



Lagoon Tidings

Conservancy Calendar

Roxy Jam Cardiff:

Friday, September 19 – Sunday, September 21, check the Conservancy website for details: www.SanElijo.org

Fall docent training:

Wednesdays, October 8, 15, 22 and 29 & November 5, 12, and 19, 9 am–12 noon, Cardiff Public Library. Contact Tara Fuad at (760) 436-3944 or tara@SanElijo.org.

Major donor reception:

Sunday, November 2, by invitation only. Contact Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944 or elaine@SanElijo.org.

Monthly bird counts:

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

Docent meetings:

Second Tuesday each month, 10:30–12 noon, at Cardiff Public Library. Contact docents@SanElijo.org.

Free guided nature walks:

Second Saturday each month, 9 am–11 am, at Rios Ave trail head.

Volunteer work parties:

Third Saturday each month, 9 am–11 am. Contact Ralph Achenbach at (760) 436-3944 or ralph@SanElijo.org for locations.

2009 Lagoon Day & BioBlitz:

Friday, May 15 - Saturday, May 16, 2009.



For directions, visit www.SanElijo.org.

Plants Can Also Be Plagues

Conservancy works hard to restore natural habitats



SELC volunteer Jessica Boshears during a recent volunteer work party assisting in the removal of invasive searocket in the dunes area.

By Ralph Achenbach, Outreach Coordinator: The sun is clearing away the last of the morning mist along the creek, butterflies are dancing to the warbling song of a wren, and the shrubs reverberate with the chorus of crickets. Before us in the balmy breeze, tall tufted heads of silvery grass are swaying to and fro, mimicking the waves of the nearby ocean. As the eye wanders to the horizon, the gently undulating stands seemingly reflect the tranquility of the azure blue sky above. Another day in paradise?

Not quite. Amy Trujillo, the SELC's biologist, is devastated at the sight. "Pampas grass is an exotic species which suffocates native plants on which many native animals and our ecosystem depend. The grass takes over, impacting ecosystem processes like groundwater recharge and decimating biodiversity." *Continued on page 4.*

New Program Builds Community

Conservancy enhances outreach to lagoon neighbors 

By Amy Trujillo, Biologist. The Conservancy will greatly expand its Land Stewardship Program to promote healthy communities in the process of conserving our lands. The program is modeled on "Whole Measures", a tool developed by the Center for Whole Communities (CWC) to evaluate an organization's impact on the community in certain focus areas, including Land Stewardship, Connecting People with Nature, and Promoting Healthy Ecosystems.

Through its new program, the Conservancy will develop management plans for its properties and reach out to neighboring landowners to develop stronger relationships with them.

The program is funded in part by a \$60,000 grant from The San Diego Foundation, which was made possible by the Henry B. and Lena Sefton Clark Memorial Fund; The San Diego Foundation Common Good Fund; and the Environment Grant Program Fund. Additional financial support for the creation of a brochure highlighting the various recreational opportunities at the Reserve comes from the County of San Diego at Supervisor Pam Slater-Price's recommendation through a \$7,500 Community Enhancement Grant Program award.



SELC president Andy Mauro shows a spittle bug to visitors during Lagoon Day. See article on page 3.

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*Outreach Coordinator*Elaine Dodge, elaine@SanElijo.org
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*Staff Scientist*Debby Strauss, debby@SanElijo.org
*Program Assistant*Amy Trujillo, amy@SanElijo.org
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Encinitas, CA 92023-0634**Office Address:**2049 San Elijo Avenue
Cardiff, CA 92007**Contact Information:**Phone: (760) 436-3944
Fax: (760) 944-9606
Web: www.SanElijo.org
Email: info@SanElijo.org

Retreats Refresh

By Andy Mauro, President. At our monthly meetings, the Conservancy Board of Directors reviews the strategic plan, current activities, opportunities for funding new projects, the state of our finances, etc. That's the business end of being on the board. One of our favorite topics is the Conservancy's regular biological monitoring program done at the Reserve—how many species of birds were observed, what native plants are thriving, how many consecutive days the lagoon mouth has been open to the sea.

In addition, every July we get together for our "board retreat", a daylong meeting to delve a little deeper into some of the planning issues facing the Conservancy. I've always wondered about our use of that phrase. Shouldn't going on a "retreat" conjure up an image of peaceful rest and relaxation? Of course, a board retreat is generally all about business. However, there was something idyllic about our gathering this year, as we allowed ourselves to dream about the future.

