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Protecting and
Preserving the
Central Coast



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

Jul./Aug. 2009
Volume 46 No. 7

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Pre-meeting of the minds: On June 11, Grover Beach Mayor John Shoals, Renewable Energy Secure Communities (RESCO) grant project manager Mark Shefrin, County Supervisors Jim Patterson and Adam Hill and Sonoma County Climate Action Plan Technical Director Dave Erickson met to discuss SLO County's energy future before attending the Sierra Club's South County Energy Town Hall in Grover Beach.

Upcoming Events

**July 10: Support a
Marine Sanctuary for
SLO**

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**July 21: The 2,600-mile
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YouTube**

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No *Santa Lucian* in August.
Have a cool, green summer!



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Got Clean Power if You Want It

Sierra Club brings climate action to SLO

From June 11 through June 17, Dave Erickson was a busy man.

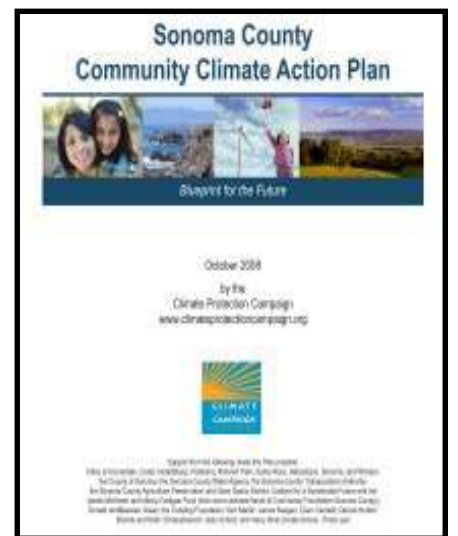
Not that he isn't pretty busy most of the time. Erickson, Senior Carbon Analyst for Local Power Inc., a Bay Area energy consulting firm, was in SLO at the invitation of the Santa Lucia Chapter. We offered to put him up for a week on our nickel, proposing that he address several groups of local elected officials, planners and managers on the recently completed Sonoma Climate Action Plan, the most ambitious plan to cut carbon emissions to be proposed by any county in the United States. Erickson

served as technical director.

He accepted, and proceeded to address meetings of city managers, the SLO Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Committee, the Santa Lucia Chapter's Energy Task Force, and the Sierra Club's South County Energy Town Hall in Grover Beach.

The discussions were all about Climate Action Plans, policies that municipalities statewide are drafting in order to meet the mandates of California's Global Warming Solutions Act, which requires significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and a shift to renewable energy sources. SLO County recently completed a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, the prerequisite to embark on the preparation of a Climate Action Plan.

As the name of his company implies, Erickson is a specialist in local power, a concept that Local Power Inc. helps local governments to implement as they navigate the legal, logistical and financial challenges to creating renewable energy projects. The company led San Francisco's CleanPowerSF program,



To read the Sonoma County Climate Action Plan, go to www.coolplan.org

the largest local green energy project in the world, and created the first renewable energy financing authority in the U.S.

Local Power Inc. also authored California's Community Choice law (AB 117), which allows cities and counties to aggregate the buying power of individual customers to secure alternative energy supply contracts. Community Choice Aggregations (CCA) in Ohio and Massachusetts deliver greener power, charging ratepayers less per kilowatt hour than Investor Owned Utilities.

Perhaps the most arresting piece of information Erickson shared with officials from our County and cities about Sonoma's experience was the finding that staying with PG&E rather than going with a Community Choice energy aggregation plan would result in the county falling short of their Climate Action Plan's emissions reduction targets by 35 percent. (PG&E procures more than 40

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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.

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

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

General Meeting

The 2,600-Mile Summer

Tuesday, July 21, 7-9 p.m.

On retiring from his real-estate job in 2001, Bill Davies decided to do something different: hike the entire Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to the Canadian border! Listen to his tales of endurance, fears, and unexpected delights, accompanied by slides and equipment exhibits.

Steynberg Gallery
1531 Monterey Street, SLO

Free

For more information, call
Joe: (805-772-1875)



How to Green Our Electricity

By Ray Pingle, Sierra Club California Energy-Climate Committee

How can California encourage investors to generate renewable electricity? How about a guarantee that if they generate the power, they'll be paid at a good price?

That's the idea behind the so-called "feed-in tariff," the most effective, proven strategy to bring renewables on-line—rapidly, in quantity, and at appropriate cost. Under a feed-in tariff, a utility pays standardized rates to producers of renewable power so that they can compete against conventional power.

California utilities now pay electricity generators (usually a plant fueled with natural gas) according to the "market price referent," a rate paid to all such producers, currently about \$.11/kWh for base-load electricity.

Some cleaner technologies may be more expensive in the short term, and if they have to compete with the constantly changing price of power from natural gas plants, they will never be built. A feed-in tariff would be set to reimburse the developer of a renewable electricity generating plant to cover costs and provide a reasonable profit—independent of the price of natural gas. Because costs vary for different types of renewables, different payment rates would be set depending on the type and size of the project.

Over time, as with any new technology, the cost of these new sources of energy can be expected to decrease and become more cost-effective. The state would reassess rates for each technology, and as costs come down, new contracts would be pegged at lower rates. A 20-year contract signed in 2010 for a 10 MW wind system might pay \$.09/kWh, while a contract in 2012 for a similar project might pay \$.08/kWh. Germany has built into its tariff system an annual rate reduction of 5 to 6.5% for most renewables. Utilities have decades of experience at setting long-term rates to cover costs plus a profit. The concept is not new, but would be applied in a new way to renewables.

Feed-in tariffs work. Already 18 countries have adopted feed-in tariffs. A European Union Commission analysis found that feed-in tariffs achieve greater growth in renewable energy, at a lower cost, than other policies. Due to feed-in tariffs, Germany and Spain have become Europe's largest renewable energy producers, and Denmark now produces more than 20% of its

electricity from wind alone.

Spain started working to incentivize the development of renewables in 1980 and also improved its program over time. During 2007, Spain's wind-capacity additions set a European record with 3,522 MW installed in a single year, and Spain's photovoltaic market grew by over 300%.

On March 1, Gainesville, Florida, implemented the first feed-in tariffs in the U.S. for photovoltaic solar. On March 10 its web site reported: "We have already received enough completed applications to reach our 2009 and 2010 target of 4 megawatts each. We will continue to accept and approve applications, in the order in which they are received, to fulfill targets for future years."

In less than 10 days, Gainesville achieved its goal for 2009 and 2010.

Will feed-in tariffs increase electricity bills? In the short term they probably will, since some categories of renewable energy will be more expensive—but not by much. In Germany, the program increased costs to ratepayers by about \$3/month. A 2007 study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory analyzed 28 state-level studies designed to project the impact of increased renewables on electricity rates. It concluded that the median bill impact would be an increase of 38 cents per month. Only two of the studies showed increases greater than 5%, 19 projected increased rates of 1% or less, and six predicted rate decreases.

Last December, the California Energy Commission (CEC) accepted staff recommendations for California to implement feed-in tariffs much like those in Europe.

Sierra Club California is reviewing proposed legislation for two key objectives: Enacting into law the target of 33% renewables by 2020, as declared by Gov. Schwarzenegger in an executive order, and implementing a well-structured feed-in tariff to help reach this objective. As we move forward on this campaign, we would greatly appreciate your help in advocacy with California legislators. To receive alerts requesting your help for such legislation, please subscribe to the CALIF-ACTIVISTS e-mail list by filling out the form at: www.sierraclub.org/memberlists

You must be a Sierra Club member, and will need your eight-digit Club member number, which you can find on the address label of this newsletter. (If you have a nine-digit code, delete the leading 0.)

SANTA LUCIAN

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The Executive Committee meets the third Friday of every month at 12:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 547-B Marsh St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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New Brooms

A weight has been lifted off the County Planning Department. Can a corner be turned?

The spectacular departure of Chief County Administrator David Edge last May sucked all the news oxygen out of the room and buried another story which, on any other day but the day when both stories broke, would have been the top news item of the month: The sudden departure of County Planning Director Vic Holanda.

Holanda's "retirement," an event bracketed between two closed-session performance evaluations in as many weeks, was a tangible demonstration of the new Board of Supervisors' break with the old guard.

Edge underlined the point in his venom-tipped public farewell to the Board on May 19, when he took pains to knock down the official story on Holanda's near simultaneous departure, saying "I would not have chosen to end my career this way, preferring rather the approach you took with my friend Vic Holanda."

