



# Lagoon Tidings

## Calendar of Events

### Bird Counts

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

### Docent Meetings

Second Wednesday each month,  
10 am–12 noon, at the Nature Center  
[docents@SanElijo.org](mailto: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 Ralph Achenbach  
(760) 436-3944 or [ralph@SanElijo.org](mailto:ralph@SanElijo.org)  
for locations.

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

Saturday, June 6, 10 am  
"Keeping Cool"  
Meet at Rios Ave trailhead  
Contact Tara Fuad (760) 436-3944 or  
[tara@SanElijo.org](mailto:tara@SanElijo.org)

### **Dont Miss!** Lagoon Day with BioBlitz

Fabulous Family Fun  
Saturday, May 16, 10 am–3 pm  
(see front page article)

### **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](mailto:elaine@SanElijo.org) (see page 7)



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## Fabulous Family Fun Promised for Lagoon Day

### May 16th Event Reveals Secret Life at the Lagoon

By Ralph Achenbach

Fabulous fun for the entire family is on order for this year's Lagoon Day celebration on Saturday, May 16. From 10 am to 3 pm, visitors will enjoy exciting exhibits, guided walks, interactive games and other activities for children and adults alike at the new San Elijo Nature Center, 2710 Manchester Avenue, Cardiff. The event is free.

The May 16 Lagoon Day will mark the first-ever 'BioBlitz' in San Diego North County, which will attract regional science experts racing against the clock trying to find and identify as many species of living organisms in the Lagoon as possible within a 24-hour time window. Exciting prizes wait for those who guess the correct number of species.

See *Lagoon Day* on page 7

Don't miss  
**San Elijo Lagoon Day & BioBlitz**

Saturday, May 16,  
10 am–3 pm  
at the new Nature Center  
See page 7 for details  
or visit  
[www.SanElijo.org/bioblitz](http://www.SanElijo.org/bioblitz)



*Excited eyes are expected all around on Lagoon Day, Saturday, May 16.*

## New Vegetation Management Plan Addresses Fire Risk

By Doug Gibson

The recent history of major wildfires in San Diego County has made us all more aware of the potential hazard wildfire presents to those living near wild areas. To address this concern, the Conservancy began the process of creating a Vegetation Management Plan in the fall of 2008. This plan has now been completed, outlining important vegetation management measures relevant to fire risk mitigation.

As it was important to find broad community consensus on the issue, the Conservancy worked collaboratively with several partners, including the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Solana Beach Fire Department. The plan was completed in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game and also received input from the California Coastal Commission and the City of Encinitas Fire Department. The plan's purpose is

See *New Vegetation* on page 6

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# President's Message

By Denise Stillinger, SELC Board President

Once again the Conservancy is hosting our *Birds of a Feather Gala* on Saturday, September 26, 2009 from 5:00–8:00 p.m. Our guests will be treated to a gourmet dinner, musical entertainment, a silent and a live auction and major donor recognition. This year our event will take place on the lawn at Clear Spring Farm, the sport horse training center owned, and kindly donated as the venue for the night, by President's Council member Liz Keadle.

In 2007, 250 guests attended our inaugural *Birds of a Feather Gala*. The success of this sold-out event was facilitated by a variety of corporate and individual sponsors and supporters. Proceeds from the Gala fund our environmental education program.

So please “save the date” and plan on joining us at our 2009 *Birds of a Feather Gala*. You can also help us by obtaining sponsors and soliciting auction items. Those who attend the Gala will appreciate and remember the sponsors and auction donors' contributions.

It's an opportunity to “do well by doing good.” ♦

GET OUT & VISIT THE RESERVE

Spring is a fabulous time to observe nesting behavior of resident birds in the Reserve. Courtship singing fills the air with jubilant sounds, and birds can be seen defending their territory, carrying nesting material or feeding their young. All over the Reserve, hillsides explode with billowing expanses of the bright yellow, dark-eyed daisies of the California Bush Sunflower, and the distinctive pale purple balls of flowers of the Black Sage are spiking up from its green leathery foliage.

Don't forget to check the website for recent sightings and submit your own observations to [sightings@SanElijo.org](mailto:sightings@SanElijo.org).



The Lagoon is in full bloom during spring with Chalk Dudleya.

Photo: Barbara Wallach



Bladderpod, now blooming along parts of Rios Avenue trail, provides a valuable food source for hummingbirds.