There's a lot of good news on the horizon at the San Elijo Lagoon. We eagerly anticipate the County's gift to the community, the wonderful new nature center. And then there's our big project, the San Elijo Lagoon's major restoration. Lagoon restorations are necessarily long-term projects, requiring patience and perseverance. But with the planning and permitting entering its final phase, we can now envision the restored lagoon at the end of the tunnel. At our retreat we also shared happy news about the Conservancy's role in the community, the loyalty of long-time supporters and the expected growth in our membership ranks. We even took a quick walk on the trails in the early afternoon. And at the end of the day, I think we all did feel refreshed and energized.

Coastal wetlands like the San Elijo Lagoon play a critically important role in our lives, cleansing our water of impurities and cleaning the air around us. What a grand reward for caring!

New Staff Add Expertise

The Conservancy Board recently welcomed Tara Fuad as Education Director and Ralph Achenbach as Outreach Coordinator into its ranks.

Tara is developing curriculum-based environmental education programs that meet state California Academic Content standards. She is also responsible for environmental education programs for the community at large, and for recruiting and training docents.



Tara Fuad

Tara began her career in the environmental field as a Peace Corps volunteer in the 1980's, working on reforestation projects in Niger, West Africa. She then settled in Washington, DC, where she worked for the Ecological Society of America, the National Park Service, and the Audubon Naturalist Society. After moving to San Diego in 2003, Tara served as a docent for the Conservancy, and also worked for the Solana Center for Environmental Innovation as Program Manager for school recycling.

Tara holds a BA in Biology and Environmental Studies, and a MS in Biology.

Ralph coordinates the volunteer work parties, produces the Conservancy's outreach materials, guides nature walks through the reserve, and represents the organization at community events.

Ralph joined the Conservancy after a career in business and education spanning across three continents. Most recently, he was the Program Specialist for a microfinance program of a humanitarian aid



Ralph Achenbach

agency. An avid birder, Ralph volunteers with the Natural History Museum on whale watching cruises. He enjoys backpacking in the wilderness from Alaska to Anza-Borrego, and from the High Sierra to Hawaii.

Ralph has a BS from the London School of Economics and a Master's degree from Cambridge University. He is a certified 'Leave No Trace' outdoor ethics trainer.

Lots of Laughs on Lagoon Day

By Ralph Achenbach. What does a tadpole think when it befriends a caterpillar? That it will turn into a butterfly. When instead it turns into a frog, the surprise is big, and the laughter loud.

Children and adults alike enjoyed story time and other attractions at the 2008 Lagoon Day on May 10. Because of the continuing construction at the nature center (see article on page 5), this year's event was centered around the trail heads at Santa Carina and Rios Avenues. Conservancy staff and volunteers welcomed more than 300 visitors, who learned about San Elijo Lagoon through displays, artifacts and several guided walks throughout the day. Dog walkers received treats for their canine companions, and kids were presented with coloring books, crayons, and magnifying glasses. The first fifty families also received free goldfinch feeders.

