



Jan. 2011  
Volume 48 No. 1

## Inside

Avila vs. the Coastal Act	2
Pismo plays fetch	3
EcoSummit report	4
Our benefit: a hit	6
Carrizo: sun and shadow	8
Letters	10
Classifieds	11
Outings	12

### DON'T MISS

**Jan. 14:**  
the return of  
Brock Dolman  
*-see page 3*



**Jan. 26:**  
Environmentalists'  
rendezvous  
*-see page 2*



*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

## A Tale of Two Sewers

**Morro Bay Planning Commission slams treatment plan, City Council will deliberate January 10**

In attempting to avoid travelling down the road of the Los Osos sewer, Morro Bay and Cayucos have managed to dig themselves into one of the very same potholes that beset that long and winding road. Only this one's bigger and deeper.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report for the new Morro Bay-Cayucos wastewater treatment plant – the most expensive public works project in the history of those communities – was released in October.

The first rumbles of debacle came at an October 4 study session of the Morro Bay City Planning Commission, when commissioners took turns expressing misgivings with the EIR's failings and omissions.

Then the Sierra Club, Surfrider, Natural Resources Defense Council, Otter Project and others blasted the draft EIR. The Regional Water Quality Control Board noted the lack of a Recycled Water Policy and a salt and nutrient management plan. The SLO County Planning Department noted the lack of beneficial reuse of effluent and the water quality impacts of ocean discharge. The Sierra Club pointed out that because the report failed to meet the basic legal standard requiring a thorough evaluation of project alternatives that could have



**Hate to say we told them so** Here we are telling them so, at the Sept. 8, 2009, meeting of the Morro Bay City Council and Cayucos Sanitary District, where the sewer's "no alternative" fate was sealed despite a vocal community urging consideration of options.

more, in extensive detail, and citing numerous environmental impacts requiring greater analysis of alternatives and ignored by the EIR.

The message was clear: This project can't get a Coastal Development Permit unless Morro Bay and Cayucos redo the EIR and address those concerns. That delay raises the specter of fines levied against the city by the Regional Water Quality Control Board --

exactly what Morro Bay and Cayucos thought to avoid by brushing aside public comment throughout the planning

process and forging ahead with a hurry-up project that gave short shrift to alternatives and water re-use.

How could something like this happen? Only one reason: failure of leadership. The elected officials of Morro Bay and Cayucos essentially ceded their role as decision makers. Instead of giving clear direction, the City Council majority bowed to staff, and staff was wedded to the project they had proposed. Despite the urging of hundreds of citizens, environmental advocates, and councilmembers Betty Winholtz and Noah Smukler, over years of public meetings, the majority of Cayucos and Morro Bay elected officials refused to instruct staff to give full consideration to project alternatives. As a result, the environmental

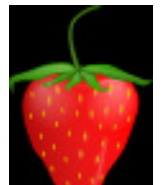
## Chapter Offers Hi School Eco Project Grants

Feeling discouraged lately about the future of the planet? Few things can more quickly rekindle hope than a tour of the high schools in SLO county.

Each of our seven schools has an environmental studies program and an Earth club, in which students are active in projects like composting, recycling, and beach cleanups, as well

*continued on page 4*

## A Strawberry Statement



*By Jesse Arnold,  
County Health Commissioner*

Methyl iodide was recently approved by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation for use as a soil fumigant on strawberry fields. The chemical replaces methyl bromide, which is being phased out because it destroys the ozone layer. Methyl iodide doesn't harm the ozone layer, but is more toxic than Methyl bromide and pollutes groundwater.

The Department of Pesticide Regulations' own scientists and an independent Scientific Review

**"We can't make decisions as informed and wise as the people we pay to give us advice."**

**- Morro Bay Mayor Janice Peters  
April 8, 2010**

fewer environmental impacts than the proposed project, it would have to go back to the drawing board.

Then the hammer came down. On November 12, California Coastal Commission's Central Coast District office staff sent a 12-page letter to Morro Bay Public Services Director Rob Livick, confirming and expanding on every one of those fatal flaws and

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

*continued on page 5*

*continued on page 10*



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

## General Meeting

**Wednesday, January 26, 7 p.m.**  
**2nd Annual Environmentalists' Rendezvous**

At our bimonthly general meeting, we'll find out what the major environmental groups in SLO county are up to and their plans for the new year. Here's a unique opportunity to hear from seven key players at one time and in one place. The public forum will feature staff from: the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, Morro Coast Audubon, ECOSLO, Green Build, Land Conservancy, Surfrider, SWAP, Transition Towns, and our Sierra Club chapter. Each will describe their premier projects and take time for questions. Last year's event was SRO, so come early for a seat! Free.



Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO Info: 772-1875.

## The Law Comes to Avila

Port San Luis Harbor Commissioners upset to find Coastal Act applies to them

Carol Georgi



Last June, many residents of Avila Beach objected to the license granted to a local concessionaire to add a high-speed tour boat operation to his jet ski rental operation -- both licensed without environmental review or a Coastal Development Permit.

They petitioned their government -- Port San Luis Harbor District-- for redress of grievances. They got the brush-off.

The Sierra Club stepped in and appealed the action of the Harbor District board to the California Coastal Commission (see "The Buzz in the Bay," Jul./Aug. 2010), noting the lack of a Coastal Development Permit.

On December 13, Coastal Commission staff concluded their analysis of the issue, informing Port San Luis

*continued on page 4*

## SANTA LUCIAN

**Andrew Christie**  
 EDITOR sierraclub8@gmail.com

**Cal French**  
**Melody DeMeritt**  
**Jack McCurdy**  
 EDITORIAL BOARD

**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 11th 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

#### 2010 Executive Committee

Melody DeMeritt  
 CHAIR  
 Steven Marx  
 TREASURER

Cal French  
 MEMBER  
 Greg McMillan  
 VICE CHAIR

Pat Veasart  
 MEMBER

Jono Kinkade  
 MEMBER

Liz Tracy  
 MEMBER

Cal French  
 COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS

cal.french@gmail.com

The Executive Committee meets the third Friday of every month at 2:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 974 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

#### Committee Chairs

##### Political

Chuck Tribbey

##### Conservation

Sue Harvey

ifsusan@tcsn.net

##### Membership

Cal French

##### Litigation

Andy Greensfelder

beckers@thegrid.net

##### Nuclear Power Task Force

Rochelle Becker

#### Other Leaders

##### Open Space

Gary Felsman

805-473-3694

##### Calendar Sales

Bonnie Walters

805-543-7051

##### Chapter History

John Ashbaugh

805-541-6430

#### Activities

##### Outings

Joe Morris

dj1942@earthlink.net

##### Canoe/Kayak

open

#### Webmaster

Monica Tarzier

monica@tarzier.org

#### Chapter Director

Andrew Christie

805-543-8717

sierraclub8@gmail.com

#### Coordinator

Kim Ramos, Admin and Development

kimramos@yahoo.com

#### Assistant Coordinators

Marie Clifford - correspondence

Noelle Cirisan - social networking

### Santa Lucia Chapter

P.O. Box 15755

San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

**Office hours Monday-Friday,  
 12 p.m.- 5 p.m., 974 Santa Rosa  
 Street, San Luis Obispo**

Printed by University Graphic Systems

## Change of Address?

### Mail changes to:

Sierra Club National Headquarters  
 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor  
 San Francisco, CA 94105-3441

### or e-mail:

address.changes@sierraclub.org

## Visit us on the Web!

www.santalucia.  
 sierraclub.org

*Outings, events, and more!*

## Meet our 2011 Executive Committee

The votes are in for the election of the Santa Lucia Chapter's 2011 Executive Committee, and officers have been selected:

**Melody DeMeritt**, Chair - term ending Dec. 2011

**Greg McMillan**, Vice Chair - term ending Dec. 2014

**Steven Marx**, Treasurer - term ending Dec. 2011

**Pat Veasart** - term ending Dec. 2014

**Jono Kinkade** - through Dec. 2012

**Liz Tracy** - term ending Dec. 2012

**Cal French** - term ending Dec. 2011

The chapter has term limits of two consecutive terms.

Best wishes to departing ExCom members **Linda Seeley**, taking care of her family, and to **Megan Worthington**, going on to the Peace Corps.

## In Memoriam

Our thanks to **Boeing SSED** for its generous donation to the Chapter in memory of **Connie Snapp**.

Our thanks to **Peter Kinkade** for his generous donation to the Chapter in memory of **Anne McMahon**.

# Ghost Nets

**Never underestimate the power of a bad idea**

Drift nets, now banned in many parts of the ocean, may be the worst thing we ever put in the sea. Miles long and horribly destructive when they function the way they are supposed to, they are prone to breaking loose in storms, but still go on doing their jobs. The virtually indestructible filaments float on, just below the surface, catching and killing everything that swims, and many things that fly, until, weighted down by bodies, they sink to the bottom. There the bodies rot, and the ghost net floats back up the water column. The cycle repeats, ad infinitum.

