EDC’s Greatest Hits: Thirty Years of Victory for Our Local Environment

The 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill was an environmental nightmare that marred miles of coastline and spurred the modern environmental movement. In its aftermath, in 1977, the Environmental Defense Center was formed to help community groups enforce new and emerging environmental laws meant to level the playing field with oil and gas companies, developers, and other corporate interests. For 30 years, EDC has represented more than 75 organizations in efforts to protect our local environment. Below is a list of some of our major accomplishments:

### COAST AND OCEAN
- Blocked extension of 37 federal oil and gas leases and sponsored state legislation banning future leases in state waters;
- Defeated proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects at Pt. Conception and offshore Oxnard and Malibu;
- Preserved historic public beach access at popular locations including San Simeon, Cambria, Ellwood Mesa, Hammond’s Beach, Carpinteria Bluffs, and Oxnard Shores;
- Successfully advocated for the establishment of marine reserves within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and prepared plans to protect Sanctuary resources from underwater noise, pollution and fish farms;
- Secured protection for 13 endangered plant species on the Channel Islands;
- Launched the Santa Barbara Channelkeeper;
- Stopped Chevron oil tankering from Santa Barbara County to refineries in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

### OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE
- Protected important open space areas from development, including Hearst Ranch, East-West Ranch, Burton Mesa, Sedgwick Ranch, Douglas Family Preserve, Carpinteria Bluffs, Ellwood Mesa, Taylor Ranch, and Ahmanson Ranch;
- Negotiated with developers to set aside open space preserves and restore habitats at Devereux, San Marcos Foothills, Forde Industrial Park, Glenn Annie Golf Course, Mackie Mountain, and Parker Ranch, among others;
- Protected dozens of species and their habitats under the Endangered Species Act, including the California Tiger Salamander and Red Legged Frog;
- Stopped a massive landfill proposed at Weldon Canyon;
- Prevented channelization of Mission Creek while developing plans to restore steelhead habitat;
- Negotiated an Oak Protection Ordinance in Santa Barbara County;
- Protected Los Padres National Forest from off-road vehicles and oil development;
- Helped found the Gaviota Coast Conservancy.

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MISSION STATEMENT: The Environmental Defense Center protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy and legal action.

FOCUS: Since 1977 we have empowered community-based organizations to advance environmental protection. Our program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health. We primarily work within Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties.

EDC STAFF
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Andre Theus, Volunteer

From the Desk of David Landecker

1977 was the year EDC was founded, and it was the year I passed the bar and took my first “real” job. I had almost limitless energy to apply to my work and my volunteer commitments, and I was tireless albeit a bit frenetic in advocating for my causes. More than thirty years later I still work hard, but find that “maturity” allows me to accomplish more in less time. Maybe it is because I’ve learned how to best expend my energy and I know who I can call to get things accomplished efficiently without “spinning wheels.”

After 30 years, the Environmental Defense Center has similarly matured. Where once our victories came from high profile lawsuits, today our lawyers spend more time ensuring decisions are made that avoid the need to sue. Our opponents know that EDC wins most of its court cases; and we’ve learned that negotiated victories or those won through public agency hearings are just as sweet, and much less costly than litigation.

“Doing everything legally possible” to protect the coast and ocean, open space and wildlife and environmental and human health means that EDC uses every available avenue to protect environmental quality. Although the “hammer” of legal process remains among our critical tools, cooperative advocacy is a big part of our work.

For example, we are working closely with the cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta to find innovative ways to rebuild channels so steelhead trout can return to their breeding habitat. We are enlisting the aid of city, county, state and federal officials to find ways to save the beautiful Gaviota coast from development. We meet regularly with historical adversaries to reduce urban incursions into agricultural lands and to support sustainable farming in and near our communities. Public officials at every level seek our opinions to formulate policies sensitive to environmental implications. We work with school districts, community colleges and universities to educate the next generation about environmental laws and the ecological challenges they will face.

