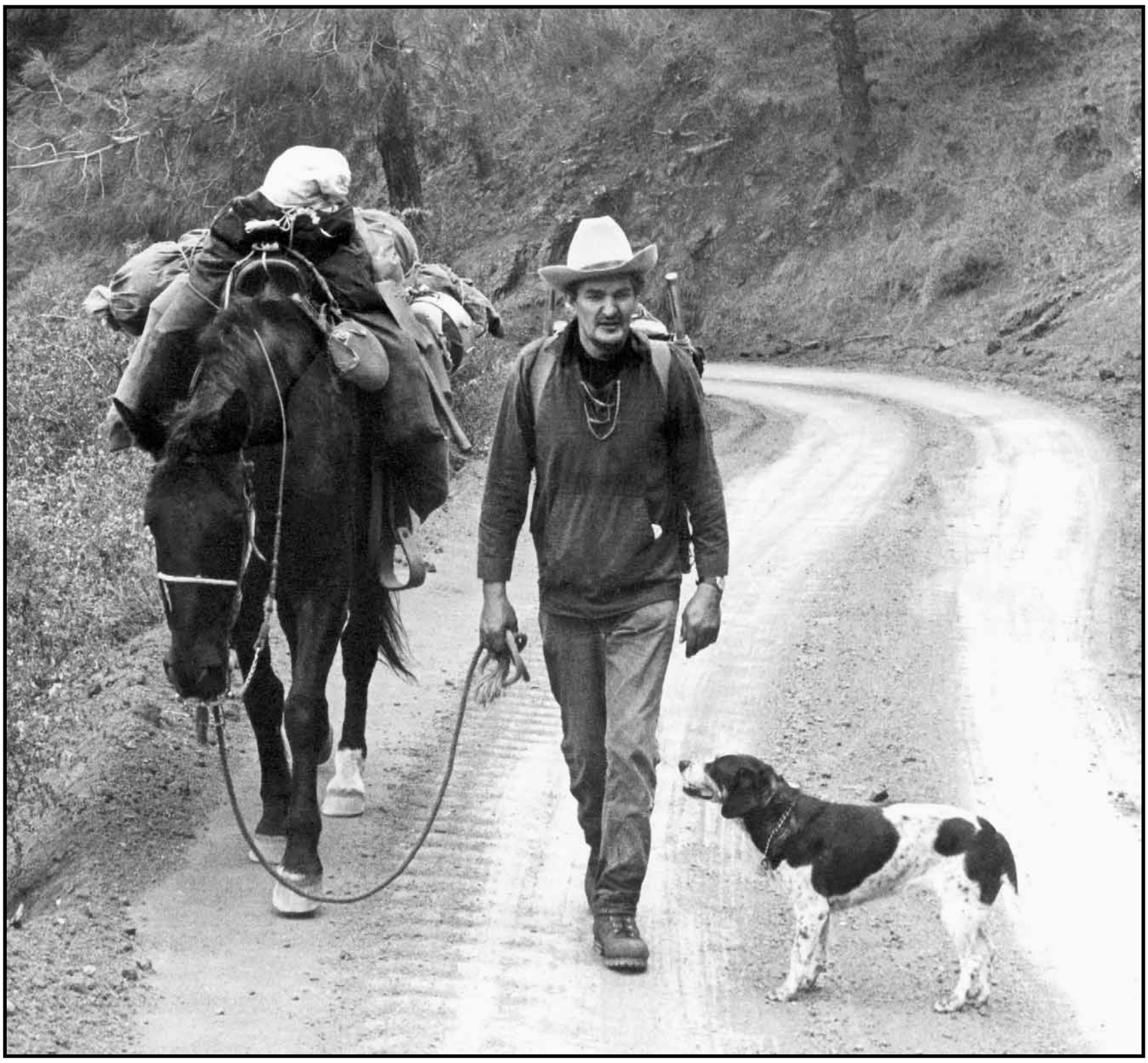
Vol. '06, No. 4 of 6

Journal of the Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club

Condor Call

Serving Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties

August/September 2006



Coastal projects . . . Pgs. 1 & 2

Beaches . . . Pg. 6 & 7

Back country . . . Pgs. 1 & 5

Islands Pgs. 3 & 7

Condor Call

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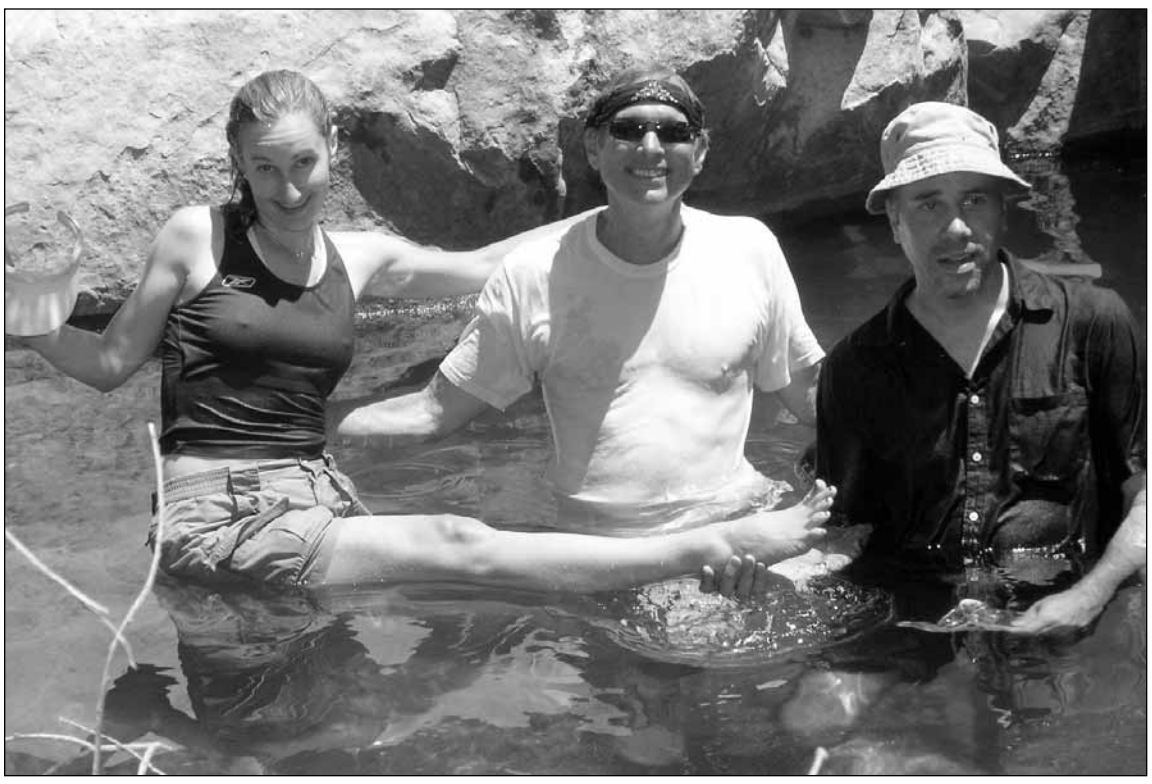


Adrienne, Sam and Oliver beat the heat on one of the Sierra Club's outings to Seven Falls. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

Venoco wants oil from Ellwood and Carpinteria bluffs

By Robert Sollen

A 15-story high oil-drilling rig on the Carpinteria bluffs?

People who have succeeded in keeping the community's ocean-front natural find the concept grossly incompatible.

But Venoco Inc. wants to erect a 175-foot rig onshore from which it would tap offshore oil deposits by means of slant drilling. At a June 13 hearing about 30 people testified, all but one opposing the project. Another 427 protestors signed a petition circulated by the Carpinteria Valley Association (CVA). The signed petitions were submitted at the hearing which drew an overflow audience at Carpinteria City Hall.

Public agencies and private contractors are preparing impact reports for expanding offshore oil production in Goleta as well as in Carpinteria. Both projects are Venoco ventures. A hearing for the Goleta project came too late for a summary in this issue of *Condor Call*.

In Carpinteria, the protests were varied, but many centered on the 175-foot drilling rig which was represented on several large posters distributed by the CVA. The structure would tower over the bluff near Carpinteria City Hall and the harbor seal rookery.

Comments on Venoco's Ellwood project are due Sept. 15 to Peter Strait of California State Lands Commission (http://www.slc.ca.gov), but there is a public hearing set for 3 and 6 p.m. Aug. 30 at the Goleta Valley Community Center that Sierra Club members are urged to attend.

"It would be like having a huge oil platform in our own backyard," the CVA said in its spring newsletter. With no structure in Santa Barbara County taller, the drilling tower will dominate the skyline and define the character of Carpinteria."

How much oil would be produced is uncertain, but many Carpinterians said that turning toward clean fuel production is far more important than extending the use of petroleum, a polluting fuel that contributes to global warming.

ELLWOOD PROJECT

Meanwhile, offshore Goleta at Ellwood, Venoco wants to drill 40 new wells from Platform Holly, a 40-year-old offshore structure in state waters, within three miles of shore. It wants state permission to expand its offshore lease into areas that the state took back from ARCO in the 1980s in a settlement of a highly contested lawsuit over ARCO's extended plans.

The Venoco plan, too, has been

VENOCO . . . *see page 3*

EAVESDROPS

"We'd lie there beneath the stars, mesmerized, wrapped in a special magic until the tale ended and the fire died."

—Bruce Brownell in a tribute to Frank Van Schaick, who passed away June 20 at age 94. He was a teacher and an author who for many years wrote the "Nature Walks" column in the *Santa Barbara News-Press* and co-authored two books with Dick Smith.

GAVIOTA PROJECTS

'Horrible precedent' predicted

The future of the Gaviota Coast is again at a crossroads and needs your support.

The community has struggled for decades, since Selma Rubin and supporters stopped the development of hundreds of homes at El Capitan in the 1970s, to maintain the rural, agricultural heritage of the Gaviota Coast.

But now, Vintage Communities of Orange County proposes to build up to 72 large residences at Naples; the eastern gateway to the Gaviota Coast, and the community cannot rely on the current Board of Supervisors to hold the line. These proposed residences, some as large as 13,400 square feet, will dominate the landscape, importing urban development into the last remaining remnant of the Southern California coastline.

"If this project is approved as proposed, it will set a horrible precedent for development of the rest of the Gaviota Coast," according to the Environmental Defense Center.

