



February 2015
Volume 52 No. 2

Inside

Impacts schmimpacts	2
A community's choice	4
Oil train resistance rising	6
Derail fast track	7
Water export rule slips away	8
Classifieds	11
Outings	12

Don't Miss:

February 11, Pismo Beach

California Coastal
Commission meeting:
Oceano Dunes

- page 7



Please recycle

This newsletter printed on
100% post-consumer recycled paper with
soy-based inks

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

Groups Call for Central Coast National Marine Sanctuary

Federal review underway for Chumash Heritage Sanctuary nomination

On February 2, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, with the support of local ocean advocates, formally submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) a nomination for the designation of a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

The proposed marine sanctuary would extend from the mouth of Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria to Gaviota Creek in Santa Barbara, protecting the area between the existing Channel Islands and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries.

"The First Peoples of this land have teamed with local communities and organizations to express our deepest passions for these magnificent coastal waters," said Fred Collins, tribal administrator for the Northern Chumash Tribal Council. "Designation of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary for the Central Coast would ensure the continuation of one of the most biologically rich coastlines in the world, and the protection of cultural sites that were once the villages of this region's first inhabitants, now located up to six miles west of the current shoreline."

The proposed sanctuary area is the transition zone between the northern temperate and southern subtropical waters that meet off the west coast, with a mix of threatened and endangered plants and animals found nowhere else in the Pacific Basin. It is home to kelp forests, the southern sea otter, gray whale migration routes and one of the most sustainable fisheries in the country, including rock fish, crab, squid and hundreds of non-commercial species. It provides an important stop-over along the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds. Fresh water estuaries make it an important nursery for a wide range of species.

Our stretch of coast faces potential threats from offshore oil drilling and seismic testing, and ongoing burdens from water pollution and climate disruption. National marine sanctuary designation would ensure ecosystem-based management and safeguard

coastal waters from offshore drilling.

"This area has long been recognized as a place worthy of protection," said Michael Thornton of Sierra Club California. "Including this area within the national marine sanctuary system will be a 'Triple Bottom Line' win for the environment, the local economy and the community."

National marine sanctuary protections are unique. A review of the NMS system in the November 2014 issue of *Environmental Law Reporter* noted that "Congress designed the National Marine Sanctuary Act to provide for comprehensive management of marine ecosystems, allowing for multiple uses that are compatible with the statute's primary goal of preservation."

The proposal has the support of many local residents, businesses, and nonprofit groups. The Cambria Fishing Club, the oldest recreational fishing group on the Central Coast, calls designation of the CHNMS "a rare opportunity to provide both ecological and cultural preservation along the California coast."

The California Coastal Commission, in a letter sent to NOAA in support of the nomination, noted that "sanctuary status enhances coordination efforts, scientific research relating to marine ecosystems and conditions, and funding opportunities."

California State Senator Fran Pavley wrote "The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would provide a legacy of prosperity in healthy coastal waters, preserve unique and significant coastal ecosystems, and strengthen the tourism-based economy of the Central Coast."

SLO County Supervisor Bruce Gibson noted that the proposed sanctuary area, between the Monterey Bay and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuaries, would "[close] the gap between protected and unprotected areas" and help preserve "this extraordinary offshore environment."

NOAA will evaluate the nomination to determine if it provides information sufficient for the agency to proceed with a review based on criteria for significance and management.



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 84
SAN LUIS OBISPO
CA 93401

Santa Lucian
Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club
P. O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406





photo:Kevin Walsh

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

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

Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!**



My Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone # _____
email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club
Please charge my MasterCard Visa AMEX

Exp. Date ____/____/____
Cardholder Name _____
Card Number _____

Membership Categories INDIVIDUAL JOINT
INTRODUCTORY \$25
REGULAR \$39 \$47

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

Just Paint It Green

Local project advocates don't seem to grasp the meaning of environmental review

Locally, we are currently witnessing three different approaches to the project of environmental denial -- an exercise engaged in for the purpose of deflecting and minimizing the idea that a development project may have impacts on the environment that should be taken seriously.

When the County Planning Department completed its environmental review of the Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry, it found the project would inflict significant and unavoidable impacts on the land, air, habitat, and the quality of life for residents of the town of Santa Margarita. "Significant and unavoidable" is the classification reserved under state law for environmental impacts that no mitigation measures or permit conditions will suffice to eliminate or adequately reduce. Planning staff determined the project presented a long list of these, and recommended denial of a permit.

Defenders of the project sought to dismiss or ignore the environmental review in favor of other less than substantive considerations. After planning staff had completed their devastating litany of the project's likely impacts on the community, the permit applicant stepped up to the microphone and said "our family rides bikes around town." This sums up the nature of this approach.

A second approach has been displayed by defenders of the Phillips 66 Santa Maria refinery rail spur project. In this approach, the environmental review is not just to be ignored, but to be represented as saying the opposite of what it says.

The January 1 *New Times* reported that Phillips 66 officials agreed that "residents have raised legitimate concerns about environmental impacts (noise, lights, emissions and the potential for spills), but they opined that such impacts will be adequately mitigated wherever they can be."

Furthermore, said refinery mainte-

nance superintendent Jim Anderson, "The draft EIR spells out the ways noise, lights, and particulate emissions can be managed, and with these points taken care of, there is no reason to deny the application."

Setting aside for the moment all that is implied by Mr. Anderson's belief that the Class I: Significant and Unavoidable Impacts of his employer's project on the environment and human health are just "points" to be "taken care of," there is the matter of belief in something that is demonstrably untrue. The EIR tallied five categories of significant, unavoidable impacts on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. These would be the same "particulate emissions" that Mr. Anderson claims "can be managed" and have been "taken care of." (These are in addition to the EIR's identification of the project's significant and unavoidable impacts on biological, cultural and water resources, and from hazardous materials.) And did we mention? Class I impacts cannot be managed or taken care of. That's what "significant and unavoidable" means. It is outside the category of impacts that "will be adequately mitigated wherever they can be." Anderson's claim is based on a document that directly contradicts his claim.

And finally, for the defenders of Cambria's "emergency" water project, because their new desalination plant and brine disposal pit was constructed in environmentally sensitive habitat with no environmental review, there is nothing to either ignore or misinterpret. This has led to yet another approach to the waving away of environmental analysis. Let's call it the future unconditional tense: someday in the future, when an environmental

PAINT IT continued on page 10

Change of Address?

Mail changes to:

Sierra Club
85 Second St., 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105-3441

or e-mail:

address.changes@sierraclub.org

Update

Coffee Time in Morro Bay



Last May, after a twenty-minute presentation by a group of determined Morro Bay residents, the Regional Water Quality Control Board was persuaded to ask the City to test for wastewater contamination in Morro Basin wells. (See "Coffee Time in Morro Bay," June 2014). At issue: Is nitrate contamination of the wells coming from fertilizer washing down from upstream agriculture operations, as Water Board staff contended, or from the city's aging and increasingly dilapidated sewer lines, as local activists have been claiming for years?

The City agreed to perform a "caffeine test," as trace amounts of caffeine in the wells would indicate that wastewater, not just agricultural runoff, is a factor in the contamination of the city's well water. But as an indicator of the presence of sewage, wastewater professionals consider the artificial sweetener sucralose, used in Splenda, superior to caffeine as a trace element because testing for caffeine can result in both false positives and false negatives. Sucralose is an extremely hardy compound, not affected by wastewater treatment. Hence it is reliably present in treated effluent, absent in water sources known to be free of effluent, and always found in septic samples.

The well test results, originally expected in September, are now complete. The activists were right: All wells tested within city limits, west of the deteriorating sewer pipes, tested positive for sucralose. Equally telling: there was no sucralose found in the one well tested east of the city, which draws from the same aquifer but is not in proximity to the city's sewer lines.

The City Manager has notified the California Department of Public Health. Local activists first alerted the City to the situation in 2007. The City should now move quickly to implement the long-delayed repairs necessary to correct this contributing factor to Morro Bay's nitrate pollution problem.

Santa Lucian

Andrew Christie
EDITOR sierraclub8@gmail.com

Greg McMillan
Lindi Doud
Linda Seeley
Sandy Simon
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Denny Mynatt
PRINT MEDIA COORDINATOR

The Santa Lucian is published 10 times a year. Articles, environmental information and letters to the editor are welcome. The deadline for each issue is the 13th of the prior month.

send to:

Editor, Santa Lucian
c/o Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club
P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierraclub8@gmail.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

2015 Executive Committee

Michael Jencks (12/15)
CHAIR
Patrick McGibney (12/17)
VICE CHAIR
Linda Seeley (12/17)
SECRETARY
Pat Veasart (12/16)
MEMBER
Lindi Doud (12/17)
MEMBER
Greg McMillan (12/16)
MEMBER
Vacant (12/15)
MEMBER

Greg McMillan
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.

Committee Chairs

Political

Michael Jencks

Conservation

Sue Harvey

Development

Greg McMillan

Nuclear Power Task Force

Rochelle Becker beckers@thegrid.net
Linda Seeley lindaseeley@gmail.com

Climate Change Task Force

Heidi Harmon sacredheart9395@yahoo.com

Intergenerational Task Force

Victoria Carranza vcarranza@gmail.com

Other Leaders

CNRCC Delegates

Linda Seeley, alt: Greg McMillan
John Burdett

Calendar Sales

Bonnie Walters 805-543-7051

Outings

Joe Morris dpj1942@earthlink.net

Canoe/Kayak

open

Webmaster

Monica Tarzier monica@tarzier.org

Trail Guide

Gary Felsman

Chapter Director

Andrew Christie
805-543-8717
sierraclub8@gmail.com

Coordinator

Kim Ramos, Admin and Development
kimramos@yahoo.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

**Office hours Monday-Friday,
1 p.m. - 7 p.m., 974 Santa Rosa
Street, San Luis Obispo**

Printed by University Graphic Systems
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Mailing
services courtesy of Silver Streaks.

