

SANTA LUCIAN



**Santa Lucia
Chapter**

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

Help SLO County Keep It in the Ground

Welcome to the hottest ballot initiative of 2018



Vecteezy.com



With the Trump administration pushing hard to realize a vision of oil derricks from sea to shining sea and remove regulations on same, local action is where the action is for anyone who wants to push back against that agenda.

Let's recall the well-known first step to take when you find yourself in a hole. (Stop digging.)

An initiative heading for the November 2018 ballot will do just that for SLO County by prohibiting both new oil wells and fracking. We can't get to a new clean energy economy, or do much against global climate change, if we are constantly

expanding the old dirty energy economy.

Then there's water. Oil drilling operations use a lot of it, and routinely pollute a lot more beyond hope of reclamation. We'd rather use that water for people, animals or crops.

A case in point and an immediate peril: The operator of the Arroyo Grande Oil Field is currently seeking permission to relieve the aquifer next to that oil field of the legal protection that bars its use as an expanded dump site for toxic oil drilling waste water. Once it gets that permission, plans will move forward to put in 450 new oil wells, more than double the current number — pumping out, as it happens, some of the dirtiest oil in North America.

This will mean yet another huge fight to halt yet another oil operation (See: Phillips 66 oil train terminal 2013-2017, Huasna Valley 2008-2012); a fight with no guarantee of success, against a proposal that would substantially change the nature and character of SLO County from an economy based on tourism and agriculture to an industrial oil producing region.

And down the road there will be more such projects, with rounds of amended/recirculated Environmental

Can we possibly win? Won't the oil companies come down like the wrath of God? In November 2016, a similar measure was on the ballot in Monterey County. In opposition, Big Oil outspent the grassroots campaign backing the measure by 18 to 1. The measure won with 56% of the vote. Two years earlier, a San Benito County measure sailed to victory. Likewise Mendocino County. So yes we can. And it's our turn.

Impact Reports as applicants are forced to accurately state the potential impacts of those projects. There will be brandishing of impressive looking lists of industry policies and federal regulations that have failed miserably to prevent or contain multiple catastrophic fires and spills across the country, which have resulted in fish kills that spread to waterfowl and birds of prey with fish-dependent diets, with toxins released that can kill off insects that are critical food for both.

At the end of the process for each of those projects, if the County finds that the economic benefits of the project outweigh its potential environmental impacts, a permit will be issued for that project. That decision will depend on who, on any given Tuesday, happens to be sitting on the dais at the county

board of supervisors through all the years to come.

We could do it that way. Or you — yes, you — could stop all such future projects right now by putting your name on a petition. The Coalition to Protect SLO County needs about 11,000 signatures, including yours, to certify a ballot measure for placement on the Nov. 2018 ballot and a vote of the people.

Beginning in February, keep an eye out for the tell-tale table, the energized person with a clipboard and a "PROTECT OUR WATER - NO NEW OIL WELLS - BAN FRACKING - SLO COUNTY LOCALS SIGN HERE" sign around his or her neck, and colorful banners in the vicinity echoing those sentiments.

Volunteers welcome, more information available. Go to Protectslo.org, or contact info@protectslocounty.org, (805) 994-0076.

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Carrizophiles Celebrate Addition to Carrizo Plain National Monument

A group of about 25 local citizens gathered at the historic Goodwin Ranch on Friday, October 27, to mark the transfer of 42 acres of previously private land on the shoreline of Soda Lake to the United States for incorporation into the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

The property had been purchased by the nonprofit Carrizo Plain Conservancy from a willing seller in 2015, entirely by the use of private funds donated by numerous local citizens and a grant from the Oakland-based California Wildlife Foundation. The property had been the victim of illegal dumping over the years, so it was cleaned up—with the removal of over 11 tons of trash, also paid for with private donations—and offered to the USA.

As part of the celebration, a group of about ten volunteers from the Santa Barbara based Los Padres Forest Watch arrived early and journeyed to the property to begin removal of rusty, old, and now unnecessary fencing along the property line with preexisting public land. Later, several speakers talked about the Carrizo Plain and its history of conservation. Long-time local resident Pat Veasart coined the term “Carrizophiles” to describe the many citizens who love and cherish the Plain and the Monument.

The event was a gentle counterpoint to the so-called “Monuments Review” recently conducted by the Interior Department, undertaken under executive order to look at whether monuments such as the Carrizo Plain had been designated improperly or without sufficient public input.

“While officials in Washington, D.C., considered shrinking or doing away with the Carrizo Plain National Monument, citizens of California and the Central Coast continued to support the Monument with their time, their volunteer labor, and their pocketbooks,” said Carrizo Plain Conservancy President Neil Havlik. “We are proud to be part of such a distinguished group of citizens. This kind of volunteer efforts has been evident in the Carrizo Plain for many years.”

The Conservancy has also offered to donate 13 additional parcels of land within the current boundaries of the Monument totaling about 140 acres to the United States. These properties were purchased with private funds again donated by local citizens and by another grant from the California Wildlife Foundation.

“We look forward to continuing to work with the Federal Bureau of Land Management, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the County of San Luis Obispo, and other nonprofit organizations operating in the Carrizo Plain area, in order to continue support for ongoing conservation and restoration efforts in the Monument and nearby areas,” said CPC board secretary Steph Wald.



Matthew Sayles, California Wilderness Coalition

Done deal Carrizo Plain Conservancy President Neal Havlik cuts the ribbon dedicating another 42 acres of the Carrizo Plain National Monument

Santa Lucian

EDITOR - Andrew Christie

Lindi Doud
Sandy Simon
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The Santa Lucian is published six 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**, Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. sierraclub8@gmail.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

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Trail Guide
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Jennifer Von Der Lohe
Chapter Director
Andrew Christie sierraclub8@gmail.com

The **Conservation Committee** meets the second Friday at 1p.m., at the chapter office, located at 974 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo.