The draft environmental impact report is out and the County Planning Department is accepting comments until the Aug. 28 deadline. However at a July 27th hearing, there was so much testimony that many members of the public asked that that deadline be extended, which could happen.

The Naples Coalition, of which the Los Padres Chapter is a member, has proposed an alternative to the developer's project where no building is allowed on the bluffs or marine terrace south of Highway 101, nor in the public view shed north of Highway 101.

WHAT TO DO

There are many actions you can take to help preserve the Gaviota Coast.

—Send written comments to Santa Barbara County Planning and

NAPLES . . . *see page 3*

COVER PHOTO

The late Dick Smith, whose spirit lives on with a Los Padres Forest Wilderness named after him, is in for a lot of accolades via the Wildling Art Mvsevm's exhibits, events and treks. Details on page 5.

Sespe forest land swap is no deal

Letters are urgently needed to stop a forest land swap that includes important access points for the Sespe Wilderness.

A bill by Rep. Elton Gallegly (HR 4162) passed the House in June that gives United Water Conservation District 440 acres of the Los Padres National Forest. It now goes to the Senate for approval.

The land is located in Ventura County at the southeast corner of the forest close to Los Angeles and includes the Blue Point Campground, a forest access road, a portion of a proposed wild and scenic river, and the Agua Blanca and Piru Creek Trailheads, an important access point for the Sespe. In exchange, the forest service will receive 340 acres of land on the western slopes above Lake Piru that has been primarily leased for grazing.

In typical fashion of anti-environmental legislation being submitted by Congress, the bill does the opposite of what it purports to do. The news release issued by Gallegly states that the bill would eliminate private inholdings, consolidate lands owned by the Water District around Lake Piru and provide better public access to the area.

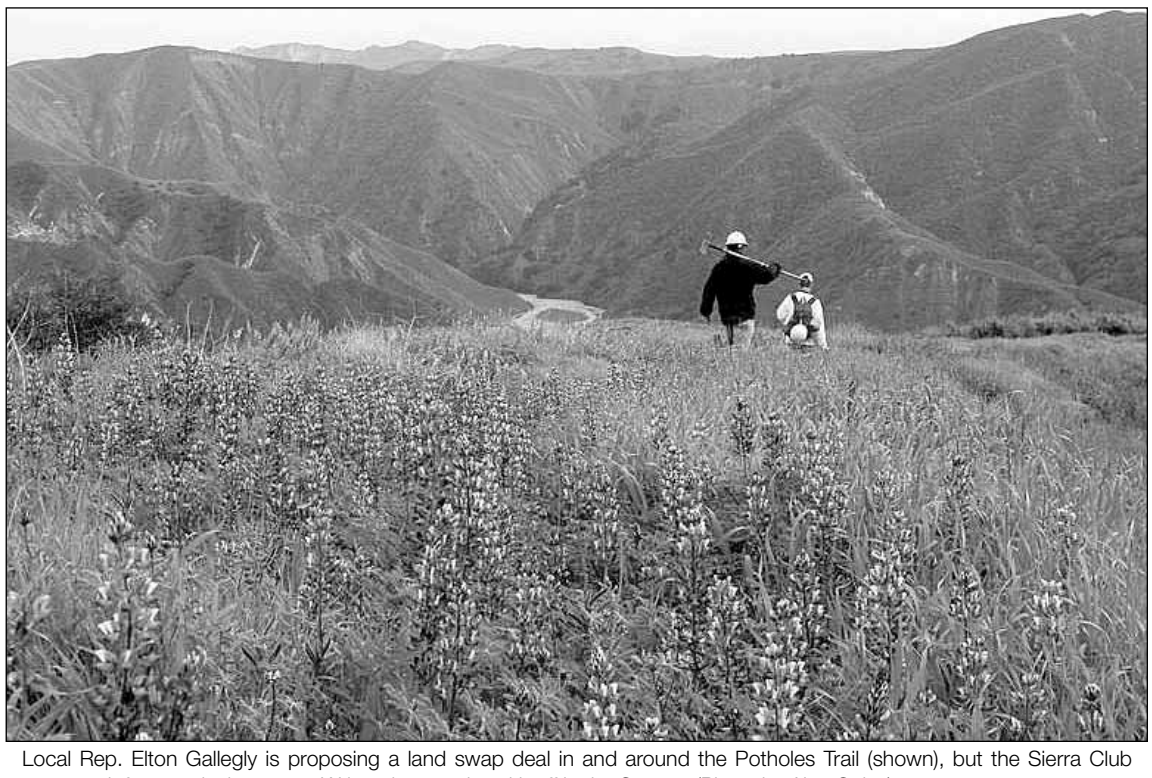
What it really does is to give some of the most valuable forest land to a water agency to develop as it likes without public comment. Congress underfunds the Forest Service, which is forced to close roads and campgrounds, then Congress uses the closed facilities as justification for giving them away.

The news release touts that a new trailhead for the Potholes Trail will be constructed as part of the exchange. However, the access road will be transferred to the water agency which can impose any fee it wishes on forest users unless they walk or ride a bike there (as they can do now).

The possible development at Blue Point could adversely impact the adjacent Sespe Wilderness and compromise one of the wildest areas left in Southern California. Sierra Club and Forest Service volunteers have been restoring the hiking trails that enter the wilderness from the Blue Point area. They have proposed a number of possible alternatives to the Forest Service that would allow greater public access to the area while protecting the natural resources. These proposals have not been considered because of this legislation.

Letters are urgently needed to Sen. Dianne Feinstein (http://feinstein.senate.gov) and Sen. Barbara Boxer (http://boxer.senate.gov) to stop this legislation in the Senate. Please let them know that you oppose the land exchange and that you would like the land to stay in the National Forest which belongs to all Americans.

For more information on this issue or to help with trail work, contact Alan Coles of the Sierra Club's Southern California Forest Committee at: alancoles@earthlink.net.



Local Rep. Elton Gallegly is proposing a land swap deal in and around the Potholes Trail (shown), but the Sierra Club opposes it for practical reasons. Write a letter to head it off in the Senate. (Photo by Alan Coles)

Venoco proposes an onshore drilling rig that at 175 feet is taller than the Statue of Liberty (152 feet) and will dominate the Carpinteria Bluffs area along with making a lot of noise.

Venoco . . .

Cont'd. from page 2

delayed for years while the state, Goleta, the county and the oil company wrestled over development conditions. Residents of the region have repeatedly complained of gas odors.

The plan would eventually phase out the marine terminal from which the produced oil is shipped to refineries by barge. Instead, the increased oil production would go by a nine-mile pipeline to Exxon Mobil's Las Flores Canyon processing plant.

The city of Carpinteria is the lead agency for the onshore drilling project, and the State Lands Commission is in charge of the Goleta project.

But many other public agencies will have input and influence in both developments. The preparation of environmental impact statements for each project will require several months.

Official Information on both projects, along with all other coastal California energy projects, is available through State Lands Commission, website: www.slc.ca.gov.

Ellwood project details are available at the County Energy Division website: www.countyofsb.org/energy.

Official information on the Carpinteria Paredon project is available at the city's website: www.carpinteria.ca.us.

Wind farm project eyes Lompoc site

A plan to put up to 80 wind turbines along Miguelito Canyon ridges near Lompoc was unveiled in July to a packed house of interested citizens.

The plan, a first for Santa Barbara County, could produce enough energy for all the power needs of the North County, but speakers worried about the turbines killing birds, night lights required by Federal Aviation Administration, grading on the ridges and the towers blighting the mountain views.

Next up is preparing an environmental impact report, and anyone who wants to comment on what issues it should address may contact county Energy Division.

The Lompoc Wind Energy Project details are on the county's website, which also contains photos of the area and what a similar project (in Spain) looks like: www.countyofsb.org/energy

LNG battle expanding to legislators

By Al Sanders

The Steering Committee of the Los Padres Chapter's LNG Task Force have elected two new members who are also on the chapter's Executive Committee.

They are Joy Kobayashi and Kesa Ryono, who have agreed to join Committee Chair Trevor Smith in taking on the Chapter's mission to stop LNG in Ventura County.

The committee is revising the web site and preparing to send some people to Sacramento to speak to our legislators. Club members are urged to help out the effort by calling 488-7988 or visiting the website: www.VenturaLNGTaskForce.com.

"The addition of Joy and Kesa substantially strengthens the composition of the Committee since both are seasoned activists and both know how to compliment the work of the committee," said Smith. "It is critical to our mission that we concentrate on educating the public with the facts on how harmful this project will be for the environment."

LNG opponents won a small victory by the recent announcement that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agreed to extend the public comment period to Aug. 3, primarily because of its failure to reach out to the Hispanic community.

Mike Stubblefield, the Chapter's air quality delegate, had already prepared comments and testified at the EPA hearing held in Oxnard, but welcomed the extension in order to expand on comments and issues.

Stubblefield had previously commented that the project description failed to consider the air pollution from all the tugs and supply vessels associated with the project. "I know why it's being done this way," said Stubblefield, "because if they include everything, as they should, they will be well over the federal criteria for significant impacts."

The proposed Cabrillo Port project by BHP Billiton consists of a floating storage and re-gasification vessel connected to two new parallel subsea pipelines. The pipelines would make landfall adjacent to the Southern California Gas Company's Ormond Beach metering station.

The vessel would be moored about 14 miles off the Ventura coast and 18 miles from Anacapa Island. The equipment on the vessel includes eight submerged combustion vaporizers, four generator engines (one a backup), three spherical LNG storage tanks, one diesel fuel storage tank, and emergency and auxiliary support equipment.

The proposed permit and supporting documents are available at the Ventura County APCD, local libraries and on the EPA web site at: www.epa.gov/region09.

Condor Call

ONLINE: http://lospadres.sierraclub.org
www.santabarbaratrailguide.com

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Non-members, $5 per year. Contact:
Art Benkaim, 645 Costa del Mar, #C, Santa Barbara 93103
Photos, news, tips always welcome!