Whether we are engaged in education, advocacy or legal action, we need your support. EDC receives no government funding. We rely on community donations as our primary source of financial support. With a budget of less than $1 million per year, our ten full time employees are quietly and efficiently assisting our community to preserve and protect the environmental treasures that surround us. Even when we are not making headlines, we are making a big difference.

Your continuing membership and support is essential to this important work.

Special Announcements

EDC would like to welcome our four new board members: Gary Hill, Christina Mahon, Harriet Miller, and Carmen Ramirez. We are delighted to have these individuals join EDC. We look forward to working with them, as each brings unique skills and expertise to the table. It is an honor to have their commitment in protecting our local environment.

We would also like to thank Mark Behnke, David Pierce and Geoff Slaff for their past commitments as EDC board members.

Finally, we would like to recognize two new additions to our Advisory Board, Yvon Chouinard and Susan Rose. Yvon is the founder and owner of Patagonia, Inc. and Susan Rose is a former Santa Barbara County Supervisor.

(Below, left to right): Gary Hill, Christina Mahon, Harriet Miller, and Carmen Ramirez
EDC Weighs in on Naples Project

On January 23, EDC submitted a 250-page letter on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation, pointing out many deficiencies in the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Santa Barbara Ranch development project at Naples. The developer has proposed to build 72 large homes (with potential for a second unit on every lot) on coastal land that would introduce urban development into the otherwise rural Gaviota Coast. EDC’s comments declared that the County of Santa Barbara still needs to provide a complete and accurate description of the project, including development that may be allowed as part of the new proposed Naples Zone District. In addition, we identified impacts to views, agricultural and cultural resources, wildlife, water quality, and public access that have not been completely analyzed. EDC and Surfrider have proposed alternatives that would reduce the environmental impacts of the project by limiting the development footprint and transferring development rights to existing urban areas as required by the County’s local coastal plan (LCP).

On February 5, EDC staff urged the County Board of Supervisors to take steps towards establishing a viable transfer of development rights (TDR) program. The Board did agree to initiate a TDR Ordinance, but we are concerned that it may not be strong enough to address the threats at Naples nor comply with the LCP. EDC and Surfrider will continue to pursue strategies to protect Naples and the Gaviota Coast pending release of the Final EIR this summer.

Political Meddling Threatens Endangered Species

Over the years EDC has achieved significant protections for plants and animals in our region that are on the brink of extinction. Some of these species are considered “indicator species,” meaning that their status provides information about the health of the broader ecology of the area upon which they rely. For example, the reduced presence of steelhead in our creeks and rivers tells us that the health of our coastal watersheds is in peril.

The first step in avoiding extinction is to “list” species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as either threatened or endangered. The next step is to designate “critical habitat” that is important to the survival and recovery of the species. Under the ESA, it is illegal to “take” (harm, harass or kill) a protected species or modify its habitat in a manner that will harm the species.

Decisions to list species and designate critical habitat must be based on science. Unfortunately, under the Bush Administration, high level officials within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have interfered in such decisions. In fact, EDC won a case in 2005 in which political appointees interfered with a decision regarding the California tiger salamander, an endangered species that relies on wetland and upland habitats in northern Santa Barbara County.

In July 2007, Julie MacDonald, the Deputy Assistant Secretary, resigned after an internal Agency investigation uncovered evidence of improper behavior. Following her resignation, the Service announced that it would review eight ESA decisions that may have been inappropriately influenced by Ms. MacDonald. In November, the Service formally began the reconsideration process for these species, including critical habitat designations for two species in our area – the arroyo toad and red-legged frog. EDC will review and comment on the new proposals and continue to review ESA decisions to ensure their scientific integrity.
Sanctuary Whales Threatened by Commercial Ships

As the Conservation Representative on the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) Advisory Council, EDC has taken a lead role in protecting our ocean environment from a multitude of threats, including air, noise and water pollution. Most recently, we have been asked to help identify measures to protect whales from being struck and killed by ships passing through the area. In the fall of 2007, commercial ships that transit the Santa Barbara Channel were implicated in the deaths of five blue whales; post-mortem analysis conducted on three carcasses positively confirmed that the whales were killed by ship strike.

