**12 reasons to shut down San Onofre nuclear plant**

**By Jeremy Drake**

The San Onofre Task Force of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter calls for permanent shutdown of the San Onofre nuclear power plant due to the growing list of design issues, safety risks and costs standing in the way of a restart.

**What really happens to green bin waste? Chapter activists find out**

**By Marjorie Phan**

Sierra Club staff members and activists recently surveyed 23 cities in Los Angeles and Orange counties in an attempt to collect information about current organics management practices, knowledge of existing organics flows within and across city limits, and future plans for organics management. The material is managed. The sooner the region adapts organics management practices to these challenges the better for our environment and for our future.

Last summer, the team introduced an online survey to cities in Los Angeles and Orange counties in an attempt to collect information about current organics management practices, knowledge of existing organics flows within and across city limits, and future plans for organics management.

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**Stamina and a deep bond of friendship are the key to succeeding on this trans-Sierra trek**

By Lynn Lively

My car was 22 miles away, so I started walking. My buddy, Blanch Kosche, joined me. We hiked our backpacks onto our osteoporotic hips (I'm 68 and Blanch is 72) and walked three days, from the east (near Independence) to the west (in Kings Canyon National Park) across the rugged spine of California. The Trans Sierra Traverse, as I named it, was like passing through a display rack of picture postcards of stunning rocky, tree-lined cliffs and mountains. A walk across our beautiful state is a real-life geology illustration.

The major challenge of a one-way trip is, how do you get home? The answer is to arrange two teams, TST East and TST West, hiking the same trails in opposite directions. We would meet at a predetermined creek crossing in the middle and, with great ceremony do a car key exchange, a version of the Transcontinental Railraid's Golden Spike.

The key exchange is a sacred commitment upon the part of a hiking pal, in this case Hugh Warren, that he will drive my car to the trailhead parking lot where our trip ends and leave it there, full of gas and hitch-hiked with some “very interesting people” to meet us. Pretty brave for a 68 year old woman with only a Swiss Army knife for protection.

Each day’s scenery was completely different. Day 1 was Dry Rock Day. We left Onion Valley trailhead at 9,185 feet and climbed 2,400 feet into those stunning rocks you see from Highway 395. The terrain was steep, dry and breathtaking. Even though the area was dotted with little green, there were a few small lakes. How does the water get there? Snow melt? Note to self: must ask geologist.

Access to fresh water was a worry on this trip, and the lakes were a comfort. One slight problem: although the lake was only one contour line away on a map, it was a 100 foot drop through rugged scree to get to the water. We simply could not run out of water in hot, dry country, because that means muscle cramps and possible heat exhaustion. So we ended up carrying far more...
Grass-roots efforts like this 2009 rally have pressured the coal industry and helped shut down plants.

One coal plant was retired each week in the past year

From Sierra Club reports

Over the past 12 months, the nationwide campaign to phase our coal burning in the United States has won retirements from coast to coast, including securing dozens of coal plant retirements and record investments in wind and solar. Facing unprecedented public opposition, the coal industry experienced numerous setbacks in 2012 as it market share fell and stock prices tumbled. With an overarching goal to move America off coal and slash carbon pollution, an unprecedented coalition including Sierra Club and more than a hundred local, regional and national organizations has helped secure the largest drop in U.S. coal burning ever. The campaign now includes legal and grassroots fights targeting every stage of the coal life cycle in more than 40 states and has grown to become one of the largest and broadest grass-roots environmental campaigns in the nation's history.

“The health of our families and our children are the big winners in 2012,” said Mary Anne Hitt, Director of the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign. “Through landmark pollution standards and a decline in coal power, millions of Americans have cleaner air and water, our children are safer from toxic chemicals, and we’ve laid the building blocks for averting future catastrophes.”

