



San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY

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

Winter 2010

Lagoon Tidings

Calendar of Events

Bird Counts

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

Docent Meetings

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

Free Guided Nature Walks

Second Saturday each month
9 am–11 am, at Rios Ave trailhead

Every Saturday each month
10 am–11 am, at the Nature Center

Saturday, April 17

Hike from Rancho Santa Fe to the coast
Refer to Education, page 5 for details

Volunteer Work Parties

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

••••• FREE LECTURE SERIES •••••

MiraCosta College, San Elijo Campus
3333 Manchester Avenue, Encinitas, CA

Friday, March 26th

1 pm, Room SAN 201
Speaker: Margaret Fillius
Topic: Wildflowers of the Lagoon
Field Hike: Margaret will lead a walk
on Sunday, March 28, 10 am–Noon
beginning at Rios Ave trailhead

Friday, April 23rd

7 pm, Room SAN 925
Speaker: Michael Klein
Topic: Insects: One of Nature's Helpers
in Plant Reproduction
Field Hike: Michael Klein will lead a walk
on Saturday, April 24, 10 am–Noon
beginning at Santa Carina trailhead



San Elijo Lagoon Day 2010 **FREE**

Fun for the entire family on Saturday,
May 15, 10 am to 3 pm, at the Nature
Center. **Save the date!**



Sand berm forming across Lagoon Inlet in July 2009.

Photo: Ben Stillinger

Opening the Lagoon Inlet:

Regional Impacts are Managed Locally

By Barry Lindgren, Staff Scientist

Did you ever wonder why all that heavy equipment appears in the San Elijo Lagoon Inlet each spring? Or why, early one morning each week, someone in waders and a red safety vest marches up and down Manchester Ave., tossing an instrument into the water every now and again?

These activities are all part of an important maintenance activity managed locally by your San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy to optimize tidal circulation throughout the Lagoon. The small opening just south of the San Elijo State Beach Campground is the Lagoon's only access to the Pacific Ocean and, left unattended, would remain closed most of the year from buildups of sand transported by high incoming tides, surf and storm surges. See *Lagoon Inlet* on page 3

Amy Trujillo Receives Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship

Amy Trujillo, Conservancy Staff Biologist, is the recipient of a national fellowship designed to advance the work of individuals with outstanding leadership potential to help shape a brighter environmental future. Amy is one of 40 individuals nationwide selected as a 2009 TogetherGreen Fellow. The TogetherGreen Fellowship offers specialized training in conservation planning and execution, the chance to work and share best practices with gifted conservation professionals, and assistance with project outreach and evaluation. Each Fellow receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health. See *Amy Trujillo* on page 6

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President's Message

By Denise Stilling, President

As we welcome in 2010 I marvel at the long list of donors who provide essential financial support for San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy through their membership. Thank you to all listed in this issue for acting locally by contributing to SELC. In December the Conservancy acted locally by adding six community members to its board of directors. Five new directors voted in at our annual meeting previously demonstrated their dedication to our organization through their volunteerism and membership in our President's Council and our Legacy Circle. Each of the new directors is profiled in this issue. 2010 also brings a change in the leadership of the President's Council. Neil Hokanson will take over the role of chair from the able hands of John Seiber who provided strong guidance for the past two years. As chair of the President's Council, Neil will be an ex-officio member of the board of directors. Such an influx of talent and expertise will further assist the Conservancy as we continue to preserve, protect and enhance San Elijo Lagoon and its watershed. In addition to welcoming our five new directors and the new chair of the President's Council, we also bid farewell to long-term board member Andy Mauro. Much thanks to Andy and John for all their years of service to our organization. ♦



Denise Stilling *Photo: Sally Foster*

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Conservancy has reaped a rich harvest of dedicated and talented new board members beginning 2010! These individuals have made the important decision to serve the Conservancy as directors and to share their time, treasure, and talent to assist in furthering the goals of this organization. Please welcome—and thank!—these wonderful leaders...

Doug Gillingham

Doug went for a run on the Lagoon trails the day he moved to Solana Beach in 1989, and has been a Lagoon fan and Conservancy supporter ever since. He has been known to run enthusiastically through the house on that one particular late afternoon each November, calling his wife and daughters outside to welcome the returning geese as they swoop and honk over the neighborhood before settling down for the night in the Lagoon. The kids worry about him... Doug hopes to help the Conservancy continue to advance its mission to protect and enhance the lagoon, and in particular to help with the challenges and opportunities presented by the planned Lagoon Restoration. Doug works as a licensed civil engineer consulting in the areas of water supply planning and engineering for public and private clients.

