



October 2012
Volume 49 No. 9

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Bioneers

October 19-21



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SANTA LUCIAN



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

We Need You Now

Sierra Club must scale back in SLO County this year if we don't get support from all our members

By Greg McMillan, Chapter Chair

I think it should be clear to even the casual reader of the *Santa Lucian* that one word best defines the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club: "Independent."

And now it's time to ask: How much is what we do worth to you?

Unless we see a significant upsurge in financial support before the end of this year, we will have to close the office, lay off staff, and move the *Santa Lucian* to on-line status only — and it will be a very different publication, and less frequent. We have been operating at a deficit for several years, and we can no longer afford to do so.

For the better part of a decade, we have had a tireless staffer who has kept up on all the environmental issues facing San Luis Obispo County. He has attended virtually every hearing on the important environmental issues that affect our county — locally, in Sacramento, around the state and across the country; testified and written extensive, detailed comments on Environmental Impact Reports and other environmental documents; penned articulate commentary in local newspapers and edited every issue of the *Santa Lucian*.

Recently:

- We called out PG&E on their seismic survey plan to study areas offshore of Diablo Canyon that may not need any more study, while doing damage to the marine environment and ignoring on-shore areas that do need study but which might tell PG&E things they don't want to know about the seismic safety of their nuclear power plant/cash cow.
- We slammed the "global conspiracy" enthusiasts who have been popping up at local meetings all over the county lately to warn that environmentalists are plotting to wreck the economy and take over the world by promoting clean energy and policies to reduce carbon emissions.

Save the Date: Saturday, October 13

The Santa Lucia Chapter is at a crossroads. The state of the economy and the condition of our finances mean that we must make major decisions and major changes soon.

We need the input of our members. Come help us plan the future of the chapter.

If you can attend a meeting in Edna Valley on October 13, please let us know at sierraclub8@gmail.com, or call 805-238-4820.

more protections for those endangered species and their habitat. The candid internal discussion that resulted helped national h.q. to see the need for a greater emphasis on "rooftop solar," which the Sierra Club is now promoting in a big way.

- We refused to endorse two "moderate" incumbents in the June election for the County Board of Supervisors — candidates who had become so moderate and malleable over the last four years, they racked up voting records that no longer met the criteria for a Sierra Club endorsement.

WE NEED YOU continued on page 7

Some of our members choose to make an automatic contribution to the chapter of anywhere from \$20 to \$500 per month. Many more need to select that option, toward the higher end, if the Santa Lucia Chapter as we know it is to continue beyond 2012.

We know you care. That's why you're a Sierra Club member. Please consider a monthly contribution of the most you can afford. Visit our website at www.santalucia.sierraclub.org and click the "donate" button, then "monthly contribution," using Paypal.

- We urged the Morro Bay City Council not to approve an environmentally deficient plan for a waste water treatment plant and try to slip it past the California Coastal Commission, a mistake that has cost — so far — hundreds of thousands of dollars to try to fix. (The council members who didn't listen have been resoundingly voted out of office.)
- When two solar power companies were seeking permits to build huge solar plants on endangered species habitat in the Carrizo Plain, we took our parent organization to task over the decision not to press harder for

Election 2012

Sierra Club endorsements for November 6

For President: Barack Obama



Photo: Matt Michrina

Environmentally speaking, Obama's first term has had a distinctly the-hand-that-giveth-taketh-away feeling. In January, he rightly refused to approve the permit for the Keystone Pipeline that would have paved a transnational highway for the environmental disaster that is Canadian tar sands oil. Then he approved the Oklahoma-Texas leg of the pipeline. Last September, he bowed to corporate polluters and their political apologists when he agreed to delay by two years the implementation of an EPA rule that would have reduced smog-causing ozone emissions and protected public health. But three months later he ended twenty years of deadly delays and enacted

ENDORSEMENTS continued on page 3

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photo:Kevin Walsh

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

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Diablo's Ground Truth



Making stuff up about the Diablo Canyon seismic survey project is not helpful

PG&E's proposed 3D seismic survey around the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant would deploy airguns in coastal waters that emit loud sound pulses in order to provide a detailed map of earthquake faults.

The survey is likely to create serious problems for marine wildlife. After extensive consultation and study, the major environmental groups tracking this issue have come to the conclusion that the information the proposed tests is likely to produce will not be sufficient to provide a full assessment of the seismic hazard, and therefore cannot justify the environmental impacts of the tests.

No one can really say how serious those impacts would be within a known range of probability. And that's why another problem is the eagerness with which some folks hereabouts have been painting a doomsday scenario; one in which those potential problems have been inflated orders of magnitude beyond the harms the test possibly could inflict within the realm of physical reality, and further asserting that there is no need to study the faults around Diablo Canyon.

This has required a lot of misstating and downplaying of the reality of Diablo. PG&E has been downplaying the seismic realities of Diablo Canyon for decades; it is saddening to see some of our friends and colleagues now doing the same.

Something like a local cottage industry has sprung up to disseminate fake facts and wild surmise to support this position, conjuring up a number of novel notions about the project, including but not limited to:

Airguns cause earthquakes.

The survey is an elaborate ruse for offshore oil exploration.

PG&E has been using its research vessel to chase whales out of Avila Bay (risking fines and the imprisonment of crew in wholesale daylight violations of the Marine Mammal Protection Act).

The estimated "take" of marine mammals in the Environmental Impact Report promises mass slaughter, with thousands of mortalities and the creation of an undersea desert off the central coast that will be devoid of life.

The seismic survey will guarantee that PG&E will get Diablo Canyon relicensed for another 20 years of operation. The survey will only delay removal of the nuclear plant. Instead of conducting seismic tests, Diablo Canyon should "just be shut down."

necessary for this standard-issue internet rumor-mongering are "no," or "wrong," or "you are making an assertion not based on evidence." But some elaboration is in order.

The widely expressed fear that the survey will wipe out all sea life off the coast appears to spring from unfamiliarity with the nature of a permit to "take" wildlife as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act, resulting in a fundamental misreading of the Environmental Impact Report prepared by the State Lands Commission and the EIR's conclusion that the survey would result in "significant and unavoidable" impacts on marine mammals. The EIR goes on to note that this "does not imply that mass mortality or severe injury of marine mammals would result from the Project, but only that the impact would exceed the EIR's identified significance threshold for these resources."

There is also much confusion around the airguns used in seismic surveys and military sonar. They are two different technologies. Navy sonar has been conclusively linked to strandings of whales and dolphins, with clear evidence of acoustic trauma; airguns have not.

We have multiple points of disagreement with the environmental review of this project by the National Science Foundation and the State Lands Commission, but here's something the EIR got absolutely right:

"The value of an accurate seismic hazard estimate for the DCP area is not dependent on whether DCP continues to operate, particularly because nuclear waste would remain on site even after decommissioning."

The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant cannot be wished away. It will not be closed down by dint of people voicing the opinion that putting a nuclear power plant in a seismically active zone was a bad idea. Officially, the plant is considered to be safe; that is, it is operating within its "design basis," its ability to withstand the largest earthquake that could be generated by known faults as understood by geologists at the time of the last major study, which was conducted in 1988.

Key phrase: "known faults." Today's reality: there is an earthquake fault a few hundred yards away from the power plant that was not known to be there until 2008. There is another one directly under the plant that PG&E has studiously ignored for thirty years (see "Safety is Their Worst Priority," June). No structure ever built can withstand an earthquake in which the ground splits directly beneath that structure.

Another fundamental misunderstanding: there are two errors contained in the notion that the tests are going to kill everything in the ocean just to secure the renewal of Diablo Canyon's license. Yes, PG&E needs to submit updated seismic data as part of the relicensing process, but nowhere is it written that doing so would show that relicensing and continued operation are permissible. The outcome no one should want is PG&E submitting its application for funding to the Public Utilities Commission accompanied by outdated seismic data; the data on which rests the current official position that the utility may safely operate a nuclear power

The only answers that should be

DIABLO continued on page 5

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

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Endorsements

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tough limits on emissions of mercury from power plants. He gave Shell Oil the green light for deepwater oil-drilling in the Arctic, but he secured a landmark 54 mpg fuel economy standard, doubling today's standard for cars and light trucks within 12 years. That's the biggest thing the government has ever done to cut oil consumption and carbon pollution – it will drive innovation, save more than 3 million barrels of oil per day and keep 570 million metric tons of greenhouse gases out of our atmosphere.

And this is the president that enacted the largest expansion of land and water conservation and protected wilderness in a generation, safeguarding millions of acres of new wilderness, protecting hundreds of miles of rivers and keeping important habitat safe from oil and gas leasing.

And then there's the matter of his opponent's deep allegiance to fossil fuel interests (see chart at right), and his use of global warming as a joke at his nominating convention. And while Mitt Romney could not add an actual oil or coal industry executive to the Republican ticket, by picking Paul Ryan for his VP, he did the closest thing to it.

For Americans who want clean air and water for their children, an economy that creates new clean energy jobs, and a healthy planet, it's clear that there is only one choice in this election, and it's the guy who said: "My plan will continue to reduce the carbon pollution that is heating our planet, because climate change is not a hoax. More droughts and floods and wildfires are not a joke. They're a threat to our children's future. And in this election, you can do something about it."