Santa Lucia Chapter

P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
805-543-8717

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

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Don't Rush Into the Wind

On December 15, Sierra Club, California Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Center, and the Natural Resources Defense Council sent a message to the California Energy Commission: Slow down on the push for offshore wind facilities off the coast of California.

The agency and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) are keen on initiating a multi-year offshore wind leasing process. All our organizations share the state's interest in exploring the opportunities for responsibly-sited offshore wind development to help meet California's clean energy targets, but stressed that the CEC prioritize "ecological considerations and protecting the ecosystem services California's marine environment provides." We noted that "The California Current upwelling system is one of the top five most biodiverse and rich marine ecosystems in the world, providing a high level of unparal-

leled productivity that supports fisheries, tourism, and livelihoods."

We strongly recommended that state and federal partners "avoid Biologically Important Areas for cetaceans, National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas, ecologically sensitive areas such as migratory corridors, and other ecologically important habitat. It is important to recognize that not all ecologically important marine areas are protected, and public input will be vital to ensure such places are highlighted during siting decisions. For example, scientists have noted that Santa Lucia Bank is an area of high fin, humpback, and blue whale concentration, and birds are known to feed at Santa Lucia Bank each fall during their annual migration from Hawaii. Though the area is not yet protected, it is part of the nominated Chumash National Marine Sanctuary because of its ecological richness."

The letter concluded: "it is imperative to have a well-informed understanding of avian and marine mammal distributions throughout the Central Coast prior to making leasing decisions in order to

improve the reliability of decisions made to identify areas as potentially 'low risk.' Having three years of robust baseline data has great potential to abet the offshore wind industry's advancement, whereas an inadequate baseline could lead to profound delays in the future. We recommend deferring final identification of call areas until the data and analyses identifying 'least conflict' areas can be included."

"In sum, our organizations believe that if offshore wind in California is to be developed, it should be done in a science-based, environmentally-sound manner that reflects the vital importance of California's marine environment.

"As CEC and BOEM consider prospective lease areas, we urge the agencies to follow a holistic, science-based process that establishes a robust environmental baseline and enables the agencies to evaluate the appropriateness of any prospective lease area. Ensuring that siting and leasing decisions are guided by comprehensive baseline research that gives full consideration of potential impacts to sensitive marine areas and species, and reflects recommendations from a robust public process beginning with siting decisions, will be essential for the development of offshore wind energy in California."



Community Choice in SLO: Warmer and Colder

Big utilities' BFF wants to put public power in the deep freeze

On December 12, the SLO City Council directed staff to move with all dispatch toward the goal of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) and the creation of a Community Choice Energy program for the city, which would serve as model for all other cities in the county.

CCA, as we never get tired of saying, is the program on the cutting edge of clean energy advocacy, one that could, in our case, replace the power of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, provide jobs, cut costs paid by ratepayers, and – in the words of Paul Fenn, the author of the bill that brought Community Choice to California in 2002 and who made a speech in SLO four years later — would "probably be the best thing to happen to the environment in this community in 100 years."

Four days before the SLO City Council took its big step into the future, the California Public Utilities Commission took action to drag it, and the rest of the state, back into the past.

On December 8, the CPUC abruptly proposed to expand its oversight over Community Choice Energy programs and impose a one-year delay on new Community Choice programs or expansions where implementation plans had not yet been filed, and a two-year delay for programs that had not filed implementation plans by Dec. 31. It also proposed to impose new requirements regarding the start date of Community Choice programs which impact economics and local timelines.

As noted by Clean Power Exchange, an information hub for communities considering a Community Choice Energy program or already serving customers: "The Commission is attempting to slow down CCA growth in California and enact a de facto 'CCA Freeze.' The Commission process requires CCAs to begin service on a Commission-defined timeline, not the timeline that is decided to be the best for the community by locally elected leaders.

"By delaying service dates, the Commission is preventing CCAs from collecting revenue that

CCA continued on page 4

CDFW Expands Land Pass Program in 2018

By Julie Horenstein and Peter Tira, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has expanded its Lands Pass Program to 42 wildlife areas and ecological reserves and will soon require a CDFW lands pass of all visitors 16 or older. Those carrying a current hunting or fishing license are exempt from this new requirement.

CDFW's Land Pass Program began in 1988 as a way to broaden the funding base beyond hunters and anglers to pay for the management and operation of some of the state's most popular and frequently visited wildlife areas and ecological reserves. In 2012, the California Legislature directed CDFW to

expand the program to more properties as a way for all visitors to contribute to the management of the places they enjoy and appreciate. A list of the lands pass properties, where the lands passes will be required, plus additional details is available at www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing/lands-passes. A daily pass costs

\$4.32 and an annual pass costs \$25.10. Lands passes can be purchased online at www.ca.wildlifelicenses.com/internetsales, by phone at (800) 565-1458, and in-person wherever

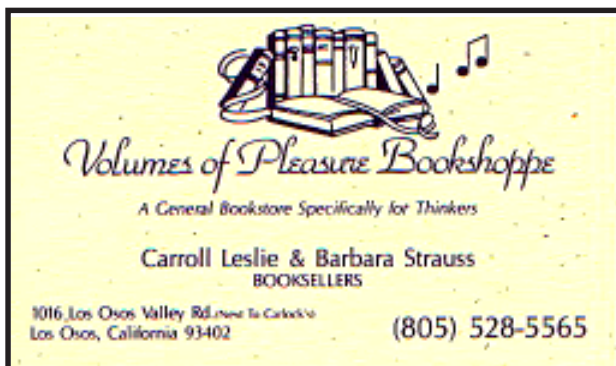
hunting and fishing license are sold (locations at www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing).