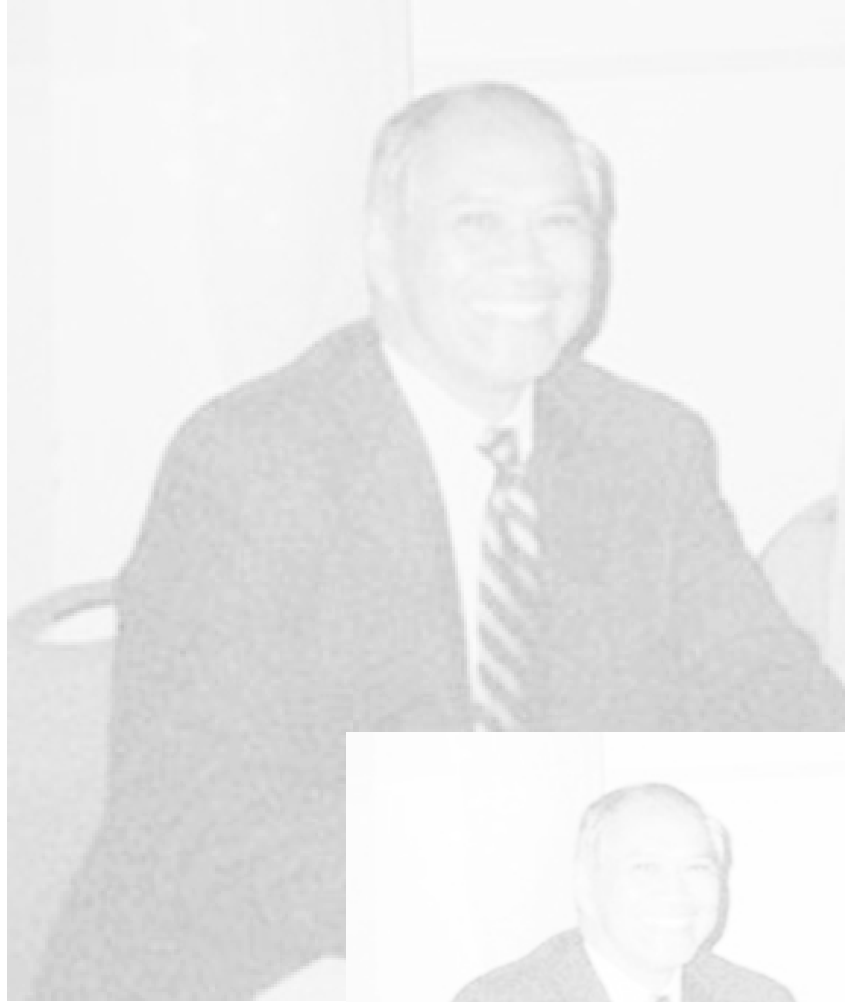
Holanda was hired by the infamous Mike Ryan Board, shortly after the new Chief Administrative Officer, David Edge, stripped the position of the civil service protections afforded his predecessor, Alex Hinds. (Not surprisingly, Hinds read the writing on the wall and accepted a more compatible arrangement in Marin County.) Poetically, both Edge and Holanda were swept into the county on a wave that broke in the 1996 election; a wave which has now receded and swept them both out in the wake of election 2008.

Environmentalists and smart growth advocates have been gritting their teeth for twelve long years, as the county Planning Department, under Holanda's laissez-faire management style, used tortured logic and selective hearing to justify any number of environmentally ghastly projects. Most recently, the Santa Margarita Ranch subdivision, the Shandon Sprawl-Town Plan, the San Miguel Ranch General Plan Amendment, the Huasna Valley oil field expansion, and a slew of sand and gravel mine proposals on the Salinas River have collectively required thousands of hours of community volunteer efforts to challenge.

What these projects all have in common: A spectacularly heedless and destructive quality that causes rational, independent minds to ask, "how can they do this?!" Whether the planning director condoned them or was oblivious to them, he was responsible for his department's decisions.

But with Holanda's departure, Board members now have an ideal opportunity to recruit a planning director with the values, talent, judgment and leadership to achieve the vision they were elected to implement. This vision has been articulated over and over at numerous community planning workshops, summits, and charettes. It is a vision that is simple to articulate but has been perniciously difficult to produce. Essentially, the public wants the county to:

- * Preserve (for real) agriculture and open space.
- * Protect scenic views.
- * Maintain community separators, so that the North County does not become SanPasoDero.



Now it's time to say goodbye.... The Holandan Era fades away.

* Provide a housing mix that accommodates public transportation and creates walkable communities.

The "what" part is easy. The "how" will take backbone, experience and commitment. It will require a combination of General Plan and ordinance amendments, project conditions, and LCP revisions. It will require thinking outside the box. It will require the fortitude to say "no" to those relatively few projects that simply should not be built, and the ability to articulate the legally defensible argument as to why. And most importantly, it will require the management skills to change the fundamental culture of the Planning Department and inspire the staff to pursue professional excellence with future generations in mind, not just the applicants paying the fees.

Undoubtedly, there is untapped talent within the County Planning Department. Although there has been a steady brain drain since 1996, some truly committed public servants remain.

But the Department's new leader should not be selected from among the current ranks. The bunker mentality that has developed over the last decade cannot be cast off quickly enough to get this urgent job done. The Board needs new ideas and fresh energy to match its own. They have given the department a morale-boost by helping show Holanda the door. Now they need to give their staff the gift of empowerment that can only come from an outside perspective. Cities and counties all over the country are re-inventing themselves to meet today's challenges with respect to energy, transportation, environmental restoration, local food



systems, and more. We need a Planning Director who has walked around and worked within those communities to guide us out of our miasma.

Despite our daunting economic crisis, San Luis Obispo remains a fabulous place to live, and there is still much to save. We have the weather, landscape, academic lure and business opportunities to attract the best and the brightest. We have a refreshing new political climate that promises to support and celebrate bold creativity.

The Board should undertake a nationwide talent search to find the person who is best equipped to lead the Planning Department in a new direction. Opportunity is knocking. Let's be smart, gracious hosts and open the door.



They left tracks: It looks like someone tried to ram a deceitful dunes land deal down our throats.

Grand Jury Slams County Planning on Oceano Dunes

Land use issue first raised by Sierra Club results in scathing report

Key information deleted from a crucial County document on a major proposed land deal, an omission first brought to light by the Santa Lucia Chapter over a year ago ("Scandal in the Dunes," May 2008) has resulted in an investigation by the SLO County Grand Jury and a damning report which concludes that the County Planning Department's it-was-an-accident explanation was not convincing and the evidence of a deliberate attempt to deceive is overwhelming.

The story began at the February 25, 2007, meeting of the County Planning Commission. The California Department of Parks was seeking to secure permanent title to the land in the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area that it currently leases from the County. County Planning Director Vic Holanda had issued a determination that there would be no difference in the use of the County's land as a result of selling it to State Parks, and no conflict with the County's General Plan policies as a result of the sale.

If not for the testimony of the Sierra Club at the February 25 appeal hearing, at which we produced the map from the County's Local Coastal Plan clearly showing the County land in question had been designated as a vehicle "buffer area" since 1983 and ignored by State Parks ever since, the Planning Commission would not have known of the designation. When the Commissioners found out, they declared there was a conflict between the use of the land under State Parks' Management Plan and the use designated in the LCP, overturning Holanda's determination

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A Will is a Way

Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others preserve the intricate balance of nature.

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Sierra Club California Report

Sierra Club California held its annual convention at Rancho El Chorro, across from Cuesta College, over the weekend of May 30.

Much of the meeting time was given over to plotting a course through the legislative hazards and opportunities presented by the current climate in Sacramento. Former Assemblymember John Laird, Saturday evening's keynote speaker, analyzed the epic budget mess and the May special election that was supposed to fix it in "State Politics, Redistricting and Budget: Does the Sierra Club Have a Role?" Laird has introduced the idea of increasing the state vehicle license fee as a way to fund the 220 state parks that the Governor wants to close. (A joint Budget Conference Committee formally proposed the measure in the state legislature on June 15.)

SCC Deputy Director Michael Endicott noted the opportunity to greatly improve the composition of the California Coastal Commission as the terms of two very bad commissioners are expiring, and the Sierra Club is taking the opportunity to press for the appointment of stalwart coastal defenders, San Diego City Councilwoman Donna Frye and Santa Cruz County Supervisor Mark Stone to replace them.

(Endicott was taken aside by concerned Santa Lucia Chapter delegates after his speech and requested to clarify that he didn't mean to say that the Coastal Commissioners to be replaced are *the* worst Commissioners as measured by the number and significance of their pro-development, anti-coastal votes; rather, they are merely in the bottom five. The title of "the worst" remains safely in the hands of SLO's own Katcho Achadjian. Way to go, Katcho: You're still number one!)

