



# Lagoon Tidings



## Calendar of Events

### Bird Counts

Second Monday each month  
7:30 am–Noon at Rios Ave trailhead  
Contact [birds@sanelijo.org](mailto:birds@sanelijo.org)

### Docent Meetings

Docent Graduation Potluck  
Tuesday, December 2, 10 am–Noon  
(location to be announced)

Regular monthly docent meetings  
Second Tuesday each month  
10 am–Noon at the Nature Center,  
resume January 10, 2012

### Guided Nature Walks

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

Every Saturday  
10 am–11 am at the Nature Center

### Family Discovery Days

“Wings Over Wetlands”  
January 21–22, 1–4 pm at the  
Nature Center

### Volunteer Restoration Events

Third Saturday each month, 9–11 am  
November 19  
December 17  
January 21  
February 18

For location and sign-up go to  
[SanElijo.org/restoration-events](http://SanElijo.org/restoration-events)

Birders Steve Perry and Jayne Lesley focus on the lagoon. Photo: Joel Kramer

## Bird Surveys Soar to New Heights

By Joel Kramer, Associate Biologist

This summer, Miranda Kennedy was an Ornithology Data Management Intern with the Conservancy. She reformatted and uploaded data on bird occurrences at San Elijo Lagoon between 1973 and 1983 to the California Avian Data Center (CADC), which is hosted by Point Reyes Bird Observatory Conservation Science (PRBO). The historical data were gathered by volunteers during monthly bird counts and were provided to the Conservancy by Mona Baumgartel and David King. A second set of monthly counts is ongoing with volunteers coordinated by Robert Patton. Together, the two sets produce a wealth of information about the abundance and diversity of bird life at the lagoon.

According to Sherie Michaile, PRBO Informatics Engineer, CADC data is made available to researchers as well as laypeople and has additional tools for sharing, analyzing *continued on page 4*

## 25th Anniversary Outreach Survey

Help guide the future of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy’s conservation and education programs.

San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy is now in its 25th Anniversary. This milestone is achieved only through the dedication of community members, donors, and supporters, like you.

We invite you to participate in a brief, anonymous Outreach Survey to share your insights and visions into how the Conservancy focuses its public and environmental programs.

Twenty-five years ago, our community saved one of San Diego’s remaining wetlands from being developed. We’ve continued to accomplish incredible strides in these decades, but what we do now is critical as we address new challenges: acquiring additional acreage, lagoon restoration, expansion of environmental science and education programs, and in the long term preparing for climate change and sea level rise. *continued on page 4*

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# President's Message

*By Denise Stillinger, President*

Twenty-five years ago, a small group of concerned citizens were drawn together by a common passion – San Elijo Lagoon. Since that time, the Conservancy has grown from a living room full of “lagoonatics” into a vibrant, community-spirited land trust well respected for our environmental education programs and conservation leadership. Our mission, now broadened to encompass the entire watershed, is to protect and restore San Elijo Lagoon for wildlife and for people. At a quarter century, our membership soars with more than 2,000 families, individuals, and businesses coming together to ensure that nature enthusiasts can walk, bird, photograph, or just relax inside this refuge with confidence that special places like San Elijo Lagoon stay protected. Our success speaks to the power of place, the power of people, and the power of passion. With wetlands still under pressure from adjacent development projects, our mission is as relevant today as ever. And so we continue to inspire citizen involvement in the restoration and protection of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, its watershed, and related ecosystems. Thank you for joining us on our remarkable journey as we launch the Conservancy's 25th Anniversary.

