



January 2014
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Don't Miss:
Environmentalists
Rendezvous
January 29



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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

We Are the 100 Percent

Sierra Club pushing for all renewable energy

A common refrain heard from non-renewable energy industries and their supporters -- whether, coal, oil, gas or nuclear -- goes like this: *It is necessary to continue generating energy from [fill in the blank] and continue its impacts on our health and the environment because clean, safe, renewable energy can't possibly get the job done.*

We are pleased to report that this anti-renewables chestnut, current when *Back to the Future* was in theaters, is being increasingly ignored worldwide.

The Sierra Club has set a goal of 100 percent renewable energy by 2050. And Executive Director Michael Brune told *National Journal* in November "We're in the process of moving up the date. We are exploring what it would take to get off coal and gas by 2030. We're first focusing on the power sector."

The same month, at the UN climate summit in Warsaw, Poland, the Global 100% Renewable Energy Coalition called upon national governments to commit to 100% renewable energy targets and strategies.

According to a statement from the coalition, "communicating and proving the urgency and feasibility of 100% renewable energy is key to breaking the climate deadlock."

Members of the coalition, including World Wind Energy Association, World Bioenergy Association and the Fraunhofer ISE Institute, criticized "the ongoing stagnancy of the climate negotiations and their struggle to agree



upon and implement measures that effectively combat the climate crisis." The organizations applauded the fact that "local, regional and national governments across the world are

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Our Loading Order

"Use less energy" is #1

Energy efficiency essentially means doing the same thing, or more, with less power.

It targets the huge energy suck that is the built environment and achieves increases in efficiency and reductions in consumption, waste and greenhouse gas emissions via cooling and heating, windows and doors, the design of light bulbs, motors and fan blades, etc. The management consulting firm McKinsey & Co. reported in 2009 that with the right incentives, codes and standards for energy efficiency, the U.S. could reduce non-transportation energy consumption by 23 percent by 2020 and eliminate 1.1 gigatons of greenhouse-gas emissions annually—"the equivalent of taking the entire U.S. fleet of passenger vehicles and light trucks off the roads."

That's why energy efficiency is even more important than replacing fossil fuels and nukes with renewable energy.

California, the most energy-efficient state in the nation, knows this, and emphasized that point two years ago this month when the California Public

20 from 300: We need you in the New Year!

One year ago, the Santa Lucia Chapter was looking at the necessity of laying off staff and closing our office. We reached out to you, and in one year, you got us halfway to our goal of raising the equivalent of \$20 or more from 300 members and supporters in automatic monthly donations -- the amount needed to cover our annual operating expenses and give us a secure basis on which to advocate for the conservation of the natural treasure that is the Central Coast, and protect healthy ecosystems and the health of residents. On pages 6 and 7 of this issue, you can judge how we spent your money.

This year, we need to do at least as well and secure the other half of those funds from those of you who have yet to join the Cal French Circle via a minimum \$20 monthly donation or lump sum annual donation of \$240. Membership in the Cal

French Circle confers special benefits in addition to knowing that you are a big part of the reason why the Sierra Club can continue to work on behalf of the environment of San Luis Obispo County. Last year, members got invited to a reception for Michael Brune at Cal Poly; this month, new members will receive a copy of *A Naturalists Guide to the Santa Barbara Region*. See page 3 for details.

See you in the Circle!

EFFICIENCY continued on page 9



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

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

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

Enclose check and mail to: **F94Q W 2500 1**
 Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Sierra Club General Meeting

7 p.m., Wednesday, January 29

Environmentalists Rendezvous: SLO County's New Activists

Our fifth annual forum showcases the new kids on the block, seven local organizations that have sprouted in the last several years to tackle specific earthcare issues. Featured are representatives of the American Biodiesel Club, the Citizens Climate Lobby, Clean Oceans Competition, Cal Poly's Green Campus Club, the Unitarians Green Team, One Cool Earth and SLO Clean Energy, who will discuss their plans for 2014. Time will be left for questions and comments. Come and learn about new directions and meet some dynamic new leaders of our local environmental movement.



Steynberg Gallery
 1531 Monterey St., SLO.
 Information: 549-8355

Paso Robles Basin Sold Out

Big Grape toasts a "compromise" water district proposal that isn't

On December 5, PRO Water Equity and the Paso Robles Agricultural Alliance for Groundwater Solutions (PRAAGS) issued a joint press release announcing that they had come to an agreement on the structure of a proposed water district to manage the rapidly depleting Paso Robles groundwater basin. It began:

"We are pleased to announce that – through compromise – we have agreed upon a proposal to put before the public. We believe this proposal provides fair and equitable representation for basin water users and a structure that meets the long-term needs of the area."

The deal triggered multiple resignations from the board and committees of PRO Water Equity.

The Tribune reported that "Sue Luft, president of PRO Water Equity, said the compromise showed 'democracy in action.'"

Here's the problem with the concept of democracy in the PRO Water Equity/PRAAGS deal: it is fundamentally anti-democratic. It weights voting power by how much land you control and relegates at-large directors to a permanent minority.

Here's the problem with the compromise deal's concept of compromise: it's not the kind of compromise that sets aside some goals in order to achieve some progress toward other goals that are equally or more important; it's a compromise of core values. PRO Water Equity, acting on behalf of rural residents, was founded as the opposition to the vineyards' push for a California Water District model — one acre, one vote, as advocated by PRAAGS — and in favor of a water

district based on one person, one vote.

As PRAAGS President Jerry Reagh told *The Tribune*, the "compromise" agreement was about "modifying the California Water District in terms of the board of directors and how they're elected."

In the name of compromise, PRO Water Equity wound up accepting the model they opposed instead of insisting on a water district based on the democratic model.

"The voting structure that these groups are supporting is still unacceptably biased to the largest land owners, compromises the vote of the residential overlayers, and allows for the election of a board of directors who do not live in the district they are elected to manage," said North County Watch President and PRO Water Equity founding member Sue Harvey, who left the group when the deal was announced. "North County Watch does not support the structure of a California Water District. A CWD still has many flaws, including the potential for a board director to be the designee of a corporation."

PRO Water Equity once proclaimed on its website, when it was arguing against PRAAGS' claimed necessity for the California Water District model:

"Any independent district can be set up to have flexibility in the make-up of the board of directors. Landowners can voice their thoughts and concerns to the board of directors of any water district."

And:

SELLOUT continued on page 8

SANTA LUCIAN

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 Pat Veasart (12/16)
 VICE CHAIR
 Linda Seeley (12/14)
 SECRETARY
 Patrick McGibney (12/14)
 MEMBER
 Lindi Doud (12/14)
 MEMBER
 Michael Jencks (12/15)
 MEMBER
 Victoria Carranza (12/15)
 MEMBER

Cal French
 COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS
 Lindi Doud, Patrick McGibney
 TREASURERS

The **Executive Committee** meets the second Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. The **Conservation Committee** meets the second Friday at 1 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 974 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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Outings, events, and more!

We Are the Sierra Club

Interviews with the movers and shakers of the Santa Lucia Chapter

Pat Veasart, Executive Committee

How and why did you come to be a Sierra Club chapter leader?

Back in the '90s I was involved with an activist group called the Alternative Transportation Task Force (ATTF) that was advocating for bike lanes in San Luis Obispo City and County, better transit service and more livable neighborhoods. Our group was quite active and, ultimately, quite successful. The Santa Lucia Chapter was an ally in our efforts. The Chapter Chair at the time, Gary Felsman, offered to bring our group under the Sierra Club umbrella and we agreed. Suddenly we were Sierra Club activists; part of a larger agenda and with access to the Club's support and resources. It made a big difference.

Eventually I ended up on the Executive Committee of the local chapter, served some time as Chapter Chair, and was hired by the Club to work on a Sierra Club independent expenditure campaign to defeat Andrea Seastrand and get Walter Capps elected to Congress. I also worked for the Club in Alaska as an organizer on forest issues and in Sacramento where I was the Chapter Liaison for Sierra Club California – connecting California's 13 chapters with the State organization.

The national Sierra Club organization is like a huge battleship – not especially nimble, but capable of delivering awesome firepower once you go through all the maneuvers to get it into position. The day-to-day work of the Club – work on local issues that people feel most passionately about – occurs at the chapter level.

What do you do in your day job?

I have the privilege to work for the California Coastal Commission. My job title is "Enforcement Supervisor" and I supervise the Commission's enforcement program in Southern California. It is a challenging job – one that requires me to bite my tongue often. We lack tools and staff, but despite the lack of resources, we are able to stop bad things from happening to coastal resources and to repair damage done. The best part of the job is the people I get to work with. Californians are lucky to have such smart and hard-working public servants in their corner.

What do you think have been the high points for conservation and enlightened land use in SLO County?

Sadly, I don't think that "enlightened land use" has come to San Luis Obispo County yet. We put good language into plans, but often fall short of actually implementing good policies. We continue to elect people who value expediency and making nice over actual conservation. Citizens are more engaged with their gadgets than they are with the decisions being made that affect our incredible county. And really, it is generous to call people "citizens" if they are not at least somewhat engaged. Inexorably, we are following the path that so many California counties have trod before us.