The year saw 54 existing coal plants retired or announced to retire, an average of one plant per week. Meanwhile, no new coal plants broke ground this year, marking the end of the coal industry’s decade-long “coal rush,” a highly controversial Buck-era plan to build more than 200 new coal plants and lock the nation into a dirty, coal-fueled future. Opposition from community members nationwide prevented the construction of 174 proposed coal plants, including 54 that were finally scuttled.

“This grassroots campaign is doing something—no one thought was possible,” said Bruce Nilles, Senior Director of the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign. “At this pace, we are on track to end the scourge of coal burning in the United States within the next two decades. Every coal plant retired means less mining destruction, less air and water pollution, and a better chance to prevent runaway climate disruption.”

The decline of the coal industry’s fortunes was evident in the marketplace as well. In 2012, many investors lost big on coal, with numerous bankruptcies of coal mining companies and coal-burning utilities in 2012. Major Midwestern Generation in Illinois, Patriot in West Virginia, and Dynegy in Texas. Dishonest Bankruptcy. Patriot, Appalachia’s third largest coal company, was recently forced to file bankruptcy. Indiana and its allies to end the practice of mountain-top removal coal mining and retire much of the land disturbed by the process. The news was celebrated by environmentalists, who reported that poor economics of coal were epitomized by the news that the Great River Energy Spiritwood coal plant in North Dakota was retired. The plant was completed at a cost of $440 million earlier this year.

The coal industry’s downward spiral in 2012 is only half the story. With help from the Beyond Coal campaign and its allies, the wind industry has installed 50,000 megawatts of installed capacity nationwide, and today more than 13 states get at least ten percent of their electricity from clean, renewable wind power.

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HR 108 Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions Act (HR 977 Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and Recreation Act. These bills would authorize more than 20,000 acres to become wilderness in the nation’s forests. This legislation would authorize 32,000 acres, or nearly half of the entire unit.

HR 13 Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act. Would protect 32,000 acres near town in the Idaho Panhandle. By Environmental Protections Agency this year. Mercury pollution—will be eliminated, thanks to national mercury protections finalized by the Environmental Protection Agency this year. New coal plants from starting construction.

HR 1909 Tennessee Wilderness Act. Would protect nearly 20,000 acres of the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee and would be the first new wilderness lands designated in 25 years.

Here are five examples of Republican-sponsored wilderness bills that are getting more love from the Sierra Club than from fellow congressional Republicans:

• HR 608 Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions Act

• HR 977 Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and Recreation Act

• HR 108 Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions Act

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By Michael Brune
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SIERRA CLUB

If you’ve seen the movie “Lincoln,” then you know that al Daniel Day-Lewis is an Oscar frontrunner and b Republicans are capable of doing great things. In the film, of course (spoiler alert), they pass the 13th Amendment and end slavery. And just a few years later, the character played by David Strathairn (Secretary of State William Seward), saved the entire state of Alaska (from Russia) by picking it up for 2 cents an acre. Another famous Republican in the film, Ulysses S. Grant, later signed the act that created our first U.S. national park (Yellowstone).

In the 20th century, of course, Republican overawed Theodore Roosevelt, designated 5 national parks, 8 national monuments, and 150 national forests (when he wasn’t campaigning out with the founder of the Sierra Club). Even just 48 years ago, the- minded Republicans were left in the House to pass the Wilderness Act almost unanimously (in the Senate, it was signed by 73-12).

How times have changed. The current Congress has demonstratd untried proficiency at overseeing our national forest. It has “succeeded”—most spectacularly when it comes to protecting public lands. When things don’t change, this could be the year in which the 1964 Wilderness Act has endangered without protecting a single acre of wilderness.

The problem isn’t that none of today’s Republicans care about wilderness. Many do. Unfortunately, the radical fringe leadership of these riot-flour-refuses to support wilderness legislation—even bills sponsored by fellow Republicans—to unless their purpose is to open up wilderness to mining and drilling.

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The un-conservation Congress (it wasn’t always this way)

Development and Recreation Act. Would protect as Wilderness Act. Would protect over 21,000 acres more than the amount contained in the bill. This area is full of deep canyons, rugged rock formations and popular with hunters, hikers, and boaters. This legislation would authorize over 32,000 acres, or nearly half of the entire unit.

