



June 2013  
Volume 50 No. 6

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### Don't Miss:

your chance  
to go solar  
this summer!

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# SANTA LUCIAN



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

## Intractable

### State Parks' Off-Highway Vehicle division is still trying to buy the La Grande Tract, the County land in the Oceano Dunes. The County should still say no.

On April 15, the Grover Beach City Council voted to send a letter to the County Board of Supervisors supporting for the sale of the 584-acre parcel of County-owned land in the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area known as the La Grande Tract, and the allocation of funds in the next state budget to allow the Off-Highway Vehicle Division of State Parks to make the purchase.

The City agreed to send the letter after Mayor Debbie Peterson was approached by Diana Perez, a member of the state Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission. Perez spent the first two months of this year meeting and calling Peterson and other local elected officials, with an emphasis on those members of the board of the Air Pollution Control District known to be hostile to the APCD's dust control rule, passed by a majority vote over the vocal objections of State Parks and the off-road recreational community.

At the March 23 meeting of the OHMVR Commission, Perez said she "would like to see the opportunity to purchase the La Grande Tract." State Parks staff replied that funds which the OHV Division has previously appropriated to purchase the land will expire in June, but they are working to reappropriate funds for that purpose in the next fiscal year.

We have told the Board that the sale of the La Grande Tract is not a course



of action the county should contemplate pursuing at any time in the near future.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation has permitted ORV use on the La Grande Tract since it entered into a lease and operating agreement with San Luis Obispo County in 1982. Consistent with the Coastal Act, in 1981 the County submitted a draft Local Coastal Program to the California Coastal Commission for review. After a series of negotiations, the Commission certified the County's Land Use Plan in 1984. South County Coastal Planning Area Standards, which contain portions of the County's LCP, contain specific standards for the development and operation of the ODSVRA.

The two area standards of particular relevance are:

4. General Development Plan [for ODSVRA] shall be revised in accordance with the Local Coastal Plan (LCP).

and

9. ORV use shall be permitted only in identified unfenced vehicular use area. These areas are identified in Figure 4. No ORV use will be allowed in the designated natural areas. These buffer areas reflect areas required for habitat protection. ORV use is prohibited in vegetated areas. ORV use of the county held portion (generally lying between the sandy beach and Dune

Lakes) shall be limited to the Sand Highway west to the sandy beach. This will minimize conflict with the Dune Lake Properties to the east and the State Department of Parks and Recreation Dune Preserve to the north. The map of ORV use areas

*DUNES continued on page 10*

## 20 from 300

In order for the Chapter to meet our basic obligations, (rent, utilities, printing, and paying our sole part-time staffer), we need at least 300 members to go to [www.santalucia.sierraclub.org](http://www.santalucia.sierraclub.org), click the "Donate" button, and sign up for an automatic contribution of at least \$20 per month.

Alternatively, you can set up a monthly donation with your bank using a monthly bank check. The service, called Bill Pay, is free to anyone with a bank account. All you need to give the bank besides your own account info is the date on which you want the check sent every month, and the name and address of the person or business you want it sent to. **(Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406).**

Since our "20 from 300" campaign began in January, our generous members have gotten us nearly 42% of the way toward our goal of the equivalent of \$20 per month from 300 people.

Onward!

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photo:Kevin Walsh

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# Judgment Day for the Paso Basin

## The Supervisors are in a hole. Will they keep digging?

We are about to find out who can actually get serious about the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and who can't.

Here's what "getting serious" would look like: an urgency ordinance restricting the expansion of irrigated agriculture (aka big vineyards) and/or the proliferation of the huge ag ponds that vineyards use for frost control, and any other measures that will squarely address the issue of the new pumping of ag water out of a groundwater basin that's in distress.

Here's what "getting serious" would not look like: more voluntary "best management practices" suggestions, low-interest loans to drill more and deeper wells, waived County fees for permits to drill more/deeper wells, green-lighting big infrastructure projects that won't be delivering any water until ten years from now, the expression of the hope that the State Water Project might someday deliver 100 percent of its promised allocations, or hey ask your neighbor to truck some of his surplus water over to your place.

And here, based on their contributions to the discussion thus far, are the people who don't sound like they are prepared to get serious: County Supervisors Frank Mecham, Paul Texiera, and Debbie Arnold.

It has been painful to watch the board majority struggle to come to grips — or avoid coming to grips — with an issue for which any real resolution cannot help but impact the biggest economic power in the county, and thereby cannot help negatively impacting the reelection campaign treasuries of all three of the Board's business conservatives. Reining in Big Grape before 6,000 wells of residential parcel owners over the Paso basin all run dry does not look like a priority for these three, who have perhaps never had to face a real-world outcome of their economic and political philosophy that presents such a high degree of discomfort and lack of wiggle room.

"We are starkly confronted with the tragedy of the commons," said Supervisor Bruce Gibson at the Board's May 7 meeting, referring to the phenomenon whereby a publicly owned resource is widely plundered but is no one's responsibility. "There's reality and there's the acceptance of reality. We need to get to the acceptance of this reality and we need to do it quick."

The meeting was heavily attended by rural landowners incredulous in the face of the surest sign of unaccepted reality: more vineyards are being planted over the basin, with still more in the pipeline.

Diane Jackson of the grassroots residents' group Pro-Water Equity, noted that "the situation has become terrifying," and pointed out the obvious: the absentee "big pumpers" who run the largest wineries are the problem. "Owning property in Paso Robles is like being on the Titanic, except we're not heading for an iceberg, we're headed for a dust bowl," she said. "It's time to choose human life over 30,000 acres of grapes."

Sue Harvey of North County Watch pointed out that vineyards use 70 percent of the water consumed annually in the basin — which works out to 2.3 acre feet per year, not the 1 acre foot the vineyards claim — and challenged the Board to take steps to "show in good faith that you're going to protect the rural residential land owner." Those steps would include flow meters, an urgency moratorium on the expansion of irrigated agriculture, and a moratorium on wells over five inches in diameter. Harvey pointed out that the right to water of the 18-25,000 residents of the affected area is superior to the right of ag operations. (California Water Code Section 106: "It is hereby declared to be the established policy of this State that the use of water for domestic purposes is the highest use of water and that the next highest use is for irrigation.")

Only one tea-partying gentleman turned up to warn everyone about the vast Agenda 21 conspiracy that pops up at every public meeting (this time in the context of "water confiscation" as part of a plot to depopulate half the North American land mass). Others asserted that there must be more water somewhere, we should somehow be able to recharge the basin, streams are not being allowed to flow into the basin, etc.

Public Works Director Paavo Ogren and the Blue Ribbon Groundwater Basin committee like to talk about a ten-mile underground pipe from Lake San Antonio to Nacimiento, or piping Santa Margarita Lake water over the backside of the lake, dumping it into the Huer Huero, and then capturing it north of Paso beyond the point where the Estrella and the Huer Huero come into the Salinas. Anything to avoid living within our means.

Gibson, who rightly zeroed in on the real issue — demand management — tagged this wishful thinking, saying "we're not going to supply our way out of this problem."

Mecham reiterated his belief that "there's no water problem, it's infrastructure" — i.e. we just need more pipes to bring water in from someplace else, and this is "not like something we haven't experienced in the past" — because, you know, droughts.