**Pastor Bill Harman**

Pastor Bill's interest in the Conservancy stems from his environmental concerns and expressing those concerns in our local setting. He feels that, as a retired Lutheran pastor, part of his Christian faith calls upon him to be concerned for God's creation. Pastor Bill hopes his presence on the Board can help to make the Conservancy better known in our area, and that he can contribute to its educational goals. Pastor Bill serves as part time teacher and Development Director at the Grauer School which has worked closely with the Conservancy over the years. He has been married to Patricia since 1965 and they have two sons and two granddaughters.



It has been decades since San Elijo Lagoon enjoyed its natural, unencumbered communication with the ocean. Human modifications to area hydrology occurred at a rapid pace after the 1880s. The first bridge and berm crossing the Lagoon was constructed in 1887 for the Santa Fe Railroad, followed by Highway 101 (1891) and the completion of the Interstate 5 crossing in 1965, effectively dividing the original wetland in half. This “partitioning” of the Lagoon created altered flow paths for both fresh and saltwater, leading to accelerated sediment deposition, dramatically reduced water quality and a reduction in native estuarine habitats due to increased runoff from continuing development upstream.

Ensuring proper tidal circulation throughout the Lagoon requires mechanical dredging of the inlet. A small maintenance operation is performed each winter/early spring to breach the sand berm that typically forms west of Highway 101. Later in the spring, after the winter storm cycle, a larger dredging operation removes sand accumulations east of Highway 101 and under the Highway 101 bridge. Clean sand removed from the tidal channel is deposited south, onto Cardiff State Beach. Conservancy staff directly manage these activities.

Thanks to funding from the California State Coastal Conservancy and CalTrans, Conservancy efforts over the past ten years to improve tidal circulation have demonstrated significant ecological benefits as evidenced by increased species diversity and abundance of fish, improved water quality, reduced production of mosquitoes and flies, increased foraging by birds, and expanded nesting areas for the Lagoon’s most sensitive species, such as Savannah sparrow and Clapper rail.



Water quality monitoring stations are located throughout the Lagoon.

Annual biological and weekly physiochemical monitoring by Conservancy staff is needed each year to comply with permit requirements for the dredging operations, and to ensure that water quality parameters critical to wildlife health are being maintained. This information is used by the Conservancy, the wildlife agencies and Reserve stakeholders to develop the adaptive management strategies that will ultimately preserve this precious oasis in the middle of our community for generations to come. ❖

Neil Hokanson

A lifelong outdoorsman, Neil is a native Californian, a UC Irvine graduate, and a long-time area resident residing in Cardiff with his wife Clarice. Neil is the President of Hokanson Associates, a wealth management firm that has served San Diego residents since 1987. Neil has served as past president of the Olivenhain Town Council and the Encinitas Coastal Rotary Club, and on the board of both San Diego (Quail) Botanic Gardens and the Community Resource Center. Currently, Neil is a Director of the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation and serves on the Audit Committee of AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination.) Neil’s favorite hobbies include gardening, cooking and beach volleyball.



Paul Worthington

Paul has lived in North County all his life, where he has devoted his life to service through leadership in his profession and his community. He enjoys running along the trails in the Lagoon, and is a regular and tireless worker at the monthly 3rd Saturday restoration events, where he can often be seen quietly taking a lead role—no doubt due to his skill and interest in landscape design! Paul has been a professional realtor for 30 years, currently working for Sea Coast Exclusive Properties. He serves as President of the Board of the Sunland Home Foundation, and has graciously agreed to serve as the Conservancy Board Treasurer—a very important role!



Linda Jones, Ph.D.

Linda retired from NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration) Fisheries in 2006, having worked as a marine mammal scientist and as the Deputy Science Director of the NW Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. Since returning to San Diego, she reinstituted her love of the Lagoon, first with the monthly bird counts and then as a volunteer for the Conservancy’s biennial *Birds of a Feather* Gala. She is currently a member and Treasurer of the Encinitas Community Garden committee and is a trainee for the Master Gardeners program.



Art Yayanos, Ph.D.

