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SANTA LUCIAN



**SIERRA
CLUB**
Santa Lucia
Chapter

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

Who Knows How the Wind Blows?



Carol Georgi



Let's discuss BOEM Pacific Regional Director Joan Barminski (left) fields a question at the April 13 California Offshore Wind Energy Planning Process meeting at the SLO County Government Center.

Will offshore wind work for the Central Coast? The state and feds have one shot at getting environmental review right

The Central Coast is officially on the map for major players in the international wind energy industry.

In recent conferences attended by CEOs from firms headquartered in Copenhagen and Beijing, the maps on the wall all feature lines in the ocean off the California coast from Piedras Blancas to Vandenberg AFB.

There are three reasons for our growing fame: Good offshore wind speeds, the location of substations and transmission lines right behind the shuttered Dynege power plant in Morro Bay and the soon-to-be-shuttered Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, and California's target of 33% renewable energy on the

electrical grid by 2020 and 50% by 2030.

That's why the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the California Energy Commission have formed the Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force and are barnstorming the California coast to meet with stakeholders (see "Moving Air," March).

On the evening of April 13, it was San Luis Obispo's turn, with Supervisor Bruce Gibson hosting a heavily attended open house designed to let BOEM and CEC officials present the details of the process and take a few questions from the audience.

It was, in large part, a description of a leap into

the unknown. Unlike the current focal point for offshore wind energy projects in the U.S., the waters off the northeast coast, the seafloor off California is too deep for conventional turbines, necessitating a new, untested floating turbine technology with large sea anchors. Jean Thurston, BOEM's Renewable Energy Program Specialist, said "the most appropriate areas likely have never been studied before for this use." Hence, the environmental challenges that lie ahead for state and federal resource agencies are formidable, and several red flags were raised at the meeting.

Two years is not enough

One of those flags was hoisted when BOEM officials said they are leaning heavily on the experience of European and U.S. East Coast offshore wind installations. But, per Dr. David Ainley, Senior Ecologist with the consulting firm H.T. Harvey & Associates, "Owing to much greater ocean productivity, seabird density/abundance in the California current are orders of magnitude greater than along U.S. East Coast or coastal Europe, from which most current information on impacts of offshore wind generation is derived."

BOEM has not committed to incorporating advances in new technologies for ocean data collection and new methodologies from ocean scientists.

Another red flag: BOEM is currently going on the assumption that amassing enough data to construct a two-year baseline for the

proposed area will suffice. (An environmental baseline requires an accurate assessment of the presence and abundance of key species, the physical characteristics and community composition of the sea floor, and the risk of habitat displacement.) We disagree. It is critically important to have at least three years of pre-development baseline data if any environmental review is to have statistical integrity. A three-year minimum is necessary to capture seasonal or inter-annual variability and rates of community turnover on the sea floor so that environmental changes resulting from the anchoring of mooring lines can be assessed.

Ecologically sensitive areas such as migratory corridors between National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas and other ecologically important habitat must be avoided, including ecologically important marine areas that are not officially protected. Whales and birds are known to feed at Santa Lucia Bank during their annual migrations. Though the area is not yet protected, it is part of the nominated Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

Also necessary:

An in-depth assessment of the risk of entanglement of large whales and other species in mooring cables; assessment of impacts from mooring cable anchors and associated scour (research shows that mooring cable anchors from other marine renewable energy technologies may significantly alter the seabed, particularly when wave conditions and

wind speeds cause the cables and anchors to move and subsequently scour the seabed); development of a better understanding of potential risks to seabirds, the potential for the physical structure to cause habitat loss and displacement, and the potential for noise levels associated with the project to cause habitat loss and displacement; the risk of ship strike during pre-construction surveys, construction, maintenance, and decommissioning; and an assessment of cumulative impacts — e.g. habitat displacement of marine mammals may increase their risk of entanglement in mooring cables or associated marine debris and their risk of ship strike.

These impacts need to be quantitatively assessed for species and habitat throughout the lease area and over the project's development life cycle. (For example, what would the potential scouring impact of mooring anchors on the

seabed be over one, five, ten and twenty years?) Resource agencies should model the potential species-level and ecosystem-level impacts and cumulative impacts arising from interactions between individual stressors (e.g. wind energy areas and shipping lanes).

No more Carrizos

The all-time poster child for how not to do utility scale renewable energy will likely always be the Altamont Pass wind farm, erected in response to the late '70s energy crisis without regard for the large number of birds passing through the 86-square-mile area. Over the last four decades, avian mortalities caused by the design and siting of the turbines have included 1,300 raptors annually, contributing to an 80% decline of golden eagles in the region.

Closer to home, per Neil Havlik's recap of the post-

WIND continued on page 4

See You at Dancing for Democracy



\$10 via BrownPaperTickets.com
\$15.00 at the door.

Saturday, May 6, 7-11 p.m.

Odd Fellows Hall, 520 Dana Street, SLO
For more info or to volunteer (serving, set up, clean up) and receive free admission, contact: karen@karenmerriam.com

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Environmental Groups Envision NAFTA's Replacement

On April 3, as Donald Trump sent a notification to Senate Republicans of his intent to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada, leading environmental organizations including the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council put forward an environmental platform for NAFTA renegotiation. The platform was sent to Members of Congress and will be used in future campaigning to transform NAFTA from a polluter-friendly, labor-hostile deal into one that supports environmental protection.

Open the NAFTA Renegotiation Activist Toolkit at www.sierraclub.org/trade/replace-nafta/.



Wild in the Plaza

The Santa Lucia Chapter's irreplaceable animal friend, Audrey the Otter will be helping Pacific Wildlife Care celebrate their 30th anniversary in SLO's Mission Plaza on Saturday, May 13, and challenging kids to a sea urchin hunt. Audrey and friends will be chatting about the kelp forest, her favorite foods, favorite places to hang out off the coast of SLO county and where to find her and her friends.

There will be a parade or two, face painting, street performing, Native American wildlife stories, craft activities and more.

Come by and say hi on May 13 from 12 to 4 p.m.



Get furry Rep. Salud Carbajal confers with the Sierra Club otters.

Thank You, Peter

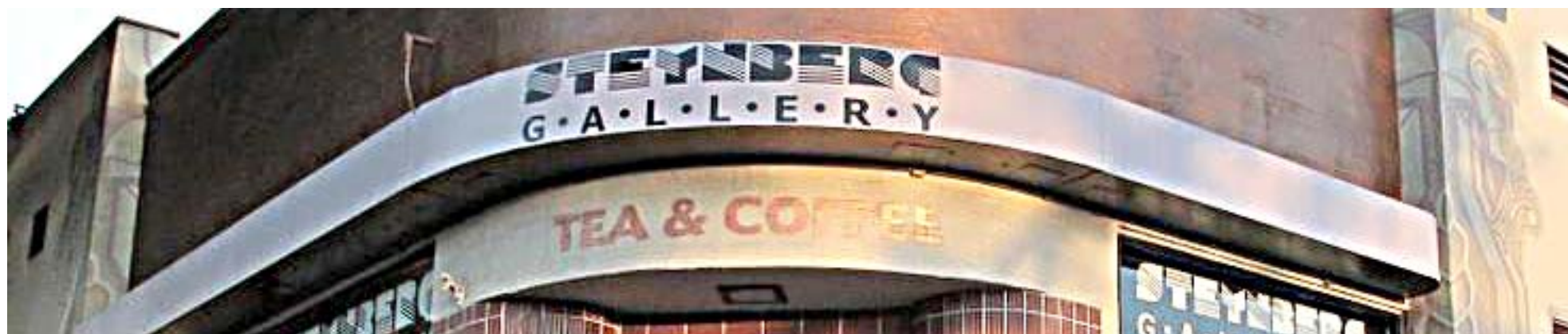
SLO's Steynberg Gallery has reduced its evening hours as Peter Steynberg prepares to close up shop and sell the community art gallery/event venue/coffee

shop that he has run since 1999, and where the Santa Lucia Chapter has held its bimonthly general meeting since 2009. Peter has been making the space available

to us free of charge since our first program there. What that means for us immediately is no general meeting this month as we look for a new home. What

it means for everyone else and for the City of SLO is the loss of a unique venue for world music, poetry reading, soirees, tea tasting, and community activism.