I will say that we have, through the efforts of citizens in this county, managed to create a pretty good General Plan with progressive land-use policies. We have done a pretty good job on energy policy, on policies that protect agriculture, and on policies that discourage sprawl. However, our

elected officials routinely ignore those policies when it comes to individual development proposals. One has to ask why we bother to make plans if we are not going to follow them. Examples include building thousands of acres of solar sprawl on the Carrizo Plain in endangered species habitat; the County's approval of sprawl development on ag land on the Santa Margarita Ranch; and the current ridiculous proposal (which never should have gotten this far) to build yet another gravel quarry, adjacent to the Salinas River and right next to an existing quarry, just east of Santa Margarita that will bring hundreds of gravel trucks through that community daily. Fortunately, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors still can do the right thing here. Right?

And the low points?

The 2012 election.

Do you have a favorite place in nature you love to visit?

I have lived in SLO County for 43 years and I am still belly-ache in love with the region. We are so close to incredible wilderness, spectacular coastline, valley grasslands, oak woodlands, rivers and lakes, amazing biological, geological, archeological resources... I feel like a hungry man at an incredible banquet – I almost don't know where to start.

I love the Big Sur coast and the Ventana Wilderness; the Arroyo Seco is one of my favorite places in California. I love the Santa Barbara back country; the Los Padres National Forest. I love the Carrizo Plain; the San Emigdio Mountains; the southern Sierra and the southern San Joaquin Valley. The coast at San Simeon; Montana de Oro; the Oceano/Guadalupe Dunes complex; Point Sal... the list goes on and on and I'm still within 100 miles of San Luis Obispo!

Do you have an environmental hero?

Oh, there are so many. You have to love Ed Abbey for his passion and his irreverence; David Brower who, despite mistakes, held the line; Peter Douglas for his vision, leadership, and decency; Aldo Leopold; Rachel Carson... Locally, Bill Denneen: the EverReady Bunny of SLO County eco-activism; Richard Krejsa, Richard Kranzdorf and Richard Schmidt (collectively, the "Richards"); the McMillan brothers (Ian and Eben)... Too many to name. So many people have risen to so many occasions – right when they were needed – and they have left their mark on this county.

How do you recommend people get involved?

Show up! Pay attention! Tell the truth! Don't be attached to the outcome. Showing up really matters. You can sit around and gripe about that which you do not like, or you can get off your duff and go to a city council meeting or the Board of Supervisors or get involved with some local NGO and start trying to change what you do not like. One path leads to impotence and one path leads to power. Oh, you'll lose quite often but you will at least hold the people who are doing the things you don't like accountable and you will lessen and slow their impact. They'd love it if you would just stay glued to your gadgets

and leave the governing to them. If the siren call of gadgets is too strong, then send money. Get involved and you will meet the very best people and your life will be better for it.

What's your vision for the future of the Chapter and our piece of California?

I assume our members know what an amazing chapter we have. When I worked for Sierra Club California I had regular contact with all 13 Sierra Club chapters in California, and the Santa Lucia Chapter is at the top of the heap. We are not the biggest, nor the best funded, but we do an incredible amount of good work for such a small chapter and we get it right most of the time. We are often on the cutting edge of what is happening in California and we are in a position to (and we do) influence the work of the other chapters and the national organization. It has made a huge difference having Andrew Christie as our director. Having staff means that we have somebody there when the phone rings and issues are breaking; it means that we have a voice at the various meetings and hearings that happen when the rest of us are at work. The money we spend to have somebody of Andrew's caliber working for us is the best investment we can make. My vision for the future of the chapter includes keeping Andrew on as our Director.

As for the future of the county, I feel strongly that we are in for some rough



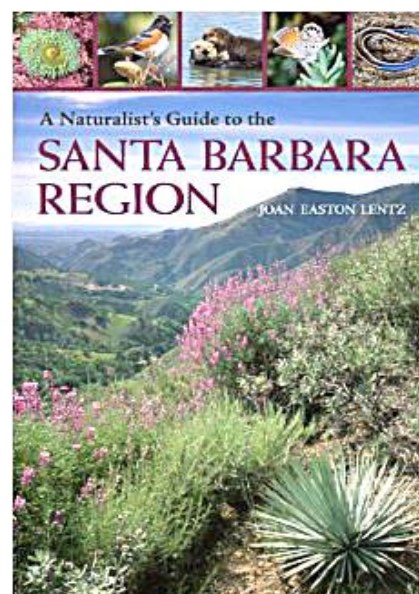
seas – right here and in California, and nationally and globally. If there was ever a time when we should be thinking about conserving our water sources, our food supply and our ability to produce energy locally, this is it. If there was ever a time when we should be coming together and working together as citizens of this county, this is it. When crisis occurs, whatever that crisis happens to be, it will be our ability to take care of ourselves and each other that will make the difference. County leaders, at all levels, should be doing all they can to make us as self-sustaining as possible.

The good news is that there is a lot of awareness and a lot of movement in the right direction here in SLO County. We are blessed with many advantages and with incredible natural and human resources. My fervent hope for the future is that people will focus more on how much we all have in common and less on our differences.

A New Year's Thank-You

Join the Cal French Circle of chapter supporters and get the newest & best guide to nature on the Central Coast

The Santa Lucia Chapter needs your help to keep on fighting to keep SLO County green in 2014! So for January only: Become a member of the Cal French Circle of supporters by authorizing an automatic contribution of at least \$20 a month for at least 12 months, or send an annual donation of \$240 to the Santa



Lucia Chapter. Simple instructions on donating via Paypal or automatic bank check are at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org. Click on "20 from 300." (If you need help, call 805-475-2270.)

As a thank-you, we will rush you a copy of the brand-new *Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region* by Joan Lentz. This 500+ page handbook covers the habitats, flora, and fauna of the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura. We have never seen any book of this size and scope dedicated to our region. We believe this is the most authoritative guide to our county's natural areas ever published.

And, of course, you'll be doing your part to protect those natural areas by joining the Cal French Circle

But **this is a limited-time offer.** We need to hear from you by January 31st!

Where the Endangered Things Are

By Stacey Hunt, Central Coast Bioneers

"There's a there there," began Tom Maloney of the Tejon Ranch Conservancy, referring to the stunning Carrizo Plain of eastern San Luis Obispo County.

The Carrizo, oft referred to as California's Serengeti, was the subject of a day-long Colloquium on November 8th at the SLO Botanical Garden's Oak Glen Pavilion. MC'd by Maloney, the Colloquium featured speakers from seven different agencies, universities and NGOs, who presented their research from such diverse areas as collaring newborn pronghorn fawns to mapping native vegetation on the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Maloney, who described himself as a "New England flatlander," was "blown away by the scale and size of the Carrizo Plain" when he first arrived in California. People assume that the Carrizo, home to 34 endangered species, is well-protected by the national monument of the same name. But less than half the Carrizo Plain is within the national monument.

Kickoff speaker Dave Hacker, a biologist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, warned that there is a risk the Carrizo could become an island if wildlife corridors are not created and maintained. "The conserved lands [on the Carrizo] are not connected and cannot alone support all of the populations out there," he said. The statistics are alarming: 80% of San Joaquin kit fox habitat on the Carrizo is on privately-owned land. Only 4% of lands within the national monument are suitable for kit fox habitat and would support only 160 animals.

Diego Johnson, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, told attendees during his presentation on pronghorn fawn survival that California's Central Valley had the largest pronghorn population west of the Rockies until the turn of the 20th century. Now the only stable remaining population is in the northeast corner of California. "From 1987 to 1990, 340 pronghorn were released on the Carrizo and the population has declined through 2012," Johnson reported. "The highest mortality is of fawns from 10-20 days of age."

The USGS uses GPS collars to track the fawns' movement. In the last season of 14 fawns born, only 3 survived, the others taken by predators. Johnson suggested that one



possible reason is the loss of habitat and the lack of vegetation for cover, showing a discouraging photo of a fawn crouching for cover behind large dirt clods in a plowed field.

The next report was by Brian Cypher, a research ecologist with CSU Stanislaus's Endangered Species Recovery Program, who has been monitoring the San Joaquin kit fox population out on the Carrizo since January 2013. Cypher spoke to the habitat management that is being performed on the land, with wildlife-friendly fencing replacing traditional cattle fences, and the restoration of shrubs, which had disappeared due to all the cattle grazing. Of ten foxes caught and monitored from January to June 2013, there were two mortalities, probably caused by bobcat predation, Cypher said.

Brian Boroski of H.T. Harvey Associates talked about the efforts to avoid or relocate giant kangaroo rat (GKR) communities (known as "precincts") during construction of the solar farms in California Valley, noting that "Some of the precincts were seven feet deep, and very complex in their development." After mapping the 4,500 acres of the proposed solar site, some of the solar arrays were moved to areas with less active GKR populations. One array was built on an old gypsum quarry to avoid prime habitat. The rats seem to be one of the species that has come out fairly unscathed from all of the activity on the Carrizo. "The number of precincts has tripled to 4,908 in 2012," Boroski reported.