A bad idea follows much the same pattern.

On page 10 of this issue, we print a letter we received from a gentleman who wished to dispute with us the notion that reducing carbon emissions and encouraging the growth of renewable energy and green jobs is a good thing. His letter arrived as part of a compiled package, which included a *Wall Street Journal* editorial and the text of an anti-environmental speech delivered to The Commonwealth Club by Michael Crichton in 2003.

The late Mr. Crichton, the superstar of the global warming denial movement, believed that environmentalism is a religion, the province of romantic fools, and, thus defined, easily dismissed as the irrational worship of false gods.

Our correspondent proudly presented this rhetorical framing and dismissal as a way of helpfully pointing out that we are wrong and that he, Michael Crichton, and the *Wall Street Journal* are right.

The environmentalism-is-a-religion idea is not new. But in its current incarnation, floating up to the surface of public discourse as a cherished rhetorical weapon of the reactionary right, it got a big boost from a single event.

In 1994, environmental historian William Cronon wrote an essay entitled "The Trouble with Wilderness." The essay was an abstract, historical meditation on ideas about wilderness, proclaiming that wilderness is merely a cultural construct, a consequence of a Western tendency to romanticize nature, a dangerous illusion. ("The romantic legacy means that wilderness is more a state of mind than a fact of nature.") For Cronon, this idea of wilderness fostered a sense of otherness, which was bad, because "The tree in the garden is in reality no less other, no less worthy of our wonder and respect, than the tree in an ancient forest that has never known an ax or a saw." In Cronon's view, excessive respect for wilderness and biodiversity depletes a finite store of human respect and wonder. "Indeed," he

wrote, "my principal objection to wilderness is that it may teach us to be dismissive or even contemptuous of... humble places and experiences."

As part of the storm of response to Cronon's fatal notion of recasting wilderness as *the way we feel about* wilderness and not an objective reality in its own right — and claim that a 1,000-year-old redwood is the same thing as the sapling you brought home from the nursery last week, and "otherness" is sufficient to define everything that is not you — philosopher and former park ranger Philip Cafaro replied: "I am fairly sure that I have different responsibilities toward women and trees, even though they are both other than me. I may not saw

off women at the knees to build a house, and any convincing explanation of why I may not do so will refer to what women are and will not refer to the sense of wonder they evoke in me."

Also prominent among those who pointed out the weapons and ammunition Cronon and like-minded academic colleagues were placing into the hands of the narrow economic special interests who have been implacable environmental foes was long-time activist Dave Foreman.

"Many of the wilderness deconstructionists claim they do not want to harm protection of the land with their fault-finding of the wilderness idea," he wrote. "What, then, do we make of their criticism? In this light, their complaints come from a lack of knowledge about biology, a misunderstanding of the conservation movement, and carelessness about the consequences of their undercutting of wilderness.

"Wilderness does not say that humans exist apart from Nature. Wilderness says that Nature can exist apart from humans. These are very

*continued on page 5*



## Price Canyon's Water Boy

**Is Pismo Beach a city in the employ of developers?**

On November 16, a month after the Local Agency Formation Commission turned thumbs down on the inadequate Environmental Impact Report for the massive Price Canyon development — a proposed 700 homes on 1,700 acres in search of a water source and annexation to the city of Pismo Beach — the project inched forward when the Pismo city council resolved to help developers secure water resources in order to annex their project to the city.

All present at the meeting were aware that the resolution had been tailored for John King and Rick Loughead, the Price Canyon developers.

Local resident Sheila Blake asked the Council, "If they tell you they're in need of financing, will you drive them to the nearest bank?"

Awaiting the end of the public comment period so as to ensure he got the last word, King walked to the podium

and disputed a previous comment that the developers had requested passage of the City resolution giving city staff the job of helping private developers win annexation. "We did not ask for this," King said.

A bemused councilman Ted Ehring read from a letter received from King's development group asking for the City's assistance in annexation.

King replied that the City had asked that the letter from his group requesting assistance be sent. In other words, the letter from King asking for city assistance was included in the city council's packet as part of the administrative record, but the letter (phone call? e-mail? carrier pigeon note?) from City staff to King asking him to ask the City for that assistance was not in evidence.

Mayor Mary Ann Reiss quickly said "thank you" and

*continued on page 5*

# Don't Miss Brock Dolman on Saving Water, January 14

Jason Elon Goodman



So... had any good rain, lately?

The Appropriate Technology Coalition -- SLO Green Build, Surfrider and Sierra Club -- is having a LID (low impact development) event at the **Morro Bay Veterans Hall, 209 Surf Street, at 5:30 p.m. Friday, January 14th.** LID is all about keeping rain in the ground, instead of taking the form of run-off and floods.

We are expecting a great turnout, as Brock Dolman will be making a rare return appearance to the Central Coast. Dolman is a nationally recognized permaculture educator and director of the WATER Institute. He writes: "Watersheds underlie all human endeavors and form the foundation for all future aspirations and survival.... Watersheds should embody the geographic scale of applied sustainability, which must be regenerative because we desperately are in need of making up for lost time."

Our new LID manual will be available to attendees, along with music, food, beer, wine and good dialog. It's all about having fun while getting work done.

**5:30-9 Vets Hall Morro Bay**  
**5:30-6:30 Networking, Music, Food**  
**6:30-7:00 SLO County Green Building Ordinance**  
**7:15-8:30 Brock Dolman presentation**  
**8:30-9 Questions**

For information, call 286-0072.

# The Armored Coast

The bad idea of allowing developers to build on top of coastal bluffs continues to spawn an even worse idea: armoring the coastline to combat the inevitable erosion of those bluffs by waves and the toppling of those structures into the sea.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to increase California's supply of armored coast by adding 1,490 feet of rock revetment sea walls to the bluffs at Pismo Beach and a 20-foot sea wall extension off Ocean Boulevard.

In its Environmental Assessment of the project's environmental impacts, the Corps has ignored one of the fundamental facts of coastal armoring: namely that in seeking to

curb erosion at a specific site, it aggravates erosion on adjacent unarmored coastal areas. The EA concludes that the project will have insignificant impacts because its assessment is largely limited to construction and environmental consequences only at the specific project sites.

The "project alternatives" listed in the draft EA are simply a description of the various options for hard armoring the Corps has determined to use at the various project sites, rather than alternatives to the armoring of more of California's coast. It does not state why the Corps is not considering "soft protection"



Terry Lilley

(nourishment, vegetation, drainage controls), or use of the least damaging feasible alternative for hard protection. As the EA does not even acknowledge the significant, long-term and cumulative environmental impacts of coastal armoring, the impact mitigations proposed do not address those impacts.

The on-line document "Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary: Resource Management Issues" identifies and details many of the site-specific and cumulative geological, biological, and recreational impacts of coastal armoring/sea walls that the EA should have analyzed. Of particular note in this document is its citation to the fact that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers acknowledged in 1995 that "armoring structures can encroach into the intertidal, or disturb important buffer areas such as marsh habitat between the marine and terrestrial environments, which naturally mitigate erosion, and play an important role in flushing of certain contaminants."

The Corps' Pismo project is being undertaken because Pismo Beach has deemed it prohibitively expensive to move the threatened bluff-top structures – pump stations – inland. It will eventually have to do that anyway, at a future, inevitably greater, expense. Nature bats last.

The California Coastal Commission has tentatively scheduled a public hearing on the project at its February 9-11 meeting in San Diego. Concerned residents are urged to check the Commission's website ([www.coastal.ca.gov](http://www.coastal.ca.gov)) for the exact date of the hearing.

## Mini-grants

continued from page 1

as going on hikes and camping trips.

Atascadero High carries this involvement a step further with an environmental academy, a "school within a school." Now in its second year, the sequence features its own set of teachers and earth-themed courses.

Last fall, the Chapter began visiting these programs and providing guest lectures. The goal is to serve as a resource for encouraging these young and often highly enthused environmentalists. The teachers tell us that a pressing need is finding seed money to undertake environmental projects. Usually the amount required is small, e.g., for a composting container or plants in an organic garden.

The Santa Lucia Chapter to the rescue! This month, we are inaugurating a mini-grant program, in which secondary schools can apply for funding up to a maximum of \$300 for new environmental projects.

The application is deliberately simple. The sponsoring teacher fills out a one-page application, detailing the activity, expenses, its benefits to the environment, and the kind of student involvement.

In May, students and faculty will report on their high school's environmental programs at our bimonthly meeting, under the agenda item "Local Youth Working to Heal the Planet."

Information about the mini-grants has been sent to all of public high schools in the county. Completed applications are due by February 11th.

Monetary contributions for this program -- make check payable to The Sierra Club Foundation, with "SLO Conservation Fund" in the memo section -- are highly welcome and are tax-deductible. For further information, contact Joe Morris at 772-1875.