Blue whales are still extremely endangered, protected under both the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act. They are the largest animal ever to have inhabited the earth, and are present in larger numbers in the Santa Barbara Channel than anywhere else on the planet. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) designated the rash of 2007 collision deaths as an “Unusual Mortality event,” meaning that they represented a “significant die-off” that required “immediate response.” The Sanctuary is working with NMFS and other agencies to analyze what happened in 2007 to help prevent future such occurrences.

EDC Chief Counsel Linda Krop has been appointed to a Sanctuary committee that will develop interim measures to prevent more collisions before the 2008 blue whale summer gathering begins. EDC will request increased aerial and acoustic surveys to help identify locations where the whales are present, immediate notification to mariners, and requirements for reduced ship speeds when whales are present. According to NMFS, reducing ship speeds to 10 knots can effectively eliminate the risk of deadly ship strikes.

More Oil on the Horizon?

EDC represents several environmental groups (Sierra Club, Get Oil Out!, Carpinteria Valley Association, Citizens Planning Association, Citizens for Goleta Valley and Citizens to Save the Bluffs) in three cases involving plans by the oil industry to increase oil development along the Santa Barbara County coast.

First, Venoco proposes to build a 175-foot oil drilling tower on the bluffs immediately next to Carpinteria City Hall, Carpinteria Bluffs Park, and the seal sanctuary. The proposal would cause significant risks of hazardous gas releases and oil spills and would affect coastal views and public recreation. City agencies will hold hearings on the project this spring.

Venoco also proposes to expand oil and gas development from Platform Holly, located offshore Ellwood Mesa and UCSB. This project would undermine a settlement agreement between Venoco’s predecessor, ARCO, and the Sierra Club, in which ARCO agreed to abandon its leases off Ellwood in exchange for additional drilling rights near Long Beach. The project would extend the
LNG IS BACK – Channelkeeper Hires EDC to Tackle “Clearwater Port” Proposal

Last year, EDC and our client, California Coastal Protection Network, defeated a proposal to build a massive liquefied natural gas (LNG) project off the coast of Oxnard and Malibu near the Santa Barbara Channel. Working with experts to submit evidence on issues such as climate change, air pollution, threats to marine mammals, and public safety resulted in denial of the project by the California State Lands Commission, California Coastal Commission and Governor Schwarzenegger. It was EDC’s biggest victory in years.

Now a new threat has emerged: NorthernStar’s proposal to convert an oil platform—Platform Grace—into an offshore LNG terminal. The Santa Barbara Channel Keeper hired EDC in September 2007 to review and respond to this proposal. The project, disingenuously named “Clearwater Port,” would result in many of the same impacts as the prior proposal. In addition, this project would result in potentially greater safety impacts, due to its closer proximity to shore, other oil platforms, and shipping lanes running through the Santa Barbara Channel. Because LNG supertankers will travel through the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, this project would result in direct impacts to the Sanctuary itself. The proposed terminal is located just three miles outside Sanctuary borders.

Any LNG project raises significant concerns. LNG is based on the importation of natural gas, in a compressed liquid state, from other countries. LNG therefore increases our dependence on foreign sources of energy and fossil fuels. LNG also results in 25% more greenhouse gas emissions than the production of domestic natural gas. Some experts believe that opening the door to LNG could interfere with efforts to increase renewable energy supplies to California, and locally, LNG would increase the industrialization of our coast and the Santa Barbara Channel.

On behalf of Channelkeeper, EDC submitted extensive comments on the proposed scope of the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report that will be prepared for the project. As a result of these comments, and those put forward by other agencies and members of the public, the Coast Guard stopped processing NorthernStar’s application until additional information is submitted.

Ocean Acidification Harms Marine Ecosystem

EDC is targeting another major emerging threat to the Sanctuary—increasing ocean acidification. Like global warming, ocean acidification results from skyrocketing human emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂). In addition to causing atmospheric warming, excess CO₂ also dissolves into the ocean, raising the acidity of seawater. Scientific research is now revealing that when ocean acidity increases, shell-forming animals like urchins, abalone and bivalves are unable to build and maintain their shells, and can even suffer shell-dissolution. Harm to these species can then affect other parts of the food chain, resulting in potentially profound effects to entire marine ecosystems.