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Mike Stubblefield (vice-chair), 988-0339, motodata@adelphia.net
Joe Connett, secretary, joe.connett@gmail.com
Trevor Smith, 469-9765, trevor.smith@earthlink.net
Kesa Ryono, 271-0506, enryo@adelphia.net
Daniel Pearson, 488-5168, seaotter4@verizon.net
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Sespe: Alan Sanders, 488-7988
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Joy Kobayashi, tandemstoker@adelphia.net
Ada Babine, 962-2042, Council of Club Leaders
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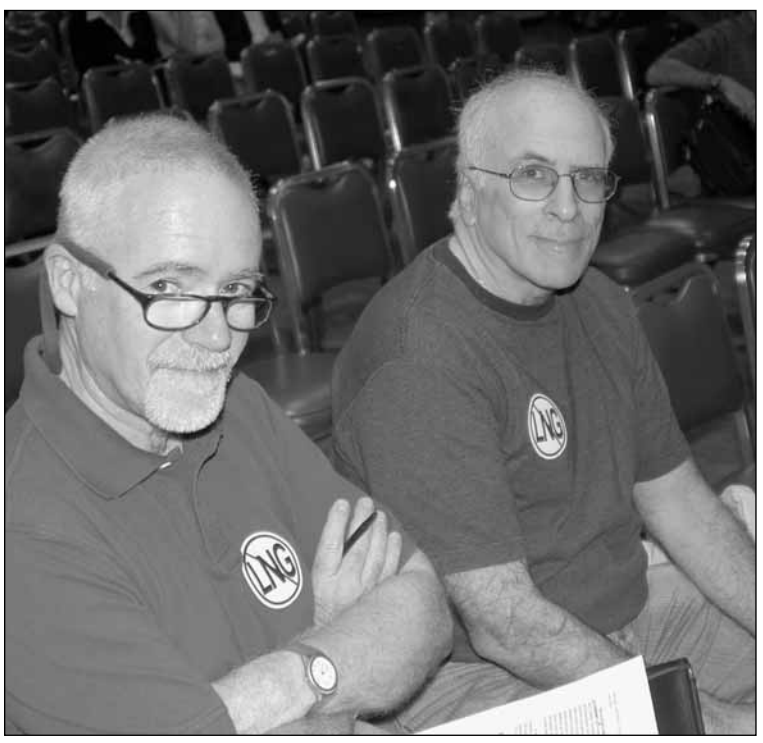
222 E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara 93101
Typography & production by Jim Cook • Printed by Western Web Printing, Inc.

EAVESDROPS

"If the whole world lived like us, we would need about five more planets."

—Comment from the Sierra Club review of *The High Price of Materialism,* by Tim Kasser, which details the relationship between wealth and happiness.



Chapter ExCom member Mike Stubblefield (left) and Art Shafman prepare to testify against LNG proposals during a recent EPA hearing. (Photo by Al Sanders)

Oil decline sparks ideas

The Fossil Free By '33 campaign of the Community Environmental Council brought the public up to speed during a conference in July on how to get better at using all kinds of energy.

Focusing on the theory that oil supplies will soon peak and then quickly decline, the CEC hoped to gather experts from the tri-counties' area, but Ventura and San Luis Obispo leaders were absent.

Nevertheless, the CEC conference noted a number of possibilities, the most important being conservation and energy efficiency. Others include biofuels, hybrid cars, wind, solar and ocean power.

Some practical solutions were cited, such as the county's new "green building," upgrading county air conditioning and lighting. Santa Barbara City is considering an agreement with a company that would build a large solar system on top of a maintenance building.

Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance is also working with cities and counties for solar energy projects.

To keep apprised of the efforts, log on to: www.communityenvironmentalcouncil.org.

Naples . . .

Cont'd. from page 2

Development Dept., 123 East Anapamu, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 until August 28.

—Educate yourself and keep apprised of information via the Coalition's website, which offers letters you can email directly to the county: www.savenaples.org.

The website has a link to the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

—Volunteer for the Coalition, which is run by community members like yourself. The outreach committee meets every Thursday night from 7 to 9 p.m. For details, contact coordinator Kristen Hoye at 452-5936 or email: info@savenaples.org.

A word from the developer, Matt Osgood, in a newspaper interview: "Fifty people showing up at a meeting because they got an email the day before isn't much of a resistance."

But plenty more turned out July 27th and the Coalition would like even more people opposing the developer's plans in order to convince a majority of pro-growth commissioners and supervisors that the Gaviota Coast is too important to sacrifice.

Chapter leaders on TV

Earth Alert's "Heroes of the Coast" series of interviews with California's major coastal activists has begun showing on the Adelphia Public Access Channel 25 in Oxnard-Port Hueneme at 6 p.m. on Sundays.

The series is a set of half-hour interviews by Earth Alert Founder and Director Janet Bridgers of coastal activists who have played major roles in events. Those include the 1972 passage of Prop 20, which created the California Coastal Commission and California Coastal Act.

"This is a labor of love, honoring the contribution of the coastal activists to California," said Bridgers. "Without their work, which most people take for granted, a great deal more of the California coast would look like lower Malibu or Marina del Rey. In a year and a half, we've been able to record 25 of these interviews, and more are in the works," Bridgers said.

"Since we've begun them, Ellen Stern Harris—considered by many as the 'mother of the Coastal Act'—has died of cancer. I knew Ellen was ill, and I wanted to honor her while she was still with us . . . that's why I started this project," she said.

Bridgers believes that the work of environmentalists will join the contributions to American history made by patriots, abolitionists, suffragettes, Freedom Riders and feminists.

"These movements are made up of people whose individual contributions are rarely known," she said. "This series begins to create a video record of some of California's most significant coastal activists."

Earth Alert! is an Emmy-award winning organization based in Oxnard; for more information, visit its website: www.earthalert.org.

Upcoming schedule for the Heroes series:

Aug. 6—Dan Pearson, Ormond Beach wildlife

Aug. 13—Susan Jordan, LNG

Aug. 20—Pedro Nava on current issues, especially oil

Aug. 28—Peter Douglas, Part 1 re Prop 20 & history of the Coastal Commission

Sept. 4—Peter Douglas, Part 2 re surviving coup attempts as the Director of Coastal Commission

Sept. 11—Don May, LNG

Sept. 18—Alan Sanders re Roma Armbrust & Cynthia Leake

Sept. 25—Bob Sollen on the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill

Oct. 2— Naomi Schwartz re history of the Coastal Act.

Tony Biegen and Dianne Soini help maintain the Sierra Club Trail at Elings Park, of which part was taken over by mountain bikers, but rescued due to excellent efforts primarily by Biegen, Jim Childress and Ed Easton. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

Expand sanctuary and ban jet skis

By Janet Bridgers

Los Padres Chapter leaders testified recently that the six-mile Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary boundaries should be expanded and that obnoxious jet skis and similar craft should be banned.

The comments referred to the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary's (CINMS) new Draft Management Plan, which is a blueprint for how the area is managed.

There were two public hearings; in Ventura on June 27 and Santa Barbara June 28.

Los Padres Chapter Conservation Chair Al Sanders and Chapter Executive Committee member Dan Pearson provided comments about protection of marine mammals and increased urbanized uses like jet skis and cruise ships.

Pearson provided several examples of the incompatibility of motorized watercraft in an area that is supposed to be managed like a marine wilderness area.

"The noise and pollution from these watercraft destroy the peace and tranquility that are part of the experience people are seeking. But more important is the effect on marine and avian wildlife that are terrorized by these machines," Pearson said.

Sanders noted that when California Department of Boating and Waterways' Director Raynor Tsuneyoshi spoke in support of jet skis he was choosing the interests of the most intrusive users over non-motorized uses.

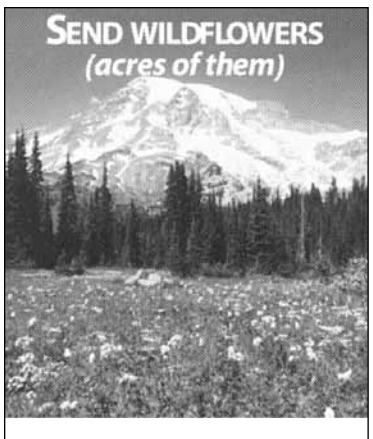
"Jet skis are so dangerous and noisy that they have no business in any part of the Sanctuary. The very term 'Sanctuary' is the antithesis of the proposed uses. Therefore, jet skis should be prohibited," Sanders said.

Ventura Surfrider representative Paul Jenkin added that, "Jet skis are also a great danger to surfers and swimmers because they can't always see beyond the swells and can run over people in the water," he said.

Sanders and Pearson have been participating in Sanctuary hearings, commissions and working groups for over 20 years. Pearson made note of this during the July hearing: "Some of us who have been providing testimony about the Sanctuary for many years are wondering all the while if anything positive will ever come of it. It is long past time to stop quibbling over small issues and to move to the heart of the matter—like the expansion of Sanctuary boundaries."

The comment period ended July 21, but you can still get a copy of the Plan at the sanctuary office in Santa Barbara Harbor or Channel Islands Harbor in Ventura, or public libraries.

You can also ask for copies by phone (884-1464), email (mp.request@noaa.gov) or on line: www. channelislands.noaa.gov.



Memorial or Commemorative gifts are a unique way to honor an individual or special event and at the same time provide important funding towards Sierra Club's long-term goals. And like the memories you hold, this is a gift that will last forever. For more information, call (415) 977-5653.

planned.giving@sierraclub.org
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85 SECOND STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105
CHAPTER CONTACT:
CATHERINE GRAHAM,
682-1357

SIERRA CLUB
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Los Padres Group News

The public is welcome to our programs

CHAPTER EXCOM
- The Los Padres Chapter Executive Committee now meets on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m., Carpinteria Library. Next dates: Aug. 24 and Sept. 28.

ARGUELLO GROUP
- Program information from Jerry Connor, 928-3598

CONEJO GROUP
- Get info from: http://users.adelphia.net/~conejo hiker.

SANTA BARBARA GROUP
- Popular potluck at Rocky Nook, Sunday, Aug. 27. Details below.

SESPE GROUP
- Oxnard/Ventura-based group information from Al Sanders, 488-7988.

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

Don't miss the picnic!

The Santa Barbara Group invites all to a potluck picnic in Rocky Nook Park on Sunday, August 27, beginning at 5 p.m. This is always a very popular event with our members and we look forward to a good turnout.

We have reserved Area 1, at the far end of the park. Rocky Nook is in Mission Canyon across from the Natural History Museum.

Plan to bring a dish to share, your own table service, your own choice of beverage and food to barbecue, if you like. We will provide a fire for barbecue and coffee.

This is the right time to renew contacts with your hiking friends and to get updated information on what the local group is doing.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

New meeting time set

The Los Padres Chapter Executive Committee will now meet on the 4th Thursday of every month at the Carpinteria Library 7:30 p.m. You can get on the agenda mailing list by emailing Secretary Joe Connett at: joe.connett@gmail.com.

The ExCom also appointed a new member, Trevor Smith, to replace Dianne Safford who resigned because she is moving to Oregon.