HR 141 Beauty Mountain and Aagua Tiba Wilderness Act. Would protect over 20,000 acres more than the amount contained in the bill. This area is full of deep canyons, rugged rock formations and popular with hunters, hikers, and boaters. This legislation would authorize over 32,000 acres, or nearly half of the entire unit.

HR 977 Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and Recreation Act. Nestled on the shores of Lake Michigan, this is a popular spot for hunters, anglers, and boaters. This legislation would protect over 32,000 acres, or nearly half of the entire unit.

HR 13 Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act. Would protect 32,000 acres near town in the Idaho Panhandle. By Environmental Protections Agency this year. Mercury pollution—will be eliminated, thanks to national mercury protections finalized by the Environmental Protection Agency this year. New coal plants from starting construction.

Southern Sierran
Fracking plans dealt a setback in Bakersfield

California rethinks the exceptions to CEQA after Club sues over potential fracking at oil wells.

From Sierra Club reports

Oil companies that want to extract oil using hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, techniques in California may now find the controversial process a tougher sell.

Responding to pressure from the environmental community, the California agency responsible for regulating the oil and gas industry delivered a major setback to fracking in a decision likely to reverberate throughout the state. In a nutshell, the state’s Division of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) reversed its decision to exempt an oil company from environmental review as required in the California Environmental Quality Act—a decision that may set a precedent for future permit-seekers too.

The agency’s decision came after Sierra Club filed a lawsuit to force the agency to complete the environmental review that was totally lacking for this project and, by implication, for thousands of other such projects that have gone completely without public disclosure for many years. In a Nov. 27 letter to the oil company, Centurion Exploration Resources of Bakersfield, the agency wrote: “Following review and analysis of the legal challenge [the agency] has determined that the proposed well operations will result in more than a minor alteration in the condition of the affected land, and therefore are not exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15384.”

“This is clearly a result of the Sierra Club lawsuit and is a first step towards public disclosure of the potentially massive environmental impacts, including possible fracking of the thousands of new oil/gas wells that DOGGR has permitted this year alone,” said Gordon Nipp of the Kern-Kernaveh Chapter.

No rules for fracking

In a separate lawsuit filed in October, the Sierra Club, Earthjustice, the Center for Biological Diversity, Earthworks and other environmental advocates went to court to with a larger-scale pattern and practice lawsuit to force the agency to abide by the state’s foremost law that requires public disclosure and protects public health and the environment. “By turning a blind eye to fracking, California officials are letting oil companies endanger our air, our water and our climate,” Kassie Siegel, director of the Center for Biological Diversity’s West Coast Office.

California wells have been pumping oil for more than a hundred years. As more easily exploited petroleum deposits have been used up and prices have climbed, oil companies have turned to fracking to increase production. Enticed by claims that more than 14 billion barrels of oil are trapped in the state’s Monterey and Santos shale formations, oil and gas companies have commenced an exploratory drilling and fracking campaign beneath central and southern California. These shale formations span 1,700 square miles across the San Joaquin Valley to the Pacific Ocean, including the Los Angeles basin, a region encircled with active earthquake faults.

Prior to the decision, the agency has rubberstamped oil and gas drilling activity, declaring it exempt from environmental review or issuing “negative declarations” that such activity will have “no significant effect” on the environment, without any study or mention of the potential impacts from fracking or other drilling techniques.

The agency’s new decision moves in the right direction. “Burning fossil fuels has taken its toll on our planet for far too long. Now the desperate search for the last remaining drops of oil has reached a scale that threatens to add even more burden. All the while, the state regulations responsible for oversight have been too slow to respond,” said Jim Metropolis, former Senior Advocate at Sierra Club.

23rd Camera Committee Photo Auction raises more than $5,000

From Chapter reports

More than 70 members of the Angeles Chapter’s Camera Committee and their guests attended the 23rd Photo Auction Party at the G2 Gallery in Venice on Nov. 10. This Camera Committee fundraiser is held every four to five years.