Visit us on the Web

www.santalucia.
sierraclub.org



Now on
Facebook

search: "Santa Lucia"
and become our friend!

Outings, events, and more!

A Giant Step Toward 100% Clean Energy in California

by Evan Gillespie, Director, Sierra Club My Generation Campaign
from Sierra Club Compass, Jan. 9, 2015

Governor Brown began his fourth term with a vision for how California will continue to advance clean energy and fight climate disruption over the next 15 years. “California has the most far-reaching environmental laws of any state and the most integrated policy to deal with climate change of any political jurisdiction in the Western Hemisphere,” Brown said, but “these efforts, impressive though they are, are not enough” to stave off the worst impacts of climate disruption. And with that, he laid out three straightforward goals that will move the state climate agenda forward, all to be achieved by 2030:

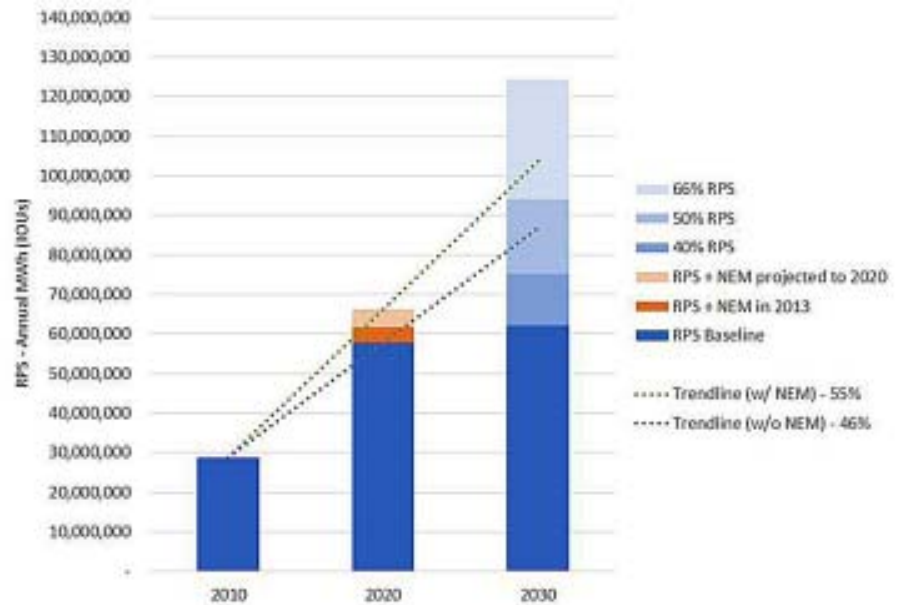
- Increase the state’s share of clean energy to 50%
- Slash oil use from cars and trucks by up to 50%
- Double the efficiency of existing

buildings and make heating fuels cleaner.

These are extraordinary goals, and together they outline how California will act on climate and transform both how we power our homes and businesses and how we move around the state in the coming decade and beyond.

Governor Brown gave more details about his vision:

“I envision a wide range of initiatives: more distributed power, expanded rooftop solar, micro-grids, an energy imbalance market, battery storage, the full integration of information technology and electrical distribution and millions of electric and low-carbon vehicles. How we achieve these goals and at what pace will take great thought and imagination mixed with pragmatic caution. It will require enormous innovation, research and



investment. And we will need active collaboration at every stage with our scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, businesses and officials at all levels.”

This expansive vision will require engagement with the growing and diverse movement that has sprung up around climate change. This vision has the potential to build a more equitable and just economy. The new coalitions and partnerships developed around clean energy, good careers, clean air, and environmental justice in recent years across California will need to grow if we’re to achieve the Governor’s vision. There are still many details to be filled in around the Governor’s new plan, but in thinking about the clean energy goal in particular over the last few days, there are a few take-aways I keep circling back to.

We can do this. In fact, we’re already on our way. We currently have momentum that can take us to 50% renewable energy and beyond before 2030. To start with, let’s look at California’s progress towards the state’s current requirement of 33% renewable energy by 2020. California utilities are either on track or ahead of schedule to meet the current goal, and by 2020 we’ll have doubled our use of clean energy during the previous decade. Individual utilities are going even further. SDG&E announced last summer they’d achieve the state mandated 33% by 2020 six years early, by the end of 2014. Our review of PG&E and SCE’s renewable energy procurement efforts indicates they have enough projects in the pipeline to surpass 33% by 2020, too. Not factored in here yet is the explosive growth of rooftop solar, thanks to net-metering and the California Solar Initiative. When even assuming net-metering growth levels off in the next few years, its contribution will boost California’s share of clean energy to just shy of 40% by 2020. See the above chart.

What you see in this chart is that rooftop solar is making significant contributions to developing clean energy in California on top of the other statewide goals.

We plotted two simple trendlines to get a sense of where existing momentum would carry the state’s clean energy development over the next 15 years. When you couple our rooftop solar program (net-metering, or “NEM”) with the state’s renewable portfolio mandate, we’re on track to

reach 55% by 2030. Further cost declines, improvements in technology, and greater urgency to reduce emissions should propel faster expansion too. Rooftop solar will help lead the transition towards 100%, so it was great to see local clean energy play a starring role in the Governor’s address, from the references to microgrids and distributed energy to rooftop solar, greater efficiency and energy storage. Beyond providing cost-effective clean energy, localizing our energy system could help spur job and economic growth in the most economically disadvantaged communities.

We now have much needed clarity for long term planning. For the last few years, utility resource planning and a whole host of utility planning processes have been stunted by the lack of clarity about what happens to clean energy demand after 2020. Utilities plan on ten to twenty year time horizons, and where new generation after 2020 was required, conventional fossil fuels had been filling the gap, both when it comes to planning and to actual procurement decisions. Organizations like the California Environmental Justice Alliance and Sierra Club have argued that we cannot continue to increase reliance on gas plants, but without guidance from the Governor or legislature, that’s exactly what was happening.

Now that’s all changing. With greater clarity, we can plan the build out from 33% to 50% clean energy. A number of studies in recent years have noted some of the challenges as renewables shift to the core of our electric system. A 2013 study by E3 ran down some of the major barriers and concluded that a 50% goal is achievable.

The biggest question remains what role natural gas plants will play during the next fifteen years. For years, the gas industry has argued that gas plants are integral to backing up renewables and filling in the gaps as wind and solar ebb and flow. This argument is deeply problematic. Gas plants are often built in low-income communities of color, communities that suffer from some of the worst air quality in the country. One of the biggest untold stories about Governor Brown’s plan is the hugely positive impact it will have on public health. The salience of this issue has already galvanized many young activists and brought new voices



Conversations That Matter

By Victoria Carranza, Chapter Intergenerational Task Force Chair

Think of a time in your life where you had a good connection with someone from another generation. What made it work? What is one thing you wished you didn’t hear from the other generations? How can we be wiser together?

The richness of these questions was magnified at Dancing Deer Farm in Templeton on January 18 as breaking bread commenced with a group of seventy folks from different ages, stages, and places in California. Twenty elders from the San Luis Obispo County community were invited to be a part of an intergenerational experience with the California Student Sustainability Coalition (CSSC), a non-profit organization that supports and connects students from across California to help them transform their educational institutions into models of sustainability.

The group participated in a social technology called World Café. Over

fresh brewed tea, David Shaw, facilitator for Central Coast Bioneers’ World Café, facilitated a “Critical Conversation on Intergenerational Activism” with our group exploring the subject of lessons we can learn from each other and harvesting collective thoughts.

This is the “Wiser Together” component of World Café, in which a multi-generational team designs and hosts a powerful conversation — intentionally inviting people across generations to participate. This serves as a point of entry for people to “experience the power of multi-generational interaction and acts as a catalyst for new thinking and inspired, collaborative action,” per the World Café website.

The lessons learned would be superficial if stated in a short sentence within this brief write up. This excerpt is intended to leave the reader curious about how they can value connecting

Who's Got the Power?



Here's what we want Much depends on how the City of SLO weighs the choice between good and bad ideas in its 2015-17 financial plan, and not just for the City of SLO.

On January 13, fresh off the passage of Measure G, renewing its 1/2-cent sales tax increase for eight years, the City of San Luis Obispo held a community forum to gather input for its 2015-17 goal setting and budget process. Seeking citizen feedback on "what you believe are the most important things for the City to accomplish over the next two years," it got more of that feedback than it had ever seen at any such forum, with more than 400 people packing the gym at the Ludwick Community Center.

Quite a lot of them told the City that its top priority should be the creation of a Community Choice energy program.

As we noted in our January issue, this event was of interest to all county residents for three reasons: 1) SLO is the only city in the county with the foresight to have included in its Climate Action Plan a provision for the potential establishment of a Community Choice program, 2) Community Choice can power the transition from dirty to clean energy and slash greenhouse gas emissions like no other program any city or county could adopt, and 3) Community Choice is a financial winner, as wildly successful programs in Marin and Sonoma Counties have shown (see charts).

A Community Choice program in the City of SLO would very likely mean partnerships with the County, which provides for a study of the feasibility of Community Choice in its General Plan, and other cities. It was the best idea on offer at the community forum, along with the ideas of publicly funded elections and allocating greater funding and a higher priority to the acquisition and preservation of natural open space.