All those things will happen in places other than the Steynberg Gallery, but there is no way to replace this extraordinary venue. Thank you, Peter.



SIERRA CLUB SANTA LUCIA

Dear Santa Lucia Chapter member,

In recent months, the number of Chapter members has increased to record levels. We are proud of the 2,666 SLO County residents who have chosen to support the work of the Sierra Club both locally and nationally.

As the largest grassroots environmental organization in the country (and in San Luis Obispo county), we have the opportunity and the obligation to stand firm against all efforts to de-value and degrade the quality of our air, water and open spaces.

On Saturday, June 17, the Executive Committee of the Chapter will meet to discuss and draft a strategic plan that will guide the work of the Chapter for the next two years. To make this planning successful and relevant, we need your help. That is why we are inviting all Chapter members to meet and have a pot-luck picnic lunch with the ExCom to share your views of what issues should be our greatest priorities, and strategies to assure the resources necessary to address those priorities.

All-Members Chapter Meeting
Saturday, June 17, 10:00am-1:00pm
RSVP required - karen@karenmerriam.com

The meeting will be held at a home in the Edna Valley. Directions provided when you RSVP. Lunch will be potluck. Space is limited; early RSVPs are encouraged.

If you cannot attend, please send a brief note to karen@karenmerriam.com stating your view of which County environmental issues, in order of importance, you feel should be the Chapter's priorities over the next two years.

Thank you for your support and involvement in the Santa Lucia Chapter.

Karen Merriam, Chair
Executive Committee

PG&E Withdraws Proposal to Charge Community Choice Agencies for Diablo's Closure Costs

By Woody Hastings, Clean Power Exchange

In an email sent by PG&E to Parties to the Proceeding on February 27, PG&E announced that it is withdrawing its proposal to charge Community Choice Energy customers for the energy efficiency and renewable energy that would replace Diablo's Nuclear Power Plant generation.

This is very good news for California's Community Choice agencies and their customers.

In September 2016 the Center for Climate Protection submitted a formal protest letter that opposed charging Community Choice customers for replacing Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power with an alternative. Community Choice customers already pay a small fee for nuclear decommissioning. On top of the decommissioning fee, they also pay a Power Charge Indifference Adjustment fee that covers costs for already-purchased electricity that is no longer needed because the customers now receive their electricity from their Community Choice agency.

PG&E's email states that "after careful review of the important feedback provided by parties in their January 27, 2017, opening testi-

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Santa Lucian

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Sue Harvey (12/17)
MEMBER
Marcia Alter (12/19)
MEMBER

Karen Merriam
COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS

The Executive Committee meets the second Monday of every month at 2:00 p.m. 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.

Committees

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Membership/Development
Marcia Alter
Stephanie Gong
Nancy J. Cole
Conservation
Sue Harvey

Nuclear Power Task Force

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Cambria Desal Project is Taking On Water

On the bright side, we can thank the ongoing, ever-expanding failure of the Cambria Community Service District's attempted end-run around environmental review of its "emergency" desalination project for its one success: Providing an object lesson to any district or municipality that might have been tempted to try the same trick.

As the CCSD's troubled project just gets more troubled, the warning to others is clear, and can be phrased in any number of ways: Crying "wolf" to game the permit process and ram a project through in environmentally sensitive habitat area is a bad idea. "Shoot first and ask questions later" is not good governance. Measure twice, cut once. (See "Cambria Brings Home an F on Its EIR," Jan.)

In the latest step down the road that it never should have taken, on April 13 the CCSD

was notified by the Regional Water Quality Control Board that the District's responses to the Water Board's February 9 Notice of Violation (see "Chronic Violator," March) were largely inadequate, and Water Board staff had discovered 162 additional violations of requirements to monitor, record and report data over a two-year period, a discovery made by simply reading the project logs the District was forced to hand over.

The CCSD is now facing a Cease and Desist Order and an assessment of Administrative Civil Liabilities. The monitoring and reporting violations subject the CCSD to a maximum potential administrative civil liability of \$1,000 per day for each violation. Any discharge of waste in violation of Waste Discharge Requirements can subject the CCSD to a maximum administrative civil liability of \$5,000 per day for each violation.

In addition to the 162 newly discovered violations,

the Water Board determined that the CCSD:

- Failed to submit a plan and schedule to conduct a hydrologic evaluation.
- Failed to anticipate the rise of groundwater under the brine pond in a

less than 1,000-year, 24-hour rain event.

- Failed to address how the District will determine the accuracy of water level markings.
- Failed to recognize that its surface impoundment log entries

contained evidence of a potential leak in the impoundment liner.

- Failed to design, construct, and operate the brine pond so as to ensure a minimum five-foot separation between wastes and the highest anticipated elevation of groundwater.

The Board informed the CCSD that "Additional information on these enforcement decisions is forthcoming" and that "Continued violations... subject CCSD to further enforcement. Water Board staff preserves its authority to prosecute this matter to the fullest extent allowed by law." On April 17, *The Cambrian*, longtime cheerleader for the CCSD and all its works, quoted Greg Sanders, the CCSD's desal mastermind, defending the District against the Water



Board: "What does not seem to be taken into account is the extraordinary series of storms and factors out of the district's control that resulted in flooding of the brine pond."

The Cambrian helpfully buried the news of the 162 newly discovered violations at the end of its news story, did not mention that they span two years, and apparently did not ask Mr. Sanders how those extraordinary storms and "factors out of the district's control" that caused the flooding of the brine pond in January also caused the District to ignore the requirements of its permit for two years prior to that event.

The cease and desist order and administrative civil liability complaint are tentatively scheduled to be considered at the Water Board's July meeting.



The First Polluters



Pompeian banquet scene, Roman fresco, Villa dei Misteri Pompeii

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
George Santayana

Soon, that high-octane syrup (called defrutum or sapa, depending on potency) was added to everything from fruit preserves to meat and fish entrees—just like high-fructose corn syrup in countless processed foods today.

While their toddlers sucked on pacifiers and toys made of lead, their parents sucked up a wide variety of lead-enriched wines, syrups, and sauces. This slow-motion toxication

took place throughout the Mediterranean basin, affecting Roman citizens and noncitizens alike. It did an especially nasty number on pregnant women and their unborn children, as you'll see.

Given this sweetly damning evidence, the average Gaius of the first century AD may have gotten a substantial daily dose of lead just from the food and drink he consumed. And his female counterpart unknowingly took even greater risks.

There was slightly better news regarding the Roman system of community water supplies. For centuries, historians have blamed that system as the probable cause of Rome's decline, citing the lead pipes and

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by Vicki León

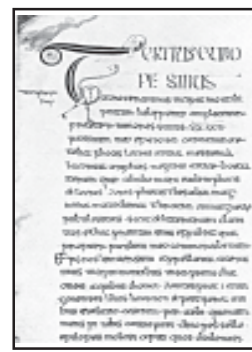
Lead in the Med, Part 1: Satisfying Humanity's Sweet Tooth

Lead compounds are toxic but taste sweet, making lead-laden toys and lead-painted surfaces irresistible to toddlers. As we now know, all kids begin life with substantially more tastebuds than adults, and their tongue-tip receptors are more sensitive to sugars as well. So it's not surprising they often explore

their new world with hands-to-mouths tastings. Two thousand years ago, Greco-Roman societies—and not just the underage crowd—found that sweet metallic flavor equally alluring. Like us, those consumers had a sweet tooth. Honey, their sole sweetener, was scarce and too costly to meet demand. Then some idiot found that acids such as vinegar, when poured into lead pots and pans, magically rendered the contents sweeter. The result, called mulsum, seemed just the thing to make often-sour *vin ordinaire* palatable. (Today the result would be called

lead acetate or 'sugar of lead' and would be declared tasty but poisonous.) Winemaking introduced other perils. Inside fermenting vats, lead strips were glued to lids, then sealed for 40 days. If the strips showed no corrosion after opening, wine was declared fit to drink. To quaff their vintages, upper class drinkers, and wannabes

who could afford it, drank from goblets made of lead or pewter, a tin-lead alloy. In a parallel development, cooks began to reduce unfermented grape juice to concentrate its natural sugars, using even more lead cookware. (They also used copper and bronze cookpots but coated them with lead alloy to keep "the agreeable taste," as Pliny the Elder put it.)



Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis*; 8th century ms.



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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#ExxonKnew

We Will Not Comply with Your Unprecedented and Unlawful Subpoena

Resistance in TrumpTime: What happened when a Texas Congressman looking to do a favor for his fossil fuel friends ran into 17 State Attorneys General

As we reported last year, ("Hot Enough for Them?," March 2016) the room started getting uncomfortably warm for ExxonMobil in 2015 when New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman opened a year-long probe of what Exxon executives knew and when they knew it regarding the reality of man-made global warming, a reality they had long been acknowledging within their corporate boardrooms while denying to investors and consumers. In November of that year, Schneiderman issued a subpoena to the oil giant to help determine whether Exxon had violated State laws against

securities, business, and consumer fraud through potentially false or misleading public statements and disclosures about the impact of climate change on its operations and finances. In July 2016, Republican Texas Congressman Lamar Smith, Chairman of the House Science Committee, sent the New York Attorney General a subpoena seeking materials from the Exxon investigation. After getting nowhere with that, Rep. Smith issued a new subpoena in February. Chairman Smith has offered various and shifting explanations for his unprecedented subpoenas, including claiming

that investigations by the New York and Massachusetts Attorneys General into whether Exxon violated their state laws somehow undermine the First Amendment rights of climate scientists. On April 13, Attorney General Schneiderman sent a letter to Rep. Smith in response to the second subpoena. The letter states, "We had hoped that with the start of a new Congress, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology would turn its attention exclusively to authorized and legitimate legislative activity. Your Subpoena does otherwise. I write to inform you that the NYOAG cannot and will

not comply with the Subpoena as presently composed." The subpoena not only seeks material from the Attorney General's open state investigation into whether Exxon violated New York securities laws, but reflects an even broader scope than Smith's prior subpoena—seeking communications not just related to the Exxon investigation but "referring or relating to climate change, environmental scientific research, and/or the Clean Power Plan." The Attorney General's letter notes, "An inquiry into the alleged effects of the NYOAG's state law fraud investigation on the research of climate scientists does not require a trove of confidential communications about ongoing law enforcement matters."

The letter points to the subpoena's effort to obtain privileged communications among the offices of state attorneys general regarding the Clean Power Plan litigation, as Chairman Smith has filed a brief in the litigation seeking to strike down the plan. That Smith, "a de facto adversary in high-stakes litigation, [is] wielding unilateral subpoena power to demand all privileged communications between the NYOAG and other State Attorneys General about the Clean Power Plan is an unfathomable offense." A New York court repeatedly has ordered Exxon to produce documents and Exxon has acknowledged in open court that the Attorney General has "the right to conduct" its fraud investigation under New York law. No congressional committee has ever subpoenaed a state attorney general, and there is no precedent for a congressional subpoena seeking material from a confidential law enforcement investigation. The Attorney General's letter concludes, "There can be no 'legitimate congressional oversight' of a state law fraud investigation. The Committee chose to pursue (and now to continue) this course, despite the lack of any precedent for such action in our Nation's recorded history, and despite the obvious constitutional problems your subpoenas have raised, as explained to you by the NYOAG, the Massachusetts Attorney General, several members of your own Committee, other sitting Senators

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Disgrace

History may record the executive order striking down key measures to meet the climate crisis and protect clean air and water as the biggest scandal in the scandal-prone Trump administration.



On March 28, President Trump signed an executive order that constitutes the single biggest attack on climate action in U.S. history.

The full scope of the disgraceful action by a President who claims to care about clean air and water leaps out of every line of the document. Trump's so-called "Executive Order on Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth" includes directives to review and rescind or amend specific rules, guidance documents, and executive orders, as well as a requirement that agencies review all of their actions that "potentially burden" the development of domestic energy resources.

In particular, the Order targets the EPA's Clean Power Plan and Carbon Pollution Standards for new power plants; EPA and Interior Department methane rules for oil and gas development (through the Bureau of Land Management); the BLM rule on fracking on public lands; Interior Department rules on oil and gas development in national parks and certain wildlife refuges; the social cost of carbon metric in rule-makings to account for harms from carbon pollution; the Council of Environmental

Quality's guidance on the analysis of climate change impacts under NEPA; the Interior Department's pause of federal coal leasing and review of the federal coal program; President Obama's overarching Climate Action Plan and Methane Strategy; and four additional climate-related Obama executive orders and directives.

(For good measure, the Energy Department's international climate office told staff to stop using the phrases "climate change," "emissions reduction," and "Paris agreement.")

Trump took this action despite the fact that EPA Director Scott Pruitt's own agency confirmed that the Clean Power Plan will lower electricity rates while saving billions of dollars and thousands of lives every year.

This is exactly the kind of dangerous assault we've come to expect from a President, an EPA administrator, and a cabinet that will do anything to deny the climate crisis and gut public health safeguards to help fossil fuel tycoons — several of whom now occupy cabinet positions in this administration. The safeguards Trump is trying to throw out protect all families in America by curbing danger-

ous carbon pollution and reducing other toxic pollutants like mercury, smog, and sulfur dioxide — but Trump would rather pad polluter profits.

We emphasize: "trying to throw out." Contrary to a common belief that arose amid the general dismay when this story broke, *Trump did not, and cannot, dismantle the Clean Power Plan with the stroke of a pen.* The Clean Power Plan will undergo a review and revision process, which will involve opportunities for notice and comment—presenting many opportunities to organize public support for clean air and climate action, and to raise our voices to resist these admin-

istrative and legal attempts to thwart our progress on climate. There is a legion of obstacles Trump must overcome to actually dismantle the Clean Power Plan.

Trump's attack ignores not just the reality of the climate crisis, but the reality that the clean energy economy is rapidly growing in both red and blue states, creating jobs and safeguarding our air and water.

Thanks to grassroots activism and market forces in the US and abroad, coal continues to rapidly decline. Clean energy, on the other hand, is growing at such a fast pace that the US is on track to meet its Clean Power Plan goals and has a path to meet its goals under

the Paris Climate Agreement. A new Sierra Club analysis of the Department of Energy's 2017 jobs data across the energy sector makes it clear that the clean energy sector Pruitt and Trump are attacking employs far more American workers than the fossil fuel industry. At a time when we can declare independence from dirty fuels by embracing clean energy, Trump's action can only deepen our dependence on fuels that pollute our air, water and climate while making our kids sicker.

Because of strong local action, many states have plans and are already on track to meet, and even

exceed, the Clean Power Plan's 2030 emissions targets years ahead of schedule. Clean energy growth nationwide will continue unabated.

Sadly, Trump's aggressive pro-polluter action means residents of heavily polluted states like Texas, Georgia and Florida will suffer from dirtier air while missing out on many of the benefits of the fair and just clean energy economy the Clean Power Plan would help create.

And kids everywhere face a deeply uncertain future, with more asthma-inducing smog and a President content to let the climate crisis spiral out of control.