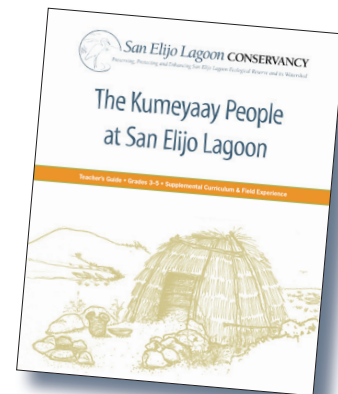
Art is a Professor Emeritus at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCSD where for over 35 years he conducted research in deep-sea biology, radiation biology, and high pressure physical chemistry. He currently serves on the boards of the Rancho Santa Fe Library Guild and Goodwill Industries of San Diego. Sandy, his wife and a docent, and he are fascinated by the diversity of life on Earth, and are strong proponents for the preservation and research of wetlands and for their use in the education of children and adults.



Education Update

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

Education program staff and volunteers have been busy recruiting and training new docents, developing educational materials for docents and teachers, and providing opportunities for people of all ages and walks of life to enjoy and learn about the Lagoon. So who are the majority of visitors who come to the Lagoon? I decided to take a closer look and learned that the little folks, grades K–3, were the most frequent visitors in 2009, representing 38% of the total docent led walks. Thankfully, we have many docents who are exceptionally talented with this age group, ensuring that the kids not only have a great time, but leave with an appreciation and better understanding of the importance of protecting wetlands. The next largest group was represented by our weekend visitors who take advantage of our weekly walks every Saturday at the Nature Center, and every second Saturday at Rios Ave. Fortunately, again, we have a regular crew of weekend docents who provide the community with these free outings. Special requests took a strong third place, representing community groups such as senior centers, photography clubs, and members from the Braille Institute.



In order to accomplish all this, it truly takes a collective effort, and our docents are not only leading walks, but also working behind the scenes to ensure that quality, age-appropriate programs are offered to schools and the public. The first of a series of Teacher Packets was completed in late 2009 called the 'Kumeyaay People of San Elijo Lagoon.' This 20 page document includes teacher lessons as well as plant cards to help teach students about the ethnobotany of lagoon plants. The document is available for download on our website education page. Production of this packet was made possible by a generous grant from Union Bank.

New Committees

The Education program recently formed two new committees to provide advice and feedback about programs the Conservancy offers and educational materials the Conservancy develops. One committee is comprised of docents, while the other committee is made up of elementary school teachers from five different school districts. If you are interested in learning more about these committees and/or getting involved, please contact tara@SanElijo.org. We would like to thank the following committee members for volunteering their time and expertise to ensure the Conservancy continues to provide quality programs to schools and the public:

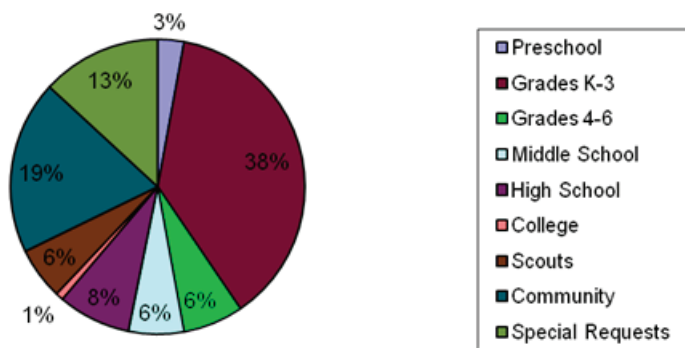
Education Committee

Kathy Dickey, Nancy Jong, Jayne Lesley, Suzanne McAllister, Carol Rayes, Ed Slater, Barbara Wallach, Kimberly Wesbey.

Teacher Advisory Committee

Julianne Clark, Phyllis Krone, Stacey Halboth, Jan Hamilton, Debbie Hanna, Nancy Kamp, Kathleen Lindemann, Janel Maud, Meredith Mills.

Docent Led Walks 2009



Twenty-one docents graduate from class of 2009

Congratulations to the Docent Class of 2009: (from left to right) Denise Croft, Jeanine Dreifuss, Janet Anderson, Joyce Smith, Lillian Scott Leslie, Denise Stillinger, Karen Larsen Gordon, Christine Bruington, Iris Godbout, Tara Fuad, Emmy Garnica, Kris Vensand, Darlene Shaffer, Edward Slater, Kaveh Barjesteh, Mark Bellows, Hal Handley, Geoffrey Smith, David Cowan (Not pictured: Tim Clancy, Debbie Patnaude, Kristy Porteous, Debbie Sandler.)