Much of the good Obama has done has been due to pressure by Sierra Club activists and our allies. Let's keep him where he is and keep the pressure on. We've made too much progress over the last four years to give it all back to big polluters. Help out at www.barackobama.com.

For U.S. Representative, 24th District: Lois Capps



Here are a few bills Capps is currently sponsoring: *The California Ocean and Coastal Protection Act* would prohibit oil and gas preleasing, leasing, and related activities in areas of the Outer Continental Shelf off the coast of California. *The Organic Standards Protection Act* would put more teeth and enforcement into the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. *The Coastal State Climate Change Planning Act* directs the Secretary of Commerce to establish a coastal climate change adaptation planning and response program to provide assistance to coastal states in developing climate change adaptation plans that will prepare for and reduce the negative consequences of climate change in the coastal zone.

In defending such laws as the Clean

Romney-Ryan Energy Plan

Open public lands and offshore areas to **drilling and mining**, threatening many of our treasured national parks.

Wants to end the wind energy **Production Tax Credit** and bring the growing wind industry to a standstill.

Reject protections from toxins and pollution, and dismantle protections like the **Clean Air and Clean Water Acts**.

Overtake fuel-efficiency standards and prohibit the safeguards that curb carbon pollution.

"President Obama promised to begin to slow the rise of the oceans and heal the planet. My promise is to help you and your family."

Mitt Romney
8/30/12

Obama Administration

Signed the most important lands-protection legislation in decades, and safeguarded a million acres around the **Grand Canyon** from **uranium mining**.

Helped create **thousands of clean-energy jobs** in the growing wind industry.

Enacted the strongest protections ever against **toxic mercury**, lead, soot, and arsenic from dirty power plants.

Implemented new standards to **double the average fuel efficiency** of new vehicles.

"Denying climate change won't make it stop."

President Obama
8/28/12

Which do you think is the right path forward?

Photo: Señor Codo

Photo: YoTuTu

Paid for by Sierra Club (www.sierraclub.org) and not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

Water Act and Coastal Zone Management Act, Capps notes "the majority party has been relentless with their attacks on these laws, as well as the areas those laws help to defend. The issues facing our oceans and coasts are more pressing than ever, that's why we should be strengthening protections, not turning our backs on them."

We need to return Capps to Congress so she can continue to champion California's environment. And we need to work on getting her more company. Help out at www.cappsforcongress.com.

For State Senate, District 17: Bill Monning



On the list of environmentally friendly state legislators we are endorsing in California this year, few can approach the record of Bill Monning. In the state Assembly and on the California Coastal Conservancy, Monning has been a strong proponent for protecting Californians' right to clean air and clean water, and for preserving our natural heritage. Before that, he was the Executive Director of the Nobel Peace Prize winning organization International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Monning brought together diverse stakeholders to develop a strategy for the creation of the Coastal Trail in the Big Sur area, and has demonstrated an ability to do the same for environmen-

tal, ocean, water and agricultural issues. That's a big part of the reason why he's been endorsed by a broad array of statewide environmental, business, public safety, consumer, labor, and professional groups, most of the County Supervisors and Mayors in the district, and by local leaders in education, law enforcement, health care, and small business.

Help out at www.billmonning.org.

For State Assembly, District 35: Gerry Manata



A veteran of Tom Hayden's 70's state senate and congressional campaigns, Manata has since championed progressive causes in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, and served on the executive committee of the Sierra Club's Los Padres chapter in Santa Barbara County. He has conducted voter registration drives and lived in the Oak Creek Commons co-housing complex in Paso Robles since 2004 and served as the housing association's board president for two years. He wants to establish a state oil extraction tax, ban plastic bags at checkout from all retail stores statewide, label products that contain genetically modified organisms, provide alternative energy for every state-owned building, convert state government car and small truck fleets to all- electric or hybrid vehicles, require that food sold in state-run

cafeterias use as much local organic food as possible, and so on. In short: he's the anti-Katcho – as far as you can get from the you-scratch-my-back machine politician currently representing our fair county in the State Assembly. Works for us. Help out at Manataforassembly.org.

For Mayor of San Luis Obispo: Jan Marx



Mayor Marx, a past recipient of the Bill Denneen "Environmental Hero" award, has, in her eight years on the city council, consistently voted in favor of open space acquisition, smart growth, climate and habitat protection, alternate transportation and rigorous CEQA standards, and against projects which did not have adequate EIRs, violated the general plan and/or were environmentally unacceptable.

She's done extensive fundraising for open space acquisition and bicycle trails, and has promised to advocate for Community Choice Aggregation, the essential ingredient for a clean energy future in the City's newly adopted Climate Action Plan. Help out at www.janmarx.com.

Endorsements

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For SLO City Council:

John Ashbaugh

Ashbaugh co-founded the SLO Land Conservancy and worked with several founding members of the Santa Lucia Chapter, including Kathleen Goddard Jones, Harold Miossi and Lee Wilson, in helping to establish the Santa Lucia Wilderness and the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. If reelected, he wants to expand greenbelt around SLO, improve water quality in SLO Creek, upgrade the municipal wastewater treatment plant to meet EPA/RWQCB water quality standards, and implement the city's Climate Action Plan – especially where investments in alternative energy like wind and solar can reduce the City's electricity costs. In his spare time, he'd like to take on the task of eliminating the billboard-blighted corridor along Highway 101 north of San Luis Obispo. Help out at www.johnashbaugh.com.



For SLO City Council: Jeff Aranguena



Aranguena comes from a Park Service family. He would like to use his environmental experience to spread the message that we must preserve our resources and protect our unique open spaces. He also wants to increase alternative and transportation and the number of the city's walking and biking paths and establish a rent-a-bike program. He believes in locally generated power and wants to see roof top solar and other local green power generation in big numbers as quickly as possible. So do we. Help out at jeffaranguena.com.

For Mayor of Grover Beach: Debbie Peterson, Phyllis Molnar

Our dual endorsement of these two worthy candidates is based on mutual sterling environmental qualifications: Both are graywater advocates. Molnar is the Grover Beach site captain for Coastal Cleanup Day, championed the plastic bag ban as the City's rep on the board of the Integrated Waste Management Authority, and opposed the sale

of the community garden on Brighton and will push for more community gardens to replace the loss. Peterson pushed for green building measures on the planning commission, and on the council has been an advocate for rainwater catchment, conservation and solar power, as

well as live-work units and compact development geared to accessible public transportation. Both are Sierra Club members. Help out at phyllismolnar.com or sites.google.com/site/debbiepetersonformayor.



Molnar

For Grover Beach City Council: Karen Bright

Bright can take credit for the rescue of an oak tree on one of the oldest city parcels in Grover Beach and an 80-year-old cypress in Ramona Park, both slated for removal to make way for development. She initiated the ordinance



to ban smoking in city parks. She was the only member of the council to advocate for the APCD's Fugitive Dust Rule at Oceano Dunes. And two years ago, she forced the council to discuss the potential impacts of Proposition 16, PG&E's doomed effort to kill off competition from local clean energy programs. Gutsy.

For Cuesta College Board: David Baldwin, Barbara George

Attractive environmental credentials resulted in another dual endorsement. Baldwin is an advocate for LEED certification on all campus buildings. He wants to provide local and/or organic food sourcing for the campus via a review of current practices at other colleges who have adopted local foods programs, and implement a plan to enhance the steelhead trout run in Pennington Creek. George wants lighting retrofits for efficiency and energy savings for interior spaces in the aging buildings on the SLO campus, a switch to LEDs for outside lighting, improvements to eco-positive landscaping, recycling programs, and measures for the reduction of energy consumption in new construction, renovation, job training and the curriculum.



George

A Handy Guide to Arguments Against Proposition 37

Clip & save!

On November 6, Californians will have the chance to vote on Proposition 37, an initiative affirming our right to know what's in our food, specifically whether it has been genetically engineered.

Genetically engineered foods have had their DNA artificially altered by genes from other plants, animals, viruses or bacteria. The engineering of food to create genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is still a new technology, and it is being used to create new foods that consumers know nothing about.

The Food and Drug Administration does not require health and safety studies for genetically modified food. That laissez-faire policy should have been on everyone's minds on September 19, when the results of **the first long-term safety study ever conducted** on genetically engineered food were published in the peer-reviewed journal *Food and Chemical Toxicology* (and immediately attacked by the ag biotech industry). For two years, researchers fed rats Monsanto's "Roundup Ready" corn. **Massive tumors, kidney and liver damage and premature death resulted.**

People should at least be able to decide whether they want to play guinea pig for the ag biotech industry. Scientists worldwide agree that by labeling genetically engineered food, we can help identify potential adverse health reactions.

You might wonder how opponents of this initiative can make an argument against informed choice — a fundamental right and the way the marketplace is supposed to work. You won't have to wonder for long. By mid-August, the biotech industry, pesticide companies and Big Food had dedicated over \$25 million to the effort to defeat Prop 37.

The opposition claims that a requirement to label genetically engineered food will mean a burdensome cost to producers and consumers, and invite a storm of lawsuits against companies by opportunistic lawyers.

But food labels already list calories, sodium, fat content and allergens. Companies will have 18 months to add a line to labels reading "partially produced with genetic engineering" or "may be partially produced with genetic engineering." The law also prohibits marketing genetically engineered foods as "natural." This will not raise the cost of your groceries. Per David Byrne, former European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, when Europe introduced GMO labeling in 1997, "it did not result in increased costs, despite the horrifying double-digit prediction of some interests." Bag that scare tactic.