P.S. We're not gonna take it

On April 3, Earthjustice, the Consumer Federation of America, Natural Resources Defense Council and Sierra Club notified the Trump Administration of our intent to sue the Department of Energy for needlessly delaying a raft of common-sense energy efficiency measures. The rules were developed through a robust public process and signed by the DOE in December 2016.

Energy efficiency is the most affordable and effective solution to America's energy problems. Appliance and equipment efficiency standards save energy, increase the reliability of the electricity grid, reduce consumer energy bills, and decrease pollution. According to DOE projections, the standards prescribed by the rules will save about 3 percent of all the energy used annually in the United States for all purposes over a 30-year period and yield a net savings for consumers of more than \$11 billion.

The standards will also enhance public health by reducing emissions of carbon dioxide by more than 25 million metric tons by 2030—equivalent to the emissions generated by the annual electricity use of more than 3 million U.S. homes. They will also reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides by hundreds of thousands of tons.

"If the Trump Administration continues blocking these common sense measures that will help people across the country, we'll take them to court," said Earthjustice attorney Timothy Ballo. "It is past time for the DOE to take the simple action of publishing these completed rules so we can all start to reap the benefits."

MAKE AMERICA GREEN AGAIN



of the highest concentrations of threatened plant and animal species in the U.S.: hence no potential mitigations for such impacts had ever been tried.

The BOEM and CEC are to be commended for their efforts to establish a collaborative, stakeholder-driven process as they consider whether offshore wind

should be a part of California's renewable energy portfolio. We must be clear that "Cross your fingers" won't cut it for the first floating offshore wind project in the coastal waters of the United States, planned for the nonpareil wildlife habitat off California's Central Coast. The Sierra Club and other major environmental groups are speaking with one voice on this: There can be no corner cutting or question marks when setting the bar for the environmental protection of one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world.

TAKE ACTION

Stay abreast of the plans for wind energy off the Central Coast. The Intergovernmental Task Force will meet at the SLO Marriott on July 13. Get on the information list at www.boem.gov/California/.

TAKE ACTION

Tell Trump and Pruitt: Don't destroy climate progress: [sc.org/Cpp](https://www.addup.org/cpp)

Join the Sierra Club's AddUp campaign: <https://www.addup.org/resist>

Social media mavens: Use these Hashtags: #DefendClimate #ActOnClimate #SaveTheEPA #BetterNotBackward

Call the Congressional switchboard: (202) 816-6137
EPA: (202) 564-4700

On the Threshold of Insignificance

State Parks' Off-Highway Vehicles Division is breaking new ground in the avoidance of environmental review



Sierra Clubbers of a certain age may remember malaprop comics.

Their shtick was a rapid-fire, confident monologue that was hyper-articulate, with the exception of one or two slightly garbled or displaced words, which happened to be the one or two words vital to understanding the ostensible subject of whatever they were saying. The joke was that the confident delivery made you think it must be your fault for not paying close enough attention. For a split-second, you thought you must have mis-heard as the guy on stage was spouting plausible-sounding nonsense.

The spirit of that Vegas lounge act lives on in the environmental document prepared by the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicles Recreation Division to gain a permit for dust control measures at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area.

State Parks' OHMVR Division has been called out by multiple resource agencies and the Sierra Club for citing "recreational impacts" in its Environmental Impact Report in order to concoct an EIR that avoids or dismisses the most potentially effective dust control measures on the Oceano Dunes and focuses instead on preserving maximum off-road riding area, as though that were the goal of the dust control project. (See "ODSVRA, Are You Kidding?," Nov. 2016.)

As background: EIRs are required by the California Environmental Quality Act. They must identify and assess

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Wind

continued from page 1

construction history of the First Solar and Sunpower Carrizo Plain solar projects on the facing page, it should be noted that, pre-construction, Sunpower executives admitted that they had designed their project and were more than six months into the planning process before they realized the project site was in the center of some of the last remaining habitat for the federally endangered giant kangaroo rat, primary food source for the likewise endangered San Joaquin kit fox.

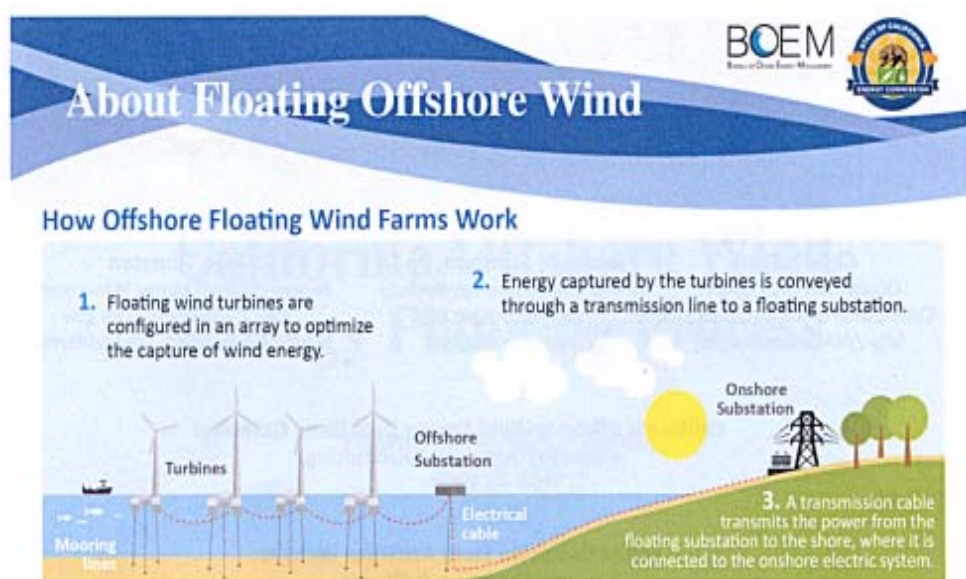
Per the accompanying "How It Happened" sidebar, litigation and threatened litigation followed, with months of brutal negotiations accompanied by reams of draft memoranda and settlement terms, which ultimately compelled the companies to

allocate millions of dollars for conservation lands acquisition and half a million more for monitoring, research and protective measures -- the result of a protracted effort by Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, North County Watch et al to extract from the two companies the environmental funding that was necessary to at least begin to compensate for the impacts stemming from the woefully ill-chosen site of their projects.

As Mr. Havlik notes, luck appears to have been with us, so far, in terms of mitigation of the impacts of the Carrizo solar projects on threatened species. That doesn't change the fact that the Sunpower and First Solar projects were a roll of the dice — no such projects of their combined scale and scope had ever been attempted, let alone in an area known to be habitat for one

of the highest concentrations of threatened plant and animal species in the U.S.: hence no potential mitigations for such impacts had ever been tried.

The BOEM and CEC are to be commended for their efforts to establish a collaborative, stakeholder-driven process as they consider whether offshore wind



Solar Facilities On The Carrizo Plain: A Win-Win Situation?

by Neil Havlik

from the March 2017 Desert Report, *News of the desert from Sierra Club California/Nevada Desert Committee*

When several proposals for solar power facilities in the Carrizo Plain area of eastern San Luis Obispo County, California, became publicly known in 2009, those proposals raised many questions. How big would they be? How would they be managed? What would be the environmental and social impacts of their creation? Would they be a benefit to the community or a detriment?

It took several years of investigation, research, and public debate to begin to answer these questions. At that time the author served as a member of a citizen's advisory group for Carrizo Plain National Monument. The Carrizo Plain had over the years attracted a dedicated group of volunteers and activists who were fiercely protective of the Monument and its natural and cultural resources. The solar proposals (known as Topaz Solar Farm and California Valley Solar Ranch) were the subject of considerable debate and discussion within the advisory group, but in the end the group determined that it would not enter into the public discussion of the project. The author also made the personal decision to stay out of the approval process, knowing that many others, including several influential environmental groups, were ready to take on that effort.