Although budget cuts have reduced staff, Sierra Club California's advocacy team continues to speak out on the full range of environmental issues faced by the state. In April, Capitol Weekly named Sierra Club California Director Bill Magavern to the 38th

spot on its "Top 100 List" of the most influential non-elected political players in the state, saying "Magavern is a critical environmental voice as it relates to government policy and legislation. He and his colleagues weigh in on all things environmental: water, air, timber, land use and increasingly, global warming." (No other environmentalists placed in the top 50.)

The dismal condition of the state's budget is currently posing a threat to a number of important environmental programs. In addition, the polluters and their allies are attempting to use the economic downturn as a rationale for rolling back our delaying some of our most important protections.

We are fighting global warming, generating clean energy and stimulating green jobs. Sierra Club California is working with the Legislature, Governor and Air Resources Board to speed our state's transition to a green economy that sustains both jobs and our atmosphere. We can make nation-leading progress this year by:

- * Raising the Renewables Portfolio Standard to 33% or higher by 2020, and improved implementation.
- * Requiring major polluters to pay for greenhouse gas emissions, revenues go to clean energy, public transit, green jobs, low-income consumers.
- * Protecting community health while we address global warming by including strong smart growth measures and safeguards against "hot spots" of local pollution, and limiting loopholes like excessive offsets.



Sierra Club President Allison Chin addresses convention delegates.

California's current water policies are failing to provide our people, our economy, and environment with adequate clean, affordable water. We must respect, and adjust to, the natural limits on our waters and waterways. To that end, Sierra Club California is seeking to:

- * Promote statewide water conservation and efficiency, including enacting into law requirements for water metering and a 20% reduction in per capita water use statewide by 2020.
- * Advance a comprehensive solution to the problems of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta that restores the Delta ecosystem while providing a reliable water supply for the state.
- * Build best management practices for urban water agencies by revising existing BMPs for water loss detection, and developing new BMPs for

water recycling.

We are protecting Californians from toxic threats. Bipartisan 2008 legislation gives the Department of Toxic Substances Control the authority to ensure that consumer products sold in California are safe for our families and our environment.

We are preserving our natural heritage as we continue to push the Board of Forestry to fix the flawed logging rules that are destroying salmon habitat.

And we are advocating in the legislature to ensure that California's beautiful coast, ocean, desert, and parks are protected, and that our diverse (but diminishing) species and habitats are safeguarded from such disparate threats as off-shore oil drilling, poorly planned development and global warming.

Dawn Ortiz-Legg Joins Executive Committee

The Santa Lucia Executive Committee this month welcomes its newest member, Dawn Ortiz-Legg, appointed



to complete the term of Jack Morrow, who has elected to enjoy retirement by traveling the world.

Co-founder of the SLO County chapter of Code Pink and sales manager for Shine LED Lighting, Dawn is a rare combination of business smarts and political organizing savvy.

"We wish Jack all the best and welcome Dawn, who is known as one of the most effective activists in SLO," said ExCom chair Karen Merriam. "We are extremely fortunate that she has agreed to serve."

Volunteer Opportunities

Opportunities to volunteer abound at the Santa Lucia Chapter:

Database Entry: (Training provided.) Enter donors, new members, and event/meeting participants into HELEN, the Sierra Club's national database. Create queries to find existing contacts.

Fundraising Committee: Identify what sources of funding are available and which ones will fit best with the Santa Lucia Chapter; make basic plan for the sources and programs; identify volunteers for implementation.

Education Outreach Committee: *Tablers* - Present at Sierra Club booth and special & ongoing events. *Program Coordinator* - Help coordinate monthly Chapter meetings, select topics and speakers.

For more information, call Kim, 543-8717, or write to kimramos@yahoo.com

Lobby Day

Come join us in Sacramento for our annual Lobby Day on Sunday and Monday August 23rd and 24th.

You will be part of a team that will help Sierra Club California pass our priority bills during the most exciting and challenging time of the year at the State Capitol. You will have opportunities for interaction with other activists and our professional lobbying staff, as well as with legislators and their staff.

This is a two-day event. On Sunday afternoon our advocacy team will train you on how to lobby and brief you on our priority bills so that you can effectively advocate for them. On Monday, you will work the halls of the Capitol as teams, with meetings scheduled from morning through the

afternoon. We will focus on key remaining bills as the session winds down; hot issues this year are renewable energy, water conservation, air quality, park protection and resilient habitats.

You will find out that it is possible to have fun and save our environment at the same time! Past participants have found it to be an eye-opening

and rewarding experience. Participants should expect to pay some costs, but some travel and lodging reimbursements will be available, depending on location.

For more information, please contact Annie Pham, Legislative Aide at lobbyday@sierraclubcalifornia.org or (916) 557-1100 ext. 107.



GOP Wool-Pulling Tour Comes to SLO



Are we green yet?: Rep. Kevin McCarthy told the audience at Cal Poly's Spanos Theater that we should not "make the mistakes that Spain made" in creating green jobs through its renewable energy program. See discussion of the debunked charges of Spain's "mistakes," Letters, page 11.

On May 28, Representative Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) anchored the Central Coast edition of a series of "energy summits" that Republican Congressmen staged around the country that month as the American Clean Energy and Security Act was making its way through legislative subcommittees. Their message to their SLO audience: Let's relax the meaning of the word "renewable," build lots of nukes, and make greenhouse gas emission caps voluntary.

McCarthy was accompanied on the stage by fellow Republican Representatives Devin Nunes from Tulare, Bob Latta of Ohio and Lee Terry of Nebraska. Their attempt to pull green wool over the audience's eyes could not obscure their records: All voted against the American Investment and Recovery Act, which funded renewables; and against the energy bill, which included dedicated funding for renewables; and against a recent school construction provision that included funding for renewable energy for schools and would be putting solar panels on our schools right now but for their opposition. They now style themselves as supporters of renewable energy.

We cannot improve on the response to the GOP's energy summit penned by Sierra Club volunteer Ken Smokoska, printed as the Viewpoint "Strengthen, don't weaken, energy act" in the *Tribune's* June 16 edition. If you missed it, go to www.sanluisobispo.com/letters-to-the-editor/story/753602.html.

There's the Water

New report: California businesses could save more than enough water to supply Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco. Innovative businesses, agencies show how to save money with water efficiency

In the midst of a third dry year, California's water supply continues to shrink as the state's population grows, but according to a new report by the Natural Resources Defense Council, the state's commercial, industrial and institutional (CII) sector has the tools to save more than enough water to meet the annual needs of Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego combined. Some leading California businesses and institutions are already catching on - saving water and money at the same time.

"After three consecutive dry years

and global warming threatening to intensify California's droughts, we need smart-water solutions that that will stop waste and help businesses use only what they need," said Ronnie Cohen, Director of Water Efficiency Policy for the NRDC. "Luckily, 21st-century technologies exist to stretch our water supply and save money. And some trailblazing California businesses and water agencies are already showing us how it's done."

The complete report, *Making Every Drop Work: Increasing Water Efficiency in California's Commer-*

cial, Industrial and Institutional (CII) Sector, is available online from NRDC.

In February 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger called for a 20 percent reduction in per capita water use by 2020, and legislation to help reach that target is pending in the State Assembly (AB 49). California's CII sector - which includes office buildings, hotels, oil refineries, golf courses, schools and universities, restaurants and manufacturers - is responsible for one-third of urban water use, making progress in this sector essential to reaching this

reduction goal. The CII sector uses the equivalent of more than a million Olympic-sized swimming pools of water annually. NRDC estimates California businesses could save about 25-50 percent of that water with efficiency measures, or as much as 700,000 -1.3 million acre-feet - the equivalent to 350,000-650,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Water efficiency improves water quality, supply and ecosystem health by reducing polluted landscape runoff

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Focus on the Environment

Our popular photography workshops continue

Learn to communicate your passion for the natural world through still and video photography. The Santa Lucia Chapter of Sierra Club is offering a series of monthly workshops led by local professional photographers.

accessories you have to learn how to better use them. If you don't have accessories, you'll learn how to turn

ordinary household items into useful video tools. Cost: \$40; Sierra Club members \$30.

will receive a detailed handout of all the topics covered. \$40; Sierra Club members \$30.

All workshops will take place at First American Title Company, community room, Pacific and Morro Streets, San Luis Obispo. Size of workshop is limited to 40 participants. To Register

e-mail Kim Ramos at kimLramos@yahoo.com, or call 805-543-8717 after 3 p.m.

To save your place, send your check, made payable to "Sierra Club" to the Santa Lucia Chapter - Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

How to make your video stand out on YouTube with David Weisman:

July 25, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon. Use your video camera advocacy—and make sure that your audience can really see and hear your subject! Award-winning documentary film maker David Weisman will offer a hands-on workshop in citizen video advocacy, so bring your camcorders, tripods, microphones, headphones and any



Taking Better Pictures with Jon Lomax: TBA, 9-11 a.m.