Coming down from Point Blue Conservation Science in Petaluma were emerging projects director Geoff Geupel and GIS specialist Dennis Jongsomgit to talk about LaConte's Thrasher. Their monitoring of this dusty-colored bird with its distinctive curved beak began in 2010 with the establishment of 117 plots on the Carrizo containing the best potential

habitat. "Thrashers are elusive," Jongsomgit said. "They run along the ground like rodents and they are hard to spot."

Once a good protocol was developed, detection of the birds went up from 18 the first year of the study to 48 in 2013. The highest densities of birds were found in areas with large shrubs, with the birds preferring allscale saltbush and desert tea.

LaConte's thrasher is a species of special concern, due to loss of habitat from grazing impacts. Geupel and Jongsomgit concluded by saying that restoration targets need to be established, and habitat connections between subpopulations need to be created so that the genetic pool remains as large as possible. As Dave Hacker put it earlier in the program, "isolated populations are less likely to persist."

If you see a theme running through these presentations, you're right. Your real estate agent says "location, location, location." Biologists have a similar theme: "habitat, habitat, habitat." Jennifer Buck-Diaz, vegetation ecologist and botanist with the California Native Plant Society spoke about her achievement in creating a fine-scale vegetation map for the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Although to some people, plants don't have the charisma of the megafauna, they are vital to all of these species' survival. Buck-Diaz gave the assemblage a fascinating lesson in plantlife 101, describing the basic steps of vegetation classification and sampling, patterns and arrangements, and the mapping of vegetation alliances. Vegetation tends to be classified by groupings of plants that tend to grow naturally together, such as "grasslands," or "coastal scrub," rather than by individual species.

"We identified more than 400 species over the two years of our study," Buck-Diaz said, "and established a baseline for climate change monitoring." The map Buck-Diaz created will help improve conservation management on the Carrizo.

Other speakers at the Colloquium were California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife conservation scientist Robert Stafford, who talked about the Tule elk herd on the Carrizo, and Lizard Man Barry Sinervo, professor at UC Santa Cruz, whose topic was the endangered blunt nosed leopard lizard. These lizards can be so difficult to spot that lizard scat-sniffing dogs have been trained to seek them out.

Eighty-five representatives from governmental agencies and universities, environmental groups and private companies were in attendance, along with members of the general public, and provided lively discussion during the general assembly at the conclusion of the Colloquium. Topics included rewilding the desert tortoise population struggling with climate change in the Mojave to the Carrizo Plain to estab-

lishing an on-line repository for all Carrizo research.

One small drama took place when a hummingbird flew in through an open door and trapped itself in the building. After flying in circles for an hour trying to find a way out, the exhausted bird collapsed to the floor, where it was snatched up by one of the biologists. A group resuscitated the hummingbird with agave nectar from the outdoor coffee station and sent it on its way. The bird had chosen wisely the location of its mishap.

The Carrizo Colloquium was sponsored by Cal Poly SLO's Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences; SunPower; North County Watch; E. Monitor, LLC; Mid-America Solar; First Solar; H.T. Harvey & Associates and NRG Energy, Inc. The Steering Committee for the event was Sue Harvey, Douglas Campbell, Dawn Legg, Nikki Nix, Brian Boroski and Michael Jencks. More information about the event can be found at www.carrizocolloquium.org.

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leading the way."

"The more organizations and institutions support this initiative, the stronger the impact on policy makers to heed this global movement," said Anna Leidreiter, Coordinator of the Global 100% Renewable Energy Campaign and Policy Officer at the World Future Council. "In many countries there seems to be a verbal consensus on the necessity of ambitious climate change mitigation policies without a convincing perspective of the necessary policy decisions to be reached. One answer in breaking the inertia is the robust, global campaign for 100% renewable energy."

As the recently published IPCC report highlights, burning of fossil resources is the main reason behind a 40 percent increase in CO2 concentrations since the industrial revolution. The world's leading climate scientists call for a cap on greenhouse gas emissions and identify sustainable and efficient energy systems as the prerequisite for achieving the internationally agreed upon climate protection target.

The Sierra Club's Climate Movement Working Group has been meeting since the summer of 2013, engaging staff and volunteers across the organization to determine how the Club can best build a movement to respond to scientists' increasingly urgent warnings of extreme climate disruption. The working group will make recommendations to the board of directors in March.



How are they doing? Michael Jencks of EcoLogistics kicks off the Carrizo Colloquium.

Sierra Club California Releases 2013 Legislative Report Card

Low grades, high hopes



The state legislature, as a whole, performed poorly on key environmental legislation in 2013 according to Sierra Club California's annual legislative report card.

The report card evaluates legislators' environmental record based on 11 bills. Those bills were selected for scoring because of their overall importance to environmental quality, the precedent they set for good or bad impacts, and their importance to fulfilling the Sierra Club's mission to protect the planet.

"It's no secret that this year was a tough one for environmental legislation," said Kathryn Phillips, director of Sierra Club California. "This report card just confirms that with numbers."

The report card translates the value of votes—for or against the Sierra Club's position—into a percentage.

This year, no legislators earned 100 percent. The highest scores in the Senate, 90 percent, were earned by Ted Lieu (D-Torrance), Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley), and Bill Monning (D-Carmel). In the

Assembly, the highest score was an 89 percent earned by Bonnie Lowenthal (D-Long Beach). A large number of legislators of both parties earned scores of less than 60 percent, particularly in the Assembly.

"This year we started with 39 freshman legislators, people who had never served in the California Legislature. Many of them were still learning the complexities of the issues and legislative politics as the session came to a close," said Phillips. "As they get more experience, I think they'll become more confident and make wiser decisions on environmental issues."

New bills can be introduced from January 6 to the end of February.

The report card is available at Sierra Club California's website: www.sierraclubcalifornia.org.



City Farm: Water Access & Small Plots

A water system providing irrigation to the farm site at City Farm in San Luis Obispo is now up and running.

City Farm—San Luis Obispo is an experiential and educational community farm operated by Central Coast Grown in the center of San Luis Obispo on Calle Joaquin. The enterprises and

farming that develops on site will act as a community resource by connecting the public to local food and farming through education and personal experiences.

The first farmers to break ground at City Farm are Mama's Meatballs owner Nicola Allegretta and farm manager Derron Dike. They appreciate the access to water, saying "With the serious water crisis occurring in our county, we've been growing our appreciation of the ample water supply in our particular location. We feel blessed with the water, soil, climate, and visionary people we are partnered with as we plan to grow and offer nourishment to the local community."

Access to water at City Farm is also big news for small and new farmers interested in experiential and educational farming in San Luis Obispo. Central Coast Grown will make a portion of their land available for individuals and organizations that wish to join the creative and collaborative environment developing at City Farm.

Central Coast Grown intends to sublease the plots to a variety of local food and farming related endeavors, with a focus on propelling sustainable agriculture forward. To apply, contact 805-769-8344; cityfarmplots@centralcoastgrown.org.



NRC Fails to Apply Standard Earthquake Protection Protocols to Diablo Canyon

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is not holding the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant to the same standards it requires of every other nuclear facility to address potential earthquake hazards, according to "Seismic Shift: Diablo Canyon Literally and Figuratively on Shaky Ground," a new report by the Union of Concerned Scientists prepared for the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility.

"This is a dangerous double standard," said David Lochbaum, director of UCS's Nuclear Safety Project and author of the report. "At other facilities, the NRC enforced its safety regulations and protected Americans from earthquake threats. Today, in the case of Diablo Canyon, the NRC is ignoring its

regulations, unfairly exposing millions of Americans to undue risk."

In late 2008, PG&E informed the NRC about a previously unknown earthquake fault line running as close as 2,000 feet from Diablo Canyon's reactors that could cause more ground motion than the plant was designed to withstand. Since then, the NRC has not demonstrated that the reactors meet agency safety regulations.

When similar concerns surfaced at nuclear facilities in Maine, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the NRC did not allow the plants to continue to operate until the agency determined

DIABLO continued on page 8

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"Earthquakes do not wait until the nuclear industry is ready to deal with such threats. And families who live near nuclear facilities should not have to wait one additional day for needed safety enhancements at nuclear reactors. This is a key point for the Diablo Canyon nuclear facility."

- Senator Barbara Boxer on NRC's Implementation of the Fukushima Near-Term Recommendations and other Actions to Enhance and Maintain Nuclear Safety, Nov. 21, 2013.



California Coastal Art & Poetry Contest

California students in kindergarten through 12th grade: Submit your work to the California Coastal Commission's annual Coastal Art and Poetry Contest!

Let our coast and ocean inspire you!

Win prizes!

Have your work featured on-line and exhibited throughout California!

The California Coastal Commission invites California students in kindergarten through 12th grade to submit artwork or poetry with a California coastal or marine theme to the annual Coastal Art & Poetry Contest. Up to ten winners will be selected to win \$100 gift certificates to an art supply or book store, and each winner's sponsoring teacher will receive a \$50 gift certificate for educational supplies, courtesy of Acorn Naturalists. All winners and honorable mentions will receive tickets for their families to visit the Aquarium of the Pacific, courtesy of the Aquarium. Students may have their work featured on Commission web pages and materials, and winning entries will be exhibited throughout the state.