There are no incentives for lawyers to sue, as there is no reason to believe companies would decide to violate the labeling law or otherwise fail to comply. **States have the right to require labeling.** The Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act allows states to add language to labels so long as the feds don't require language on the same subject. Alaska already has a law on the books requiring labeling for genetically engineered fish.

You will likely see defenses of the alleged safety of genetically engineered food from folks who make their living in that field, begging the question recently posed by Michele Simon at NationofChange.org as to why the industry "would object so strongly to labeling for something they claim is not harmful."

The other thing opponents will never mention: companies like Coke, Pepsi, Nestle and Kellogg are already required to label genetically engineered food elsewhere. **Labeling genetically engineered foods is standard procedure in most of the rest of the industrialized world,**

including all of Europe, Japan, Russia and China. People in 49 countries already have the right to know if they're eating GMOs. We don't.

In polls, more than 90 percent of Californians want genetically engineered foods labeled. Those opposed to letting you to know what you're eating, who plan on spending whatever amount of money it takes to persuade you to vote against your own interests, include Monsanto, DuPont, Pepsi/Frito Lay, and Coca-Cola. Major supporters include the American Public Health Association, United Farm Workers, California Certified Organic Farmers, the Consumer Federation of America, and leading businesses in the sustainable food industry, such as Nature's Path, Lundberg Family Farms, and Eden Foods.

This initiative is not a ban. It doesn't say genetic engineering is good or bad. It says "let's label these foods and give consumers the information they need to know what they're buying." Whatever your views on genetically engineered food, the bottom line is this is information people want, and they should have it.

So you're going to be hearing a lot about Proposition 37 up through November 6, most of it in opposition (because "Yes on 37" will be outspent by at least 10 to 1), and most of that opposition will be funded by Monsanto, out-of-state interests and DC-based lobby groups — primarily the front group "Stop the Deceptive Food Labeling Scheme," bankrolled by chemical companies and processed food manufacturers. Vast amounts of money are going to be spent on the effort to convince you that this proposition is scary, expensive and confusing. But this is not rocket science. **It's just labels.**

Since getting the truth to voters will require a lot of people power, we suggest you clip and save this, or download and print it. When your friends tell you they saw half a dozen commercials on TV last night and just got several slick mailers warning them about an expensive, complicated, scary food initiative on the ballot, show them this.

To read the full text of the measure and get more information on the opposition, go to www.carighttoknow.org.

"Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring its safety is the FDA's job."

*- Philip Angell, Monsanto's director of corporate communications.
"Playing God in the Garden," New York Times Magazine, October 25, 1998.*

"Ultimately, it is the food producer who is responsible for assuring safety."

- FDA, "Statement of Policy: Foods Derived from New Plant Varieties" (GMO Policy), Federal Register, Vol. 57, No. 104, p. 229.



Thanks for clearing that up Need anything more be said?



Thank you for shopping! left to right: Dana Mite, Jeanne Blackwell, Richard Kranzdorf and Sherri Danoff, volunteers for the Proposition 37 campaign, at the Arroyo Grande Walmart on September 8.

Attention, Walmart Shoppers

On Saturday, September 8, Proposition 37 campaign volunteers delivered the letter below to the store manager of the Walmart in Arroyo Grande in response to Walmart's intention to sell genetically engineered corn.

GE corn only should be sold if labeled as such because customers have a right to know what is in their food. Such Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), engineered to cross species barriers, are banned or required to be labeled by more than forty countries. Proposition 37 on California's November ballot would require that genetically engineered foods be labeled as such. Adding this information to labels involves virtually no cost.

Sept. 8, 2012

TO:
Walmart, Arroyo Grande, California

ATTENTION:
Jared Reindel, Store Manager:

This letter is to protest Walmart's decision to sell untested, toxin spliced sweet corn from Monsanto without giving any information to customers. If this corn is to be sold responsibly in your store, IT MUST BE LABELED AS GENETICALLY ENGINEERED.

Genetically engineered Bt sweet corn, which has been manipulated at the DNA level to withstand pesticides that are sprayed on it, has never been proven safe. The US Food and Drug Administration requires no safety testing of genetically engineered foods. No long-term health studies have been conducted, and no labeling is intended which would alert unsuspecting consumers to exactly what they are eating.

Sierra Club California on the Ballot Propositions

Vote NO on Proposition 31.
Constitutional Amendment to allow local override of state laws.

Vote NO on Proposition 32.
Prohibits political contributions by payroll deduction.

Vote YES on Proposition 37.
Mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods.

Vote YES on Proposition 39.
Tax treatment for multistate businesses. Provides clean energy and energy efficiency funding.

For more information, go to:
<http://sierraclubcalifornia.org/elections>

Bt toxin works as an insecticide by disintegrating the lining of insects' stomachs when they ingest the corn. What is this doing to the bodies of your customers who eat the corn? We don't know, and without labeling, won't know which corn is natural and which is genetically engineered. Consumers deserve to know and choose.

Walmart's reputation has suffered because of worker treatment, lack of commitment to environment and communities and for putting profit above all else. Now Walmart has the

Diablo

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plant and high-level nuclear waste storage facility on Diablo Cove.

That would guarantee the operation of the power plant -- flying blind -- for twenty years beyond the expiration of its current license and force us all to take our chances.

But just as some have fallen victim to fake fact syndrome, PG&E is in the grip of fake deadline syndrome -- insisting that the survey must take place immediately because the

Nuclear Regulatory Commission has requested seismic updates from all U.S. nuclear plants by March 2015. The PG&E executives making this claim saw it destroyed under cross examination by Chris Garland, Lt. Governor Newsom's chief of staff, at the August 9 meeting of the State Lands Commission.

PG&E is in a rush to complete the surveys to meet that artificial deadline. They can wait. And if the California Coastal Commission compels them to wait, then all of the above could become a moot point, because new seismic mapping technologies are in the works for alternatives that may make it unnecessary to choose between harming marine wildlife and determining the safety of a nuclear power plant.

Meanwhile, this is not about PG&E getting to check off the "seismic survey" box on an application so they can get an automatic license renewal. This is about the truth. We must know what is under Diablo.

We need to know the likelihood of ground motion around Diablo Canyon exceeding the design basis of the power plant, or the earth opening up under the reactors. If a 3D seismic survey isn't the best way to obtain the information we need -- and it now appears to us that it is not -- then we need to obtain that information by other methods. This could be a combination of low-energy surveys, more sophisticated modeling, and/or those alternative, less destructive

opportunities to forge a positive reputation as an advocate for its' customers by doing two simple things:

First, Walmart should respect its customers and only sell Monsanto's sweet corn if it is clearly labeled as such.

Second, Walmart should be a good corporate citizen by advocating for the public's right to know what's in their food and endorsing Proposition 37 (which an overwhelming number of Californians support).

We appreciate your time and consideration, and request the courtesy of a written response as to how Walmart will address only carrying genetically engineered corn which is labeled as such and endorsing Proposition 37.

Sincerely,

Sherri Danoff
Jeanne Blackwell

cc: Mike Duke, Walmart President & CEO, c/o Corporate Office

technologies that are still in the development stage but likely to become available well before Diablo's current permit expires.

As much as we might like to just say "stop the tests!" and consider our job done, it is possible that the Coastal Commission won't agree to go along with that suggestion. That's why impact-reducing options must be

PG&E can wait. And technology is in the works that could make it unnecessary to choose between inflicting harm on marine wildlife and determining the safety of a nuclear power plant.

presented as well. (First and foremost: no testing in the Point Buchon State Marine Reserve before completing a 3-year minimum baseline survey there.) If such options are not put forward for consideration and the Commission approves the permit, that permit would be, by definition, for the most damaging version of the project. That will be no help at all to the whales, dolphins, otters and fish.

So if regulators reject denial of the permit and exploration of alternatives, we are also urging them to impose maximum levels of mitigation and restrictions on time and place to reduce the impact of the survey.

But no seismic survey could ever wreak havoc on marine wildlife and the local fishing industry that could compare to a catastrophe at a coastal nuclear power plant.

TAKE ACTION

As of September 20, Sierra Club members and activists had submitted more than 1,600 comments to the California Coastal Commission urging denial of the permit for the project. Getting this done right the first time means making PG&E go back to the drawing board.

The California Coastal Commission will take public comment at the permit hearing for the seismic imaging project at its **November 14-16 meeting: Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St., Santa Monica.** (Check their website for exact date.)

To GE or Not GE



By Jesse Arnold

The latest development from the genetic engineers is an apple, called the Arctic Apple, that doesn't turn brown when sliced or bruised.

The U.S. Apple Association says a genetically engineered apple could undermine the apple's image as a healthy and natural food and does not support the Arctic Apple. The association, however, is not opposed to genetic engineering in general.

The Arctic Apple's non-browning trait is purely cosmetic. The apple doesn't have increased nutritional value, nor will it "feed the world." So it does not rate as a major breakthrough for ag biotech.

In another recent development, the Seminis Seed Company has announced a new broccoli called Beneforte broccoli. This new broccoli was developed with traditional plant breeding methods, but is patented. Beneforte broccoli is claimed to be higher in antioxidants than regular broccoli.

When you consider that regular broccoli is already high in antioxidants, the idea that we need more is open to question.