*“In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy”*

~ **John Sawhill**, former president, The Nature Conservancy

## FEATURED PHOTO



*American Avocet, June 2011  
Photo: Jan Roxburgh*

Submit your own photos taken in the lagoon! Send as an attachment with a description and your name in the subject line to photos@sanelijo.org

**Images for submission:** We prefer RGB files with minimum pixel dimensions of 2100 x 1600, minimal image manipulation and no recompression before submission. Please see image submission info at [SanElijo.org/lagoon-image-drop-box](http://SanElijo.org/lagoon-image-drop-box)

# Amy Trujillo, Associate Director, resigns from San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy

## Her decade of service is remembered as key to our successes

In August, valued staff member Amy Trujillo resigned as Associate Director with the Conservancy to relocate with her family to Idaho. Amy is a highly-skilled and resourceful biologist who served the Conservancy capably and generously from 2002 through 2011.

“I have always felt lucky to work with so many fine people at the Conservancy,” she said. “The staff, board, and volunteers are such genuinely good people, and I count many of them as close friends.”

San Elijo Lagoon and the protected lands of northern San Diego County are healthier for her dedicated efforts. She managed the Carlsbad Watershed Network’s Invasive Species Program, created SELC’s Land Stewardship program, was a trusted and welcome member of numerous water quality monitoring and biological assessment field crews, and helped restore hundreds of acres of habitat in both the reserve and the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit.

Amy played a pivotal role in keeping project staff focused in the right direction, and our many and diverse sponsors properly informed of Conservancy activities. The staff and board of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy honor Amy’s decade of service, and we look forward to keeping in touch with her endeavors.

Barry Lindgren, former Science Director, replaces Amy Trujillo as Associate Director of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. ❖



Amy Trujillo Photo: Justin Trujillo

## Restoration Public Meetings

Over the past few years, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy has been providing you glimpses into the planning for the full restoration of the reserve’s aquatic system. This fall, we take the next step in developing this plan by kicking off the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), as required under the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (CEQA/NEPA).

As we begin the preparation of these documents, your input is needed. We will hold three public meetings beginning mid-November where we will outline the project and request your input about issues that need to be addressed in the environmental documents. These meetings will allow the public to submit comments to be considered as we move through this phase of the planning. Our view is that we have been looking at this project very closely for the past 15 years, which can result in a myopic view of the project. Your input will make sure that we have not overlooked any important points that should be analyzed or further discussed.

Currently, the three meetings are scheduled for:

**Carlsbad:** November 15, 2011 at 1 pm  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Conference Room 3  
6010 Hidden Valley Road, Suite 101  
Carlsbad, California 92011

**Encinitas:** November 29, 2011 at 6 pm  
Encinitas Community and Senior Center  
1140 Oakcrest Park Drive  
Encinitas, CA 92024

**Solana Beach:** December 1, 2011 at 6 pm  
City of Solana Beach City Hall, City Council Chambers  
635 South Highway 101  
Solana Beach, CA 92075



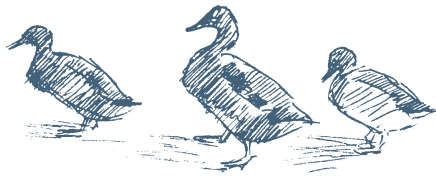
Be sure to check our website as we get closer to the meetings because times and locations may change. San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy looks forward to your involvement in this project. In late spring 2012, we will hold a series of workshops that will update the public about our progress and outline greater details of the project. We encourage you to attend those meetings as well. In order to make this a true community restoration project, the community must be involved.

continued from page 1, 25th Anniversary Survey Conservancy staff and board are in the planning phases for future programs and conservation projects. Your voice, as member, donor, and lagoon neighbor, is needed to help us better understand our supporters, and how we can improve and move forward in new areas.

What inspires and sustains your membership? How do you interact with San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve and Conservancy programs?

The online survey will be live until December 15. If you do not have access to a computer, and would like to take the survey, we will mail you a printed version. Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your voice. We will highlight results of the survey in upcoming *Lagoon Tidings*.