## Avila

continued from page 2

that the operator they had licensed, and all future such operations, needs to apply for a Coastal Development Permit.

At the relicensing hearing the next day, Harbor commissioners attempted to characterize Coastal Commission staff's action, six months after we filed the appeal, as "sudden" and "informal," saying that Coastal staff may have been "operating without full information and the facts," and that their very clear directive somehow needed clarification.

Harbor commissioners proceeded to argue with audience members over conflicting opinions of the potential environmental impacts of various types of boating recreation and variously implied that they knew better than the state agency charged with interpreting and administering the California Coastal Act for the last 35 years.

One commissioner asserted "there's no law" that regulates the use of high-speed watercraft in environmentally sensitive habitat areas such as kelp beds.

We are pleased that we were able to introduce the Port San Luis Harbor District to the California Coastal Act and the County's Local Coastal Plan. The Port must now change the way it does business. We trust the harbor board commissioners will conclude their display of chest-thumping ASAP, take the Coastal Commission's advice, and bring their operations within the law that does, indeed, regulate the very thing for which the Port is issuing licenses.

## TAKE ACTION

Residents of Avila Beach – and all those who value Avila Bay's irreplaceable coastal resources — need to show up and speak up in support of a Coastal Development Permit at the rescheduled Wavejammer relicensing hearing in Avila Beach, 6 p.m., Tuesday, January 25, Coastal Gateway Bldg., 3900 Avila Beach Drive (confirm meeting date and time before you go at [www.portsanluis.com](http://www.portsanluis.com)).

# EcoSummit 2010

ECOSLO hosted EcoSummit 2010 – the annual convocation of local environmental activists – at the Senior Center in SLO's Mitchell Park on December 4.

Bill Denneen enlivened the proceedings with his annual distribution of the Bill Denneen Foundation Environmental Award, presented to CoastWalk's Nancy Graves, organic food activist Jesse Arnold, and local poet Rosemary Wilvert.

Three panels presented case studies on the theme of "What's worked, what hasn't, and what is yet to be done?" Panelists included long-time participants in the long-term battles to limit the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural and open space lands, halt the devastating impacts wrought on the marine environment by the Morro Bay power plant, and expand the boundary of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to include the coastal waters of San Luis Obispo County.

A fourth and final panel was presented by the student leaders of the Empower Poly Coalition ([empowerpoly.calpoly.edu](http://empowerpoly.calpoly.edu)), who gave a presentation on the programs their 600 members are participating in,

including the Real Food Collaborative, Engineers Without Borders, Be the Change, Green Gravity, and the Green Initiative Fund.

The three case studies were chosen for the extraordinary length of the environmental battles



– over ten years each, and ongoing – and the complexity of the issues.

David Broadwater and Eric Greening led the panel on sludge regulation and the notable role the concerted opposition of local citizens has played in sparing San

continued on page 7

# Passing the Torch: a New Year's Resolution

By Eric Greening

Many of our environmental organizations are populated mainly by people whose hair (if present) has gone gray. A frequently heard refrain is: "Why aren't the young people joining us?"

I submit that a more productive approach is to ask: "What are the young people doing, and how can we help?"

And the young people *are* doing. Cuesta College Grassroots is starting an on-campus organic garden; the Empower Poly Coalition includes groups doing everything from solar cooking to providing clean water through appropriate technology. Even at the High School level, there is a ferment expressed not only in school-sponsored programs like the Atascadero Greenhounds, but by initiatives that arise spontaneously from among the students themselves, such as the anti-shark-finning group at Paso Robles High School.

Many of these initiatives are tied, loosely or otherwise, to educational institutions, but perhaps the most valuable opportunities for mentoring can be created within the wider community, in which community members don't presume to be formal "educators," but act authentically in their community-member role. At the recent EcoSummit, sponsored by ECOSLO (see above), a refrain heard again and again from the younger participants was a request for mentoring by the elders; for the sharing of time, knowledge, and involvement; for community-building that spans generations.

I am convinced that these responsibilities can't simply be left to institutions of formal education. I have seen how faculty dedication to defined "outcomes" sullies even those occasions to which the community is

continued on page 7

**Pismo Water Boy**

*continued from page 3*

dismissed King from the podium before he could go into any more detail that might further illuminate the eagerness of City staff to carry water, so to speak, for private developers, despite staff's efforts to avoid the appearance of doing so.

The exchange made the front page of *The Tribune's* November 20 edition, but not in its full *no-we-didn't/yes-you-did/okay-but-only-after-you-told-us-to* glory.

The delicate who-asked-who minuet opened a window on the closeness of the relationship of Pismo Beach to developers, which could be summed up as "please ask us to help you do this so it doesn't look like it was our idea." Though it might seem that their relationship could hardly be more intimate, it will now be even closer.

At the meeting, the Sierra Club pointed out that voting for the City to extend an obviously eager helping hand to developers desiring annexation raised the issue of recusal from a future vote. We asked if any council member who voted to approve this resolution would subsequently need

**Ghost Nets**

*continued from page 3*

different things.... Let's be very clear: this human/Nature question is not a deconstructionist toy with which to play in the coffeehouse or academic lounge; it is a matter of life and death since those who are trying to squeeze more dollars out of Nature have long argued that because humans are part of Nature, everything we do is natural so, why worry?"

Cronon later wrote a quasi-apology, saying that his essay "was written in the summer of 1994, before the November 1994 elections gave us the most anti-environmental Congress in American history. Read after the election, this essay may seem still more dangerous and provocative, perhaps even appearing to offer aid and comfort to hostile forces that would gladly roll back all the progress that has been made in preserving wilderness and protecting the environment over the past thirty or more years. I would feel deep regret were my words to be used toward such an end."

Unnoted by Cronon (who, after his expression of theoretical regret, promptly blamed environmentalists for "the political backlash we are now experiencing"), his words immediately were -- and still are -- used to precisely that end. Before the ink was dry on his text, anti-environmental legislators were using it to attack and roll back wilderness designations. "Pro-wilderness" meant anti-human, fuzzy-headed, romantic and impractical, a perpetuation of the idea that man exists apart from nature.

After being thoroughly dismantled and discredited by his colleagues and longtime environmental activists who pointed out that Cronon's picture bore no resemblance to their daily reality, Cronon's anti-wilderness idea would, one might think, sink below the waves and disappear. Instead, it has been popping up regularly in magazine articles, essays and political speeches. Seven years after Cronon's bad idea was injected into the public discourse, Michael Crichton seized on it as a tool wielded in service to global warming denial in his Commonwealth

*continued on page 7*

to recuse him or herself from voting on annexation, having already directed City staff to act essentially as members of the applicants' team -- an action that could be seen as telegraphing their vote on annexation.

Staff and the Council clung to the notion that they would not be directly participating in negotiations to obtain water for the developer. At the behest of Councilman Ed Waage, the word "assist" was changed to "participate"

in the third paragraph of the resolution, "so we look more neutral."

But the title remained: *A Resolution Establishing a Policy that Authorizes City Staff to Assist in Water Resource Acquisition for Properties Wishing to Annex to the City of Pismo Beach.*

The council voted unanimously to pass the resolution.

The issue of recusal when the annexation vote comes before the council should be interesting.



**Glub glub** Pismo in the tank.

**Two Sewers**

*continued from page 1*

review that was supposed to secure a development permit for a new wastewater treatment plant for Morro Bay and Cayucos went off the rails. All Smukler and Winholtz could do as the *fait accompli* rolled forward was protest what was happening, at the losing end of a lot of 3-to-2 votes.

In 2009, almost exactly the same thing happened to the Los Osos sewer, when County staff were in our-way-or-the-highway mode. At the April 8, 2010, joint meeting of the Morro Bay City Council and Cayucos Sanitary District, the Sierra Club's Chapter Director foretold what was about to happen seven months later, reading into the record excerpts from two cautionary letters sent to the County Public Works department by Coastal Commission staff as the Los Osos

sewer project's environmental review was nearing completion (see below).

On October 7, PERC Water, which carried the one glimmer of an alternative grudgingly allowed into the process, threw in the towel, notifying Morro Bay's city manager that due to "the lack of cooperation of City staff" and the fact that "the current draft EIR does not contemplate the PERC Water solution, at the direction of our attorneys we will no longer continue our efforts on the wastewater project."

On December 20, the Morro Bay City Planning Commission unanimously voted to reject the EIR and requested that the City Council direct staff to accommodate water reclamation and prepare a screening of potential alternative sites.

In 2009, the County took heed of the Coastal Commission's warnings in time to get an approved EIR and

Coastal Development Permit for the Los Osos sewer. Not so, Morro Bay.

The City Council majority responsibly for this debacle wholeheartedly backed Bill Yates for Mayor and George Leage and Nancy Johnson for City Council, who in turn wholeheartedly backed the "no alternative" sewer plan at JPA meetings and candidate forums.

