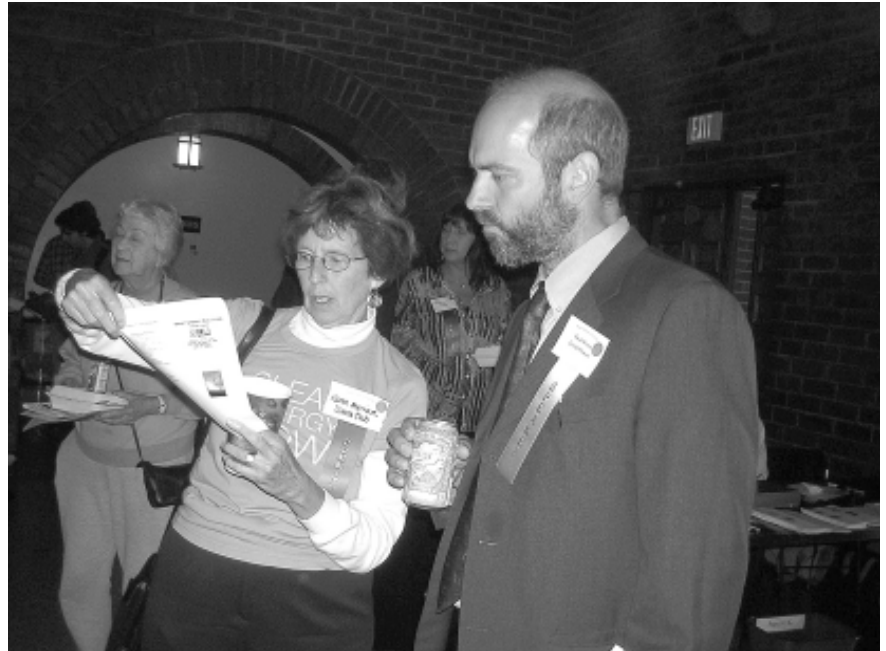
There are 19 power plants along the California coast, including Morro Bay and Diablo Canyon, that come under the new state policy restriction on use of once-through cooling. Under the proposed policy, most non-nuclear plants would have to comply by 2015 and nuclear plants by 2018.

A state study called the Electric Grid Reliability Impacts from Once-Through Cooling in California, issued last April, concluded that "more than enough power plants are expected to be operating in 2015 to more than compensate for any or all OTC plant retirements," and its investigation "showed that given sufficient time to

react, the electric industry could likely tolerate and compensate for mass OTC plant retirement at relatively modest costs to the rate-payer."

The most "realistic scenario," the study said, "in which some OTC plants would be retired while others repower or convert their cooling systems,

showed potential for significant benefits to the environment because the overall power sector would be more efficient and produce fewer emissions, and because marine ecosystem impacts caused by use of OTC technology would be greatly reduced."



Chapter Chair Karen Merriam consults with Local Power founder Paul Fenn at the SLO Smart Energy Solutions Summit in October 2006.

We Brought Back the Power

Chapter contracts with author of landmark energy law

No one who attended the Smart Energy Solutions Summit, held at the SLO Vets Hall on October 10, 2006, is likely to forget the keynote speech, delivered by Paul Fenn, head of the Oakland energy consulting firm Local Power.

Fenn is the author of the 2002 bill that created Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) in California, allowing communities to combine their purchase power and buy green

energy, at better rates than a private utility can get. Fenn galvanized the room with his talk on this powerful tool that California cities are taking advantage of to blaze a trail to a clean, renewable energy future.

Fenn's Local Power is now working for the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club on greenhouse gas inventories and local climate action plans for San Luis Obispo (see our front page). Good to have them back!

Morro Bay GHG

continued from page 1

to take part in ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. The international association of local governments and national and regional local government organizations provides region-specific software and technical assistance to aid municipalities in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