In this event, committee members created a pop-up art show that included 61 mounted photographs donated by 38 photographers. After an elegant evening of viewing and noshing on goodies, the bidding began!

Camera Committee members and notable photographers such as Robert Kenfey, Joan Gentry, Camile Seaman, and Mark Cierl donated images for the auction. Eleven silent auction items included works by Robert Glen Ketchem, John Swope, and Ian Schive. The event raised $5,400, part of which will be used to support the Camera Committee’s ongoing programs and part will be donated to the Angeles Chapter.

Thanks to all Auction committee members, including Chair Peter Mason, Joan Schipper, Allison Boyle, John Swope, Bob Ketchem, Bill Brinton, Grant Rigby, Jasmine Swayne, Alan Der, Stephen Beck, Audrey Pignotti, Virginia H. Neil Davidson, Beverly Houwing, Randy Knox, Carole Surlock, Judy Muelle, Frances Germain, John Davis, Janet Schipper.

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INYO COUNTY, CA

Legendary Experiences. Larger than Life.
Trail crew works to reopen fire-ravaged Strawberry Peak Trail

By Don Bremner

Named in the 1880s for its resemblance to a berry with its tip pointing up, Strawberry Peak has remained a popular climb ever since.

At 6,164 feet, it’s the highest summit in the front range of the San Gabriel Mountains, edging out nearby San Gabriel Peak by 3 feet if erosion and tectonic shifts haven’t changed things too much recently.

The peak offers hikers panoramic views of the front range and backcountry, with climbing routes of varying difficulty for both newcomers and experienced climbers. Or there’s the hike around the peak to Strawberry Meadow shadowed by the peak’s sheer north cliffs, a delightful patch of wilderness just an hour or two away from busy Angeles Crest Highway.

All of this has been officially off-limits to the public for three years since the 2009 Station Fire burned through. The U.S. Forest Service has gradually reopened most of the 160,000 acres in Angeles National Forest scorched in the fire, but a large area north of Mt. Wilson around Strawberry remains closed to recreation.

Damaged trails are one reason for the continued closure. Dirt and rock slides across the trail, washouts and downed trees make the trails difficult in some places or even risky. Not to mention the thick stands of poodle-dog bush that tempt the unwary with purple blossoms, but can leave a stinging rash if touched. Poodle-dog, thriving in areas denuded by the Station Fire, often grows taller than a man’s head and can lean menacingly across the trail as hikers and bicyclists try to squeeze by.

With the Forest Service short of funds for trail maintenance and repair, volunteers have turned out to help restore the Strawberry Peak Trail and the adjoining Colby Canyon Trail. The two trails make an arc of several miles from Red Box Junction to the Colby Canyon trailhead about four miles west along Angeles Crest Highway.

The Sierra Club’s Trail Crew has joined in the trail restoration, along with volunteers from JPL and the Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association (CORBA). A contractor specializing in trail work did an assessment of the Colby/Strawberry trails in the fall of 2011, listing every problem needing work and its GPS coordinates. The needed repairs ranged from small slides and dead trees across the trail to big rock and dirt slides, washouts, gutter retaining walls damaged by fire, debris and spillways to be restored to handle flow from heavy storms, and rerouting sections of trail.

Many of the jobs can be done by volunteers who have had training and experience during years of trail work. Others may be more difficult, requiring machines to move debris or haul in heavy materials. Those will await the contractor’s crews, and that will take money. Grants may help get started.

The Sierra Club Trail Crew, organized by the Angeles Chapter Forest Committee, has been a variety of trails since the summer of 2010. But leaders decided to concentrate now on the Strawberry Peak Trail. With grant funds, the Forest Committee bought a small tool shed and enough trail work tools for 15 or 20 Sierra Club volunteers and placed them at Red Box at one end of the trail.