Photo: John Glascock



Docents of the Quarter

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

Meet Docents of the Quarter Carol Rayes and Jayne Lesley, residents of Cardiff and Solana Beach, respectively. Carol and Jayne are both graduates of the docent class of 2008, and have volunteered numerous hours leading walks, as well as serving on the Education Committee, providing advice and oversight to the Education Program. Although they both tend to keep a low profile publicly, they are behind the scenes worker bees, and are experts when it comes to turning school children onto nature, opening their worlds to the treasures of the Lagoon.



Jayne Lesley
Photo: Geoffrey Smith

"I actually enjoy all age groups," noted Jayne Lesley, "they all ask different questions...and you never quite know what is going to grab their attention, which makes leading the walks interesting, and of course, also challenging." Although Jayne has become more involved in the Conservancy since she retired after a 30 year career as an immunology/cancer researcher at the prestigious Salk Institute in 2002, Jayne has been a supporter of the Lagoon and the Conservancy in a multitude of ways for decades. Dating back to the 1970s, Jayne helped gather petitions

to prevent the Lagoon from being developed, helped raise money for the purchase of Holmwood Canyon, and was a participant in the original 10-year bird survey of the Lagoon conducted from 1973–1983. An excellent birder and teacher of birding, Jayne continues to conduct the bird surveys in San Elijo Lagoon, and has recently started surveying the San Dieguito River Park as well. In her spare time, when she's not leading a walk or conducting a bird survey, Jayne enjoys trail riding and camping with her horse.

When Carol Rayes isn't jetting across the globe, either for her 30+ year career as a flight attendant or for leisure, she squeezes in as many walks as she can, and prefers the little tykes with their abundant energy and inquisitive minds. "I was shocked to learn that the average child is spending 8 hours per day plugged into a computer, iPod, or some other electronic device," noted Carol, "and I decided it was time to help them get 'unplugged'." Carol added that "becoming a docent seemed like a great way to both help this generation of nature deprived kids, as well as satisfy my own curious mind about all the interesting plants I encountered while hiking the Lagoon." Keeping calm and cool with a rowdy group of kids might throw some folks off, but this does not seem to intimidate Carol. When asked what her secret is, she smiles, noting that having been a camp counselor and swim instructor in her younger years probably provided for excellent training.

Thank you Jayne and Carol for sharing your talents with the Conservancy. We greatly appreciate all you do!



Carol Rayes
Photo: John Rayes

Lagoon Day 2010

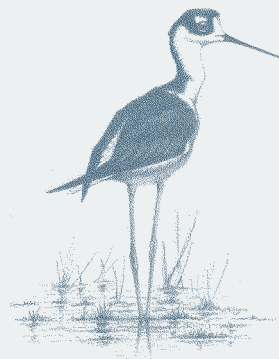
Saturday, May 15, 10 am–3 pm.



Save the Date!

Hikes, games, family fun and learning!
Look for more information in the Spring edition of *Lagoon Tidings*, and check the Conservancy website.

Take a Hike!



Join us on a hike from Rancho Santa Fe all the way to the coast on Saturday, April 17. Meet at La Orilla trailhead at 9 am and hike to Rios Ave., exploring the diversity along the way. During the 2.5 mile hike, you will traverse through riparian, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, freshwater and saltwater marsh plant communities. Transportation will be provided back to your cars. The walk is limited to 10 adult participants, so please RSVP Tara at tara@SanElijo.org.



Amy Trujillo continued from Page 1

For her fellowship, Amy will focus on bringing San Elijo Lagoon and Escondido Creek communities into a discussion about San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy's properties. By approaching neighbor concerns in a cooperative and non-confrontational manner, Trujillo hopes to transform neighbors into stewards of the local watershed environments. Engaging neighboring landowners in a dialogue about their concerns and developing various management strategies will help create mutually agreeable solutions—benefiting San Elijo Lagoon, Escondido Creek, and their neighbors.

Amy currently serves as Staff Biologist for San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. In that capacity, she coordinates field crews and Land Stewardship Program activities, writes management plans, and provides GIS support to all teams.

“Amy is the kind of person who can make a real difference in the health of our environment and the quality of our future,” said Audubon President John Flicker. “Each of our TogetherGreen Fellows demonstrates exceptional environmental understanding and commitment, combined with tremendous potential to inspire and lead others. Together, they represent the talented and diverse leadership the environmental community will need to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us now and in the years to come.”