Learn how to eliminate many of the common errors made by casual photographers. Improve your photos by avoiding cluttered backgrounds, keeping your subject in sharp focus, using the "Rule of Thirds," and when to use flash in the daytime.

With this illustrated lecture, you



About That Budget...

Interpreting the Failure of Prop 1A

by Sheila Kuehl

The Problem With the Rhetoric

Immediately after last May's special election, the Governor announced that the "voters had spoken" and that the defeat of Prop 1A "clearly" meant that Californians stood adamantly against any new taxes or fees. He must have been reading the leaves in the bottom of his tea cup in order to come to a favored conclusion, however, because there was no evidence to support his assertion. Quite the opposite, as a poll taken between May 16 and May 20 showed.

The Governor didn't stop there. Building on his unsubstantiated assertion, he went on to maintain that he, therefore, had no choice but to propose a budget that would put the wrecking ball to California's safety net for healthcare, children, the elderly and schools.

As shown below, his conclusion as to the meaning of the "No" vote on Prop 1A is not true, and, therefore, these proposed cuts, and a budget with no new revenues, is not the most acceptable answer for California's voters.

What Would Prop 1A Have Done Again?

Many voters indicated they were confused by Prop 1A, and with some good reason. Like every one of the Propositions on the May 19 ballot, Prop 1A was originally constructed to satisfy Republican demands in exchange for a minimal number of "aye" votes on the February budget. As such, Prop 1A would have placed a spending cap on future budget expenditures. Then, in order to placate Democrats who did not agree with the spending cap as drafted, an extension to the new sales tax was added to the Proposition, giving virtually everyone something to hate.

An Interesting Irony

It seems sadly ironic that, just as the rest of the United States is rejecting the right wing's long stranglehold on our rhetoric, California, the long hold-out, is embracing it. Years ago, Grover Nordquist, one of the right's mouthpieces, said that his goal was to shrink government down to where it could be drowned in a bathtub. By patiently denigrating government, valorizing private enterprise, establishing inflexible term limits to guarantee an inexperienced legislature, setting up a 2/3 vote requirement to raise a tax but only a majority to lower one, government in California was set up for the shrinkage.

But California proved stubborn. Support of schools and the safety net continued. Since, by definition, these are jobs only the government can perform, government continued to be an important part of all solutions to poverty, education and healthcare.

Until now. Even our moderate Republican Governor, along with a seemingly cowed Democratic majority in both houses, contemplates throwing in the towel and balancing the budget with nothing but cuts, cuts, cuts, thus fulfilling Grover Norquist's desire.

But the call for these cuts is predicated on misreading the tea leaves of the defeat of Prop 1A, in an election in which only 23% of registered voters voted (4 million out of 17.1 million, or about 10.5% of Californians).

What Did The Voters (and the Non-Voters) "mean" by the Defeat of Prop 1A

The only real information we have about voters' intentions is a poll conducted between May 16 and May 20 of 603 people who voted in the election and 405 who did not. According to several sections of the poll:

A) 3 out of 4 voters and non-voters simply thought these propositions should never have been put to them for a vote.

B) 7 out of 10 did not like that the Governor and the Legislature keep balancing the budget "on the backs of average Californians" instead of requiring special interests to pay their fair share. Only 20% thought all Californians were being asked to share the pain equally.

How About the "No on 1A" voters specifically?

This is the result that puts the lie to the Governor's interpretation. Of voters who voted "no" on Prop 1A, less than half said the government should rely entirely on spending cuts and not increase taxes.

65% of all voters agreed that shared responsibility should be part of the solution and not simply reliance on spending cuts to balance the budget.

Do "No" Voters on Prop 1A Support Any Taxes?

According to the poll, 62% of "no" voters supported increased taxes on alcohol (75% of "yes" and "no" combined supported this tax), 62% supported increased taxes on tobacco (74% of all voters), 60% supported an oil extraction tax on oil companies drawing oil and gas in California (73% of all voters), 58% supported not allowing corporations buying property to be protected by Prop. 13 (63% of all voters), 55% supported not allowing tax credits for companies to go over 50% of what they owe in taxes (59% of all voters).

Conclusion: Voters Would Support a Balanced Approach

Even so, the budget will have to incorporate deep cuts no matter what the solution. The only question is how much, and whether some of the cuts can be made less deeply because revenue solutions are part of the answer.

Sheila Kuehl is a former California State Senator. If you want to read her follow-up essay "Next: A Possible, Though Still Painful, Way to Balance the Budget" or subscribe to her essays, please go to her website at www.SheilaKuehl.org.



Noreen Evans

How Did We Get Into This Mess?

California State Assembly Budget Committee Chair Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa) has created a YouTube video that explains California's budget mess in terms everyone can understand.

Evans provides a common-sense explanation of the problem in seven minutes that cuts through the myths that there is a lot of "out of control spending" in Sacramento and "wasteful" budget items to be cut, and lays out the sharp reality of locked-in spending mandates, the Governor's slashing of the vehicle license fee (a local government funding source that had to be made up with state funds), the necessity of passing bonds to avoid raising taxes, plunging the state ever deeper into debt, and California's absurd two-thirds majority requirement to pass a budget.

And at the eye of the fiscal hurricane: The "no new taxes pledge" devised by D.C. lobbyist Grover Norquist that must be signed by all California Republican office holders or candidates who want the support of the party. The threatened closure of 220 state parks is a direct result of the "cuts only" mentality of the Republican minority in Sacramento.

Click on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogfNEw2XSbY

There's the water

continued from page 5

and the amount of water taken out of rivers and streams - making it an important tool in managing the troubled San Francisco Bay-Delta and restoring the state's quarter billion dollar salmon fishery. Water efficiency has also proven to be good for the bottom line of businesses, as it lowers water bills and energy costs, as well as wastewater charges and costs for chemicals and water purification.

Payback for investing in water-efficient technologies is between one and four years. Many water agencies help accelerate payback by providing free water audits, equipment and technology rebates, and in some cases, free water-efficient products and installation.

While the CII sector has made some progress over the last decade, there is still a tremendous potential for improving water efficiency and lowering bills. The report reveals:

* Commercial dishwashers use 25 percent of the water in commercial kitchens. A water-efficient commercial dishwasher would reduce that water use by 25 percent. Commercial kitchens can also save up to \$1,050 a year on energy and water bills with a water-efficient pre-rinse spray valve, and cut faucet water use and related bills in half with a low flow faucet aerator, which run less than \$5 each.

* The average hotel will use more than 604,000 gallons of water every year just to wash bed sheets and towels. If that hotel installs a water-efficient washing machine, it can cut that number by 38 percent.

* Landscaping, such as at office parks, schools, parks and street medians, is responsible for one-third of the CII sector's water use. But with smart irrigation controllers that adjust for weather conditions, commercial-sized landscapes can reduce water use by 40-50 percent.

* Restrooms are responsible for 15 percent of CII water use. Low-flow showerheads, which can be purchased in bulk for \$5-12 each, can save 2 to 3.5 gallons of water per shower. More efficient toilets and urinals could save 35,000-64,000 gallons a year.

The report provides case studies and a reference for other CII facilities and urban water agencies to begin taking advantage of savings opportunities.

Get on the Sierra Club Cal-Alerts List

See the variety and reach of issues the Sierra Club works on statewide.

To sign up for the CAL-Alerts list, go to www.sierraclub.org/memberlists.

Chapter Awards Banquet an Enchanting Evening

The SLO Botanical Garden provided an enchanting setting for the Santa Lucia Chapter's fourth annual awards banquet & fundraiser on May 30.

The theme "Landscapes of Change" was chosen to celebrate 2009's new legislative terrain and to highlight the Chapter's work over the past year to advocate new government policies in smart growth, appropriate technology, food security, clean energy, protections for ag land, and affordable housing. From start to finish, the event was designed to illustrate models of sustainability found on the Central Coast.

A walkway of bright orange California poppies, golden mustard, lavender, and olive-toned rosemary plants provided a painterly background of Mediterranean colors to welcome guests. **Matt Ritter**, Director of the Cal Poly Plant Conservatory, opened the festivities with a tour of the Garden, which showcases plants in our Mediterranean climate that don't need fertilizers or pesticides and can live with limited water. Traditional and Latin jazz vocal stylings by **Lynn Manzella**, with

pianist **Bob Harway**, bassist **Dylan Johnson** and drummer **Jim Stromberg** filled the courtyard where guests enjoyed food, drink and appetizers generously provided by local businesses. **Judith Bernstein** solicited the donated wines, which were all certified as Sustainable in Practice, denoting the wineries' commitment to protecting both natural and human resources. We're grateful to **Castoro Cellars, Halter Ranch, Pomar Junction Vineyard & Winery, Robert Hall Winery, Saucelito Canyon Vineyard, and Wolff Vineyards** for allowing us to offer their SIP wines. SIP Certification addresses sustainability issues such as energy conservation, employee benefits, wildlife habitat and water quality.