After mistakenly equating a drought with the permanent depletion and contamination of a groundwater basin, Mecham dog-whistled his base with some of the impressionistic free-association scating that has become his trademark, saying he was concerned about "the land-use hammer that we seem to want to be so progressive trying to put on things." Mecham had previously demonstrated Olympian levels of unseriousness about the Paso basin at the Board's Sept. 25, 2012, meeting, in a Who's-on-first? exchange with Gibson that we reproduced for the edification of our readers (See "What Shark?," Nov./

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

**Greg McMillan**  
**Lindi Doud**  
**Linda Seeley**  
**Thomas A. Cyr**  
 EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

**Denny Mynatt**  
 PRINT MEDIA COORDINATOR

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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

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

#### Committee Chairs

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 Rochelle Becker beckers@thegrid.net

#### Other Leaders

**Calendar Sales**  
 Bonnie Walters 805-543-7051  
**Outings**  
 Joe Morris dpj1942@earthlink.net  
**Canoe/Kayak**  
 open  
**Webmaster**  
 Monica Tarzier monica@tarzier.org  
**Trail Guide**  
 Gary Felsman

**Chapter Director**  
 Andrew Christie  
 805-543-8717  
 sierraclub8@gmail.com  
**Coordinator**  
 Kim Ramos, Admin and Development  
 kimramos@yahoo.com

**Santa Lucia Chapter**  
 P.O. Box 15755  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406  
**Office hours Monday-Friday,**  
**12 p.m.- 6 p.m., 974 Santa Rosa**  
**Street, San Luis Obispo**

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## Sierra Club Outings Leader Wins K.G. Jones Award

The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club has given the Kathleen Goddard Jones award to Club outings leader and SLO resident Carlos Diaz-Saavedra in honor of his longtime commitment of service to the Club.

The Kathleen Goddard Jones Award was established by the founder of the Santa Lucia chapter. Known as “The Lady of the Dunes,” Jones exemplified environmental action in her fierce love for and protection of the Nipomo Dunes in the 1960s. The award is given annually to a chapter volunteer whose contributions reflect her values.

“Part of the Sierra Club’s primary mission is to get people out into nature, and this year we felt it was time to bestow our highest honor on one of our members who has been doing that continuously in this county for over twenty years,” said Chapter Chair Greg McMillan. “When it comes to getting people outdoors, and creating and maintaining the trails that make that possible, Carlos Diaz-Saavedra is in a class by himself.”

Diaz-Saavedra moved to SLO from Connecticut in 1989, and found Sierra Club hikes a great way to get out and see his new home and make new friends. He became a Sierra Club Outings leader in 1992.

“Once I started leading hikes, I found that it really is a pleasure to take people to these beautiful places and show them

these treasures we have in and near our county,” he said. “It is gratifying to hear the appreciation that people express during and after the hike for having volunteered to take them to these places, with interesting people to socialize with.”

Trail maintenance work and building new trails soon followed naturally. “I like to improve on things and I usually don’t mind hard work,” he said. “It is in my nature to help for the benefit of others. I know that these are many of the same people that I lead hikes for. There is a strong sense of accomplishment after having bettered the path for them to use.”

Those who sign up for Carlos’ trail work crews quickly learn the language of waterbars, grade dips, switchbacks, culverts and crib walls, not to mention whips, lopping shears, bow saws, two-man crosscut saws and Pulaskis (a double-headed ax/ hoe.)

The main focus of trail work is to provide a relatively flat pathway on dirt or rock to prevent water from washing the trail away, and to prevent gravity, animals and people from displacing the flat dirt tread.

“I am humbled to think that I have made any contribution to the benefit of the Chapter that would be worthy of an award with Mrs. Jones’ name on it,” said Carlos. “I know of her



reputation as an environmental activist who dedicated herself to causes such as preserving the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes. I am grateful to those who devote time to such often challenging

efforts, and I know that others share the same appreciation.”

The Santa Lucia Chapter’s monthly outings can be accessed at [www.santalucia.sierraclub.org](http://www.santalucia.sierraclub.org).

# The Least Known Unknown

## The high seismic jeopardy of fracking our Monterey shale

By Ralph Bishop, Nipomo Creek Dogs

I’ve heard a lot of debate points concerning fracking the Monterey Shale, but the most powerful and foundational one, based on irrefutable fact, has not been offered.

Unlike other areas in the country that have relatively stable geological formations overlying product strata, our geological province, from the San Andreas Fault westward, is unique, as is its attending profound seismic jeopardy. Our bedrock foundation exists as an active crushing point where two major tectonic plates collide. Our bedrock foundation is composed of a chaotic wreckage of twisted and shattered geological shards of once-stable formations known as “terranes” or individual rock units that are three dimensional in nature and descend to great depths in this mantle.

Between each terrane are interconnected fissures that can and do act as conduits for fluid (oil, water) transfer as well as gas volatiles, and have a great influence on aquifer development. These fissures not only exist along main trending faults such as the San Andreas or the Nacimiento that has caused the uplift of our Santa Lucia range. Because of the angle at which the unrelenting force of the Pacific plate abuts the North American plate, there are multitudes of transverse faults that run off of and between trending faults at every conceivable angle, multiplying fluid transfer conduits geometrically in numbers beyond comprehension.

Our coast does not move as a single unit. Each of the many terranes can and do move independently of one another. It is when one of these

terranes jams during our inexorable seismic creep that pressure builds and snaps, causing an earthquake. Whether creep or quake, this movement maintains fissures as viable conduits for fluid transfer.

A case in point: When the Cayucos earthquake rattled the Nacimiento fault, new sulfur springs erupted in Paso Robles; springs dried up and some wells once fresh turned sulfurous miles from the epicenter in a lateral or transverse direction. Given this reality, if Huasna were fracked, could fluid transfer through interconnected fissures reach Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, or active hot springs at Avila Beach?

Will any of the chemical elements involved in fracking combine with sulfur molecules? This would allow those chemicals to be absorbed through your skin while lolling in Avila’s hot tubs.

Can the frackers legitimately deny the geological jeopardy unique to our shattered and active plate boundary? Given the creep and quake that constantly affect our extant geological wreckage, can the oil companies assure us that their vertical and horizontal hydraulic fracturing will not be prone to a high degree of failure – failures that will taint what is left of our rapidly over-drafting aquifers?

A few years ago, I produced a photo-documented report on the seismic setting of Diablo Canyon that relates directly to this issue. “Diablo Canyon Area: Seismic Hazard of the Geological Bedrock” was a photographic day tour from Avila Beach, over See Canyon and on to Montana de Oro. I urge anyone concerned with

the fracking issue to take this tour and see with your own eyes the chaotic nature of our local geological foundation, where the Monterey shale is prominently exposed. You can download the report at [santalucia.sierraclub.org/documents/diablo%20canyon20area.pdf](http://santalucia.sierraclub.org/documents/diablo%20canyon20area.pdf), free of charge.

I do not have an ideological aversion to responsible oil production; however, given the unassailable reality of our subterranean foundation, common sense demands I question the wisdom of fracking our active plate boundary.

The Western Petroleum Association has said that fracking regulation should take place at State level. Because water has become our most diminished resource, already polluted and in serious overdraft, my suggestion is to take your concerns to the State Water Board using our unique geology as a foundational debate point. On two occasions, Mr. Daniel Diaz and I, average citizens with minimal funds, disposable cameras and no computer skills, took legitimate concerns to the Water Board and prevailed. In the case of the abusive use and inappropriate disposal of agricultural drip tubing and attendant chemical pollution, our photo-documented report changed our regional regulations with great success on the ground today.

Our second success came when we confronted Conoco concerning their large oil spill under Nipomo Creek. Using the same photo-documentation procedure (spending only \$300), we forced them to live up to their legal liability and clean up the creek.

Certainly there are more than two old average citizens here who are concerned about fracking, with better

cameras and advanced computer skills – including the youthful exuberance of Cal Poly students (what a great educational project!) who could reproduce our success.

One final suggestion: Never fudge the truth. The truth has no agenda! The flame of truth will consume all but itself! And pray to the Spirit of Waters Past.

## Did You Forget?

We’ve looked everywhere for your response to our March appeal.

In March we sent out an appeal to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to your Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter’s budget. When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club’s work in your own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature. Please be as generous as you are able—remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood. Thank you.



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# Mercury Rising

It's now known that there's something nasty in Santa Rosa Creek. It would be good to know how much, and how bad.

April 13, 2013  
Hand-delivered

Dear Congresswoman Capps,

Thank you for your work and for being a U.S. Representative for whom I feel genuine admiration.