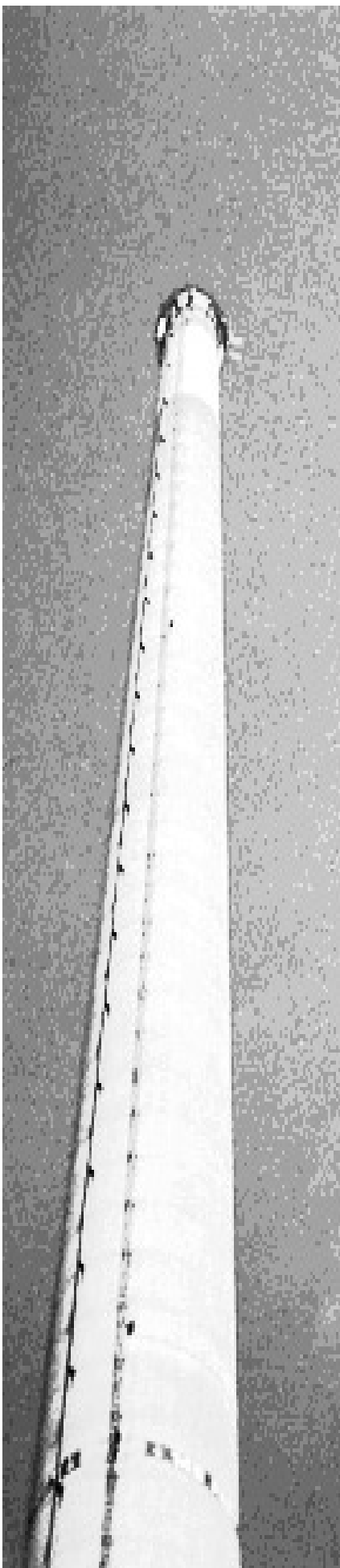
"This issue is the Sierra Club's highest priority, and we are allocating funds accordingly," said Santa Lucia Chapter Chair Karen Merriam. "This is the most important single step communities can take in reducing the carbon they're putting into the atmosphere."

"City Staff is very aware of the implications of State Assembly Bill AB 32, which mandates cuts in greenhouse gas emissions," said Morro Bay Associate Planner Rachel Grossman. "Though the California Air Resources Board has not yet established standards to implement the bill, AB 32 requires early action measures to be implemented by January 1, 2010. The City feels fortunate to have the assistance of the Sierra Club in getting a jump start on these regulations."

At the Club's urging, the Morro Bay City Council voted to endorse the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement two years ago. More than 800 cities nationwide have signed the agreement, in which cities pledge to undertake an inventory of their greenhouse gas emissions and implement policies and programs to reduce emissions. Encouraging cities to sign onto the Mayors agreement is the cornerstone part of the Club's national "Cool Cities" program.

Club staff and volunteers are assembling Climate Action Groups consisting of Cal Poly students and local volunteers who will work with cities and the County in the task of crunching the numbers to provide baseline data for emissions in every aspect of municipal operations.

Morro Bay is the third city in the county to sign up for membership in ICLEI, following San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles, which joined earlier this year. ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection campaign is active in Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan, Latin America, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Southeast Asia, and the U.S.



Classifieds

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

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 P.O. Box 15755
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
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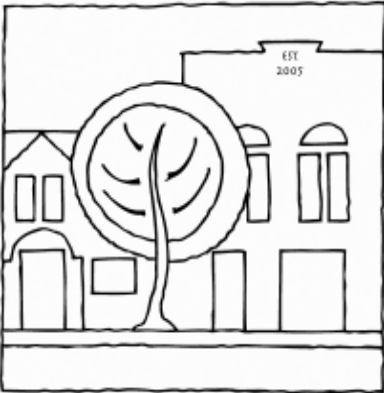
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Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Leader **Gary Felsman (473-3694)**. For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. 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.

Nov. 9th, 0930, Sun. NATURE HIKE in NIPOMO AREA. Easy hike. Kids & dogs welcome. Call (929-3647) or e-mail <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before for details. Sponsored by Elder Bill. (Dog Owners be sure of location prior to bringing your pet.)

Nov. 9, 10 a.m., Eagle Rock Nature Trail. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling optimal techniques for using trekking poles. Join us for an easy hike. The trailhead is located across from Cuesta College at El Chorro Regional Park. From SLO, take Highway 1 North and turn east (right) at the first of two turn signals to El Chorro Regional Park. Follow the signs to the Day Use area, passing the ball fields and Botanical Garden. Park in the Day Use area at the end of the park, just before the locked gate. Contact David Georgi at polecatleader@gmail.com, 458-5575 for upcoming activities. Biped welcome.

Nov. 15, 9:00 a.m., New Trail - Johnson Ranch. City of SLO Work Party. Come help the CCCMB build a new trail on the Johnson Ranch south of SLO. Bring water, snack work gloves and dress for the weather. Meet at intersection of Ontario Road & Lower Higuera.