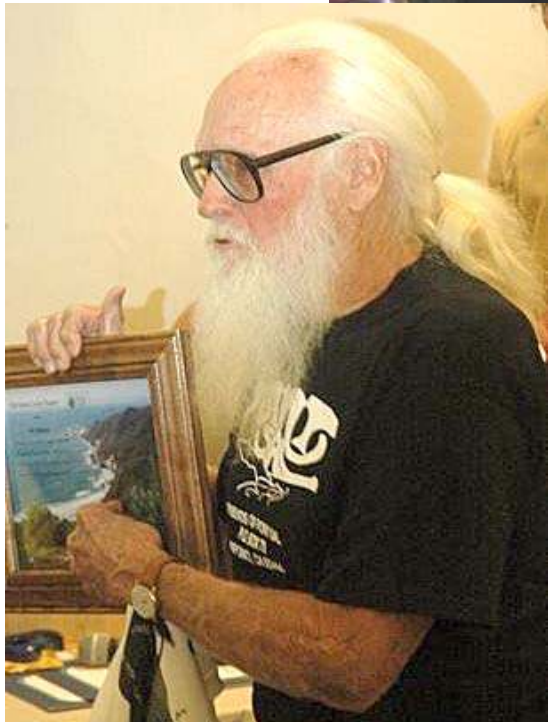
We were also pleased to serve organic, fair trade Yerba Mate provided by **Guayaki**, founded by two Cal Poly students who developed a restorative business model linking consumer purchases of healthy Yerba Mate products in North America with indigenous South American communities engaged in sustainable agriculture and reforestation projects. Thanks to **Michael "don Miguel" Newton**, their Orange County & Southern L.A. area manager, for personally delivering a variety of delicious Yerba Mate drinks to the banquet.

As the evening winds began to stir things up on the courtyard, guests moved inside the Oak Glen Pavilion, a sustainable straw bale building, for an abundant family-style meal that was both startling and delightful. **Tirtza Abuan** of **Andalouse Mediterranean**

Cuisine orchestrated a subtly-blended vegan menu of Vegetable Eggplant Moussaka; Balkan Salad, Lime, Celery and Cabbage Salad; Organic Spring Mix Salad; along with a Taguine of Chicken and couscous, almonds and cranberries. Tirtza was assisted in performing her magic by her incredible crew, **Danielle Abuan, Mark Summer** and **Chas Partridge**. The meal was finished on a sweet note with an array of delicious donated desserts generously provided by **Melody DeMeritt, Mary Fullwood, Evy Justesen, Leslie Krinsk, Karen Merriam, Brandie Michelle, Kim Ramos, New Frontiers** and **Splash Café**.

The entire evening flowed smoothly due to the efforts of an amazing group of volunteers who met up an hour before the event and melded their efforts seamlessly to organize, set up, serve, respond, clear, and break down all the elements required to create this wonderful evening. Our heartfelt thanks go to our volunteers, whose help we appreciate their help more than they could know. Many, many thanks to **Sean Basalyga, Val** and

Clockwise from top left: Michael Fitts of the Endangered Habitats League delivers the keynote speech; guests arrive at the Botanical Garden; Executive Committee member Melody DeMeritt and Morro Bay City Councilwoman Betty Winholtz kickin' it; Chapter Chair Karen Merriam congratulates Steven Marx on receiving the Kathleen Goddard Jones Award; Bill Denneen receives the Inspirational Outings Leader Award.



Dave Barboza, Judith Bernstein, Kathy and Kristin Filipponi, Laura Kelleher, Cyndee Jones, Rebecca Larsen, Nicole Panos, Liz Tracy, Barrie Valencia, Mac VanDuzer, and Nali Weinstein.

Special thanks, of course, to our keynote speakers, **Michael Fitts** of the Endangered Habitats League and **Allison Chin**, President of the Sierra Club Board of Directors, who inspired us with speeches based on their vast experience in land use activism and organizing.

Coordinating it all was the Chapter's wizard of Administration and Development, **Kim Ramos** of AmeriCorp's Central Coast Volunteer Corps.

Karen Merriam, Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter's Executive Committee presented the evening's awards:

- **Steven Marx** received the Chapter's highest honor, the Kathleen Goddard Jones Award, named for our founder, for his sustained commitment and dedication to the mission of the Club to explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

- **Bill Denneen** received the Inspirational Outings Leader Award for his decades of Outdoor leadership, educating young and old alike in the wonders of the land the sea and the sandy shores of Oceano Dunes, Point Sal, the Pecho Coast and many other favorite ecosystems of our region.

- Energizer Awards went to recent Cal Poly grads **Nancy Cole** and **Chad Worth**, who distinguished themselves by working with us to organize and conduct "Energy Town Hall" meetings in each region of SLO County,



inspiring citizens and elected leaders to envision a renewable energy future, and to **Karin Johnson** for her work collecting data for greenhouse gas inventories, and **Eric Veium**, who collaborated on an award-winning grant to help the County to assess and deploy renewable energy. Johnson and Veium are creating a unique business model for assisting citizens to become more energy efficient.

Support Your Local Chapter!

Donate online, via PayPal:



at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org

Climate Action Plan

continued from page 1

percent of its power from natural gas, and despite its high-profile solar power procurement plans and other “green” measures, the overall carbon intensity of its energy emissions is projected to remain essentially the same.)

The Sonoma plan mandates a break with PG&E as a provider (it will continue to maintain the wires) so the County and its municipalities can initiate a CCA program and exercise local control in choosing their own

Staying with PG&E rather than going with a Community Choice energy aggregation plan would result in the county falling short of its Climate Action Plan’s emissions reduction targets by 35%

energy provider and service rates while increasing the amount of non-polluting renewable energy they use.

Erickson emphasized the benefits Sonoma has found in Distributed Generation (DG) over traditional dependency on a few remote, centralized sources of energy – i.e. large power plants. In a DG scenario, power is generated and used locally, derived from multiple smaller scale sources. A distributed generation plan can be funded on the public power model, in which public utilities traditionally offer rates 15 to 20 percent lower than investor-owned utilities and levelize costs, making green power competitive with natural gas.

“From the supply standpoint, it’s a slam dunk,” Erickson said, noting that the end result of full implementation of a localized power plan is 100 percent energy self sufficiency for the county. “Sonoma could just as easily have called our Climate Action Plan a jobs plan, or a green economic recovery plan, or an energy independence plan,” he said.

Erickson pointed out that a Climate Action Plan means “huge savings to the extent that your greenhouse gas reduction measures free you from the fossil fuel markets.” And forming a Community Choice Aggregation in order to do so provides access to municipal bond financing, the lowest cost capital available.

“The Sonoma Climate Action Plan is



His SLO tour: Dave Erickson takes a break.

using Community Choice to achieve the nation’s most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction,” said Erickson. “It’s essentially a public works project to meet the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2015. The financing tools laid out in the Plan provide some elegant ways to overcome some of the barriers to paying for renewable energy and energy efficiency.”



Supervisor Jim Patterson (center) fields a question at the Town Hall.

Dennis Eamon Young Photo, www.DennisEamonYoungPhoto.com

Energy Town Hall: Grover Beach

SLO ENERGY TOWN HALL
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

7:00pm	Energy and Our Future: What's Your Call? (Panel)
7:15pm	Ken Smokoska, Sierra Club California's Energy/Climate Committee
7:30pm	What's the City up to? Community Strategies: What's your role? (Workshop)
8:00pm	What's your voice? (Closing)

Join Ken and John, and...
 Tuesday, December 8th
 Chad Worth and Nancy Cole
 8:00pm

SIERRA CLUB
 ENERGY TOWN HALL

What is the real cost of energy? How do we change the local renewable energy market?

ENERGY TOWN HALL
 YOUR COMMUNITY! YOUR CHOICE! YOUR VOICE!

STEINBERG GALLERY
 1531 MONTEREY ST
 WEDNESDAY, DEC 9th
 7:00PM TO 8:00PM

Hot drinks and light refreshments will be provided.