Today I am seeking you out to implore you to direct the capacities of your office to help stop the further entry of mercury and to clean up its legacy deposits in the beautiful, but imperiled, Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria. As you know, inorganic mercury (Hg) can become a potent bioaccumulative neurotoxin which can have lethal consequences when transformed into organic methylmercury. I was stunned to learn of its so far unremediated presence in the SR Creek watershed. This leaves an opening for the Hg to be converted by sediment bacteria into the toxic bioavailable methylmercury form.

Some background:

The Oceanic mercury mine and mill operated intermittently into the 1940's. They are above Curti Creek just a short distance from where Curti converges with Santa Rosa Creek -- a mere 7 miles up creek from Cambria's glorious coast and near shore waters...the southern end of The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

The mine/mill produced about 2.8 million pounds of liquid mercury -- quicksilver -- in eras when environmental safeguards were unknown.

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board ( CCRWQCB) did some study of the area in the early 90s. An order for clean-up was issued by the RWQCB in the late 90s. It has not been acted on or enforced to date.

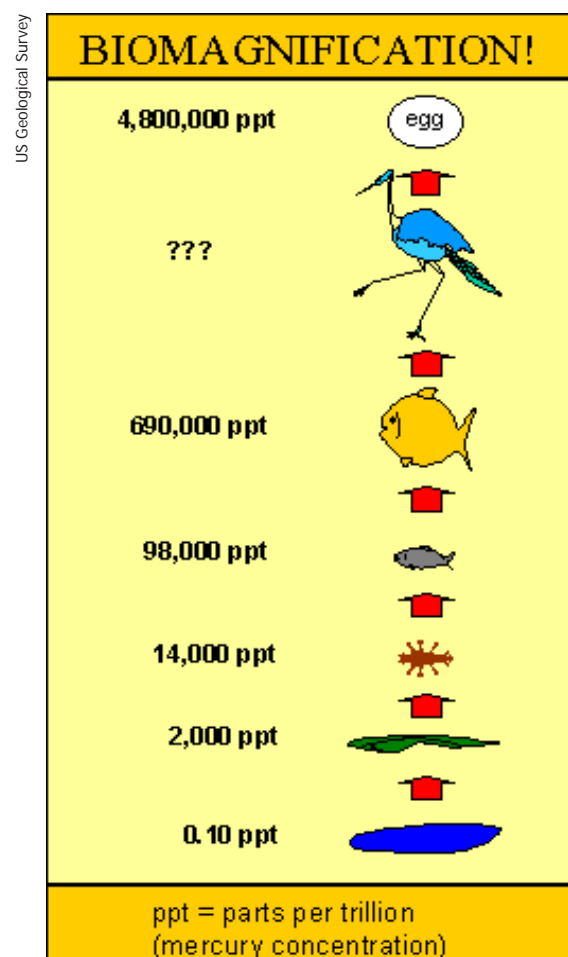
Astounded and frustrated by this state of affairs, I did some testing of sediment in the SR creek myself-some of it with support from the Santa Lucia chapter of the Sierra Club. The levels of mercury I found ranged from 120 parts per billion at the Main St. Bridge up to 554 ppb at the mouth of the creek. (170 ppb is designated as level for threshold effects for aquatic life, per the Santa Rosa Creek Watershed Management Plan.)

Right now, the largely federally funded bridge replacement over SR Creek at that same Main St. has the potential to aggravate the mercury situation by disturbing legacy Hg deposits in creek sediments, possibly degrading both surface and groundwater quality. The Regional Board required mercury testing for the project, just done in January and March of 2013. They found -- at deeper levels than I tested -- anywhere from 2x to more than 25x more Hg than I did back in 2009.

The NEPA Environmental Assessment process which should have assessed the Hg potential for adverse effects was put aside by Caltrans, which gave the project a Categorical Exclusion (CE) -- which I believe is not permissible because SR Creek is federally designated "Critical Habitat" for steelhead, let alone the possible public health implications. Caltrans maintains that their CE is sufficient.



Matthew Geyer



There's much more that's gone on and I have more detail and documentation for everything if your office contacts me.

So one issue is the urgent need for mine and mill remediation, and the time seems right given that EPA is working on the other side of the coast range to deal with the Klau and Buena Vista mine problems near Templeton/Paso Robles.

The other is fully assessing/deferring on the bridge project that could aggravate the situation. The Main St. bridge is structurally quite adequate -- it is safe for use now and into the future until remedies for the SR Creek dilemma are found, funded and implemented.

I invite you to do the right thing here and to attend to something that you likely have not been told of, but as a health-oriented person, you will appreciate the need for addressing this matter. I would gladly volunteer to help your office in any way possible to get the aid to Santa Rosa Creek/watershed that it needs to heal!

Thank you for your time and kind attention.

Sincerely,  
Lynne Harkins  
Cambria

Paso  
continued from page 2

Dec. 2012).

The push to establish a groundwater management district that would be controlled by the largest landowners -- with voting power determined by the value of land holdings -- got support from the obvious sectors.

North County Watch notes that "there appears to be a well-orchestrated push to form a California Water District, [in which] voting rights are based on one vote for each dollar of assessed valuation. North County Watch continues to raise the issue of the rights of the rural residential user because we have not heard anything that would give comfort to the thousands of rural residential users as to how their rights and concerns might be addressed in a California Water District."

Supervisors Hill and Gibson proposed an "urgency ordinance" that would address expansion of irrigated ag or restrict the proliferation of huge ag ponds -- looking to "staunch the bleeding for a year or two while long-term measures are considered."

Supervisor Arnold dismissed this as "leap-frogging ahead" and made a motion that the County just suspend fees for well drilling and look into low-interest loans to allow residents to drill ever deeper wells.

Hill said the Board needed to "show rural residents we've explored everything within our power." Gibson pressed to "explore what else this board might do," and pointed to multiple references to the possibility of enacting urgency ordinances in the Blue Ribbon committee's report.

Pressed by Gibson and Hill, Ogren said he realized that the menu of options he was expected to come up with will include urgency land use ordinances, even though Mechem,

**"Owning property in Paso Robles is like being on the Titanic, except we're not heading for an iceberg, we're headed for a dust bowl. It's time to choose human life over 30,000 acres of grapes."**

Arnold and Texiera could not actually bring themselves to say so.

Hill said "I'm not sure that we're sending them away utterly convinced that we've done everything in our power."

Gibson replied "I think the question might be rephrased 'Are we sending them away [asking] have we done anything?' Have we made use of all the land use authority that this board has at our disposal?"

All this set the stage for the date (tentatively June 18, but more likely sometime in August) when Public Works staff will come back to the board with a full suite of options and recommendations, and the board majority will have to decide, right there in public, what they're going to do. And if they don't want to pass an urgency land use ordinance, they are going to have to phrase their failure to do so in such a way that they don't look like they're in the pocket of Big Grape and are not telling the owners of 6,000 rapidly depleting residential wells to drop dead because the big money wants to keep the party going and the tap open until there's nothing left.

It should be an interesting meeting.

# SAVE OUR WAY OF LIFE...say **NO** to Spanish Springs!

**Pismo City Council Votes June 18 on this proposed Massive Unneeded Price Canyon Project.  
Act NOW: Tell them we have too many projects taking our scarce resources and our quality of life.**

- 43% Pismo Beach Size Increase
- Threatens Our Water Supply
- Creates Traffic Congestion & Jams
- Strains Overburdened Services
- Drastic Quality of Life Decrease
- \* Residents deserve the right to decide on this project themselves. We call for a Referendum.