Even though SLO's preservation of open space is well known as the key to its rep as the happiest city in America, this has not been designated as a Major City Goal in the City's budgeting process since 2009. B.K. Richard of the SLO Land Conservancy pointed out that since the original 1/2-cent sales tax measure passed in 2006, open space funding levels have never risen above three percent of the City's

annual budget despite overwhelming public support, and the land around the Irish Hills and Reservoir Canyon offer excellent preservation opportunities — not to mention the need to budget for signage, trail maintenance and amenities — should the City see its way clear to giving its natural open space "the support and attention that a crown jewel deserves."

On the same night as the SLO Community Forum, the City of Santa Monica passed a resolution to participate in a South Bay Community Choice feasibility study along with Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach and Torrance.

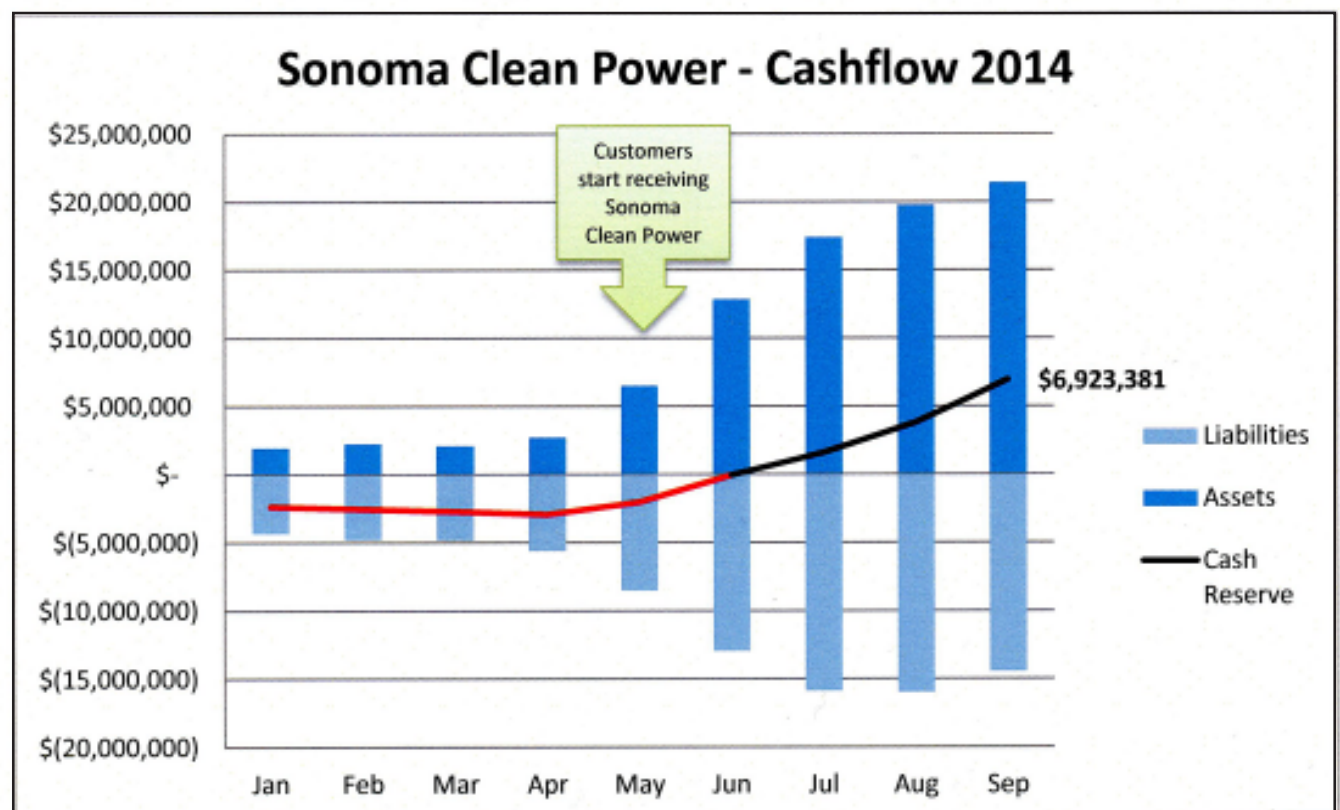
The following evening, Solana Beach passed a resolution of support for Community Choice, allowing San Diego to accelerate the formation of a

POWER continued on next page

For contrast, here's a bad idea

Along with many good ideas on setting goals and spending Measure G funds that SLO Community Forum attendees offered to the City Council, a very bad idea was also on offer, courtesy of a small coterie of developers who would like to see the City establish an "investment fund" for infrastructure. This would "work like the open space fund," they said, and would allow the City to "team up" with developers -- i.e. the City would pay for some of the infrastructure necessitated by development projects rather than making developers responsible for paying those costs in the form of much hated development impact fees.

This is the latest chapter in the development community's tireless quest to make the public bear the cost of new development, lowering developers' costs and raising yours. Eagerly agreeing with this concept, a Chevron executive argued against the multinational having to pay more than its "fair share" of the costs of its Tank Farm Road development, specifically complaining that his giant corporation is being required to provide bike trails as a public amenity of the project — a project from which it will reap millions of dollars in private profit. (For more on what the concept of "fair share" hath wrought, see Atascadero's Wal-Mart cost overrun debacle.) Chevron urged the City to "take the opportunity" to use public funds to mitigate the impacts of its project.



Source: Financial Statements, Sonoma Clean Power Authority, sonomacleanpower.org. Available upon request.

Not too shabby Five months after it started providing power to customers, Sonoma's Community Choice energy program was operating in the black and had nearly \$7 million to invest in local clean energy projects and programs as a greener, competitively priced alternative to PG&E, averaging 5% lower rates and 30% lower carbon emissions.



Here's why we want it Eric Veium of SLO Clean Energy's leadership team laid out the benefits of Community Choice for the City Council, staff and community forum attendees.

Power

continued from facing page

Community Choice program.

One month previously, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced support for Community Choice Aggregation of electricity service by the state's municipalities as a platform for "deployment of renewable generation, energy efficiency programs, home energy management, and other distributed energy resources."

Community Choice has caught fire, and communities statewide are grasping what it can do. Marin County residents in Marin's Clean Energy Community Choice program typically pay \$3.06 per month less than a PG&E customer. An average commercial customer pays \$6.46 less than a PG&E customer. And if Marin Clean Energy customers wish to pay an extra penny per kilowatt hour — about \$5 per month for the average residential customer — they can get electricity from 100 percent renewable sources.

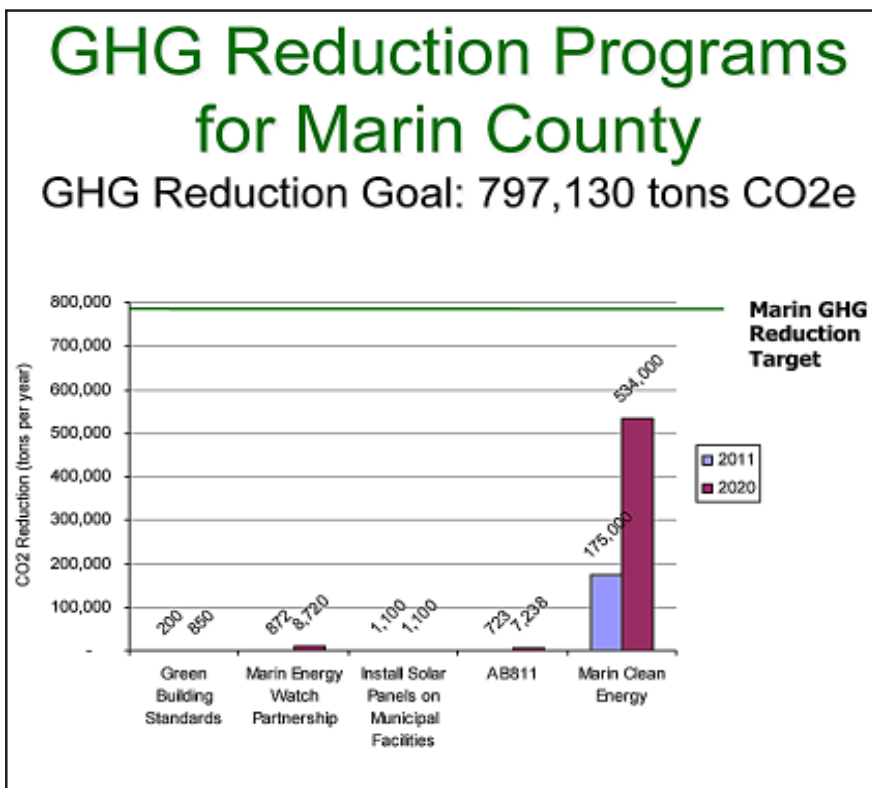
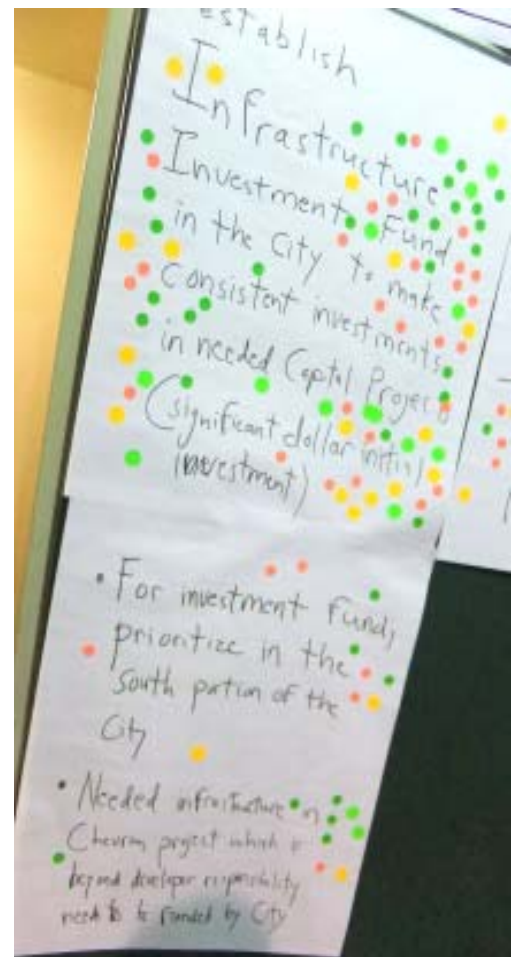
On January 24, the SLO City Council held another goal-setting workshop, at which Councilmembers voted to restore Open Space Preservation to the status of a Major City Goal. Community Choice did not make the cut. Per the schedule for its budget process, the City will hold several public budget workshops, followed by the adoption of a budget on June 23.