Entries must be postmarked by January 31, 2014, to be eligible for the contest. For rules and entry form (and helpful links for teachers and students), visit the website, e-mail coast4u@coastal.ca.gov, or call (800) Coast-4U. You can also download a contest flyer.

The 2013 contest winners are currently on exhibit at the Birch Aquarium at Scripps in La Jolla through January 20. Visit the California Coastal Commission's Public Education Program on the web at www.coastforyou.org.

The Year in Review

Your chapter at work in 2013

January

In an ominous sign for SLO's Land Use and Circulation Element update efforts, SLO City staff demote "Preserve Open Space" from the Major City Goals where survey results obviously should have put it, and relegate it to the "other goals" category.

Harvesting the Rain is published by the SLO Coalition of Appropriate Technology – SLO GreenBuild, SLO Surfrider, Permaculture Guild and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club – a how-to guide on the capture of water for passive and active landscape irrigation, protecting watersheds, reducing flooding, cutting home and business water bills and recharging groundwater aquifers.



After a misbegotten years-long process that ignored the voices of local residents, the Morro Bay wastewater treatment plant replacement project finally dies. The Sierra Club and a dozen other appellants appealed the City's decision to issue a permit for the project despite its multiple violations of the Coastal Act and the city's Local Coastal Plan. The Coastal Commission administers last rites on January 10. (But no one calls for the retroactive recall of former mayors Bill Yates and Janice Peters and their city council majorities, whose insistence on pushing the doomed project despite all warnings cost Morro Bay residents more than \$2 million.)

February

We point out problems in the Environmental Impact Report for Spanish Springs. The City of Pismo Beach denies them and defends the EIR. This will turn out to be a bad idea.

The Feb. 7 *New Times* prints the Santa Lucia Chapter's Opinion piece "The president needs to hear it from you," spreading the word on and contact information for the largest climate rally in history at the White House over President's Day weekend.

On February 13, Sierra Club Executive Director Mike Brune handcuffs himself to the White House fence along with 50 other climate activists, the first act of civil disobedience in the Club's 120-year history, urging the president to take action on the climate crisis and halt the Keystone XL pipeline.

March

Fred Collins tells attendees at the Chapter's General Meeting about the world "Through Chumash Eyes."



Mike Broadhurst takes a March 21 *Tribune* Viewpoint to dispute the Chapter's call for the removal of GMO produce from local farmers markets. We dismantle his arguments and claims for GMO's in the May *Santa Lucian* and urge readers to contact SLO Farmers Market managers to call for a policy banning the GMO foods now allowed to be sold at the market.

We urge Morro Bay and Cayucos to consider alternative technologies and designs that would produce cleaner water, in a smaller footprint, with less impact on coastal resources than the technology and design chosen for their failed wastewater treatment project.

April

The *Santa Lucian* is the first publication in the county to explicitly lay out the developing crisis over the Paso Robles groundwater basin and the role of corporate vineyards in depleting the aquifer.

Robles groundwater basin and the role of corporate vineyards in depleting the aquifer.

A Fierce Green Fire: the Chapter co-sponsors with Hope-dance and North County Watch the April 30 SLO debut of a documentary on the modern history of the environmental movement.

The Santa Lucia Chapter wins the 2013 Anthony Grassroots Prize for

Organizational Stewardship for our leadership in working to bring Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to the Central Coast, which would empower local communities to replace fossil fuel-generated electricity with clean renewable energy and incentivize energy efficiency programs.

The Chapter co-sponsors the Senior Celebration of Atascadero High School's GreenHound Academy, a pre-graduation awards ceremony marking the first graduating class to pass through the school's "green" core curriculum (also winning two eco-grants from the Chapter's high school grants program.)

The Chapter joins the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and the American Bird Conservancy as intervenors in the EPA proceeding to ban d-Con rodenticide. EPA has deemed it unsafe for children, pets and wildlife, but the manufacturer is fighting the ban.

The Chapter organizes a write-in campaign to the regional office of the EPA urging them to formally declare pollution levels from the Oceano Dunes SVRA to be in violation of federal air quality standards. (See July.)

May

The Santa Lucia Chapter's 45th anniversary fundraiser rocks the Edna Valley on May 11 with performances from Charlie Kleemann and Ranchers for Peace and gives guests an opportunity to the multimedia presentation "John Muir's Yosemite," presented by Outings Chair Joe Morris.

Meteorologist and *Tribune* "Weatherwatch" columnist John Lindsey talks climate change

with our General Meeting attendees.

The Chapter sponsors an evening with Santa Barbara attorney and Chair of the Sierra Club's Fair Trade Team Jesse Swanhuysen at the SLO City Library. He rips the lid off the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

The May 18 Hands Across the Sand event at the Avila Pier forms a human chain on the beach to dramatize opposition to offshore drilling and environmentally destructive seismic tests, one of 100 such events in 18 states and 9 countries.

Chapter outings leader Carlos Diaz Saavedra wins the Chapter's highest honor, the Kathleen Goddard Jones Award.

June

The Pismo Beach City Council pulls the trigger and takes its fatal vote on the Spanish Springs development. At the end of a meeting beginning the evening of June 18 and stretching into the early morning hours of the following day, the council ignores overwhelming public disapproval of the project and the Sierra Club's warnings against approving a defective Environmental Impact Report. They vote to approve two General Plan amendments to accommodate the developer and certify the project's EIR.

New Times picks up the story of rumblings coming from the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation

YEAR continued on next page

2 years later

The Horrible, Awful, No-Good Plastic Bag Ban

On January 11, 2012, amidst a storm of controversy verging on hysteria, the board of the SLO County Integrated Waste Management Authority voted to pass an ordinance removing plastic bags from point of sale at all the stores in the county.



As has been the case in regions around the world, the IWMA had had enough of the exorbitant cost of cleaning up plastic litter and removing bags from impaired waterways, the gears of sewage treatment plants and the recyclables stream. They decided to remove plastic bags from retail stores and require stores to charge ten cents for a paper bag as incentive to shoppers to bring their own multi-use reusable bags.

The ordinance went into effect in November 2012. Before we review what happened next, let's take a trip down memory lane and review what went before.

During the stormy IWMA meetings leading up to the vote, Paul Brown of the Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (COLAB) warned that the ordinance was "an attempt to change human behavior by sanctions or incentives."

The American Chemistry Council, the plastic industry's lobbying arm, warned of the dire threat of bacterial contamination from reusable bags.

Keep Bags Free SLO set up shop in front of the San Luis Obispo Food 4 Less to collect signatures in opposition and warn shoppers about the unbearable economic burden the plastic bag ban would impose on them. Ditto from the Save the Plastic Bag Coalition.

DC lobbyist Grover Norquist, from his perch at Americans for Tax Reform, fired off a letter to the IWMA board elaborating on this theme, claiming that the new "tax" and regulatory burden would cripple the local economy, would not reduce plastic bag litter "and may increase it."

In the multiple public hearings on the ordinance, there was much testimony about relatives who hit the beach at Normandy to preserve our right to get free plastic bags at supermarkets, and how banning plastic bags would mean the death of freedom and a Marxist takeover. We are not making this up.

More than a year later, the verdict is in: COLAB, the Tea Party and Mr. Norquist need to work on their soothsaying skills.

Last November, the Central Coast Economic Forecast reported that SLO is one of only four counties in the state experiencing an economic recovery so strong that it is now doing better than it was before the recession, with growth expected to continue through 2016. The county has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state; all jobs lost in the recession have been replaced and then some. Per the 2013 Benchmark Employment Revision, "All major economic indicators show that the worst is behind the region and as the national economy gains steam, the prospects for the region will only continue to improve."

Freedom of choice has also survived in SLO county: you can either buy a paper bag or bring your own, and you are no longer subsidizing the store's cost to give you "free" plastic bags while passing along the costs in higher food prices. The IWMA reports that all stores are in compliance, no one has perished from reusable bag poisoning, customer complaints have been minimal -- "even the checkout counter jokes about the ban died away after a few weeks," says SLO CoastKeeper Gordon Hensley -- and the number of plastic bags floating around the county has been reduced by 120 million.

"We also won the lawsuit filed by the Save the Plastic Bag Coalition, which they chose not to appeal," says IWMA Manager Bill Worrell. "They also lost their appeal in a suit against Marin County. Since the adoption of the ordinance, plastic bag bans have been adopted by the City of L.A. and Santa Barbara. Plastic bag ordinances currently cover 31 percent of the state's population."

In California, 13 billion plastic bags are distributed annually. Only 3% are recycled as of the last time anyone checked (2009), and the recycling program has virtually no oversight or means of monitoring or enforcing store compliance.

Year

continued from previous page

Commission to revive the idea of purchasing leased County-owned land in the Oceano Dunes SVRA to lock it up for off-roaders forever (“The grand scheme of things,” June 13), as first reported in the *Santa Lucian* (“Intractable,” June 2013). *New Times* points out the “buffer” designation for the land in question in our Local Coastal Plan, which is “now beyond legal challenge” courtesy of the Sierra Club.