These were just two of a number of actions taken by the ExCom over the last few meetings. Others include:

—Renewed the Santa Barbara office lease at $375 per month, with the Santa Barbara Group picking up $100 of that.

—Requested the services of the Sierra Club conflict resolution committee to address conflicts within the ExCom.

—Agreed to oppose a Forest Service land swap that may affect access into the Sespe Wilderness. See story on page 1.

—Donated $100 to the Lynnell Hankins Memorial Scholarship Fund at Buena High School. A lifelong champion of environmental causes, Lynnel passed away on July 6. She was the wife of *Condor Call* editor John Hankins.

—Approved fund appeals to members for continuing opposition to LNG proposal off Ventura County and the urbanization of the Gaviota Coast at Naples in Santa Barbara County. Stories on these are on pages 1 & 2.

Also, Santa Barbara Group Chair Ed Easton and Chapter employee Erin Zellot attended the Sierra Club's fund raising training.

—The chapter is now accepting old cell phones for recycling in addition to printing ink cartridges, which earn money for us. Either may be dropped off or sent to the Chapter's office (address in Page 2 directory) or given to Erin at the ExCom or SB Group meetings.

—Supported the Sespe Group's opposition to an amendment allowing the Lang Homes development Port Hueneme, as well as the creation of an Oxnard Harbor District overlay in the Ormond Beach Specific Plan Area and annexation by the City of Oxnard of any land within that SPA.

EAVESDROPS

"Those plein air painting journeys into Santa Barbara's back country with Ray Strong made me fall in love with our California landscape and, at long last, I felt at home."

—Jill Mackay, a UK transplant, lauding painter Ray Strong of Santa Barbara who passed away July 3 and who helped create the Oak Group of artists favoring the environment. Follow the artists' exhibition by logging on to: www.theoakgroup.org

Condor Classifieds

TREK PLANNING: 30 years experience local & Sierras, maps included. 964-5153.

ROSEBUD CHOCOLATES: Gift-giving made simple. Weddings, anniversaries, babyshowers, birthdays, or any special occasion. www.rosebudchocolates.com or toll-free 1-888-856-7166.

LIGHTEN UP. Professional organizing. Helping create homes that uplift and enlighten. 805-680-903. lighten-up@cox.net.

YOGA HIKE: Add another dimension to your nature experience with yoga. Sundays, 10am. Call Tali, 448-2619. www.yogahike.com. [5]

PASS ON your outdoor gear or whatever through the Condor Call classifieds. Just fill in the blanks below and send us a check.

REAL ESTATE: I can help. Kevin Young RE/MAX SB, 564-3400. www.sbre.com; 22 years experience, UCSB grad.

SOUTHOLD, Long Island room and shared bath hostel type, 3 beds in one room, 2nd floor, Victorian. $500 week. Area of old houses, barns, cemeteries, kayaking too. 962-6508.

ACUPRESSURE MASSAGE for back, feet, hands, etc. for adults, children and animals; your home or office. Be healthy - Paula Westbury 962-6508.

Classified Ad Placement Form

A classified ad in the Condor Call reaches over 6,500 Sierra Club members in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.
Ads cost only $6 for three lines, and $1 for each additional line per issue.
Specify by circling the months below. Deadline for next issue is September 20, 2006.
Questions? Call the Condor at 745-5432.
Enclose a check made out to the Condor Call, 1056 Eugenia Pl., "A", Carpinteria, Calif. 93013

Name:

Phone:

Number of issues: ____ Feb/Mar • Apr/May • June/July • Aug/Sept • Oct/Nov • Dec/Jan

Outings Schedule

Los Padres Chapter — Sierra Club

http://lospadres.sierraclub.org

Folks having fun at a pool at Seven Falls in the Santa Barbara front country, a popular place for Sierra Club outings. When's the last time you hiked with us? (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

Conditions

A number of campgrounds and roads in Los Padres National Forest are closed or have restricted (no autos) access due to protection of habitats and species or are under repair. Before you go into the local backcountry, it's a good idea to check conditions with rangers. Numbers to call (unless noted, all 805 area code):

Los Padres National Forest Districts:

Headquarters	968-6640
Ojai Dist.	646-4348
Mt. Pinos	(661) 245-3731
Santa Barbara	967-3481
Santa Lucia	925-9538

Other Areas:

Santa Monica Mts. Area	370-2301
Conejo Parks	381-2737
Simi Valley	584-4400
Montecito	969-3514

Forest Notes

For updated information, news releases, maps, and many other goodies, go to Los Padres National Forest website:

www.r5.fs.fed.us/lospadres

Public's Forest

Best website run by citizens of the Los Padres Forest Association, with info as varied as wildflower alerts, trailwork opportunities and factious issues, welcomes your input too:

www.lpforest.org

Arroyo Hondo Preserve open

The Arroyo Hondo Preserve on the Gaviota Coast is open for free public hiking and picnicking on the first and third weekends of each month.

In August the preserve is open Saturdays and Sundays Aug. 5 & 6 and 19 & 20 and Sept. 2 & 3 and 16 & 17.

Come out and explore this pristine canyon with eight miles of trails along the ridges and gurgling creek. Picnic by the stream and visit the historic 1842 Ortega adobe with visitors' center and art gallery and explore the Discovery Center in the old barn.

Docent tours are also offered as well as opportunities for trail maintenance and habitat restoration. Reservations are required; call the preserve at 567-1115.

The Preserve is about 4.5 miles west of Refugio State Beach.

Ongoing Outings

Every Monday morning

Join Elizabeth Budworth and Patricia Jump every Monday morning at 8:30 a.m. for moderate walks in the Ventura and Ojai areas. Now in its seventh year, the walks last about two hours and the group sometimes goes for coffee afterward. CALL 643-0270 or 642-6971.

Every Wednesday

URBAN EVENING HIKE: Weekly urban hike in Ventura meeting at 6:45 pm for a 4 mile hike up the hill to Father Serra's cross with view of sunset over the ocean and the Channel Islands, then down the hill to the ocean and walk to end of pier, then along beach promenade to mouth of Ventura River. Meet at the fountain across the street from the San Buenaventura Mission. DAVE RIVAS 701-2466

Tuesday Evenings

HIKES: Short, easy 90-min. hikes at Surf Beach, the Mission, Miguelito Canyon, or other spots near Lompoc (approx. 3 miles) Novice hikers will find these hikes to be a good introduction to group hiking. Meet in the parking lot behind the Lompoc Civic Center Pool by 6:25 pm for carpool to hike location. Wear walking shoes and bring a flashlight. Rain cancels. VERN 733-2903 or DEAN 736-6685. (AR)

Every Friday

SOCIAL HIKE: An easy-to-moderate 2-4-mrt night hike in Santa Barbara front country, beach, or back roads. Meet at 6:15 p.m. at the Old Mission. Bring a flashlight. Optional potluck or pizza afterward. AL SLAYDEK (SB)

Sunday Afternoons

CONEJO GROUP is leading a special series of Sunday Afternoon Hikes approximately twice a month. These hikes are geared to the interests of individuals or families who wish to take a 2-3-hr. walk in the outdoors with frequent stops to examine or study wildlife and the ecology. Exercise is of secondary concern. The hikes are not intended to be strenuous, but may entail some ascending of hills or walking on rocks. No pets or radios. TOM MAXWELL, 492-2184 (CJ)

Monthly Programs

ARGUELLO GROUP: Slide shows, speakers, and movies—third Friday of each month. Inquire for details: 928-3598. (AR)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Help keep Highway 1 beautiful. Adopt-a-Highway trash pickup from the Lompoc 'Wye' to the Base boundary. Meet at Vandenberg Village Shopping Center parking lot at 9 a.m. on the fourth Saturday of odd-numbered months. Rain cancels. For information contact Connie (805) 735-2292.

San Luis Obispo Outings

THERE ARE MANY south San Luis Obispo County outings planned monthly that should interest Los Padres Chapter members and the public. They include hikes, bike trips, campouts, trail riding with horses, kayaking Avila and Morro bays, and treks through the Nipomo Dunes area. To get on the mailing list, contact the legendary Bil Deneen at (805) 929-3647 or email him at bdenneen@kcbx.net.

August 5

SAN JOSE CREEK LOOP: This is an easy 3 mrt hike, exploring the neighborhood trails and roads of San Jose Creek in North Goleta. We will begin near the intersection of N. Kellogg and Calle Real and follow the creek on trails and adjacent roads. We'll travel north of Cathedral Oaks Rd., then return via creek trails, retracing part of our initial route. Meet 9am at the Bank of America parking lot, Hope & State St. GERRY 964-5411. (SB)

August 6

PLAYGROUND: Explore the rock formations off West Camino Cielo. Steep but short with rock hopping and exploring in a playground of boulders. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ROBERT 685-1283 (SB)

August 7

MONDAY MORNING WALK - OJAI LAND CONSERVANCY: Start the week off with a five-mile hike in our local area. We'll cross the Ventura River and hike into Wills Canyon. Meet at 8am at Mission Plaza or 8:30am in parking lot Rice Road Meiners Oaks. Pat 643-0270 (SP)

August 11

BEACH WALK - POINT DUME - EASY HIKE SERIES: Easy 4 mrt hike with 250' elev. gain. Hike along the beach, up to the bluff. Bring water and food. Meet in parking lot near Burger King on Hampshire Road in Thousand Oaks at 8am for carpooling. LILLIAN TREVISAN 498-1623 (CJ)

August 12

McMENEMY TRAIL: Hike from San Ysidro trail to Saddle Rock overlook, then back by dirt road to starting point. Moderate 6 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. Diane 687-1929 (SB)

August 13

SHORELINE PARK PICNIC AND BEACH WALK: Share a potluck breakfast followed by an easy beach walk. Bring food to share. Coffee provided. Meet in the middle of Shoreline Park at 9am. ART 965-4850 (SB)

SCHEDULE YOUR OUTINGS: Outings for the period Oct-Jan (plus one week into Feb) are due at your outings chairperson's mailbox soon. Write-up your new outings and get them over to your outings chair promptly.