The hope is that with volunteer groups sharing the work, and the contractor doing the more difficult tasks, the Strawberry/Colby Canyon loop can be improved and reopened to the public before long.

Participate in the next Trail Crew event on Feb. 9, see listing on Page 7.

Boulders and ferns frame the trail down to Charlotte Creek.
Get involved

Contact Angeles Chapter Conservation Program Coordinator George Wafstad at george@sierraclub.org or call (213) 387-4287, ext. 210.

An aerial view of the San Onofre nuclear power plant that was shut down in 2012.

The handles cited above are likely to make the attempt to restart the San Onofre nuclear generators not worth the effort. It is time to move on to more promising alternatives to assure the region’s energy capacity and environmental safety.

The San Onofre Task Force of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter was launched in 2012 to monitor the shutdown of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station due to radiation leaks reported in January.

Since then members of the task force have participated in related hearings by PUC and the NRC. Go to http://angeles2.sierraclub.org/san_onofre_task_force for more about the task force and its important mission.

The Organics Project Tally

Voters must vote to approve the proposition or call (213) 387-4287, ext. 210.

To donate on line please visit: angeles2.sierraclub.org/joinDonate/1000 for $100

The Angeles Chapter’s Zero Waste Committee team will invite more cities in Los Angeles and Orange counties to participate in this survey and will begin sharing findings with city officials and residents alike. And your help is needed. Individuals or organizations interested in getting involved with this project, contact the committee at http://tinyurl.com/berkeyp.

A variety of organsics management programs are scattered across the region. The inconsistency in source reduction, diversion, education, and incentive program implementation from city to city can be seen as an opportunity. Cities need to understand that they can easily enhance their organics management portfolios by adopting tried and tested programs already in place in neighboring communities.

Cities seek to adopt green practices

Three out of four surveyed cities expressed a positive view of organics management practices. Although many cities currently rely on landfills as the first option for organics disposal, they are not necessarily satisfied with the status quo. Cities need to know they have grassroots support in the adoption of composting and anaerobic digestion as preferred organics management practices.

Residents have expressed interest in waste collection and disposal responsibilities to private waste-handling companies. A number of cities expressed concern that private companies will not participate in recycling because they simply did not know enough about their city’s waste programs to answer our questions. City leaders must understand that waste management decisions determined by policy are preferable to those determined by the whims of organics management programs.

The results from this survey provide only a glimpse into current organics management practices in the region. Through this project, activists hope to first develop a more accurate understanding of the region’s existing practices and trends, and then take action to ensure the most environmentally sound organics management practices are in place across the region.
Angeles Chapter \nAdventure Travel \nTrade Calendar

These fund-raising trips are open to Sierra Club members and non-members. Each trip presents a value for participants and raises funds for the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. For more details and how to sign up, go online to angeles2.sierrclubs.org/get_outdoors/travel_adventure.

Thailand Cultural & Wildlife Tour

April 2-10

O-rated: See the cultural gems and wildlife of Thailand on an 8-day tour to see ancient ruins, designer shopping, and exotic jungle adventures. Visit Ayutthaya, Sukhothai; the historic capital at Ayutthaya; and the famous island of Bali and to the island of Flores with its unique culture, history and traditions. With optional add-on sightseeing in the cities of Bangkok, Phuket, Phang Nga, and Krabi.

O-rated: Join Angeles Chapter on a brand new adventure to peaceful Hindu Bali and Flores Island, with its unique culture, history and traditions. With optional add-on sightseeing in the cities of Bangkok, Phuket, Phang Nga, and Krabi.

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It’s snow time!

January 25-27 Winter Sports Bus Trip to Mammoth Lakes
If this trip is all about cross-country skiing in the backcountry with experienced ski leaders, enjoy a classic backcountry skiing and snowshoe touring with leaders. Or you may cross-country ski on your own at Tamarack Nordic Ski Center or go downhill skiing or snowboarding on Mammoth Mountain. Stay at Quality Inn close to shopping, nightlife, fun... 2 full days of ski touring with pickup in LA. 949-372-4727, gennyq@netcom.com Joseph Reed.