Photo: Herb Knufken



# Education Program Grows

By Tara Fuad

The Conservancy's environmental education programs have seen tremendous growth since the opening of the Nature Center in January – it seems the phone has not stopped ringing with requests for guided walks from local and regional schools. One school from Fallbrook, for example, was so determined to benefit from the Conservancy's program that a group numbering more than 100 took time on a Saturday to drive to the Lagoon when finances didn't allow for a school-paid trip on a school day. This shows that there is a clear need and desire for people to get out and connect with nature. Thankfully the Conservancy has a committed group of docents helping to make those connections.

Our docents are devoting great effort to preparing and leading numerous hikes, each developing expertise in certain areas. Newbie docent Maggie Davis, for instance, loves the littlest ones, while Janine Free is sticking to the adults for now. Barbara Wallach, a seasoned Torrey Pines docent but new to San Elijo, loves to have fun with the elementary school kids, and can effortlessly grab their attention with her stories and humor. "I have really been impressed with how much the kids know, and with their desire to connect their knowledge with this Lagoon," observed Anne Geisler, another recent docent-training graduate.



Looking for animal tracks from the board walk during a recent docent-led walk for their school group. Photo: Tara Fuad

Because of our committed corps of docents, we will be able to offer nature hikes and programs throughout the Lagoon to over 1,000 children and adults this spring. A big thanks to all the docents for their time and commitment to the education program, and for enriching the lives of so many people throughout San Diego County. To learn more about becoming a docent or booking a docent-led walk for your school or youth group, contact Tara Fuad, (760) 436-3944, tara@SanElijo.org. ❖

## CORNER

KIDS

### Chasing Rainbows!

By Tara Fuad

Spring is a wonderful time to visit the Lagoon! Why? Because on any given day you might see a rainbow. Not a rainbow in the sky, but a rainbow of colorful flowers throughout the Lagoon. Do you think you can find the colors of the rainbow? Here are examples of some plants you might find along the trails:



**Red:** Coast monkey flower—can you see the grinning monkey face?

**Orange:** Fiddleneck—when first blooming, flower heads look like neck of a violin (also called a fiddle)

**Yellow:** Bush Sunflower—notice the dark center

**Green:** New growth of leaves triggered by winter rains

**Indigo:** Baby blue eyes—look for blue veins on the petals of this tiny flower

**Violet:** Fiesta flower—the bristly hairs on the stems can cling to clothing

Don't forget to look for the flowers that don't fall within the rainbow colors. The popcorn flower is a favorite—can you guess its color?



Veteran docent Pete Ash is joined by Anne Geisler (left) and Nancy Jong (right) during a break in between leading children on guided walks.

Photo: Tara Fuad

During a visit to the Lagoon, these preschoolers try out their first pair of binoculars, which they made with the help of the Conservancy. Photo: Tara Fuad



# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

## Jimbo's...Naturally! Donates Sales to Conservancy

By Ralph Achenbach

The Conservancy benefited from this year's customer appreciation sale at Jimbo's...Naturally! stores throughout San Diego North County and received a donation of \$12,251.33. On Saturday, April 4th, all four locations of the natural foods grocery store passed 5% of the entire day's sale on to the Conservancy. Customers, who enjoyed raffles, give-aways and free samples throughout the day, were offered a 5% discount on all groceries, with the option of donating their savings to the Conservancy as well. The Conservancy informed shoppers about its programs and the Lagoon with educational displays and brochures. "It was great to see so many community members interested in learning more about and supporting the Lagoon," said Celest F. Willoughby, Conservancy Board Vice-President, who interacted with customers at the Carlsbad location. "The staff and crew at Jimbo's were very supportive and genuinely excited to have us there. And I really enjoyed chatting with the folks who stopped by to ask questions, share their experiences with the Lagoon or just to let us know they'd donated from their purchase. Many thanks, all around."

"At Jimbo's, we're committed to sustainability, conserving resources and caring for the earth," said Jim "Jimbo" Somek, owner of Jimbo's...Naturally! "For more than 20 years, the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy has been working hard to protect and preserve this precious ecological reserve as a place for recreation



Jim "Jimbo" Somek, owner of Jimbo's...Naturally! presents a check in the amount of \$12,251.33 to Conservancy Board President Denise Stilling and Executive Director/Principal Scientist Doug Gibson.