“At the Conservancy we recognize that excluding people from nature without addressing their needs will ultimately undermine conservation efforts. We must work to address issues important to our neighbors while maintaining our commitment to protecting this rare resource. The TogetherGreen program will help us bridge this gap,” said Trujillo.

Amy has been affiliated with San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy since 2001.

Amy received her Bachelor's degree in ecology, behavior, and evolution from the University of California, San Diego. A dedicated environmental scientist, she previously worked at San Diego Wild Animal Park and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

“We must engage the best and brightest leaders representing the broadest and most diverse communities in this country to solve our ever more complex conservation challenges,” said Diane Wood, President, National Environmental Education Foundation. “TogetherGreen is a creative program that uncovers such leaders, nurtures their talents, supports their dedication to conservation and holds them up to inspire others to follow.”



Amy Trujillo

Photo: Justin Trujillo



About TogetherGreen

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year TogetherGreen initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. To date, 80 environmental leaders—half from within Audubon

and half from outside organizations—have received TogetherGreen Fellowships to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide. For more information, visit www.togethergreen.org.

communications



Find us at www.facebook.com/sanelijo.
This 'viral networking' technology is revolutionizing the way we communicate!

RECENT

Grants Received

The Conservancy gratefully acknowledges this grant received in January:

San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative (SDCaN) with funding from Sempra Energy Foundation—to help create a model pilot program for 'Nearby Nature' School Field Trips.



California Buckwheat
Eriogonum fasciculatum

DEVELOPMENTS

Ways of Giving...

Thinking Globally... and Acting Locally

By Geoffrey Smith, Communications Director

This 'Ways of Giving' section of *Lagoon Tidings* is typically devoted to highlighting the myriad ways in which Conservancy members can support our mission with their pocket books. The financial support of our members and sponsors is very much appreciated, and allows the Conservancy's mission to unfold in ever new and effective ways. But there is more to giving than merely financial—our actions in the local community are very important components of the work we do to “preserve, protect and enhance the Lagoon and its watershed.”

'Think Globally, Act Locally'. This mantra has been around for decades, yet its message is more significant today than ever. With a renewed focus on global climate change, 'localization' means acting locally...



Choosing where we shop is a way to take local action. By supporting businesses which utilize locally produced materials, we are thinking globally. The Conservancy's neighbors in Cardiff Town Center, Rimel's Rotisserie and Zenbu Sushi, have built a loyal clientele by providing local sustainably produced foods. Owner Matt Rimel, and his business partner Thad Benshoof, procure local fish by partnering with fishing boats through their 'Ocean Giant' company. As their web site proudly proclaims, “Driven by the concept of oceanic and environmental sustainability, Zenbu relies on its own seafood company to provide fresh fish daily... and offers locally-raised all natural grass-fed beef.” Their beef is produced locally by business partner Joel Mendenhall on a ranch on Palomar Mountain. As Thad told this reporter, “These buying practices keep the dollars in companies/families that use sustainable practices, and this helps sustain the local economy.”

We can make a statement when we purchase our groceries, too. The proliferation of local farmer's markets in Leucadia, San Marcos (pictured), Encinitas, Solana Beach and other communities, has brought fun and community back into the process of putting food on the table at home—all the while supporting local growers and producers of food.

How we spend our leisure time is a way to take action locally. Dozens of citizens volunteer at our 3rd Saturday restoration events each month, giving back to the Lagoon in fun and rejuvenating ways. Through their efforts we are able to manage harmful invasive plants, remove toxic trash, plant native species of trees and plants, and remove structures which are harmful to the natural systems of the Lagoon.



Photo: San Diego County Farm Bureau

Pictured are some of the more than 70 volunteers who worked on a fuels management project in January, using protocols developed by the Conservancy, and designed to reduce impacts to the habitat while providing fire safety to the homes there.



We take our message to the streets—street fairs to be exact! Conservancy staff and volunteers frequent numerous community fairs, festivals, and gatherings every year, bringing our message of local engagement to address global problems. The recent 'Founder's Day' event at Cabrillo National Monument is just one example. Below, then Conservancy board member Andy Mauro talks about avian nesting behaviors with some inquisitive visitors.

Photos: Geoffrey Smith

So what will you do tomorrow in your community?





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For information on sponsoring upcoming issues, please contact Geoffrey Smith at (760) 436-3944 or geoffrey@SanElijo.org.