In our comments on the draft EIR for the proposed Las Pilitas gravel quarry outside Santa Margarita, the Chapter points out that “up to 800 truck trips per day may be anticipated for a large project,” in contrast to the EIR’s estimated 273 trips, the basis of its traffic impact analysis.

At the Chapter’s request, California Senator Bill Monning signs on to a letter from state legislators around the country to the U.S. Trade Representative expressing concerns over the impacts of the Trans-Pacific Partnership on energy, the environment and natural resources in their states.

July

We file suit against Pismo Beach for ignoring the flaws we pointed out in the Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Spanish Springs development and certifying its defective EIR.

The Chapter leads a local delegation of attendees from our May meeting on the Trans-Pacific Partnership to meet with Congresswoman Lois Capps to express concerns over the enormous but secret free-trade deal. Representative Capps signs on to a Congressional letter opposing the “fast track” process that would push the deal through Congress with little oversight or review.



After receiving more than a hundred e-mails in response to our campaign (see April), the EPA writes to the Air Pollution Control District to put them on notice that the feds will step in if the district fails to reduce pollution from the Oceano Dunes SVRA. The campaign by dissident APCD board members to repeal the agency’s dust rule -- led by Grover Beach Mayor Debbie Peterson -- evaporates.

In a July 22 letter to the *Tribune*, the Chapter points out that State Parks, at the same time it is allegedly complying with the Air Pollution Control District’s dust rule for the Oceano Dunes SVRA, is filing an appeal of their failed lawsuit that attempted to overturn the dust rule. State Parks asks the court for six-

Thanks for dropping by

Brune to Students: Occupy the Sierra Club

Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune came to the Central Coast on November 4 for an address at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo’s Chumash Auditorium that focused on climate change and clean energy.

Brune told the several hundred attendees — half students and half local residents — that while the pace and scale of climate change is cause for alarm, it is not a cause for despair.

“The message doesn’t get out there,” he said, “but we are seeing dramatic progress” in the fight against climate change.

He cited California’s torrid pace in clean energy generation, on track to supply 40% of its energy needs from wind, solar and other renewable sources by 2030. Xcel Energy, one of the biggest utilities in Colorado, has

announced it will be significantly increasing its renewable energy portfolio because wind and solar now make more economic sense than coal, gas or nukes. One-sixth of all the coal plants in the country have been retired or will be retired in the next few years.

“We don’t need faith-based hope,” he said. “Every week, every month, we’re getting stronger. In the last eight years, the U.S. reduced carbon emissions more than any other country.”

Brune’s other message of the evening was “Occupy the Sierra Club. Take it and make it your own.” Anybody with ideas about how to address environmental issues of urgent concern can run for leadership positions in their local chapter. “The beauty of the Sierra Club is we’re democratic,” he said. “If you want to kick ass and focus on a clean energy economy that doesn’t destroy wildlife habitat, this is the group for you.”

After his speech, Brune attended a reception where he met with local activists and Cal Poly students, and taped a video message for the November 9 convergence of the California Student Sustainability Coalition at Humboldt State

University in Arcata.

“Pessimism limits our ability to think big,” Brune told the crowd. “It’s the idea that we can’t achieve great things that we have to fight.”

The evening was hosted by the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Empower Poly Coalition, and Cal Poly’s Green Campus Program and Biomimicry Club, with sponsorship by Pedego Electric Bikes, Pacific Coast Lumber, Kilcoyne Landscaping, Flying M Farm Products and *New Times*.



Jenna Smith of Central Coast Grown chats with Mike Brune at the reception following his Cal Poly speech.

The important thing to remember is that, once they happen, clean energy victories are irreversible. No one will tear down wind farms because they are nostalgic for fracking in our watersheds. Nobody will pull down their solar panels because they miss having mercury in their tuna or asthma inhalers for their kids. Because once we leave fossil fuels behind, we are never going back.
- Mike Brune

month stay of action on their appeal.

August

New Times prints “Let’s not beat around the basin” in its August 22 edition, in which Chapter Director Andrew Christie provided a brief on the political gymnastics performed by Supervisors Frank Mecham and Debbie Arnold as they sought to appease their backers and avoid taking action to preserve the imperiled Paso Robles groundwater basin.

Soaring Eagle Press, a Templeton webzine, takes the Sierra Club, North County Watch, PRO Water Equity, the media, and Supervisors Adam Hill and Bruce Gibson to task for our respective

positions on the Paso Robles groundwater basin crisis, which the editor perceives as an attack on “our North County Supervisors,” filled with “anger... misinformation... political manipulation... single-minded hatefulness... prejudice...” etc., which made the Soaring Eagle editor “disgusted.” Her sole evidence: an unattributed reference to the above-

mentioned *New Times* piece by our Chapter Director concerning those North County Supervisors “being in the pockets of (gasp) COLAB and (double gasp) ‘their ideological allies whose donations comprised the bulk of their campaign contributions.’” The gasping editorialist did not seem to realize that she was agreeing with the premise by way of mock scandalized interjections, nor did she make any attempt to refute it.

October

We settle our lawsuit against the City of Pismo Beach over the Environmental Impact Report for Spanish Springs when the City agrees to nullify the EIR, three months after certifying it in an attempt to pave the way for the sprawl development project in Price Canyon.

The Chapter’s Viewpoint “There is an answer to the Diablo question” in the October 23 edition of the *Tribune* cites “the ability of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to create jobs, diversify and strengthen the economy and otherwise avoid the economic hit of Diablo’s inevitable closure.”

November

At the Sierra Club’s suggestion, the SLO LUCE Task Force retains resource mapping in the draft Land Use Element update and adds to the element’s Creeks, Wetlands and Flooding Policies a measure to “encourage the use of methods to facilitate rainwater percolation for outdoor hardscaped and roof areas where practical to reduce surface water runoff and aid in groundwater recharge.”

The Chapter donates \$1,000 to SLO Clean Energy to help fund a feasibility study for CCA.

December

Representatives of the Chapter and North County Watch meet with Senator

Bill Monning to discuss concerns over the Paso Robles groundwater basin and the nature of any future water district formed to manage it.

The Chapter submits comments on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s “Waste Confidence” rule, which seeks to justify the continued production and indefinite storage of nuclear waste at the site of nuclear power plants. We find the NRC’s probability assessment improbable. Posted at santalucia.sierraclub.org/news/news.html.

Grover Beach yanks Debbie Peterson off the APCD board. See July (and “The Dusty Trail,” Sept. 2013 *Santa Lucian*).

At the December 9 meeting of the Avila Valley Advisory Council, Supervisor Adam Hill presents Shirley Goetz and Avila Beach Community Services District President Pete Kelly with the official proclamation of the Avila Beach Bird Sanctuary (below), after more than two years of work by Ms. Goetz with the support the Santa Lucia Chapter.



Sellout

continued from page 2

“California Water Districts were formed in the distant past, principally in areas focused on agriculture, for the primary purpose of securing and delivering supplemental water. . . . Some would have you believe that a CWD is *the* best water district available. However, the powers of a CWD are hardly exclusive. Those same powers, *plus* many others that are needed to stabilize the basin, are available in a Water Replenishment District”

Instead of sticking to their guns, PRO Water Equity bowed down to Big Grape.

When compromise is unwise

And here’s the final problem with that: PRO Water Equity, in compromising with PRAAGS, compromised with an entity who wants no land use restrictions of any kind on pumping or any conservation measure that would hinder their plans to expand vineyard operations and reap ever-higher profits from the groundwater basin. They wish to be free from the oppressive hand of government regulation and the laws of nature — including the one about what happens when you grab too much of an over-exploited finite resource. Throughout the struggle over the future of the basin, PRAAGS has made it clear that its idea of assistance for homeowners caught in the present crisis is to take a page from Marie Antoinette (let them drill deeper), and its only interest is more infrastructure to import more water so the vineyards can continue with business as usual after they’ve drained the basin.

The 20 biggest vineyards over the basin use 40 percent of the water and must be pleased at the prospect of a grower-controlled water district. Here are some of these not quite local folks:

- Stewart and Lynda Resnick, the Beverly Hills billionaires who own Justin Vineyards.
- Gerald Forsythe, an Illinois resort developer who owns Continental Vineyards, Forsythe Championship Racing, New Frontiers Capital LLC, and investments in a dozen power plants in the U.S. and Great Britain.
- Rick Middleton, President of Anderson & Middleton, Washington State wine and lumber barons and the owners of Red Cedar Vineyards.
- Paul Rayner, Chairman of the Board of TWE Global, with \$1.6 billion in sales in 2012, the owners of Meridian Vineyards.
- Rob Sands, CEO of Constellation Brands, the world’s largest premium wine producer, owners of Corona Light, Black Velvet Canadian Whisky, SVEDKA Vodka and about a hundred other brands, Grupo Modelo’s U.S. beer business (recently acquired from Anheuser-Busch for \$4.7 billion), and Wild Horse Winery and Vineyards.