The passes, which are good at any lands pass property, are not sold on site and should be purchased in advance. Though lands passes can be purchased from a smartphone and used immediately, many of CDFW's wildlife areas and ecological reserves are in remote locations with limited or no cell service or Wi-Fi availability. Signs will be posted notifying visitors of the need for a lands pass and explaining how to obtain them.

Other exemptions from the lands pass requirement include

school and organized youth group field trips, volunteers while they are working on a lands pass property, and researchers who are carrying a valid letter of permission to conduct research on the property. School groups include preschool through graduate school classes, as well as school clubs that provide science or environmental education.

All lands pass revenue will go to managing California's native species and habitats on CDFW lands. Providing the name of the property you plan to visit is not required during the purchase process, but providing it assists CDFW with directing funds to that property.



CCA

continued from page 3

could be used for these efforts. This could drive new CCAs into significant debt.

[Investor owned utilities] will continue to procure power on a new CCA's behalf until service is launched to customers, increasing the exit fees for those customers when they do begin CCA service."

CCA advocates have observed that the move by the PUC to hobble the biggest competitor of investor owned utilities lives up to the Commission's reputation as the utilities' very close friend.

The CPUC claims the resolution is necessary as a mechanism to address "resource

adequacy," a requirement that utilities and CCAs demonstrate that they have procured energy to serve at least 115% of their peak loads.

Samuel Golding, President of Community Choice Partners, did not mince words about that rationale or the sudden move by the Commission and its president, Michael Picker: "The CPUC's true intent here is actually to freeze CCAs. If Picker's actions over the last year weren't proof enough, it's been made blatantly obvious in this draft resolution. If the CPUC was taking an unbiased look at all options on the table, Energy Division would have included the other

mechanisms in the draft resolution. These are, to be blunt, obvious solutions to anybody familiar with how the power sector actually operates. A freeze should be a last and worst case option. The silence is deafening, and betrays the fact that the CPUC is strategically constrain-

ing this debate to justify the freeze."

The CPUC is scheduled to take oral public comment on Draft Resolution E-4907 at their meeting in San Francisco on Jan. 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you can come, show up early (8:30) for a media event and rally on the

steps of the CPUC building at 505 Van Ness. (Note: between now and then, a rising storm of anger from CCA advocates may well compel the Commission to remove this item from the agenda and seek a different path, so check their current agenda before you go.)

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

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

photo: David H. Lewis

The Conservationist's Case for a Theodore Roosevelt Monument in SLO

Go to: www.artsobispo.org/tr-monument
(805) 550-7713

By John Ashbaugh

Over the last year, we've watched the Trump Administration take a wrecking ball to our environmental laws, including the Antiquities Act of 1906. That legislation enables the President to establish National Monuments to protect "historical landmarks, historic preservation structures, and other objects of scientific interest."

It is only fitting that here in San Luis Obispo, we recall a time when the White House was occupied by another wealthy New York businessman, one who deserves credit for passing the Antiquities Act, creating five National Parks, and using the powers of his Presidency to protect the environment for future generations: Theodore Roosevelt.

I am currently working with several colleagues, in partnership with our local Arts Council (ARTS Obispo), to create a monument in San Luis Obispo to our 26th President. In *La Vista*, an anthology of Central Coast history, I wrote about how San Luis Obispo hosted President Roosevelt in 1903. I suggested that we should erect a monument to "TR" in Mitchell Park. It was at that site, then known as the "Murphy Block," that the President spoke before a crowd of 10,000 people – at a time when the entire population of the town

had just reached 3,000.

Our proposal for a TR Monument has resonated with many people, and a project to raise funds for the monument to Theodore Roosevelt is proceeding well. A committee has been formed that includes local historians, arts advocates, and graphic artist. To date, we have raised over \$40,000 for the project. The central feature of the monument is to be a bronze statue of a seated Roosevelt, created by artist Paula Zima. Her work-in-progress on the Roosevelt Monument may be seen at www.facebook.com/paulazimastudio.

The monument will recognize not just Roosevelt, but the conservation movement that Roosevelt helped launch. As President, he preserved over 260 million acres of National Parks and Wildlife Refuges, National Monuments, National Forests and other public lands. Roosevelt worked with noted conservationists such as John Muir and John Burroughs, scientists, and his fellow politicians to preserve these lands and resources. A trained naturalist with a lifelong interest in the ornithology and wildlife biology, Roosevelt published several books and articles on topics of interest to conservationists.

Notably, Roosevelt also worked with Native Americans to build respect for their tribal rights and to conserve lands and waters important to them and to all

Americans. At Roosevelt's request, six renowned Native Americans participated in his inaugural parade in 1905, including Geronimo, America Horse, and Quannah Parker.

During his "Great Loop" tour to the American Far West in 1903, the magnificent landscape triggered a new and significant theme in the soul of the President. He spent two weeks in Yellowstone with John Burroughs and viewed the vast sandstone cataract of the Colorado River from the south rim of the Grand Canyon. Almost all of his 255 speeches on this tour emphasized conservation of the nation's resources, and preservation of its spectacular wilderness, the landscapes that he had witnessed for the first time in Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon.

Douglas Brinkley recounts this transformation in his 2009 book, *Wilderness Warrior*. Brinkley rhapsodizes on the effect that his experience in the Grand Canyon must have instilled in Roosevelt as he spoke to the Arizona delegation there on May 6, 1903:

"This speech... marked the beginning of Roosevelt's ceaseless determination to save the canyon from destruction. Overawed by its immensity... Roosevelt was in

rapture... What was becoming clear from the looping 14,000-mile railroad journey was that the beauty of the American West – the real West – had Roosevelt spellbound. From the Grand Canyon onward, all of Roosevelt's speeches promoted, with intense vitality, the holy trinity of irrigation, forestry, and preservation."