Memo to the Council: To set a clear course for the future, heed the results of your January 13 community forum. Say "yes" to supporting Community Choice, and "no" to helping private developers cut costs and increase profits by making them a gift of public funds.



Yea & nay Attendees at the SLO goal-setting community forum were issued a supply of green and gold adhesive dots, which they affixed to suggestions made in public testimony as recorded on flip chart sheets around the room. A green dot was a vote for major city goal; a gold dot was a vote for the expenditure of Measure G funds. The public benefits of Community Choice (top) earned it much love, especially from Sierra Club members in attendance. Total tally: 387 dots.

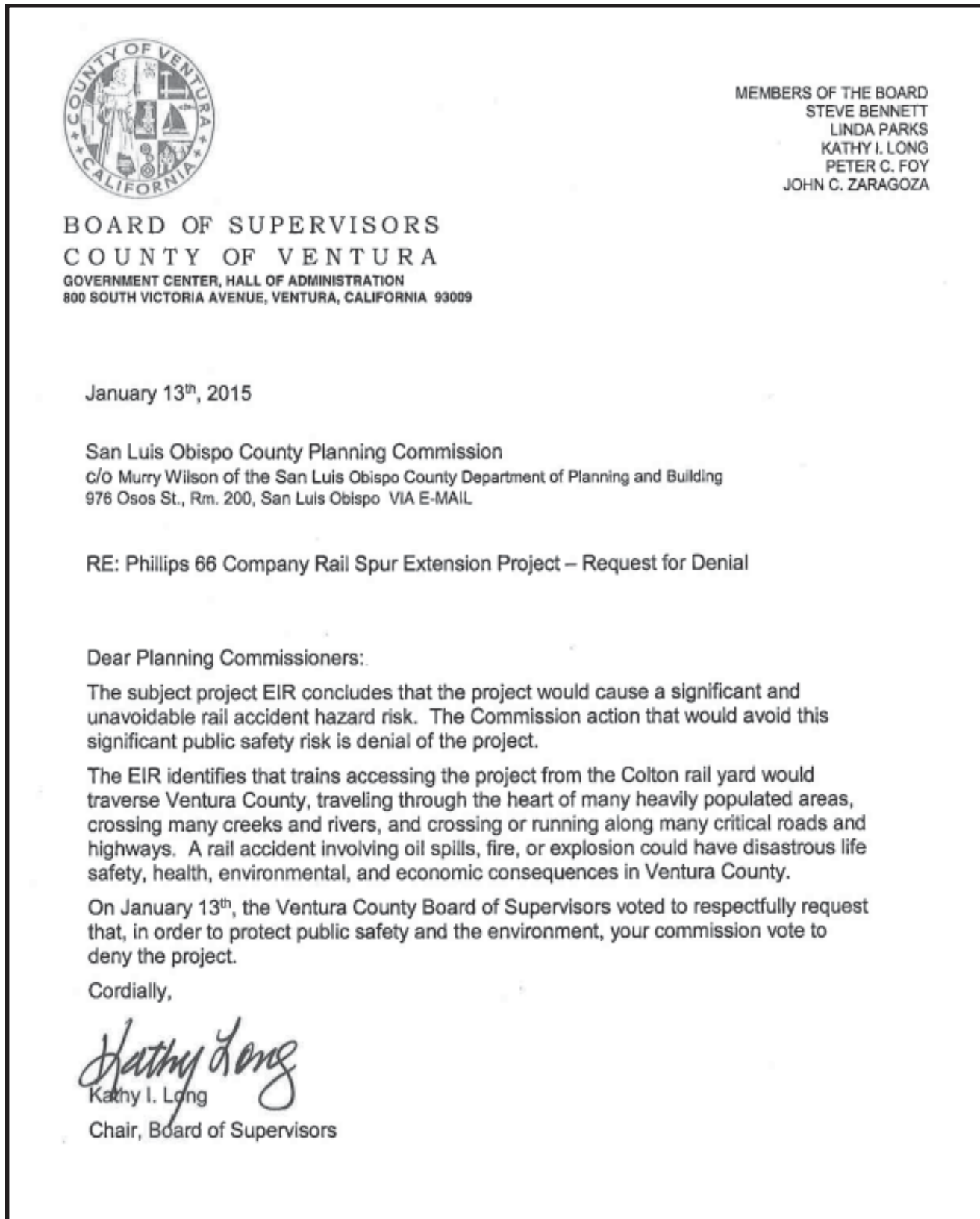
By contrast, the idea of an "investment fund" that would subsidize the public infrastructure costs for private development (right) did not appear to be what folks had in mind when they voted to raise their taxes last November. A small flurry of support for "Infrastructure Investment Fund [for] needed Capital Projects" (support that can be attributed to the sure,-that-looks-like-a-good-idea phenomenon), dropped off markedly as the flip chart sheets proceeded downward, until reaching the somewhat more candidly worded "Needed infrastructure in Chevron project which is beyond developer responsibility. Need to be funded by City" (9 dots).



Also not too shabby In its first year of operation, Marin County's Community Choice program far outpaced other policies and programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and is on track to eclipse them completely.

Dear SLO Planning Commissioners...

The rest of the state would like to have a word



Opposition to the Phillips 66 Santa Maria refinery rail spur project continues to mount.

On January 13, Ventura County, the City of Oxnard and the City of San Jose became the latest jurisdictions to oppose the proposed oil train off-loading facility in Nipomo. All sent letters like the one at left to the SLO County Planning Commission.

The day before, the City of Moorpark did the same, noting that “although the EIR for this project identifies the risk of derailment resulting in a spill as small, the impacts could be devastating on adjacent land areas,” including “homes, schools, parks, businesses...located adjacent to the Union Pacific tracks.”

Local governments along the rail route affected by the Phillips 66 project that have previously submitted letters or passed resolutions against crude-by-rail include Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, Martinez and Davis. More than 22,000 individuals from across California have also voiced opposition to the project.

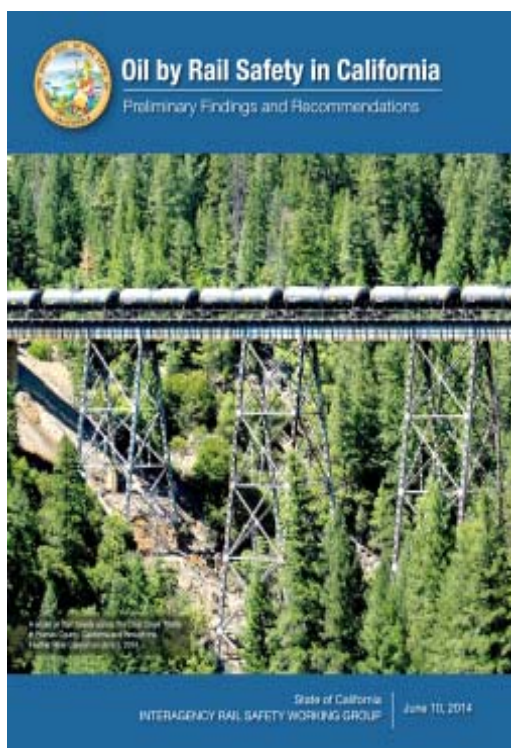
If approved, the facility would bring mile-long oil trains carrying 2.5 million gallons of crude nearly every day through densely populated centers.

“The Phillips 66 rail project is a disaster waiting to happen,” said Valerie Love with the Center for Biological Diversity. “It’s heartening to see so many speaking out against this facility. It’s clear that people recognize the danger of this plan and want it stopped in its tracks.”

Ventura County and the growing number of city councils are “speaking for the five million Californians who live in the oil train blast zone when they say that the Phillips 66 expansion plan is dangerous and unnecessary,” said Ethan Buckner with ForestEthics.

Oil trains have become an increasing concern to cities and towns along the rail routes, as oil train traffic in the U.S. has increased over four thousand percent since 2008. Following this trend, there has been a steep rise in derailments, spills and explosions, with more oil spilled in rail accidents in 2013 than in the previous four decades.

Tied to the Tracks



Last June, the California Interagency Rail Safety Working Group released its report on *Oil by Rail Safety in California*.