Pole Cats

continued from page 6

with those? You look like an Edmond Hillary wannabe."

I saw that Greg was resistant to the idea that poles could help his hiking and responded, "I just know that poles give me more stability and endurance and I don't know what sort of conditions to expect on this trail."

Greg relented, "OK, bring them along and I may use them."

At the trailhead, I offered to demonstrate some ways to use the poles.

He replied, "Look, I'm going to carry them and I may even use them, but you have to promise not to pester me about technique. They're just poles and what sort of training could you need?"

As we walked down a gentle stretch of trail, Greg's attitude wasn't helped

Nov. 16, 0930, NATURE BIKE RIDE in NIPOMO AREA. Meet at Library with bicycle with many options such as Native Garden, Dana Adobe, new bike-lane, kids welcome but no dogs. Call (929-3647) or e-mail <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before for details. Sponsored by Elder Bill.

Nov. 22, 7:30A.M. McPherson Peak: Join us on an all-day hike up this 5,427 foot high peak in the Sierra Madre Range near New Cuyama. There are distant views of the San Rafael Wilderness, Cuyama Valley, and the Caliente Range if it is clear at the top. This moderately strenuous hike is 11 miles long and climbs 2,870 feet. The trailhead is 85 miles from SLO. We will leave Santa Rosa Park in SLO and can stop at the Halcyon exit commuter parking in A.G., and the dirt pullout on the east side of the highway at the beginning of Route 166. You may camp at the trailhead at Aliso Campground on Fri. or Sat. night. An Adventure Pass is required at the trailhead/campground. The climb up is often without any shade and the top can be windy so be prepared. For any other info or to meet the group at the other possible meeting places, call Carlos at 546-0317. Rain postpones to Dec.

Nov. 27, 0930, THANKSGIVING. NATURE HIKE in NIPOMO AREA. Call (929-3647) or e-mail <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before for details. Sponsored by Elder Bill. (Dog Owners be sure of location prior to bringing your pet.)

Nov. 30, 10 a.m., Quarry Trail. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling optimal techniques for using trekking poles. Join us for an easy hike. Meet at the Cabrillo Peak trailhead. From SLO, go 12 miles north on Hwy 1 to Los Osos/Baywood Park exit just before Morro Bay. Go south on Southbay Blvd. and drive .7 miles to the State Park entrance. Continue straight for .2 miles and look for the dirt parking lot on the left. It is easy to miss. Do not wait at the Live Oak trailhead, which is shortly after the Quarry trailhead. Contact David Georgi at polecatleader@gmail.com or 458-5575 for upcoming activities. Biped welcome.

Fri. (eve) – Sun., Dec 5 – 7, Wilderness Restoration in Death Valley National Park: Work project in Middle Park/South Park area of the Panamint Mountains. Main objective is to help obscure old vehicle routes by installing wilderness restoration signs and using rock or vertical mulch. If there are enough participants, we might also help clearing up trash and debris from the

vicinity of a couple of the old cabins in the area. Park will supply some of the required 4x4 transportation. Meet late Friday afternoon and drive to campsite. Work Saturday and Sunday. Happy hour/potluck on Saturday night. Contact leader for more information. Kate Allen kj.allen@wildblue.net, 661-944-4056.

Sat.-Sun. Dec 6-7, Antelope Protection Work Party: Antelope Protection Carcamp, Carrizo Plain National Monument (Nature Study/Work Party). With little rainfall and few water sources, the species that live here are both hardy and endangered. Pronghorn antelope evolved in these wild, open spaces. Then cattle ranching left a legacy of endless fences, which are deadly to pronghorn. Join us for a weekend in this remote area removing fencing for their benefit. We've made noticeable progress and we are making a difference. Camp at Selby campground, bring food, water, heavy leather work gloves, and camping gear for the weekend. Potluck Sat. night. Rain cancels. Resource specialist: Alice Koch. For more information, contact Leaders Cal and Letty French, 14140 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446, (805-239-7338). Preferably e-mail lettyfrench@gmail.com or cal.french@gmail.com. Santa Lucia Chapter/CNRCC Desert Com.

Dec. 7, 0930, Sun. NATURE HIKE in NIPOMO AREA. Easy hike. Kids & dogs welcome. Call (929-3647) or e-mail <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before for details. Sponsored by Elder Bill. (Dog Owners be sure of location prior to bringing your pet.)

