

Get Outside



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SLO weighs risks and benefits of allowing recreation in its open spaces after dark

BY PETER JOHNSON

Path less traveled



Get Outside

FEBRUARY 18, 2022 VOLUME 1, NO. 1

MISSION STATEMENT

Focused on outdoor adventures that range from recreational activities to extreme sports, where to find those adventures on California’s Central Coast, the people who seek them out, and the gear that makes it all possible.



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Contents (1/2 page)

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GO Trailblazing

MARVELOUS MORROS This photo, taken from Cerro San Luis and looking west toward Morro Bay, shows most of the Nine Sisters in the chain of peaks.

Peaks that pique

A guide to hiking and exploring SLO County

BY RHYS HEYDEN

Stretching between Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo, the craggy peaks of the Nine Sisters—a chain of hills dividing the Chorro and Los Osos Valleys—provide some of the most iconic vistas in SLO County.

In addition to their visual singularity, the Nine Sisters or the Morros (a Spanish word meaning mountains or small, round rocks) are a geological oddity as well. They're classified as "volcanic plugs"—essentially leftover, congealed lava that once filled volcano vents millions of years ago.

William H. Brewer, a Yale professor who led a geologic expedition through California in 1861, made a note of the Nine Sisters in his journal.

"These buttes are a peculiar feature, their sharp, rugged outlines standing so clear against the sky, their sides sloping from thirty to fifty degrees," Brewer wrote. "A string of these buttes more than twenty in number, some almost as sharp as a steeple, extend in a line northwest to the sea, about twenty miles distant, one standing in the sea, the Morro Rock rising like a pyramid from the waters."

In its *guide to the Nine Sisters*, the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club notes that there are more than 21 major and minor peaks in the Morros, but there are nine major peaks, hence the name The Nine Sisters. Depending on how they're tabulated, some people choose to refer to the peaks as the Seven Sisters, but the Sierra Club's accounting seems to be the industry standard.

Ranging from the shortest (feet) to the tallest (Bishop Peak, Sisters are also popular hiking spots and are publicly accessible.

In the interest of promoting fitness of SLO County, here's exploring the Nine Sisters.

Morro Rock

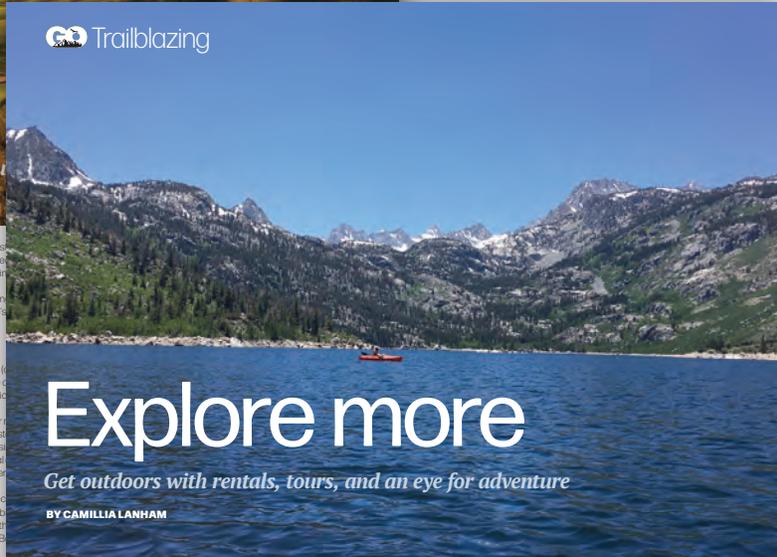
Perhaps the most iconic (and photographed and painted) of morros rises out of the Pacific Bay coast.

Though it was quarried for and was declared a California Historical Landmark and it's been protected ever since, Chumash tribes have special access to the rock for ceremonial purposes.

The rocks is the centerpiece of the Morro State Park. Preserve, and—though climbing is welcome to walk around the Embarcadero in Morro Bay.