August 14

MONDAY MORNING WALK – CARPINTERIA: Start the week off with a five-mile walk in our local areas. We'll walk from Bates Beach to Carpinteria and return. Meet at 8am, Ventura car pool lot or at 8:30am. Pat 643-0270 (SP)

August 16-22

BACKPACK FROM TUOLUMNE MEADOWS (YOSEMITE) TO MAMMOTH LAKES: Moderately strenuous one way by use of YART bus service. Approx. 55 miles. Limited by permit availability to 6 participants. Please contact hike leader for detailed trip description, equipment needs, etc. PETER SCIFRES (818) 991-5769 (CJ)

August 18

MASH SITE - MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK: Moderate 8 mrt hike to Mash Site and Old Forest Trail. Bring water, food and lug-soled shoes. Meet in parking lot near Burger King on Hampshire Road in Thousand Oaks at 8am for carpooling. LILLIAN TREVISAN 498-1623 (CJ)

August 19

RATTLESNAKE TRAIL: Hike up a wooded canyon with scenic views to Gibraltar Rock. Moderate 5.5 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. DAVE COOPER 453-4103 (SB)

Outing Notes

The two letter abbreviation at the end of each outing is a key to the group who has organized the outing.

AR–Arguello Group
CJ–Conejo Group
SB–Santa Barbara Group
SP–Sespe Group
WLA —West LA (Angeles Chapter)

All phone numbers are in area code (805) unless otherwise noted.

The public is welcome at all outings listed, unless otherwise specified. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Study footwear is recommended. If you have questions contact the leader listed. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 14.

A frequently updated listing of all outings can be viewed at: **http://lospadres.sierraclub.org**. This website also contains links to the Group web pages.

August 20

HIKE LEADER'S BBQ: Hike leaders meeting with Tri-tip BBQ and presentation on back country orientation or just a good time. Bring a side dish, drinks, and join us at 4pm. Call for details. Gerry 964-5411 (SB)

August 26

ANNUAL McGRATH TO VENTURA HARBOR BEACH WALK: Meet at the parking lot at the harbor just off Spinnaker Dr. at the far end of the Sheraton 4-Points hotel. To get to the parking lot, take an immediate right off Spinnaker just as you turn off Harbor Blvd. Meet at 1pm, bring water. Moderate. Sheila 649-9044 (SP)

ROMERO CANYON LOOP: Hike up a trail with trees and a small stream to a lunch spot, then down an abandoned road with a beautiful view. Moderate 6 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. Jasna 907-6026 (SB)

August 27

RED ROCK TO SWIMMING HOLE: Hike to below Gibraltar Dam and relax by/in the water. Moderate 6.5 mrt. Bring swimsuit, wading shoes, lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. DAVID 563-2176 (SB)

OUTINGS WRITE-UP DUE: Outings are due soon, covering the period Oct-Jan (plus the 1st week of Feb). Get them to your outings chair NOW!

September 2

BACKBONE AND ZUMA RIDGE TRAILS: Moderate paced 10 mile hike with 1400' gain, 2400' loss from Kanan Dume Road past Buzzard's Roost to Zuma Beach, with return on the Park-Link Shuttle. Meet 9am at Newton Canyon Trailhead on Kanan Dume Road. Directions: From PCH take Kanan Dume Road 4.5 miles to just after first tunnel on left side, or 8 miles south of Ventura Fwy on right just before third tunnel. The shuttle bus will get us back about 3pm. Bring water, lunch, lug-soled shoes and bus fare (call 888-734-2323 for current fare). Rain cancels. SMMTF Wilderness Adventure. Leaders: HUGH WARREN 497-9612, HOWARD KAYTON (CJ)

ARROYO BURRO DOWN: Drive to trailhead on Camino Cielo then down the mountain to the Santa Ynez River. About 7.5mrt, 2000' elevation loss/gain. Decent shade on the North side of the mountain and the river should be running well. Moderately strenuous. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. TONY 687-1929 (SB)

September 3

DOUBLE PARK HIKE: First a 2 mile wooded trail along San Ysidro Creek in Montecito, then after lunch another 3 miles stroll along San Antonio Creek Trail. Easy pace, children welcome with supervision. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. VICKI 563-4850 (SB)

September 4

MONDAY MORNING WALK - EMMA WOOD: Start the week off with a five-mile hike in our local area. Meet at 8:30am at parking lot end of Main Street before the bridge. Pat 643-0270 (SP)

EAVESDROPS

"Can't close the US border? Charge every person crossing illegally the $5 Adventure Pass fee. Eleven million times five bucks and the National Forest Service is back in business. Voila!"

—Robert Hefferman of Lompoc.

September 6

CALABASAS PEAK: Moderate 5 mrt hike with 900' elev. gain. View of Old Topanga Canyon and San Fernando Valley. Bring water, snack and lug-soled shoes. Meet at Burger King parking on Hampshire Road in Thousand Oaks at 5:30pm for carpooling. JOANNE SULKOSKE 492-3061 (CJ)

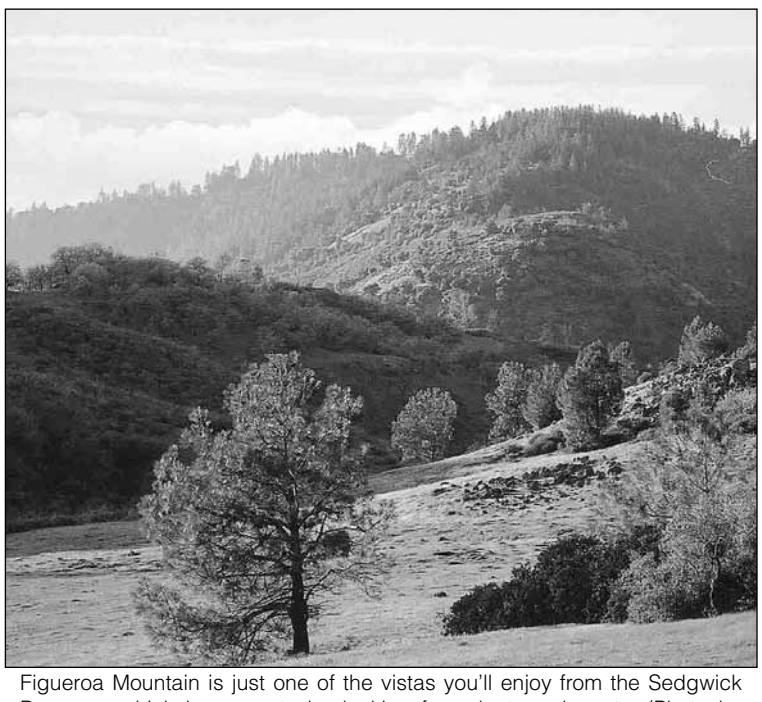
September 9

MONTANA DE ORO: Hike to Valencia Peak, out the Badger, Rattlesnake, and Bluff Trails (8 mrt, 1800ft. elev. gain). Bring lunch, water, camera, binoculars. Rain cancels. Meet at the Lompoc Civic Center at 8am. Hikes are subject to change, always contact the leader. DEAN 736-6685 (AR)

MISSION RIDGE: Hike from end of Edison access road overlooking Rattlesnake Canyon, up new connector trail to ridge and across to Tunnel Trail. Primitive trail, steep at times and some boulder hopping. Moderately strenuous 7 mrt. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. DAVE COOPER 453-4103 (SB)

September 10

El CAPITAN CANYON: Start at El Capitan Canyon Camp, walk into the canyon, cross the creek and climb up various ridges for great view of the coast. Finish with a swim in the ocean (El Capi-



Figueroa Mountain is just one of the vistas you'll enjoy from the Sedgwick Preserve, which happens to be looking for volunteer docents. (Photo by Nick DiCroce)

Train to be a docent

Sedgwick Reserve, the "crown jewel of the University of California Natural Reserve System," will begin a training program for volunteer teachers in October.

Weekly classes will be held on the reserve in Santa Ynez through February. Participants will learn about the natural history of the reserve from UCSB faculty and local experts. They will also receive instruction on how to lead children and adults on educational hikes.

There is no charge for the training program, but participants are asked to make a two-year commitment to the reserve's educational outreach program.

Other volunteer opportunities available at the reserve include: gathering seeds and specimens for its native plant nursery, habitat restoration, slide and photo collection cataloguing, photo assignments, event coordination, trail mapping and maintenance, public relations, fundraising, office and technological assistance.

Interested? Call Lucy Thomas at 687-3507 or Kate McGuinness at 693-1356.

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Dick Smith is true 'wilderness spirit'

The Wildling Art Museum is honoring the memory of Dick Smith with its annual Wilderness Spirit Award, along with an exhibit of his photographs, sketches and hand-made items.

Often called the "conscience of Santa Barbara County," Smith was a reporter, photographer, naturalist and conservationist who loved the back country wilderness, a large portion of which is named after him.

"Dick Smith and his Backcountry Wilderness" runs from September 17 through January 7 at the Wilding to pay tribute to his lifelong dedication to protecting wilderness areas.

During his lifetime, Smith worked diligently with legislators to help establish the San Rafael Wilderness area, the first of its kind under the 1962 Wilderness Act and strongly supported by the Sierra Club. After he died in 1977, at the age of 56, his friends and area politicians joined forces to get legislation passed commemorating Smith's innumerable contributions to Santa Barbara County.

In 1982, the 65,000-acre Dick Smith Wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest was dedicated in his memory, also supported by the Sierra Club.

As a journalist for the *Santa Barbara News-Press* for 29 years, he educated readers about the wonders of nature and wilderness through his photographs and articles. He was especially interested in the California condor, a fascination that began during a hike in the 1950s. His determination to study the bird's behavior and habitat, and later to champion its protection, is one of Smith's many legacies.

Smith wrote and illustrated books such as *California's Back Country* and *Condor, Vanishing American* to heighten ecological awareness of the condor's plight. Smith also helped spark the national environmental movement in 1969 with his iconic photograph of a cormorant covered in oil off the Santa Barbara coast.

A gifted artist as well as a journalist, many of Smith's outstanding photographs featuring sweeping vistas of the backcountry, soaring condors, and portraits of plants and animals will be on view.

The exhibit will also highlight his sketches and illustrated photo albums which he frequently gave to friends who accompanied him on back country hikes. Smith loved to work with his hands and tooled leather, built furniture, carved wood and even built his family's original home. Known for his generosity, Smith gave his handmade artworks to friends as gifts and several examples of his sculptures and household objects are featured in the exhibit.

A series of events such as guided pack trips in the Los Padres National Forest, a panel discussion about the life and legacy of Dick Smith, a 16-page monograph, and educational opportunities for children and adults will complement the exhibit.