Among its more arresting findings:

- In addition to the oil train derailment in Quebec that killed 47 people and incinerated half the town of Lac-Mégantic, there were eight major accidents in 2013 and 2014.
- In California, oil trains “will travel through some of the state’s most densely populated areas, as well as some of the most sensitive ecological areas, since rail lines frequently operate near or over rivers and other sensitive waterways in the state.”
- “High hazard areas for derailments are primarily

located in the mountains, with at least one such site along every rail route into California. Some high hazard areas are also located in more urban areas, such as in the San Bernardino-Riverside and San Luis Obispo regions. Overall, high hazard areas represent an estimated 2% of track and 18% of the derailments that have occurred. This means that 82% of derailments have occurred in a wide range of other locations. The high hazard areas do not reflect the locations of other types of rail accidents (e.g., collisions). Therefore, while the highlighted areas are important, they are not the only sites where accidents may occur.”

- “Areas of vulnerable natural resources are located throughout the state, including in urban areas. A rail accident almost anywhere in California would place waterways and sensitive ecosystems at risk. The high hazard areas for derailments are generally located in areas with high natural resources vulnerability and nearby

waterways....”

- In addition to being identified as a High Hazard Area, SLO has only non-certified hazmat teams -- “local teams that have not applied to be certified by the state as meeting certain levels of training and equipment.”
- “While the federal actions taken to date are significant, they do not go far enough to address the risks of increased oil by rail transport. The state should press both the federal government and the railroad industry to take additional safety measures. Additionally, the state should strengthen its inspection and enforcement resources, remedy significant gaps in its emergency preparedness and response programs, and provide the public with an interactive map showing potential high risk areas from oil by rail traffic.”
- “Transportation of oil by rail has dramatically increased in recent years and will likely continue to increase in



Fast Track: Down to the Wire

Group letter to Congress outlines key threats to public health, climate, and clean energy from fast track trade authority

Congress is contemplating “fast track” legislation that would enable the president to push through flawed international trade agreements at the expense of the environment, public health, and communities.

In a January 21 letter to Congress, the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, League of Conservation Voters and 41 other environmental groups urged members to reject forthcoming “fast track” legislation and instead develop a system for negotiating and implementing trade pacts that gives greater congressional and public oversight to trade negotiations, which today are shrouded in secrecy.

“Trade should be done right — not just fast — to protect our families and neighbors from pollution and climate disruption. Fast tracking flawed trade pacts is a deal-breaker,” said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club’s executive director. “With fast track, we would be trading away clean air, clean water, and safe communities.”

The Obama Administration has urged Congress to pass a bill that would give the President fast-track authority for international trade deals. If introduced and approved, fast track would empower the President to send already-signed trade agreements to Congress for straight up-or-down votes with limited floor debate and no amendments, severely limiting Congressional influence over the world’s largest-ever

international trade deals, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, a deal negotiated in secret between the U.S. and 11 Pacific Rim countries.

“Congress shouldn’t give a fast lane to trade pacts that don’t protect our public health and climate. These trade bills would give foreign corporations and governments the right to challenge our bedrock protections for clean air, safe drinking water, healthy food and proper chemical safeguards,” said Peter Lehner, the Natural Resources Defense Council’s executive director. “We shouldn’t trade away our sovereignty. We need trade bills that tackle the 21st-century environmental challenges, not take us backwards.”

In his January 20 State of the Union address, President Obama encouraged Congress to pass fast-track legislation. However, fast track has broad opposition, including key Members of Congress, labor unions, faith-based groups, consumer safety advocates, and environmental organizations including the 44 signatories of the January 21 letter.

Signers include: 350.org * Athens County (OH) Fracking Action Network * Berks Gas Truth * Catskill Mountainkeeper * Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy * Center for Biological Diversity * Center for International Environmental Law * Chesapeake Climate Action Network * Clean Economy Coalition

of the Coastal Bend * Clean Water Action * The Delaware Riverkeeper * Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * Earthworks * Energy Action Coalition * Environmental Action * Environmental Health Coalition * Environmental Investigation Agency * Food & Water Watch * Friends of the Earth * Friends of Merrymeeting Bay * Greenpeace USA * Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy * Institute for Policy Studies, Climate Policy Program * League of Conservation Voters * Natural Resources Defense Council * Oil Change International * Olympic Climate Action * Partnership for Policy

Integrity * People Demanding Action * PODER (People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources) * Progressive Democrats of America * Progressive Democrats of America Maryland * Rainforest Action Network * Safe Climate Campaign * Sierra Club * Southern Oregon Climate Action Now * Sustain US * Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition * The Texas Drought Project * Union of Concerned Scientists, Center for Science and Democracy * U.S. Climate Plan * Washington Environmental Council * Wild Earth Guardians.

Go here to view the letter: sc.org/EnvirosAgainstFastTrack

TAKE ACTION

Don’t Trade Away Climate Progress. Tell Congress to say NO to Fast Track! Secret trade negotiations between the United States and 11 other countries in the Trans-Pacific Partnership are nearing an end. If an agreement is reached, this massive NAFTA-on-steroids trade deal would have huge climate implications. Leaked texts and news reports show that the TPP would weaken our environmental standards, open the floodgates to more fracking, and empower corporations to attack climate policies in secret trade tribunals. Since the public has been left in the dark, we’re counting on environmental champions in Congress to stand up for us. Unfortunately, some key leaders in both parties are seeking “fast track” legislation that would rush the TPP through Congress without any meaningful oversight. We must act quickly to ensure that climate ruin isn’t the cost we pay in the mad rush to approve trade deals.

Take a stand for responsible trade: Go to www.sierraclub.org/trade to tell your representatives in Congress to oppose fast track! Complete the form, personalize your message if you wish, and click the Send Your Message button.



Dunes Day at the Coastal Commission

The California Coastal Commission will meet in Pismo Beach on February 11-13. On their agenda for Wednesday, February 11, for the first time in eight years: A review of the Coastal Development Permit that the Commission issued to the California Department of Parks and Recreation for the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA).

The Commission will assess the

“overall effectiveness of methods being used to manage vehicle impacts in relation to coastal resources at OSDVRA.”

Coastal dunes are the most fragile wildlife habitat in the United States, and State Parks has yet to come up with a Habitat Conservation Plan for the OSDVRA that it has been promis-

DUNES continued on page 9

Correcting the Record on GMOs for *The Tribune*

By Jesse Arnold

The November 22, 2014, issue of *The Tribune* published an article by David Sneed titled, “What you need to know about genetically modified crops.”

Early in the article, Sneed wrote that GMO crops are engineered to “resist insects and improve nutrition.”

Ironically, as far as resisting insects goes, insects have been developing resistance to the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) toxin that is engineered into certain genetically modified crops. The number-one trait used in GMO crops, unmentioned in the *Tribune*’s story, is herbicide resistance. The first GMO crop approved for use in the U.S. was a soybean engineered to resist the Monsanto herbicide Roundup. The farmer can spray the whole crop and kill the weeds, but the soybeans survive. Monsanto calls these crops Roundup Ready. About 70% of U.S. GMO crops use some form of an herbicide resistance trait.

Similar to insects developing resistance to the Bt toxin in certain GMO crops, the use of Roundup Ready crops has led to an increased use of Roundup herbicide and the emergence of Roundup-resistant weeds, leading to the use of more toxic herbicides, such as 2,4-D.

The heavy use of Roundup has decimated milkweed — the only food source for Monarch butterfly larvae. The result has been a crash in the Monarch butterfly population. Monarchs are necessary pollinators for many flowers that honeybees and other insects cannot pollinate.

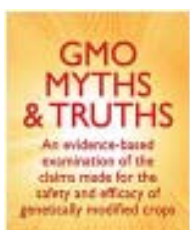
As for improving nutrition, there is no GMO crop grown in the U.S. that does anything to improve nutrition. The only crop in the world designed to do so, golden rice, is in overseas field trials and not commercially available.

A month before Sneed’s story appeared, a *Tribune* Biz Buzz Extra article reported that two local companies, Bejo Seed and Seminis Seeds (a subsidiary of Monsanto), are successfully developing more nutritious vegetables using traditional plant breeding. Why? Because it is a better, faster and more economical way to get that job done.

Sneed’s article quotes Jeff Wong, horticulture and crop science professor at Cal Poly, as saying that “corn, wheat, soybean and canola” are the big four GMO crops in the U.S. But GMO wheat is not grown in the U.S. Overseas customers will not buy it. The same is true for rice. Cotton is the other member of the top four GMO crops in the U.S. Two additional major U.S. crops with GMO varieties that resist Monsanto’s Roundup herbicide are alfalfa and sugar beets.

Finally, Sneed listed Humboldt and Marin Counties as banning the cultivation of GMOs. Mendocino was the first county to ban the growing of GMOs, and Santa Cruz and Trinity Counties also have bans.

For further information, see *GMO Myths and Truths* (www.earthopen.org), an evidence-based examination of the claims made for the safety and efficacy of GMOs. A good subtitle for that study, set beside the *Tribune* article, would be “What you *really* need to know about genetically modified crops.”



The Wet Elephant in the Room

How the County’s water export ordinance slipped into limbo

Surely the most underreported local news story of 2014 was something that was supposed to happen, but didn’t.

On September 9, County planners brought the Board of Supervisors a draft ordinance that would require a permit for the export of groundwater

from the County’s groundwater basins.

The Supervisors made sounds of concern, failed to grasp the corollary threat of groundwater banking via “paper water” – in which an entity would bank its surplus state water allocation in the massive Paso Robles groundwater basin, then withdraw real water – and voted to put off consideration of the ordinance to the end of the year so that planning staff could do more public outreach.

On November 25, with the ordinance due to come up for a hearing the following week, Supervisor Mecham abruptly made a motion to remove it from the agenda altogether and “consider this off calendar,” effectively killing it.