Local, organically grown broccoli would be my preference. If the Beneforte broccoli is grown with chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides, I would not be interested, no matter how high the antioxidant level might be.

The Seminis Seed Company is owned by Monsanto Corporation, the leading developer of genetically engineered crops. So why didn't Monsanto use its biotech capability to produce Beneforte broccoli?

There are three possible reasons, and all three could be true:

1. It is easier to develop a broccoli with more antioxidants using traditional plant breeding than by genetic engineering.

2. It is cheaper to develop a high antioxidant broccoli with traditional plant breeding than with genetic engineering.

3. The biotech industry has consistently opposed labeling of its genetically engineered crops based on the claim that its genetically engineered crops are "substantially equivalent" to the regular varieties. If they use genetic engineering to develop a broccoli that is higher in antioxidants, it would be difficult to claim that it is "substantially equivalent" to regular broccoli. It wouldn't make sense to develop a nutritionally improved broccoli unless it would be labeled and advertised as such.

Monsanto knows that if it labels a crop as genetically engineered there will be consumer backlash.

In the 17 years that genetically engineered crops have been produced commercially, there has not yet been a crop produced by the ag biotech industry that has been higher in any nutrient. And for the reasons cited above, there probably won't be any in the future.

**Public Pro/Con Forum
California Proposition 37:
Mandatory Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food**



**Monday, October 8, 2012
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM**
Joseph Centeno Betteravia Government Center
511 E. Lakeside Parkway
Santa Maria, CA

If passed Proposition 37 would:

Require food sold in California stores to have labels that say if it is made from Genetically Engineered (GE) plants or animals. The law would not apply to food served in restaurants and certain other foods.

- Find out what genetically engineered food is and how labeling will impact you.
- Hear the pros and cons of labeling genetically engineered food as defined in Proposition 37 from 2 speakers on each side of the issue.
- Opportunities to ask questions of the experts
- Copies of the actual proposition will be available at the meeting.

It is estimated that between 40% and 70% of food sold in California may contain GE ingredients. No current US law specifically regulates GE foods, or requires identification of GE foods.

For more info call: 598-8929

Sponsored by Santa Maria Valley League of Women Voters



Affordable, Easy Solar Power for Santa Lucia Chapter Supporters

As efforts to fight climate change accelerate; the Sierra Club is helping members and supporters drop dirty fuels. Our Solar Homes program is aimed at catalyzing widespread deployment of clean energy.

Through an innovative partnership with Sungevity, a leading national solar service provider, the Club is able to offer its members and supporters an affordable way to get solar on their rooftops.

And for every home in the county that goes solar through this program in October, **Sungevity will give \$1,000 to the homeowner, and \$1,000 to the chapter** to fund our work to protect the environment.

Previously, in order to get solar panels on your home you would have to conduct extensive research, hunt for rebates, obtain a permit, and be prepared to fork over \$20,000. Residential solar companies like Sungevity are now offering a "solar service" for people who don't want to pay the up-front costs to put panels on their roofs. Sungevity will install the panels for no up-front cost and handle all maintenance and service. The homeowner pays for clean energy with a small monthly bill, which may be less than the household's current energy bill.

"In order to end our dependence on dirty energy, we need as many Americans as possible to switch to



**GET A FREE SOLAR
EVALUATION
WITH SIERRA CLUB**

clean energy like rooftop solar," said Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune. "This is a high priority for the Sierra Club. We are urging all of our members and supporters in California to work with Sungevity to find out if solar is right for them. Every home that goes solar gets us one step closer to our goal of a clean energy economy."

The average Sungevity customer saves 15% on their electricity costs by going solar. The Santa Lucia Chapter will raise money for important campaigns. And more solar will replace coal as Sierra Club members cut their carbon footprints and collectively help to scale up this key clean energy solution.

TAKE ACTION

Visit sierraclub.org/solarhomes for a free solar quote. Sungevity will contact you to discuss whether solar is right for you. In five minutes, they can give you a good idea about how much solar might save you.

Two Clean Energy Bills Killed

By Jim Metropolis, Senior Advocate, Sierra Club California

Powerful utility and business interests made a late-session, end-of-August press and killed two bills that would have increased Californians' access to clean, renewable energy.

The bills, AB 1990 by Assemblymember Paul Fong and SB 843 by Senator Lois Wolk, were strongly supported by Sierra Club California. Both would have brought California utilities closer to meet Governor Brown's goal of producing 12,000 megawatts of local clean energy by 2020, while creating jobs and energy cost savings.

Discouraged but not defeated, supporters have vowed to push for the environmentally positive programs covered by the bills in the next session. Sierra Club California will work on resurrecting both ideas with the authors and supporters.


AB 1990, the "Solar for All" legislation, would have required electric utilities such as San Diego Gas & Electric, Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison to buy renewable energy from clean energy projects, such as solar rooftop installations built in low-income urban and rural communities. These disadvantaged communities are often the most vulnerable to the pollution from energy generated from dirty fossil fuels, yet are not yet seeing the full benefits of transitioning to a clean energy economy. Had it passed, this bill would have been a first step towards addressing the lack of geographic diversity in solar distribution by establishing a 190-megawatt cash back or "Feed in Tariff" program for disadvantaged communities in California.

The bill would have addressed a tiny portion of the thousands of megawatts of clean energy that utilities must purchase by 2020 to meet the state's Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) law. Despite that, California's three investor-owned utilities—PG&E, Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas & Electric—opposed AB 1990. The utilities claimed that they had already signed enough clean energy contracts to meet the RPS goal of 33% renewable energy by 2020, and that it would be too costly to site small clean energy projects in low-income communities. AB 1990 failed on the Senate Floor, gathering only 14 votes. It needed 21 votes to pass.

SB 843, the "Community Solar" bill, would have created a new 2,000-megawatt program allowing the customers of the three investor-owned utilities to voluntarily buy up to 100% renewable energy from an off-site renewable energy system. The utilities would have been required to give customers a credit on their bill for every kilowatt purchased. While rooftop solar is a strong and growing business in California, this program would have helped households that can't participate in current renewable energy programs because (1) they are renters and don't own their roofs, (2) they are unable to finance the cost of installing a solar system, or (3) their roof is too small or does not receive enough sunlight. It would also have helped most businesses because they rent or lease their facilities and do not own their own roofs. Many local governments, schools, colleges, and the U.S. Department of Defense had planned to take advantage of this program by purchasing energy generated from wind, solar, and geothermal through off-site facilities and supported SB 843. Even one utility, San Diego Gas & Electric, supported the bill.

However, PG&E and Southern California Edison opposed SB 843. They claimed that by allowing customers in the proposed program to reduce or zero out their electricity bills while not reducing the costs of the utility's network maintenance proportionally, non-participating customers would be burdened with more costs. However, the SB 843 program would have extended access to renewable energy to a wider variety of energy users, providing cost-saving benefits to all energy customers, whether participating in the program or not.

Senator Wolk lamented the utilities' successful efforts to kill the bill. "Unfortunately, the coalition of support behind this measure was simply no match for the high-paid lobbyists and the campaign contributions of these monopoly corporations," she said.



SIERRA CLUB *Now on Facebook*
SANTA LUCIA CHAPTER search: "Santa Lucia" and become our friend!

Pine Needle Basketry Workshop at the SLO Botanical Garden

On Saturday, October 20 from 9:30- 2:30, join artist Elizabeth Bear at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden as she guides budding basket weavers through the art of pine needle basket weaving. Attendees will be lead through the process of creating beautiful, fragrant and sustainable pieces of artwork at this intimate workshop. Each piece is as unique as the person who creates it, and they make wonderful gifts. If your inner artist is calling, this is the perfect time to answer! Just bring sharp scissors, imagination and a bagged lunch, as Ms. Bear provides all materials and her masterful insight. Each participant will make their own basket and start a second basket to work on at home. Workshop also includes a lecture on sustainable harvesting and tree kindness.


Ms. Bear has been teaching pine needle basket weaving since 1997 in New Mexico and California. Her artwork was on display at the 8th Annual Art Eco show at the Botanical Garden.

Workshop cost is \$95 for Garden members and \$120 for non-members. Limited class size. To register call 805.541.1400x304, or visit slobg.org.



...when the swallows come back to Avila...

Let's Make This a Bird Sanctuary!



If there is a bird that symbolizes Avila Beach, it is the cliff swallow. Cute as the dickens, celebrated in story and song – these are the swallows that “come back to Capistrano” – the cliff swallow’s range extends from western Alaska to southern Mexico, and spans southern Canada and the continental United States from coast to coast.

But in Southern California, they’re in trouble. These little birds have adapted to changing times, shifting their nests from beneath the ledges of cliffs and canyon walls to sites offered by newly constructed bridges and buildings, but we’ve seen a 50 percent decline in our swallow populations over the last 40 years due to urbanization.

IT’S TIME FOR THE AVILA VALLEY TO MAKE THEM FEEL AT HOME

The City of San Juan Capistrano declared itself a bird sanctuary and made the cliff swallow the emblem of its tourism economy, selling visitors silver swallow charms, swallow wind chimes, swallow mugs, etc. The cliff swallow has become that city’s “brand.” (One problem: San Juan Capistrano destroyed a lot of swallows’ nests when it refurbished its famous mission over ten years ago, and has been struggling to lure the birds back ever since.) The cliff swallow can be *our* brand!