By the time Roosevelt arrived in San Luis Obispo at 5:30 p.m. on May 9, 1903, this "holy trinity" of conservation was fully integrated into his speeches. Consider these robust lines from his Mitchell Park speech that day:

"...The legislation of the country must be shaped in the direction of promoting the interests of the man who has come on the soil to stay and to rear his children to take his place after him. We have passed the stage as a nation when we can afford to tolerate the man whose aim it is merely to skin the soil and go on; to skin the country, to take off the timber, to exhaust it, and go on; our aim must be by laws promotive of irrigation; by laws securing the wise use in perpetuity of the forests, by laws shaped in every way to promote the permanent interests of the country. Our aim must be to hand over our country to our children in better shape, not in



Preliminary Concept for TR Monument in SLO by Paula Zima
(photo by Pierre Rademaker)

worse shape, than we ourselves got it."

The San Luis Obispo Roosevelt Monument is designed to help us to recall the sentiments and passionate conservation message of Theodore Roosevelt. We welcome the participation of Sierra Club members in helping to shape this monument as we finalize our planning and raise the remaining funds to erect it.

Donations welcome!

The commemoration of a monument to our finest Presidential conservationist would be a unifying symbol for our community, a fitting tribute to this clarion-clear messenger of environmental wisdom, and to his message. Let's engrave some of the words of his 1903 speech on its pedestal. Our hope is that this monument would stir the imaginations of young school-age visitors, tourists, and residents alike as we face the powerful environmental challenges of our time. What better figure to link us to the environmental movement that has shaped our own community, our state, and our nation for over a century?

2017: The Year in Review

January:

One more monument

On January 12, President Barack Obama expanded the California Coastal National Monument, adding 6,230 coastal and offshore acres between Humboldt and Orange County, including the Piedras Blancas Light Station. The Bureau of Land Management was directed to protect objects of scientific and historic interest in these areas, which may not be disposed of by the United States and are closed to new extractive uses. Those were the days.

Commencing the final engagement of a long battle, Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, Environmental Defense Center, Center for Biological Diversity, STAND.org and Surfrider intervened in the suit brought by Phillips 66 against SLO County for denying the oil company a permit to build a crude oil train terminal in Nipomo.

The Coastal Commission met in SLO on Jan. 12 to review the Coastal Development Permit for the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area and, per Commission staff, the “three-decade old violation” of that permit by State Parks. It was the eighth such review since 2001. More studies were called for. More vows to work together cooperatively were made. (See September.)

February:

Remember them at election time

At the Feb. 7 meeting of the County Board of Supervisors, Supervisors Lynn Compton, Debbie Arnold, and Frank Mecham passed a resolution opposing the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. They had to ignore actual facts and the will of the vast majority and embrace fact-challenged anecdotes and fears from a tiny minority in order to do so, while emphatically stating their belief that we don't need the protection of a national marine sanctuary's prohibition of offshore drilling because we have all the protection we need in the form of a 40-year-old county ordinance that doesn't apply to federal waters. What could possibly go wrong?

March:

Oil trains in court, round one

The court ruled that Phillips 66 failed to exhaust its administrative remedies by filing suit over the County Planning Commission's denial of its project without waiting for the outcome of its appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to the County Board of Supervisors. Speaking of that Phillips 66 Board of Supervisors appeal hearing: Supervisor Lynn Compton had long claimed that the only opposition she was hearing to the project was coming

from “NIMBYs” on the Nipomo Mesa and people from outside the county concerned about the project's impacts on their own communities – i.e. people she could politically ignore. The week before the March 13 hearing, Sierra Club organized an online write-in campaign targeting Compton's district. She proceeded to get the word from her constituents in a major way, all asking her “as my representative to vote as I expect you to, as the facts and the project's potential impacts dictate, and as an overwhelming majority has been asking for several years: Deny this project.” To widespread surprise, Compton voted to uphold the Planning Commission's denial of the permit.

April:

Trump goes after the monuments

The Santa Lucia Chapter's Executive Committee placed an op ed – and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's phone number — in the April 29 edition of *The Tribune*, headlined “We must fight any effort to take away or shrink our national monuments.” We compared the PBS documentary of a few years ago, “The National Parks: America's Best Idea,” to President Trump's April 26 Executive Order for a “review” of all national monuments designated in the last 30 years, “what may be an American administration's worst idea.”

The Cambria Commu-

nity Services District, which claimed an “emergency” in order to get a permit for a desalination plant that evaded the requirements of state and federal environmental law, was hit with 162 permit violations by the Regional Water

general manager for mischaracterizing the Water Board's position and publicly attacking a local resident who reported the CCSD's violations to the water board.

May:

#ReadyFor100

At the invitation of the Sierra Club's “Ready for 100” campaign, SLO Mayor Heidi Harmon added her name to the burgeoning list of mayors across the country who have pledged their support for a transition to 100% renewable energy, seizing the moment to lead the nation toward a healthier, stronger



Tina Dickason blew the whistle on the Cambria CSD.

Quality Control Board, which also reprimanded the District's



August: Offshore resistance part 1 We started letting Sierra Clubbers know that the SLO City Council would be considering a resolution in response to the plans of the Trump administration to greatly expand offshore drilling. We asked you to send message of support to the city council urging them to join “cities up and down the coast of California...preparing to pass resolutions calling on the administration to halt new oil and gas drilling off our coast, ban fracking and well stimulation techniques in existing offshore wells, and issue no new offshore oil and gas leases in the Pacific, Atlantic, or Arctic Oceans or the eastern Gulf of Mexico.” You did. And then they did. (See October.)

future by committing to clean energy for all.