Dec. 14, 0930, Sun. NATURE BIKE RIDE in NIPOMO AREA. Meet at Library with bicycle with many options such as Native Garden, Dana Adobe, new bike-lane, kids welcome but no dogs. Call (929-3647) or e-mail <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before for details. Sponsored by Elder Bill.

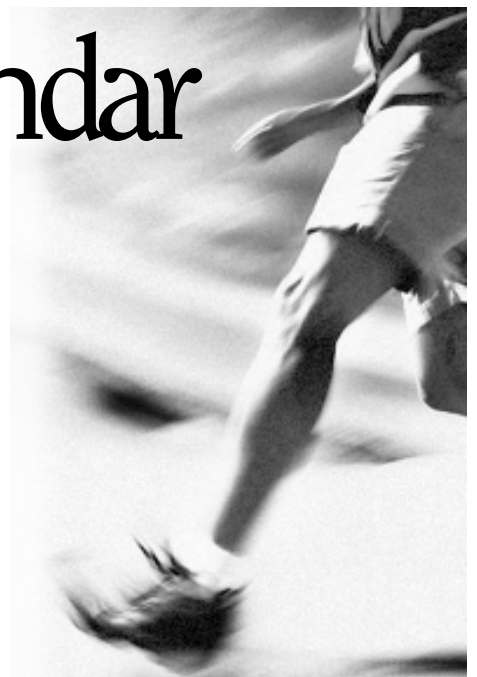
Dec. 14, 10 a.m., Islay Hill Open Space. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling optimal techniques for using trekking poles. Join us for an easy hike with spectacular views of Edna Valley to the south and morros to the north. From Broad, go east on Tank Farm, turn right on Wavertree, left on Spanish Oaks and veer right onto Sweetbay and park near cul de sac. Contact David Georgi at 458-5575 or polecatleader@gmail.com, for upcoming activities. Biped welcome.

Dec. 28, 10 a.m., Maino Open Space trail. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading

giving me support and confidence. Greg awkwardly attempted planting his poles and was able to save several slips.

The trails of Alakai Swamp meander through dense jungle and marshy swampland, connected by many steep and uneven stairs. We came to the first of many downhill steps built of wood, some steps as high as 18 inches. It was a breeze to plant both poles on the next step down and then gracefully hop down, with the biceps serving as shock absorbers. After a while, I looked back and saw Greg following my technique.

When we encountered our first uphill stairs, I confidently planted both poles at the base of the next step and used my triceps to push my body to the next level. It felt great to be



local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling optimal techniques for using trekking poles. Join us for an easy hike. The trailhead is located off the Marsh Street onramp of southbound Highway 101. From downtown SLO take Higuera Street to the intersection with Marsh Street and proceed as if to take 101 South. Immediately after the freeway underpass, bear right into the parking lot. Contact David Georgi at 458-5575 or polecatleader@gmail.com for upcoming activities. Biped welcome.

Mon.-Sat., Dec. 29, 2008 - Jan. 3, 2009; Holiday Service in Carrizo Plain National Monument: Celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of the next in one of our national monuments. A welcome hike Dec. 29, three and a half days of service modifying barbed wire fencing, and a full day for hiking and exploring. Use of accommodations at Goodwin Ranch included. Limited to 12 participants, \$30 covers 5 dinners. For more information, contact leader: Craig Deutsche, deutsche@earthlink.net, (310-477-6670), or co-leader Melinda Goodwater, mgoodwater@sbcglobal.net, (408-774-1257). CNRCC Desert Committee.

Jan. 1, 2009, 0930, Thurs. MUSSEL ROCK NEW YEARS DAY HIKE. Meet on Guadalupe Beach at 0930 for the 25th annual hike to top of dunes. Details: karaslo@charter.net. Call (929-3647) or e-mail bdenneen@kcbx.net a few days before for details. Sponsored by Elder Bill. (Dog Owners be sure of location prior to bringing your pet.)

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.

using both upper and lower muscle groups to ascend the series of steps that would have quickly exhausted unassisted leg muscles. I noticed that Greg was using the same technique.

We came to a stream with algae-covered stepping stones. I planted both poles alongside the first stone and felt the carbide tips securely grab the slippery bottom. I supported a large part of my body weight and stepped to the next stone, repositioning my poles and repeating the process across the stream. Greg followed and when he made it across, he said, "OK, I'm starting to see how these things can be useful. They really helped going up and down the stairs and this stream would have been scary without them."

continued next issue