- **961 Acres**
- **473 Residential Units**
- **120 Senior units or more**
- **150 Room Hotel**
- **10,000 SF Conference Center**
- **9 Hole Golf Course**
- **Restaurant, Wine Center and 5000 SF Retail**



### WATER

**Proposed General Plan Change** – The City of Pismo Beach’s existing General Plan Policy requires any proposed development to bring its own water to its project. This requirement was created to protect the current residents’ water supply. Spanish Springs developers and other proposed project developers seek to change Pismo’s General Plan to allow them to use Pismo’s existing water resources. We have received 1/10<sup>th</sup> of our normal rainfall for this year. The State Water Project has said that cities will receive 35% of their contracted water amount. Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach and OCSD are suing each other over ground water. Pismo’s water resources are in jeopardy. If the City changes its water requirements to allow developers to build without bringing their own water it will sacrifice the current residents’ water supply. Water in short supply equals \$\$ rate increases and water rationing. **Save our water.**

### TRAFFIC

**Faulty Traffic Study** – Pismo Beach’s General Plan Policy states that no development is to take place until an inland arterial road is in place from Price Canyon Road to Oak Park Blvd. This road is very unlikely because the land needed is owned by the Mankins family. Since 1620 they have owned this land and used it for farming and agriculture. The Mankins have adamantly stated many times they will not allow an inland arterial road through their property. During the March 5, 2013 City Council meeting, traffic engineers admitted that the traffic studies used to establish traffic flow assumed the road would be built; therefore, traffic flow projections are incorrect. The City’s own engineer conceded that taking the inland arterial road out of the study results in the need to restudy all major intersections in Pismo Beach. Clearly, this massive project and other proposed projects warrant new traffic studies to provide the residents with a realistic picture of the traffic jams and lower quality of life that await them. Caltrans has stated that even without this development Hwy 101 will have an “F” rating. We moved here to get away from traffic congestion, bumper-to-bumper, and gridlock. Now, a SoCal developer wants to congest our hillsides and highways with over-building. Do you want traffic jams? Ventura recently said “NO” to this same developer because of traffic concerns. Say, “No,” to Spanish Springs. **Save our quality of life and our beautiful area.**

## What Can You Do?

For more information or to receive our email updates:

Email: [SavePriceCanyon@gmail.com](mailto:SavePriceCanyon@gmail.com) or  
go To [www.SavePriceCanyon.com](http://www.SavePriceCanyon.com)

On June 18, 6:30 pm: Attend the Public Hearing, Pismo Beach Vet’s Hall,  
680 Bello St., Pismo Beach

**Before June 18:** E-mail or send a letter to the City Council members:  
760 Mattie Rd, Pismo Beach, CA 93449.

- |                                                                                  |                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="mailto:SHigginbotham@pismo beach.org">SHigginbotham@pismo beach.org</a> | <a href="mailto:MReiss@pismo beach.org">MReiss@pismo beach.org</a>   |
| <a href="mailto:EWaage@pismo beach.org">EWaage@pismo beach.org</a>               | <a href="mailto:Ehowell@pismo beach.org">Ehowell@pismo beach.org</a> |
| <a href="mailto:KVardis@pismo beach.org">KVardis@pismo beach.org</a>             | <a href="mailto:JLewis@pismo beach.org">JLewis@pismo beach.org</a>   |

## Sierra Club Awards Organizing Funds to Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility and Santa Lucia Chapter

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, sponsored by the Santa Lucia Chapter, has received a Sierra Club Activist Network grant of \$2,000 to recruit new leaders on California’s nuclear power issues.

The Alliance has been testifying at the Public Utilities Commission hearings on the proposed restart of the beleaguered San Onofre reactors, and is sponsoring a Sierra Club-supported bill in the state legislature addressing relicensing costs. “Addressing the economics of nuclear power is not preempted by federal authority, and we hope this legislation will provide a template and precedent for other states with aging reactors,” said A4NR Executive Director Rochelle Becker.

The Alliance plans to recruit and train ten new leaders from key Orange County, San Diego and San Luis Obispo reactor communities, and focus on the economic impacts of nuclear power. Working to develop informed activists as well as training others to enhance their lobbying skills will provide a challenge, as the base of support for opposition to nuclear power has not traditionally focused on

economic issues. Recruits will learn how to craft arguments to address and engage potentially nontraditional allies such as chambers of commerce, Rotary groups and unions.

The Alliance will be in ongoing communication with the Sierra Club’s No Nukes Team and post regularly on the Club’s Activist Network online community. The Sierra Club’s Activist Network supports projects that promote collaborative volunteer activity, empower Sierra Club members to act on behalf of environmental causes, and increase capacity for regional and national grassroots action. Projects must be national or regional in scope. Proposals are encouraged from Chapters or Teams working to engage non-traditional constituencies such as youth, faith, labor, low income, or business communities. All proposals must include volunteer engagement and leadership development along with measurable benefits to the environment.

The laser-like focus of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility on a single strategy and a single goal has yielded

an impressive roster of achievements over the years, all the more impressive when measured against its modest resources. That record of activism and achievement, and Alliance co-founder Rochelle Becker’s work on the Sierra Club’s

National Radiation Committee and Nuclear Power Task Force and as chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter’s Diablo Canyon Task Force, is the reason why the Chapter bestowed our Founders award on Ms. Becker, and Congresswoman Lois Capps awarded her a Congressional certificate of recognition. National Sierra Club bestowed the 2007 Environmental Alliance award on Becker in recognition of her capacity to build alliances and promote community understanding of the need to decommission nuclear power as part of our transition to a renewable energy economy. Few groups in the nation are as completely aligned with the Sierra Club’s policy on nuclear energy, and are as



**The other nuclear waste** The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility knows the nuclear industry’s weakest point.

passionately and effectively dedicated to the implementation of that policy.

We congratulate the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility on its award of a Sierra Club Activist Network grant to carry on their excellent work.

# Don't Move the Trees, Bury the Wires

PG&E is running Cambria's forest out of town

*"Fear not, till Birnam wood  
Do come to Dunsinane."  
- Wm. Shakespeare, Macbeth*

By REAP (*Ratepayers for Ecologically Aligned Power*)

PG&E engaged in the heedless, unpermitted destruction of scores of mature, healthy and genetically important Monterey pine trees in Cambria's Lodge Hill area in 2009.

Now PG&E is looking for an after-the-fact permit and approval for having planted 300 Monterey pine seedlings well north of the rest of the forest. This is purported mitigation for its act of destruction of this rare forest ecosystem. Moving the forest out of the watershed — "1.5 miles northeast of the community of Cambria" — as a convenience for PG&E ignores the need for a full environmental review of the cumulative impacts of PG&E's routine maintenance.

You might wonder: "Why did PG&E kill the pines?" PG&E claimed those trees might be a future hazard to their wires; a "reliability" risk — no discussion, no proof of that claim, no public input; they just sent in the booms and chainsaws. Workers and tank-treaded equipment were imported from Fresno to Placerville to make quick work of bringing down those pines in the interests of PG&E's future bottom line. It was the corporate m.o. that would later press for an equally heedless destruction of marine life and habitat through PG&E's ill-conceived high-energy seismic survey. Fortunately, the Coastal Commission got there first, and disaster was averted.

But before the Coastal Commission intervened on behalf of the Cambria Monterey Pine Forest back in the summer of 2009 — after the SLO County Enforcement Officer told callers that he knew about the action and stated (falsely) that it was a permitted activity — the forest was suffused with the smell of the sap that oozed from shattered pines. The mayhem was strewn all along Ardash Road and the side streets on the way to the ocean. Exposed grains and rich hues of bark bore mute witness to false profits — the dispatch of chainsaws to visit early death on these cone-bearing sky dancers. How can a national treasure, one of only five remaining stands of native *Pinus radiata* in the world, be routinely subjected to the mutilation of PG&E's "regular" cutting, and then face a special onslaught of carnage to secure some GPS'ed, virtual reality version of a "utility wire appropriate" forest? — all with the County's blessing and no environmental review required?

The reality is that it is not even the cutting that makes PG&E the looming menace in the forest. It's their high-wire act and its sparking sizzle that snakes from pole to pole throughout the forest, an ever-present threat of the fire that we all dread. We clear gutters, eradicate the essential forest understory, install big water tanks and pay exorbitant fire insurance premiums, while PG&E's wires hang there. They deliver power — and lots of blaze potential — every minute of every day. We are always living with the risks and paying a high price for PG&E's appetite for profits which makes them



too cheap to do the right thing and put their snapping wires underground where they belong.