The Santa Lucia Chapter hosted a Dance for Democracy, showcasing the diversity of cultural heritages in SLO County and bringing folks together in celebration of our common humanity.

June: Eagle down

Our work with the Atascadero Neighborhood Alliance and comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 3,500-acre Eagle Ranch project paid off when Atascadero’s Community Development Director announced “With hundreds of comments on the Draft EIR and a better understanding of the mitigation measures that would be required for the project, Eagle Ranch has asked for more time. The city has not received any indication from the development team about how much time will be needed.”

July: Trump goes after the marine sanctuaries

We coordinated local

response to Trump’s Executive Order requiring a “review” of all Na-

tional Marine Sanctuaries designated or expanded in the last ten years – i.e. all three marine sanctuaries off the coast of California – with an eye to future offshore drilling and seafloor mining in protected waters. Rep. Jimmy Panetta wrote in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*: “As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, we must also acknowledge that everybody is able to enjoy the fruits of our sanctuary because our leaders and local community members had the foresight to come together and create laws that preserve our oceans.... It will take a lot more than an executive order by President Trump to turn back the clock on the incredible work done to establish these treasures. For three of our nation’s sanctuaries, including Monterey Bay, it would take an act of Congress to open them up

November:

Happy first anniversary, California Plastic Bag Ban

-- and happy fifth anniversary, SLO County bag ban. We were one of more than 100 California cities and counties to enact a plastic bag ban before state voters took action. The \$6 million the plastic bag industry spent in 2016 in the attempt to kill Proposition 67 was foreshadowed by the local opposition to our 2012 ban — opposition that appeared in the form of fake “grass roots” groups and petitions whipped up by the American Chemistry Council, ExxonMobil, Monsanto et al; personal intervention by Grover Norquist; a “town hall” featuring an industry shill from UC Davis; robo-calls from the “Environmental Safety Alliance;” and apocalyptic hysterics from the Coalition of Agriculture, Labor and Business (COLAB). They were beaten back by the Sierra Club, Surfrider, CoastKeeper and alumni of the Empower Poly Coalition organized as Think Outside the Bag.

Board members of the SLO County Integrated Waste Management Authority who voted against the ban included Tom O’Malley, John Hamon and Frank Mecham. They might usefully contemplate the conclusion of the Nov. 13 San Jose Mercury News study on the environmental impact of the state-level version of the ban they fought in SLO: “Take a bow, California voters. It’s working.”

ploration and exploitation. That will not happen on my watch.”

September: Again, ODSVRA

On September 14, the California Coastal Commission came to Cambria to review the permit application by State Parks for dust control measures at the Oceano Dunes. The Commission was no

happier with State Parks than they were the last time they convened to discuss the Oceano Dunes (see January). After Commissioners got an earful from the Sierra Club and local residents about Parks’ endless recalcitrance and its devastating impacts on human health, they let the Parks rep know that they were tired of

“going in circles,” overwhelmingly approved their staff’s overhauled version of the Coastal Development Permit for the dust control plan, and added a timeline requiring annual progress reports, with the first one due in February. An attempt by State Parks to characterize their 5-year program window as “short” — following six years of foot-dragging and failure — drew an immediate rebuke from Commission Chair Dayna Bochco: “Five years is not short if someone’s dying.”

October: Terminal station

On October 24, a settlement was filed in San Luis Obispo Superior Court, signed by attorneys for the County of San Luis Obispo, the Sierra Club, Surfrider, Communities for a Better Environment, Center for Biological Diversity, Environmental Defense Center, STAND.org, and



October: Offshore resistance part 2 Mary Ciezinski of ECOSLO, Blake Kopcho of the Center for Biological Diversity, San Luis Obispo Mayor Heidi Harmon, Andrew Christie of the Sierra Club and Ashley Blacow of Oceana share a celebratory moment after the October 3 San Luis Obispo city council meeting. See August. (The decals say “No New Drilling - #protectourcoast.”)



“Who is the CEQA Working Group?”

Supervisors refrain from fixing what ain't broke in County's environmental review process

At the December 5 meeting of the SLO County Board of Supervisors, changes were proposed to the way the County administers the California Environmental Quality Act -- specifically, there was a full court press by the development community to give them a private bite at the apple, allowing them to weigh in on the very first draft of an Environmental Impact Report before the public gets to.

At the end of public testimony, Supervisor Adam Hill asked a question. He had picked up on the fact that several local developers and their representatives who stepped up to the microphone to advocate for those changes and complain about the burdens of CEQA had identified themselves as members of the “CEQA Working Group.”

Leading that parade was Carol Florence, a longtime local lobbyist for hire who has specialized in representing the most problematic and environmentally destructive projects brought forward in the county over the last three decades. She introduced herself as “one of the group of professionals with an aggregate of 400 years of experience who form the CEQA Working Group and have taken to heart the opportunity that the board has provided to us.”

Planning consultant T. Keith Gurnee proclaimed “I’m also a member of the group

that Carol just mentioned, with over 400 years of experience of working with this County.”