Black Hill

The second peak in the Nine Sisters is a little bit taller at 665 feet. It's in Morro State Park, with several hiking trails leading to the summit. The Sierra Club guide notes



GO Trailblazing

Explore more

Get outdoors with rentals, tours, and an eye for adventure

BY CAMILLIA LANHAM

PHOTO BY KAORI FUNAHASHI

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is still hanging on as students head back to college campuses for in-person classes. After being masked up and stuffed in a classroom, you'll want to find a place where you can unmask and breathe in that free air. Fortunately, San Luis Obispo County has a lot of wild space, outdoor activities, and exploration opportunities for everyone. Hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, surfing, fishing, rock

climbing—the list goes on. And there are plenty of places where you can even rent the gear you need and get a little help figuring out where to go and what to do. Here's a list of places that can help get you started:

At Cal Poly

Poly Escapes (Cal Poly Recreation Center, (805) 756-1287, asl.calpoly.edu/experience/poly-escapes)

For Cal Poly students, the best deal around is

right on campus with ASI (Associated Students Inc.), which they already pay a fee toward as part of tuition costs. Offering equipment rentals for backpacking, camping, climbing, hiking, kayaking, paddleboarding, surfing, and snowboarding, it's a one-stop gear rental shop offering small items like headlamps and stoves to larger things such as tents and stand-up paddleboards. ASI has wetsuits, trekking poles, outdoor climbing shoes, water coolers, snowshoes, and more so Poly students can experiment with that outdoor lifestyle from spring to winter.

Poly Escapes also has a climbing park at the Rec Center—50-foot climbing wall and bouldering wall—for all skill levels, and offers guided hiking and backpacking trips during most quarters. Due to COVID-19, Poly Escapes trips won't be offered during fall 2021.

Close to campus

The Mountain Air (667 Marsh St., suite D, SLO; (805) 543-1676, themountainair.com)

As a locally owned outdoor store, the Mountain Air is unbeatable for knowledgeable service and a super selection of gear that can help you get lost. For gear rentals, though, they specialize in winter sports—specifically for hitting the slopes.

Rentals continued page 3

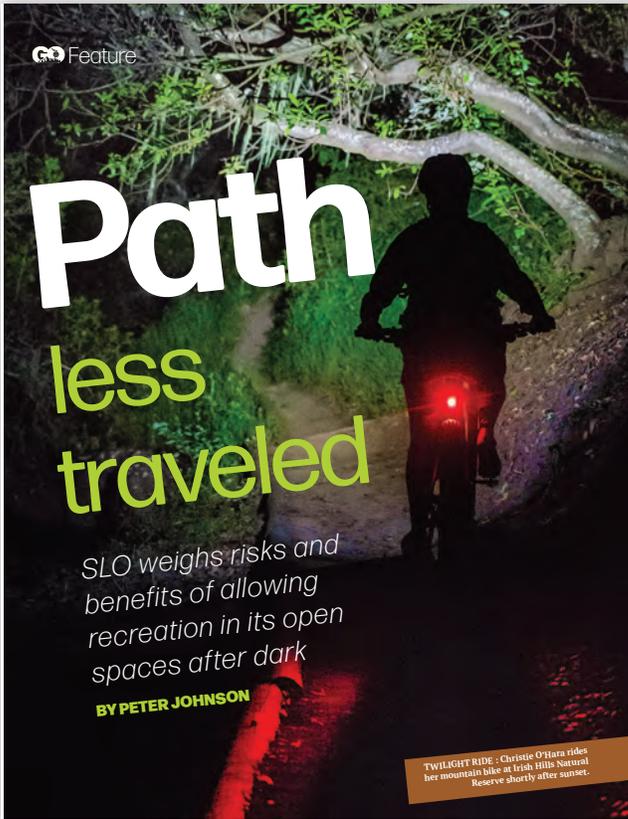


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Trailblazing (3 pages)

A quick gander highlighting the best of the Central Coast outdoors from the waters of the Pacific to the coastal peaks. This section will feature short stories, lists, and handy tips

about where to go, what to do, and how to get there. It will include staff favorites and expert picks for trails, campgrounds, trips, shops, events, and more.