Photo: Ralph Achenbach

and education for the whole community, and as invaluable habitat for many threatened and endangered plants and animals. We are happy to support this important work through our commitment to responsible stewardship of the earth's resources." Doug Gibson, the Conservancy's Executive Director/Principal Scientist, said that "we are extremely grateful to Jimbo's...Naturally! for their commitment to the environment and their support of the Conservancy's environmental education and habitat restoration work. The San Elijo Lagoon is an asset to the entire community with an abundance of wildlife and recreational opportunities, and this kind of community support is crucially important to ensuring the continued survival and health of this unique resource."

Jimbo's...Naturally! is a complete natural foods grocery store with a focus on local and organic produce. Jimbo's locations include Carmel Valley, Escondido, Carlsbad and 4S Ranch. For more information, visit [www.jimbos.com](http://www.jimbos.com).



### Photo of the Week

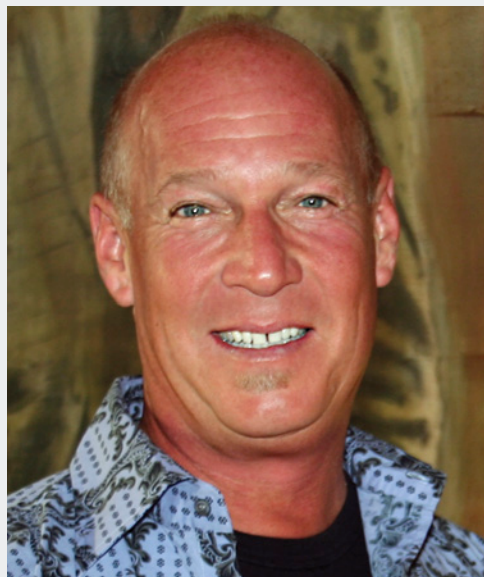
This image of two American White Pelicans, taken on March 22 by Robin Shook in the east basin, is a recent winner of the 'Photo of the Week' contest. Each week, the Conservancy's website features another image taken by community members throughout the Reserve at [www.SanElijo.org](http://www.SanElijo.org).

Submit your images to: [photos@SanElijo.org](mailto:photos@SanElijo.org)



# Please join us

for a memorable evening of music, gourmet cuisine, friendship and fun. Event proceeds will continue to support Conservancy education and outreach programs in the community.



We are honored to announce that the master of ceremonies for our *Birds of a Feather Gala* event will be **Loren Nancarrow**.

## Birds of a Feather Sponsorship Levels

### Peregrine Falcon Sponsorship - \$15,000

Complimentary reserved seating for 8, a full page ad in our program and emcee recognition

### Osprey Sponsorship - \$10,000

Complimentary reserved seating for 8

### Kestrel Sponsorship - \$5,000

Complimentary reserved seating for 6

### Kingfisher Sponsorship - \$2,500

Complimentary reserved seating for 4

For sponsorship details, please contact Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944 or [elaine@SanElijo.org](mailto:elaine@SanElijo.org).

Honorary Gala Chair, Liz Keadle, owner Clear Spring Farm

# Ways of Giving



## Birds of a Feather Requested Auction Items

Thank you for your support of the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. The *Birds of a Feather* auction committee is requesting donated items for our silent and live auctions. Please contact *Birds of a Feather* auction co-chairs Barbara Bolton ([barbarabolton@cox.net](mailto:barbarabolton@cox.net) or (760) 803-9595) or Pam Fitch ([pam\\_fitch@yahoo.com](mailto:pam_fitch@yahoo.com)) or (858) 922-7345) to discuss auction items you wish to donate or can procure for us, before obtaining them on our behalf. We want to be careful not to duplicate our requests in the community. Thank you for your help.

## One-of-a-kind opportunities/experiences

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Unique merchandise                                    | Restaurant gift certificates          |
| Pieces of original art—preferably with a lagoon theme | Celebrity memorabilia                 |
| Sporting event tickets                                | Specialty services                    |
| Concert tickets                                       | Catered party for a group             |
| Golf packages for private courses                     | Spa treatments                        |
| Hotel accommodations                                  | Wine tasting                          |
| Airline ticket vouchers                               | Gift certificates to local businesses |
| Condo/time share accommodations                       | And the list goes on ...              |

Thank you to our supporters. All supporters will be recognized in upcoming issues of *Lagoon Tidings* and the Gala program.