Ready to get started? Visit [www.SanElijo.org](http://www.SanElijo.org) and click on "Outreach Survey" to begin or call Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944 x 708 for a print copy. ❖



continued from page 1, Bird Data Analysis and visualizing the data. Entries from the eBird at Cornell database and the CADC database are shared with each other and are open to the public. Meanwhile, San Elijo Lagoon data submitted to CADC will be focused toward the conservation needs of bird communities along the West Coast.

Comparison of the 1973–83 and recent data show that over the last four decades species richness has increased, while overall abundance has declined. "The lagoon has hosted the successes of an impressive number of threatened and endangered species; on the other hand, presence has experienced a comparative decline among non-threatened species," Kennedy writes. She attributes the declines in overall abundance to edge effects from encroaching development around the reserve, as well as in other locations along the birds' migratory path.



A Clapper Rail in the lagoon, September 2011

Photo: Jan Roxburgh

Species which were recorded in the thousands during the 1970's are now seen infrequently. There is no longer any record of Northern Pintail Ducks during the summer months, and Common Terns are now sighted two or fewer months out of the year. Meanwhile, restoration efforts for endangered species like the Light-footed Clapper Rail have been successful. The rail first appears in the counts in 1980, and is now seen or heard on every count.

## Want to make a world of difference?

### Become a habitat restoration volunteer!

Here are some recent volunteer projects...



**September 17:** Volunteers removed 140 kilos of garbage along Manchester Ave. for Coastal Cleanup Day.

**October 7:** Volunteers from Vertex Pharmaceuticals prepared the Santa Carina trailhead for replanting with native plants.

**October 9:** Solana Beach Presbyterian volunteers helped native plants grow at the Santa Carina trailhead by removing invasive fennel.

You can sign up to plant native plants at the Santa Carina trailhead on **November 19th** by visiting [sanelijo.org/restoration-events](http://sanelijo.org/restoration-events).



A determined Boy Scout from Rancho Penasquitos Troop 667 hauls a full-sized load of garbage out of the lagoon. State-wide, volunteers picked up more than half a million pounds along our coastlines on California Coastal Cleanup Day.

Photo: Joel Kramer

Further studies will include a current ten year study of 2003 to 2013, and the surveys of the mid 1990's, during which time the opening of the lagoon inlet became a regular activity.

Anyone can participate in the monthly bird counts. The next count will be on Monday, December 12th. Birders meet at 7:30 am at the North Rios Ave trailhead. Bring binoculars, lunch and a set of curious eyes and ears. To find out more, visit [sanelijo.org/birdcounts](http://sanelijo.org/birdcounts). ❖

# Docent of the Quarter

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

A graduate of the docent class of 2009, Karen Larsen Gordon contributes her abundant talents to the Conservancy in many different capacities. In addition to leading walks on a regular basis, Karen assisted with the spring Nature Discovery Camp where she entertained the campers with the fascinating world of tracks and scat. Karen has provided feedback on outreach, serves on the education program evaluation committee, and volunteered at the *Birds of a Feather Gala*. Somehow she manages to squeeze this all in when not traveling, a great passion of hers.

Karen and husband Steve moved from Rancho Bernardo to Solana Beach shortly after the Witch Creek fires of 2007. "We had been thinking about downsizing, but our decision to move was precipitated by our neighbors' home burning to the ground. They were in need of a place to live while they rebuilt," recalls Karen. "Having moved from the chaparral, I was



Karen Larsen Gordon

Photo: Karen Larsen Gordon

looking forward to learning about coastal communities and the docent program seemed like a good fit."