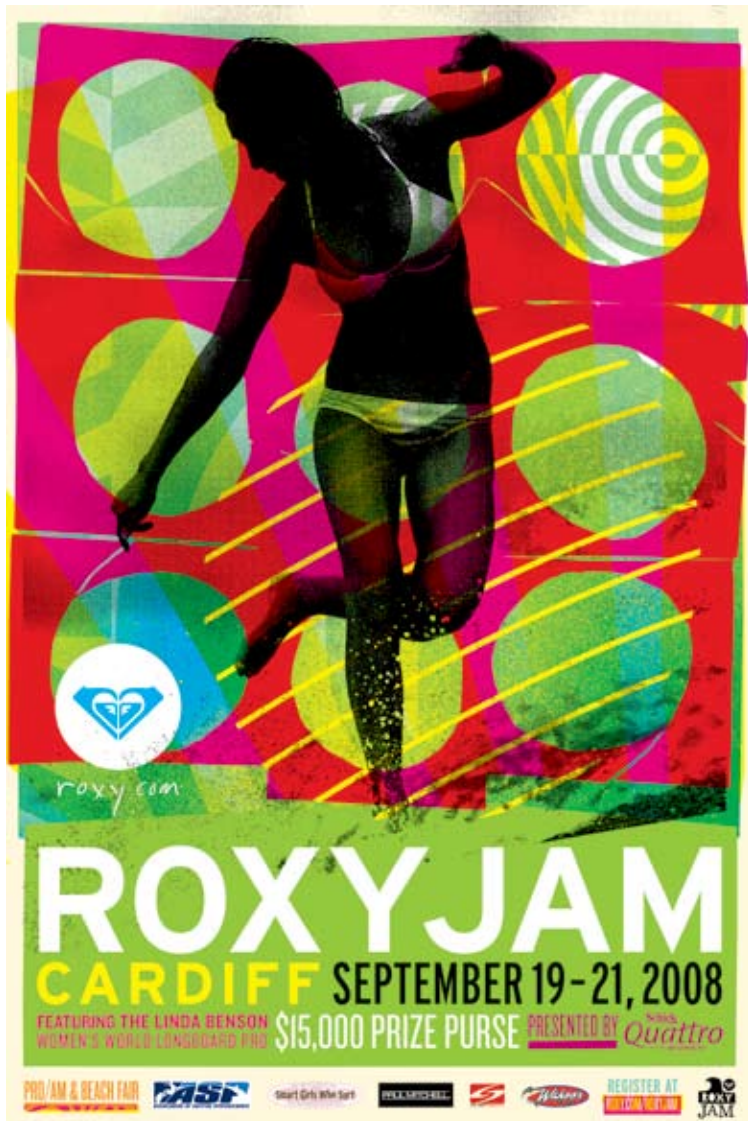
Story time was presented by Mary Ellen Marquand, and local artist Peter Strunk had donated several copies of his book *Two Inch Hero*, featuring a lizard's first experience of the setting sun at the lagoon. The event was hosted by the Conservancy and the County Department of Parks and Recreation and would not have been possible without the



Clinton Alden gets a chance to marvel at tadpoles during Lagoon Day (Photo Jennifer Nelson)

generous support of County Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, corporate sponsor Dudek, Gary & Joyce Pickersgill, Steve & Pam Fitch, David & Sherry Winkler, Mac & Audrey Elliott, and Jere & Joyce Oren.

Roxy Surf Contest And Raffle To Benefit Conservancy: September 19 - 21



This year's Roxy Jam Cardiff poster gives a taste of this colorful beach event.

By Jocelyn Jenks, Intern. Fun, action and a great cause are on the agenda during the third annual Roxy Jam Cardiff on September 19-21. Proceeds from the event, headlined by local legend Linda Benson, will support the Conservancy's education program. In addition to pro competitions, which will attract top female surfers from around the world, the event will feature an all-age amateur women's long boarding competition.

Visitors can enjoy a beach festival with food, art, and music on all three days. A raffle drawing will offer attendees a shot at custom-made surfboards created by world-renowned shapers such as Donald Takayama and Robert August. Raffle tickets (\$10) can be purchased at the Conservancy office before September 19th or at the event any time before 3:00 PM on Sunday, September 21st. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the surfboard raffle go to the Conservancy.

The Conservancy booth will feature women scientists in fields ranging from wetlands ecology to oceanography, informing girls and women curious about career opportunities in the biological sciences. Hands-on scientific activities will entertain all ages. A specially designed "My Space" page will allow athletes and fans alike to continue to engage in conversation with women scientists about the San Elijo Lagoon, and education and job opportunities in the sciences.

Come and enjoy watching talented female surfers compete for the prize while sharing in family fun and food and checking out the Conservancy booth. While you're at it, why not buy a raffle ticket and help support the San Elijo Lagoon? You just might go home with a new surfboard in tow. More details are on the Conservancy's website at www.sanelijo.org.

HOW TO GET YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS:

At the Conservancy office before September 19th or
at the event any time before 3:00 PM on Sunday, September 21st.
You do not have to be present on the day to win!

Conservancy Office:

2049 San Elijo Avenue, Cardiff, CA 92007, Phone: (760) 436-3944

Plants Can Also Be Plagues *(continued from page 1)*

Pampas grass was introduced from South America but is well adapted to the local climate here, where it lacks the natural predators that keep it in check at home. “As a result”, Trujillo further explains, “it grows rapidly and out-competes native plants”. Because of their unchecked growth, plants like pampas grass, giant reed (arundo) or tamarisk build biomass rapidly. When they invade local habitats such as the San Elijo Lagoon, this buildup creates severe problems. The plants’ low value to local wildlife causes dramatic declines in biodiversity. As a leading cause of extinction, invasive species are second only to habitat loss.