Morro Bay needs a city council that understands that elected officials are supposed to provide the vision and leadership needed to meet the challenges a community faces, and to hear and convey the will of the people, even when that means saying "no" to staff.

We will now find out if the folks who are now in charge have learned that lesson.



**We've Seen This Movie Before**

Following are excerpts from two letters sent by California Coastal Commission staff to the SLO County Public Works Department -- dated March 25 and July 19, 2009 -- regarding the Los Osos Wastewater Project. Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter Director Andrew Christie read these excerpts into the record of the April 8, 2010, joint meeting of the Morro Bay City Council and Cayucos Sanitary District as a comment on the progress of the Morro Bay-Cayucos wastewater treatment plant project.

*"It seems clear that if the project is a tertiary project, many of the effluent disposal options will be completely different from those that have been evaluated, and could significantly change the scope of the project, including the availability of effluent for a range of beneficial uses (including, but not limited to, injection wells, urban/agriculture exchange or "purple pipe" programs, etc.). ...*

*"It also addresses necessary and appropriate mitigation necessary for adverse projects impacts because the tertiary treated wastewater will then be available and can then be used for other beneficial uses (i.e., groundwater augmentation, irrigation, habitat enhancement, etc.). ... In this regard, it is incumbent on the County to thoroughly evaluate and explain the various options and implications so that fully informed and best land use decisions can be made. ...*

*"There is little doubt that tertiary treatment can...assist in addressing community water supply problems, which...should be part of a broader discussion of the community needs and benefits derived from a project that includes tertiary treatment. This is particularly appropriate given that the project represents a significant public infrastructure investment which is capable, if properly conceived, designed and carried out, of achieving multiple public and community benefits. ...*

*"... We are concerned about and strongly urge the County to build into the project sensible and doable wastewater reuse and disposal components.... We strongly encourage design of a project that returns flows to the basin at project start up, particularly because if appears that multiple discharge options exist over the basin. As previously indicated, one of those feasible options is agricultural re-use, which has the added benefit of reduced pumping from the aquifer. Other feasible options include urban irrigation, residential re-use (purple pipe), constructed wetlands, disbursed leach fields and on-basin spray fields. ...*

*"The County's LCP policies call for balancing of groundwater basins and protection of watersheds. A project that does not fully return tertiary treated effluent to the basin would be inconsistent with applicable LCP policies."*

Christie concluded his testimony with the observation: "We do not think that when this project is before them, the Coastal Commission is going to say something totally different from what they just said about the wastewater treatment project right down there, and decide that none of this applies to the wastewater treatment project right here. Most likely, they will require very much the same as what I just read; unless, of course, you make water reclamation and re-use part of the project *before* you get to the end of this process and go before the Commission to see if you can get your permit approved."

Subsequently, Morro Bay and Cayucos produced an Environmental Impact Report that ignored all of the above, immediately prompting a letter from Coastal Commission staff telling them to do it over again and do it right.



# A CELEBRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ART AND LITERATURE

## It certainly was!

By popular acclaim of attendees, our 2010 fundraiser was one of the best events the Santa Lucia Chapter has ever held.

Those who thronged the King David Masonic Temple in San Luis Obispo on December 5 had the usual initial reaction of anyone entering the unprepossessing building on Marsh Street and beholding the richly furnished interior of one of the oldest historic locations in SLO ("Wow!").

Throughout the day, they ventured into the hall's recesses and into the audience for local authors who gave fifteen five-minute readings from their works and donated signed copies for sale, including several award-winners and best sellers:

- Sylvia Alcon, from *Poems for Endangered Places*
- Odile Ayrat, from *To Speak, To Tell You*
- Phyllis Davies, from *Grief: Climb Toward Understanding*
- Ken Haggard, from *Fractal Architecture*
- Paula Huston, from *The Holy Way*
- Starr Jenkins, from *More than My Share*
- Vicki Leon, from *How to Mellify a Corpse*
- Martin Luschei, from *The Black Hills and the Indians: A Haven of Our Hopes*
- Steven Marx, from *Cal Poly Land: A Field Guide*
- Karen Merriam, from *Searching for Connection*
- Jack Morrow, from *The Consortium*
- Bob Pavlik, from *Norman Clyde: Legendary Mountaineer*
- Matt Ritter, from *Plants of San Luis Obispo, Their Lives and Stories*
- David Weisman, from *The Texas Legacy Project*
- Marion Wolff, from *Shedding Skins*



Andrew Christie

In between, guests went shopping, browsing among 90 unique silent auction items, including original crafts, artwork, wine tastings, resort stays in cabins in Yosemite and British Columbia, and much more. They availed themselves of the wine tasting opportunities provided by several of San Luis Obispo's most prestigious wineries, augmented with bread, cheese and chocolate -- artisan breads donated by



Andrew Christie

Steven Marx



Linnea Phillips exits a reading with Vicki Leon (left) and Sylvia Alcon.

Skipping Stone Productions of Paso Robles, and fair trade chocolates by Sweet Earth Chocolates -- followed by gourmet organic, vegan cuisine catered by Vraja's Kitchen of downtown SLO... all the while serenaded by the country-bluegrass stylings of the Cornshuckers.



Silent auction coordinator Liz Tracy assists bidders.

"It was a memorable afternoon with fellow Sierra Club members and chapter leaders," said Steven Marx, Chapter Treasurer and one of the event's lead organizers. "I'm very glad we all got the chance to experience a wonderful day of exploration of the interconnections among nature, the arts, spirituality, health, and activism.

"I'm also glad our supporters came together to provide the essential financial support to keep your local Chapter afloat during hard times for all non-profits."



Skipping Stone Productions

Many thanks to our providers of fine food and drink













Steven Marx

**EcoSummit**  
continued from page 4

Luis Obispo County the fate of municipalities that have allowed the virtually unregulated importation and disposal of highly toxic sewage sludge, trucked in from around the state.

Broadwater, the founder of the Center for Sludge Information, said that in the struggle to create a permanent ordinance to regulate the land application of sewage sludge, "this county has refused repeatedly to look at alternatives."

Jack McCurdy, a retired Pulitzer Prize winning reporter who founded the Citizens Alliance on Plant Expansion (CAPE), anchored the panel on the Morro Bay power plant. CAPE co-founder Dave Nelson summed up the rationale for spending a decade fighting the damage done by the Morro Bay power plant by observing "Saving an estuary? If I do nothing else in my life, I'm good."

Local environmental attorney Babak Naficy, CAPE's lawyer throughout the long fight with Duke Energy, the plant's original owner, observed, "it's like a war: you're going to win some battles and

lose some battles, and you can't know the outcome until the end. Sometimes you win because you're the last one standing. Duke folded like a cheap umbrella."

The panel on the ongoing effort to include the waters of SLO County in a National Marine Sanctuary had the longest pedigree, and included Karl Kempton, the former county planner who was charged with drafting the 1990 document — a 500-page treatise — submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



**Passing the Torch**  
continued from page 4

invited. I was serving on the committee tasked with advising on the creation of the Land Use and Circulation Element for the El Pomar Estrella planning area in the North County when a faculty member brought her students to share their plans for new towns with the community.

The encounter was tense and almost combative. The community had not indicated a preference for new towns, and the students acted as if they had all the answers for a community they had not previously consulted for its thoughts.

When I asked the professor why she couldn't have brought the students at an earlier stage, simply to listen, she asserted that she didn't want the students to experience the vulnerability of appearing unprepared. Her definition of "prepared" was perceived by the community as arrogance; the evening was marked by deepening misunderstanding as the students, when challenged, reacted with defensiveness and quick comebacks, while the community felt this was an attempt to put something over on them.

Another professor often brings students to share transportation and planning ideas in community settings. The students are very well-grounded in their subject matter, but their opportunity to learn from the community is forfeited by the professor's insistence on drafting the community members as quasi-faculty, tasked with issuing number grades to the student presenters. Time that could be spent in authentic conversation is wasted in tortured explanations of this grading system. I have always refused to issue these snap judgments. The advantage of going to the community is to see how they authentically react to these proposals;

when those students go on to careers in the field, they will be presenting to neighborhood meetings, and there they won't be graded. They will field questions and hear authentic reactions. Why can't the community be invited to do what it does naturally?

I believe the best way to seek opportunities to mentor is to find youth-led efforts and humbly ask if we can be of assistance. Not to take over, not to judge or grade, but to assist.

An excellent opportunity for the community-building in which these relationships can be created is the "Green Gravity" gathering ([greengravityradio@blogspot.com](mailto:greengravityradio@blogspot.com)) that happens at Sustenance Cooking Studio about four times a year. It is primarily organized by young people in the Empower Poly Coalition, and consists of the sharing of a meal, presentations by people of all ages, and music and dancing at the end.

The subtitle of "Green Gravity" is "A time to pull together!" The atmosphere at these gatherings is convivial and non-ageist. People mingle naturally and truly hear each other. (Another such event will be happening in February; contact Sustenance for the date.) It is a good starting point for those who don't see other avenues for creating intergenerational community. But those avenues are there, and we should all remain open to seeing the ones that present themselves to us.