February 15-18 Yosemite National Park Winter Bus Trip
Join us for the West L.A. Group’s 34th annual winter bus trip for a three-night stay in Yosemite’s winter wonderland. Skiers and non-skiers welcome with plenty of time to ski, snowshoe, hike, ice skate, photograph the scenery or just loa. Contact Leader: Paul Carter (949) 651-9642 or dickeychris@msn.com.

March 1-3 Winter Combo Bus Trip to Mammoth Lakes
1) Ski downhill or snowboard on Mammoth Mountain, enjoy great ski lifts and ski schools, go on cross-country skiing and snowshoe tours, to geological formations and spectacular scen…2) Newcomers, non-skiers and cross-country skiers welcome. Stay at the Quality Inn (double occupancy) Leaven Orange County at 7 pm. South Bay bus will leave Lodi 6:30 a.m. on Sunday morning. Lunch at the Quality Inn in Mammoth. Dinner at the Mammoth Lakes Golf Club. Breakfast the next day included. Bus fare $295 for Sierra Club members, $315 for non-members. Sponsored by Orange County Sierra Singles, Wilderness Adventures. Send email address (or self-addressed stamped envelope with name and address) to: Reservationist: Donna Scheidt 2221 Woodland Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, 714-963-6345, donnascheidt@sierraclub.org.

May 25-28 Zion National Park & Bryce Canyon Bus Trip
O! Tour beautiful Zion and Bryce Canyon national parks on this bus trip. Pickups at two points: Redondo Beach and Orange County. Choice of hotels available each day. Leave Saturday morning, return Tuesday evening in this trip sponsored by California Bus Tour Group. Stay three nights in Springdale next to Zion. Lunch trip includes bus, driver gratuity, motel, three happy hours, snacks and accommodation costs. $40 can- celled for backcountry ski tours and $30 for snowshoe tours. Deposit is required until April 15 only if trip is full. Contact Leaders Sandy Graham, san@unisio.com and Al Kerschen, dave@tajinn.com and Jerry Tregier.

June 28-July 21 Jike Along an Ancient Pilgrimage Route in France
Join us and walk 200 miles on the 18-mile Via Podiensis at architectural, historical and culinary treasures abounds. Hikes average of 20 miles a day from Moscou near the confluence of the Tarn and Garonne rivers to Saint-Jean-de-Deu-de-Port in the foothills of the Pyrenees, stay- ing at small hotels, inns, bed & breakfasts, and even a former con- vent, and eating local fresh food. Visit medieval sites, admire pretty villages and architectures, explore Roman baths, caves and Roman roads from around the world. Sponsored by the Orange County Group. $3,158 for Sierra Club members including accommodation, breakfast and din- ner. Transportation beginning and ending in Toulouse. France. Contact leaders: Ed Maurer 949-768-9417 balois@cox.net, Helen Maurer 949-768-9417 gennyq@cox.net. November 18-27 Hiking the Japan Alps and Kii Mountains
Join your leader as she leads six picturesque Mt. Fuji climbs, on a non- altitude hike along the historic Nakasendo. This ancient route was used during the Samurai era to link Edo, current day Tokyo with the former capital, Kyoto. The group will stay in Minakusa at simple Japanese style family inns. After a brief stay in Kyoto, explore the temples, shrines and shrines. After a stay in the Kii Mountains to hike to a Zen Monastery. Daily hikes involve walking through a mixture of forest paths and mountain tops. sponsored by California Bus Tour Group. $2,875 for the Orange Count…reserve is $1,595 non-members. The price includes all accommodations based on two sharing, daily breakfasts & dinners, 5 to 2 dinners, 2 lunches. Airfare addi- tional. For details, contact leader Roxana Lewis 510-332-9233 roxlewis@sierraclub.org. Co-leader: Robert J. Vail 915-1274 chikamah@iseclantern.com
Seeds of Jeffrey Pine and Big-Coned Spruce have chosen the same spot to germinate.