Thus when I had the opportunity in 2013 to get involved in the Carrizo Plain area outside of the Monument, (1) I had only a general idea of the outcome of the public approval process, and (2) I was pleasantly surprised to see that what I had imagined as the outcome was quite mistaken.

Overall, in the view of this one observer, the solar facilities have been a significant benefit to the Carrizo Plain. There are several reasons for this.

The public debate over the solar facilities was lively and lengthy. It included the imposition of more than 125 conditions of approval, ranging from environmental mitigations to bus-pooling for workers (more than 1,000 at the peak of construction) to reduce impacts on traffic. Many of the environmental conditions were enhanced by the settlement of litigation that followed the County's approval of the projects. The result has been the creation of a second cohort of conserved lands second only in size to Carrizo Plain National Monument itself, together with renewed interest in continued expansion of those lands. This is explained more fully below.

The visual impacts were considerably less than feared. I had imagined fifteen square miles of solar panels lined up side by side,

with heavy use of soil sterilants and herbicides to control weeds. In short, it could have been a biological wasteland. But that was not the reality. The solar facilities were arranged in arrays of irregular shape, and separated by wildlife movement corridors of varying sizes, all of which served to reduce their visual impact. By agreement with the environmental organizations, the solar facilities do not use pesticides within the arrays or wildlife corridors.

Biological impacts to the local environment were one of the most significant issues in the approval process. There are several federally listed endangered species in the project area, as well as several other important species of concern, including pronghorn and tule elk. Extensive research into the needs of these species was conducted and modifications to the project's layout occurred as a result of the findings of that research.

And this was just within the actual project area. The solar companies agreed to purchase a large acreage of land for habitat mitigation purposes and commit those lands to permanent conservation, including sizable endowments to support their long-term management. In

the end, over 30,000 acres of ranch and dry-farmed lands were purchased by the solar companies and transferred either to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or to local land trusts. The result has been the establishment of an entirely new conservation complex in the northern Carrizo Plain area. There is considerable interest in the expansion and consolidation of these lands and in their ultimate connection to Carrizo Plain National Monument several miles to the south.

Other significant efforts have included research into the historical vegetation of the area, which had been greatly altered by years of dry farming. The findings of this research suggest that the Carrizo Plain was an open scrubland with native grasses, both annual and perennial, among the scattered shrubs. Because of disking and other farming operations, the shrubs have mostly disappeared from the valley floor. Efforts to restore a semblance of this original vegetation are getting underway. The recent years of drought have not helped this effort, but these efforts will continue, using a mix of as many as a



At home with the family San Joaquin kit foxes.

Joseph Terry, USFWS

dozen native shrub species, and several native grasses and wildflowers. Livestock grazing will continue on the conservation lands as a vegetation management tool only, not as ordinary commercial leasing of grazing privileges. Timing, number of animals, and distribution will play important roles in using livestock (both cattle and sheep) as an effective management tool.

Agriculture will even continue within the array areas. The panels provide shade, and grass and wildflowers are doing well underneath them. So to manage the amount of growth for fire safety purposes, sheep are brought in to graze off the plants in the mid- to late spring. Electrical conduits are rodent-proof and thus rodents such as gophers, ground squirrels, and even the endangered giant kangaroo rat can be allowed to re-colonize the array areas. This shows the wisdom of the no pesticide agreement; raptors such as hawks and owls, and predators such as coyote, bobcats, and the endangered San Joaquin kit fox have continued to thrive in and around the arrays. As a protection for the kit foxes, the fencing around the arrays is designed so that the kit foxes can get through them but the larger coyotes and bobcats cannot. This has worked well, and several kit foxes are known to have taken up residence within the array areas.

Miles of pronghorn-friendly fencing has replaced standard barbed wire along Highway 58 and many property and pasture boundaries. Pronghorn and other wildlife have also benefitted from the installation of numerous wildlife water troughs, providing good sources of water throughout much of the area. The eventual establishment of a shrub component to vegetation in the mitigation areas will aid in pronghorn calf survival by making the calves harder to be seen by possible predators; the openness of the ground has been a major problem affecting reproductive success of pronghorn in the area.

I believe that the advent of the solar facilities on the Carrizo Plain has been beneficial on the whole. Do I wish they could have been

located somewhere else? As one who loves the wildness of the Carrizo, of course I do. But as the world moves forward toward more renewable energy, the Carrizo solar plants are making an important contribution. They are here to stay for at least the next thirty-five to forty years.

I attribute most of the success of the Carrizo Plain efforts to the vegetation of recent years, which is grassland. This area is on the lower edge of the rainfall spectrum suitable for grassland; four to six inches per year is normal, and the grasses are short, as is the actual growing season. Occasionally there is a wet year (like the current one) and the grasses may be several feet tall, but that is only occasional. The grassland is also largely annual, the native perennials having been diminished by the regular plowing, disking, and harvesting that went on for many years. The decision to avoid pesticide use and to tolerate a grass cover beneath the solar panels has resulted in the establishment of a new grassland, with more native species and without the heavy disturbance of the past. It has also allowed for reestablishment of a native fauna, primarily of rodents, which are the base of the food chain for larger mammals and birds. In the desert, the primary vegetation is shrubs, which are large and usually cannot be tolerated in array areas.

Thus, large areas of shrublands are often cleared and destroyed to make way for solar facilities. In the Carrizo Plain, which had already been converted to grasslands or farming lands, the solar arrays are leading a return to more natural growing conditions, even including the restoration of a shrub component to the vegetation.

While the initial indications are very positive, it remains to be seen how these efforts will ultimately turn out. The solar companies are required to fund continued research on the endangered species for several more years, and it is hoped that that information will be able to guide further efforts once the initial monitoring and reporting obligations are completed.

The north Carrizo Plain is now a giant experiment in restoration, and one which everyone hopes will be successful.

Neil Havlik, PhD., is the former Natural Resources Manager for the City of San Luis Obispo (retired), which position he held for seventeen years. A graduate of Cal Poly, Neil earned his doctorate at UC Berkeley in 1984. He served on the Monument Advisory Committee for Carrizo Plain National Monument for ten years and is currently president of the land trust known as the Carrizo Plain Conservancy.

How It Happened

As Mr. Havlik writes, the debate over the Carrizo solar projects "was lively and lengthy." It was the end point of that debate, involving litigation and potential litigation, that played the crucial role in securing the benefits for the Carrizo which he describes.

In August 2011, Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife and Center for Biological Diversity entered into a settlement agreement with First Solar and Sunpower, developers of the Topaz Solar Farm and California Valley Solar Ranch. It required more than 9,000 acres of the Carrizo Plain to be added to the lands designated for permanent protection and preservation under their permits, resulting in a total of approximately 26,000 acres, about 40 square miles, of the Carrizo receiving protection.

Thirty miles of livestock fencing were required to be removed from the area, allowing for greater wildlife movement around the projects. First Solar and SunPower agreed to make beneficial enhancements to the wildlife-friendly fencing around the solar system arrays, require prescriptive grazing, use no rodenticides in the construction or operation of the projects and fund efforts to eliminate rodenticides on the Carrizo Plain and in other San Joaquin kit fox conservation areas. The companies agreed to make significant financial contributions to help San Luis Obispo County acquire a largely undeveloped subdivision in the Carrizo Plain to restore for wildlife conservation.

In a joint statement, the parties noted that "many challenges may be minimized or avoided in the future through earlier, more comprehensive communication between conservation groups and the solar companies with the goal to locate projects outside of important wildlife areas and sensitive natural resources."

Three months later, North County Watch and Carrizo Commons settled a lawsuit against the Topaz project requiring a date certain 35 years hence for implementation of a Final Closure plan mandating rehabilitation of project lands, and additional funding for kit fox, giant kangaroo rat and pronghorn research and a biological working group.