Setting aside the claim that the CEQA Working Group has been working with SLO County since women were being burned at the stake for witchcraft and pirates were terrorizing the Barbary Coast, Supervisor Hill asked the right question: “Who is the CEQA Working Group? As far as I can tell, they’re people who’ve represented projects that have been turned down. Bad Ag clusters, oil drilling, gravel mining... I mean, is there anyone representing affordable housing here? Is there anybody representing the interests of the environment or the ocean? Is

there anybody representing the urban development that’s most needed? Because I’m not seeing that. Maybe there’s a secret handshake and we can know who the roster of the CEQA Working Group is.”

cheaper and more amenable to their projects.... ‘CEQA Working Group’ sounds like a good idea until we find that it’s 400 years of experience in the development community, and that’s only

the court, it’s quite likely that they will follow the *Ceres* case rather than the *Oaks Foundation* case when and if they are presented with the issue of whether or not the administrative draft has to be presented to the public at the same time its presented to an applicant” (i.e. yes, it does).

Melissa James, director of economic initiatives for the SLO Chamber of Commerce, Economic Vitality Corporation, and Home Builders Association, said the administrative draft review proposal was submitted to the board by those three organizations for the purpose of providing a “sound and objective EIR” that eliminates “avoidable flaws” and “assures the public of an objective analysis.”

Gibson replied that staff had pointed out that “they already do consult with the applicants,” who “explicitly approve the project descriptions.”

Supervisor Arnold floated the Alice in Wonderland notion that giving applicants even more input into the process than they already have would somehow be conducive to the production of “objective” reports – notwithstanding the fact that the average permit applicant is the walking definition of non-objective self-interest. (As a brief perusal of their website makes clear, the CEQA

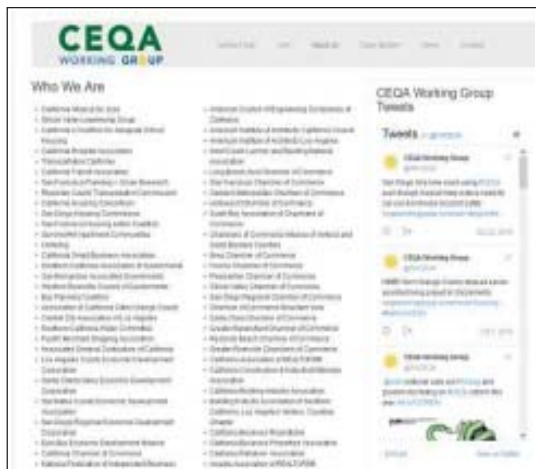


Who speaks? Developer's rep Carol Florence.

Supervisor Gibson noted “It’s quite clear the development community wants this process to be faster,

one side of this equation. The reason for CEQA is to have the public involved in these things.”

Lawyer Sophie Treader tried to juggle the two court cases — known as the Oaks Foundation case and the Ceres case — that have split on the question of when EIR drafts are to be shared and with whom, saying the County should feel free to blaze the trail through state environmental law that developers wanted them to. County Counsel Tim McNulty replied that the most recent of the two cases explicitly rejected the conclusion of the earlier case, saying “It’s true that none of these cases are going to bind the 2nd District Court of Appeal, the court we appear in front of all the time, but based on our understanding of



Things that make you say hmm.... This website, last updated in 2015, is the only trace of the “CEQA Working Group” on the web. It consists of re-tweets of conservative legislators and distorted anti-CEQA horror stories from right-wing bastions like the *Orange County Register* and *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Identified by Streetsblog-LA as “a coalition of business interests who want to do away with environmental protections,” the CEQA Working Group first appeared in 2012 to lobby for a bill that allowed an NBA team to build a new stadium and evade meaningful environmental review of the impacts of construction on local neighborhoods in Sacramento.

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Year

continued from page 7

Phillips 66 that finally closed the book on the Phillips 66 tar sands oil train terminal, ending the oil giant's lawsuit challenging SLO County's denial of a rail terminal that would have brought millions of barrels of explosive tar sands crude down the coast. It was the end of an epic three-year environmental struggle, and a complete win for our community and communities across California that would have been placed

directly in the line of fire of Phillips' "bomb trains."

The Bishop Peak oak planting program initiated by Sierra Club, ECOSLO, One Cool Earth and the City of SLO in November 2016 achieved a 50% survival rate by October 14, when a final cohort of nature nurturers tended to the seedlings and gave them a long drink of water after a long, hot summer. If the 27 surviving seedlings grow to maturity, they

will provide a lot of sustenance and shelter for wildlife and much needed shade for hikers. The project gave a lot of people a chance to give back to a place they all love.

On October 16, the Central Coast Wild Heritage Coalition celebrated the introduction of the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act by Representative Salud Carbajal (D-CA) and Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA). The culmination of over seven

years of outreach and discussion with local stakeholders, the Act would safeguard 244,909 acres of wilderness, create two scenic areas encompassing 34,882 acres, and designate 159 miles of wild and scenic rivers in the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

**November:
That kit foxes may safely forage**

The Board of Supervisors passed the final version of the Cannabis Ordinance on Nov. 27. It made many people unhappy on various sides of

the issue, but California Valley residents, the Sierra Club, wildlife professionals and members of the public who repeatedly pressed the board prevailed in achieving the restoration of a key provision that briefly went AWOL over the course of the drafting process: No outdoor pot grows allowed in the California Valley -- the unprotected portion of the Carrizo Plain, where the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife determined that endangered species would be at high risk from the rodenticides, herbicides, and water

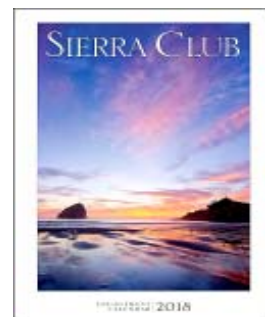
use that go along with intensive cannabis cultivation.



Job well done Bishop Peak oak planting crewmembers head out.

2018 Sierra Club Calendar

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CEQA

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Working Group has a very specific membership -- mostly building trade groups and chambers of commerce -- taking "self-interest" miles beyond the self-interest of the average permit applicant.