For details of this and other events and exhibits, contact The Wildling, 2329 Jonata Street in Los Olivos, 688-1082 or log on to www.wildlingmuseum.org

tan beach is minutes away). Moderate 7 or 8 mrt. on ranch roads and some trails. Elevation gain is about 600ft. Meet behind B of A on upper State Street at Hope Ave.at 9am. CHRISTINE 963-2347 (SB)

OUTINGS DUE: Outings for the Condor Call, covering the period Oct-Jan (plus one week into Feb) are due NOW! Get them together and send them to gerry_ching@msn.com. If you are going to be a little late, drop me a note.

September 11

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Start the week off with a five-mile hike in our local area. Meet at 8:30am at Harbor Boulevard and Spinnaker. Pat 643-0270 (SP)

September 16

REFUGIO BEACH TO EL CAPITAN: Car pool to Refugio Beach and walk to El Capitan or beyond. Easy 6 to 8 mrt. Optional swim. Bring swimsuit, old shoes, lunch, and water. Share parking fee. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. DAVE 563-4850 (SB)

September 17

RATTLESNAKE TRAIL: Hike up a wooded canyon with scenic views to meadow. Moderate 3.5 mrt. with 1000 foot elevation gain. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. Paul 964-9002 (SB)

September 18

MONDAY MORNING WALK - OJAI LAND CONSERVANCY: Start the week off with a five-mile hike in our local area. We'll cross the Ventura River and hike into Wills Canyon. Meet at 8am at Mission Plaza or 8:30am in parking lot Rice Road Meiners Oaks. Pat 643-0270 (SP)

September 23

GAVIOTA CAVES EXPLORATORY: Hike from Gaviota beach to the caves and wind tunnels in the ridges above. If possible, we will do some cross-country exploration. Some rock scrambling and agility required. About 4 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9 am. ROBERT 685-1283 (SB)

September 24

GOLETA BEACH/MORE MESA: Hike along the beach at low tide and then up onto More Mesa, looping around. Easy 4-5 mile. Bring water and a snack. Meet behind B of A on upper State Street at Hope Ave. at 9am. KEITH 965-9953/681-0916 (SB)

September 25

MONDAY MORNING WALK - McGRATH STATE PARK: Start the week off with a five-mile hike in our local area. Meet at 8:30am at car pool lot or park before bridge at Harbor Boulevard. Pat 643-0270 (SP)

September 30

TOP OF BONEY: Strenuous 8 mi loop up the northwest ridge (some boulder climbing) and returning via the cabin site/monument. Wear hiking boots, bring water, snack, hat, sunscreen, and windbreaker. Long carpool to the trailhead. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 7am. Note the early start time! DAVE COOPER 453-4103 (SB)

October 1

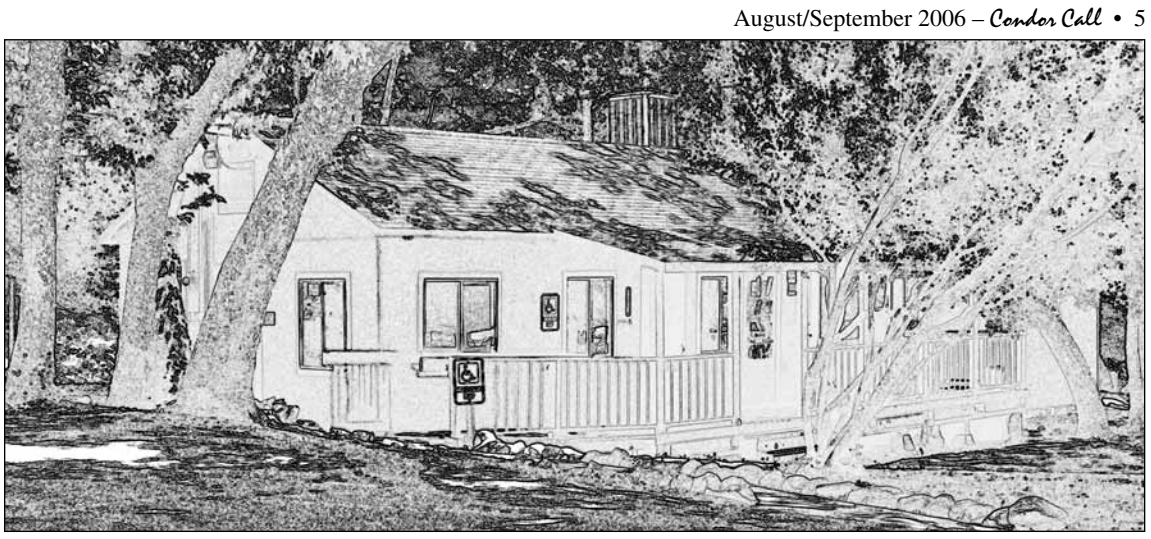
GUADALUPE DUNES: Car pool to Guadalupe Dunes Beach Park north of Vandenberg. Walk over impressive dune area, then loop back along beach. Long drive and moderate 8 mrt walk. Bring old shoes, lunch, and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. VICKI 563-4850 (SB)

October 2

MONDAY MORNING WALK - OAK VIEW TRAILS: Start the week off with a five-mile hike in our local area. Meet at 8am at Mission Plaza for carpooling or at 8:30am, 45 Alto Drive, Oak View. Pat 643-0270 (SP)

October 7

BACKBONE TRAIL: Moderate paced 10 mile, 2000' elev. gain hike from Malibu Canyon Road, past Mesa Peak, Elephant Rocks, Castro Peak to Kanan Dume Road, where we return via Park-Link Shuttle. Meet 8am at Pacific Palisades Rideshare Point or 8:30am at Backbone Trailhead fee parking area or park on Piuma Road shoulder just east of Malibu Canyon Road. Parking area is on west side 3 miles from PCH (1 mile north of tunnel, or 5 miles from Ventura Fwy). Bring water, lunch, lugsoled shoes and bus fare (call 888-734-2323 for current fare). Rain cancels. Leaders: HUGH WARREN 497-9612, HOWARD KAYTON (CJ)



Wheeler Gorge Visitor's Center off Highway 33 behind Ojai is a great place to stop for information, maps and materials. It will also be the headquarters for a comprehensive training program. (Photo graphic by Mike Havstad)

Broad backcountry training offered by forest group

The first-ever Wheeler Gorge Naturalist/Docent Training Program will launch on Sept. 9, and continue for six alternate Saturdays to Dec. 2.

Sponsored by the Ojai Chapter of the Los Padres Forest Association, the purpose is to create a core of excited volunteers empowered with a new-found knowledge, who would like to commit three hours of service or more per month to help in a variety of areas.

The docents would greet and answer questions at the Visitor Center, introduce and set up LPFA's Saturday Speakers Program and lead hikes, walks, and talks. The Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center is located eight miles north of Ojai on Scenic Highway 33.

"The program is based on the very successful Topanga Canyon Docents Program, which has been in operation for over thirty years. Many of the outstanding speakers from that program have graciously volunteered to help us start up our own program," said Mike Havstad, host for the Wheeler Gorge program.

Instructors include the local talents of Julie Tumamite-Stensile and Pete Crowheart Zavalla, both Chumash descendents; Kim Stroud of the Ojai Raptor Center, and Paul Jenkin of Ventura Surfrider Foundation and the Matilija Coalition, among other experts such as Havstad.

Topics covered during the training sessions include workshops dedicated to birds, water issues, insects, national forest policies, Chumash legends and lore, and plants and animals of the region. Special segments will focus on specific topics such as the California condor, mountain lions and amphibians.

For more information and registration, contact Havstad at 630-9977.

Fires close forest areas

In July and August, hundreds of firefighters continued to suppress numerous lightning-caused fires scattered across the Los Padres National Forest, prompting the U.S. Forest Service to close some areas until further notice.

Visitors should first check incidents of fire with the Service or the nearest ranger station (list on page 4 Outings) before they go into the backcountry. On line, go to:

www.inciweb.org

www.fs.fed.us/r5/lospadres

Also in response to the increasing fire danger and hot weather, additional fire restrictions have been imposed, including no target shooting except Winchester Gun Club in Santa Barbara and Ojai Valley Gun Club. Hunters with permits are exempt. Smoking is only allowed at campgrounds, buildings or cars.

These are in addition to restrictions already in place for the summer, including no open campfires except in designated camping sites.

Have a cool desert journey

The California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee loves the desert so much, it sponsors trips even in the summer, although in cooler places in mountains and valleys.

For more information or a complete list of trips via email, contact Kate Allen, 32515 121st St. East, Pearblossom CA 93553, (661) 944-4056 or email kjallen@gnet.com.

For a good guide to desert travel we recommend the Sierra Club book, Adventuring in the California Desert, by Lynn Foster.

Some of the upcoming trips include:

In August you can backpack the Southern Sierra along the PCT trail from Aug. 16-20, and from Aug. 19-21 go high in the Inyo Mountains where the air is cool and the views spectacular to help restore some vehicle routes and add signs.

September starts with a Tamarisk eradication affair in Surprise Canyon in the Panamint Mountains from Sept. 2-4, and a similar work/fun event in the Santa Rosa Wilderness from Sept. 23-24. A Toiyabe Crest backpack trip is planned from Sept. 14-18 and finally, Sept. 30 to Oct. 1, help clean and plant trees at Cottonwood Campground during National Public Lands Day.

From Oct. 14-16, there is a service day to remove barbed wire fences and the next day a celebration of the Carrizo Plain National Monument into a little-known area of the Caliente Mountains. Then on Oct. 21 & 22, tour the Avawatz Mountains proposed wilderness area.

The "Sierra Club Secret" is that you can meet fun-loving people on our hikes. Photo by Robert Bernstein

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The habitat and health of snowy plovers and other endangered beach birds are discussed by (from left) Reed Smith and Linda Kraus and others at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo recently. (Photo by Al Sanders)

EPA may tackle toxic Halaco

By Al Sanders

Los Padres Chapter members by now are used to the broken promises and failures to act that have characterized the ongoing battles to get a clean up of wetlands that were converted to the Waste Management Unit (fancy name for 'slag pile') at Halaco Engineering's Oxnard facility.

So it is understandable that a little caution is in order before anyone falls in love with recent efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to move forward on a cleanup plan.

"We have all been lead down this path many times before," said Port Hueneme resident and Chapter Executive Committee member Kesa Ryono. "But if they follow through and take action, that would be great."

Halaco, located at the south end of Perkins Road, is surrounded by the waters of the Ormond Beach lagoon and wetlands area, displacing habitat that the City identified for restoration in the early 1970s, and perhaps creating a toxic hazard to the wetlands.