California Valley Solar Ranch entered into a settlement with North County Watch requiring implementation of a Final Closure plan no later than 2061 or earlier if the facility stops generation for two years, and the provision of funding for additional kit fox, giant kangaroo rat and pronghorn research. All told, the companies spent about \$500,000 to support additional wildlife monitoring and monthly biological working group meetings.



A good day Santa Lucia Chapter Chair Karen Merriam and friends enjoying the Carrizo's spring 2017 bumper crop of wildflowers.

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Diablo

continued from page 2

mony... PG&E is withdrawing... the proposal to implement the Clean Energy Charge... The Clean Energy Charge was the proposed fee that would have been charged to all customers, including Community Choice customers, for future PG&E procurement costs. The original proposal was initiated in the summer of 2016 by PG&E, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Friends of the

Earth, Environment California, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1245, Coalition of California Utility Employees, and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility.

PG&E's withdrawal will change only a part of the Joint Parties' original proposal. The overall application for closure is still in place, including the plan to procure 2,000 gigawatt-hours of energy efficiency to replace Diablo's power.

When a community forms a Community Choice Agency, one of its main purposes is to take local control of decision-making about energy sources for electricity. This proposal for Diablo Canyon would have undermined that purpose by re-introducing PG&E as a procurer of energy for the community.

For information about Community Choice Energy around the state, visit www.cleanpowerexchange.org/.

Still Life with Gilt Goblet, Willem Claesz Heda



A leaden repast Pewter plates with bread and a pewter dish with oysters, a glass of red wine, a rummer of white wine, a gilt silver cup and a pewter jug.

Lead

continued from page 3

holding tanks that supplied drinking water to households. They point to architect Vitruvius' evidence, whose first century BC's observations showed how acute lead poisoning affected plumbers: "The natural color of [their] bodies is replaced by a deep pallor. When lead is smelted in casting, the fumes from it settle upon the plumbers, and day after day burn out and take away all the virtues of the blood from their limbs. Hence, water ought by no means to be conducted in lead pipes, if we want to have it wholesome."

True enough; lead plumbing certainly wasn't healthy. But compared to the larger dangers presented by the consumption of contaminated food and wine, drinking water via lead plumbing was a lesser worry. As archaeologists and other experts have discovered, water delivery channels became coated with calcium carbonate deposits that actually pro-

ected users from the lead in the pipes.

Sip by sip, nibble by nibble, unsuspecting consumers throughout the Roman Empire accumulated enough of a lead burden to experience early symptoms of saturnism, or lead poisoning. One of the clues? A persistent metallic taste and loss of appetite. It was generally known that working with lead, extracting it, sickened workers. The workforce, however, used

slaves or criminals sentenced to die. Thus most end users did not think about these harsh realities too deeply.

Lead fumes and lead dust could make people ill, but imbibing it in other ways caused no immediate alarm. Lead isn't excreted from the body but accumulates in bones, like plutonium does. It stealthily, slowly attacks the kidneys, the brain, the nervous system.

As it happened, women endured the worst toxicity, for several reasons. Females of that era admired smooth pale skin and ruby lips, using a near-lethal array of cosmetics to achieve them. Back then, cold cream was about the only beauty aid that did not actively poison its users. The cold-cream queen was the notorious second wife of Emperor Nero. She invented a sleek body butter she named Poppaea Sabina, after herself. Poppy also branded facemasks made of honey, rare oils, and grated bread,

which she washed off each morning with the milk of an ass. Not just any old ass, either. Thanks to the obscene wealth of her Pompeian family, a stable of 500 female asses let her loll in milky luxury.

Gals of more modest means and status also maintained nightly beauty regimens to remove blemishes and wrinkles, cleansing with lead soap. Skin peels were popular, too: just apply white lead and sublimate of mercury and watch two ugly layers of epidermis slough off!

Nocturnal treatments were just the noxious beginning. Onto clean faces, women buffed quantities of face powder. The most

vibrantly desirable scarlet color, nothing could compare with minium, raw cinnabar, and vermilion. A type of red lead, minium these days is found only in batteries and rustproof paint. Cinnabar had ultra-toxic mercury content: 86 percent. Vermilion was refined from raw cinnabar.

Long-ago eye makeup presented similar issues, simply different toxins. Galena, the natural ore of lead, was the standard eyeliner. Romans also picked up the Egyptian fondness for green malachite, made from copper ore. Kohl was popular with both men and women—which until very recently was thought to be protective—or at least benign.

Personal slaves and women of humbler status would seem to have dodged the bullet when it came to toxic cosmetics. Not entirely, however. There was a cherished belief among Romans that human saliva made an admirable ingredient in cosmetics of all sorts. As a result, female slaves were obliged to chew certain cosmetics before applying them to their mistresses.

Beauty regimens have always been hell—and hell on the health as well. But lead's malignant hold on millions of unsuspecting women and men around the Roman Empire hid even more appalling surprises that we continue to discover today—including one that will rock fellow members of the Sierra Club and Citizens Climate Lobby.

That's coming next month in Part 2: "Lead in the Med: Sex, Silphium, and Species Extinction."

Exxon

continued from page 3

and Representatives, the former Acting General Counsel of the House of Representatives, and a bevy of federalism and First Amendment scholars."

The day before A.G. Schneiderman fired back at Rep. Smith, fifteen other attorneys general including California A.G. Xavier Becerra weighed in on behalf of Schneiderman and Massachusetts A.G. Maura Healey, another target of Rep. Smith's Exxon-protective attentions.

They pointed out to Chairman Smith that both of his subpoenas exceeded his Committee's constitutional authority and departed from the "proper respect for state functions" which the Supreme Court has laid down as a marker to clarify the authority of federal and state governments and the dividing line between them.

They also noted the interesting, nay exact, similarity in wording between portions of Rep. Smith's subpoena and several discovery requests filed by Exxon against A.G.s Schneiderman and Healey in a suit filed by the oil company in Texas district court -- further underscoring "the concern that Exxon may be trying to obtain, via the Committee's subpoena, discovery that it is seeking in the court proceedings and is unable to obtain due to...pending motions to dismiss."

The Attorneys General did not congratulate Rep. Smith for his outstanding constituent service.



The water's fine Roman lead pipes.



Fatal beauty Thy lips are like rust-proof paint....

popular—and deadly—was made of pure lead carbonate. (Its toxic residues have been found at several archaeological digs.) Trendsetters naturally demanded pricier powder, such as that made from the white excrement of crocodiles. If croc supplies ran low, a dusting of arsenic would suffice.

Feminine lips and cheeks got generous applications of rouge, which had harmless ingredients, such as mulberry and lichens. But to achieve that

dependent activity... as that term is defined and understood per the Coastal Act. It would be inaccurate for the DEIR to represent as such, and all references and analysis in the DEIR need to be corrected in that respect."

The OHMVR Division is trying to change the meaning of words while avoiding the fundamental point that the recreational impact it is claiming is not an environmental impact.

The Commission also found it necessary to remind OHMVR what its job was supposed to be in the preparation of this particular Environmental Impact Report: "While there may be secondary objectives, it has always been our understanding that the primary objective of the project is intended to be Rule 1001 compliance. The DEIR should thus revise its project description and objectives to state that Rule 1001 compliance is the primary objective, and explain how the proposed measures do or do not meet those requirements."

In March, the OHMVR Division issued a Final EIR, with replies to those comments. Watch closely as the walnut shells swish around on the card table: The OHMVR Division is trying to change the meanings of multiple words while avoiding the fundamental point that the recreational impact it is claiming is not an environmental impact under the California Environmental Quality Act.