EDC is working with commercial fishermen and other conservationists to bring this issue to the attention of not only the CINMS, but to Sanctuaries throughout the country. We have invited two leading marine scientists to speak to the Sanctuary Advisory Council and the public on this issue in May; we will follow up their presentations with a report to the Council this summer.
CCEHP Turns Ten

Ten years ago, the Central Coast Environmental Health Project was created by the EDC to address pesticide conflicts at the ‘agricultural/urban interface’—those areas that place residents in close proximity to farming operations. Since then, CCEHP has been successful in reaching out to farmers and farmworkers, health care providers, elected officials, government agencies and others to address this important topic.

Early on, CCEHP was forced to respond to pesticide drift incidents near schools in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Our work helped lead to increased restrictions on the use of the pesticide metam sodium in Santa Barbara and the development of stronger regulations protecting schools from pesticides statewide. Pesticide health concerns in Lompoc and California’s lax implementation of laws governing methyl bromide use were also contentious and challenged early on by CCEHP.

CCEHP soon turned to its original objective—educating the public about risks associated with pesticide use and exposure. Community forums, medical trainings for health care professionals, policy work and a specific focus on outreach to farmworkers became CCEHP’s daily task. CCEHP built effective alliances, working with the City of Santa Barbara to reduce their pesticide use as well as working with farmers to encourage better management practices aimed at protecting water quality.

Today, CCEHP finds itself working proactively in support of sound agricultural practices. CCEHP has formed partnerships with farmers through the Ag Futures Alliance, collaborated with statewide organizations including the Roots of Change and Ag Innovations Network, and begun our first real efforts to connect the dots that tie protection of human health, food systems, open space/wildlife preservation, and community sustainability together.

CCEHP seeks to establish a network of local, organic growers from throughout Santa Barbara County to serve as a ‘supply source’ for increasing demand for fresh, local produce. We further hope to partner with schools in North County to implement pilot projects aimed at educating youth about the interrelations between health, agriculture and the environment. While these efforts are just now taking root, we are excited about the possibilities! Call CCEHP to find out about current project plans and how you can help.

City Pesticide Policy Wins State Award

On January 17th, 2008, the City of Santa Barbara was honored by the state Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) for its reduced-pesticide Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy, becoming only the fifth city in the state to receive this distinction. EDC’s Central Coast Environmental Health Project (CCEHP) Director Eric Cardenas was asked to accept the award on behalf of the City, and was joined by members of the Santa Barbara City Council staff.

As you may know, Eric and CCEHP played a critical role in the development and ultimate approval of this policy, aimed at reducing the amount of toxic pesticides applied to City properties. Since its adoption in 2004, City staff have successfully reduced pesticide use by 85%!

There is more work to be done, and agencies from throughout the County are now looking to better coordinate their IPM efforts to reduce pesticide use even more. For more information about how you can help, call 963-1622.

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EDC’s 15th Annual Benefit Auction and Environmental Hero Awards

June 8, 2008 • 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. • Stow House • 304 Los Carneros Road • Goleta

Please join us for live music, wine, hors d’oeuvres, live and silent auctions, and our 2008 Environmental Hero Awards presentation. This year we are honored to recognize California Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi and Kim and Jack Johnson for their environmental stewardship. We are also proud to announce our first ever Environmental Youth Award to Anna and Sarah Schwab of Tree Amigos. Check our website for event details.

Help Plan EDC’s Auction
Volunteers are needed! EDC’s annual Auction would not be successful without the help of our dedicated auction committee volunteers. Please contact Vickie Hormuth at EDC at 963-1622 or vhormuth@edcnet.org if you are interested in being part of a fun and hardworking team.