Fun Facts

- Because cliff swallows consume millions of insects each year they are extremely helpful in controlling insects populations.
- Cliff swallows will usually alternate nest sites from year to year.
- The cliff swallow’s bill is small and can open very wide, allowing it to easily catch insects in the air. This feeding behavior is called aerial foraging. Their bill is also used as a scoop to gather mud for building their nest.
- The flight of the cliff swallow is very distinctive. It will fly along very smoothly, then dive and make a deep swoop upward.
- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 federally protects the cliff swallow, the occupied nest, and the eggs from being destroyed by humans.

YES, I WANT THE AVILA VALLEY TO BE DECLARED A BIRD SANCTUARY

Name _____

Business _____

Phone/e-mail: _____

All the mission bells will ring... This proposal is gathering broad support.

Sanctuary for the Swallows

Bird lovers: come to Avila on October 8

Every year, the cliff swallows immortalized in story and song for coming back to Capistrano come back to...Avila Beach.

After spending the winter in Argentina, they wing 6,000 miles back to the U.S. And though they’re increasingly abandoning Mission San Juan Capistrano -- and their Southern California population has declined 50 percent over the last 40 years -- they’re flocking to Avila, which is cliff swallow heaven: it has a creek, all the mud they need to build those little nests that look like earthen-ware jars, and all the mosquitoes they can eat.

It’s time to make them feel at home!

TAKE ACTION

Come to the Avila Valley Advisory Council and tell them you want the Avila Valley declared a bird sanctuary!

7 p.m., Monday, October 8, PG&E Community Center, 6588 Ontario Road, Avila Beach.



The State Has No Plan for the Carrizo Reserve

Fish & Game still trying to pretend commercial cattle grazing = conservation

The Carrizo Ecological reserve is 30,000 acres of sensitive habitat between the Carrizo Plain National Monument and Los Padres National Forest – a vital link for the region’s diverse and threatened wildlife.

In 2009, extensive damage was done to the Reserve due to overgrazing and trespass by cattle under a grazing permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Game (see “Reserve or Feed Lot?” Nov. 2009). We brought this to the attention of the Department of Fish and Game, which is charged by the state with managing the reserve for wildlife conservation, allowing cattle grazing only if deemed necessary for vegetation management.



In 2010, Los Padres ForestWatch and the Sierra Club filed suit against the DFG over its failure to conduct environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act in issuing Dr. Neal Dow a livestock grazing lease on the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve.

One of our key concerns was DFG’s continued permitted grazing in the absence of a long-promised Land Management Plan for the Reserve.

In December 2010, we entered into a settlement agreement that provided, among other things, an agreement by Fish and Game to “use its good faith efforts to issue a draft Land Management Plan for the Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve by August 2011, and use its good faith efforts to issue a final Land Management Plan for the Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve by March 2012.”

To date, DFG has failed to move forward with the Land Management Plan.

In October 2011, DFG advised Jeff Kuyper of Los Padres ForestWatch that the consultant was “in the process of revising the LMP based upon [Kuyper’s] comments and then the plan will go to region and HQ for final review before release. CEQA document will be determined after the internal review.”

In May 2012, Kuyper was told that DFG would be announcing a scoping meeting sometime in June.

At the end of June, Kuyper was told that the scoping meeting would not occur until September. As we go to press, there has been no notice of a scoping meeting.

Meanwhile, and without the Land Management Plan in place, in November 2011 DFG issued yet another lease to Dr. Neal Dow for livestock grazing on the Carrizo Ecological Reserve. This decision evidenced yet another step to permit grazing without consideration of overall management that is necessary to protect the values for which the Reserve was created and exists. However, this lease did contain a monitoring protocol, which provided that:

“[t]he biological goals are tied to specific grass height or biomass/RDM [residual dry matter] objectives for each management unit. The goal of

We need you

continued from page 1

Needless to say, we caught a lot of flak for a lot of this, as we knew we would. And if any of the above raised your blood pressure a wee bit, dear Sierra Clubber, let me also point out:

- Our eco-grants program has marked its second year of mini-grant funding in support of deserving projects mounted by high school environmental clubs throughout the county.
- We put our support behind the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s proposal to declare 1,652 acres of critical habitat for the threatened snowy plover in the Oceano and Guadalupe Dunes. The off-road lobby organized a national write-in campaign in vigorous opposition. We won.
- We insisted that consideration of a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program – allowing cities and counties to break with the private utility energy monopoly and buy 100% clean power from green sources – be included in the Climate Action Plans for both the County and City of San Luis Obispo. It’s in there.
- We were part of the groundswell of support that got the County plastic bag ban passed, refuting all the objections thrown up by the corporate/reactionary forces that tried to defeat it.
- We served as the operations center for the SLO county portion of the massive signature-gathering effort to put Proposition 37 on the ballot. It’s there.
- By pointing out the bigger problem implied by the major leak of an abandoned, century-old oil transfer line under Nipomo Creek, we persuaded the Water Board to create a region-wide abandoned oil line monitoring program.
- We publicized the sky-high commercial solar permit fees charged to local businesses for a permit to

install a solar energy system in Grover Beach, Pismo Beach and Morro Bay. All revised their fee calculations, which came down from their discouraging heights to affordable levels.

- We killed the plan to sell County land in the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area to the state, and established in court the authority of the California Coastal Act over future permit actions in the off-road playground.

That’s a partial list from roughly the last year and a half. These things were done on your behalf. And while we do plenty of collaboration with other groups, I should point out that nobody else is funding the high school projects of this county’s next generation of environmentalists. No other group persuaded County planners to include CCA in the Climate Action Plan, brought down solar permit fees, prevailed on the Water Board to put that abandoned oil line program in place, or sued to protect the integrity of coastal planning at the Oceano Dunes. That was the Sierra Club.

If just one of the things in the list above is important to you, if you’re glad someone was there to champion that particular cause on your behalf, you’re going to have to take action now to maintain that level of service. Otherwise, due to the current state of our finances, these kinds of things are about to stop.

We’re open to suggestions. Please bring yours to our Edna Valley meeting on October 13. Use the phone number or e-mail address listed on our front page to let me know you’re coming. I’ll get you directions and the agenda for the day.

Much obliged,

Greg McMillan
Chapter Chair

Our November Convention

By Kathryn Phillips, Director
Sierra Club California

The Democrats had theirs in September.

The Republicans had theirs in August.

And after those two parties face off in November, Sierra Club California will have ours.

If you're a political junkie, you've probably guessed that I'm talking about conventions.

This year, Sierra Club California will hold its annual convention right after the November election. We've timed it that way so we can get a jump start on planning our environmental agenda and strategy for the coming year, keeping in mind who has won which elections.

The convention is actually a joint meeting of the policy arm of Sierra Club California, known as the California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee or CNRCC, and Sierra Club California.

If you've never attended a Sierra Club California convention, you should consider coming to this one. The event will be held Saturday, November 10, through Sunday, November 11, at Rancho El Chorro park and public meeting facility, across from Cuesta College. The venue is a great place for nature lovers to gather. And registration is easy: You can do it online at sierraclubcalifornia.org/cnrcc/cnrcc-registration/.

The agenda is still being planned, but typically Saturday is packed with interesting activities and information, from early morning through the evening. Sunday is usually reserved for elections until adjournment at noon.

Past conventions have included workshops and presentations about timely environmental issues in addition to decision-making about policies and planning for the coming year. We always have an interesting keynote speaker.

Every Sierra Club member is welcome to attend, and admission is low: attending the entire weekend, including rustic lodging in a bunkhouse-style cabin, costs just \$45.

Meals are included. Even then, nobody is turned away from the meetings due to lack of funds and some scholarships are available.

Some members attend as voting delegates. But you don't have to be a voting delegate to attend. If you've been looking for a way to get more involved in Sierra Club California and the work we do to advance environmental protection around the state, the convention should be in your sights.



What new development? Building a barn on the Harmony Coast requires a dedication of public access to the coast. The horror!

No Access

The California Coastal Act requires an offer to dedicate land for public access as a condition of new development.

In 2006, this condition was applied to a permit issued to the SDS Family Trust, landowners on the Harmony Coast seeking to build a barn. The required easement would allow the public access to the coast as a segment of the California Coastal Trail.

The owners appealed to the SLO County Board of Supervisors to keep their permit but have the easement removed, whereupon the old reliable troika of Achadjian/Lenthall/Ovitt tossed coastal law out the window and deleted the permit requirement for a public easement.

The Sierra Club appealed that decision to the Coastal Commission, which heard our appeal in August

2010. The Commission voted 10-1 (Commissioner Achadjian opposed) to uphold our appeal and restore the requirement for an easement on the Harmony Coast that the owners had originally agreed to dedicate for public access (see "Chapter Wins Coastal Commission Appeal," Sept. 2010).

The owners retained the services of the Pacific Legal Foundation, which referred to the easement -- the aforementioned standard requirement of the Coastal Act for all new coastal development -- as "the strange requirement," and sued the Coastal Commission on the grounds that the requirement was unconstitutional, a claim the PLF has attempted to make about multiple provisions of the Coastal Act since its inception. Founded by right-wing billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife in 1973 to attack environmental and

public health laws, the PLF makes a specialty of suing the Commission and challenging the Endangered Species Act. It's greatest claim to local infamy came ten years ago, when the City of Morro Bay retained the PLF in an unsuccessful bid to remove the snowy plover from the endangered species list.