Big Grape’s corporate absentee landlords are interested in making a profit for as long as there is a profit to be made. For multinationals that do billions of dollars in global business, a failed aquifer in a semi-rural county in central coastal California is a tax write-off. But land use regulations that may save some homes and rural wells but would put a crimp in vineyard expansion plans while there is still water to be pumped? That’s not in the program.

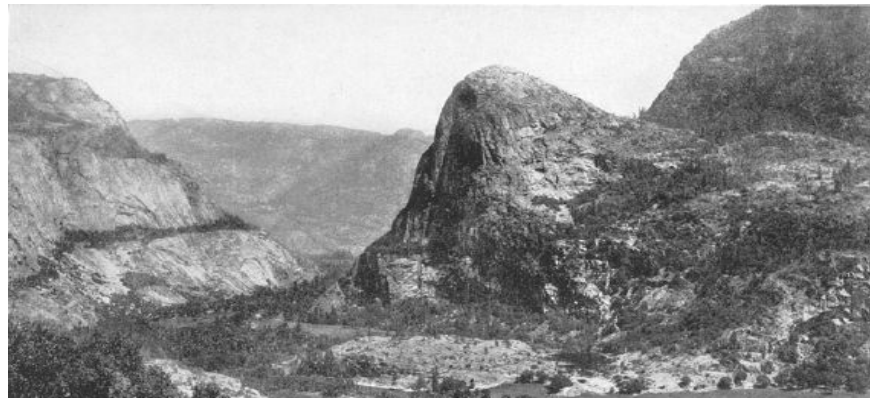
Big Grape’s local face at the Board of Supervisors is the County Farm Bureau and PRAAGS. They have been very upset for some time (see “How Com-

promise Works at the Board of Supervisors,” October 2013; “Judgment Day for the Paso Basin,” June 2013; “Paso’s Last Drop,” April 2013; and “What Shark?,” November 2012). Before the Supervisors voted to pass the urgency ordinance last August mandating offsets of expanded water use, PRAAGS circulated a flyer headlined “The COUNTY is pursuing an ORDINANCE to control your WATER.” They invited all to share their outrage over possible “annual limits on new wells . . . flow meters on all wells over three (3) inches . . . no overhead sprinklers” and other such crimes against humanity. How dare the County seek to impose such measures on the local agriculturalist, said PRAAGS, which had a better idea: the formation of a water district in which voting “will be proportional to land ownership.”

The e-mail traffic that flew after the PRAAGS meeting of November 19

provides insight into how popular this idea is with the public:

- “I heard that about half the room was rural residential and the other half growers. They got about 50-75 signatures. They really only need the signatures of the top 36 land owners to get the petition moving forward at LAFCO. So therein is the problem with a voting structure that is based on acreage.”
- “I was at the PRAAGS meeting and was pretty horrified. The bottom line is that they whined the whole time and said that they deserve all the water and it should be based on how many acres of land one has. One vote per acre! The theory is that the large land owners will put more cost into it than just the



For more than a hundred years, the Sierra Club’s board of directors has maintained its fundamental opposition to the damming of the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park and welcomed initiatives toward the restoration of the free-flowing Tuolumne River and Hetch Hetchy Valley. One such is the proposal by the group Restore Hetch Hetchy to return the Hetch Hetchy Valley to its natural splendor while continuing to meet the water and power needs of all communities that depend on the Tuolumne River.

December 19, 2013

Statement of Restore Hetch Hetchy on the Centennial of the Raker Act

100 years ago today, for the only time in American history, we allowed significant destruction within one of our national parks. When President Woodrow Wilson signed the Raker Act, he permitted Yosemite National Park’s Hetch Hetchy Valley to be dammed and submerged beneath 300 feet of water for use as a reservoir by San Francisco.

The Raker Act was deeply controversial, and was condemned in more than 200 newspaper editorials nationwide. That outcry is often cited as the birth of today’s conservation movement. Three short years after the Act was signed, Congress atoned by passing the National Park Service Act, largely to protect our national parks from any further disfigurement.

Yosemite’s Hetch Hetchy Valley, however, remains underwater and unavailable to the American people for whom it was originally meant to be preserved “in perpetuity.” That reservoir is the greatest blemish in America’s otherwise magnificent national park system.

Restore Hetch Hetchy is committed to removing the reservoir and returning Hetch Hetchy Valley to the American people, thereby making Yosemite National Park whole once again.

Restore Hetch Hetchy is also committed to working with all communities, especially the city of San Francisco, that rely on the Tuolumne River for water and power to ensure their needs are met when the valley is restored. To that end we have proposed system modifications that would allow San Francisco to divert the Tuolumne River downstream and outside of Yosemite National Park.

Alas, while many in San Francisco do support restoration, neither elected officials nor the city’s Public Utilities Commission have been willing to engage with Restore Hetch Hetchy in constructive dialogue. San Francisco’s reluctance came to a head in 2012 when a well-financed campaign arose to prevent city officials from even taking part in a public discussion of the potential for restoration.

Therefore, while it will always be Restore Hetch Hetchy’s goal to work cooperatively with San Francisco and its wholesale customers in the Bay Area, going forward we will focus our strategic efforts on decision-making entities outside the city. We will engage Congress directly and we will challenge ongoing occupation of Yosemite’s Hetch Hetchy Valley in the state and federal courts.

Congress: Amend the Raker Act: Restore Hetch Hetchy, working with our colleagues, will pursue a bipartisan effort in Congress to amend the Raker Act. An amended Raker Act would allow San Francisco to keep its other reservoirs, pipelines, and powerhouses in the Tuolumne River watershed, but would require



regular Joe. My friend point-blank asked who would hold the power. If looks could kill! It befuddled them that we should even ask the question.”

- “The mansions on the hill want it all! Not new news. Frankly, I’m happy for wealthy folks and I think the wine/grape industry had done tons to bring up our area, but at the cost of losing it all?”

SELLOUT continued on next page

Diablo

continued from page 4

they met safety regulations. In particular, the NRC required a number of measures to limit earthquake damage. In contrast, the NRC has allowed PG&E to continue to operate Diablo Canyon’s reactors despite the known threat.

In March 1979, the NRC ordered Beaver Valley Unit 1 in Pennsylvania, FitzPatrick in New York, Maine Yankee, and Surry Units 1 and 2 in Virginia to shut down after it discovered an error in the computer code that analyzed earthquakes and associated protective features of these plants. The agency did not allow the five reactors to resume operating until plant owners reevaluated earthquake hazards, input proper computer codes, and installed or upgraded protection devices to better protect the plants from earthquakes.

“At these other plants,” the report concludes, “the NRC did not rely on luck to protect the public.” But “the NRC allows Diablo Canyon to operate based on unsubstantiated beliefs that the plant can withstand the threat from the Hosgri and Shoreline faults. . . . PG&E has never performed a rigorous analysis of the Hosgri and Shoreline faults using the methods and assumptions required to legally re-define the seismic design basis. As a result, the NRC does not have the information it needs to determine that Diablo Canyon can operate safely.”

The Diablo Canyon reactors are more than ten times more likely than the average U.S. reactor to experience an earthquake larger than they are designed to withstand, and there is a 1 in 6 chance that such an earthquake will occur at Diablo over its 40-year lifetime.

“Despite solid evidence that Diablo Canyon does not comply with federal safety requirements, the NRC continues to allow the plant to operate,” said Rochelle Becker, executive director of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility. “The NRC should enforce its safety regulations at Diablo Canyon.”

READ THE REPORT

www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/nuclear_power/diablo-canyon-earthquake-risk.pdf

HETCH HETCHY continued next page

Sellout

continued from previous page

● “I must say that John D Rockefeller and Warren Buffet et al get one vote each....”

Equally illuminating were some of the (disregarded) comments made by concerned PRO Water Equity members at the meeting where they were presented with the compromise deal:

● “Maybe we should draft a document with PRAAGS saying what it is we do agree upon and what we do not agree upon? Seems like we would hold on to our beliefs and our integrity.”

● “‘Working together’ with PRAAGS should not mean giving up what we think is right. Work with PRAAGS, don’t become them.”

● “Destroys the equity of one man one vote. Our supporters expect us to stand for ‘equity’ — it is in our name. This looks like PWE sold out the rural residents...and we will then lose credibility. What do the folks who gave us checks expect of us?”

Meanwhile, the numbers continue to have the last word:

- Paso Robles groundwater usage, main basin: Small commercial = 3%, Municipalities = 5%, Rural domestic = 13%, Irrigated agriculture = 79%.
- 36 landowners over the Paso Robles groundwater basin own 51% of the land.
- As of December, the safe yield for the entire basin was found to be 7,800 AFY less than had been previously believed.

He eats 800-pound gorillas

The big vineyards in PRAAGS who got PRO Water Equity to knuckle under and agree to a California Water District for the Paso Robles basin should be careful what they wish for.

One individual certain to sit on a board based on the California Water District model would be Justin Vineyards owner Stewart Resnick – or rather, the manager whom Mr. Resnick assigns to represent his interests.

PRAAGS represents the interests of the three dozen people in the North County big vineyards club, but Resnick’s interests go far beyond those of his fellow owners, including the other absentee corporate landlords in the above list, who simply wanted to acquire some California vineyards to diversify their financial portfolios and add a few million to their billions.