Ageism is as corrosive to a healthy community as racism, sexism, and homophobia. Let us all resolve, in this new year, to combat all attitudes that stand in the way of building community, and especially to focus on building bridges with those who will live the longest into a future that looks scary to all of us, but in which there is room for hope—if, and only if, we all pull together.

nominating the waters of SLO for Sanctuary status. Former ECOSLO Executive Director Pam Heatherington recounted her organization's efforts to revive that effort in the century; Sierra Club Chapter Director Andrew Christie picked up the saga with the Sierra Club's work on sanctuary expansion from 2004-2009, and Surfrider's Carol Georgi concluded with the current work being done by the Marine Sanctuary Alliance, founded by the local chapters of Surfrider and the Sierra Club.

Empower Poly co-founder Eric Veium, one of the climate activists who attended the 2009 climate change summit in Copenhagen and deeply felt the failure of those talks, urged the importance of making the case for the cost of inaction, and noted the importance of "making our message relevant to people who want different things than we do."

It was clear by the end of the day that discouragement comes with the territory, and victories are few and tend to be temporary. CAPE's Monique Nelson said that if you're going to be an activist, "you have to leap before you look, because if you looked at the situation you're getting into, you'd get so discouraged you'd never do it."

Moderator Sue Harvey, president of North County Watch, concluded the program by quoting Warren Buffett's granddaughter: "sometimes all you can do is show up, do your best, and tell the truth."

"And some days that's enough," she added.

**Ghost Nets**  
continued from page 5

Club broadside against environmentalists and the environmental movement. And seven years after that, our correspondent sent us Crichton's speech in support of the effort to overturn California's landmark clean air and clean energy law.

Crichton's Commonwealth Club speech enlisted many other specific bad ideas in the cause of pointing out how wrong environmentalists are. Among them: the ban on DDT caused millions of malaria deaths in the Third World (wrong: DDT was banned in the U.S., not the Third World, where its declining efficacy is a result of its overuse in agriculture); and, of course, global warming



# Lame Duck Orders Midnight Special



*Blink and you missed it* Arnie and Reiss.

When Supervisor Katcho Achadjian went to Sacramento to join the State Assembly, he gave up his seat on the California Coastal Commission, much to the relief of the California coast.

After all newly elected officials in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura were seated, Governor Brown would then have called for a list of nominees from the three counties in order to appoint a local elected official to serve as the new Central Coast coastal commissioner, in a transparent public process.

Instead, *before* the election, Governor Schwarzenegger called for the list in a highly opaque process

continued on page 10

is a natural event, no big deal, and/or not really happening, because the ice in the Antarctic is growing thicker. (Wrong: warmer atmospheric temperatures are replacing Antarctic snowfall with increased rainfall).

But always central to Crichton's attack was the idea of environmentalism as religion, and environmentalists as dangerously irrational romantics.

Because it is useful when deployed in this manner, Bill Cronon's bad idea will be with us for some time to come. To the extent that we will have time in which to entertain bad ideas -- that is to say, if our time is not running out -- it will be thanks to all those dangerous romantics who have fought to preserve the natural world, which is all that sustains us.



# Sunlight and Shadow



## Proposed Carrizo solar power plant proposals to be heard Jan. 27

The shift to renewable energy, from all sources, including utility-scale solar power plants, is imperative if life as we know it is to survive on this planet. We need a whole lot of wind, solar, geothermal energy, and efficiency and conservation (“negawatts”).

That said, two other things need to be said. First, this need has not changed the fact that there are better and worse places to put large renewable energy facilities, and a major criterion in ranking those places is the presence of endangered species on the proposed project site. Second, “distributed generation” – aka urban solar, aka rooftop solar – is not a boutique energy source, or inadequate to the purpose of generating solar power on a large scale.

That doesn’t mean we need to form up into opposing camps of who thinks utility-scale solar power plants can generate the renewable energy we need, or whether rooftop solar can generate all the renewable power we need. That is not what this is about.

This is about two specific projects applying to the County for permits; proposed for specific sites, to generate 250 MW and 550 MW of solar power, respectively. And the question before the county, as the permitting authority, is “Are there feasible alternatives to this project that could meet the essential project objective — the generation of solar power at the preferred level — and do so with significantly less environmental impacts than the proposed project?”

If there are such alternatives – alternative sites, alternative technologies, or both — the law requires that the County select those alternatives.

One problem with the discussion of alternatives is the problem of old data. In the solar industry, data gets old faster than it does in any other field. “Old data” means 18 months and less. Figures from 2009 on relative prices of solar technology in various configurations are now out of date. In 2010, the price of solar power per watt fell to a level competitive with fossil fuel sources, and rooftop solar is now

competitive with the price of utility scale solar.

As a result, many utility vs. rooftop arguments from 2009 are now inoperative.

The single greatest concern the projects pose are their unmitigatable impacts on threatened and endangered species.

When we talk about endangered species and the Endangered Species List, we’re talking about the blue whale, the snow leopard, the mountain gorilla, the chimpanzees of Gombe, the San Joaquin kit fox, and giant kangaroo fox -- all on the same list, for the same reason. They are all of equal importance, and they are all facing the same problem: loss of habitat. State resource agencies and conservation groups have devoted

millions of dollars and thousands of man hours to protecting, conserving and reestablishing the threatened and endangered species of the Carrizo; a number of which live in the Carrizo Plain and San Joaquin Valley and nowhere else on Earth. If we lose them here, they’re gone from the planet, forever.

That’s why the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Defenders of Wildlife, The Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Center for Biological Diversity, North County Watch, the California Department of Fish and Game and others are urging the County to think long and hard before permitting a project that promises mitigation measures for its impacts never attempted on such a massive scale.

### TAKE ACTION

The County Planning Commission will potentially decide whether to issue permits for both projects on Thursday, January 27. Check [www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning.htm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning.htm) for agenda and time. Please attend and support the concerns expressed below by environmental groups and the California Department of Fish and Game.

# Doombunnies!

About a hundred miles north of the sites of the two solar power plants proposed for the Carrizo Plain lies San Benito County and the Panoche Valley, site of a third proposed solar plant, even larger than the massive installations proposed for the Carrizo.

The plans for Panoche Valley are a matter of concern for the state



tem of which the kit fox and the giant kangaroo rat are an integral part. The same problem is an issue with the Carrizo projects.

The Panoche Valley EIR consultant somehow morphed that into the following statement in the EIR:

*The addition of vertical structure and changes in grazing practices are likely to attract rabbits, which are known predators of giant kangaroo rats and could reduce giant kangaroo rat abundance on the project site.*

The gaffe immediately became legend among enviros and state resource specialists. For years to come, it is likely that the carnivorous killer rabbits of the Panoche will stand as the emblem and verbal short-hand for problematic or dubious Environmental Impact Reports.

The humor is obvious, but serves to underscore the seriousness of the matter at hand: when the survival or extinction of a species is at stake, you’d better know what you’re doing.



resource agencies studying the Draft Environmental Impact Reports for all three plants, as the Panoche and the Carrizo represent two of the remaining three “core areas” supporting the critically endangered San Joaquin kit fox and giant kangaroo rat. Cumulative impacts of the three projects could have a potentially devastating impact on these species.

The California Department of Fish and Game met with the environmental consultants preparing the Draft EIR for the Panoche Valley project on behalf of Solargen to raise the concern that Solargen’s contemplated change in grazing of the proposed array area -- a plan to have sheep graze in and around the solar arrays -- would attract rabbits, which attract coyotes, which prey on rabbits and also kill kit fox. This, DFG biologists pointed out, would be detrimental to the kit fox and the biological ecosys-

## A Chorus of Concern

### Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the California Valley Solar Ranch project

Full text at [www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/environmental/Environmental Notices/sunpower/publicresponse.htm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/environmental/Environmental%20Notices/sunpower/publicresponse.htm)

#### Audubon Society

While Audubon California supports renewable energy to reduce the impacts of climate change, we advocate for avoidance of habitat disturbance over mitigation. We are especially concerned about the inadequate level of effort in the DEIR on the many species of birds in the project vicinity.... The science is insufficient to know with a reasonable degree of certainty whether a mobile species, such as the Kit Fox or Pronghorn Antelope, will utilize the corridors between solar arrays, or whether foxes will pass through the fencing and use the solar array areas themselves.

#### Center for Biological Diversity

It is hard to imagine a proposed project site with more endangered and imperiled species on site than the project described in the EIR. The proposed project will result in significant unmitigatable impacts to biological resources both on the proposed project site and cumulatively for the region.... The DEIR fails to consider potential alternatives that would protect the most sensitive lands from future development. Alternative siting such as the Westlands Solar Park, which is on abandoned agricultural fields, and alternative technologies (including distributed PV on commercial rooftops and near existing substations) should have been fully considered in the DEIR, because these alternatives would eliminate the impacts to species, soils, and water resources in the California Valley,

which is part of the larger Carrizo Plain.... As the Center has emphasized in our comments on the various large scale industrial solar proposals in the California desert, planning should be done *before* site specific projects are approved in order to ensure that resources are adequately protected from sprawl development and project impacts are avoided, minimized and mitigated.