OHMVR took umbrage with the APCD for pointing out their "significance" conclusions were based on a "subjective interpretation" of CEQA, and retorted that since this comment "fails to define any specific evidence or remarks to support this

assertion...no response is warranted." And: the CEQA Guidelines apply to "a project which requires the exercise of judgement or deliberation when the public agency or body decides to approve or disapprove a particular activity." Thus,

CEQA anticipates a lead agency will exercise its objective, independent judgement during the CEQA review process."

There you go: CEQA anticipates objectivity, so the

OHMVR Division is being objective.

OHMVR admits the project has nothing to do with the only "threshold of significance" listed for recreational impact in CEQA:

"The threshold is related to the increase in use of existing recreational facilities such that deterioration of the facilities would occur.... The Dust Control Program does not have the potential to accelerate the deterioration of existing recreational facilities because the OHMVR Division is not proposing changes to camping or visitor limits and would not induce or generate population growth."

But, according to OHMVR, that's okay because:

"First, CEQA Guidelines Appendix G does not establish a definitive or exhaustive list of resources, impacts, or thresholds of significance that require evaluation and/or consideration under CEQA. For example, CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(f) states (emphasis added), "Sample forms for an applicant's project description and a review form for use by the lead agency are contained in Appendix G and H.... These forms are only suggested, and public agencies are free to devise their own format for an initial study. In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section

15064 states, in part (emphasis added), "The determination of whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment calls for careful judgement on the part of the public agency involved, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data. An ironclad definition of significant effect is not always possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting."

Did you catch all the switcheroos?

- Permission for agencies to use any preferred format in devising their impact checklist forms got turned into permission to invent "resources, impacts, or thresholds of significance."
- Subjective judgment became objective judgment, based on "scientific and factual data."
- In CEQA, "The significance of an activity" refers to, in this case, the potential impact of dust control measures on the environment of the Oceano Dunes. The OHMVR Division is pretending it refers to the impact of dust control measures on off-highway vehicle recreation.

Up next: The Off-Highway Motor Vehicles Recreation Division will go to the Coastal Commission, possibly before the end of the year, to seek to persuade the Commission to grant a Coastal Development Permit for OHMVR's preferred dust control project based on that Environmental Impact Report.

We wish them luck...by which, of course, we mean we don't.



Lucia Casallinuovo

ODSVRA

continued from page 4

the magnitude of a project's potential impacts on the environment. The job of this particular EIR was to assess which of several potential dust control methods would best comply with the Air Pollution Control District's Rule 1001, requiring the OHV Division to reduce dust emissions from the Oceano Dunes to non-hazardous levels and finally bring relief to the long-suffering

The proposed mitigation is to move the most effective dust control measure to the least emissive areas of the park.

residents of the Nipomo Mesa.

Got it? Good. Strap in. Instead of following that definition of environmental review, the EIR strained to avoid by any means necessary the obvious conclusion that planting native vegetation in the OHV-denuded foredunes -- thus removing them from the off-road playground -- would be the most effective means of dust control that State Parks could implement, asserting at one point that this would interfere with snowy plover nesting (it wouldn't) and would constitute an adverse visual impact.

After reading the OHMVR's attempt at an EIR, the Sierra Club responded thusly:

"We restrict our comments on the Draft EIR to its fatal flaw: a misreading of a single clause in the CEQA Guidelines which resulted in an attempt to stand CEQA on its head and produced a Draft EIR that impermissibly shifts and narrows its focus, primarily identifying the project's impacts on OHV recreational opportunities instead of potential impacts on the environment, then attempting to elevate alleged

recreational impacts to the level of 'significant and unavoidable' environmental impacts.

"The DEIR...attempts to create a new CEQA category of 'significant conflict' out of the fact that the project does not 'perpetuate and enhance recreational use of OHVs in the SVRA' [and pretends that] this is a violation of CEQA."

Here's how the APCD weighed in:

"OHMVR has modified [the Coastal Act's definition of coastal dependent use] in this EIR to include off-highway vehicle recreation at the ODSVRA as a coastal dependent use. This expansion of the Coastal Act definition is then used as the basis for several de-

terminations... identifying the dust control project as inconsistent with Coastal Act Planning and Management Policies because it would interfere with OHV activity on the dunes. The California Coastal Commission should be asked to make a determination as to the appropriateness and applicability of OHMVR's new interpretation and expansion of the Coastal Act definition of a coastal-dependent use."

Regarding the Draft EIR's "Impact REC 1: The Dust Control Program would limit and interfere with coastal vehicular recreation opportunities at Oceano Dunes SVRA," the APCD noted that "This identified impact is based on OHMVR's creation of their own significance threshold for impacts to Recreation that is found only in this document and goes beyond what is defined in the CEQA guidelines...."

"OHMVR has created the following criterion for defining a significant impact: 'In addition, the OHMVR Division has determined the project would have a significant environmental impact related to recreation and public access in the

project area if it would: Substantially limit, reduce, or interfere with established opportunities at Oceano Dunes SVRA.'

"This self-defined 'qualitative threshold' is then used as the basis for determining the proposed project would create a significant impact to Recreation that must be mitigated because it would temporarily or permanently reduce the size of the riding area by 78 to 113 acres (a 5.3 to 7.7% loss of riding acreage). The proposed mitigation is to move the most effective dust control measure available, the planting of vegetation, to outside the open riding and camping areas in the least emissive areas of the park.

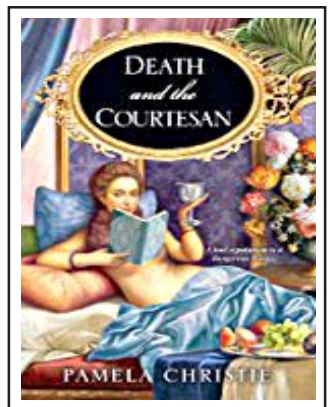
"This mitigation is inconsistent with the goals of the project and the requirements of Rule 1001 and should be eliminated from consideration. No area should be excluded from consideration of dust controls without clear scientific justification that conclusively demonstrates controls in that area are not necessary to achieve the performance standard in Rule 1001."

When it came to the EIR fretting that dust control measures could "conflict with the California Coastal Act," it turned out that the Coastal Commission didn't need to be "asked to make a determination as to the appropriateness and applicability of OHMVR's new interpretation and expansion of the Coastal Act definition of a coastal-dependent use." The Commission was happy to send OHMVR a lengthy response on this point, which basically boiled down to three words: *Not your job.*

The Commission informed OHMVR that "The evaluation of the appropriate balance between sometime competing coastal resource values associated with a CDP application under the Coastal Act is the Commission's role." Nor is OHV riding "a coastal-

Classifieds

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Outings and Activities Calendar

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

All our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies, or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Chair Bill Waycott, (806) 459-2103. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Fri.-Mon, May 5th-7th, Bright Star Wilderness Restoration Project.

Bright Star Wilderness lies in the high desert and forests of Kern County. Help us in repairing a corridor fence there burned in the 2016 Erskine Fire to rebuild blocked access to a cabin site that has been removed but still faces vehicle trespass problems. This is part of a larger project to protect the vulnerable burned area. Contact Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com or 661-944-4056. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sun. May 7, 1 p.m. Hike + Yoga on High School Hill.

A hike up High School Hill (a.k.a. Outlook Hill, a.k.a. Murray Hill) will conclude with 45-minute vinyasa yoga practice at the top. The hike is short (approx. 2 miles up), but has a steep incline that will give you a good cardio exercise. When reaching the top, you will see some of the best views of the San Luis Obispo area. Total hiking distance is 4 miles round trip with a 1492 feet elevation gain. Trailhead is located at the top of Lizzy St. and parking is very easy. Bring water and good walking shoes. No yoga mat required. For more information, contact Nan Cole at cole.nancy.j@gmail.com.

Sat., May 13th, 8:30 a.m. Rinconada, Little Falls, and Big Falls Hike.