On June 8, a judge of the SLO Superior Court told the SDS Trust they had waited too long to complain about the requirement to provide an easement and dismissed the case.

The applicants claim they were taken by surprise and had no idea they would be required to dedicate a public easement as a condition of their permit for new coastal development -- a story that has played well on FOX News. In court, not so much.

The PLF has filed an appeal.

Food Day is October 24

Support sustainable and organic farms

Food Day is a nationwide celebration and a movement toward more healthy, affordable, and sustainable food. Powered by a diverse coalition of food movement leaders, organizations, and individuals, Food Day takes place annually on October 24 to address the issues of health and nutrition, hunger, agricultural policy, animal welfare, and farm worker justice.

The ultimate goal of Food Day is to strengthen and unify the food movement in order to improve our nation's food policies.

One of best ways everyone can help do that is by advocating for sustainably and organically grown foods, which build healthy soil and minimize harm to farmers, the environment, and consumers from dangerous pesticides, excess fertilizer, antibiotics in animal feed, and synthetic food additives.

The Facts

- The federal budget provides \$16 billion annually in farm subsidies. 74% of those subsidies go to only 10% of the largest industrial farms.
- The USDA estimates "local" food sales total just 1.6% of the entire U.S. market for agricultural products. This includes farmers' markets,

Topaz Solar Farm construction is underway and will continue for the next three years.

For Project Information:

www.topazsolar.com

Questions?

Construction Liaison, Dawn Legg:

(480) 390-6256

To register anonymous comments:

Toll-free Hotline: **(877) 228-3331**

*Bringing jobs,
clean energy and
opportunities to
San Luis Obispo
County*



First Solar.

GET CLEAN™
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Michelle Naficy 805-748-6688
eco-healthyfamily.myshaklee.com

Hold Back the Dawn

Opponents of climate action plans have a plan: no action on climate

Climate Action Plans are being developed statewide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to hit the target mandated by AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: rolling back greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

For municipalities, this effort involves proposing emission reduction measures – usually centering on domestic, commercial and industrial energy use and energy efficiency, transportation and land use planning, and encouragement of the development of renewable energy. The public is asked to review potential measures and share their ideas in public workshops, interactive surveys and other forums, which inform the measures ultimately selected for the climate action plans.

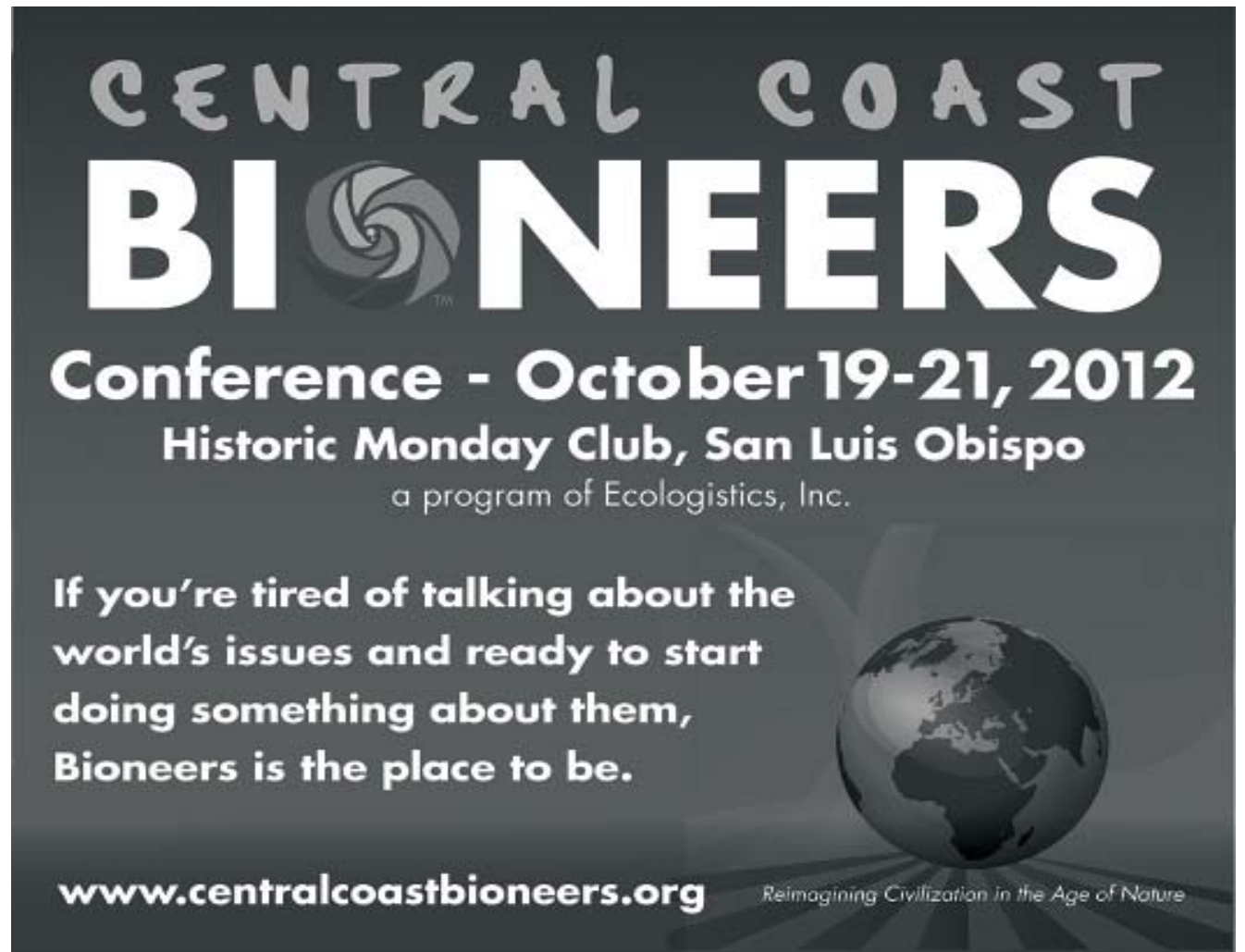
The idea is to cost-effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining or improving the quality of life for residents and reducing costs for individuals and businesses.

In SLO County, the Air Pollution Control District is overseeing the creation of Climate Action Plans for the cities of Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles and Pismo Beach (the City and County of San Luis Obispo have completed their plans). The District's goal is to develop the plans in a transparent manner with extensive public participation and input from elected officials and stakeholders to ensure that each plan is crafted to meet the particular needs of each city.

The process is scheduled to extend over four public workshops conducted at locations around the county through January, followed by compiling preliminary GHG reduction measures, public review drafts, and submission of the draft plans to city councils next summer.

That's the plan. So let's hope that the first workshop, held on the evening of August 23 at Cuesta College, was not a harbinger of things to come.

It quickly came to resemble a somewhat more genteel, less organized



CENTRAL COAST BIONEERS
Conference - October 19-21, 2012
Historic Monday Club, San Luis Obispo
 a program of Ecologistics, Inc.

If you're tired of talking about the world's issues and ready to start doing something about them, Bioneers is the place to be.

www.centralcoastbioneers.org *Reimagining Civilization in the Age of Nature*

version of the “death panel” town hall meetings held across the country by members of congress when they returned to their districts to discuss health care reform over the course of the long, hot summer of 2009. Those who showed up to hijack those meetings and shout down their congressional representatives were louder than their ideological brethren at the Cuesta meeting, but equal in the level of determination to obstruct and harass, throw a wrench into the works and derail the train.

The small but vocal contingent wanted everyone in the room to know that they didn't care that the state of California has mandated this action, that every city must comply, that AB 32 has survived every political and legal attempt at repeal and is the law of the land, or that the purpose of the workshop was to gather ideas for what measures residents think should go into the climate action plans to reduce carbon emissions, not an opportunity to debate whether climate action plans should be drafted.

The plans will be drafted. The

opponents were there to re-fight a fight they had lost.

Heard in the room:

I don't believe in greenhouse gas!

You're going to put a tax on carbon and make us do cap and trade!

You're going to jam us into high-rises!

Let's do more with more! (rather than conserve or practice efficiencies).

This is part of a conspiracy to reduce the world's population to 5 million people!

What about oil seeps in the Santa Barbara Channel?!

As opponents' every argument was patiently refuted and mistaken assumptions corrected by APCD staff, they ignored it and popped back up with two or three more.

Extreme Green Car Show at 2012 Central Coast Bioneers

This year's Central Coast Bioneers conference will feature its first green car show, October 20-21.

“We call it Extreme Green,” says conference organizer Michael Jencks, “because only electric and alternative fuel vehicles that already meet the 2025 EPA fuel efficiency standards are being allowed into the show.”

The car show, which will also include Segways and electric bikes and scooters from Todd's Green Machines of Morro Bay, will take place in the parking lot of the Holiday Inn Express, across the street from the Monday Club conference site on Monterey and Grand in San Luis Obispo.