**Peregrine Falcon Sponsor**  
County of San Diego, Vice Chairwoman  
Pam Slater-Price, District 3



**Osprey Sponsor**



**Las Olas**

**Kestrel Sponsor**

to reduce the wildfire risk to lives and property in the Solana Beach neighborhoods adjacent to the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, and to protect the public's interest in the Reserve. It guides the removal of exotic vegetation and thinning of native vegetation in select areas between the La Orilla Trailhead and Rios Avenue Trailhead for a five-year period.

Throughout the creation of the Vegetation Management Plan, the Conservancy was conscious of its mission to “preserve and protect” the habitat contained within the Reserve. A primary goal was to create a plan which protected Reserve lands and adjacent properties from unnatural threats posed by wildfire. Of equal concern, however, was protecting the Reserve from loss of critical habitat as a result of indiscriminant clearing of native vegetation. To help in this effort, the Conservancy led its partners on a field survey along the entire Reserve boundary with the City of Solana Beach. This allowed the team to see and decide firsthand where vegetation management needed to occur and, equally important, where it wasn't needed. As a result, five areas totaling 6.4 acres within the Reserve were identified to be in need of controlled vegetation management. Without the onsite inspection, the plan would likely have affected over five times as much native habitat.

Overall, the Conservancy and its partners feel that this plan reduces the fire threat to areas that need protection, while still preserving the public's interest in maintaining the natural habitat within the Reserve. To read and download the plan, please visit [www.SanElijo.org/publications](http://www.SanElijo.org/publications). ❖



## A Look Back in Time

*By Tom Clotfelter, “Pioneer Protector,” co-founder of the San Elijo Foundation and present member of the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy's President's Council*

Driving north on I-5, descending from Solana Beach towards Cardiff, to your right on the immediate horizon is Schroeder Point. Note the chalk colored cliffs immediately north of Manchester Avenue and the vegetable field in between.

The point of land at the top of the bluffs was saved by the personal efforts of two of the San Elijo Alliance (S.E.A.) stalwarts and “original Pioneer Protectors” of the San Elijo Lagoon. A dredge and fill housing project had received San Diego County “tentative” approval for 700 houses between Solana Beach and Cardiff in the late 60s. Dr. Pete Schroeder DVM, President of the San Elijo Alliance, and attorney Eric Lodge challenged the Jaffe development slated for W. Lagoon Drive in Cardiff.



*The new Vegetation Management Plan reduces the risk from fire to private property while protecting the public's interest in the Reserve.*

*Photo: Bill Wechter*

The developer “lost” three potential sites. Read on for the “rest of the story.”

The Lagoon had been saved by the efforts of the San Elijo Alliance in persuading the Wildlife Conservation Board, an agency of the State of California, to purchase half of the Dome Ltd. lagoon acreage. Concurrently, the County of San Diego fulfilled its prior commitment to be a partner if another was found and wrote a check for \$465,000. The total original purchase was approximately 775 acres. The S.E.A. was a small group of activists who organized to oppose the 700 house Dome Ltd. development in the Lagoon.

Later, after the Lagoon purchase in the early 70s, the State Coastal Commission was formed. The Jaffe development atop the Cardiff sandstone bluffs planned an extension of Lake Drive down the bluffs to Manchester Avenue. The Alliance went to bat for the Lagoon viewshed, winning a precedent-setting decision from the Coastal Commission denying the Lake Drive connection. At the same time, the Alliance effectively eliminated the three additional sites in separate County hearings where Schroeder Point remains.

Thanks to the “Pioneer Protectors” of the San Elijo Alliance. ❖



"This event will showcase the amazing abundance of different life forms one can find at the Lagoon and will be a great opportunity for the community to witness the natural treasures at our doorstep first-hand," says Doug Gibson, the Conservancy's Executive Director/Principal Scientist. "I am particularly excited about raising awareness for the beauty of the Lagoon with our children and our neighbors." Activities planned for May 16 include free guided walks, children's crafts, story time and face painting. There will also be live animal ambassadors, allowing all visitors to marvel at a magnificent hawk close-up or to see eye-to-eye with a brilliantly colored lizard. Other community organizations will offer informational booths and activities on a wide range of topics related to life in our watershed. Visitors can learn about drought-tolerant gardening, water conservation in the home, and how to protect the Lagoon and our oceans.