Resnick’s business model is nothing so simple. Resnick, with his wife Lynda and through their many companies, is the owner of such brands as POM Wonderful, Fiji Water, Teleflora, the Franklin Mint, etc. Most importantly,

he owns 18,000 acres of pomegranate fields in the San Joaquin Valley and 100,000 acres of citrus, pistachios and almonds. Resnick’s companies are the largest purveyors of almonds and pistachios in the world. It was to secure his agricultural endeavors that Resnick masterminded the biggest windfall of his empire-building career: the take-over of the Kern Water Bank and its one million acre feet of storage. (Ernie Conant, an attorney for the Kern Water Bank, also works for PRAAGS.)

It was in recognition of this feat that *Baffler* senior editor Chris Lehmann described Stewart and Lynda Resnick as “the billionaire couple that’s hollowed out and privatized the foundation of inland agricultural production in California.”

Or as the *Earth Island Journal* put it: “With the takeover of the Kern Water Bank, a public asset that could have been used to supply clean water to nearby farmworkers’ towns—and as a drought-relief water bank for both small towns and farmers—was instead used to safeguard the water supply of almond and pistachio trees in the desert for a Beverly Hills billionaire couple.”

The Resnicks and their executives have given \$4 million to candidates, political committees and more than two dozen elected officials in California.

PRAAGS is pleased with the inequitable California Water District that it and a splintered PRO Water Equity are now trying to sell to skeptical North County residents. The desired scenario

for the vineyards is clear: a quick and easy district board take-over, then getting out from under any land use restrictions and bringing in new pipelines just in time to switch on the spigots as the last drop is pumped out of the Paso Robles groundwater basin (and all the creeks, streams and ecosystems that depend on it die). But they are overlooking something.

Representing the biggest vineyards in the area, PRAAGS members fancy themselves 800-pound gorillas. But Stewart Resnick is an 800,000-pound gorilla, and he long ago made *his* business plan clear. Should the PRAAGS contingent get their desired regulation-averse permanent voting majority on a California Water District, which will result in the inevitable depletion of the basin, they may find to their surprise that all their other options on infrastructure and imported water have somehow come down to just one option: getting in line at the teller window and buying from Mr. Resnick’s water bank, paying what he chooses to charge, or else selling him their parched lands at fire-sale prices.

Finally, a word to those who have no truck with either PRAAGS or PRO Water Equity and have struck out on their own to sue the County: You folks are aiming in the wrong direction and should focus on the real threat, lest you come to find out the hard way that a meter on your well would have been far preferable to life on your knees, begging a pair of Beverly Hills billionaires for a cup of water.

TAKE ACTION

Let Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian and Senator Bill Monning know that you do not support the undemocratic and unfair PRAAGS/PRO Water Equity “compromise,” you will oppose any bill seeking to carry it forward, and they should instead draft legislation preserving the principle of one resident/one vote or one parcel/one vote. This is the only way to preserve the Paso Robles groundwater basin.

Achadjian: (805) 549-3381
Monning: (805) 549-3784

And prepare to fight the proposed hybrid California Water District at the Board of Supervisors and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). Tell the supervisors you want a district with *all* directors, *all* living within the district, elected by the popular vote of *all* residents. One person/one parcel, one vote.

Efficiency

continued from page 1

Utilities Commission clarified its Long Term Energy Procurement Plan and strengthened a key state energy policy called the Loading Order.

The Loading Order sets a priority list for electricity sources. California’s utilities must first employ energy efficiency and conservation to meet customer demand; then energy from renewable sources such as wind, solar and geothermal. Only after all those supplies are exhausted may the utilities purchase power from fossil fuel plants. In January 2012, the PUC told the utilities that the energy efficiency requirement is a floor, not a ceiling.

“Saving energy and using it efficiently is a priority for most of us, and it should be for the power companies as well,” said Jim Metropulos, Senior Advocate with Sierra Club California.

ExCom Election Results

Of 50 ballots cast, the vote tally was:

Pat Veasart: 42
 Greg McMillan: 40
 Heidi Harmon: 28

The Executive Committee met on December 15 and seated Veasart and McMillan for their second 3-year terms and elected Michael Jencks Chair for 2014, Patrick McGibney Vice-Chair, Lindi Doud Treasurer and Linda Seeley Secretary. Victoria Carranza was appointed the Chapter’s Assistant Coordinator.

Resignation from PRO Water Equity

December 5, 2013

Effective December 1, 2013, I resign from the position of 2nd Vice President of PRO Water Equity, Inc. and from the Board of Directors of that corporation.

I take this step with respect for the hard work we all have contributed. However, as I expressed at the Board meeting on December 1st, I have advocated for and believed that our goal was a district government elected by residents of the basin on the basis of one resident-one vote or one parcel-one vote.

I cannot support the agreement announced today with PRAAGS and regret that the recommendation of a majority of PRO Water Equity’s policy committee and the votes of two members of the Board could not bring about a reconsideration or compromise. In addition, the agreement announced today includes language not considered by the policy committee or voted upon by the Board at the Sunday December 1st meeting:

“Within each class (large or small), consistent with existing law, the initial vote would be based on acreage and thereafter would be based on assessed valuation shown on the last equalized assessment roll.”

With respect for hard work by all and with great regret,

Maria Lorca
 Creston

Hetch Hetchy

continued from previous page

the city to relinquish Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and to return the valley to Yosemite National Park and the American people.

State and federal courts: Restore Hetch Hetchy will pursue promising legal options that will directly challenge the ongoing operation of San Francisco’s water system as a violation of both state and federal law. These new legal actions will complement but be separate from our ongoing involvement in the relicensing of Don Pedro Reservoir, where San Francisco’s water bank is twice the volume of Hetch Hetchy Reservoir.

Restore Hetch Hetchy will of course continue our efforts to educate the public, directly and through the media. And we stand willing to work with San Francisco and other Bay Area communities to develop a sustainable and responsible water supply as we pursue restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park.

Restore Hetch Hetchy could not agree more with the title of Ken Brower’s new book *Hetch Hetchy: Undoing a Great American Mistake*. And undo it we shall.

TAKE ACTION

1. Go on an outing to Hetch Hetchy, take photographs, and write articles about your experiences for Sierra Club newsletters and for newspapers of general circulation;
2. Encourage your elected representatives to support Hetch Hetchy’s restoration. The mailing address for letters to Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein is: Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.
3. Got to www.sierraclub.org/ca/hetchhetchy, and the website of the campaign organization, Restore Hetch Hetchy www.hetchhetchy.org.
4. Volunteer your expertise (volunteer organizing and outreach, engineering, economics, geology, law, education). Together, we can, as John Muir said, “do something to make the mountains glad.”



Taking Issue

Reviewing problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our media

“WTO’s global free-trade deal talks collapse in Geneva,” Associated Press, *The Tribune*, Nov. 27, 2013.

Summary: The reporter wants the reader to know that wealth and happiness would come to all if only the deal could be sealed on a new trade agreement at the World Trade Organization. But for unexplained reasons, unidentified opponents opposed it.

The deal binds developing countries to the procedures that rich countries have implemented over many decades to their own advantage. Poor nations would have to prioritize computerizing their customs offices over their schools, and improving infrastructure at ports rather than at hospitals. Rich nations have tried to spin this as a “win-win” for developing countries. The World Development Movement warned it was “an agreement for transnational corporations, not the world’s poor.” Subsequent to the collapse at Geneva, developing countries forced concessions on the pro-corporate agenda of the US and EU. “However, those concessions are only the minimum necessary to get through what remains a deal for corporations, not for the world’s poor.”

Negotiators came close but failed Tuesday to clinch a free-trade deal that could have helped boost the world economy...and cleared the way for a broader global agreement.



Achieving a deal in Bali is seen as a final effort to revive a broader 12-year effort to ease global trade rules.

WTO rules allow developed countries to massively subsidize their agriculture (to the tens or hundreds of billions of dollars annually), while only 17 developing

countries are allowed to subsidize over a minimal amount. As poor farmers make up a large percentage of the “bottom billion,” removing this limit to Food Security in the WTO is the most sensible way the international community can reduce hunger, poverty, and inequality.

[The deal] could boost the global economy by \$1 trillion a year and support 21 million jobs, according to a report co-written by Jeffrey Schott, a senior fellow in international trade at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

“Peter G. Peterson is a controversial Wall Street billionaire who uses his wealth to underwrite numerous organizations and PR cam-

paigns to generate public support for slashing Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, citing concerns over ‘unsustainable’ federal budget deficits.... Peterson wants to convince Americans — who overwhelmingly want to keep and strengthen Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid — that these programs’ very existence threatens our national well-being.... [Peterson’s] “Fix the Debt” leaders know that nothing short of a massive effort will be needed to convince members of Congress to impose fiscal austerity in the midst of an economic downturn. Not only has this failed in the European countries where it has been tried, but poll after poll showed that the American public specifically rejected the Fix the Debt agenda in the 2012 election and want jobs to be the nation’s priority.” More at petersonpyramid.org.