GO Feature

Path less traveled

SLO weighs risks and benefits of allowing recreation in its open spaces after dark

BY PETER JOHNSON

TWILIGHT RIDE: Christie O'Hara rides her mountain bike in Irish Hills Natural Reserve shortly after sunset.

It's 7:30 on a misty April evening in San Luis Obispo, where Madonna Road dead-ends into the Irish Hills Natural Reserve. The sun is beginning to disappear behind the mountainside.

SLO resident Christie O'Hara, clad in a spandex jersey, methodically straps on her helmet, adjusts her gloves, and places a big pair of athletic glasses over her eyes. She then reaches forward to turn on the light mounted on the handlebars of her black mountain bike.

"Sometimes I'll wear knee-pads, but not for this trail," the 31-year-old Cal Poly biomechanics researcher says, before starting up the Mariposa trail that meanders through the open space.

As a native to the New York City area, O'Hara didn't know much about mountain biking growing up; road cycling and running were her big hobbies. When she moved to SLO in 2009 to pursue a master's degree in kinesiology at Cal Poly, everything about the city's "greenbelt"—the bountiful open spaces, the vast network of trails, and the warm community of locals who cherished them.

"The trails out here are amazing," O'Hara says. Volunteering as "trail work days" hosted by the Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (CCCMB) organization brought O'Hara even closer to the land and its stewards—and introduced her to the sport of mountain biking. She's now the vice president of CCCMB.

Enveloped in canopies of tree cover, O'Hara checks her watch, which tells her the sun just set. In one hour, the Irish Hills will be closed and she could get a \$561 ticket if she's still out on the trail.

O'Hara always obeys the city's open space hours, but she thinks it'd be nice if night rides were allowed. In the winter, when after-work sunlight is scarce, O'Hara and her friends will go for weekend night rides in Montaña de Oro State Park, which is open until 10 p.m. But that's at least a 30-minute drive away.

"It'd be nice to be able to ride in Irish Hills and not have to drive all the way out there," she says.

O'Hara's just one of many mountain bikers, trail runners, and hikers in the community who have recently asked the city to consider relaxing its open space hours to allow for legal recreation after dark. In the 20-year history of SLO's public open space, the hours have held firm: open from one hour before sunrise, to one hour after sunset. A recent push by the city to more strictly enforce the open space rules has pushed the debate squarely to the forefront.

On March 21, the SLO City Council asked its staff to craft modifications to the open space ordinance that would allow for some "after hours" recreation at a few locations, and only during the winter season.

But the impact of any amount of nighttime activity on SLO's natural resources—and the diverse wildlife that calls those spaces home—is not well understood. The council's decision is drawing strong criticism from community members who question the wisdom of altering the original open space policy and subjecting the open-space wildlife to more human impact

after dark. Those in favor of night hiking point out that 80 percent of the open space areas are already off limits to recreation; so opening a few trails could be a small slice of impact.

The debate hits as the city is putting forth a 20-year vision plan for the SLO open space program. Some residents view night hiking as complementary to that vision, others see it as completely in conflict.

Night and day approaches
Back in 2015, the SLO City Council decided to take a no-nonsense approach toward violators of the open space regulations, ramping up enforcement to unprecedented levels. The city added three new ranger positions and boosted the funding allocated to patrolling—as well as other open space goals like signage improvements and maintenance—by about \$150,000 per year.

Since then, the city's dished out 26 night hiking tickets and 350 open space tickets in total—at \$561 a piece. It was a drastic change, according to Ranger Supervisor Doug Carscaden, who said the city didn't track citations prior to 2015 but figured they were "minimal in quantity."

"We were more education-focused before, given the resources," Carscaden said. Last August, three SLO County residents attended a City Council meeting and asked if the city would reconsider its stance on night hiking. They said the current hours made going out on open spaces in the winter impossible before or after normal work hours. The council at the time voted 5-2 to have a discussion about the open space hours at a later date.

On March 21, with a new mayor and two new councilmembers, the City Council had that discussion and voted 4-1 to ask for a night

hiking "pilot program." The program would apply to a few locations, possibly Laguna Lake Park and Cerro San Luis Obispo (the hill with the "M" on it, also known as Madonna Mountain), with "optimized" hours, so that in the winter, some after-work recreation could legally take place. The council quickly eliminated Bishop Peak as a candidate for any night hiking.

"I feel like it's worth talking about," SLO Mayor Heidi Harmon told *New Times*. "Most of the mountain biker and hiker folks are younger and working with young children, so even [using open space] on the weekend can feel a challenge... We want our community to feel engaged and healthy."

But the council's perceived lenience has some community members very concerned. Former Mayor Ian Marx, current Councilwoman Carlyn Christensen, and other longtime city leaders like former Mayor Peg Pihard are opposing the proposal, joining local environmental groups like the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Environmental Center of SLO (ECCOL). They're primarily concerned about the effects of nighttime recreation on the open space wildlife.

"Has there been an environmental impact report?" Marx asked in a scathing April column in the *Santa Lucia*, a monthly Sierra Club publication. In a nutshell, opponents to the council's proposal believe that it sets a dangerous precedent for the city, that it's a step down a slippery slope toward degrading the original, essential purpose of the greenbelt: natural preservation. They argue that the very concept of night hiking conflicts with the city's general plan, which prioritizes the protection of open space natural resources ahead of human recreation.

Night hiking continued page 4
PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOW



SENSITIVE HABITAT: Mary Ciesinski, executive director of ECOSLO; Carolyn Huddleston, ECOSLO docent; Heidi Harmon, SLO mayor; and Evan Albright, docent, (left to right) discuss the issue of night hiking at Laguna Lake Park.

SPRING 2022 Get Outside 3

Unbound

Cover feature (4 pages) and featurettes (1-3 pages)

Get Outside main features will focus on the local explorers making strides in the outdoor universe—from professional athletes to outdoor photographers to gear creators, backpacking enthusiasts, guides, and more—events that highlight the Central

Coast's landscape and the people who come to enjoy it—i.e. Big Sur Foragers festival—the land itself and what it has to offer explorers; the agencies, nonprofits, and volunteers who come together to maintain and elevate those spaces; and the best ways to enjoy them.

GO Feature



GLAMPING HEAVEN: Branch Mill Organics Farms outside Arroyo Grande offers glamping tents, complete with beds, bathrooms, showers, and an outdoor kitchen.

A better kind of isolation

Amid closures at regional and state parks, local Hipcamps offer respite to those looking to get out and get away

BY KASEY BUBANSKI

Living just a few miles out of Arroyo Grande and up to Branch Mill Organics farm fields like entering a better, calmer world. A little produce stand greets you at the entrance of the farm, where fresh-cut hot herbs and blooming flowers fill the air. A friendly black cat meows as he makes his way leisurely over to a nearby deck, where he effortlessly hops up onto the platform to rub cheek against guest. Maybe if you're lucky he'll eventually meander over to you.

It's quiet and still and secluded here. It feels more than just 3 miles outside of Arroyo Grande and much, much farther from the screens and stresses that have come to define pandemic life. Owner Ruth Madocks knows her land is special, and fortunately for us, she's willing to share it. With Madocks at the helm, Branch Mill has become more than just a local organic farm, operating simultaneously as a community event venue, educational space, and, most recently, a private campground.

"It's really providing a safe view for people that don't have available in other places," Madocks told *New Times*. "Even as we open up with COVID, all a lot of people would rather be here than be coming out of a place with a bunch of people they don't know."

Madocks has two sites on her farm that she rents out for \$80 a night. With large canopies, beds, showers, bathrooms, and an outdoor kitchen all provided in the package, the Branch Mill Hipcamp experience definitely leans toward glamping. Visitors can tour the farm, feed the animals, and order boxes of fresh produce and eggs.

Recently her clientele has largely been made up of health care workers and families from San Francisco and Los Angeles looking to get outside. Kids in particular love the farm, and Madocks said that's true especially now, when they've spent so much of the last year cooped up staring at screens. "The main thing is people love to bring their kids and get a taste and learn about organic farming," she said. "And so our goal is to make this an educational place. I feel like the Hipcamp fits in with that vision that we had."
—SLO County

HIP CAMP continued page 13

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GO Feature

Deer(ly) departed



Five years of drought and decades of habitat loss could be impacting deer and their predators

BY SPENCER COLE

Crank. Bill Decker, 69, drops his truck into the lowest gear and punches the gas. The Toyota Tundra whines as its all-terrain tires climb the series of broken concrete slabs that used to be called a road.

"This is all public land," Decker says, surveying the surrounding chaparral, tall grass, and rolling foothills that stretch for miles. The track dips and shakes sporadically as it passes through, over, and in between other paths.

For most, venturing across the stretch of dirt and broken stone deep in the hills north of Highway 166 in Los Padres National Forest would be a daunting endeavor, fraught with broken axels, shredded tires, and shattered self-esteem. Decker, who says he's seen

countless vehicles destroyed attempting to tackle the road, is undaunted.

He knows the path well from his years as a hunter and, later, as a volunteer for the U.S. Forest Service. Over the past 10 years he's built and installed signs and birdhouses for orange-breasted Western bluebirds. Most days he drives out with a few jugs of water, pouring gallons into open drums for wildlife along a parcel of private land in the Los Padres. His work usually ends with a slow drive out, where he'll stop periodically to lay birdseed, blanketing it across the road as he goes.

The truck rolls to a stop on a flat piece of earth surrounded by hills dotted with oak trees. A small stream trickles through a ditch at the base of the closest mound.

Decker leaps from his seat and saunters to a large blue plastic bucket that holds about 2

gallons of fresh water he refills each visit. He scratches his snowy mustache as he surveys the area.

"Not a single track," he mutters under his breath. "This is what I'm talking about, this is one of the only areas where there's water for miles and I don't see a single sign of deer."

Decker pauses.

It's early October, mating season—also known as the rut—when deer, sheep, and other ruminants can be found wallowing in the mud, and, if they're male, rubbing together antlers or horns, sometimes violently.

"Usually, you would find [dead] deer on the side of the road because of the rut, but I didn't see one on the entire drive up here," he says. "Shows ya there aren't many around right now."

He places a large weathered hand toward the sun and looks up.

DATA POINTS The California Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates that since 1999 the deer population has dropped by more than 300,000, according to its annual estimates.



"Hot as can be right now, so we know they're moving."

But where are they? Decker's ongoing theory about the "missing" deer isn't radical. The drought scorched available food and water for half a decade, and rapid, consistent human development is constantly pushing deer out of their traditional habitats, which reduces their population range and weakens their ability to evade predators.

These assertions are supported by data from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as well as anecdotal evidence from biologists with the Los Padres National Forest and University of California Davis.

Indeed, deer populations have dropped precipitously—by more than 300,000 statewide since 1990—and the scientists who spoke to *New Times* agreed on how fauna were affected by habitat loss and human encroachment.

However, the latter part of Decker's theory holds a little less weight than the former. "The mountain lions are homing right now," he says. "I've been here for 44 years and know guys—hunters and outdoorsmen—that never saw a cougar in their life, and now they are seeing them daily."

Decker believes mountain lion populations are exploding because hunters can't shoot them except with the due cause or a depredation permit. In 1990, California passed Proposition 117, which made mountain lions a "specially protected species," and illegal to hunt. The legislation came about due to fears that the animal was on the path to extinction. Hunters

have bemoaned the legislation since its passage. Decker says the circumstances created conditions that allow the big cats to feast on deer unchecked.

Christine Thompson, senior environmental specialist with CDFW, said via email that the agency didn't keep specific population numbers for San Luis Obispo or Santa Barbara counties. She said that in the upcoming winter and spring, department staff will conduct deer population surveys to estimate density and abundance.

"The population appears to be stable and healthy," she added, noting there were no disease outbreaks. "A number of deer are attracted to the growing vineyard industry both because of the abundance of available food in the vineyard provides and the displacement effect—or deer habitat that is being or has been converted to vineyards."

Those properties could create problems down the line for deer and mountain lion populations, according to Los Padres National Forest biologist Kevin Cooper.

"If more and more lands are converted to agriculture, particularly grapes with high fences that prevent deer's ability to move through grazing land, it really changes the population dynamics of the deer and of course their predators, mountain lions," he said.

The wine industry has exploded in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties since the moratorium on mountain lion passed. In 1990, Santa Barbara County had 1,542 acres of

Deer continued page 4

PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLMOR

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SPRING 2022 GET OUTSIDE 3

GO Feature

Escape to the outside

Poly Escapes takes students off campus and into the wild

BY CAMILLIA LANHAM

GLAMPING HEAVEN Branch Mill Organic Farms outside Arroyo Grande offers two types of tent complexes, complete with beds, bathrooms, showers, and an outdoor kitchen.

She wakes up to a foot and a half of snow, and fellow campers with tents that were cooking in under its weight. Then, one of the vans got stuck in the fresh powder covering that section of the Alabama Hills on the east side of the Sierra Nevada. And on top of that, everyone seemed to be in the back.

Kate Lane was on an ASI Poly Escapes trip, where potential trip leaders were attempting to learn snow camping skills. An aspiring trip leader at the time, Lane was in training to lead local Cal Poly students on backpacking and camping trips through places like the Sierra, Big Sur, and Joshua Tree National Park.

"Everything that could go wrong did, and it was a really great opportunity for us to come together and figure it out," said Lane, now a senior anthropology and geography student at Cal Poly. "It was a really bonding moment because of it."

Associated Students Inc. (ASI) run program has three facets, according to ASI Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Matt Estare on trips program (which Estare said they've been known for) or rental shops, and an outdoor climbing park at the campus Recreation Center (which is also owned and operated by ASI). Paid for in part by student fees, ASI is a student-driven organization that provides programs, services, employment opportunities, and facilities on campus.

Employing about 100 to 120 students, Poly Escapes gives students an opportunity to get outside by hosting trips to recreational hot spots on the Central Coast and beyond. Through the rental center, students and community members can rent equipment to backpack, hike, paddle, or rock climb at a discounted rate. And the climbing park is open to all skill levels—whether you're on an old hat or new.

"We are really the avenue to connect Cal Poly students to the outdoors," Estare said. "Cal Poly students work so hard academically, they work so hard professionally. It's really important to break away from campus, and get outside in general. To refresh, gain some perspective, learn about themselves, and learn about the environment in California and connect with other people."

Estare said Poly Escapes does about 20 trips a quarter, 60 trips a year, and takes out about 600 students every school year. Employees can man the climbing wall, the rental center, or train to be a trip leader, like Lane.

The trip leader program is a one- to two-year program, where students learn hard skills—like how to operate a camp stove or what to do if a foot and a half of snow falls overnight—and soft skills—like how to manage a group.

Reacts continued page 13

PHOTO BY KAGBI PHOTO COURTESY OF ASI



WATER TIME Cal Poly students get out on the water in Morro Bay through kayaking and paddleboarding trip hosted by ASI Poly Escapes.

12 GET OUTSIDE SPRING 2022

GO Feature

Running man

In 2001, Cameron Clapp lost both legs and one arm — today he competes in triathlons and wins gold medals

BY ABRAHAM HYATT



As the sun sets over a track in Pluma Beach, a young man with no legs and only one arm is running.

BIONIC MAN: Cameron Clapp recently returned from a trip to Oklahoma and the corporate headquarters of Hanger, the company that makes his prosthetics. While he was there, specialists made adjustments to his arm and fixed a cracked valve in one of his computer-embossed tires.

12 GET OUTSIDE SPRING 2022



GO Outdoor Kitchen



CAPHEADS UNITE SLO Botanical Garden's upcoming mushroom event on this Friday, Feb. 8, will cover taxonomy basics, field identification, ethical harvesting guidelines, safety issues, and tips on how to avoid toxic mushrooms in the wild.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SLO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Mushroom hunters will unite at SLO Botanical Garden

BY HAYLEY THOMAS CAIN

There are some 50,000 species of mushrooms you could be eating. Yet, my guess is you're only barely scraping the surface of the fungal forest floor. Today, the most commonly consumed variety is the button mushroom, or *Agaricus bisporus*, which makes up about 40 percent of the mushrooms grown around the world. Nothing against the oft-ordered pizza topping,

but there's a big, fungal world out there. This earthy realm of swirling stems, caps, and threadlike roots awaits with delicious, mysterious, and—on occasion—intoxicating results.

Mushroom expert Christian Schwarz of Santa Cruz wants to open up that portal and be your guide through the thrilling, satisfying (and potentially hazardous) world of seasonal mushroom hunting.

The SLO Botanical Garden will host Schwarz for an in-depth look at the diverse fungi found on the Central Coast this Friday, Feb. 8, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Expect an informative identification

Rentals continued page 22



SHROOM EDU Interested yet daunted by the complexity of fungal forms? Now is the time to get some in-depth and hands-on training on mushroom identification. The SLO Botanical Garden will host an event on Friday, Feb. 8, featuring mushroom expert Christian Schwarz of Santa Cruz.

PHOTOS BY CAMILLIA LANHAM



FISHY FISHY Eric Collier, 8, holds up the biggest catch of the day! A red rockfish that he caught himself out on the water near Port San Luis.

Catch and eat: Rockfish are on the menu straight out of the Pacific Ocean

BY CAMILLIA LANHAM

A Pacific rockfish by any other name is cod, snapper, and any one of the more than 70 species that swim about in the waters between Alaska and Baja California. There are red ones, blue ones, black ones, and yellow ones.

Olive ones and striped ones. Those species with giant ugly, bulging eyes and those that look less freaky.

Ones you're not allowed to catch based on federal law, and those that you can.

With most species, though, recreational fishers (who have a permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) can bag up to 10 per day, combined. Anglers can fish from shore, off a pier, or from a boat, although there are slightly different rules depending on the method.

The flesh has a light, lean texture with a soft nuttiness—and although I couldn't really tell the difference in taste between say, a red or blue rockfish, there are people out there who swear they can.

Either way, there's nothing like fresh caught fish for dinner, and on Sunday, July 12, I got the opportunity to indulge thanks to the hard work of the Collier boys and an early morning. They left the house at 5 that morning with their boat in tow and headed out onto the open water from Port San Luis.

Eric, 8, caught the biggest fish of them all, and he was proud to show it off the second they pulled back into the driveway around 2:30 p.m.

The fish were packed into a cooler on ice, and they got to work filleting as soon as everything was unloaded.

Those fillets went from the cutting board to the flat-top grill after receiving a bath in some tangerine olive oil from Pasolivo and a sprinkling of Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning. A little citrus and a little heat along with some sautéed onions and serrano peppers did the trick. We wrapped the finished product up in a heated flour tortilla with



SEASONED EATING Pasolivo tangerine olive oil and Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning give the rockfish and kick of heat and a citrus backbone.

fresh mango and pineapple salsa and a cilantro salad for a fresh, healthy, light Sunday dinner.

This isn't the first fresh fish dinner I've had with the Colliers, either. The weekend fishing trip is a staple in that household. We've beer-battered the fish, put it in tacos, and just had it grilled. Really, it can't be beat, and no matter how simple you make it, eating fresh-caught fish always feels special. Δ

Editor Camilla Lanham is full of fish. Send comments to clanham@newtimeslo.com.

SPRING 2022 **GET OUTSIDE 21**

Outdoor Kitchen (1 to 2 pages)

Whether it's crafting cuisine over an open flame or boiling water to hydrate your meal, we want to make sure the food you cook under an open sky is tasty and satisfying. This section will include recipes and tricks for making firepit cuisine—car camping, beach

bonfires, or that backyard barbecue—ways to prepare hunted and gathered food, snacks to keep you going while you're on the go, dehydrated delicacies that make you go yum, and local purveyors you can salivate over.

Take a hike

If you're going to hit one of the many trails the Central Coast has to offer, you better make sure you have all the right gear

LAYER UP

TESS™ FLANNEL LS
Cozy up in the KÖHL TESS™ FLANNEL Long Sleeve Shirt. With super-soft fabric, snap front for easy layering, and corduroy trim for added style, it's sure to be your go-to flannel. Keep this super-soft women's flannel at hand to make sure you're ready for cold season adventuring in style. **\$75**

BEST SPURGE

LEKI Micro Vario Carbon Pole
Exclusive AERON grip features a hollow core construction to save weight and create an edgless, rounded grip for comfortable gripping at all angles especially for "palm" on steeper terrain. Thermo foam grip material for extra comfort, light weight and insulation in colder weather. Built in 8deg Positive Angle in LEKI grips keeps wrist in neutral position and provides more efficient pole plants. **\$199**

STYLE AND FUNCTION

Danner Trail 2650 Hiking Shoes
Danner is known for making high-quality, long-lasting hiking boots. And this is true of their hiking shoes, too. Inspired by the terrain of the 2,650 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, the mesh liner helped keep our feet cool and aided in breathability even on hot summer hikes. In addition to the stylish looks, we really appreciate the fantastic grip these provided. **\$149**



LIGHTWEIGHT AND PORTABLE

Wakeman Lightweight Foam Sleep Pad
The 1/2" thick premium foam material offers superior comfort to ensure a restful night's sleep. At 72-inches long, this cushy bedroll will easily fit on extra wide cots designed for adults of all shapes and sizes. Weighing only 0.6 pounds and only 7 inches tall when rolled, this lightweight mattress is convenient to pack and transport to your next adventure. The compact sleep mat has a handy carrying strap for ultimate portability. **\$45**

ROOMY RUGGED BACK PACK

REI Pinnacle 5-liter Back Country Back Pack
A good backpack that stores all the items you need with a 5-liter load space. Twelve thoughtfully placed pockets hold your belongings, such as two 20-ounce soft flasks, energy gels, a phone, and headphones, while a large compartment at the back stores extra items. **\$175**

VERSITILITY AND COMFORT

Mountain Hardwear Dynama 2 Bermuda Shorts
The fabric is technical and breathable, and the stretch is generous with the shapes of our bodies. From strenuous hikes to hour-long bike rides to movements on a yoga mat, we were able to do it all with ease. Style is likely the only concern if you're one to stray away from longer inseams, but the cut is both sporty and chic in our opinion. **\$65**

Don't forget the water

Water bottles. We all use them, but many of us don't really put much thought into it. We just use whatever vessel is lying around. If you're still sipping from that banded-up old bottle you've had for a decade, it's probably time for an upgrade.



Best water bottle overall for style, insulation & accessory options

MSRP: \$44.95
MEASURED WEIGHT: 15.8 oz.
INSULATED: Yes

Excellent insulation, many color choices, lots of accessory options, easy to add/accessories, leakproof, dishwasher safe



Ultralight, compact & affordable soft bottle

MSRP: \$44.95
MEASURED WEIGHT: 1.6 oz.
INSULATED: No

Patent-pending DuoLock™ cap won't accidentally flip or twist open, overting leaks. Clip-gate handle makes it easy to carry the bottle or securely attach it to a strap or loop.



Best durable insulated water bottle

MSRP: \$50
MEASURED WEIGHT: 1lb. 8.5 oz.
INSULATED: Yes

Top to bottom, inside and out, every inch of the 36 fl. oz. YETI Rambler vacuum bottle is brimming with quality, durability, and performance. And it's all topped with a fan-favorite Chugcap.



Best non-insulated budget bottle for everyday use

MSRP: \$16
MEASURED WEIGHT: 1lb. 8.5 oz.
INSULATED: Yes

Made from Tritan Renew copolyester—using 50% certified recycled content—the 32 fl. oz. Nalgene Sustain wide-mouth water bottle helps you lessen your impact on the environment.

Gear Hub (2 to 3 pages)

The gear you need to get the job done. Featuring local Central Coast shops, prices, and the equipment that's necessary to hike, bike, camp, backpack,

hunt, fish, hit the water, and explore more. Descriptions and top gear picks will come from local shops, outdoor activity experts, and magazine staff.