People continue to meekly succumb to

the corporate smoke and mirrors that make it look like it would be a too-costly imposition on PG&E for them to provide us with truly safe and reliable power. In truth, they now impose upon us the burdensome costs of trying to keep at bay the fury of a forest fire in Cambria that many believe would most likely be caused by utility wires. Ask Fire Chief Miller how he feels about those wires, and where he thinks they belong.

So why wasn't the sensible, "reliability" alternative of requiring PG&E to bury their wires considered in the belated permit that the County is facilitating for PG&E? It would solve both of the potential problems of outages from trees falling and wires flaring. It would end the ridiculous attempt to reduce outages by getting rid of the pine canopy.

How about a "down-to-earth" solution that saves the trees and the rate-payers from outages and the ubiquitous threat of fire, and also honors the immeasurable ecological vitality that the pines provide. When the true value of the Monterey pine ecosystem as "coastal resource" is understood and rightly reckoned, it dwarfs any monetary considerations about undergrounding wires.

After this after-the-fact Coastal Development Permit is appealed to the County Board of Supervisors (where no vision or justice is expected), it will hopefully be appealable to the Coastal Commission. Let's start there on the work of reshaping hardened, rate-payer-hostile utility practices.



**Bad actor** The scene in Cambria's Monterey pine forest after PG&E swept through in 2009.



June 2013

## Don't miss out on the rooftop revolution!

We continue to be amazed by the number of people interested in going solar with Sierra Club. So far this year, 288 of your neighbors have requested a solar quote from our solar partner, Sungevity.

If you haven't had a chance to request a solar quote yet, get started today. It takes less than 3 minutes to request your quote! Someone from Sungevity will follow-up with you to discuss if solar is right for your home.

Getting solar panels installed on your house is a great way to save money and support your local Sierra Club chapter. With new solar leasing options, there is little or no upfront cost. Many customers save right from day one and savings grow as energy rates rise.

In addition to shrinking your carbon footprint, going solar with Sungevity helps support Sierra Club's work to protect California's environment. If you get solar installed on your home, Sungevity will give you a \$750 cash gift card and \$750 to your Chapter of the Sierra Club.

See if solar is right for you today. It's quick and easy to get started! Get your free evaluation now at:

[sierraclub.org/solarhomes](http://sierraclub.org/solarhomes)

## Confronting Fossil Fuels from All Angles

by Laura Peters, Sierra Club Foundation blog

The Sierra Club Foundation, which is a publicly supported charity, makes grants to grassroots campaigns that deliver results in the fight against climate disruption. The Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign is at the leading edge of this movement, having successfully defeated more than 160 coal plant proposals in the last six years, while targeting existing coal plants for retirement and replacement with clean energy. TSCF also funds the Sierra Club's Beyond Oil and Beyond Natural Gas campaigns, which are focused on reducing emissions and the effect of fossil fuels on our health, as well as the Sierra Club's Our Wild America Campaign, which works to stop drilling and mining on public land.

But the urgency of the climate crisis demands that we do more. A couple of years ago we took a hard look at our investments and decided that our investment strategy should be in line with the Sierra Club's mission. We now select all of our mutual funds using environmental, social, and governance (ESG) screens. We have investments in highly regarded ESG mutual funds — namely Generation, Domini, Calvert, Neuberger Berman, and Boston Common.

Running investments through an ESG filter was the first phase in making sure our investments are mission-aligned, and that we get the worst actors out of our portfolio. We are now developing a policy that more fully spells out TSCF's decision not to invest in fossil fuels, investing instead in funds that directly support clean-energy solutions. TSCF Board Chair Larry Keeshan stated: "We at the Foundation are stewards of the money we receive to support our environmental mission, especially longer-term investments and endowments. Part of that stewardship is an investment policy that incorporates socially-responsible investing with a special focus on environmental concerns."

However, TSCF will retain the minimum level of holdings required to allow us to participate in shareholder actions. As a shareholder in Spectra Energy, for instance, Trillium Asset Management represented us on a proposal to cut fugitive methane emissions from natural gas drilling.

"Given the rapid pace of natural gas development in the U.S., it is no surprise that operators have prioritized growth over efficiency, and regulators have been slow to catch up," said Natasha Lamb, Vice President at Trillium Asset Management. "The business case for strong oversight and methane reduction targets is clear. Leaking gas is a symptom of poor management systems that neglect shareholder value and amplify climate change." That proposal received 35.5 percent of the votes cast by the shareholders at the company's annual meeting. The vote far surpasses the 3 percent threshold that is required by the SEC for inclusion in next year's proxy voting.

The Sierra Club — with grant support from The Sierra Club Foundation — has unmatched capacity for direct environmental activism through its large grassroots base, its strategic legal actions, and its media punch. In short, the Club is bringing outside pressure on an industry that needs to change. We are complementing these efforts by bringing inside pressure as an investor and shareholder.

It's time for an all-of-the-above strategy. The urgency is there. The climate is changing. We must use every tactic available to us to create change before it's too late.

# What a Party That Was

On May 11, the Santa Lucia Chapter's 45th Birthday Bash fundraiser rocked the Edna Valley



John Muir, founder



Charlie Kleemann serenades.



all photos: Michael Jencks

### Many thanks:

...to Outings Chair Joe Morris for his multimedia presentation on John Muir's Yosemite, an all our volunteers on set-up, serving and clean-up,

...to Castoro Cellars, SIP Certified Wines, and Firestone Brewery for their donated libations, to Trader Joe's for donating a bag of goodies,

...to all who donated items for the silent auction: Woody Combrink, Bayside Café, Clays Body Pottery, Jayne Cairn Designs, Niels and Bimmer Udsen, Anita Marie Jewelry, Bart Alford, The Frame Shop in Los Osos, Flying M Enterprises, Thai Bounty, Captain Stew, Sub Sea Whale Watching, Humankind, Big Sky,



Ranchers for Peace take the stage.



Master chef Pat Veasart whips up pies and vegan pizza.

To their very good health:



Apropos, Sally Loo's, Julie Dunn, JCD Jewelry, Marcie Harvey, Kayak Shack, Elly Johnson, Lani Briceland and the Zulu Nyala Lodge,

...and, of course, to former Chapter Chair Karen Merriam for the use of the hall.

A good time was had by all... and a really good time will be had by the two lucky couples who put in the winning bids at the silent auction on two South African photo safari packages from Zulu Nyala Lodge.

Executive Committee member Patrick McGibney makes sure all get served who sit and wait.



# Taking Issue

Reviewing problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local media

“PG&E files to lobby against startups,” by Robert Rodgers, *Contra Costa Times*, reprinted in *The Tribune*, April 5, 2013.

**Summary:** PG&E’s century-old energy monopoly is feeling the heat of competition, and the utility wants to be able to nip clean, renewable local power in the bud. That means aggressive lobbying to kill off Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), the tool that allows California cities and counties to buy and incentivize renewable energy at competitive rates and keep ratepayer funds in the community instead of pouring them into the coffers of an investor-owned utility.

The PG&E filing is a bold declaration that they intend to become a “marketing utility.” What this means is that they are holding out the possibility of mega-bucks public marketing campaigns designed to kill CCA programs in local communities. The law requires utilities to “fully cooperate” with a community’s desire to implement CCA. But PG&E’s anti-CCA marketing campaigns have been anything but cooperative — they are damaging and pervasive. If PG&E prevails, other investor-owned utilities could follow suit. LEAN Energy US, on behalf of California consumers, communities and organizations who want to protect their right to pursue CCA, has filed a protest response to the PG&E Advisory Letter.

PG&E states that it “expects that at some time it will wish to express to customers or governments its views on (Community Choice Aggregation or CCA) programs that can only be expressed through an independent marketing division....”