YOUR COMMUNITY YOUR CHOICE
YOUR VOICE

MORRO BAY ENERGY TOWN HALL
 INTERACTIVE VISIONING WORKSHOP

PRESENTS
 BRUCE GIBSON
 SLO COUNTY SUPERVISOR

NOAH SMUKLER & BETTY WINHOLTZ
 MB CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

CHAD WORTH & NANCY COLE
 EMPOWER POLY COALITION

THURSDAY, FEB. 19TH, 2009
 7:00-8:30PM
 ON THE WATER
 999 EMBARCADERO, MORRO BAY

north county ENERGY TOWN HALL
 INTERACTIVE VISIONING WORKSHOP

WITH
 COUNTY SUPERVISOR JIM PATTERSON
 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
 MAYOR ELLEN BERARD
 CITY OF ATASCADERO
 CHAD WORTH & NANCY COLE
 SIERRA CLUB INTERNS

05.06.2009 7PM-8:30PM
 PHILIPSON THE LANE
 ATASCADERO, CA

INTERACTIVE VISIONING WORKSHOP

south county ENERGY TOWN HALL
 JUNE 11TH 2009

WITH
 DAVE ERICKSON
 LOCAL POWER

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
 MAYOR JOHN SHOALS
 CITY OF GROVER BEACH

RAMONA GARDEN PARK CENTER
 993 RAMONA AVE.
 GROVER BEACH

COUNTY SUPERVISOR ADAM HILL
 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

So glad we had this time together: The Sierra Club Energy Town Hall crew (left to right: New Cal Poly grads Karin Johnson and Nancy Cole, Ken Smokoska of Sierra Club California's Energy/Climate Committee, Santa Lucia Chapter Chair Karen Merriam, Cal Poly grad Chad Worth and Chapter Director Andrew Christie) spearheaded four public information events in SLO, Morro Bay, Atascadero and Grover Beach between December and June. Many thanks to the SLO Community Foundation for its support!



About fifty people – including County Supervisors Adam Hill and Jim Patterson, Grover Beach Mayor John Shoals, Santa Maria City Councilwoman Hilda Zacharias and members of the Grover and Pismo Beach city councils and the Nipomo Community Services District — turned out for the Sierra Club’s South County Energy Town Hall on June 11.

Mayor Shoals welcomed attendees to the event, held at the Ramona Garden Park Center, a major public transit hub for South County which Shoals has big plans for by way of making it even moreso in the future, expanding bus service and reconfiguring the Grover Beach Amtrak station.

“We’re living in exciting times,” he said. “Educate your elected officials. It’s through your efforts that they will find the fortitude and the political will to do the right thing.”

The highlight of the evening was Dave Erickson’s riveting presentation on Sonoma County’s Climate Action Plan (see our front page.) Let us do likewise!



Santa Maria City Councilwoman Hilda Zacarias makes a point.

Credo

Let me walk through this life
 Like the part of earth and sky I am:

Let me be a reflection in the
 Beauty of the water,
 Not an eddy:

Let my song in the wind
 Be one that says always.

- Denny Mynatt

Grand Jury
continued from page 3

and jamming up the \$5-million deal. A darker dimension to the apparent “oversight” in the staff report was discovered a year later by the Santa Lucia Chapter’s attorney, Babak Naficy. In the course of preparing a lawsuit based on the Local Coastal Plan’s buffer designation of the County’s dunes property, Naficy found that the February 2007 staff report had done more than fail to mention the map of the buffer area in the General Plan. While purporting to reproduce the policies relevant to the proposed sale of the land, the staff report had removed not only the map, but all the text in the Local Coastal Plan that explicitly refers to the buffer area shown on that map.



Smoking gun: There was just one, small detail...

Naficy pointed out the omitted text to the County Supervisors during their deliberations on the proposed sale of the County property at their board meeting of April 15, 2008. *New Times* broke the story in their May 22 edition. Chapter Director Andrew Christie urged the board to investigate the matter at their June 3 meeting.

Planning Director Holanda went on vacation and into retirement on June 1, 2009. The Grand Jury, after a year of interviews and file reviews, released its report on June 15.

We concur with the findings of the Grand Jury: Someone evidently went to unacceptable lengths to close a land deal that would have meant a \$5-million payday and put nearly 600 acres of County land in State hands, but for the existence of current land use policies that clearly don’t permit the use to which the land is being put.

The Sierra Club has a particular interest in the Grand Jury report. Our lawsuit against State Parks seeks to compel Parks to declare those 584 acres of County land in the dunes off-limits to off-roaders precisely because of the LCP policies that someone in the SLO County Planning Department tried to erase. State Parks and the local branch of the off-road lobby have contended that the map from the LCP is inconsequential and is superseded by State Parks’ general permit to operate vehicles within the boundaries of the ODSVRA.

“We think it should be of interest to the court that a grand jury has concluded that someone in County Planning considered the LCP policies and map of the buffer area to be highly consequential indeed,” said Naficy; “so much so that every trace of them had to be eliminated from a report that would have had the effect of greasing the wheels for the sale of the land and foreclosing on any possibility of the County ever removing off-road vehicles from that property. That’s what would have happened if those artful omissions had not been discovered.”

By Olivia Diaz, Co-Chair
Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee

Fall at Donner Summit in the Sierra Nevada is a bit of a secret. Most people associate Donner Summit with snowy road conditions, skiing and frosty breath. If you only know it in the winter, you are missing a real treat.

Clair Tappaan Lodge, located among four popular ski resorts on Donner Pass Road, is open all year long. But it seems as though a bell rings on Labor Day and our guests forget about the Lodge until the onset of winter. However, September is peaceful and the weather is clear and sunny. Most of the hiking trails are empty, not the busy thoroughfares they are during summer. In October the evenings get cooler and the colors begin to change.

If you look at the CTL webpage at www.sierraclub.org/outings/lodges/ctl/activities.asp you will see that on September 4th there is a full moon hike. If you haven’t seen the moon rise over the Sierras, you are missing something grand. Have you considered coming to the Lodge for Thanksgiving? The food is great and someone else does the cooking. The costs at Clair Tappaan Lodge are so reasonable, that you can invite family and friends to join you. You always get a good value at CTL. Remember that overnight fees include 3 meals.

A pastels class along the Sierra trails is featured in September and in October there will be a Halloween/Day of the Dead weekend. It happens that October 31 is on Saturday. We are planning a costume parade, games, pumpkin carving (bring your own pumpkin and tools) a piñata and other fun ghoulish activities that are not just for kids.

The Day of the Dead portion of the weekend is an invitation to explore another cultural view of the passing loved ones. You can bring memorabilia of someone in your life who has died. You are invited to make and bring an altar or some remembrance of someone in your past you would like to honor. You can prepare it in advance or you can just bring a photo or some other reminder of your loved one. This Mexican celebration offers a different way to view our ancestors, a joyous way, not at all macabre.

Check out the website, or call the Lodge at (800) 679-6775 or (530) 426-3632,



(Read the “Oceano Dunes Sale” Grand Jury report at: www.slocourts.net/grand_jury/reports)

If you want to change this...



back into this:



Oceano Dunes

If you want to save this...



from this:



Cayucos Viewshed

...then you need to support us.

Help save the Oceano Dunes and the Cayucos Viewshed: Fund the Sierra Club’s public interest litigation

The Sierra Club is suing the State of California to establish a vehicle-free buffer area in the Oceano Dunes, as was promised twenty years ago in our Local Coastal Plan. We are suing the County of San Luis Obispo to fix a non-protective “viewshed protection” ordinance written by special interests that opens up the Cayucos Viewshed to regulation-free development. Litigation requires a significant outlay of funds. Please donate at the highest level you can. **Your donation is tax-deductible.**

Thank you, Sierra Club! Please put my tax-deductible donation to work on your conservation campaigns and making sure the courts work for us to secure the natural habitat and scenic values of these special places for future generations!

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 \$1000 \$_____

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

name _____
address _____
city, state, zip _____
e-mail _____



Because funds from the SLO Land Preservation Fund go directly to the Santa Lucia Chapter’s conservation campaigns and public interest litigation, your donation to the Fund is tax-deductible.

Letters

send to: sierraclub8@gmail.com, or Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. Letters may be edited for space.

Renewable energy will kill us all

Santa Lucia Chapter - Sierra Club,

The public has been misled into believing that “renewable energy” is a good thing, but the provable facts show just the opposite. Hobbits may be able to live poetically, generating energy from the wind, the sun, and the soil. The true facts show that real human beings need concentrated nonrenewable energy to survive.