#### Defenders of Wildlife

Despite Project improvements, the DEIR has multiple flaws. It fails to analyze a reasonable range of alternatives, narrowly defining the project’s objectives in such a way as to preclude assessment of many viable alternatives on private and public degraded land. In addition, the DEIR does not adequately address the significant loss of habitat and cumulatively significant impacts of a project that spans more than 2,000 acres of relatively undisturbed grassland.... The Westlands CREZ Alternative is feasible based on a CEQA feasibility analysis. It is capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.... It should be considered for adoption due to the inability to mitigate impacts to San Joaquin kit fox and giant kangaroo rat on the proposed project site.

#### North County Watch

Although the large scale industrial solar project that is the subject of this EIR is located outside the Carrizo Plain National Monument on adjacent private lands, its development and operation will necessarily have significant, irreversible, individual and cumulative adverse spillover effects on vital public values of the Monument.... The significant adverse effects on the essential, intrinsic values of the Monument – its isolation, tranquility, visual integrity,



# Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“Diablo is on top of recent seismic issues,” by Loren Sharp, *The Tribune*, December 5, 2010.

**Summary:** According to the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant’s director of engineering services, there’s no need to do a detailed seismic survey of the area around Diablo prior to seeking renewal of the plant’s operating license for another twenty years.

Mr. Sharp has a short memory. Diablo Canyon is the only nuclear plant required to have a long-term seismic program as a penalty from the NRC for their seismic negligence during the original licensing and construction period. As amply documented in the 1970s and ‘80s by the San Luis Obispo *Telegram-Tribune*, PG&E ignored the Hosgri fault, then denied its existence or potential consequences, and eventually had to retrofit and rebuild the plant twice, adding over \$4 billion to the price tag for ratepayers. The NRC “looked the other way” on seismic problems until it was too obvious to ignore, hence the mandated program.

Our company recognizes geological safety is a critical component of the ongoing safe operation of Diablo Canyon.... Diablo Canyon is the only nuclear power plant in the United States with a long-term seismic program led by our team of expert, in-house geoscientists who continuously gather new data and work with the United States Geological Survey. Their findings are then independently reviewed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The word “safety” did not appear in Ms. Becker’s editorial, and she raised no such concerns. She identified the directives of state regulators and legislators to complete and peer-review new seismic studies and mapping before the approval of license renewal. These agencies have jurisdiction over the economics and reliability of power generation. In the wake of the 2007 Japanese earthquake that crippled the world’s largest reactor complex—which had been certified by the Japanese NRC to meet their highest standards—Californians have a right to be concerned.

In her Dec. 2 Viewpoint, Rochelle Becker raised concerns about the seismic safety of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant (“Answers before Diablo renewal”). As long as we operate the plant and provide electricity to our customers, we will be studying seismic issues.

The “Shoreline” fault was officially recognized by scientists using advanced techniques at the US Geological Survey, *not* PG&E -- which, in their “25 years of operating history” seemed to have missed an active fault, the traces of which were first visible on maps over 25 years ago. The NRC seems to be no better as a seismic sleuth. In the aftermath of the 2003 San Simeon quake, the NRC was asked if a fault survey had been done in the area “...right next to the shore, but not on shore where a geologist has been able to map it.” In May 2004 the NRC concluded that “the presence of a fault within the coast between Point Buchon and Point San Luis is very unlikely...” until the USGS pointed it out to them. And the NRC’s Shoreline assessment is “preliminary,” for PG&E hasn’t even completed their formal evaluation yet, and the USGS believes several more years of research are needed.

Throughout Diablo Canyon’s 25 years of operating history, continuous rigorous seismic research and analysis has allowed us to stay on top of seismic issues such as the 2008 discovery of the Shoreline fault. Through the efforts of our long-term seismic program, we discovered the fault, we immediately reported it, we conducted in-depth studies on it and we came to the scientific conclusion that Diablo Canyon was designed and constructed to withstand a larger, more severe earthquake than the Shoreline fault is capable of generating. The Nuclear Regulatory Commis-

Assembly Bill 1632 and the state’s subsequent directives, drafted before the discovery of the Shoreline Fault, directed PG&E to use “use three-dimensional and geophysical seismic reflection mapping and other advanced techniques to explore fault zones near Diablo Canyon” and “to assess the implications of a San Simeon-type earthquake beneath Diablo Canyon.” In addition, the Coastal Commission has requested more in-depth studies of the land-based faults beneath the Irish Hills. PG&E’s continued public relations strategy to focus attention solely on the Shoreline Fault ignores seismic concerns for the other fault zones near the reactors. PG&E hasn’t even begun to obtain the permits needed for the 3-D studies.

We are committed to continuing to provide safe, clean, reliable and affordable power to customers for years to come, and we are committed to continued analysis of important new seismic information. Beginning the license-renewal process now will help us meet that commitment. We will keep providing new information to our regulators, the scientific community and our neighbors through normal regulatory means. To date, PG&E has briefed the California Legislature, the governor’s office, the California Energy Commission and the California Coastal Commission on the status of the Shoreline fault zone investigation and other long-term seismic program activities, as well as provided the California Energy Commission and the California Public Utilities Commission with the most up-to-date seismic information available.



**Upshot:** The California Public Utilities Commission—the same regulators who are culpable in PG&E’s tragic San Bruno gas explosion—are poised to grant them ratepayer funding for license renewal without conclusive seismic review, a potential repeat of the last \$4 billion debacle. Learn more and send an action letter at [www.a4nr.org](http://www.a4nr.org).

# Letters

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

We received the following letter shortly before the November 2 election and the defeat of Proposition 23, the oil company-backed measure that would have rolled back implementation of AB 32, California's clean energy/clean air law.

Editor,

Your recent letter to the editor of The Tribune, supporting the implementation of AB 32 mandating a certain amount of "green energy" in the State, attempts to refute my contention that jobs would be lost in the state by saying that "green jobs" have and would be created. I will grant you that this is probably true.

However, one question is: Will there be a net loss of jobs because of the implementation of AB 32?

Logic tells me that if the price of producing "green energy" solar and wind were competitive with fossil fuels there would be no need for AB 32. Solar and wind are more expensive to produce. Purchasers of electricity in California businesses and homes will be required to pay more for electricity – this will result in a loss of jobs and higher costs for energy. See the enclosed editorial from the *Wall Street Journal*.

The other question is: Is creating "green jobs" and reducing carbon dioxide by California acting alone worth it?

Economist Martin Feldstein has written: "Since the U.S. share of global CO<sub>2</sub> production is now less than 25% (and is projected to decline as China and other developing nations grow) a 15% fall in U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> output would lower global CO<sub>2</sub> output by less than 4%. Its impact on global warming would be virtually unnoticeable." (Martin Feldstein, "Cap and Trade: All Cost, No Benefit," *Washington Post*, June 1, 2009.)

Mr. Feldstein is writing about reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the United States, not just California. It is pretty clear that the continual implementation of AB 32 will be very expensive for the state and accomplish nothing.

I suspect that your mind will not be changed because you are of the opinion that "green jobs are good jobs" and this is a core believe [sic] of the Sierra Club.

The government attempts to create jobs has historically been unsuccessful. The free market is best.

Do you really want to create green jobs? Enact a law that makes it illegal to use any fossil fuels on California farms. That will create a lot of jobs, but to what end? Will not food produced in California be more expensive? You bet. In the 1930's about 40% of the population lived on the farm. Today, less than 5% do. Why are farmers more productive? Because of tractors and other farm equipment are powered by gas and diesel. The people who left the farm became teachers and doctors, factory workers and on and on. The U.S. is still the most productive nation in the world because each worker with, among other things, power equipment can produce more. Do you want to live with the Amish? I don't think so.

Also enclosed is a copy of Michael Crichton's remarks to the Commonwealth Club, 15 September 2003.