The collective experiences Karen brings to the Conservancy are impressive. In addition to earning a certificate from UCSD in Natural Resource Management, Karen is a founder of Friends of Goodan Ranch & Sycamore Canyon Open Spaces, served as Executive Director of the San Diego Tracking Team, volunteered as a docent at Blue Sky Ecological Reserve for nearly a decade, and regularly attends the San Diego Partners for Biodiversity monthly meetings. "I have really enjoyed becoming familiar with the Conservancy and getting to know the other docents in the program," notes Karen. "I also appreciate the variety of programs the

Conservancy offers to both kids and adults." We are fortunate that Karen's curiosity of coastal communities led her to the Conservancy; she is a wonderful addition to our Education Program. ❖

## Not-So-Scary Estuary

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

The weather was perfect for Family Discovery Day's "Not-so-Scary Estuary", with coastal fog hovering over the 750 people who attended the seasonal community event on October 22–23. Many visitors got into the spirit of the season by arriving in costume to experience the nocturnal creatures that "spirit" the lagoon after sunset. At the bat cave, visitors relied on their sense of smell to imitate nature in helping a mother bat find her baby bat. Along the Haunted Hike Trail, visitors were more dependent on sight and sound as they hunted for howling coyotes, hooting owls, and a variety of animal tracks. The live bat, raccoon, and owl exhibits were crowd favorites as kids enjoyed getting up close to animals that typically only venture out at night.

Family Discovery Days is offered seasonally to members of the community. It is also an opportunity for the hundreds of school children who visit the lagoon annually to return with their families to share their experiences in nature. Plan to join us at the next Family Discovery Day scheduled for January 21–22. "Wings over Wetlands" will investigate our many feathered friends who depend on the lagoon throughout the year.

Family Discovery Days is jointly sponsored by the Conservancy and the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation, with additional funding support from the City of Encinitas and the Mizel Family Foundation Community Grant.



Docent-trainee Debbie Hanna dissects owl pellets with Family Discovery Day visitors.

Photo: Lydia Cobb



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[www.facebook.com/sanelijo](http://www.facebook.com/sanelijo)

# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

By Elaine Dodge, Development Director

## Birds of a Feather provides the Wind Beneath Their Wings



Barbara Wallach was honored as Docent of the Year.

Photo: Janine Free

Over 200 guests attended the *Birds of a Feather Gala* on September 17th on the grounds of Libby and Doug Scott's Olivenhain home. Celebrated at the gala was the Conservancy's 25 years of watershed moments protecting and restoring the resources of the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, presented in a slide show created by Executive Director Doug Gibson. If you missed the gala, you can watch the slide show on our website at the new [SanElijo.org/25-years-watershed-moments](http://SanElijo.org/25-years-watershed-moments) page.

Tables surrounding the swimming pool were decorated in red and black and embellished with silver center pieces commemorating our silver anniversary. Cuisine was provided by Ki's Restaurant & Catering. The contemporary jazz ensemble Endangered Speciez Project provided musical entertainment throughout the evening.

Proceeds from sponsors, underwriters, ticket sales, the silent and live auctions and Fund a Need pledge donations contribute much needed funding for the Conservancy's environmental education programs that annually serve over 2,000 students. The Conservancy's flagship "Our Living Watershed" course provides nearly 900 children from underserved schools with hands-on outdoor environmental science curriculum and field trips. All field trips are led by our core of trained docent-naturalists, many of whom volunteered to help with the gala.

Thank you to everyone who made the 25th anniversary gala a resounding success.



Carol Childs, Peter House and Sally Foster.

Photo: Jennifer Nelson



2011 Birds of a Feather Gala guests enjoy dinner by the pool.

Photo: Janine Free

## Newest Legacy Circle Members

We're honored to welcome Ida Houby and Bill Miller to our Legacy Circle. Ida and Bill were among the first lagoon neighbors to save Holmwood Canyon from development back in the early 1980's. They are hiking naturalists, as likely to admire and identify a flower, a mule deer, or an alligator lizard. When they are not outdoors, they practice medicine and psychology.

Legacy Circle members are those donors who have included the Conservancy in their estate plan. Legacy Circle members are treated to special member benefits including two private guided-walks ending with a picnic reception in the reserve.