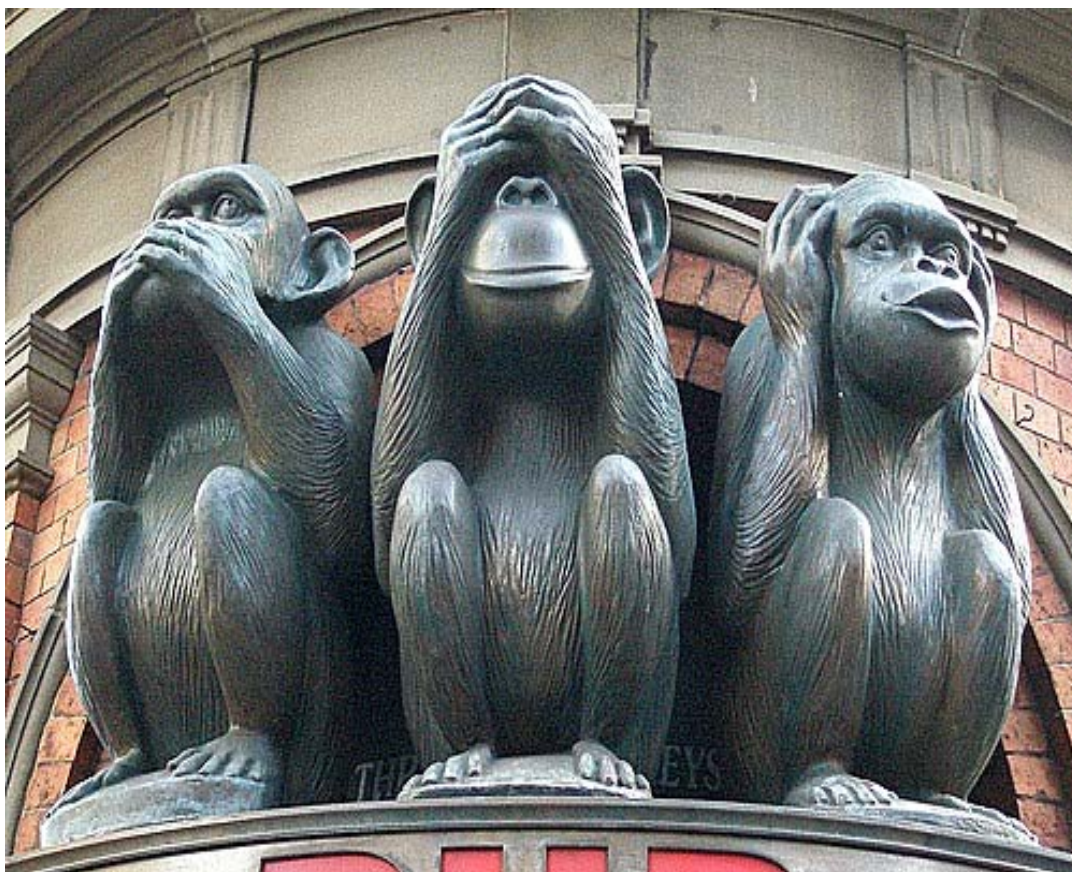
Saturday will also feature a Green Chef Cook-off presented by Cal Poly's Real Food Collaborative, dancing with music by The Mother Cornshuckers, and truly “green” beer – brought in by bicycle -- from Central Coast Brewing.

Plenary lectures, beamed live from the Bioneers main stage in Marin, are always a favorite part of the conference. This year's featured speakers include Bill McKibben of 350.org, Michael Brune of the Sierra Club, Nikki Henderson of the People's Grocery in Oakland, Paul Hawken, and many more.

Weekend, single day, and special event passes are available online or in person at AtMODsphere, 1119 Chorro, San Luis Obispo. RTA and SLO Transit are offering free transportation to the event if you show your pass to the driver.

The Bioneers Conference is one part global salon for an ongoing conversation between like-minded but otherwise isolated visionaries and practitioners at the forefront of civilizational change, and one part catalytic organization that takes the many conversations up to a higher level and down to Main Street.

- David W. Orr



TAKE ACTION

Rational people wanted!

Next workshop: November. Check the website over the next month for time and place. Go to www.centralcoastghgplanning.com and click “Get Involved” to sign up for e-news.

You need to show up and speak up. The clean energy future you save will be your own.

And if you want to know the best single thing you could recommend to be incorporated in each plan, go to www.local.org/commchoi.html

Stirring It Up

A Cambria bridge replacement could unleash a deadly toxin

The SLO County Public Works Dept. wants to replace the bridge over Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria. The project will involve diverting the creek, and has entailed a passel of environmental mitigations. But the County hasn't been paying much attention to one particular problem: decades of mercury deposits in sediment, courtesy of the Oceanic Mine.

Mercury is highly toxic in minute amounts. Once released into the environment, sediment is probably the best place for it to go, along with uptake into tree roots, so long as those roots and that sediment remain undisturbed. But if that sediment is disturbed or those trees uprooted, the sequestered mercury goes back into the water column, gets ingested by fish, which get eaten by other fish, which get eaten by humans, with the toxic load bioaccumulating all the way.

The County has contemplated installing a well to pump out the creekbed, even after the creek is diverted, because of the presence of groundwater. ("It is expected that simply diverting the flow of Santa Rosa Creek through the project site may not adequately dewater the project site. In this event, the contractor may excavate and insert a well point into the stream-bed. The groundwater would be pumped to adequately dewater the project site....")

The California Toxics Rule, in its guidance for freshwater mercury, sets the safe limit for mercury at 0.05 parts per billion. In July 2009, with Sierra Club funding, Cambria resident Lynne Harkins had a sample of wet sediment from Santa Rosa Creek at the Main Street project site tested. It was found to contain total mercury of 120 parts per billion. Testing for total mercury at other downstream sites found mercury in even higher concentrations. Harkins

found mercury in its methylated form — the most toxic — at the mouth of the creek, about 2.5 miles downstream of the project site.

The Harkins/Sierra Club testing activities infuriated the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and helped sink its plan to drill desalination test wells at the mouth of Santa Rosa Creek. Her sample testing prompted a letter to the Corps from the California Coastal Commission noting that Harkins' "documentation submitted to the CCSD shows mercury contamination in and near Santa Rosa Creek and its associated sediments. Because the project site includes areas that were likely within the creek's historic channel areas, it may also contain some level of mercury contamination."

Public Works estimates that 1500 cubic yards of soil will be excavated at the site. Research has shown that willow roots take up and sequester both organic and inorganic forms of mercury. The project site is densely vegetated with willows along creek banks. The removal of these willows to allow for bridge construction in a different alignment will create the potential for mobilizing mercury from sediment disturbance and willow destruction, increasing the potential for ground and surface water contamination. The substantial root systems from cut willows (and cottonwoods) that line the banks will die and decay, creating the type of environment in which the toxin converts to its most hazardous form, methylmercury.

The groundwater level is very close to the creek at the proposed project site. In research published in 2009,



Fact Sheet: Contaminants in Fish

CONTAMINANTS IN SPORT FISH Two-Year Statewide Survey Reveals High Methylmercury on California Coast

The State Water Resources Control Board's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) has released findings from the largest-ever statewide survey of contaminants in sport fish on the California coast. The report, *Contaminants in Sport Fish from the California Coast, 2009-2010*, represents a major step forward in understanding the extent of chemical contamination in the coastal food web. The report presents new data from sampling that focused on the North and Central coasts in 2010; these data combine with the results from 2009 to provide a comprehensive assessment of the entire coast. The study has provided information that will be valuable in prioritizing areas in need of further study, support development of consumption guidelines and cleanup plans, and provide information the public can use to be better informed about the degree of contamination of popular fishing spots.

May 2012

Not what we'd like to be known for How much will County Public Works contribute to our latest coastal distinction?

inorganic and organic mercury were shown to be transported to the near-shore marine environment by means of groundwater, contributing significantly to marine mercury pollution in a way that had not been previously verified. A 2012 study (above) found high levels of methylmercury in sportfish

caught off Cayucos and Cambria.

The Harkins/Sierra Club mercury test sampling results are cited in the recently released Santa Rosa Creek Watershed Management Plan. The County Public Works Department and the Water Board should pay heed to what they show.

Carrizo

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monitoring is to detect if the utilization of each management unit is consistent with overall biomass/RDM objectives. Each management unit within the lease area will be monitored to determine if it meets specific RDM objectives."

The lease identifies management objectives for units; for example: "No more than 25% of the management unit shall fall below 300 lbs/acre RDM and no more than 25% will be above 750 lbs/acre RDM. Spring grass height measurements are the primary monitoring event for these management units. RDM monitoring will also be required to ensure that management units are not over utilized."

ForestWatch requested documents from DFG about the monitoring of livestock grazing on the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve. Among the documents was a three-page spreadsheet titled "2012 range monitoring table." It lists each grazing pasture and indicates that they were inspected approximately once per month from January through July.

However, contrary to the monitoring protocol in the lease, the spreadsheet has no useful monitoring data; rather it

just contains vague phrases such as "livestock in unit – getting low," "livestock moved from pasture," and "livestock to be moved." There are no RDM measurements from the monitoring transects that are in place on the Reserve, no photographs, no monitoring field reports or anything else that provides any more detail.

It is bad enough that DFG does not appear to be moving forward in a timely fashion with the development of the Land Management Plan for the Reserve and has permitted grazing in the absence of the Management Plan. It now appears that DFG is not conducting appropriate monitoring as outlined in the permit to ensure that existing activities are in compliance with the current lease.