William H. McKenzie  
Atascadero

*While last November's election resulted in a nationwide entrenchment of deeply reactionary politics — meaning voters are in for an object*

*lesson in the truth of the maxim that it is unwise to make decisions when you're angry — the striking contrast of those national results with the vote in California was cause to hold onto hope for the future. And the best symbol of that hope was the overwhelming rejection of Proposition 23, the oil company-funded initiative to gut California's efforts to move from fossil fuels to clean renewable energy.*

*Is creating green jobs and reducing carbon emissions by California "acting alone" worth it?" The idea that actions to reduce carbon emissions and accelerate the transition to a renewable energy economy require economic hardship is false. A growing body of research shows that clean energy and climate policies will protect both the environment and the economy. It's safe to say that efforts by Prop. 23's backers to depict California's share of the nation's current economic woes as having something to do with our state's moves toward a clean energy economy were rightly seen by the voters as a shell game.*

*And California is far from "acting alone." More than a thousand municipalities nationwide are putting carbon emission reduction measures in place thanks to the Sierra Club's Cool Cities program (see [www.coolcities.us](http://www.coolcities.us)). More than a dozen states have mandated a percentage of their total energy output come from renewable sources. California is one of 27 U.S., Canadian, and Mexican states and provinces participating in the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), a collaboration of independent jurisdictions working together to identify, evaluate, and implement policies to tackle climate change at a regional level. We are part of a comprehensive effort to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, spur investment in clean-energy technologies that create green jobs and reduce dependence on imported oil. Had Prop 23 passed, we would have had to drop out of WCI.*

*Proposition 23 also would have killed competition and jobs from*

## Midnight Special

*continued from page 7*

that was the opposite of public. Many members of the selection committees in the three counties didn't even know it was happening, nor did the public, nor did a lot of potential nominees. In the staff reports to the various boards of supervisors describing the item as it quietly slipped onto consent agendas, it wasn't even mentioned that the governor had officially called for the list of nominees.

As a result, only two names made the list: SLO County Supervisor Bruce Gibson and Pismo Beach Mayor Mary Ann Reiss, a development-friendly real estate agent. Unsurprisingly, Reiss got the nod from the departing governor.

Sierra Club California has joined with 83 other environmental groups in urging Governor Brown for a re-do: Call for the list of nominees again, and this time let everybody know it.

*clean energy and technology businesses and stifled billions of dollars in investments. According to the nonpartisan State Legislative Analyst's Office, the suspension of AB 32 could: "dampen additional investments in clean energy technologies or in so-called 'green jobs' by private firms, thereby resulting in less economic activity than would otherwise be the case." The LAO found that a study by a Sacramento economics professor claiming that AB 32 will bring economic doom "contains a number of serious shortcomings that render its estimates of the annual economic costs of state regulations essentially useless."*

*The fate of Proposition 23 was keenly observed nationwide. When the voters spoke loud and clear in defense of our clean energy and clean air law, the toughest in the nation, other states took notice. As has so often been the case, California has set the bar and established a goal for the rest of the country to aim for. Most likely, the federal government will wind up playing catch-up with the states on progressive clean energy and carbon reduction legislation, with goals far beyond "a 15% fall in U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> output."*

*And finally: The disappearance of small farms is not a success story of increased productivity; it's testimony to the loss of family farms to rapacious corporate consolidation. When the U.S. National Research Council assessed the efficiency of large industrial food production systems, it concluded that "Well-managed alternative farming systems nearly always use less synthetic chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and antibiotics per unit of production than conventional farms. Reduced use of these inputs lowers production costs and lessens agriculture's potential for adverse environmental and health effects without decreasing — and in some cases increasing — per acre crop yields and the productivity of livestock management systems."*

## Strawberry

*continued from page 1*

Committee both concluded that methyl iodide is too toxic to use.

The Pesticide Action Network said in a letter to Governor Jerry Brown, "Methyl iodide will be a health nightmare for people who live and work near strawberry production areas in the Central and South Coast regions of California. The result will be more thyroid disease, more cancer, and tragically, more mothers who lose their babies late in pregnancy."

## TAKE ACTION

Buy only organically grown strawberries, and/or contact:  
Governor Jerry Brown  
State Capitol Bldg.  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: 916-558-3160

...and ask him to reconsider the approval of Methyl iodide.

## Carrizo Concerns

*continued from page 8*

cultural sacredness – cannot be mitigated and are scarcely discussed in the DEIR.

## Natural Resources Defense Council

The two projects impact the same species of concern and together have the potential to significantly reduce the width and permeability of a key migration corridor that runs up and down the Carrizo Plain.... impacts to [kit fox] will have cumulative impacts far beyond Carrizo that will prevent recovery of the species.... Given the significant impacts of the project and the cumulative impacts anticipated if both projects mentioned above are developed, we are very concerned about the lack of a clearly described mitigation plan in the DEIR

## The Nature Conservancy

Based on the wide-ranging impacts to species and the lack of sufficient, effective and appropriate mitigation, the Conservancy must register deep concern with the project.... The mitigation package should not include fragmented lands within the project's footprint that are unused for photovoltaic panels...because of the uncertainty as to whether kit fox or other wide-ranging species would actually use these sites.... Without a thorough plan to accomplish these goals and others, efforts to mitigate losses to San Joaquin Valley threatened and endangered species could fail, exacting a devastating toll on the Carrizo Plain core populations and recovery of the species overall.

## Sierra Club

We urge that the alternatives analysis, which currently contains a significant amount of dated, imprecise or incorrect information, be corrected and updated as indicated to afford the clearest possible picture of project alternatives. In evaluating the Project Objective of locating the facility near utility grade transmission lines of adequate capacity, the DEIR states that it is "uncertain" as to "whether adequate transmission capacity exists" or whether new or upgraded transmission facilities would be required" at the Westlands CREZ... We note the analysis of the Westlands alternative as it appears on page E-16 of the Sept. 2010 Final EIR for the Panoche Valley Solar Farm Project:

*"As part of a California Public Utilities Commission Long Term Procurement Planning workshop, the CAISO prepared a rough estimate of available transmission by CREZ. The Westlands CREZ was found to have 800 MW of existing transmission capability with minor upgrades (CAISO, 2010)."*

The Panoche Valley project FEIR finds that the Westlands alternative "substantially meets" this project objective. The CVSR DEIR should be revised accordingly.


## CA Department of Fish and Game

The Department recommends that this Project be relocated to impaired agricultural lands in the Central Valley, or to otherwise disturbed lands that are not considered critical for the recovery of multiple State and Federally listed species.... Any project in the Westlands CREZ would substantially reduce or even eliminate impacts to the species that occur on the proposed project site. Many of the species do not even occur within the Westlands CREZ, which is expected to support only low numbers of a few special status species.

# Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **January 13**. 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



**Wonderful 2,000 sq ft solar home**, sustainable materials — cork, bamboo, therapeutic spa. Nature and Bay all around; 1-2 blks, Sweet Springs, bay boat inlet, Morro Rock. Unique design, lots of angles; large beautiful enclosed and private landscaped gardens, much more. Auction proceeding, contact Josef Jackson (805) 704-9133, [lososohomeauction.com](http://lososohomeauction.com)

**SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING**



**NATURAL INVESTMENTS LLC**

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

San Luis Obispo, California  
[www.naturalinvesting.com](http://www.naturalinvesting.com)

Fee-only Sustainable Investment Advice  
Natural Investments, LLC  
An investment adviser registered with the SEC

**Les Kangas**  
Solar Energy Consultant  
REC Solar, Inc.  
775 Fiero Lane, Suite 200  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401



Office: (805) 528-9705  
Cell: (805) 305-7164  
Toll Free: (888) OK-SOLAR (657-6527)  
Fax: (805) 528-9701

*Eco Slo* **Learn Green, Work Green, Live Green.**

**Not a member? Join today.**  
[www.ecoslo.org](http://www.ecoslo.org)

1204 Nipomo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 544-1777  
ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

**slosolstice.com**  
green directory



**Be smart... be green!**  
CONTACT us... to be SEEN!  
ph: 805-473-5064 or email: [Solstice222@aol.com](mailto:Solstice222@aol.com)

**Helmholz Consulting**  
**Business Computer Networks**

PHONE: (805) 547-0293  
E-MAIL: [dave@helmholz.net](mailto:dave@helmholz.net)


Providing personalized computer service to businesses in San Luis Obispo county

**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](mailto:planned.giving@sierraclub.org)

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



**Mac VanDuzer**  
Broker Associate  
TOLL FREE: (800) 767-0095  
OFFICE: (805) 927-1511  
FAX: (805) 927-1599  
CELL: (805) 909-7630  
[MacVanDuz@aol.com](mailto:MacVanDuz@aol.com)

**e-PRO** **Sand Shell REALTY**

555 Main Street  
Cambria, CA 93428

**GREEN HOMES**  
Pismo to San Simeon A portion of any commission donated to the Sierra Club

**CYNTHIA HAWLEY**  
ATTORNEY

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
LAND USE  
CIVIL LITIGATION**

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

Paul J. McCloskey • Photo-Paintings  
Fine Art Photography, Pigment Prints, & Photo-Paintings (Mixed media)



**"Painting With Light"**  
"A New Vision of the Central Coast... And Beyond"  
Art Exhibition

The Clark Center  
For the Performing Arts  
Jan. - Feb., 2011

1487 Fair Oaks Avenue  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
805-489-9444

\*A percentage of sales goes to the local Sierra Club



**Stew Jenkins**  
Lawyer

Trust & Estate Plans  
Prenuptial Agreements  
Domestic Partnerships

1336 Morro Street ♦ San Luis Obispo ♦ 541-5763



**SIERRA CLUB**  
SANTA LUCIA CHAPTER

**We're on Facebook**  
search: "Santa Lucia"  
and become our friend!

# 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. 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, 772-1875. For information on a specific outing, please call the outing leader.