The toxics issue is what the EPA is now investigating. Past sampling at the Halaco site documented the presence of elevated concentrations of copper, zinc, nickel, arsenic, cadmium, zinc, chromium and radioactive scrap metals. The EPA believes that, "heavy metals such as chromium, lead and beryllium, and thorium radioisotopes pose the major concern at this site."

EPA sent an Emergency Response Team to Halaco in May to investigate compliance with previous permits and orders. Based on its observations the team determined that toxics were present that were a danger to the community and the environment that warranted removal. EPA also initiated a process to determine what kinds of actions were necessary to address the big issues of toxics at the slag heap. The fear is that these materials are migrating into the wetlands, the water table and the surrounding area.

EPA entered into an agreement with Halaco on July 19 that details the next steps in securing the site and doing initial cleanup actions. EPA is now waiting for the results of their tests before deciding on measures for a longer-range cleanup plan.

Much of this information was divulged to the public in great detail at the May meeting of the Ormond Beach Task Force. EPA also informed the public that a firm named Chickadee had made an offer to purchase the slag heap and then clean it up and place homes or hotels on the site.

Chickadee's offer has not been supported by local residents. "The last thing we want to see is one environmental mess replaced by another," said Ryono. "Commercial or residential development placed in the middle of a wetlands is clearly inappropriate."

Ryono believes that wetlands restoration should be the primary option. "Many of us who live in South Oxnard and Port Hueneme believe that the City of Oxnard should revive its plans to make this area an attraction that we can all be proud of," she said. "Ormond is always called the jewel of Oxnard, it deserves to be treated that way."

Meanwhile, a recent court ruling allows the plaintiffs in a civil suit to resume their proceedings which had been held up by Halaco bankruptcy proceedings.

Environmental Defense Center, ChannelKeeper and Lawyers for Clean Water will again tackle one of the most complicated legal challenges in recent memory.

River 'banks'

Long-term restoration of riparian habitat for the Santa Clara River Parkway Project began earlier this year thanks to a $208,000 grant awarded by the Santa Clara River Trustee Council.

The Santa Clara River is the last natural river in the area and the longest free-flowing river in Southern California. However, it faces major threats from development, notably the massive Newhall Ranch project, the first phase of which is eyed along Highway 126 west of Interstate 5.

In response, Friends of the Santa Clara River, Center for Biological Diversity and Wishtoyo Foundation filed a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers alleging it has failed to address cumulative impacts of development.

To get involved and/or keep up with events, contact the Friends of the Santa Clara River; call Ron Bottorff at 498-4323 or log on to: www.fscr.org.

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Plovers get reprieve but threats remain

By Al Sanders

An attempt to reduce protection for snowy plovers along California's beaches was recently thwarted, but the threats to the plovers and their habitat remains real.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in April formally decided not to delist the Western Snowy Plover under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service had received a petition from the Surf-Ocean Beach Commission of Lompoc and a second petition from the City of Morro Bay. The petitions contended that the Pacific Coast population does not qualify either as a distinct population or as a threatened species.

However, the Service issued a proposed rule to encourage the development of habitat conservation plans (HCPs), conservation agreements or management plans at the county level to meet recovery goals. The comment period (see box above) on this was extended from June 20 to Aug. 21. The Sierra Club is preparing its own response to the use of HCPs, but individuals are encouraged to also submit comments.

If these plans are approved, the Service would lift the prohibition on "incidental take," meaning that any failures in the plan would not result in violations of the ESA and a higher legal proof of intent to violate the act would be required.

The Los Padres Chapter has invested years of effort to support the initial listing of snowy plovers in 1993 and then to provide protection at several local beaches. The USFWS noted that there had been improvement, notably from increased nesting success at chapter-area beaches, including Ormond and Hollywood beaches, Santa Rosa Island, Coal Oil Point and Surf Beach.

USFWS attributes increased populations to "management actions" currently being implemented. It believes there may be 2,300 snowy plovers based on a 2005 Survey.

Information and comments on the proposed rule may be sent by Aug. 21 to the Field Supervisor (Attn: WSP-4d), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1655 Heindon Road, Arcata, CA, 95521. Phone is (707) 822-7201, or log on to: www. fws.gov/arcata.

Snowy plover and eggs. Photo by Al Sanders

Janet Bridgers of the Ormond Wildlife Patrol has a different take on the current success. "Anyone who has any personal involvement with this issue at all knows that it has been the personal commitments of all the volunteers who have made the difference in bringing snowy plovers back from the edge of extinction.

"The truth is that the civilians have done such a good job that their efforts are now being used against them to delist snowy plovers because of the population gains," she said.

The list of Los Padres Chapter members who have helped protect plovers is long and impressive—a partial list:

Chapter ExCom member Dan Pearson has volunteered to haul signs and nesting material to Ormond and Hollywood beaches for over 15 years and volunteers thousands of hours to patrol and report scofflaws to Oxnard police. ExCom member Kesa Ryono helped put up the first fences at Ormond way back in 1992. ExCom member Ed Easton has put similar effort into the plover protection at Coal Oil Point and Chapter Chair Rick Skillin worked to protect plovers on Santa Rosa Island.

Credit should also go to the Environmental Defense Center for their work in establishing critical habitat for snowy plovers. Their lawsuit in the 1990s forced the USFWS to list critical habitat.

Incredibly, all of the energy focused on delisting snowy plovers came from an unpublished master's thesis that failed to find significant genetic differentiation between Pacific Coast and interior plovers, even though the issue had been recognized during the listing process and rejected as being irrelevant.

ABOUT THE PLOVER

The western snowy plover *(Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus)* has lived on the west coast for thousands of years. It is a sparrow-sized (5 to 7 inches long), light colored shorebird with dark patches on either side of the neck, behind the eye, and on the forehead. The Pacific coast population is a federally listed threatened species. By 1970 the number of areas where snowy plovers were breeding had been reduced to 88 in California, Washington, and Oregon. That number fell to 33 by 1993 with only 20 in California.

Snowy plovers are threatened due to habitat loss, human disturbance and predation. Because the birds and eggs are camouflaged, beach visitors can unintentionally disturb resting birds or wander right through a nesting area, never knowing of any damage they have caused.

Visitor use of the beach close to nests causes adult birds to stay off the nest, exposing eggs to harmful temperature changes, predators and the elements. Beach fires and fireworks disturb the nesting birds. Kites, paragliders and ultralights flown above nests look like predators, causing the adults to flee and sometimes to abandon nests. Other enemies include dogs and cats, and natural predators such as gulls, crows and raptors, ground squirrels and shrikes.

Suit aims at lead bullet ban

A coalition of conservation and health organizations announced in July that they will sue the California Fish and Game Commission for continuing to allow use of toxic lead ammunition.

Experts say lead bullets are poisoning rare California condors, which feed on contaminated carcasses left behind by hunters, who also risk poisoning themselves by eating shot or bullet fragments embedded in meat.

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), and the Wishtoyo Foundation, along with representatives from the hunting community served a 60-day notice of intent to sue under the federal Endangered Species Act.

"Lead poisoning from ammunition is the single greatest obstacle to the recovery of wild California condors," said Jeff Miller with the CBD. "California put the condor on the state quarter as a symbol of our natural heritage, but if we want condors to survive, we must stop poisoning their food supply."

The intent to file suit follows failure by an Assembly committee to pass local Assemblymember Pedro Nava's bill (AB 2123) that would not only limit use of lead bullets, but also provide non-lead substitutes at no cost.

More information about condors and the lead poisoning threat can be found at www.savethecondors.org,

Help stop Alaska oil lease

On September 27, the Bush administration could auction off the first oil and gas leases to oil companies in the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area of the Western Arctic.

The decision to open up the area to leasing eliminates long-established wildlife and environmental protections first put in place by Reagan Administration Interior Secretary James Watt. It is home to an estimated 45,000 caribou, 60,000 geese and hundreds of species of birds.

In response to a request for comments on whether or not to weaken T-Lake area protections, more than 215,000 citizens spoke out in opposition. Yet the Department of Interior dismissed these diverse voices.

The Sierra Club is asking its members and friends to take a minute today to send a letter to the Department of the Interior, asking that the lease sale be cancelled. You may also send it to the Sierra Club which will ensure the letter gets to the right people at: Save T-Lake, c/o Sierra Club AK field office, 333 W. 4th Ave. #307, Anchorage, AK 99501.

For more details on what you can do to protect the Arctic, call (907) 276-4044 or email: betsy@sierraclubalaska.org

Hiking the web

Do you know of a web site that would interest Los Padres Chapter members? Send it in to the Condor Call editor (new email: condorjohn@gnusman.com) or call him at 745-5432. All begin with www. unless otherwise specified.

Coast projects at Naples . . . . . savenaples.org
Solar energy . . . . . newsolarhomes.ca.gov
Sea Center (Stearns Wharf) . . . . . sbnature.org/seacenter
Ormond Beach forums . . . http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ormondbeach
Water saving guide . . . . . sbwater.org

Beach webcams live!

Live inland and want to know what the beach is like on any given day?

It's easy because there are webcams located at the Santa Barbara Harbor and Ventura Beach right near the piers. Don't get up, just fire up your internet connection and you'll see whether the weather is clear or cloudy and the surf is stupendous or sucks.

These are live cams that show the action right away and give you a panorama, too.

There are four cameras at the Santa Barbara Yacht Club, while the Ventura one is atop the Crown Royale Hotel (formerly Holiday Inn). The webcam addresses, which you should bookmark, are:

www.sbyc.org
http://web.insidevc.com/webcam

Opposition increasing over Island hunting

By Carolyn Greene

There are many places on this wondrous planet I know I will never visit due to constraints of time, money and remoteness. Yet, I am comforted and inspired knowing that such unique, wild and natural places exist.

The northern Channel Islands, just a few miles off our coast, are such remote places—sometimes appearing as mirages offshore, sometimes clear enough to seemingly touch.

Often called the "Galapagos of North America," these islands are a precious ecological resource with almost 150 species of plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth. Fortunately for all of us and for future generations, the Channel Islands became a National Park in 1980.

That's why I oppose the proposal that would continue big-game hunting for military families for non-native "trophy" elk and deer on Santa Rosa Island past the year 2011, advanced by San Diego-area Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Alpine). This would require closing a majority of the island to the public.

The 2011 deadline was agreed upon by the National Park Service and the island's previous owners, Vail and Vickers Co., which received almost $30 million in taxpayer money when it sold their portion of the island in 1986.