The Conservancy's staff scientists will be supported by experts from the San Diego Natural History Museum, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the University of California, Santa Barbara, California State University, San Marcos, and other organizations in the effort to find and identify as many different kinds of plants

and animals as possible. The final whistle will blow at 3 pm on Saturday, May 16, when the final tally will be announced to the public.

As one of the few remaining and largest coastal wetlands in Southern California, the San Elijo Lagoon is home to an exceptionally large number of different plants and animals. Visitors enjoy the six primary types of habitat on more than seven miles of hiking trails. The Lagoon Day celebration will offer unique opportunities for exploration, education, and entertainment around the Ecological Reserve. The free event is made possible by the generous support of the City of Encinitas and the Mizel Family Foundation, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, DUDEK, Patagonia, Souplantation and the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation. ♦

Please join the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy in celebrating:

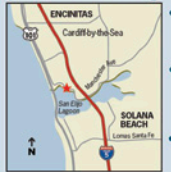
# San Elijo Lagoon Day BioBlitz Extravaganza

**Saturday, May 16, 2009**  
**10 am - 3 pm**

Parking & admission **FREE**.  
Details & directions:  
[www.SanElijo.org/bioblitz](http://www.SanElijo.org/bioblitz) or  
(760) 436-3944

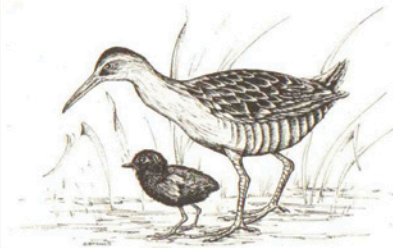
## At the New Nature Center

2710 Manchester Avenue, Cardiff  
We will count all the animals & plants in the Lagoon!



- Discover the secret life at the Lagoon
- Experience bio-diversity up close
- Enjoy exciting exhibits & vendors

## Join the Fun!



### Family activities include:

- Interactive games
- Story telling
- Face painting
- Guided walks
- Fun crafts
- Live animals
- Nature treasure hunt



San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY

Program Sponsors



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Final tally of species identified at the San Elijo Lagoon BioBlitz and winners of prizes will be announced at 3 pm at the San Elijo Nature Center.

Parking, admission and all activities are **FREE**.  
For details, please call (760) 436-3944 or go to  
[www.SanElijo.org/bioblitz](http://www.SanElijo.org/bioblitz).

Exciting exhibits and interactive games in the new Nature Center and on the trails will be enjoyed by children and adults alike on Lagoon Day, May 16, 2009.

Photo: Ralph Achenbach





## San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY

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

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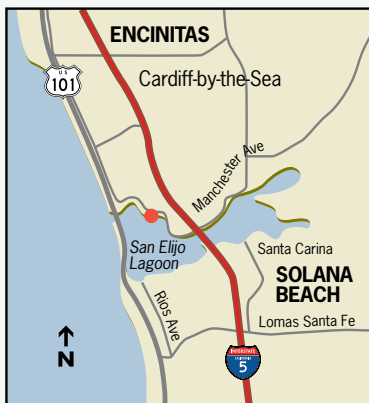


Please join the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy in celebrating:

# San Elijo Lagoon Day

## *BioBlitz Extravaganza*

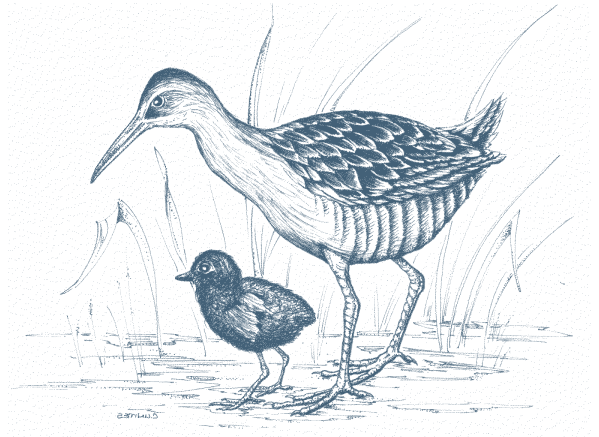
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For information on sponsoring upcoming issues in 2009, please contact Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944 or [elaine@SanElijo.org](mailto:elaine@SanElijo.org).