The company “has no plans at this time” to advertise or lobby, “but we do realize that the evolution of the CCA is in its early stages and it’s reasonable to have options in the future.”

“Just as PG&E was pledging cooperation, it aggressively set out

to undermine the city’s plans with competing bids and continued its fiercely adversarial posture in another half-dozen realms in which it must work with the city, battles that have cost San Franciscans millions of dollars.”  
-- “PG&E’s extreme makeover: Utility promises cooperation and green power while delivering the same old deception and big money attacks,” by Steven T. Jones, [www.sfbg.com](http://www.sfbg.com)



Last year, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted to switch from PG&E to CleanPowerSF, another clean energy provider.

“A local program seeking to provide San Franciscans with the option to purchase 100 percent renewable energy has come under

attack by a group intertwined with California’s largest utility company. An online petition posted to Change.org targets San Francisco’s CleanPowerSF initiative and urges petitioners to call for it to be halted. The group behind the Change.org petition and a second one posted on Facebook is the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 1245, a union representing Pacific Gas & Electric Co. employees. PG&E annually pumps more than 2 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. The majority of its electricity is derived from nuclear and natural gas power plants. If CleanPowerSF manages to attract San Francisco customers who would prefer to power their homes with green energy, PG&E stands to lose.”

-- “PG&E union turns to Change.org to attack renewable energy program,” by Rebecca Bowe, SFBG Politics Blog, Jan. 30, 2013

MCE procures renewable electricity for their customers, who have the option of choosing between 50% renewable and 100% renewable, with many of the same rate schedules as PG&E -- which offers less than 20% renewable energy (see “It’s time for the government to accept spent nuclear fuel,” right) .

Marin Clean Energy has picked up 90,000 residential and commercial customers, and expects to have more than 120,000 by summer.

**Upshot:** As CCA works its way to SLO, guess who is going to be “expressing its views” to its customers? Knowledge is the best defense against the onslaught of misleading political mailers and “Be afraid!” saturation bombing tactics on every local TV channel that is in our future. Go to [slocleanenergy.org](http://slocleanenergy.org) and get hip to CCA before PG&E tries to scare you away from it.

## Avila Bird Sanctuary: Flight to the Finish

The Port San Luis Harbor District and Avila Beach Community Services District have joined the Avila Valley Advisory Council in endorsing the idea of declaring Avila Beach a bird sanctuary, a la Morro Bay (see “Bird Sanctuary Taking Off,” April). The Avila Beach Tourism Alliance and Avila Foundation are interested in supplying funds. Now all that’s needed is a resolution from the Board of Supervisors.



## How to Get an Energy Rebate

The County Planning Department has opened an Energy Rebate and Information Center in the Old Courthouse in downtown SLO, at the 976 Osos Street entrance. The center is located in the lobby, just outside the permit center, and contains important information about energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, rebates, financing options, and training opportunities. The information covers new and existing residential, multi-family, and commercial properties, and programs and resources available for residential, commercial, and municipal buildings. Information on energy programs is also available online at [www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/Energy](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/Energy).



“EPA methane report further splits opinions on fracking,” by Kevin Begos, AP, *The Tribune* April 29, 2013.

**Summary:** The EPA has lowered its estimate of how much methane -- a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide -- natural gas production is responsible for releasing into the atmosphere. According to “an environmental group,” the EPA’s disputed report is “great news,” and means full speed ahead for fracking.

“This is great news for anybody concerned about the climate and strong proof that existing technology can be deployed to reduce methane leaks” [said Shellenberger].

The co-founders of The Breakthrough Institute

are past masters of wrapping the corporate imperative in philosophical greenspeak — up to a point. Joe Romm, founder of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory’s Energy Forecasting group and proprietor of the Climate Progress blog, noted in 2009: “Breakthrough has tried to create the impression they are a progressive, environmental organization dedicated to promoting clean energy — so that when they launch their umpteenth attack on progressives and environmentalists and climate scientists and clean energy they can be seen as ‘contrarians.’ Stop the presses — here’s an environmental group saying environmentalists are doing the wrong thing.”

The EPA report amounts to an estimated 20 percent reduction in the amount of methane believed to leak from natural gas operations, meaning that instead of leaking the equivalent of over a billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> over the last 20 years, the industry has only emitted 850 million tons. Break out the party hats! (The methodology of the EPA study has been sharply criticized by Cornell University researchers who found the industry’s methane emissions to be much higher.)

EPA methane report further splits opinions on fracking



The new EPA data is “kind of an earthquake” in the debate over drilling, said Michael Shellenberger, the president of the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental group based in Oakland.

In the Sept. 2011 issue of *Orion*, Shellenberger co-authored “Evolve: a case for modernization as the road to salvation,” which downplayed global warming as no big deal. After four pages of “modernization theology,” Shellenberger & co. finally got around to stating what they were specifically promoting under that title: nuclear power and genetically engineered food. George Will, the American Enterprise Institute and the Republican National Committee are all fans of the Breakthrough Institute, for obvious reasons.

**Upshot:** On July 28, 2012, thousands of people rallied in Washington, D.C., to move our country toward a more sustainable future where drilling for natural gas does not threaten our air and water. “Stop the Frack Attack” was organized and supported by more than a hundred environmental groups, watershed associations, clean water and clean air advocates. But one corporate think tank posing as an environmental group gives fracking a big thumbs up, and lo and behold: environmentalists are “split.” And behold another lazy reporter with a contrarian on speed-dial in order to create a debate.

“It’s time for the government to accept spent nuclear fuel,” by Ed Halpin, *The Tribune*, April 24, 2013.

**Summary:** According to a PG&E senior vp, the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant can generate cheap power for as long as the federal government agrees to take care of the waste. The author scolds the government for failing to fully deliver on the terms of this enormous -- and thus far impossible -- government subsidy that allows the nuclear industry to generate profit and not have to worry about its waste. Thanks to the Renewables100 Policy Institute’s “Pathways to 100-Percent Renewable Energy” International Conference, held in San Francisco, April 16, 2013, and the conference notes of Edward Mainland and David McCoard, Energy-Climates Committee, CNRCC, Sierra Club California, for many of the responses below.



Says who? Steve Berberich, CEO of California Independent System Operators, sees “tectonic changes” coming to the energy industry, driven by the economics of labor and procurement costs, upgrades of distribution, and falling costs of distributed generation (DG) – widespread small-scale local power — enabling technologies like energy storage, whose cost is decreasing. His view of the future has three phases: 1) DG grows, storage improves, biofuels expand; 2) electrification of transportation; 3) local generation predominates, with 100 percent renewables.

Without the plant, California would be much harder pressed to meet its ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals cost-effectively.

A grid reliability assessment was evaluated for the absence of DCP. This study determined that there was no material mid- or long-term transmission system impacts associated with the absence of Diablo Canyon.

Nuclear power remains essential to meeting the energy demands of the future.

It takes a special kind of chutzpah to cite the “24/7” baseload stat while the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station is entering its 15th month of delivering zero power to customers but charging them anyway. That and Diablo Canyon’s long history of scheduled and unscheduled outages, re-fuelings, etc. aside, do we actually need 24/7 baseload power constantly feeding into and “stabilizing” the grid, as opposed to the variability of wind and solar power? Above, Mr. Berberich and the ISO Transmission Plan say no. And Dr. Eric Martinot of REN21 Global Futures Report urges going beyond this kind of outmoded 20-year-old thinking about energy, saying the integration and balancing of grid renewables is technologically possible with options available now, grid stability is no longer a challenge, nuclear is not necessary, and 100 percent renewable power appears quite achievable in the electricity sector.

Nuclear power stands alone as the only major source of carbon-free, baseload power that can operate 24/7.

The plant also helps PG&E deliver some of the cleanest energy in the nation to our customers, with nearly 60 percent of our portfolio coming from renewable or carbon-free sources.