**Sat., January 1st, 9:30 a.m. Cerro San Luis Hike:** Start the New Year outdoors with a hike up Cerro San Luis for a look at all of SLO in 2011. Meet at the Fernandez Road parking area (Marsh Street to 101 south on-ramp) at 9:30 A.M. for an energetic and just a little strenuous hike to the Summit (1000 ft. elevation gain). Trail is rough in places, just over 4 miles, and boots or sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Leader: Mike Sims, 805 459-1701, [msims@slonet.org](mailto:msims@slonet.org).

**Fri-Sun, Jan 7-9, Death Valley Wilderness Restoration.** Help with installing park boundary and wilderness signs, removing trash, and other restoration tasks in this beautiful and remote National Park. Meet early Friday afternoon and work on erasing vehicle tracks in Gower Gulch. Saturday work in Amargosa Valley on east side of Park, installing signs. Sunday work TBA. Camp Friday and Saturday nights at Texas Springs campground. Bring appetizer/dessert for potluck Saturday evening. Leader: Lois Allen, (661) 944-4056 or [kj.allen@wildblue.net](mailto:kj.allen@wildblue.net). CNRCC Desert Committee.

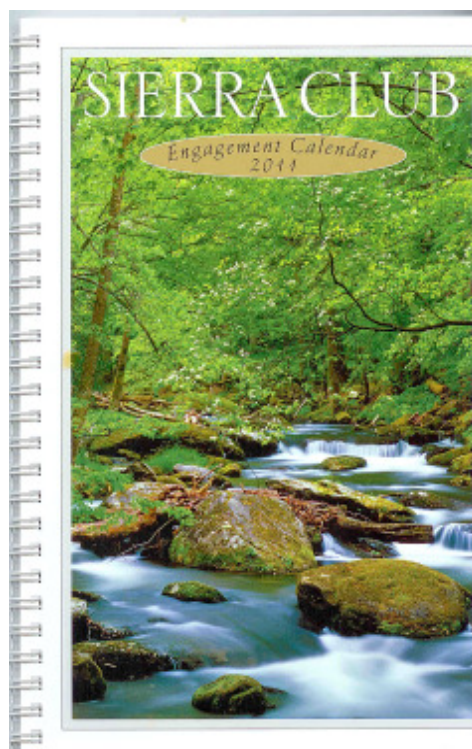
**Saturday, January 15th, 9 am, Lopez Lake – Duna Vista Trail:** Join us for a hike led by a botanist to the Duna Vista lookout, located on the ridge between the two arms of Lopez Lake ("Two Waters Trail"). Ascend eastern side (Wittenberg Arm), descend to the western side (Lopez Arm), then up the summit loop trail (Duna Vista Trail) with 360 degree views of the Pacific and Santa Barbara Co. Total distance 7 miles, elevation gain 1000 feet, and hike time of about 3 hours. To reach the trail head, drive towards Lopez

order now!

## 2011 Sierra Club Calendar

**Accept no substitutes. Your desk will thank you. Your wall will thank you. And your friends and family will thank you. When you buy direct from the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's conservation work in San Luis Obispo County. We thank you.**

wall calendar: \$12.50  
desk calendar: \$13.50  
To order: 805-543-7051



Lake Recreation Area. Just before entrance, after crossing a bridge, turn right on Hi Mountain Road and proceed 0.8 miles to junction with Upper Lopez Canyon Road. Bear left on Upper Lopez Canyon Road and drive 4 miles to entrance of French Boy Scout Camp on left side of road. Park outside entrance to Boy Scott Camp at 9 a.m. Bring adequate water, a snack, and dress in layers for the weather; a hat is advised. For info, call Bill at (805) 459-2103 ([bill.waycott@gmail.com](mailto:bill.waycott@gmail.com)). Plants, animals, and the geology of the area will be topics during the hike. Rain cancels.

**Sat., Jan. 22nd, 9 a.m. Islay Creek East Boundary Loop in Montana de Oro State Park.** 9-mile hike with 1500 foot of elevation through the

wonderful hills of MDO SP. The recent rains will have greened the hills and we may see some early flowers as we roam the ridge tops. Bring water, snacks and dress for the weather. Possible eats after for those interested. Meet at the Hazard Peak/Ridge Trail parking area, 1/4 mile before the visitor center, MDO SP. Info.: Gary (805)473-3694. Rain Cancels.

**Sun, Jan 23rd, 10 a.m. Quarry Trail.** Pole Cats is back! Still

dedicated to leading local Sierra Club day hikes and modeling the benefits of using trekking poles. 2 miles/320 feet elevation change. Meet at the Quarry/Cabrillo Peak trailhead. Confirm with David Georgi at [polecatleader@gmail.com](mailto:polecatleader@gmail.com) or 458-5575. Bipeds welcome.

**Wed., January 26, 7 p.m. Bimonthly General Meeting: 2nd Annual Environmentalists' Rendezvous.**

What are the major environmental groups in SLO county up to and their plans for the coming new year? Here's a unique opportunity to hear from nine key players at one time and in one place. The public forum will feature staff from: the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, Morro Coast Audubon, ECOSLO, Green Build, Land Conservancy, Surfrider, S.W.A.P., Transition Towns, and our own Sierra Club chapter. Each will describe their premier projects and take time for questions. Last year's event was SRO, so come early for a seat! Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Free. Info: Joe Morris, 772-1875.

**Sat., Jan. 29th, 8:30 a.m. Cruikshank Trail to Lion Den Camp.** Join the leader on a strenuous mid-winter hike to Lion Den Camp in southern Big Sur, 12 miles round trip,

### Outings Sponsored by Other Organizations

**Sat., January 1st, 9:30 a.m. New Year's Day Hike in Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes.** In the tradition of Bill Denneen, Elizabeth Scott Graham will lead an outing in the Dunes north of Muscle Rock. Join and celebrate the new year. Meet at Guadalupe Nipomo Dunes parking lot, west end of Hwy. 166. Bring water, snack, and dress for the weather. Sponsored by the Dunes Center.

**Ventana Wilderness Alliance Trail Workdays in the Big Sur Area.** The Ventana Wilderness Alliance hosts many volunteer opportunities to clear and maintain trails on the Big Sur Coast. No experience is necessary, just the desire to be outdoors and work with others. You may be able to just come for the day or spend the weekend depending on trip location.

→ Jan 15-16 Upper Carrizo Trail. Bmac  
→ Jan 22-23 - David Knapp Cook Springs. To sign up or for information, contact Dave Knapp, Trail Crew Leader at e-mail [daveknapp@ventanawild.org](mailto:daveknapp@ventanawild.org).

This is a partial listing of Outings offered by our chapter. Please check the web page [www.santalucia.sierraclub.org](http://www.santalucia.sierraclub.org) for the most up-to-date listing of activities.

3000 ft of elevation gain, with great views of the coastline. We will hike to Upper Cruikshank Camp, near site of the old Cruikshank homestead. Then climb past Silver Camp to a rocky outcropping with wonderful views of the canyon of the north fork of Villa Creek. We will continue climbing to Lion Den Camp for lunch. Some early wildflowers may be present. This is an all day outing, not for beginners. Meet at Washburn Day Use area of San Simeon State Park, just north of Cambria. As you leave Cambria, the Hamlet Restaurant is on the right. The right turn into day use area is a short distance past restaurant. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and dress for the weather. There is a possibility of ticks and poison oak. There is a high probability of a refueling stop at the Main Street Grill after the hike. Rain cancels. Info.: Chuck at (805) 441-7597.

**Sat-Sun, Feb. 5-6, Winter Escape in the Carrizo Plain.** This outing combines a day of assistance to the Carrizo National Monument with a day of sightseeing and/or hiking. Weather can be cold, gray, and rainy, or warm and bright - we take our chances. The service will be to remove or modify fences to give pronghorn greater mobility on the Plain; and the recreation will be determined by the wishes of the group. This is an opportunity to combine carcamping, day-hiking, exploring, and service in a relatively unknown wilderness. Leader: Craig Deutsche, [craig.deutsche@gmail.com](mailto:craig.deutsche@gmail.com), 310-477-6670. CNRCC Desert Committee.



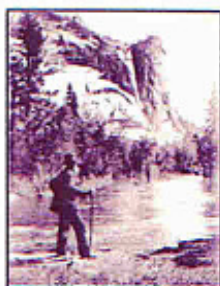
The Sierra Club  
Needs You!

## 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, Outings Chair  
Sierra Club, Santa Lucia Chapter  
(805) 772-1875  
[djj1942@earthlink.net](mailto:djj1942@earthlink.net)



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite