



# Lagoon Tidings

## Calendar of Events

### Bird Counts

Second Monday each month,  
7:30 am–12 noon, at Rios Ave trailhead  
birds@SanElijo.org

### Docent Meetings

Second Tuesday each month,  
10 am–12 noon, at the Nature Center  
docents@SanElijo.org

### Free Guided Nature Walks

Second Saturday each month,  
9 am–11 am, at Rios Ave trailhead  
**NEW!** Every Saturday,  
10 am–11 am, at the Nature Center

### Volunteer Work Parties

Third Saturday each month,  
9 am–11 am  
Contact Geoffrey Smith  
(760) 436-3944 or  
workparties@SanElijo.org for locations

### **NEW!** Kids' Walks for Young Families

Saturday, September 5, 10 am  
"Willie the Willet and Other Waders"  
Meet at Rios Ave trailhead  
Contact Tara Fuad (760) 436-3944 or  
tara@SanElijo.org

### Lecture Series

Friday, September 11, 7 pm  
"The Past, Present, and Future of the  
San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve"  
by Doug Gibson, Executive Director and  
Principal Scientist  
MiraCosta College on Manchester Ave

### **Dont Miss! Birds of a Feather 2009**

Saturday, September 26, 5–8 pm  
Fundraising gala for SELC's  
Environmental Education Program

- Sponsorship opportunities available
- Volunteers welcome
- Auction items currently being accepted

Contact Elaine Dodge (760) 436-3944  
or elaine@SanElijo.org



## Birds of a Feather Gala to Benefit Conservancy's Environmental Education Program

**Saturday, September 26, 2009, 5–8 pm**

By Elaine Dodge, Development Director

Please join us for the *Birds of a Feather Gala*—an enchanting evening fundraiser for the Conservancy's Environmental Education program! Buy your tickets now and get set for a unique experience under the trees on the spacious lawn of Elizabeth Keadle's world famous Olympic sport horse training facility—**Clear Spring Farm** in Rancho Santa Fe, on the edge of the lagoon.

Guests will be treated to live music from the aptly named local jazz ensemble **Endangered Speciez Project**. A scrumptious dinner will be catered by **Ki's Restaurant**, known not only for its lagoon viewing location but its reputation for serving locally grown and organic produce. We are honored to have media personality **Loren Nancarrow** as our master of ceremonies.

See BOAF on page 6



Master of ceremonies  
Loren Nancarrow.



Clear Spring Farm.

Photo: Denise Stillinger

## Conservancy Launches New Land Stewardship Webpages

By Amy Trujillo, Staff Biologist

The Conservancy has recently updated its website to include information on its Land Stewardship activities. A visit to [www.SanElijo.org/stewardship](http://www.SanElijo.org/stewardship) will give you descriptions of land protection efforts throughout the watershed, descriptions of the properties owned by the Conservancy, and a variety of land protection tools available to property owners, many of which offer potential tax benefits.

See *Land Stewardship* on page 3

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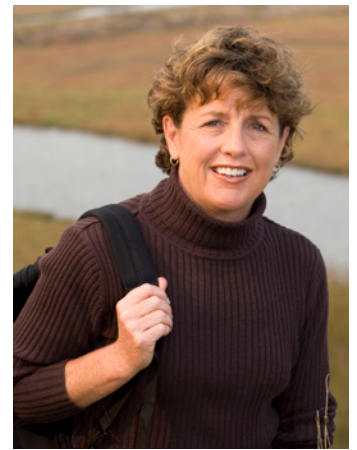
**Design:** Artefact Design

# President's Message

*By Denise Stillinger, SELC Board President*

As you can see from the diverse array of topics in this issue of *Lagoon Tidings*, the Conservancy is as busy as ever. While reading through the various articles I hope you feel a sense of pride knowing that your support makes these accomplishments possible. Whether you are interested in protecting open space, enthusiastic about environmental education, or concerned about the health and integrity of coastal wetlands, rest assured that the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy has these same goals in sight.

Among the league of Conservancy supporters are the local businesses and individuals who have once again shown their support for our environmental education program by donating to our upcoming fundraiser, "Birds of a Feather Gala". They are listed in this issue, and I invite you to join me in thanking these special members of our community the next time you visit their place of business. ❖



## WHO'S NEW?

### Geoffrey Smith Joins Conservancy Staff

Geoffrey D. Smith has joined the Conservancy staff, serving as Communications Director. His responsibilities include public and media relations, marketing, branding, electronic and print newsletter production, leveraging of emerging social networking technologies, community outreach, and volunteer coordination.

"I'm thrilled to be working with a great team of staff and volunteers, in one of the most beautiful places on earth," Geoffrey noted, while overlooking the San Elijo Lagoon on a recent sunny afternoon.

A familiar face in local environmental circles, Geoffrey most recently served as Executive Director for The Escondido Creek Conservancy. A 40-year resident of San Diego, his volunteer and professional work in the nonprofit sector has focused primarily on public lands protection with emphasis on federal wilderness and wild and scenic river legislation.

Under Geoffrey's leadership, look for the Conservancy to continue to engage and connect with our members and the local community, while expanding our influence to new constituencies.

Geoffrey holds a BA in Biology from the University of California, San Diego, and an MA in Leadership and Nonprofit Management from the University of San Diego. He worked for over 20 years as a software engineer before pursuing his new career path in the nonprofit sector ten years ago.

Our best wishes are extended to departing Outreach Coordinator Ralph Achenbach, who has embarked on an exciting new career path as a Yoga practitioner.



The new pages will also give you a place to express what it is that you love about your property along Escondido Creek and the San Elijo Lagoon. Visit the stewardship webpage and click on the “appreciate” link to check it out. You can submit your original poems, essays, photos, or other media describing what Escondido Creek inspires in you. Your neighbor Kim MacConnel has graciously offered to provide the first submission—a description of the many surprises he has encountered along Escondido Creek:

*“Living on Escondido Creek has been a constant pleasure over the last nearly thirty years. Given that we live in a fairly dense sub-urban environment, the wildness of this small corridor of creek, willow, and wetland can be truly a surprise. The phrase of a songbird, like a Bell’s Vireo, heard but not seen in the willow thickets, or the particular throaty screech and “chuckling” of a Black-crowned Night Heron from its secretive roost by the pond. The overwhelming loudness of the frogs after the first rain. The Swallows suddenly filling the sky,*

*the same with the ever growing flock of White Faced Ibis, or the first faint honking of the Geese returning in December. All these things come to punctuate time.*

*“In a way, though, it also comes to be background for the unexpected: all the rattlesnakes that got washed down stream in the 1994 rains; or, the year before, coming across the tracks of the first deer to venture this far west. Now that there are several families of deer it shouldn’t be a surprise that Mountain Lion have followed, but the tracks of a 140 pound “Lion” just steps from the back door can only be described as a SURPRISE.*

*“There are always the muddy paws of Raccoons on the white wall where they come through on their way to check out the fish in the cow tanks—now covered with a wire canopy to keep them and the Herons, Egrets, Kingfishers, Coyotes, and not a few Hawks from eating every last fish.”*

~ Kim MacConnel

## SELC Scientists Participate in Regional Monitoring Program

### Conservancy is One of Over 60 Agencies in “Bight ‘08” Monitoring Project

By Barry Lindgren, Staff Scientist

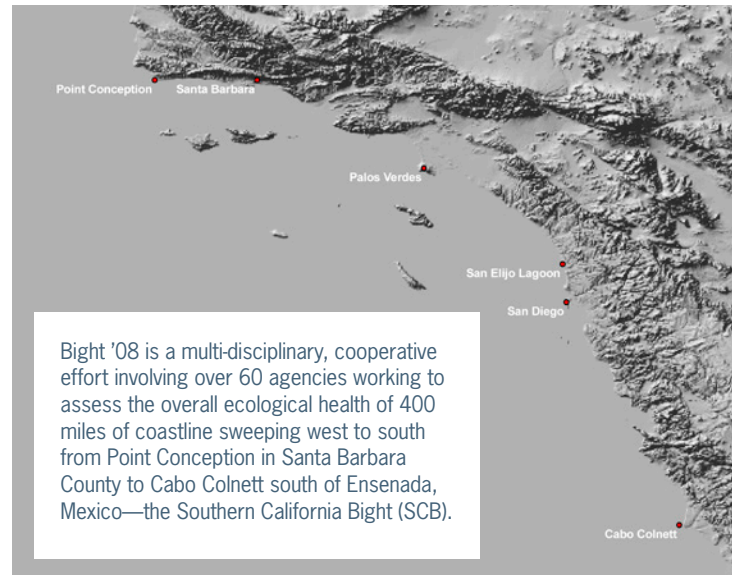
San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy is collaborating with other technical teams in southern California to improve our understanding of the magnitude and extent of eutrophication\* in coastal receiving waters. Eutrophication in estuaries like San Elijo Lagoon is a global environmental issue closely associated with human disturbance in watersheds, increased nutrient loading from activities like agriculture, harmful algal blooms, hypoxia (lack of oxygen in aquatic habitats) and impacts on aquatic food webs.

Beginning in November of 2008, SELC staff has gathered samples every two months from three different locations in the Lagoon in order to quantify the types and coverage of “primary producers”, such as kelp (algae) and submerged aquatic vegetation, and to assess various constituents of water such as nitrogen, phosphorous and chlorophyll. In addition, SELC also maintains a computer-controlled “datasonde” that remains submerged in the Lagoon, measuring dissolved oxygen, temperature, conductivity, turbidity and chlorophyll concentrations every 15 minutes. This study will conclude in October of 2009.

The Eutrophication Assessment comprises the ‘Coastal Wetlands and Estuaries’ element of the much larger Southern California Bight 2008 Regional Monitoring Project (“Bight ‘08”). Bight ‘08 is a multi-disciplinary, cooperative effort involving over 60 agencies working to assess the overall ecological health of 400 miles of coastline sweeping west to south from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to Cabo Colnett south of Ensenada, Mexico—the Southern California Bight (SCB). In these waters, subtropical northerly flows hug the shoreline while subarctic waters flow south offshore creating a unique



Photo: Amy Trujillo



circulation pattern that creates a biological transition zone that supports 500 marine fish species and more than 5,000 invertebrate species.

The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) of Costa Mesa, CA initiated a series of coordinated, regional monitoring efforts—of which Bight ‘08 is a part—to improve the efficacy of existing monitoring programs and the southern California region’s capacity for regional assessments. ❖

*\*Eutrophication: Depletion of oxygen in water. The process by which a body of water becomes rich in dissolved nutrients from fertilizers or sewage, thereby encouraging the growth and decomposition of oxygen-depleting plant life and resulting in harm to other organisms (Encarta Dictionary)*

# Docents of the Quarter



By Tara Fuad, Education Director

Meet weekend nature walk wonders Elizabeth Venrick and Janine Free. Elizabeth and Janine have made an excellent team, working together nearly every Saturday since the opening of the Nature Center in January, 2009. Their leadership and commitment led to our established Saturday walks, which are now covered by four rotating docents, allowing Elizabeth and Janine to take back some of their Saturdays.

Elizabeth holds a Ph.D., spent her entire career as a Research Oceanographer at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and continues to conduct research as an RTAD (returned to active duty), which is equivalent to Professor Emeritus for researchers. She is a current Conservancy board member, Cardiff resident, and native plant gardener with an undergraduate degree in Botany, so becoming a docent at the lagoon was a natural fit. She graduated from docent training in the spring of 2006, and now participates in the monthly bird walks, serves as a county volunteer at the desk at the Nature Center, leads the 4th Saturday walks at the Nature Center, and helps out at the 2nd Saturday walks at Rios Avenue.

A trained librarian, Janine retired from Qulacomm as a research librarian three years ago. Not missing a beat, upon retiring, Janine filled her time giving back to the community by offering her professional skills to the City of Encinitas public library, and sharing her lifetime passion for nature with the Conservancy, the Encinitas community garden, and the County. "I've always been an avid hiker, and passionate about nature—so it's wonderful now to be able to share my passion with others," noted Janine. But her skills don't stop there. A natural communicator and accomplished photographer, Janine helps represent and photograph the Conservancy at community events, seamlessly alternating among her many skills.

A native of Sacramento, Nancy Jong, her husband, and two kids moved to San Diego in 2003 following a three year stint in London. Nancy has always enjoyed the outdoors and recalls taking her two kids who are now nearly grown—a daughter in college and a son a senior in high school—on hikes when they were younger. An elementary school speech therapist by training and having worked in the San Francisco school district for many years, Nancy is a natural with the kids. "It's been 9 years since I worked professionally with kids, so I really missed being around them... I enjoy the things they say and how they view the world," noted Nancy. Nancy graduated in the docent class of 2008 and immediately hit the trails, leading more walks than any other docent in the spring of 2009! Although Nancy is a new face to the "Conservancy Family", with her natural ability to teach, willingness to lead walks and serve on special committees, it seems she has been with us for much longer. It is hard to imagine how we managed without her. A big thanks to Elizabeth, Janine and Nancy for their outstanding contributions to the Conservancy, and to the community. You are wonderful role models for us all. ❖



Elizabeth Venrick on the left, and Janine Free. Photo: Tara Fuad



Nancy Jong. Photo: Tara Fuad

## VIEW IT ONLINE



### ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

You can get your personal copy at  
[www.SanElijo.org/publications](http://www.SanElijo.org/publications)

### Fence Lizards

By Tara Fuad

If you have ever visited the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, you have probably seen me. I'm all over the place, along the trails, and boldly sunning myself atop rocks and fence posts. How do you think I got my name, Western Fence Lizard? That alone says a lot about me. I live in the west, along the coast as far north as Oregon, as far south as Baja California, and even up in the mountains (but not in the desert). I like to sit on posts.

There's another name that people like to call me, and that's the blue bellied lizard. Can you guess why? The name gives it away, but did you know that only the males have blue bellies? But let's go back to the fence post. Not only does this position allow me to soak up the sun, but it also allows me to look for yummy insects, and watch out for scary predators. Did you ever think of a lizard as a yummy morsel of food? Or did you just think...yuk? Snakes, hawks, and mammals think I'm quite tasty (like pizza), and king snakes and striped racers think I am absolutely delicious (like cookie dough ice cream, yum!) To prevent from being eaten, I can move really fast, or change my color to match my background. If you visit the lagoon in August, look around for baby lizards, but be sure to walk quietly and look carefully—they will only be 2 inches long.

Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*)



#### Take the Fence Lizard Quiz (T or F):

- 1) We like to live in the desert.
- 2) We all have blue bellies.
- 3) I can change my color to match my background.
- 4) King snakes think we taste delicious.
- 5) You will be able to find baby lizards in the reserve in January.

## Become a trained naturalist at the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve!

Fall 2009 training starts October 6th

**REGISTER NOW!**

#### Training dates (Tuesdays):

October 6, 13, 20, 27 and November 3, 10, 17  
9 am to 12 noon

#### Location:

San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center  
210 Manchester Ave  
Cardiff-by-the-Sea

#### Fee (to cover cost of materials):

SELC members: \$70.00  
Non-members: \$100.00 (includes membership, a \$35 value)

Please contact Tara Fuad at (760) 436-3944 or tara@SanElijo.org



This year we're treating our guests to a lively auction facilitated by **Richard Houk**. We will offer a wide array of silent and live auction items, including tickets for popular theater productions and weekend getaways at romantic vacation destinations. Featured will be a selection of rare and unique wines donated from the cellars of our cultured conservancy connoisseurs. Bid on some exciting items including...

- **A Bird's Eye View of the San Elijo Lagoon**—fly over the Reserve in a private plane piloted by Dave Stillinger, husband of our Board President.
- **Four VIP passes to the 2010 Long Beach Grand Prix**—two days, meals included.
- **3-Night La Petite Spa Package at Cal-a-Vie**—named by Travel + Leisure as 2008 World's Best #1 Destination Spa.
- **Sushi at San Elijo**—a private party of 10 will be treated to an after-hours dinner prepared by Zenbu master sushi chef Tim Johnson and served on the deck of the new San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center.
- **Ski Deer Valley**—a one week stay in Deer Valley, Utah at a luxury condo located mid-slope, [www.skicondodeervalley.com](http://www.skicondodeervalley.com).

Learn more about *Birds of a Feather* at our website [www.SanElijo.org/gala](http://www.SanElijo.org/gala). Tickets are \$125 and advanced registration is required. Seating is limited. Our last *Birds of a Feather* Gala sold out early, so don't delay! It will be an affair to remember ~ *especially with you there!* Tickets can be purchased on-line at our website or call the office at 760-436-3944. ♦

#### Photo of the Week

This photo was taken by Ben Stillinger near the Holmwood Canyon trailhead in June. Look carefully to see the crab spider nestled inside the Weed's mariposa lily.

Each week, the Conservancy's web site features another image taken by community members throughout the reserve. Submit your images to [photos@SanElijo.org](mailto:photos@SanElijo.org).



*Your table is waiting! Guests at the 2007 Birds of a Feather Gala mingling before sitting down to a feast.*

## Ways of Giving

### Gifts In-Kind

**Thanks to the following supporters for their gifts of time and materials:**

- Lynne Friedmann, Docent, for 40 mini clipboards and a box of golf pencils to the Education Program
- Steve Gebler Studios for Adobe Photoshop software training
- Emmy Garnica for a filing cabinet

We're looking for a 5' x 8' enclosed 'cargo' trailer to support our restoration and outreach work. Do you have one gathering dust? We'll shine it up and put it to good use! Call Geoffrey at the office.

### Grants

**The Conservancy is grateful for the grant support of these agencies:**

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, County of San Diego, District 3: Local Community Projects Grants, to develop an educational brochure and a wetlands teacher's guide

City of Encinitas and Mizel Family Foundation Community Grant Program: To sponsor a lecture series coupled with a series of nature walks that will track seasonal changes in the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve

Union Bank: To continue supporting the Education Program

Wetlands Recovery Project, with funding by the Earth Island Institute: For the teen education/restoration/stewardship program titled "Teens Restoring Sensitive Wetlands Habitat at San Elijo Lagoon"

California Department of Transportation, Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP): For restoration and enhancement of San Elijo Lagoon through improved tidal circulation

# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS



The following businesses and individual are supporting our *Birds of a Feather* Gala. Please join the Conservancy in expressing gratitude and appreciation, especially the next time you step through their doors.

## SPONSORS



Board of Supervisors at the  
recommendation of Supervisor  
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## Birds of a Feather Auction Item Donors

Adventure 16	Kathy and Fred Dickey
Business Agent of Jake Peavy	Kern & Co.
Amy Trujillo	La Jolla Symphony
Birch Aquarium at Scripps	Libby Scott
Bodywear Boutique	Linda's Nails & Reflexology
Cal-a-Vie The Spa Havens	Lomas Santa Fe
Carizma	Country Club
Carlsbad Inn	Margaret Parry
Cathie Dixon	Mary Oren
Cathy Santone, DDS	Moana Designs
Cedros Gardens	Movin' Shoes
Cedros Soles	Objects of Desire
Dave Stillinger	Omni Hotel San Diego
David Allen Collection	One of a Kind Ceramics
Del Mar Lifeguards	PacifiKai Salon & Spa
Detour Salon	Pizza Nova
Diane Dudek	Poseidon Restaurant
Dot Renshaw	Queen Eileen's
Dr. Phil Show	Q'uevo Restaurant
Downtown Encinitas	Rimel's Rotisserie
Mainstreet Association	Salon Salon
E Street Café	Shampoo Too
East Coast Pizza	SoulScape
Emmy Garnica	spa Violet
Endangered Speciez	St. Tropez Bakery & Bistro
Eye Gallery	Klinsky Ceramics
Fielder Mattox CFP	Terry Mullis
Firenze Trattoria	The 3rd Corner
First Street Gallery	The Beach House
Frank Varnell	The Fish Market Seafood
Gary Johnson Studio	Market & Restaurant
Gordon Dixon, DDS	Thyme in the Ranch
Gregory Balogh	Toni Williams Art
Grounded	Trios Gallery
Hansen Surfboards	Vertical Hold
Harlan Jewelers	Vigilucci's
Heather KiNCH Studio	Wade Koniakowsky Fine Art
Islands Restaurant	Warner Springs Ranch
Jack and Patty Queen	Art 'n Sol: Fine Art by
Jennifer Nelson Photography	Wendy Gauntlett-Shaw
Joan J. Grine Artist	When in Rome Restaurant
John Moseley Fine Art	Wine Steals
John Rowe	Zenbu Sushi
John and Valerie Zagara	Zinc Café & Market
Chef Josef Lageder	

## UNDERWRITERS

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# San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY

*Preserving, protecting and enhancing the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve and its watershed*

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Thanks for helping save paper!



Please join the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy in celebrating:



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**Birds of a Feather**

THE SAN ELIJO LAGOON CONSERVANCY  
2009 FUNDRAISING GALA

**Saturday, September 26 5pm - 8pm**  
**Clear Spring Farm in Rancho Santa Fe**

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For information on sponsoring upcoming issues in 2009, please contact Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944 or [elaine@SanElijo.org](mailto:elaine@SanElijo.org).