### Current Legacy Circle Members:

Elaine Dodge & Martin Staubus	M. Alberta Kruger
Ilse Epprecht	Declaration of Trust
Lynne & Marc Friedmann	Andy & Kathleen Mauro
Doug & Lauren Gibson	Ida Houby & William E. Miller
Bill Gish	Brys & Rita Myers
Tom & Donna Golich	Craig & Jeanne Olson
Pastor Bill and Patti Harman	Mariette Pinchart
Tom Heywood & Stephanie Wilde	Janet Placido
Robert Jensen & Erin Thomas	Dave & Denise Stillinger
Mayme Kline	Elizabeth Venrick
Peter & Marge Kohl	Ret. Col. Harold Wright
James Lauer	Paul Worthington
	Art & Sandy Yayanos

# Ways of Giving

By Elaine Dodge, Development Director

## Charitable Opportunity Set to Expire at Year's End

If you're 70 1/2 years of age or older and have a traditional or Roth IRA, you can still make a tax-free charitable transfer of up to \$100,000.

It used to be financially disadvantageous to give IRA funds to charities during one's lifetime because withdrawals from IRAs were subject to income tax. Legislation was passed, though, extending the Charitable IRA opportunity through the end of 2011.

If you have money in an individual retirement account (IRA) that might be vulnerable to estate taxation or potentially taxed as income to your heirs, for a limited time you can make a direct charitable donation from your IRA to San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy and avoid federal and state taxation.

Donations to the Conservancy can be placed in our unrestricted fund to be spent on existing programs or held in perpetuity in one of our two endowment funds.

For more information, please contact Elaine Dodge, Development Director (760)436-3944 x 708 or your own financial advisor.



Ilse Epprecht

## Matching Gift Endowment Challenge

For the third consecutive year, Ilse Epprecht has been a contributing sponsor of our endowment matching gift challenge. The Conservancy maintains an endowment fund held at the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation and The San Diego Foundation. The purpose of our operating endowment is to ensure the financial future of Conservancy programs by protecting endowment principal and relying upon annual interest distributions for supplemental support.

This year we achieved an important milestone in our endowment campaign when we reached \$1 million. Our operating endowment goal for this year is \$45,000 with an additional matching gift challenge of \$15,000. To date we've raised \$21,392 towards our goal of \$45,000 and \$9,200 towards Ilse's match.

If you'd like to help us reach our endowment goals and qualify for Ilse's matching gift, please use the remittance envelope attached to this newsletter and specify that the donation is for the endowment. All donations are gratefully appreciated.

## 2011 Membership Campaign Wrap Up

Renewing members, we need you! Times have been tough. Some members have lost jobs; others worry it could happen to them. In this difficult climate many of you have not renewed your membership with San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy.

Now is when we need you most! Membership renewal is the chief source of support for the wetlands conservation and environmental education work that we do. Your donations are central to the Conservancy's ability to protect and restore the resources of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve for the benefit of current and future generations.

The good news: with the growing reputation of the Conservancy and its work, we have seen a 20% increase in requested environmental education field trips to San Elijo Lagoon, with many requests coming from underserved schools. The bad news: without membership renewals from you and others, our resources will be insufficient to meet this surge in participation.

Whether your passion is about fostering the next generation of environmental stewards or saving wild places for people and nature, we hope you'll renew your membership with San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. It will make a difference.





Ask about  
**Charitable Gift Annuities**  
with  
San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy today.

(760) 436-3944 x708 | [www.SanElijo.org](http://www.SanElijo.org)



# San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY

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

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Thanks for helping save paper!



## 25th Anniversary Commemorative Tote



*Carry the Celebration With You*

- Limited Edition
- Durable cotton, canvas, zippered & handy for so many things.

**To Order:**

For details & order form, please visit the Birds of a Feather page at **SanElijo.org**

***\$10 of every tote purchase is donated to SELC.***

For information on sponsoring upcoming issues, please contact Elaine Dodge at (760) 436-3944 x 708 or [elaine@sanelijo.org](mailto:elaine@sanelijo.org).