Less than 20% of the power in PG&E’s energy portfolio is renewable energy. The other 40% in

the oft-touted “nearly 60%” figure is nuclear and large hydroelectric, neither of which are allowable in a Renewable Energy Portfolio. Germany has set a goal of 80% renewable energy by 2050; Denmark and multiple European countries and cities are on track to meet a goal of 100 percent renewable power. PG&E is a long way from meeting “the energy demands of the future.”

**Upshot:** “The overarching finding of this study is that zero-CO<sub>2</sub> U.S. economy can be achieved within the next thirty to fifty years without the use of nuclear power.... A zero CO<sub>2</sub>, nuclear-free economy is not only achievable, it is necessary for environmental protection and security.”  
-- “Carbon-Free and Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap for U.S. Energy Policy,” by Arjun Makhijani, Ph.D., Nuclear Policy Institute, Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, 2007.

Worldwide - May 18, 2013

## Dirty Fuel Opponents Join Hands Across the Sand

Thousands of participants turned out to draw a line in the sand at approximately 100 events in 18 states and 9 countries today for the fourth annual "Hands Across the Sand/Land" event, to demonstrate opposition to expanding offshore drilling and the use of dirty fuels as well as support for cleaner energy choices. A complete list of events can be found at [www.handsacrossthesand.org](http://www.handsacrossthesand.org).

Dirty fuels industries are pushing for an expansion of offshore drilling in U.S. waters and seismic testing for offshore oil and gas is proposed along the East Coast. Meanwhile, the same industries are seeking to advance the Keystone XL Pipeline and are destroying whole landscapes through mountain top removal coal mining. To counter these threats, Hands Across

the Sand/Land participants showed leaders like President Obama the breadth of opposition to new fossil fuel exploitation and support for a clean energy economy rooted in energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy solutions, such as wind, solar and geothermal.

At the Hands Across the Sand event at the Avila Pier, sponsored by the local chapters of Surfrider, Sierra Club and StopOceanBlasting.org, the high-energy seismic testing recently proposed for the Central Coast was also in the mix, along with the benefits that long-delayed National Marine Sanctuary status would bring in the form of permanent protection from such surveys and offshore drilling, rather than having to rely on local ballot initiatives and the good graces of state regulatory agencies.

Nationwide, Hands Across the Sand is sponsored by Oceana, Surfrider Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Gulf Restoration Network, Center for Biological Diversity and Sierra Club.

"The massive turnout for the Hands Across the Sand today shows that people oppose the risky practice of offshore drilling and understand that we need to seek real solutions to

our energy crisis including increased efficiency, conservation and renewable alternatives," said Pete Stauffer, Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Program Manager. "Dirty fuels should be kept in the

ground," said Athan Manuel, Sierra Club Public Lands Director. "We should be investing in clean energy solutions, like wind and solar, and expanding our transportation choices, not opening up special places off our coasts, on public lands or in the Arctic to destructive mining, fracking or drilling."



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## Dunes

continued from page 1

indicates a buffer area along these critical interface areas.

In the LCP's map of ORV use areas ("Figure 4"), the La Grande tract is marked as a buffer area. DPR has yet to revise its General Development Plan in accordance with the LCP to reflect this designation, which prohibits ORV use on the La Grande Tract.

On December 4, 2006, in anticipation of sale of the La Grande Tract to DPR, the County's Planning Director made a determination that the sale of the La Grande Tract to DPR would be consistent with the County General Plan. His determination was appealed to the Planning Commission, which, after receiving public testimony, reversed his decision and determined that the sale would violate the General Plan and the LCP.

Specifically, the Planning Commission determined that the sale would be inconsistent with the Coastal Area Planning Standards which designate the La Grande Tract as a natural buffer area. (The Planning Commission came to this conclusion despite obvious attempts to excise all policies pertaining to the land's long-standing "buffer" designation and omit any reference to those policies in the staff report that was supposed to serve as the basis for the Commission's decision.)

DPR and off-road groups appealed the Planning Commission's determination to the County Board of Supervi-

sors. In relevant part, the Board denied the appeal and upheld the determination of the Planning Commission, concluding that sale of the La Grande Tract to DPR would not be in conformity with the County's LCP and Ag/Open Space Policies. This determination was challenged in court by off-roaders, who also argued that DPR's General Development Plan "pre-empted" the Local Coastal Program. This case was dismissed in 2010 at the request of the petitioners, the equivalent of a court judgment. As a result, both the authority of the LCP and the County's determination of nonconformity are now beyond legal challenge.

The California Coastal Commission has said of the proposed La Grande Tract purchase that "the sale would result in the continuation of a use that is inconsistent with the land use designations established by the certified LCP," and that conflicting interpretations of allowed activities on the La Grande tract should be resolved by the submission of an amendment to the LCP.

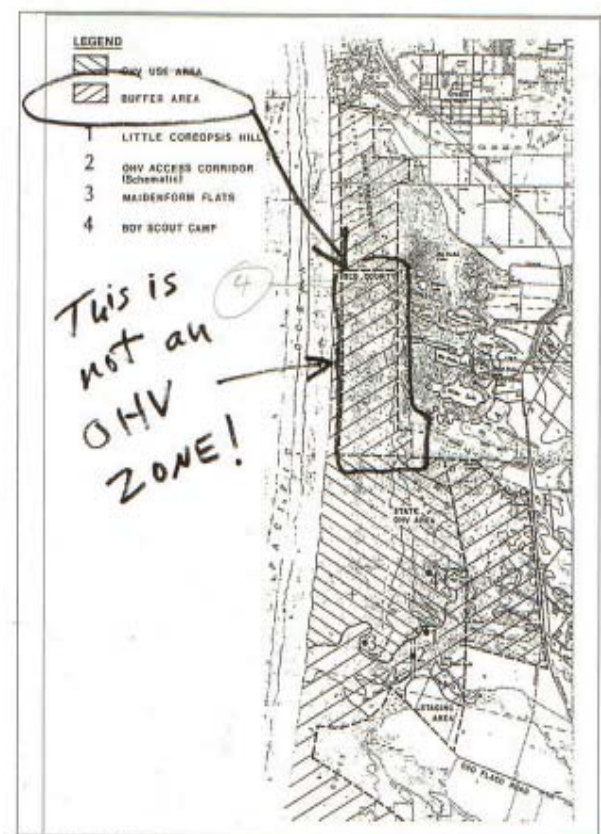
When the Sierra Club sued to enforce the terms of the LCP, the court ruled that it could not require that the General Development Plan of the Oceano Dunes SVRA be revised to conform to the LCP by a certain date, but essentially agreed with the Coastal Commission, observing that Standard 4 of the South County Area Plan does say that the General Development Plan of the Oceano Dunes SVRA shall be

revised in accordance with the Local Coastal Plan, "but does not say when."

On March 24, 2010, the board of the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District accepted a scientific study concluding that ORV activity on the Oceano Dunes, having denuded the dunes of vegetation and destabilized sand surfaces subject to high winds, is a significant cause of particulate matter pollution in the county that exceeds threshold levels set by the EPA as hazardous to human health.

The County Health Commission has urged all actions necessary to revegetate and stabilize the dunes. The health of our residents would be better served by the County using its land parcel in the ODSVRA for revegetation and dune stabilization efforts.

But the bottom line is that the County should not sell this land to



Map 2: Off-Road Vehicle Use Areas

**Let's not reward noncompliance** The land State Parks wants to lock up for off-roaders in perpetuity is land they are not supposed to be riding on.

**We urge the Board of Supervisors to retain control of its 584 acres; the state's \$4.8 million offer isn't nearly enough to compensate future generations of San Luis Obispo County residents for loss of local control.**

- "We must keep the Dunes under the county's control," editorial opinion of *The Tribune*, Sept. 7, 2008

State Parks because the LCP as certified does not permit off-road recreation on the La Grande Tract.