Very strenuous, 14-mile, 2200 ft. gain hike in scenic Lopez Canyon, with middle of the loop on Lopez Canyon Rd. There will be several stream crossings during the two miles of hiking on dirt road, so bring sandals or other footwear to use for wading. Poison oak probably abundant trailside, and the hike will last most of the day. A shorter in-and-out hike is possible if desired. Bring lunch and lots of water, hat, and sturdy shoes. Meet in front of Pacific Beverage Co. in Santa Margarita for carpooling. Rain or extreme heat will postpone to May 20th. For more information, contact Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sun., May 14th, 9 a.m. Arroyo de la Cruz Native-Plant Field Trip, N. SLO County.

Join us on this Mother's Day visit to a major botanical hotspot in the county, co-led by D.R. "Doc" Miler, to see the unique species on these coastal bluffs. The Arroyo de la Cruz area features a variety of plant communities plus endemic and rare species found only in this relatively small region. Duration of field trip about 3 hrs. Bring water, snacks, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat, and layered clothing as needed. Meet at Elephant Seal Overlook on Hwy 1, first entrance on left going north, at 9 a.m. To carpool, meet in parking lot of Spencer's Market in north Morro Bay, 2650 Main St. at 8:30 a.m. For more information, contact Leader: Bill Waycott, 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Sat., May 20th, 8 a.m. Alejandro Camp Trail Hike.

Moderate eight-mile, in-and-out hike to explore Colson Canyon. We will walk a mile up a forest road and then down a rugged stream canyon trail to beau-



On the Pt. Buchon Trail.

tiful Alejandro Camp, nestled between hills. Be ready for some bushwhacking, ticks, and poison oak. Wear long sleeves and pants. Dress in layers and bring lots of water, hat, and good walking shoes. From SLO, take Hwy 101 south to Betteravia Rd. to meet and carpool in front of the FedEx Office Print and Ship Center, 2142 Bradley Rd. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Leader: Andrea Ortiz, 264-4527 or Kenya683@msn.com.

Sat., May 20th, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Point Buchon Trail Hike.

Come on a four-mile, 629 ft. gain, scenic

walk on meandering coastal trail through grassy expanses with ocean views and unique coastal rock formations. A great place for binoculars and birding. Photo opportunities and rest stops available with benches. We will maintain a leisurely pace to take in natural beauty of wildlife and flowers. Sign-in required with PG&E at start of trail. Bring ID, windbreaker, water, sunscreen, and hat. Take main road through Montana de Oro State Park until it ends in a parking lot just past Bluff and Hazard trail-heads. Park and walk through gate with sign giving hours of operation, go up hill to check-in area with PG&E official. Bring ID. No dogs allowed. Leader: Jan Secord, 602-0403.

Sun., May 21st, 10 a.m. Trekking-Pole Hike in Shell Beach.

Come on a short, 1.5 mile, 100 ft. gain, hike on Bluffs Coastal Trail to learn and practice effective use of trekking poles. Hike follows fire road to coastal trail and back. From Hwy 101, take Shell Beach Rd, then west

on El Portal Rd to intersection with Bluff and Indio Drives. Go right and park near gate. Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or hikingpoles@gmail.com. Rain cancels.

Tues., May 23rd., 10 a.m.-noon Paso Robles River Walk.

Join us on an easy, three-mile walk along a level dirt/paved path through riparian habitat with sycamores and willows. Directions: take Hwy 101 to Spring St., then east on Niblick Rd and right on S.River Rd, then right on Riverbank Lane to Lawrence Moore Park, across from Bridgegate Lane. No dogs please. Leader: Debbie Roller, 610-0458.

Sat., May 27th, 10 a.m. Treehuggers' Walk on Terrace Hill.

One-mile stroll to learn about the secret lives of some native trees, their Chumash uses, and take in grand views of three other morros. Wear sturdy walking shoes. From Johnson Ave. in SLO, take Bishop St. southwest for one-tenth mile to the signed trailhead. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.


Sun., May 28th, 2 p.m. Historic Walk of San Luis Obispo: Post-World War II Rebirth.

Imagine San Luis Obispo before its tree-lined streets or Mission Plaza, but with soda fountains, pool parlors, and five-and-ten cent stores. This guided stroll past downtown buildings and along San Luis Creek will take you from city life in the late forties to its transformation

in the seventies. Meet at corner of Santa Rosa and Pacific Sts. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.



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




The Sierra Club Needs You!

Become an Outings Leader

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

For further information contact:

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



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

Activities sponsored by other organizations

Sat., May 13th, 9-11a.m. Birding at the Garden with Morro Coast Audubon. One mile birdwalk at a slow to moderate pace. Gentle terrain over a variety of surfaces. Jay Carroll and Eric Wier of Morro Coast Audubon Society will be your leaders. Bird Walk is \$5 for SLO Botanical Garden members/\$10 non-members. \$3 parking fee. No reservations needed. For more information contact education@slobg.org.

Hello, Secretary Zinke

On April 17, hundreds of protesters greeted Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke when he showed up for a speech in Santa Barbara about his recent visit to the Channel Islands and "parks in general."

While he didn't unveil an expected offshore drilling Executive Order as we had feared, he did use the opportunity to talk about oil and gas drilling on public lands and waters. In 1969, Santa Barbara was the location of the largest spill in U.S. waters at the time, followed by the Refugio Beach spill in 2015. And April marked the seven-year anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Hard to imagine a less appropriate time to push for more drilling.

The week before, Zinke told an industry conference that an offshore oil directive was set to be issued soon. "That's why it's surprising that he would then hold an event a block from the beach that was the site of the first major offshore oil spill in the U.S.," said Katie Davis, chair of the Sierra Club Santa Barbara Group.

"Congressman Carbajal's first act in congress was to introduce a ban on offshore drilling. That's a testament to the sentiment against drilling here. Of course there's a protest." Huge kudos to Katie and



Los Padres Sierra Club Chapter Chair Jim Hines, who were able to help organize the protest on about two days' notice, and digital staff Andy Wilson and Marie Bergen for getting a text alert out on twelve hours' notice.

Donald Trump's Interior Department has repeatedly sought to destroy publicly owned lands for fossil fuel development. The Secretary has called expanding leasing for fossil fuel development "a pillar" of Trump's plans, ended the federal coal leasing moratorium that protected our public lands and prevented publicly owned coal from being sold for pennies on the dollar, and even required the Bureau of Land Management's home page to swap an image of a family enjoying our public lands for a picture of a coal mine.

Welcome Bill Waycott

By Joe Morris, Outings Chair 2009-2017

The new Outings Chair for our chapter will be Bill Waycott. He has been approved unanimously by the Executive Committee, and will take up his duties on May 1st.

In my estimation, Bill is eminently qualified by training, experience, and respect from his peers to take over this job, and we are very fortunate to get his acceptance. He has been a well-regarded outings leader for the chapter since 2009 and is especially known for his botanical field trips to identify and discuss local native plants (he holds a Ph.D. in botany). Bill initiated the Morro Mania Day, during which hikers climb the five accessible morros all in one day. He recently served as both President and Outings Chair of the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

I have enjoyed being Outings Chair and will see you all on the trail, as I will continue to lead hikes and city walks for the chapter.

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park 2017

May 7-9, June 11-13, July 16-18, August 20-22, September 24-26, October 22-24

Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard cruise to California's Channel Islands! Hike wild, wind-swept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Snorkel in pristine waters teeming with colorful fish. Swim with frolicking seals and sea lions. Look for unusual sea and land birds. Watch for the highly endangered island fox. Or....just relax at sea! All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. The cost, \$650, includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks and beverages plus the services



of a naturalist-docent assigned by the national park to help lead hikes, point out items of interest and give evening program. For more information contact leader: Joan Jones

Holtz; 626-443-0706; jholtzhl@aol.com. To make a reservation send a \$100 check, written to Sierra Club, to leader, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732.

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