And all of the above is notwithstanding the fact that the SLO County Planning Director who presided over the 1998 North Coast Area Plan Update for the Hearst Ranch — remember the 18-hole golf course, four hotels, and development of San Simeon Point? — introduced the now entrenched concept of "customer service" at the county planning department, with the definition of "customer" being the applicant paying the fees (not the general public, and not future generations). The role of planners was to get projects approved for the person paying the bills.

COLAB, in its report to its members on the board item, had a simple fix that gave the game away: get rid of CEQA. ("CEQA is biased against change and human progress. Any increased noise, traffic, reduction of open space or anything else is considered a problem which must be 'mitigated'.") The horror.

In the end, the board gently set aside the claim that developers don't have enough input, and the suggestion was made that they might want to engage a broader group of stakeholders before they tried this again.

New Year's resolution: Lose 4000 pounds!

Ring in the New Year by helping The Sierra Club Foundation's Santa Lucia Chapter in our pursuit for a healthier planet. Make a resolution to start the New Year off supporting our efforts to educate and

empower so we can protect and improve our natural and human environment.

Donating your unused or unwanted car can not only save you a lot of time trying to dispose of your vehicle but, it can also save you from the headaches and hassles that come with selling an older car or paying for those hefty repair bills. Our partners at CARS make donating your vehicle fast and easy—you might also receive a tax break for your generous donation. Simply call **844-674-3772** or visit scfch.careasy.org, and they'll help you with the donation process from beginning to end!



Cayucos Resident Wins CCC Photo Contest

First prize goes to "Polar Bear Brr" by Danna Dykstra-Coy

Of the 600 entries in the 19th Annual California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest, a shot by Danna Dykstra-Coy got the nod for the top honor.

Contest judges selected the top three winners and eleven honorable mentions.

Dykstra-Coy tried for three years to photograph the start of the annual New Year's polar bear swim in Cayucos. Photographers come from all around and line up on the pier hours early to try to get the shot. Last year, it was extra cold and windy so Ms. Dykstra-Coy (who arrived about 5 hours early) was able to get a spot on the pier without someone in front of her and she captured the moment at noon when the costumed, celebrating people ran into the ocean.

Ms. Dykstra-Coy is a 25-year resident of Cayucos and tries to take pictures every day out of gratitude that she now has time after retirement to see the sunrises and sunsets. She says that her photography of Cayucos is her "thank you" to the community for keeping it so beautiful and pristine.

The California Coastal Commission coordinates the photo contest in partnership with the Thank You Ocean Campaign and provides financial support from the Whale Tail License Plate Fund.

The contest is also sponsored by Fairmont Hotels & Resorts of California, which donated the contest prizes.

Visit <http://mycoastalphoto.com> this summer to enter the 2018 contest!

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Outings

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Day Use Area, San Simeon State Park. Info: call Gary, (805) 473-3694. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Dogs on leash only.

Sunday, Jan. 14th, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Atascadero Plant Walk. A plant I.D. walk on the new trail at Three Bridges Oak Preserve. Starts in blue oak woodland, ascends into chaparral, ends in stands of madrone. 4 miles up and back, gradual 800 ft. ascent toward the ridge. Pick out plants that attract you. Bring native plant samples to be identified, paper and pencil and a camera. To reach the trailhead, go west on Hwy 41 from Atascadero, turn right onto San Gabriel Rd. 0.5 miles, turn right onto Monita Rd. 0.2 miles, right onto Sierra Vista Rd., left onto Andrita Rd. for 0.2 miles, continue onto Casanova Ave. for 0.7 miles, continue onto Carmelita Ave. for 0.2 miles to the trailhead. Bring water and snacks. Sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hats, and layered clothing recommended. No RSVP needed. No dogs please. If you would like a copy of the plant list, let the hike leader know 24 hours in advance. For information, contact Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103, bill.waycott@gmail.com. Rain or threat of rain cancels.

Sunday, Jan. 14th, 10:00 a.m. Shell Beach. PoleCats is a group dedicated to demonstrating the effective use of

trekking poles. From Shell Beach Road, go west on El Portal until you reach the intersection of Bluff Drive and El Portal. Go right and park near the illegal gate. We will go up the fire road and follow the trail for @ a mile, returning to the parking area. 1.5 miles, 100 feet elevation. Call to confirm. David Georgi, hikingpoles@gmail.com, (805) 458-5575. Rain cancels. No dogs.

Saturday, Jan. 20th, 9:00 a.m., Colson Canyon Exploration. A moderate, 8 mile, in-and-out hike to explore Colson Canyon on the forest road to La Brea Creek. Dress in layers and bring lots of water, hat, good hiking shoes. From SLO, take Hwy 101 south to Betteravia Rd. in Santa Maria. Meet to car-pool in front of FedEx Office in the Home Depot Shopping Center, 2142 Bradley Rd. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, (805) 934-2792 or Kenya 683@msn.com.

Saturday, Feb. 3rd, 10:00 a.m., San Simeon Campground. Less strenuous. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area, San Simeon State Park. Turn right off State Hwy 1 going north, about 1.5 miles north of Cambria. Gently climbing trail passes through extensive wetlands, woods, open areas. 1.5 hours. Bring water, snacks. Wear layers. For info, call Eliane Wilson at (805) 748-7815.