Because State Parks recently lost its bid to overturn the APCD's dust control rule (see "Off-Roaders Hit the Wall," May) – and because the County's ability to cancel its La Grande Tract Operating Agreement with State Parks is an effective tool to have at hand assuring compliance – the interest of State Parks' Off-Highway Vehicle Division in acquiring the County land in the Oceano Dunes remains urgent. By the same token, so do the reasons why the County should not sell.

# Classifieds

Next issue deadline is **June 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](mailto:sierraclub8@gmail.com)

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



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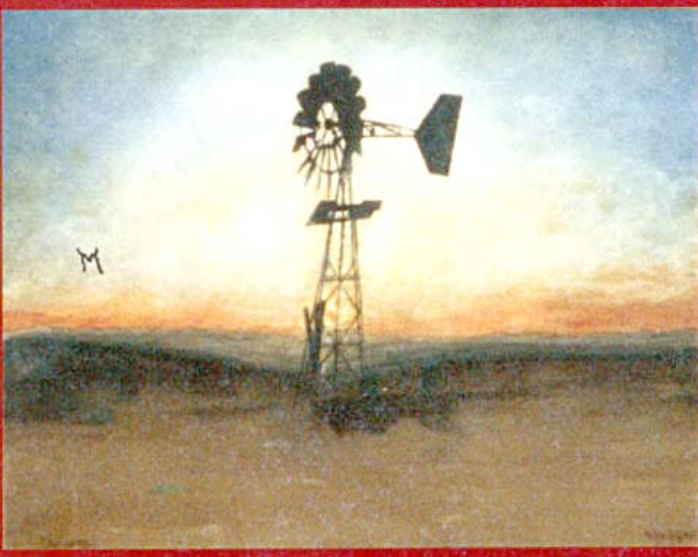
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## Hold Your Water

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Now that mantra can be yours, too, along with healthier soils, happier wildlife, and reductions in your water bill, thanks to the tips and techniques in **Rainwater Management for Low Impact Development**, a publication of the Appropriate Technology Coalition -- SLO Green Build, the Santa Lucia

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.

**LAW OFFICES OF BABAK NAFICY**  
 Babak Naficy - Attorney at Law



1504 Marsh Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

ph: 805.593.0926 - fax: 805.593.0946  
[babaknaficy@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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., June 8, 8:30 a.m. Rinconada/Little Falls/Big Falls Loop.** All-day, strenuous 14-mile hike on scenic roads and trails, 2000-ft. gain. It is possible to do a shorter in-and-out hike, if desired. 2 miles of hike is on Lopez Canyon Rd, which has several stream crossings, so bring sandals or other footwear to use for these crossings. Bring lunch and water. Leader will have water purifier to refill containers. Poison oak present along trail. Extreme heat will postpone this hike to June 22nd. Meet in front of Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita. Need to call leader at least 24 hrs. in advance to confirm your participation. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

**Sat., June 8, 9 a.m. Hike in Montana de Oro State Park.** Moderately strenuous 8-9 mile loop hike, 1800 ft. gain, on Islay Rd and Barranca and Ridge Trails. Explore the backcountry of the park and enjoy great coastline views from Hazard Peak. Possibility of poison oak and ticks along route. Bring plenty of water, lunch, and/or snacks and dress for the weather. Meet at the Ridge Trailhead, about 1/4 mile before the visitor center. If you reach the visitor center, you have gone too far. Leader: Chuck Tribbey, 441-7597.

**Sun., June 9, 9 a.m. Johnson Ranch Open Space and Irish Hills Natural Reserve Hike.** Explore the new trail connecting Johnson Ranch and the Irish Hills Reserves. Total distance of the hike is 6 miles, with a 700 ft. gain, taking about 3 hours. This trail offers

a new perspective on the SLO area as seen from the southern hills, winding through different habitats displaying a diverse ecosystem. Meet at the Johnson Ranch Open Space trail head, located at the turn out to the intersection of South Higuera Street and Ontario Road, adjacent to Hwy 101, south of San Luis Obispo. From there we will shuttle in a few cars to the Irish Hills Reserve trail head located at the southern end of Madonna Road in San Luis Obispo (ten minutes by car). At the end of the hike, we will shuttle the drivers back to their cars at the Irish Hills. Bring water, snacks, and dress in layers for changing weather. A hat and sturdy shoes are advised. The plants, animals, and geology of the area will be discussed. Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103 or [bill.waycott@gmail.com](mailto:bill.waycott@gmail.com).

**Sun., June 16, 10 a.m. Sycamore Springs Trekking-Pole Hike.** 2-mile hike to model the techniques and benefits of using trekking poles, 700 ft. elevation gain. Meet near the entrance to Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Resort. Confirm beforehand with leader if coming. Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or [polecatleader@gmail.com](mailto:polecatleader@gmail.com).

**Fri-Sun., June 21-23 Southern Sierra Sojourn** Leisurely hikes to three peaks on the Kern Plateau. Camp Friday and Saturday nights + happy hours at USFS Troy Meadow campground (7800'). Saturday, climb Sherman Pk (9909'), 5 miles rt and 1170' gain, followed by climb up Bald Mtn. (9382'), .6 mile rt and 155' gain. Spectacular panoramas from both peaks. Sunday, climb Blackrock Mtn., (9635'), 1.5 mile rt, 700' gain, on forested slope bordering the Golden Trout Wilderness. Suitable for vintage

or newer climbers. Email home and work phones to reservationist, Jerry Keating, [jkeatinghiker@att.net](mailto:jkeatinghiker@att.net), 714-524-3862 Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club.

**Sun., June 23, 9 a.m. City Walk of San Luis Obispo: Jazz Age to the Fifties.** Where is the hotel where Hearst entertained his guests, the speakeasies in the twenties, and the original French Hospital? Find out and much more on a guided downtown stroll past historic stores, theaters, and hotels. Learn about SLO city life from the years of the Model T to Prohibition and World War II. Meet at building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, corner of Santa Rosa and Pacific Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.


**Fri.-Sun., June 28-July 21 200-mile walk on the Via Podiensis.** This is an ancient pilgrimage route in France, averaging 12 miles/day, past architectural, historic, and culinary treasures, ending in foothills of the Pyrenees. Stay at small hotels, inns, bed & breakfasts, and even a former convent. \$3,158 per person for Sierra Club members. Info.: Ed Maurer, 949-768-0417, [balois@cox.net](mailto:balois@cox.net). Angeles chapter, Sierra Club.

**Thurs-Sun., July 4-7. Independence Day Weekend in the Black Rock.** Car-camp weekend in the Black Rock Desert, no RVs or



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.

trailers, with full list of activities. For further information, call David Book after June 15, 775-843-6443. Great Basin Group/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  
Sierra Club  
(805) 549-0355  
[dpj1942@earthlink.net](mailto:dpj1942@earthlink.net)



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club in Yosemite

## Activities sponsored by other groups

**Sat., June 22, Botanical Garden: The Art of Nature – Pine Needle Basketry Workshop.** You'll find the main material for your unique creation right under your feet. You don't need a loom or mountains of materials for these special creations. From 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., 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 led 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. If your inner artist is calling, this is the perfect time to answer! Just bring sharp scissors, imagination and a bagd lunch. Each participant will make their own basket and start a second basket to work on at home. Workshop 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. \$95 for Garden members, \$120 for non-members. Limited size. To register call 541-1400 x304, or visit [slobg.org](http://slobg.org). A \$3 fee is charged for parking by County Parks in El Chorro Regional Park.

## Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

**June 2-4; July 21-23; Aug. 25-27; Sept. 15-17**

Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard cruise to Channel Islands National Park.

Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds. Watch for the endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who were here for thousands of years.

Or just relax at sea. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68' twin diesel Truth.

The cost, \$590, includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks and beverages plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to help lead



hikes, point out items of interest, and present evening programs.

To make a reservation send a \$100 check, written to Sierra Club, to leader

Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. For more information call or e-mail 626-443-0706 or [jholtzhln@aol.com](mailto:jholtzhln@aol.com).