Rep. Hunter's proposal to continue hunting in Channel Islands National Park passed the House of Representatives (supported by Rep. Elton Gallegly, R-Simi Valley, but opposed by Rep. Lois Capps, D-Santa Barbara) but was opposed by a bipartisan vote in the Senate.

Despite losing support of a key military group recently, Hunter's proposal is still pending and may be revived when Congress reconvenes in September, so continued public opposition is necessary.

Somewhat ironically, it should further be remembered that it was a local Republican, Rep. Robert Lagomarsino, who helped establish the park in 1980.

Matthew Hogan, acting assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, wrote Hunter in May saying that even the Bush administration opposes his hunting proposal because the park was created, "to restore the native ecology of the island and open it to the public for hiking, camping, sightseeing." The National Park Service is also opposed to continuing the hunt beyond 2011.

The Park Service cannot fulfill its mission to restore and conserve unique island ecosystems while more than 1,000 deer and elk feed on rare oak and pine seedlings and numerous other plants that occur only on these islands.

The non-native animals also attract non-native golden eagles that have decimated native island fox populations.

Some of the quotes in a June 10 article in the *Ventura County Star*—"Disabled veterans' group likes island hunting idea"—were both interesting and ingenuous. According to a Vail and Vickers' representative: "We want a solution that doesn't result in the annihilation of these herds. We are happy it is bringing a public disclosure on what to do with these wonderful animals."

In late July, however, the PVA told Hunter it now opposes his initiative because of "the numerous obstacles inherent to the island, including ingress and egress, logistics, personal safety and cost far outweigh the possible, limited benefit it could provide."

Does it seem rather ludicrous for supporters to want to preserve these magnificent animals so they can be slaughtered by hunters?

Could the military reserve space for hunting on islands that are not part of the national park, such as San Clemente or San Nicolas? Or could they use military bases such as Camp Pendleton, Vandenberg or Hunter-Liggett, or an area closer to Hunter's San Diego-area district?

Why close off part of a national park with unique, rare and endangered species and habitats?

Sierra Club members and friends who oppose the hunting should contact Representatives Gallegly and Capps, and Senators Feinstein and Boxer to voice strong opposition to continuing private hunting operations on Santa Rosa Island past 2011.

—Carolyn Greene is a 35-year Sierra Club member (Conejo Group) and is one of about 200 National Park Service volunteers at Channel Islands National Park.

Island chick on webcam

It's been since 1949 that a bald eagle was hatched on the Channel Islands where the population was decimated because of DDT pollution.

But in April the first chick since then broke from its shell and in July it fledged from Santa Cruz Island.

Eagle fans were delighted to watch its progress via a special webcam installed by Channel Islands Live, a new project that uses technology to let the public see what's happening on the islands. Underwater cams are also used.

Check it out for yourself at: http://chil.vcoe.org.

Vehicle tracks and garbage spoil habitat areas on Hollywood Beach, but so does the grooming of natural plant material. (Photo by Al Sanders)

HOLLYWOOD BEACH

Agencies insensitive to beach

The population of some endangered birds at Hollywood Beach has crashed, probably because government agencies are not treating it as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA).

One of the conditions applied by the California Coastal Commission to Ventura County for approval of the Boating Instruction and Safety Center project in the Channel Islands Harbor was that the beach would be considered sensitive as defined by the Coastal Act.

As of two years ago, Hollywood Beach seemed to be on its way to re-establishing habitat for California least terns and Western snowy plovers. Close to 50 least tern nests and seven plover nests were successful in that year. However, the ESHA designation has not been followed by supporting action from responsible agencies of both species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave permits to the Army Corps of Engineers allowing 'take' of both least terns and plovers in 2005. The Corps then dredged the area. The results were predictable—no terns have nested at Hollywood since the habitat was altered and plovers tried to nest this year unsuccessfully.

Sespe Group Executive Committee member Trevor Smith believes that the dredging work by the Corps is being compounded by Ventura County's beach grooming and other management activities.

"The County keeps grooming the area where both terns and plovers are trying to nest. They place trash cans right in the heart of the ESHA area and drive everywhere they want within the area that should be protected," said Smith.

Terns and plovers prefer to nest in the area just beyond the high tide line, known as the wrack line, and like to use the organic material that washes onto the shore for cover and to forage.

"The county has picked up most of the sticks and seaweed that makes up the wrack line," said Smith, "they are destroying it, removing any native vegetation and dune formation and driving through the habitat area. In effect, there is no ESHA there is no habitat."

Smith frequently calls the Conservation Committee to verify his observations, establishing himself as one of Ventura County's leading activists. "Trevor really cares about protecting wildlife and has the ability to see problems that other people never notice," said Point Mugu Wildlife Center Director Dan Pearson.

—Alan Sanders

Terns . . .

Cont'd. from back page

1990 by organizing volunteers to erect signs and fencing and to watch over nest sites to deter trespassers. The OWP was responsible for getting hundreds of citations written for off road vehicle violations and for dumping and littering.

We also reported violations by the Baldwin Company that lead to one of the first cease and desist orders ever issued by the California Coastal Commission and which lead to a restoration order by the Department of Fish and Game. We reported violations of 1600 stream alteration regulations that forced the Ventura County Flood Control District to cease draining the Ormond lagoon. We reported violations by Halaco Engineering that became part of the litigation that resulted in closure of the plant.

The chapter has also participated in planning issues that may have an effect on Ormond habitat and was the primary force in stopping many projects being considered by the cities of Oxnard, and Port Hueneme and Ventura County that would have a harmful effect on area wildlife. The chapter continues to provide leadership to the Ormond Beach Task Force and Observers to implement a consensus plan.

Least terns had not nested successfully at Ormond for at least 25 years prior to our Chapter's involvement.

We are now in our 17th year of leadership in protecting least terns, snowy plovers and all other area wildlife.

But we did have help. Ventura Audubon, Surfriders, Environmental Coalition, Ormond Beach Observers, Point Mugu Wildlife Center and others helped acquire and construct miles of fencing. All of this work was a great success through the 1990s as the numbers of nests constantly increased eventually reaching a high of nearly 100 nests.

Our Chapter's efforts were merged with the Western Alliance for Nature to form a partnership to protect Ormond wildlife in 1993 named the Ormond Project under which the patrol now functions.

The patrol is always looking for volunteers; call 488-7988 for details.

EAVESDROPS

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. "

—George Carlin

Flushed drugs still harmful

In the past, the public was advised to flush unwanted medicines down the toilet as a poison prevention measure.

But recent studies indicate that the pharmaceuticals found in wastewater may have an adverse effect on the environment. Sewage treatment facilities are not designed to remove or destroy the chemicals found in many drugs, which consequently end up in surface water.

The best way to dispose of unwanted medicines is to take them to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center or event.

To find out more, log on to: www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org.

photo/Carlos Paes

RECYCLE

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

How life turned for beach terns

By Al Sanders

After two consecutive years of large scale site abandonment, endangered California least terns have returned to nest successfully at Ormond Beach this summer.

The comeback apparently confirms a theory that the impacts created by motorized paragliders were the determining factors that had previously decimated the bird's population.

Volunteers have located 57 nests and many have already produced chicks.

The one observable factor that has occurred at the beach, thanks to many citizens and the Oxnard City Council, is the forced removal of motorized paragliders that had been harassing Ormond wildlife for over two years.

These unregulated personal aircraft started appearing in large numbers early in 1994. It was immediately apparent to Ormond volunteers and wildlife officials that the paragliders were harming and harassing both least terns and snowy plovers in violation of the Endangered Species Act and that they were harming most other avian species as well.

Paragliders are restricted to flying below 500 feet and have the capability of flying just a few feet above the ground at very slow air speeds. Birds react to the aircraft as if it were a large predator. With least terns this would mean that the whole colony would fly towards the aircraft and swoop or "dive-bomb" the aircraft to try to scare it away.

This tactic often works with sea gulls, but is inadequate to deal with man and machines. Terns would often and repeatedly be off their nests for a half hour at a time, making the nests vulnerable to other predators but, more importantly, subjecting the eggs to exposure, rendering them infertile.

Witnesses on several occasions photographed and videotaped the paragliders hovering over the nest sites with least terns flying around them in panic.

At 83, Jean Bridgers (right) is the oldest volunteer for the Ormond Wildlife Patrol, and her daughter Janet may qualify for the most enthusiastic. (Photo by Al Sanders)

Official site monitors started to find abandoned eggs and even dead chicks and adult terns. During 2004 and 2005 most of the nest sites were abandoned. After two years of constant harassment it appeared that the Ormond least tern colony was on the verge of site abandonment and local extirpation.

Many attempts were made by the Los Padres Chapter, Ormond Beach Observers, Earth Alert, the Beacon Foundation and others to persuade the pilots to fly elsewhere. Many responded by supporting the petition to delist snowy plovers and least terns. They refused to stop flying over the nest sites, even insisting on doing their take-offs near snowy plover nests.

Eventually the Chapter changed its efforts to try to persuade responsible agencies to do something to stop the flights over nesting areas. We were unsuccessful in getting enforcement of ESA and other laws, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Chris Delith assisted in finding an applicable municipal code that was usable by the City of Oxnard.

Earth Alert Director, Janet Bridgers, devised a campaign to educate Oxnard City Council members about the paraglider problem. In October 2005 the Council unanimously passed an ordinance to prohibit take offs of motorized aircraft from within city limits with the exception of Oxnard airport. Delith joined with our chapter and many others to support the new ordinance.

Meanwhile, citizens communicated with Camarillo Airport, which leases space to ultralight aircraft flyers. The goal was to stop overflights by ultralights as well as the paragliders.

The results of stopping these aircraft have been profound. Least terns and snowy plovers benefited immediately.

But just as important is the increase of many species with lesser levels of protection. Upwards of 200 elegant terns are now roosting at Ormond. Black skimmers, night herons and great blue herons are again a constant presence. Water foul of many varieties are back in numbers.

"It is simply amazing to see how wildlife over the whole of the Ormond area has responded to the removal of the paragliders," said Bridgers, who also serves as a volunteer on the Ormond Wildlife Patrol (OWP). "There is absolutely nothing as joyous as the calls of least terns in the spring."

For many volunteers the joy of this year's success is tempered with the frustration of how difficult it was to get anything done. "Least terns are an endangered species. It shouldn't have been this hard and taken this long to stop something so wrong," said Bridgers.

Our Chapter has lead efforts to protect least terns and snowy plovers on Ormond Beach since

TERNS . . . *see page 8*

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