Saturday, Feb. 3rd, 9:00 a.m., Montaña de Oro State Park. Hike Valencia Peak to Oats Peak to Coon Creek Loop. Moder-

ately strenuous 10.5-mile loop hike, @ 2,800 ft. elevation gain. Views of the coastline from Valencia Peak. We will experience the back country of the park and bluffs above the ocean on our way to Oats Peak and Coon Creek. Possibility of ticks. Poison oak beside the trail. Bring plenty of water, lunch or snacks, dress for weather. Dogs are not allowed on trails in the park. Meet at Valencia Peak trailhead, just past the visitors' center, 2.7 miles from the park entrance. Heavy rain cancels. For info, call Chuck, 805-441-7597.

Sunday, Feb. 4th, 2:00 p.m., Historic Walk: Old Templeton. A guided stroll past century-old storefronts, former saloons, Victorian houses and churches built in the 1880s to learn stories of the pioneers. About 1.5 hours. Meet at Main and 1st Streets in Templeton. Leader: Joe Morris, (805) 549-0355.


Saturday Feb. 10th, 8:30 a.m., Santa Margarita Lake - Falcon Loop Hike. A strenuous, 16-mile hike, 2,000 feet elevation gain, on the north side of the Lake. Access from River Road parking area. There may be a parking fee. Bring lunch, water, hiking shoes. This is an in-and-out hike, you may go part way and turn

around early if desired. Rain postpones. Dogs on leash welcome. Meet in front of Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita. Leader Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, (805) 546-0317.


Sunday, Feb. 18th, 10:00 a.m., Shell Beach. PoleCats is dedicated to demonstrating the effective use of trekking poles. From Shell Beach Rd, go west on El Portal until you reach the intersection of Bluff Drive and El Portal. Go right and park near the illegal gate. We will go up the fire road and follow the trail for less than a mile, returning to the parking area. 1.5 miles, 100 feet elevation. Call to confirm. David Georgi, hikingpoles@gmail.com, (805) 458-5575. Rain cancels. No dogs.

Sunday, Feb. 24th, 9:00 a.m., Lopez Lake Plant and Bird Walk. Join Audubon, California Native Plants, and Sierra Club on a plant

and bird walk. @ 4 miles, 200-foot elevation gain. We will be looking for waterfowl, which should be plentiful along the trail, and an abundance of early spring flowers. A continuation hike to the top of the Duna Vista lookout is an option. From Arroyo Grande, follow signs to Lopez Lake. After crossing the dam, turn right on Hi Mountain Rd and proceed 0.8 miles to junction of Upper Lopez Canyon Rd. Bear left on Canyon Rd 3.6 miles to old entrance of the Boy Scout Camp (now part of the County Park). Enter the gate if open; if not, park on side of the road. Rest-rooms available. No day use fee. Bring water and snacks, dress in layers for changing weather. Hat, sunscreen, and sturdy shoes recommended. For information, call Bill at (805) 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com. Rain or threat of rain cancels.




**The Sierra Club
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Become an Outings Leader

- Lead hikes and camping trips
- Introduce others to nature
- Explore the outdoors
- Make new friends
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For further information contact:

Bill Waycott, Outings Chair
(806) 459-2103 or
bill.waycott@gmail.com

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

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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 Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Saturday, Jan. 6th, 8:30 a.m. Stony Creek/ Caldwell Mesa Trails Hike. We have been given entry through a locked gate to get to the Stony Creek trail head. A moderately strenuous hike @12 miles and 2,000 feet of elevation gain in the Garcia Wilderness. There will be a little poison oak along the way. We will cross a shallow part of the Salinas with our vehicles just before the trail head parking area.

Dogs on leash welcome. Meet in front of Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita. Rain postpones. For info, contact Carlos at (805) 546-0317.

Sunday, Jan. 7th, 2:00 p.m. Historic Walk: San Luis Obispo's Secret Past. A guided stroll to discover the original site of the Mission, the 1860's stage coach stop, home of SLO's first millionaire, and other hidden land-

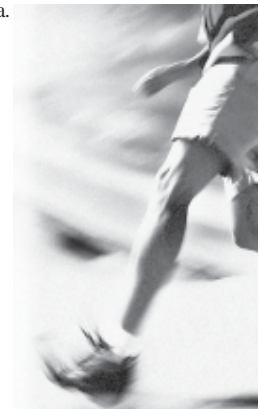
hidden landmarks near downtown SLO. Duration @ 1 1/2 hours. Meet at corner of Nipomo and Dana Streets. Leader: Joe Morris, (805) 549-0355.

Saturday, Jan. 13th, 8:30 a.m. Big Sur Coastal Hike to Buckeye Camp and back. The Ventana Wilderness Alliance in conjunction with USFS has spent 6

weeks rebuilding and widening the tread along this beautiful trail. Great views if it is clear. 7 miles with 2,000-foot elevation gain. Bring water, lunch, non-slip shoes, dress for weather. Meet at Washburn

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.

OUTINGS continued on page 11



Village Creek Plaza

168 La Costa Grill
(805) 474-8797

170 Cutting Edge Salon
(805) 481-3126

172 Bend Chiropractic
(805) 474-4747

174 House 2 Home Interiors
(805) 489-5233

168 - 174 Station Way, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420

Along Arroyo Grande Creek next to AG Post Office

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park, 2018. April 8-10; May 6-8; June 10-12; July 15-17; August 19-21; September 23-25; October 21-23. Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard tour of the Channel Islands. Hike windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines, marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions and an occasional whale. 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. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. \$675 cost includes assigned bunk and all meals. A park ranger/naturalist will help lead hikes and give evening programs. Kayaking overseen by our concessionaire; all hikes on trails, class 1 terrain. This is a fundraiser to support the Sierra Club political program in California. To reserve space send a \$100 deposit to "California Sierra Club PAC" to Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. For information: Joan Jones Holtz: jholtzhln@aol.com; 626-443-0706. Wayne Vollaire: avollaire1@gmail.com; 909-327-6825.

