INTRODUCTION TO THE ABALONE ALLIANCE

This packet is a brief introduction to the Abalone Alliance. The Alliance was a major force during the late 1970's and early 80's in educating Californians about the incredible dangers involved with commercial nuclear power. The anti-nuclear power movement's success was best stated in 1984 by Forbes magazine when it called the nuclear power experiment the largest economic catastrophe in U.S. history.

Using non-violent civil disobedience tactics handed down from Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King, the Abalone Alliance came together in 1977 with the help of the Quakers to draw attention to the dangers of nuclear power and weapons. Our tools were unique. We used consensus process, giving grassroots democracy a whole new dimension. Today those tools are used by all kinds of groups who have grasped the importance of truly seeking out the feelings and concerns of each individual. From American Peace Test's Nevada Test Site actions to the U.S. Greens, consensus process as developed by the Abalone Alliance that has become an important tool, empowering Americans to become responsible for our common future with full respect for the Earth.

By the mid 1980's Ronald Reagan and friends had taken energy issues like nuclear power off the public agenda while secretly setting goals to rebuild the nuclear industry. Renewable energy and conservation funding were cut by up to 90%, even though public support had never been stronger. Grassroots groups like the Alliance started to fade from public view. Yet a few of us, seeing these plans to rebuild the nuclear industry have held on and remain today.

George Bush's blatant moves to help revive the nuclear industry is now fully public with his own National Energy Strategy. Once again the need to educate the public about the dangers of nuclear power is reaching new levels of urgency. What the Abalone Alliance has stood for in California, safe renewable energy and its immediate availability, needs to be spread across the land.

The Abalone Alliance Story

The Abalone Alliance was formed in May of 1977 when 70 activists from across California came together over concern about the plans to build and operate the Diablo Canyon nuclear facility near San Luis Obispo. The story of the Abalone Alliance's activities since 1977 are listed below. Our role of openly expressing earth oriented opposition to nuclear power has been at the heart of our existence. The Alliance's vision of a saner energy policy has always included renewable energy to the hard path agenda (see our Declaration of Nuclear Resistence). Times have changed since 1977 but the need to keep a close eye on nuclear power has never subsided. The nuclear industry is once again trying to raise its Faustian head in the guise of Bush's National Energy Strategy.

August 6, 1977 The Abalone Alliance holds its first blockade at Diablo Canyon; 47 people arrested while 1,500 people show support at a nearby rally.

August 6, 1978 487 people arrested at the gates of Diablo Canyon, while 5,000 people attend a support rally.

March 28, 1979 The Three Mile Island (TMI) accident spurs nationwide concern over nuclear power's safety.

April 7, 1979 A San Francisco rally sponsored by the Alliance's local group draws 25,000 people.

June 28, 1979 A statewide rally draws 40,000 people to San Luis Obispo. Governor Jerry Brown publicly comes out against Diablo Canyon at that rally.

Thanksgiving 1979 Alliance members hold a 38-day sit-in at Governor Brown's office to protest continued operation of the Rancho Seco reactor, a TMI twin.

June 1979 to September 1981 The Alliance organizes neighborhood outreach campaigns and educational workshops across California, while also preparing for a major blockade at Diablo Canyon in case the NRC approves the reactor's operating license.

September 10, 1981 The Alliance begins a two week blockade of Diablo Canyon during which 1,960 people are arrested. The last day of the action, it is reported that part of the reactor had been installed backwards. The NRC revokes PG&E's operating license in embarrassment.

October 1981 The Pacific Legal Foundation, part of a nationwide network of right wing legal organizations challenging the First Amendment, brings a $1 million lawsuit against the Alliance, hoping to prevent further Alliance actions. The suit takes 5 years to complete (see October, 1986).

1982-1984 While public concern shifts toward nuclear weapons, Alliance activities shift toward hearings being held concerning who will pay for Diablo Canyon.

January 13, 1984 After the NRC announces that it will license Diablo Canyon, the Alliance mobilizes the People's Emergency Response Plan, which lasts through April and results in over 600 arrests involving actions at the main gate, in the back country and at PG&E headquarters in San Luis Opispo.

June 1984 AA participates in writing the energy plank of the People's Congress platform presented to the 1984 National Democratic Convention in SF by Jesse Jackson.