Just before Mecham made his motion, the Board heard from John Wallace, the former administrator of the South County Sanitation District — now undergoing a probe to determine if the lawsuits, violations and Grand Jury finding of a conflict of interest that hit that facility on his watch might indicate some degree of mismanagement. Wallace told the Supervisors he worried about the “extremely long permit processing” in the draft ordinance and the “extremely burdensome” one-year sunset on an export permit.

Suddenly, there was a concern among the board majority about “getting it right” that had not been present two months previously. It was agreed, Supervisor Arnold dissenting, that there was no cause for concern due to the present lack of infrastructure to pipe water out of the county’s groundwater basins. (As the board majority had failed to grasp the export threat in

the banking of paper water, so were they unable to consider that the entities that have been buying up ag land over the Paso basin – thus assuring themselves seats on the board of a future Paso Robles groundwater management district — are fine with the idea of building a hundred million dollars’ worth of infrastructure to secure a billion dollars in profits.)

Mecham cited his concern about “some pretty heavy-duty land use restrictions” implicit in the ordinance, saying “I’m not saying this should go away completely,” as he made the motion to make it go away completely.

Supervisor Arnold was alone in pointedly observing that other counties in the state were “wringing their hands” over their inability to control groundwater exports, and this County has a water problem that “everyone on this dais was calling a crisis situation.” She argued that we should “put something in place that requires us to take a look and require permission to be able to export groundwater. Why can’t we have that?”

Why, indeed?
“After months of work drafting an acceptable ordinance and hours of public testimony in support of the ordinance, two days before Thanksgiving the whole process was essentially dumped after a few words from John Wallace, the owner of an engineering firm with a heavy interest in the design and construction of water projects,” said North County Watch President Sue Harvey. “It was a now-you-see-it, now-you-don’t maneuver worthy of Houdini. It was all over in a few minutes, leaving the public to wonder “What gives?”

Farmland for Lease at City Farm



Central Coast Grown (CCG) has announced fourteen acres of the City Farm–San Luis Obispo are now available for ground lease.

City Farm–San Luis Obispo is part of the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve Open Space owned by the City of San Luis Obispo. CCG maintains a master lease agreement for the site and manages all relations with the city. The Reserve is intended for both agricultural production and education, so the public is occasionally on portions of the Reserve adjacent to the farmland being offered for lease.

This irrigated Class One and Class Two farmland is located within the city along Highway 101 between Madonna and Los Osos Valley Roads. Two acres of the Agricultural Reserve is currently being leased to Green Gold Farms for organic strawberry production. Two additional acres are managed by Central Coast Grown for educational programs and small scale crop production.

CCG is seeking several qualified individuals/organizations motivated to enrich the community through farming on portions of these fourteen acres of land, with between one and ten acres for each farming enterprise proposed. The property has been cover cropped and farmed without chemical inputs for the last six years, and must remain viable for organic certification. The

amount of acreage and length of the lease are negotiable (between 1-10 acres and 1-5 years). The farmland to be leased is intended for row crops, with the possibility for perennial plantings and animal husbandry, and has access to excellent water resources. To find out more or download a lease proposal application, visit the CCG website at www.centralcoastgrown.org.

Fire in the spreadsheet

A personal reflection on the life and legacy of Martin Litton

By Spreck Rosekrans, Executive Director, Restore Hetch Hetchy

Martin Litton passed away on November 30, 2014. From the time he abruptly quit his job as travel editor at Sunset Magazine until his death at age 97, Litton was a passionate, indefatigable defender of rivers and forests in the western United States.

Among other eulogies, Bettina Boxall and Ken Brower have penned excellent tributes to Litton's legacy for the Los Angeles Times and National Geographic respectively. Brower's piece in particular inspired me to reflect on my personal experience with Martin Litton.

Ken Brower wrote that Litton was one of the last of the pioneers who shaped the modern environmental movement. He explained how Litton worked alongside Sierra Club icon David Brower, Ken's father, encouraging conservationists never to compromise and never to back down.

Brower compared Litton's legacy to modern environmental organizations which are "run by MBAs" whose analytical minds have less "fire in the belly" and are too consumed with fundraising and too prone to deal-making -- a statement considerably more discreet than the declaration his father once made that "economics is a form of brain disease."

I met Martin Litton for the first time at a Senate hearing in Washington DC. The subject of the hearing was how the largely unfettered hydropower operations at Glen Canyon Dam were damaging the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. Hydropower was worth



more during the day than at night, so the dam's operators liked to release flow to the river during the day and shut it down at night. This practice threatened endangered fish and exacerbated the erosion of beaches which, due to the dam upstream, were no longer supplied sediment from the Colorado River's annual floods.

My boss, Tom Graff, and I were presenting testimony on behalf of the Environmental Defense Fund. It was my first Senate hearing and I felt I had my facts straight. I'd written a computer program to analyze the alternatives that were under consideration. I'd determined with precision how much the proposed limitations on the river's hourly fluctuations would cost the local utilities as they provided protection to the riparian corridor in the Grand Canyon. I was deep in the proverbial weeds.

When it was Litton's turn to testify, it was clear he knew little about the

various alternatives. All he knew was that Glen Canyon Dam, in addition to flooding more than 200 miles of Glen Canyon upstream, had also stopped the annual deposit of Colorado River silt onto beaches downstream in the Grand Canyon. ("Colorado" in fact means "colored red" and is named for red sandstone soil.)

During Litton's testimony I gestured to Graff that this guy Martin Litton was rather ignorant of what was being proposed. I thought his testimony was diminishing our panel. But Tom was thoroughly enjoying Litton's fiery oratory. He understood that the Senate Committee needed to hear a variety of perspectives on behalf of the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon. I came to realize how right Tom was.

It was a good lesson for me and one I hope I have learned. I do also have fire in my belly for so much of our natural world and especially for Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley.

But we won't restore Hetch Hetchy on passion alone. We need solutions to replace San Francisco's water, drop for drop and hydropower watt for watt. The details do matter. So at Restore Hetch Hetchy, we do have fire in our belly, but we have fire in our spreadsheets, too.

Conversations

continued from page 3

with other generations, speaking authentically, and deeply listening to others.

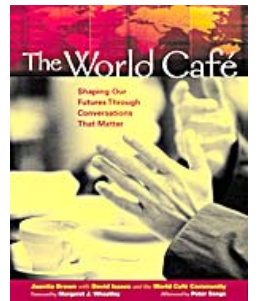
David Georgi, a participating community member and Outings Leader for the Santa Lucia Chapter, said, "The group dynamics were the best I have ever seen. My doctoral program was based on Gestalt therapy and was mostly conducted in facilitated groups. The college student and board member leaders with CSSC did a flawless job of involving everyone and eliciting personal feelings and ideas that were directed at meaningful tasks. Everyone was engaged the whole time. Someone said the movement (we) are in is the largest movement without a name. When I

was at the university in the 70s, the movement was called 'personal development.' The wider term was 'human potential.' [This one] has a more universal scope and may be the only thing that can save the world."

Fernando Flores, a global leader and thinker, wrote "An organization's future is born through webs of human commitments born in webs of human conversation."

What we say and how we listen makes an impact on our world. We are at the source of it all. I am left with gratitude and honor to be a part of this movement.

For more information about The World Café, visit www.theworldcafe.com.



Sierra Club's Silver Shoals Appeal Advances at Coastal Commission



At its January 7 meeting, the California Coastal Commission upheld an appeal of the Coastal Development Permit issued by Pismo Beach to the developer of the South Silver Shoals project. The appeal was filed by the Sierra Club and local residents. (See "Last Look?," Nov./Dec. 2014).

Development plans call for

ten townhouse lots and nine single-family residential lots on the coastal bluff site. The Commission agreed that our appeal raised substantial issues of conformity with the city's Local Coastal Program in the density and scale of the planned development, building heights and the preservation of public views of the sea from Shell Beach Road.

Coastal Commission staff argued that

the design of the proposed project did an adequate job of protecting coastal views and urged Commissioners to deny the appeal.

The Commission rejected staff's recommendation and directed that a "de novo" hearing be scheduled to address remedies for the issues raised in our appeal, which may include a 50-foot wide view corridor and a reduction in the number of structures.

Dunes

continued from page 7

ing for over ten years. Nor has it been able to reduce vehicle-caused hazardous dust levels impacting local residents in two years of trying. So a review is a very good idea.

TAKE ACTION

Show up on February 11 and let the Commission know they could make a few changes in the off-road playground that would greatly enhance the overall effectiveness of methods used to manage impacts in relation to coastal resources. We suggest:

- Prohibiting camping within 100 meters of snowy plover enclosure areas, moving camping sites to back dunes areas with lower biological value than enclosure areas.

- Requiring a study of year-round closure of plover breeding areas, or implementation of year-round closure, to evaluate as an alternative to seasonal closure and determine which method

better ensures viability of the habitat and continuation of the species.

- Prohibiting night riding and the use of high-intensity lights in this activity. Shorebirds, including the threatened and endangered species State Parks is tasked to protect, are known to engage in night foraging. Night riding and the artificial lighting of same is clearly disruptive and a threat to the continuation of these species.

- Closing the Pier Avenue entrance and rerouting traffic through the Grand Ave entrance, creating a pedestrian-friendly, child-safe natural extension of Pismo State Beach.