Given the history of the past two years, we question DFG's good faith as agreed in the Settlement Agreement. DFG knows what needs to be done. We have asked the Attorney General to instruct Fish and Game to tell us exactly what steps it has taken since December 2010

toward the issuance and adoption of a Land Management Plan for the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve. We are also demanding that it identify the current schedule for issuance of the Land Management Plan for the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, and provide documentation that it is conducting monitoring in accordance with the monitoring protocol as provided in the 2011 lease issued to Dr. Dow.



Food Day

continued from page 8

farm-to-school programs and community and school gardens.

- Nitrogen and phosphorus run-off from synthetic fertilizers used in the upper Midwest lead to a "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico. In 2011, the dead zone was as large as Rhode Island and Delaware combined. That has serious long-term consequences for the unique aquacultures and the local seafood economy.

- Sustainable and organic farming practices contribute to reduced water and air pollution, richer soil, and healthier farm animals and communities.
- A 2-year study comparing the nutritional quality, taste, and environmental effects of organic versus conventionally grown strawberries concluded that organically grown berries had a longer shelf life, greater nutritional value, better sensory appeal, and resulted in significantly higher quality soil.

What You Can Do

- Hold Food Day events that highlight issues of conventional versus sustainable and organic farming, including a taste test between organic and conventional produce, debates by academic experts about the dangers of antibiotics and pesticides used on farms, cooking demonstrations and talks at farmers markets, and film screenings.



Reports trying to create doubts about organic agriculture are suddenly flooding the media. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, people are fed up with the corporate assault of toxics and GMOs. Secondly, people are turning to organic agriculture and organic food as a way to end the toxic war against the earth and our bodies.... This is a trend that will grow, no matter how many pseudo-scientific stories are planted in the media by the industry.

- Dr. Vandana Shiva, founder/director
Navdanya Research Foundation for
Science, Technology, and Ecology

- Write or call your Congressional Representatives and ask them to increase federal support for small and mid-size organic farmers and beginning farmers.
- Visit the websites of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Sustainable Table, Environmental Working Group, National Farm to School Network, and American Farmland Trust and learn more about what you can do now.

And check out www.foodday.org.

Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **October 12**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Surfrider Foundation, available for \$10 postage paid, while supplies last. Mail your check to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, SLO 93406.

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babaknaficy@sbcglobal.net

Outings and Activities Calendar

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

All our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies, or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Chair Joe Morris, 549-0355. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Sat., Oct. 13, 8:30 a.m. Beginner's Bird Walk at Morro Bay. Come experience the fun of birding, co-led by Audubon expert Jessica Griffiths. The Cloisters area, adjacent to the beach, north of downtown Morro Bay. 1-2 miles of walking along paved paths and beach walk past dunes. Binoculars and field guides provided. Suitable for all ages, first part on Cloisters paved path is appropriate for mobility-impaired. Meet near rest-rooms at the Cloisters, across Hwy 1 from Spencer's Market. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sat., Oct. 13, 9:30 a.m. Guadalupe/Paradise Beach Hike. Moderately strenuous 6-mile hike along pristine Guadalupe Beach to Mussel Rock, then along bluffs to secluded Paradise Beach. About 5-6 hrs. Bring water, lunch, windbreaker, hat and dress in layers. Meet near interpretive signs and picnic tables. Lunch at Guadalupe restaurant afterwards. Rain cancels. From Hwy 101 in Santa Maria, take Main St./Hwy 166 to end at Guadalupe Beach. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 934-2792 or kenya683@msn.com.

Sat-Sun, Oct. 13-14 Explore and Serve in Carrizo Plains. Remove or modify old fencing to facilitate passage of Pronghorn antelopes. Saturday is a workday, followed by camping and potluck. Sunday hike in the Caliente Range or tour of views in the Plains. Leader: Craig Deutsche, 310-477-6670 or craig.deutsche@gmail.com. CNRCC Desert Committee

Sun., Oct. 14, 10 a.m. Family-Friendly Hike at Pt. Sal. Easy walk along Brown Rd, 1.5 mile round-trip, for panoramic ocean, coast, and Santa Maria Valley views. Many geologic, plant, and animal discoveries. Bring water, hats, sunscreen, snacks, dress in layers. From Hwy 1, take Brown Rd. west 3.9 miles to end at Pt. Sal Gate. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 934-2792 or kenya683@msn.com.

Fall at Clair Tappaan Lodge

October 5 -7. Opera in the Mountains. Wake up to the smell of brewing coffee and the sound of great music. We will have music sessions after each meal

October 13, 1-4 pm. Wine Tasting
Spend a Saturday afternoon exploring



Sun., Oct. 14, 1 p.m. City Walk: Victorian-Age San Luis Obispo. Easy, guided stroll past 18 century-old homes and churches in the Old Town Historic District, SLO's "Nob Hill." Residences of past mayors, newspaper editor, Cal Poly founder. Eavesdrop on the lives of the newly rich who transformed the city at the turn of the 20th century. About 1 1/2 hrs. Meet in front of Jack House, 536 Marsh St. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sat., Oct. 20, 9 a.m. Poly/Stenner Creek Canyons Hike. Moderate, 6-mile, 1000 ft. gain hike through grassland and oak groves from Stenner Creek Rd. through Poly Canyon to Yucca Ridge. Learn about local plants, animals, and geology, maybe even spot a wandering tarantula. Bring water, hat, sturdy shoes, lunch. Dress in layers. Meet at end of Stenner Creek Rd off Hwy 1 at north end of Cal Poly campus. Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Sun., Oct. 21, 10 a.m. Trekking-Pole Hike at Sycamore Springs. "Pole-

new wines and making new friends with local wine expert Dave Luce. Wines will be available for purchase and a percentage will go to Clair Tappaan Lodge. Appetizers will be served. \$20.

October 12 - 14. A Weekend of Yoga and Hiking.

Located in the Sierra Nevadas, Tahoe National Forest. Spaces limited. Call (800) 679-6775. Cost for weekend activities include 6 meals, 2 nights lodging and all of the activities, unless otherwise stated. See Activities web page at motherlode.sierraclub.org/sierranevada/activities.htm for fees and details on activities.

cats" is dedicated to leading local Sierra Club hikes and modeling the benefits of trekking poles. 2-mile hike, 700 ft. gain. Meet near entrance of Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Drive. Confirm with Leader, David Georgi, 458-5575 or polecatleader@gmail.com. Bipeds welcome.

Sat., Oct. 27, 8:30 a.m. Southern Big Sur/Silver Peak Wilderness Coastal Hike. Moderately strenuous hike, 9 miles, 2,400 ft. gain/loss. Depending on weather, hike up Salmon Creek, Bald Top or other route. Bring lunch, water, non-slip hiking shoes. Dress for varying weather. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area, San Simeon State Park, 1.5 mile north of Cambria. SLO carpoolers leave from Santa Rosa Park at 7:14 a.m. Leader: Gary Felsman, 473-3694. Rain or possibility of it cancels.

Sat.-Sun, Oct. 27-28. Ghost Town Extravaganza. Spend Halloween



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.

weekend with ghosts of California's colorful past near Death Valley. Camp at historic ghost town of Ballarat (flush toilets). Saturday, 7-mile, 1500 ft.-gain hike to Lookout City ghost town with historian Hal Fowler, regaling us with Wild West tales. Happy Hour at campground and potluck, midnight visit to Ballarat's graveyard. Sunday visit to infamous Riley townsite. Group size limited. Send \$8 per person, 2 large SASE, h/w phone, email, rideshare info to leader: Lygeia Gerard, P.O. Box 721039, Pinon Hills, CA 92372. Info.: 760-868-2179 CNRCC Desert Committee.

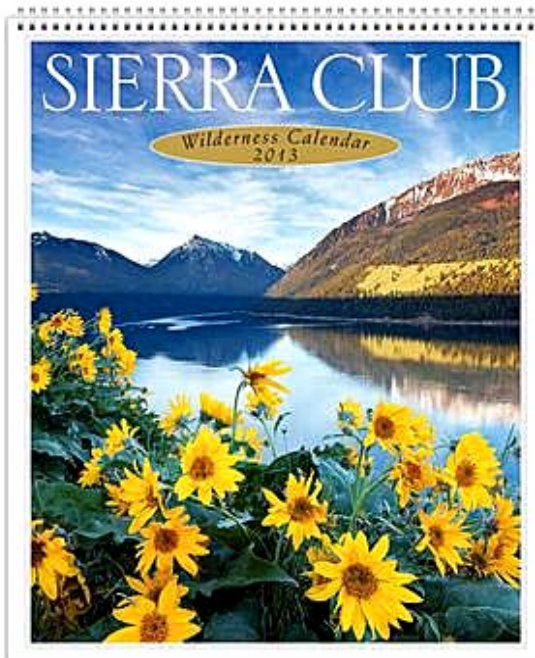
Sun, Oct. 28, 2 p.m. Historic Cemetery Walk. Guided stroll through the Old Mission and San Luis cemeteries in San Luis Obispo. As you pass by the passed-on, you'll hear compelling stories of city residents from the 19th century -- a Confederate veteran, a schoolteacher, downtown business tycoon, cattle rancher, newspaper editor, Chinese railroad worker, and a young mother who died in childbirth. About 1 1/2 hrs. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water. Meet at entrance to the Old Mission Cemetery, 101 Bridge St. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

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For further information contact:

Joe Morris, Outings Chair
Sierra Club, Santa Lucia Chapter
(805) 549-0355
dj1942@earthlink.net



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite