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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"California's two needs today are, first, water, and secondly, space for recreation," stated Dr. Richard A. Pimentel, of Cal Poly's Biological Sciences Department, guest naturalist on the Sierra Club walk in the Nipomo sand dunes last Sunday (September 26).

The Nipomo Dunes area is currently used extensively for a wide variety of recreation: fishing, hunting, horseback riding, clamming, hiking and dune vehicle sports. In an effort to focus public attention on the scenic recreational potential of the dunes and to build support for a dunes state park, the Sierra Club has for some time conducted outings in the area.

"At one time, there was no place in North America that had dunes superior to the dunes here. They are unique," said Dr. Pimentel, "and probably the best chance of keeping this area relatively unspoiled, would be with a park."

The Nipomo Dunes, Dr. Pimentel explained, are a special type of dune, called barchenes: formed when the prevailing winds are from one direction; whereas most dunes have two wind directions.

"This is, moreover, an area of strong winds. There are no obstructions off-shore: no islands, no reefs. We have here a very strong wave action. This helps in making sand dunes," the Cal Poly biologist said.

Questioned about the pollution study conducted under his direction, from 1957 to 1959, on the Union Oil Company's Santa Maria Refinery outfall line, located at the State Clam Reserve,

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on the seashore south of Oceano at the Nipomo Dunes, he stated: "Although we know there are phenols and hydrocarbons in the Union Oil Company's outfall, our study of the sea and tidal and intertidal area showed abundant and normal Pismo Clam population and our analysis indicated absolutely no detectable pollution. So we gave Union Oil a clean bill of health."

Questioned as to whether he believed there should be a pollution study made of the effects of coke dust on dunes vegetation and marine life prior to the construction of the proposed coke conveyor and pier by Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation, subsidiary of Union Oil Company, Dr. Pimentel indicated his agreement that such a preliminary study should be made, saying: "Coke is considered primarily inert, but when there is a potential source of danger, the situation should be studied beforehand."

Present also and concerned about possible pollution of Pismo Clams and surf fish from the proposed coke shipping project of Union Oil Company's Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation, was Mr. Dennis Doyle of the California State Department of Fish and Game.

Among the nineteen persons attentive to Dr. Pimentel's talk in the dunes was Mr. George Snyder, Superintendent of Union Oil's nearby Santa Maria Refinery, which supplies the petroleum product for manufacture of Collier Carbon's coke briquets. Currently the coke is shipped by rail in open freight cars to Stockton, where it is loaded on ocean-going freighters and shipped to foreign ports. The proposal of Collier Carbon and Chemical Corporation to build a motorized conveyor belt and pier is an effort to effect advantageous economies in meeting competition on the world coke market, stated George Ford, Superintendent of the local Collier

plant, to Mrs. Kathleen Jackson of the Sierra Club. \$3.5 million has been announced in news media as the estimated cost of the proposed coke conveyor and wharf facility.

The Sierra Club has for several years urged acquisition of the industrially owned sand dunes by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation, to preserve them for scientific study and for a scenic recreation area. The National Park Service survey of 1959 has been cited as stating that the Nipomo-Santa Maria Dunes area is unexcelled, that "Nowhere along the California coast do sand dunes of comparable scenic quality, extent and height occur."

Controversy on a county level was recently generated over the dunes by a letter from the San Luis Obispo County Planning Department, listing some dune areas among suitable lands for state parks in San Luis Obispo County. The letter was written in response to a request from Fred L. Jones, Director of the State Department of Parks and Recreation, and quoted from the original San Luis Obispo County Master Plan of Shoreline Development, passed by the County Board of Supervisors in 1948.

The Board of Supervisors at their meeting today, September 27, recommended deletion from the letter paragraphs mentioning the scenic dunes.

Mrs. Lela Burdett of San Luis Obispo, Legislation Chairman of the Santa Lucia Group of the Sierra Club, although empowered to speak for the Sierra Club, offered personal opinions, rather than speaking officially, on the value to posterity of saving the dunes for recreation space.

Also speaking for recreation use of the dunes, was recently elected President of The Dune Riders, Inc., Mr. C. L. (Chet) Cooper of Oceano.

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Other conservation and citizen groups present at the Supervisors' meeting were not heard by the supervisors, due to lack of time in the meeting.

Regular Sunday afternoon walks in the sand dunes have been conducted by the Sierra Club weekly since the spring. This weekly series has now been concluded. During the winter months one walk per month is planned, with an occasional two-day campout at Pismo State Beach, Oceano Campground.

The next outing will be an easy and leisurely two or three mile walk, scheduled for Sunday afternoon, October 10. Meeting time is 2:00 (two) p.m. Meeting place is the intersection of Highway One and Oso Flaco Lake Road. This point is 13 miles south of Pismo Beach on Highway One. Dr. Robert J. Rodin of Cal Poly's Biology Department will be guest naturalist on October 10. The public is welcome. Purpose of the outings is to invite acquaintance with the scenic dunes area of south San Luis Obispo County.

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