To the Conservancy’s staff scientist, Barry Lindgren, this is obvious every day he spends in the field monitoring water quality: “Watching invasive plants in Escondido Creek has been a powerful first lesson in biodiversity and the importance of balance in an ecosystem; once established, these weeds take resources from the native plants and ultimately remove familiar habitat for native insects and birds.”



Pampas grass

In addition to this irreplaceable loss of local species and the resulting imbalances in the functioning of our ecosystems, the rapid growth of many invasive plants has direct impacts on the human neighbors and communities. The rapid accumulation of biomass leads to a buildup of fuel, increasing the risk of fires. The plants also clog local

waterways, contributing to heightened flood risks. And encroaching on open space, hiking trails, river banks and lake shores, the plant plagues also radically reduce recreational opportunities.

Mitigating these impacts is a costly matter. Nationwide, the damage done by invasive plants is estimated to amount to more than \$100 billion, while the State of California alone spends approximately \$85 billion annually to combat non-natives.

Responding to the widespread problem of invasive plants at the San Elijo Lagoon and its watershed, the Conservancy has been carrying out exotic plant control programs over the last four years.” The often



Revegetation with native species is a necessary, albeit back-breaking, part of invasive plant control.

back-breaking battle is necessary”, as Trujillo further explains, “when the plants spread from urban areas and landscaping into waterways, creeks, and other habitat areas”. Unfortunately, these plants have evolved such efficient means for dispersal that they inevitably make their way to the wildlands. To date, the Conservancy’s programs have treated invasive species along more than 38,000 linear feet of creek, and controlled over 470 acres of invasive vegetation on public and private land.

“However”, adds the Conservancy’s executive director and principal scientist Doug Gibson, “effective control needs to go beyond simple eradication, requiring follow-up over a number of years.” In an effort to replace and restore healthy, native vegetation, and as part of an active campaign to protect natural areas from being re-infested, the Conservancy has installed more than 55,000 native plants in the treated areas.

So as our children and future generations explore our environment, they will indeed be able to enjoy heavenly days surrounded by natural landscapes, native plants, and a continuing abundance of local birds and other animals.

Board Announcements

Earlier this year, Robert Wilder, PhD, stepped down from the Conservancy Board to devote his attention to his appointment to the City of Encinitas’ new Environmental Committee. We congratulate Rob and thank him for his years of support and service while on the board, and eagerly anticipate the efforts of the committee to help with the “greening” of Encinitas.

We are pleased to welcome Marissa Marion as our newest member of the Board. Marissa received her law degree from UC Davis in 2007, and is an Associate with Cooley Godward Kronish, LLP, in San Diego. Her outdoor passions include surfing, scuba diving, and snowboarding.

“We’re thrilled to have Marissa on board,” says President Andy Mauro. “Her qualifications and expertise will be a great asset, as we face the challenges and opportunities of the exciting times ahead.”



Marissa Marion

GET OUT: Visit the Reserve!

The peak of fall bird migration is approaching with great opportunities to observe flocks of shorebirds on the mudflats.

Also look for startling splashes of dark golden flowers, as the Goldenbush punctuates the fall expanses of dried and dormant perennial shrubs in the Reserve, giving proof of life and providing forage and pollen to numerous insects.

County Corner: Nature Center Update

The County's new nature center on Manchester Avenue is gearing up for the grand opening early in 2009. Most recently, the concrete for half of the second story has been poured, and construction is continuing at a steady pace.

Longtime Park Ranger Ketsela Mengistu accepted a position at Sweetwater Summit Campground park. County and Conservancy staff and volunteers will all miss her greatly, thank her for her hard work



The second floor of the new nature center is on its way to being completed.

for the Reserve over the last eleven years, and wish her well in her new assignment.

Because of the anticipated greater visitation at San Elijo Lagoon with the new nature center, the County Parks Department has added a ranger position to the Reserve, as well as a temporary Park Attendant.