Let the forest heal naturally

In August, 2009, the Station Fire burned almost a quarter of the Angeles National Forest, about 250 square miles from Big Tujunga to the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. Many favorite hiking trails were closed for a couple of years, so now hikers are anxious to see how the fire has affected the forest.

On a December hike on the Devil’s Canyon Trail, we were happy to see signs of natural recovery in the form of many seedlings of Jeffrey Pine and Big-Coned Spruce (aka Big-Coned Douglas Fir).

The seedlings are 1 to 2 feet tall and located in spots that were shaded by large trees but are now exposed to sunlight. It will be years before these trees reach maturity, not within our lifetimes, but the trees will be back for the next generation of hikers to enjoy.

—Genny Hertiger, Natural Science Section

Chapter news and events

Come meet members at Mission Viejo open house

Join us for a Sierra Club open house for new members, old members, prospective members and curious non-members who want to find out what the Club is all about. Learn how and where to go for hikes and walks, how to save the environment and protect wild places too. Come and get all your questions answered. Different presenters will discuss hiking, getting started in the Club, trail maintenance, how to get involved in protecting the earth, and much more. Refreshments will be provided as well as a chili cookoff. The meeting takes place in the Sweyrer Room at the Norman Murray Center, 24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo.

Four win seats on Chapter’s Executive Board

Top vote-getters in the fall Angeles Chapter Election were Jennifer Wright, Susan Heitman, Joe Phillips, and Tom Polteo. These four will join the 2013-14 Executive Committee as at-large members and will serve two-year terms.

Opt in only for Southern Sierran, Schedule

The Southern Sierran and the Schedule of Activities will be available this year in print to those who request it and online to all. The cost-saving measure took effect last year and continues as we move forward with the publications that are key to communicating with members. The Southern Sierran will publish six times in 2013: this issue, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October and November/December. The Schedule of Activities will appear quarterly.

Wolves should be protected, not hunted down

Yellowstone National Park in December-historic and iconic, the beloved female alpha wolf of the Lamar Canyon pack. She was shot and killed by a hunter during a brief excursion out of the park.

The shooting was especially heart-breaking because this wolf, whose partner was killed last month, was special. Her pack, which is part of a wolf research project, can often be observed by tourists and researchers as the wolves roam Lamar Valley at dusk.

Known for her superior size and strength, this alpha wolf was a fierce defender of her pups. Researchers and hikers often saw her bringing them food and snarling ferociously at any animals that posed a threat. The loss of a wolf that was both an alpha and a mother puts her pack at great risk.

How did this happen? Earlier this year, Wyoming’s wolves lost their Endangered Species Act protection, and Wyoming announced that it would allow wolf hunting near Yellowstone for the first time.

Together the Sierra Club fought this new rule. The Club worried that it would mean an “open season” on the wolves of Wyoming. Unfortunately, the Club was right.

Since these new rules were instituted (taking the similar rules in Montana and Idaho), 265 wolves have been shot or trapped. Fifty-five wolves in Wyoming alone have been killed, eight near Yellowstone.

The Club will continue the fight to protect wolves. Right now, the Sierra Club is fighting in court to overturn Wyoming’s brutal wolf hunting rules.

Not so big and bad

When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed wolves in Wyoming from the endangered species list last August, the state promptly put them on the hunting list. In Idaho, hunters have the option to kill wolves year-round. And when hunters in Montana failed to kill enough wolves in 2011, state wildlife commissioners allowed wolf trapping as well.

These efforts are motivated, in large part, by the belief among ranchers that wild wolves are a major threat to livestock. But looking at 2010 data, the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that wolves accounted for just 0.2 percent of “unintended” [i.e., pre-draughterhouse] cattle losses—fewer than are lost to theft, domestic dogs, or vultures.

—Paul Rauther is a senior editor at Sierra magazine

For a special gift

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