- Requiring an Environmental Impact Report on the impacts of vehicular recreation on the dunes and a carrying capacity study to determine how many visitors per year in the dunes could be deemed environmentally sustainable.

and especially:

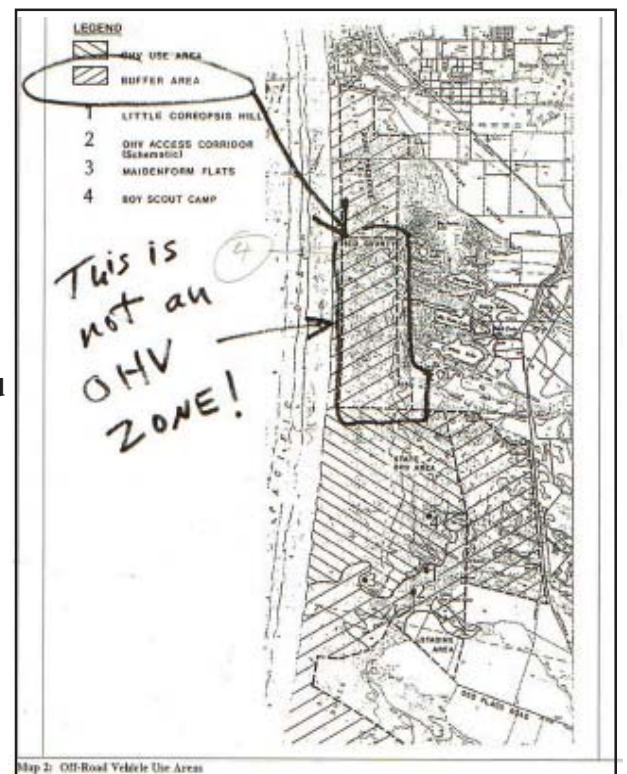
- Require State Parks to update the ODSVRA's General Development Plan to reflect the provisions of the

County's certified Local Coastal Program. The LCP, approved more than thirty years ago, includes the requirement that the La Grande Tract area — a 584-acre parcel in the middle of the park — be designated a buffer between the southern riding area and the Dunes Preserve to the north.

The meeting will be held at:

**The Cliffs Resort
2757 Shell Beach Road
Pismo Beach**

Fill out a speaker slip, available in the back of the room, for Item 14. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. There is no way to know what time this item will be heard, but you should plan on arriving no later than 10 a.m.



Trains

continued from page 1

the future, both nationally and in California, because of the increased oil production from the Bakken shale and other oil fields. Current regulations and industry practices are not adequate given this recent boom. Minimizing the potentially serious risks of transporting oil by rail will require strengthened federal requirements, expedited tank car upgrades, and other proactive measures by industry. It will also require additional resources, planning and preparation, and coordination among local and state agencies."

Worthy of note: The State of California has indeed tried to "press...the railroad industry to take additional safety measures." The month the Interagency Rail Safety Working Group released its report, the Governor signed Senate Bill 861, requiring railroads to submit oil spill response plans for state waterways and demonstrate the ability to pay for a cleanup. The railroads immediately sued to overturn the new law.

TAKE ACTION

As we go to press, the public hearing at which the Phillips 66 project was to be considered by the County Planning Commission -- originally scheduled for last April -- has been delayed again, after being moved from January 29 to February 5, then bumped to sometime in March.

So here's the plan:

Volunteer to read a statement at the hearing, provided courtesy of our colleagues at the Mesa Refinery Watch Group. Each speaker will have limited time at the podium, and the issues of concern around this project are many. Nobody has done a better job of describing them than MRWG. Their statements need to be read into the record of the Planning Commission. Each addresses a different reason why the terminal shouldn't be built.

Contact Mesa Refinery Watch Group Chair Linda Reynolds ASAP at lreynolds151@gmail.com to let her know if you plan to attend, if you're willing to read a statement, or just want to show support by being present. Please include your phone number.

We know it's not possible to make a commitment when the date of the hearing is unknown, and may ultimately conflict with your schedule, so for now just let Linda know if you're interested in attending and/or reading a statement.

"California is slated to see a 25-fold increase in crude oil shipped by rail within the next few years, and...this increase in traffic will pass through many highly populated areas in our state. However, there has not been a corresponding increase in regulatory oversight capacity to address this significant increase in risk to California's citizens."

- California State Senator Lois Wolk



That's not good California's Office of Emergency Services' Rail Risk & Response Map classifies the Union Pacific main line route through SLO County -- primarily the Cuesta Grade -- as a "High Hazard Area - Historic Derailment Clusters," surrounded by "Sensitive Species or Habitat Occurrence Near Rail," intersected in four places by geologic faults, and with only non-certified HazMat teams in the vicinity.

Recent Major Oil Train Accidents:

October 19, 2013 – Gainford, Alberta: 100 people evacuated, 13 cars derailed (9 carrying liquefied petroleum gas and 4 carrying Canadian crude oil)

November 8, 2013 – Aliceville, Alabama: 30 cars carrying North Dakota crude oil derailed

December 30, 2013 – Casselton, North Dakota: 1,400 people evacuated, 34 cars derailed (20 carrying North Dakota crude oil)

January 7, 2014 – Plaster Rock, New Brunswick: 17 cars derailed (5 carrying Canadian crude oil)

January 20, 2014 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 7 cars derailed (6 carrying Canadian crude oil)

February 13, 2014 – Vandergrift, Pennsylvania: 21 cars derailed (19 carrying Canadian crude oil)

April 30, 2014 – Lynchburg, Virginia: 15 cars carrying crude oil derailed

May 9, 2014 – LaSalle, Colorado: 6 cars carrying crude oil derailed.

-- "Oil by Rail Safety in California,"
California Interagency Rail Safety Working Group, June 2014

Clean

continued from page 3

into California's climate activism movement.

We cannot pretend that we're going to meet our climate and clean energy goals on the back of fossil fuels. Rather, planning has to focus on how we use renewables to break our dependence on fossil fuels, including natural gas, and that means investing more in preferred resources like demand response, energy efficiency, energy storage, and other grid services that can help manage the grid with higher and higher levels of renewables. These are the innovations that will let us even out natural variations in wind and solar without the use of natural gas plants. In fact, we need to plan for a system that can manage 100% clean energy.

100% clean energy is closer than you think. At some point in the next decade, California could have enough clean energy available to run its electric grid entirely on clean energy for periods of the day. Planning for our first 100% clean energy moment is essential, and something the CPUC needs to take up in earnest now that there's greater certainty about the state's direction on clean energy. The first moment will likely come on a cool, sunny spring weekend, when solar generation is high and energy demand is low, when our grid may be producing more solar energy than we actually have demand for. This could actually be quite a headache (to say the least) for grid operators, and we must begin planning for these 100% clean energy moments, as they will become increasingly common in the years ahead. The E3 study mentioned earlier dives into this in detail, but I'd strongly recommend reading a joint filing by Union of Concerned Scientists and Sierra Club to the California Public Utilities Commission that explored several solutions ("Opening Testimony of Dr. Jimmy Nelson..." PUC, Sept. 24, 2014).

This is just the beginning. There are many pathways to achieving the Governor's goal. Which particular path California takes means everything for how quickly we phase out fossil fuels and address climate change, and how Californians benefit from the transition to clean energy.



Paint It

continued from page 2

review is conducted to assess, after the fact, the impacts that development has had, it will show that everything is fine.

"Cambrians for Water" (as distinct, presumably, from Cambrians Against Water) has stated "we believe that all issues are addressed, including the evaporation pond, potential impact on wildlife and other environmental matters now under review...." And for good measure: "We believe that if wildlife and habitats would be impacted, those effects can be reasonably mitigated. In fact, by infusing fresh water into San Simeon Creek aquifer, it would enhance that ecosystem."

Note the mix of past and present tense. Even though environmental matters are now under review (or, more

accurately, may be under review someday) they somehow have already been "addressed." This claim would surprise the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Parks, and California Coastal Commission, from whom the Cambria CSD's cursory environmental documentation of its emergency water project evoked such responses as "insufficiently identifies the project's expected adverse effects...", "does not identify or evaluate potential impacts to wetlands...", "does not provide sufficient technical details necessary to provide comments on the pond design...", "cannot ensure protection...", "lacks evidence...", "this is not appropriate...", and so on, at length.

When conducted, the project's cur-

rently nonexistent environmental review might show that infusing fresh water into the aquifer could provide an environmental benefit that is not canceled out by the deliberate inducement of seawater intrusion into the aquifer to obtain enough salt water to desalinate and infuse into San Simeon Creek. But without that analysis, this is a confident statement that depends on the omission of an impact. (It also moot, as the



proposal to infuse water into the aquifer was omitted from the project's Water Board permit.)

For the defenders of indefensible projects, it seems to come down to a matter of biology versus public relations, desire versus consequence, and wishful thinking versus reality.

The correction they all require comes from Starhawk, well-known global justice activist, educator and organizer. She puts it this way:

The environment is not an afterthought: it's the ground of economy, security and survival. Environmental protection, environmental justice and regeneration must be our top priorities, because they are the only sound foundation for every other endeavor.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **February 16**. 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

Losing Sleep and Waking Up Worried?

For confidential professional help, call

Jill Denton, LMFT
Experienced Trauma & Anxiety Therapist

805-534-1101
www.accesspt.com
Serving our community since 1978

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING



NATURAL INVESTMENTS LLC

Financial Advisor
SCOTT SECREST AAMS®
(805) 235-3031

San Luis Obispo, California
www.naturalinvesting.com

Fee-only Sustainable Investment Advice

Natural Investments, LLC
An investment adviser registered with the SEC

slosolstice.com

green directory



Be smart... be green!
CONTACT us... to be SEEN!
ph: 805-473-5064 or email: Solstice222@aol.com

Virginia Perry Souza, CIMA®
*Senior Vice President
Certified Wealth Strategist*

Wealth Management
2005 S Broadway
Santa Maria, CA 93454

tel 805 928 4311
direct 805 347 4544
fax 805 925 1315
toll free 800 659 4311
CA Insurance Lic. # 0683508

Morgan Stanley

virginia.souza@morganstanley.com

LAW OFFICE OF TAREN COLLINS

WILLS & TRUSTS
ESTATE PLANNING

LAND USE & PLANNING
TRIALS CONTRACTS




TAREN COLLINS
Attorney at Law
(805) 773-0233
coastlaw@gmail.com
P.O. Box 3063
Shell Beach, CA 93448

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.