One of the new Rangers is Rachel Carter, who has already started her assignment at San Elijo Lagoon. We all welcome her warmly and look forward to working



Supervising Park Ranger Susan Welker shows Conservancy board member Bob Moore the progress on the new nature center during a recent tour of the construction site on Manchester Avenue.

Dedicated Docents Inspire Local School Children

By Margaret Parry, Conservancy Board Member. Looking back at the spring months, we think of blooming wildflowers, migrating birds, and the enthusiastic questions of children visiting the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. Indeed, springtime is the busiest season for public and private schools to take their field trips to the Lagoon. Over 700 excited students ranging from elementary through middle school, teachers and parent chaperones visited the Lagoon this spring to learn about wetlands ecology, plants and animals.

The groups are led on guided walks by the Conservancy's dedicated docents. When the students come to the Lagoon they can see, smell and in some cases taste nature first-hand. Many of the students will have studied habitats, flora, fauna and the history of the Native Americans of the coastal wetlands in their classrooms. On their field trips, some students come sporting t-shirts that they designed with their chosen bird, reptile or insect in hopes of having an encounter.

Each field trip, the students' excitement is contagious as they witness the comical sight of the Snowy Egret wiggling its "yellow slippers" in order to lure a meal, hear the mew of the endangered California Gnatcatcher, or learn how Native Americans tasted blue elderberries. The children also learn why it is imperative that we protect our wetlands and watersheds. Everyone is invited to return with their families, as it is their lagoon to enjoy and protect.

This invaluable experience would not be possible without our dedicated Conservancy docents. The docents volunteer their time to become trained naturalists and to share their knowledge and appreciation for the wonders of the Lagoon. Throughout the year, docents have the

opportunity to enhance their knowledge by attending monthly docent meetings on topics as diverse as bat conservation, global warming and identifying animal tracks.

If you are interested in becoming a docent, you can join the fall docent training. See below for further information.

GET INVOLVED: Become a Docent!

Are you interested in learning more about coastal wetlands and sharing your knowledge with others? Come learn from experts about the history, flora and fauna of the San Elijo Lagoon. The 7-week docent training also includes interpretive skills, and offers practical tips in leading groups of students and adults.

Training Dates:

Wednesdays, October 8, 15, 22, 29 & November 5, 12, 19
9am-12 noon

Location:

Cardiff Public Library with field trips into the Reserve.

To Register:

Call Tara at (760) 436-3944 or email at tara@SanElijo.org.

Fee:

Conservancy members: \$35, Non-members: \$65

Recent Developments

By Elaine Dodge, Development Director

Frances Hamilton White Endowment Gift Challenge

In our last issue, we announced the election of John Seiber as our President's Council chair. Since then John and the Council have embraced a new endowment goal of \$1 million by 2010.



Frances Hamilton White

John believes they have made great strides in that direction with the introduction of the Frances Hamilton White Endowment Gift Challenge.

Many of you know our esteemed Conservancy member, supporter, and Lagoon Viewer Frances Hamilton White. She is a founding member of our President's

Council and has donated every year to our Operating Endowment.

This year Frances has made an extra-special gift to the Conservancy's Operating Endowment. She has created the opportunity for us to increase our endowment by \$100,000 through a matching gift challenge. If we raise \$50,000 for the Operating Endowment, Frances will give us a \$50,000 matching gift.

The great news is that already we've raised \$33,500 towards this challenge. We encourage you to join in and respond to the matching gift challenge. Be a part of this momentous campaign to permanently endow the Conservancy and protect the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve by donating to the Operating Endowment.

With Frances' help, your donation will count double.

A big thank you to our Frances Hamilton White Endowment Challenge donors:

Tom and Karen Clotfelter, Ilse Epprecht, Sally Foster, Doug and Lauren Gibson, Bill Gish, Mark and Davielle Huffman, Elizabeth Keadle, Marissa Marion, Andy and Kathleen Mauro, Bob and Cindy Moore, Brys and Rita Myers, Craig and Jeanne Olson, Margaret Parry, Jack and Patty Queen, John and Patricia Seiber, Elaine Dodge and Martin Staubus, Dave and Denise Stillinger, Barry and Debby Strauss, Dr. John and Marcia Trombold, Justin and Amy Trujillo, and Celed F. Willoughby and Heather Kinch.