- Sourcewatch

Upshot: The Associated Press basing its reporting on happy talk from a Wall Street billionaire’s “austerity” think tank on the WTO’s corporate globalization agenda is not exactly unbiased journalism. Global civil society remains staunchly opposed to a top-down business-oriented trade regime that has run aground. For that side of the story, check out the WTO Turnaround Agenda, endorsed by 250 civil society groups, including the development advocates, trade unions, farmers groups, environmental and consumer organizations from more than 100 developing and developed countries that this article ignores. It provides an outline of the policy changes essential to the process of transforming the global trade system into one that works for sustainable and inclusive development for all. See www.ourworldisnotforsale.org

“Some Good News About U.S. Carbon Emissions,” *BloombergBusinessweek*, Oct. 24, 2013.

Summary: U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are down. That’s good...right? Most responses below are from “Carbon States of America,” by Paul Rauber, *Sierra* magazine, Nov./Dec 2013.

While we congratulate ourselves for having decreased our energy-related greenhouse gas emissions...we’re simultaneously turning into what some boosters call “Saudi America”—a major world source of coal, oil, and natural gas. Collectively, these were our number-one export last year. We’re cutting back on the crack, but selling it to the kids next door.

Greenhouse gas emissions from power and industrial plants in the U.S. fell 4.5 percent in 2012

California doesn’t have to wait and see. For the first time since 2008, our greenhouse gas emissions increased in 2012, due to our increasing reliance on dirty gas plants. When the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station went offline, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric fired up their old and dirty power plants and emissions in the electric sector went up 35%. Governor Brown and state regulators have a choice: make this a minor blip on the road to a safer climate by relying on clean energy solutions or lock in 40 years of new fossil fuel emissions by building huge new polluting gas plants.

Since November 2012, though, coal has been on a comeback thanks to its ultralow price.... It will be interesting to see if 2013 brings a slight rise in greenhouse gas emissions as a result.

That bounty, however, is primarily obtained via fracking, a process that the Energy Department’s own advisory board has warned comes with “serious environmental consequences.” These include the leakage of large amounts of methane, an incredibly potent greenhouse gas; the contamination of groundwater; and, when drilling fluids are reinjected into the earth, even the promotion of earthquakes. Air pollution is another concern: Parts of gas-rich Wyoming now have worse smog than Los Angeles.

Although Americans are consuming slightly less electricity, much of the decline in emissions has resulted from natural gas displacing coal.

The upward price pressure brought about by exports [of natural gas] could even make coal competitive once again, just when it seemed to be on its last legs.

Shipping millions of tons of coal and billions of cubic feet of natural gas to Europe, South America

and Asia is a huge industrial enterprise, requiring a vast new infrastructure of pipelines, storage facilities, and export terminals. (U.S. law currently forbids the export of domestically produced crude oil, a ban the industry is lobbying to overturn.) Building that infrastructure requires federal environmental approval, which could depend on whether the United States is willing to take responsibility for the enormous climate-changing potential of exporting its carbon reserves. The Sierra Club is calling for a full environmental impact assessment of the implications of natural gas exports.



Upshot: On climate change, President Obama said “If Congress won’t act soon to protect future generations, I will.” Here’s his chance. The biggest carbon export scheme in the country is to ship the coal reserves of the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming to the blast furnaces and power plants of Asia, particularly China. The Powder River Basin is well placed to feed China’s carbon hunger. Its strip mines produce hundreds of millions of tons of coal a year, which the federal Bureau of Land Management sells to coal companies at below-market prices. Annual exports from the basin, however, are only 15 million tons, limited largely by the paucity of West Coast shipping terminals. The coal industry hoped to increase its export capacity by building six new terminals in Oregon and Washington. Fierce opposition from Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign and other environmental groups, together with the dicey economics of the situation, meant a quick end to three. Left standing are proposed facilities at the Port of Morrow in Oregon and Cherry Point and Longview in Washington.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **January 10**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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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 our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. 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 Chair Joe Morris, 549-0355. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Sat., Jan. 4th, 10 a.m. City Walk: Victorian-Age San Luis Obispo

Guided stroll past 21 stately, century-old homes and churches in the Old Town Historic District, SLO's former "Nob Hill." See residences of past mayors, newspaper editor, and founder of Cal Poly. Eavesdrop on the lives of the newly rich who transformed the city at the turn of the 20th century. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet in front of Jack House, 536 Marsh St. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sun., Jan 5th, 9 a.m. Point Buchon Trail/Montana de Oro State Park.

Five-mile trail accessing coastal shelf and rugged coastline south of Coon Creek. Bring water, snacks, and dress in layers for changing weather. Hat, sunscreen, and sturdy shoes are recommended. Meet at parking lot, south end of MDO at the start of the Coon Creek Trail. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Geology, animals, and plants will be discussed. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Sat., Jan 11th, 8 a.m. Blinn Ranch Rd./Falcon Loop Hike Strenuous 13-mile hike, 1800 ft. elevation gain, on north side of Santa Margarita Lake. We will access the route from the River Road parking area, where there may be a parking fee. Option of going part way and turning back early, if desired. Bring lunch, water, and sturdy hiking shoes. Meet in front of the Pacific

Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sun., Jan. 19th, 10 a.m. Sycamore Springs Trekking-Pole Hike. Hike in scenic area to model and practice benefits of using trekking poles effectively, 2 miles rt, 600 ft. elevation change. Meet near entrance to Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Dr. Confirm you are coming beforehand with Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or hikingpoles@gmail.com

Mon., Jan. 20th, 10 a.m.-noon North Dune/Bloody Nose Trails Hike. Three-mile loop hike, 400 ft. gain, in Montana de Oro State Park past eucalyptus, manzanita, dunes, canyons, ocean views, sandy trail. Meet 1.6 miles past park entrance at Hazard Canyon parking area on right. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, 528-5567.

Sat., Jan. 25th, 8:30 a.m. Willow Springs Trail. 4.2-mile hike with scenic views of Los Padres backcountry. Bring hat, sunscreen, plenty of water, long-sleeve shirt and pants and sturdy walking shoes. Carpool pt. at intersection of Hwys 101 and 166, then west on Hutton Rd., parking by Cuyama Lane. If meeting at trailhead, arrive by 9 a.m., go to Willow Spring trailhead off Hwy 166, about 20 miles from Hwy 101. Trailhead is 4 miles past Pine Canyon Fire Station. Park on right by gate. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 934-2792 or cell 264-4527.

Wed., Jan 29th, 7-9 p.m. Bimonthly General Meeting: 5th Annual Environmentalists Rendezvous -- the New Activists.

This year our annual forum showcases the new kids on the block, seven local organizations that have sprouted in the last several years to tackle specific earthcare issues. Featured tonight are reps from the American Biodiesel Club, Citizens Climate Lobby, Clean Oceans Competition, Cal Poly's Green Campus Club, the Unitarian Green Team, One Cool Earth, and SLO Clean Energy, who will discuss their activities and plans for 2014. Followed by Q&A. Come learn about new directions and mix with some dynamic new leaders of our local environmental movement. Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Thu.-Sat., Jan. 30th-Feb.1st Death Valley Wilderness Restoration

Restore wilderness values in a beautiful and remote national park. Project involves removing plane-crash debris in southern end of park. Meet early Thursday afternoon in Shoshone, work at crash site Thursday afternoon, all day Friday, plus Saturday if needed. Primitive camping (no water) Thursday and Friday night. Need to bring all supplies, including water. Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com or 661-944-4056 CNRCC Desert Committee.

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park. 3 Days, 3 Islands: April 12-14, May 4-6, June 8-10, July 22-24, August 24-26, September 14-16. Join us as we explore these enchanting islands! Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds. Watch for the highly endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the



Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. A ranger/naturalist will travel with us to help lead hikes, point out items of interest and present evening programs. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. The \$590 cost includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks, and beverages plus the services of a ranger/naturalist.

To reserve space, send a \$100 check, written to Sierra Club to leader Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. For more information contact leader; 626-443-0706; jholtzln@aol.com.


Sponsored by other organizations:

Mon., Jan. 13, 5:30 p.m. Central Coast Community Gathering to Guide Continued Marine Protected Area Monitoring. Join the California Ocean Science Trust and the Department of Fish and Wildlife in an informal dialogue to help inform continued marine protected area (MPA) monitoring in the Central Coast. All members of the Central Coast ocean community are welcome, including those interested in the monitoring, evaluation and management of the region's MPAs and oceans. Local, state and tribal government representatives, fishermen, researchers, nonprofit organizations, citizen scientists, divers, surfers, paddlers, wildlife enthusiasts and all other ocean stewards are encouraged to join.


5:30-7:30 p.m., Museum of Natural History, 20 State Park Road, Morro Bay. For more information and information about the California Ocean Science trust and their work on the Central Coast, call (805) 776-3982 or visit bit.ly/centralcoastmonitoring.



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.




The Sierra Club Needs You!



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- Lead hikes and camping trips
- Introduce others to nature
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- Make new friends
- Protect the environment
- Get healthy exercise

For further information contact:
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 (805) 549-0355
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John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite



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