Renewable energy schemes other than hydroelectric power take up too much land area and produce far too little energy to be of significant value.... Wind power is a useful way to pump irrigation water, and solar panels are a responsible way to power a few light bulbs in a remote vacation cabin, but they are both terribly inefficient ways to power an entire nation. Humans need affordable, reliable power 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, not just when the wind blows and the sun shines. Barack Obama and T. Boone Pickens claim that building wind turbines in America will create many “green jobs,” but a study of Spain’s energy program found that for every new job created by state funded wind power schemes, 2.2 jobs were lost due to higher energy costs, and each new wind power job cost almost \$2,000,000 in government subsidies.

Advanced civilization demands the use of highly concentrated, nonrenewable forms of energy. ... It is a mathematically provable fact that the only practical energy source that can possibly replace fossil fuels is nuclear power, and carbon free nuclear energy is our only hope for limiting greenhouse gas emissions.... Denmark built over 6,000 expensive wind turbines as a minor supplement to its energy grid, and now has the highest electric rates in Europe, about double what the average American pays. Denmark has been unable to shut down a single fossil fuel power plant as a result of embracing wind power, as they need inherently dirty coal burning power plants as back-up when the wind stops blowing.... Nuclear power is safe, reliable, carbon free, takes up very little space, and does not displace food production. There are no problem free energy sources, but all of the well known negatives of nuclear power can be addressed and corrected by responsible design and policies. With the use of nuclear fuel reprocessing and breeder reactors, we have enough nuclear fuel to last for thousands of years.

Renewable energy schemes other than naturally concentrated hydroelectric power are inherently inadequate.... The United States Government subsidizes wind power over 14 times as much as nuclear power, and over 93 times as much as the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas.... Obviously, the United States needs massive amounts of new energy

to survive, so unless we adopt responsible energy policies that face facts honestly, the USA has no positive economic future. Trying to replace the highly concentrated energy of fossil fuels with the inherently weak energy of wind, solar, and biofuels will cripple our economy and cause massive starvation on a global scale.

Christopher Calder
Eugene, Oregon

Trend-spotters, take note: As it becomes increasingly obvious that global warming denial is absurd and indefensible — with shrinking ice caps, rising sea levels and a growing checklist of consequences that were predicted in climate change models ten and twenty years ago all coming true, those dire forecasts now appearing too conservative compared to the even more dire reality — look for an increasing migration from the ranks of GW denial into renewable energy denial. Those shots are being called, as before, by corporate think tanks, their “studies” disseminated by foot-soldiers of a libertarian bent, determined to defend the last redoubts of a fossilized regime.

Mr. Calder provides two cases in point. When citing studies to support one’s position, it’s always a good idea to check the source, and the numbers. Criticisms of Denmark’s wind power program trace back to a report by the UK Centre for Policy Studies, an ultraconservative political think tank founded by Margaret Thatcher in 1974 to “roll back the state” and “30 years of socialistic fashion” by championing free market economics and deregulation. That this experiment recently collided with economic reality and has gone horribly wrong for most people on the planet has not stopped the defenders of these imploded economic theories from digging their trenches deeper and firing away at anything that looks like it might be a threat to The Way Things Are. High on that list: Any shift away from fossil fuels and nukes to renewable energy.

Sigurd Lauge Pedersen, Senior Adviser to the Danish Energy Agency, refuting arguments such as Mr. Calder’s that rely on the CPS report, has replied that Denmark currently gets “about 20 percent of its energy from wind power,” has in fact “closed several coal and oil fired plants in the last 10 years,” and that “the 2008 electricity price in Denmark to medium-sized industries is 7.85 eurocents/kWh, which is below the European average of 9 eurocents/kWh.” Last May, the Energy Collective blog reported that the consumption of oil for electric power production in Denmark “has fallen (from over 47,000 terajoules in 1980 to just over 11,000 TJ in 2007); as has consumption of coal (from near 214,000 TJ in 1980 to almost 167,000

TJ in 2007).”

The Spanish study on the alleged failure of Spain to create green jobs through its commitment to renewable power, which was seized upon by the ultra right-wing Heritage Foundation to make the case for fossil fuels forever, was authored by the head of another reactionary think tank and recipient of Exxon-Mobil funding. It has been thoroughly debunked. In “Heritage Promotes ‘Completely Untrue’ Attack On Green Jobs,” available online at The Wonk Room, one finds that “The report relies on bad numbers, grossly underestimating that Spain’s renewable program created only 50,000 jobs, when official estimates are 188,000. Indeed, the study is claiming that ‘government spending on renewable energy is less than half as efficient at job creation as private-sector spending,’ the Wall Street Journal’s Keith Johnson explains. Critics neglect to say that ‘Spain’s support for renewable energy came out of existing tax revenues,’ so ‘it’s hard to see how it could have edged out private-sector spending, especially when the Socialist government there has reduced corporate income-tax rates, most recently this past January.’”

The notion that wind power in the U.S. has received more government subsidies than the nuclear and fossil fuel industries is at odds with the historical record.

We assume Mr. Calder was unable to come down from Eugene to join us at our Energy Town Hall in Grover Beach last month, where he could have heard from Local Power Inc.’s David Erickson about Sonoma County’s Climate Action Plan, which provides a roadmap that will lead to the kind of carbon reduction objectives Mr. Calder insists cannot be met without recourse to the dinosaur technologies he insists on, demonstrating how the methods and renewable sources he insists cannot possibly meet those objectives will do just that.

Mr. Erickson, writing with Paul Fenn and Robert Freehling, punctures Mr. Calder’s nuclear balloon with a

paragraph in their article “Carbon-reduction tax dollars better spent on demand reduction, not megagrid schemes” in the May 2009 issue of Natural Gas & Electricity: “Many in industry and government are considering ways to decarbonize the fuel supply through nuclear power, but this option is not viable. Even if nuclear were given the green light today, it would be a decade before significant new capacity can come on line. From that point, one new nuclear plant would have to be built every four months just to replace the existing 100 gigawatts of nuclear capacity as it retires over the next 40 years.”

In other words, that four-nukes-a-year pace of construction, at \$10 billion a pop, would have to be maintained to preserve the status quo, before even turning to the question of how many additional nukes it would take to start reducing greenhouse gas emissions below current levels, with all financial risk borne by taxpayers. Advocates for the technology that holds the distinction of being the most expensive way ever devised to boil water are now jockeying to win for their industry the distinction of the most expensive way to cut carbon emissions. That’s one of the reasons why the Sierra Club will continue to press for carbon reductions through means that are faster, cheaper and more effective than the nuclear option.

We commend to Mr. Calder’s attention the editorial “Let’s Clear the Table” in the June Santa Lucian, which cited FERC Chair Jon Wellinghoff’s statement that the U.S. may not need to build any new coal or nuclear power plants at all. We also recommend the New York Times article reporting that speech, as Chairman Wellinghoff went on to explain to the reporter the reasons for his statement, which directly challenge many of the core beliefs and fears about renewables and baseload power expressed by Mr. Calder, folks of a reactionary mindset, and the nuclear and fossil fuel lobbies.



A monkey-faced eel, at home in a reef off Shell Beach.

Support a Marine Sanctuary on the Central Coast!

Biologist Terry Lilley’s amazing HD underwater footage is used in National Geographic documentaries with Sylvia Earle. Come see Lilley’s documentary of rockfish of the SLO coast. Learn about our rapidly changing marine environment. See hundreds of unusual creatures, including new species never before filmed. Help protect and preserve our central coast.

Fri., July 10, 6-9 pm, La Perla del Mar Chapel, 205 Windward Ave., Pismo Beach. \$5 admission. A portion of the proceeds will support our efforts to extend the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to include the Central Coast. For more info & location, contact: Terry Lilley, 441-2206, or Barrie Valencia 543-8717.

Put yourself on the SLO Sierra Club E-Alert list

Get immediate news on events of environmental interest, public meeting and hearings where your attendance could make the difference, and the low-down on the issues that matter.

Drop a note to sierraclub8@gmail.com and ask to be subscribed to Sierra Club e-alerts for San Luis Obispo.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **August 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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4 Central Coast Cycling Classic Presented By: 



Sunday, July 5:
3rd Annual SLO Downtown Criterium Festival
Unforgettable racing, big cash prizes, and family fun.
Join us as we celebrate the bicycle as a tool for sustainability!
Downtown SLO is turned into a cornucopia of festival offerings, including:
Solstice GreenWay- Higuera between Broad and Nipomo is dedicated to green and sustainability- focused organizations & businesses from around the County, plus fun activities for all ages!
Berserker Block - an area dedicated to the family experience, adults and kids alike can test out recumbent tricycles, quadricycles, and other whimsical wheeled contraptions on a special track on Morro Street.
Bring your family and friends downtown for this unique 4th of July Weekend experience!
All details at:
www.CenCalCycling.com

Elfin Exuberance

Early morning, the dog and I start upon my favorite path here and I begin chalking up the joys I encounter in this spot by the sea:
the whisking of feathers in the underbrush-
the skittering of lizards across the trail-
rampant color in yellows and tangerines
(the waves of lavender and blue have receded)-
grey sky offset by the emerald patches of estuary,
where clumps of exposed eel grass cluster-
the delicate padding of little bunny feet in the sand-
and bands of swallows careening past, as if to bid me welcome.