Help Grow Our Legacy Circle

You can also help us grow our endowment by becoming a member of our Legacy Circle. Legacy donors are those members who have included the Conservancy in their estate plan. Planned gifts, unless otherwise directed, become a part of our Operating Endowment.

Thank you to our newest Legacy Circle members: Tom Heywood and Stephanie Wilde, Robert Jensen and Erin Thomas, Andy and Kathleen Mauro, and Art and Sandy Yayanos.

For information on how to donate to the Operating Endowment or include the Conservancy in your estate plan, please contact Elaine Dodge at the Conservancy office (760)436-3944 or email elaine@SanElijo.org.



NEW GRANTS AWARDED:

The Conservancy is pleased to announce that it was recently awarded grants from the following foundations and award-making entities:

- the Henry B. and Lena Sefton Clark Memorial Fund, The San Diego Foundation Common Good Fund, and the Environment Grant Program Fund of The San Diego Foundation.
- the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- the County of San Diego Community Enhancement Program at Supervisor Pam Slater-Price's recommendation.
- the City of Encinitas Community Grant Program.
- Patagonia's "Voice Your Choice" Program. (thank you to all those who voted for the Conservancy!)
- the Coastal Community Foundation .

Please join us in saying thank you for their support.

Recent Developments

Upcoming Events:

Stay Home and Plant a Garden

For those of you who were able to attend our Birds of a Feather 20th Anniversary Gala, you'll remember a lovely evening outdoors in a native garden setting with fragrant flowers and flush with local birds. This year we're extending you a different sort of invitation, but one for the same important purpose.

In the spirit of conservation we are inviting you to stay home! That's right, stay home and create your own native plant garden that you can enjoy every day. Soon you will receive an invitation that will include seeds for native plant species found in and around the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve.

The purpose of "Stay Home and Plant a Garden" is to raise funds to support our education program. Annually, our trained naturalists provide FREE guided walks through the Reserve for thousands of students. Our experiential education program plants a seed in the minds of these children to become future caretakers of their natural environment. The sustainability of this important program relies upon donations made by our members.

This year your financial support is all the more important as we expand our docent recruitment and training, develop our

elementary school curricula, and create specially tailored education materials, all in preparation for the opening of the San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center. Our education director, Tara Fuad, and outreach coordinator, Ralph Achenbach, are creating an environmental education program worthy of this state of the art facility.

Your invitation will include a remittance envelope. Please join us in valuing your natural resources by supporting our education program with a donation comparable to the ticket price of a traditional gala. Donate generously, plant a garden, and feel good about helping to grow the next generation of conservationists.



Wind Poppy (Photo: Herb Knuffen)

Major Donor Reception: November 2

This year our major donor reception is being held at the private residence of our "lagoon viewing" members Amy Horne and Doug Loeser.

Amy and Doug have graciously invited Conservancy major donors (\$1,000 and above) to their Rancho Santa Fe home overlooking the La Orilla Trail. Also, new this year, we'll be featuring a guest speaker. Steve A. Kay, PhD, Dean of Biological Sciences at UCSD, will give an informal presentation on biofuels and sustainability. Festivities will include catered hors d'oeuvres and live music.

If you haven't made your 2008 major gift yet, please do, so we can send you an invitation to this very special event.

Thank you to our 2008 Major Donors:

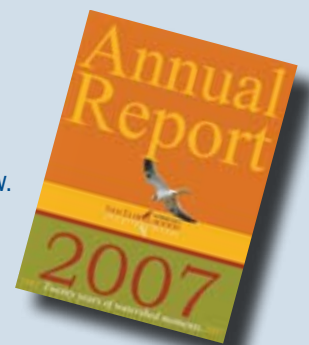
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GET UPDATED!

Do we have your current email address? All members at the \$100+ level receive monthly updates on the results from the monthly bird counts at the Reserve via email. The format of these updates is now new and improved with lovely photos of the species seen, background information on the significance of the sightings, and helpful hints on what to look out for when walking the Lagoon. Please help us ensure that we have your current email address on file. Simply send a brief message to: monthlyupdates@SanElijo.org or call Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944.

ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE!

You can get your personal copy at www.SanElijo.org, under 'Publications'





San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY

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

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For all your catering needs, please visit us at www.LasOlasCatering.com



For information on sponsoring the Fall 2008 issue, please contact Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944 or elaine@SanElijo.org.