Two-Day SCAPE Art Exhibit and Sale to Benefit EDC

Join the local artists of S.C.A.P.E. (Southern California Artists Painting for the Environment) for a two-day exhibit and sale of art to benefit the Environmental Defense Center. Over a hundred original paintings in various media and styles will be presented. The paintings will represent images and scenery of the precious open spaces EDC works to protect, with 40% of proceeds donated towards the preservation of these special places.

Where: La Arcada Courtyard, 1114 State Street
(between the SB Library and the SB Museum of Art)
When: July 19-20, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

SCAPE was founded in 2002 by a group of distinguished plein air painters. The group raises money to preserve open space while promoting camaraderie among Southern California landscape artists. To date, SCAPE has helped to raise over $78,000 for local conservation organizations while raising awareness of conservation issues.

(continued from Page 1)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN HEALTH
• Established the Central Coast Environmental Health Project to educate communities about pesticide risks while promoting healthy alternatives;
• Successfully sued the State of California for failing to adopt adequate health and safety standards for methyl bromide, a toxic fumigant;
• Sponsored state legislation limiting pesticide use near schools, and developed policies for local jurisdictions to reduce pesticide use in public areas;
• Strengthened air pollution control plans and rules;
• Defeated expansion and secured closure of the Casmalia hazardous waste facility;
• Filed lawsuit against Halaco Engineering Company for violating state and federal laws protecting the environment and public health;
• Settled litigation resulting in reduced hazards from lead in rental housing;
• Stopped expansion of the Petrochem Oil Refinery;
• Helped found Agricultural Futures Alliance chapters in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, working with farmers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices.

For a full list of our cases, accomplishments, and clients we have represented over the last thirty years, see our 30th Anniversary Case Docket at www.edcnet.org.
EDC’s Flooring Goes Sustainable, Local

EDC kicked off the new year with installation of new floors throughout the main building of our downtown office. With the support of the Santa Barbara Foundation, sustainably grown bamboo replaced carpet through most of the building. At the front entrance, visitors are greeted by a colorful chessboard of locally salvaged wood. Rob Bjorklund, owner of Local Wood, a company that mills fine wood products exclusively from trees grown in the urban forest of Santa Barbara County, graciously donated the vibrant quilt of wood to EDC. The wood utilized for the flooring comes from a variety of logs supplied by local tree trimmers that would otherwise be chipped, grinded and taken to the dump. Local Wood currently uses a solar powered wood curing kiln, and aspires to be a 100% green sustainable wood products company in the near future. EDC staff and board would like to thank Local Wood and the volunteers who helped install our striking new floor. For more information visit www.localwood.net.

Tree-free Printing: EDC Partners with Jano Graphics

EDC is constantly working to reduce the quantity of printed materials we produce. We are not yet “paper free,” but we are committed to printing our necessary publications in the most environmentally friendly method possible. EDC teamed up with Jano Graphics, an FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified printing company located in Ventura. Jano worked with us to meet the special printing needs of this newsletter, which is printed on 100% post Consumer Waste, Sakura Silk, with Soy Based inks. EDC and Jano Graphics continue to seek ways to minimize waste and the use of hazardous materials, and to encourage recycling.

The FSC is an international non-profit membership based organization that brings people together to find solutions to the problems created by bad forestry practices and to reward good forestry management. Visit www.fsc.org.

EDC Events Calendar

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<td>Dine Out for the Earth</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
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<td>15th Annual Benefit Auction &amp; Environmental Hero Awards</td>
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<td>July 11</td>
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<td>TGIF – Fall Feast</td>
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It’s Time for TGIF at EDC!

It’s the time of year that we all wait for, when the weather gets warmer and the days get longer. Mark your calendars now for the best happy hour in town, held in the EDC Courtyard. Bring your friends and enjoy the live music, tasty hors d’oeuvres, fine spirits and good company.

| May 2       | 5:30-7:30                  |
| July 11     | 5:30-7:30                  |
| August 8    | 5:30-7:30                  |
| September 12 | 5:30-7:30                |
| October 10  | Fall Feast 5:30-7:30       |

Visit www.edc.org for more information about EDC’s upcoming events and how you can get involved.