My being takes refuge in this place
where the rhythmic meter of my pace seems to make music –
the soft percussion of steps onto the creaky boardwalk,
alternating with small thunks when my feet meet rotting lumber.
Then into the composition comes the quartet of Brant geese,
their tinny sounds punctuating the pieces of quiet.
Suddenly I sense I am hearing the spirits of the Chumash speaking to me
through the voices of the dove, hawk and quail—
their tender murmurings seem to say, “Take this tranquility
and this sweet simple music
into your center
and be humbled, once again, by our mysterious universe.”

- Kalila Volkov

(The Elfin Forest is a small wilderness preserve in Los Osos)

Outings and Activities Calendar

Seller of travel registration information: CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

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.

Wed., July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; August 5, 12, 17, 25 @ 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes around San Luis Obispo, approx 5 miles with 1200 foot elevation gain. Bring water and dress for the weather. E-mail: backpackingary1@gmail.com for details.

July 4-6, COTTONWOOD LAKES BACKPACK: Moderate backpack, 12.5 miles route with 1000' gain to Muir Lake. Saturday, day-1, hike in. Day-2, spend it at the lake or join the group to visit nearby lakes. Some cross-country hiking. Send 2 SASE with resume of recent backpacks or conditioning and 2 checks: \$25 refundable at the trailhead, \$5 permit fee (non-refundable) to Kuldeep Dhadwal, 420 Carnation Place, Oxnard 93036, 815-8418 (SP) Sponsored By Los Padres Chapter.

Fri.-Sun., July 10-12, Nevada Wilderness service. Eastern Nevada's White Pine County has many new wilderness areas. Help the BLM's Ely office enhance wild values as we put up vehicle barriers, rehab old routes,

Fundraising Cruises in 2009 Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

July 17-20
August 7-10
September 11-14

Come and explore the wild, wind-swept islands of Channel Island National Park.

Cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel Truth. \$950, includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, beverages, plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and present evening programs. The proceeds benefit Sierra Club's political programs in California. To make a reservation mail a \$100 check payable to Sierra Club to leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leader for more information: 626-443-0706; jholtzhln@aol.com



or remove old guzzlers. 3-day car camp service trip with central commissary (\$15). vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org or (415)977-5527.

Sat., July 11, 10 a.m. Eagle Rock Nature Trail. Pole Cats is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of trekking poles. 2.2 miles/720 feet elevation change. Trailhead across from Cuesta College at El Chorro Regional Park, off Highway 1. Follow the signs to the Day Use area at the end of the road, just before the locked gate. Confirm with David Georgi at polecatleader@gmail.com. Call 458-5575 for upcoming activities. Bipeds welcome.

Sat.-Sun., July 11-12, White Mountains Canyon Exploration. Camp in the Hamill Valley east of Bishop and explore Pellisier and Birch Canyons in two day hikes. I know the Birch Canyon narrows can be surmounted, but there may be some route-finding involved. We won't attempt any real rock-climbing. Limit 12. Leader: John Wilkinson, johnfw1@mac.com (408) 876-8295

Sun. July 19, 5:00pm, Sierra Singles - Lemon Grove Trail Loop/Maino Open Space Trail: Join Sierra Club hike leaders Stacy Talbert and Karen Merriam for a look at one of the hikes in your own backyard, with views of downtown SLO as we hike along the eastern flank of the San Luis Mountain. This is an easy to moderate 2.2 mile hike with an altitude gain of 400'. Bring sturdy shoes and water. Meet at the parking lot to the trail head off of the Marsh Street onramp to the 101 South. Possible gathering for ice cream/snack afterwards in celebration of National Ice Cream Day. Call Stacy (818-472-6827) or Karen (544-6628) for more details.

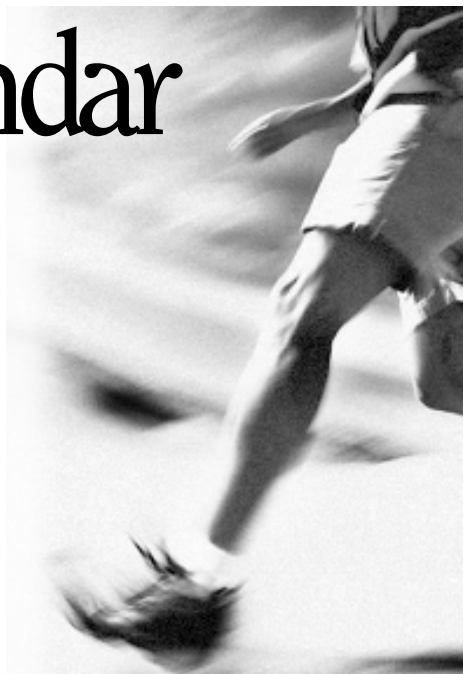
Sat., July 25th, 9 a.m., Anniversary Hike Up Shooters and Down Morning Glory Loop. Join Gary and Darlene as they start their day-long celebration with a hike and eats in on West Cuesta Ridge. 8 - 9 mile hike with 1700 foot elevation gain, exploring lands purchased by the LCSLO and added to Stenner Springs Reserve.

Bring water, snack and dress for the weather. Meet at the Cal Poly Ropes Course Parking area on Stenner Creek Road. 1.5 to 2 miles off Hwy 1. Refueling stop after for those interested. Details call Gary (473-3694).

Sun., July 26, 1:30 p.m. City Walk of Victorian-Era SLO. Where did the stagecoaches stop in SLO? What was a rancher's life like? How did the coming of the railroad produce instant millionaires? Learn these stories on a guided stroll past century-old homes and shops in downtown SLO. Children welcome. Meet at Jack House, 536 Marsh St., SLO. Info: Joe (772-1875)

Sat., Aug 1. 9:00 a.m. Hike Islay Road to Barranca Trail to Ridge Trail. 8-9 mile hike in Montana de Oro. Moderate hike with 1600 ft. elevation gain. A pleasant loop hike with great coastline views from the top of Hazard Peak. Bring water, snacks, dress for the weather. Meet at parking area across from Ridge trailhead. Typically 4-5 hours. For info, call Chuck @ 805-441-7597.

Saturday, August 15, 9:00am, Sierra Singles - Cerro Alto Short Hike: - Hike to the Cerro Alto Summit where you can see the volcanic chain known as the Nine Sisters. Moderate 5.1 mile hike with an elevation gain of 1600'. Sturdy hiking boots, water, snacks. Meet at day use parking area at the back of the campground. \$5 day use



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.

fee per car at Cerro Alto Campground. Call Stacy Talbert (818-472-6827) for more details.

Sat.-Sun., Aug. 22-23, Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest. Come to the White Mtns for a moderate 5 mile-loop interpretive trail hike, picnic lunch, optional hike to mining cabin. Group size limited. Send \$8 per person, 2 large SASE, contact & rideshare info to Reserv/Ldr: Lygeia Gerard, P.O. Box 294726, Phelan, CA 92329, (760) 868-2179. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sponsored by other organizations

Sat., July 11, 9:00-1:00. Trail work on Fiscalini Ranch. Spreading wood chips on trails on the upper part of the Ranch Preserve in Cambria to prevent erosion. Bring shovels, rakes, gloves, snacks, and water. If you can bring a wheelbarrow or large plastic garbage can, please call the leader. Possibility of poison oak and ticks. We will be meeting at the Tipton entrance to the Ranch. Call Chuck @ 441-7597. Sponsored by Friends of Fiscalini Ranch.

July 27 - Aug. 1: Teen Backpacking Expedition to Big Pine. Big Pine Canyon backpack to Palisades Glacier. We will be spending the week exploring the high alpine (above 10,000 ft) and making camps among the turquoise glacial lakes. Mandatory pre-trip meeting July 20 6:00p.m. Trip departs from Santa Rosa park in San Luis Obispo. \$500 - \$725 sliding Scale -- families can contribute based on available resources. Limited space. Call 541-9900. Sponsored by Central Coast Village Center and Outside Now!



"Spring Poppies - Montano de Oro"
24" x 36" Photo-Painting on Canvas
Mixed media: Pigment Print w/Acrylic


"Painting With Light"
Paul J. McCloskey • Photo-Paintings
"New Visions of the Central Coast"

Earth Tones
1319 Park Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

May 15 - July 15, 2009
Artist Reception: TBA

http://web.mac.com/paul_mccloskey/