Contact:
John Calaway
Director of Gift Planning at
(415) 977-5639 or e-mail:
planned.giving@sierraclub.org




Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

**CYNTHIA HAWLEY
ATTORNEY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
LAND USE
CIVIL LITIGATION**

**P.O. Box 29 Cambria California 93428
Phone 805-927-5102 Fax 805-927-5220**

FLYING M FARM PRODUCTS




FROM THE RED HILLS

**Current Crop - Grass Fed Beef
Estate Grown Extra Virgin Olive Oil**
Available Now-Delivery Available
Please Get in Touch For More Information
Greg and Linda McMillan

805-238-4820 greg@flyingment.com

USE IN AND FOR GOOD HEALTH




Volumes of Pleasure Bookshoppie

A General Bookstore Specifically for Thinkers

Carroll Leslie & Barbara Strauss
BOOKSELLERS

1016 Los Osos Valley Rd. Suite 100
Los Osos, California 93402 (805) 528-5565

LAW OFFICES OF BABAK NAFICY
Babak Naficy - Attorney at Law



1504 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

ph: 805.593.0926 - fax: 805.593.0946
babaknaficy@sbcglobal.net

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.

Sun., Feb. 1st, 9 a.m. Lopez Lake Bird and Plant Walk. Four-mile hike, 200 ft. gain, co-led by Audubon and Calif. Native Plant Society leaders, to view waterfowl and early spring wildflowers. Option to continue hike to top of Duna Vista lookout. Bring water, snacks, hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, and dress in layers for changing weather. From Arroyo Grande, follow signs toward Lopez Lake. After crossing the dam, but before entering Lopez Lake County Park, turn right on High Mountain Rd, continuing for .8 mile and turning left on Upper Lopez Canyon Rd. Then proceed 3.6 miles to the old entrance of the Boy Scout Camp (now closed) and park on road side. Restrooms available; no fee area. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com. Rain or threat of rain cancels.

Sun., Feb. 8th, 11 a.m. Canoe/Kayak on Morro Bay. Group canoe or kayak trip across Morro Bay from Los Osos. We will adventure across the Bay to land at Morro Bay State Park for a one-mile walk along the dunes, with time to relax or beach comb, then head back same way. Duration about 4 hrs. BYOB (boat), snacks, water, and life jacket. To meet, park off Pasadena Dr. between Baywood Way and Santa Ysabel Ave. Confirm a few days in advance with Leader: Vicki Marchenko, 528-5567 or vmarchenko57@gmail.com.

Fri.-Sat, Feb. 13th-14th. S. Nevada Valentine's Day Service Trip. Give our public lands a valentine by working with the BLM Las Vegas office and Friends of Nevada Wilderness on the 14th to enhance wilderness in one of the southern Nevada BLM wildernesses. Sociable campout Friday night. For more details and sign up, contact Leader: Vicky Hoover, 415-977-5527 or vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org. CA/NV Wilderness Committee.

Sat., Feb. 14th, 8:30 a.m. Salmon Creek to Ragged Point Hike. This diverse trek will take us through

shaded canyons, open meadows, a ridge with coastal views, and chaparral-covered slopes. It is a strenuous 10-mile, 3000 ft. elevation gain, hike. Bring lunch, water, and sturdy hiking shoes. Poison oak will be present along the trail. A car shuttle will be used. Meet at the Washburn Day Use Area near San Simeon State Park off Hwy 1, north of Cambria. Contact Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317, for further info or for rescheduling if there is a chance of rain.

Sun., Feb. 15th, 10 a.m. Johnson Ranch Trekking-Pole Hike. "Pole-cats" is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes that model the benefits of using trekking poles effectively. This walk is 2 miles long plus 600 ft. elevation gain. Meet near the entrance of the Johnson Ranch trailheads at the corner of Higuera and Ontario Sts. Need to confirm you are coming beforehand with Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or thegardendude@me.com.

Sun., Feb. 22nd, 9 a.m. Coon Creek 2 Years After the Burn. Take a walk in Montana de Oro State Park (4 miles, 500 ft. elevation gain) for a rare opportunity to see chaparral and riparian plant communities rejuvenate after both a period of low rainfall and the blackened void created by the 2012 fire. Many species expected to be in bloom. Meet at the Coon Creek parking area at south end of the paved road at Montana de Oro SP. Duration about 3 hrs. Bring water, snacks, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat, and jacket. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Sun., Feb. 22nd, 2 p.m. Historic Walk of San Luis Obispo: The Post-War Rebirth Years. Imagine SLO before its tree-lined streets, the Mission Plaza, and Farmer's Market. How did this unremarkable little town after World War II become the dynamic and attractive place it is today? Find out and more on a guided stroll past stores, civic buildings, and San Luis Creek to

follow the changes in city life from the late forties to its transformation in the seventies. Duration about 1 1/2 hrs. Meet at the corner of Santa Rosa and Pacific Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sat., Feb. 28th, 8 a.m. High Mountain Rd. to Condor Lookout Hike. Moderately strenuous, out-and-back 10-mile hike past wildflower meadows, chaparral, creek, and mountain peaks with beautiful vistas to the condo lookout station atop High Mt. Peak. Option to go part way and turn back early. Bring water, sun protection, snacks, dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes and binoculars are useful to spot a condor! Directions: From Arroyo Grande, follow signs toward Lopez Lake. After crossing the dam but before entering Lopez Lake County Park, turn right on High Mountain Rd for 12.6 miles, (bearing right on Upper Lopez Rd. to stay on High Mt.). You will reach a second gate, parking area, and trailhead. High Mt. Rd. is easy on all cars until this spot—no need for a four-wheel drive. A second option is to meet at the Ridge Trail staging area, just past the upper Lopez Canyon/High Mt. Rd junction at 7:30 to carpool in. For more info, contact Leader: Andrea Lopez at 934-2792 or kenya683@msn.com. Rain or serious threat of rain cancels.

Activities sponsored by other organizations

Sat., Feb. 7th, and Sat., Mar. 7th, 9:30 a.m. Citizens' Climate Lobby. Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2201 Lawton Ave, SLO. Join us and learn what you can do to slow climate change and make a difference in our community. Become a climate activist and part of the solution to the most pressing issue of our time. For more information email: citizensclimatelobbylo@gmail.com or call Sandy Simon, 550-3899.

ECOSLO Natural San Luis Docent Hikes:


Sun., Feb. 15th, 11 a.m., Johnson Ranch. Meet at trailhead.
Sat., Feb. 21st, 9 a.m., Reservoir Canyon. Meet at trailhead.
Sat., Feb. 28th, 9a.m., Irish Hills. Meet at Madonna Trailhead. Bring water and wear sturdy shoes. Contact Adria Arko, ECOSLO, 805-544-1777, programs@ecoslo.org.

Feb. 21-22nd, Wilderness First Aid course. Conducted by the National Outdoor Leadership School on the Cal Poly campus. WFA certification from NOLS is perfect for anyone recreating outdoors or leading day trips in the wilderness, defined as 1 hour from definitive care or cell reception. The WFA certification teaches you important fundamentals for working in the outdoor industry or if you just find yourself outside a lot with family and friends. \$200 for community members. Contact Derek Wright, Coordinator - Outdoor Recreation, ASI Recreational Sports, Cal Poly. 805-756-6355. www.asi.calpoly.edu.

Sat., Feb. 28, 1 p.m. Saturday at the Children's Garden: Kid's Wet and Wild Water. Winter is a wonderful time to explore the creek! Meet some creek creatures, discover where our water comes from, and how we can protect this wonderful resource. Join us at the Children's Garden at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden to learn how the whole family can save water and preserve our waterways. Play, explore and craft at the Garden with the Watershed Stewards Program. Presentation is \$5 suggested donation. No preregistration required. For more information visit slobg.org/water or call (805) 541-1400 x304.



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!

Become an Outings Leader

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

For further information contact:
Joe Morris
 Sierra Club
 (805) 549-0355
dj1942@earthlink.net



John Meade, a member of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

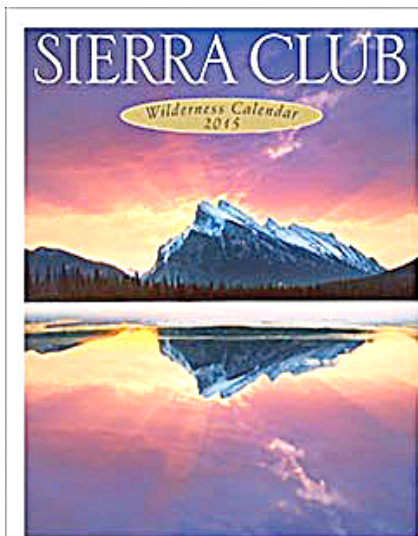
Clearance!

2015 Sierra Club Calendar

Your desk will thank you. Your wall will thank you. Your friends and family will thank you. And when you buy direct from the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's conservation work in San Luis Obispo County. We thank you.

up to 40% off!

wall or desk calendar:
\$10.00



To order, call:
805-543-7051

