



# 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

Second Tuesday each month 9–11 am  
at the Nature Center

### Guided Nature Walks

Every Saturday 10–11 am at the  
Nature Center

*Wildlife Walks*—Explore new habitats

Second Saturday each month 9–11 am

December: Rios Avenue Trail

January: Santa Helena Trail

February: Rios Avenue Trail

*Family Fun Days*—First Sunday of the  
month, 11:30 am–1:30 pm at the  
Nature Center

*Sunday Strolls*—Third Sunday of the  
month, 3–4 pm at the Nature Center

### Family Discovery Days

“Wings Over Wetlands”

January 24–25, 1–4 pm at the  
Nature Center

“Spring EGG-ucation”

March 21–22, 1–4 pm at the  
Nature Center

### Community Habitat Restoration

Volunteer Restoration Events

Third Saturday each month 9 am–Noon

December 20, January 17, February 21,  
March 21

[RSVP@SanElijo.org/restoration-events](mailto:RSVP@SanElijo.org/restoration-events)

> > > **Save the Date!** < < <

### Birds of a Feather Gala 2015

Saturday, September 19

Fundraising gala for SELC's

Environmental Education Program

- Sponsorship opportunities available

- Volunteers welcome

- Auction items now being accepted

Contact Jennifer Bright

(760) 436-3944 x 705 or

[Jennifer@sanelijo.org](mailto:Jennifer@sanelijo.org)

(Further details on page 7)

## Conservancy Embraces Conservation Education

By Tara Fuad, Education Director



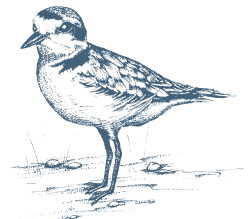
Students from Flora Vista Elementary School in Encinitas learn about habitats at San Elijo Lagoon. Photo: SELC

The Education Program's 5-Year Strategic Plan will be unveiled this month after nearly a year of strategizing and planning. Expert consultant Chris Parsons of Wordcraft facilitated the process that included input from conservancy staff, board members, and docents, as well as teachers and community members.

*continued on page 4*

## North County Dunes Project Underway

By David Varner, Resource Management Director



Recently, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy was awarded a grant by SANDAG's Environmental Mitigation Program to restore dune systems along the coast. As the project manager, we will work with project partners and landowners between northern Carlsbad and northern La Jolla to survey and conduct restoration activities at dune habitat sites, while we concurrently enhance the dunes adjacent to San Elijo Lagoon.

*continued on page 4*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Design:** Artefact Design

# President's Message

*By Scott Griffiths, President*

Who remembers middle school? I remember it as particularly challenging, especially spending Friday afternoons trapped at a small desk with the illegible chalk characters on a black board competing for my attention with the sunlight streaming in from the windows behind.

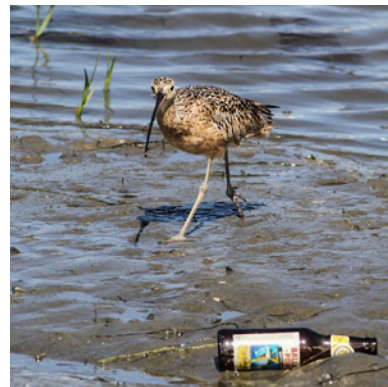
Ahhhhh, but field trips! A chance to get outside and experience real life. A change of scenery. A chance to discover instead of memorize.... A field trip to the coast? Too fine to be possible.

Well that is exactly what middle school students will experience, led by San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy docents. (See *Middle School Students to Explore Watershed*, Page 5) Field trips will begin in Escondido, where Escondido Creek has been channeled into a cement culvert, continue to the Elfin Forest where the creek flows freely through pristine riparian woodland, and conclude at San Elijo Lagoon, where the creek flows into a salt marsh, eventually reaching the ocean. What an experience! Most importantly, students will learn how everyone can take responsibility for protecting these precious resources.

In this season of gratitude, we are grateful to The Escondido Charitable Foundation and the McLaughlin Endowment Fund for providing the funding to make this program possible. ❖



Scott Griffiths



*A Long-billed Curlew benefits from Coastal Cleanup Day.*

*Photo: SELC*

# Coastal Cleanup Day Success

*By Nick Regoli, Associate Biologist*

On September 20th, 2014, San Elijo Lagoon Platoon volunteers joined hundreds of thousands of people around the world to participate in one of the largest global volunteer efforts, Coastal Cleanup Day. Acting as citizen-scientists, participants record each piece of debris before removing it from our waterways. The Ocean Conservancy publishes an annual report with the year's findings:

Results from 2013 and 2014 Cleanups:

	2014 Lagoon Platoon	2013 Lagoon Platoon	2013 International Cleanup*
Volunteers	126	107	648,015
Trash (pounds)	611	440	12,329,332
Most Common item found:			
Cigarette Butts	5897	3714	2,043,470
Plastic Grocery Bags	116	252	441,493

\*Ocean Conservancy's Coastal Cleanup Trash Index (2014 International Cleanup results are still being processed)



# The Road to Restoration

## Summer Public Meetings Move Us Forward in Planning Lagoon Restoration

By Barry Lindgren, Associate Director

Thank you. The conservancy's board of directors, its staff, and stakeholders thank you for showing how much you care about the health and future of San Elijo Lagoon.

Last August, the publication and distribution of the draft environmental report for lagoon restoration was released. The conservancy put its plans into action. We hosted two public meetings (and two neighborhood forums) to clarify and answer questions regarding the various proposals of this significant habitat enhancement project. Held in Encinitas and Solana Beach, both gatherings attracted more than 200 participants and featured an introduction by County Supervisor District III Dave Roberts. Presentations were given by Doug Gibson, the conservancy executive director and principal scientist.

The purpose of holding a public forum was to encourage interested parties to submit formal comments on the four restoration alternatives. These were directed to the project's state and national leads, San Diego County and the Army Corps of Engineers. The 60-day comment period ended September 29. These comments and questions will inform a final draft of the EIR/EIS\*, and each unique inquiry or observation will be addressed in writing. Asked about the importance to the project of this input from the public,

Doug Gibson acknowledged: "The conservancy has been a community-based organization since its inception in 1987. The comments from the lagoon's neighbors and stakeholders, many of whom are conservancy members, are motivated by a strong sense of place and a commitment to, and investment in, the lagoon's health and well-being. Their considered feedback will make a better planning document and a better restoration project."

The restoration project team works to finish the final engineering tasks and begin the permitting process. The final EIR/EIS will guide the physical restoration slated to begin in early 2016. This will be prepared for adoption by the San Diego County Supervisors and a Record of Decision by the Army Corps of Engineers. This will not be possible without an informed public's support and participation throughout the CEQA/NEPA\*\* process.

Thank you for working with the conservancy to make the lagoon a better and more sustainable place for the plants and animals that live there, and a welcoming wild space for its human visitors to enjoy.

\* Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement

\*\* California Environmental Quality Act / National Environmental Quality Act



## San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project Timeline



## Michelle's Journey



Michelle Tateyama

Internships allow college students and recent graduates to gain valuable experience in a real-world setting. Michelle Tateyama's evolution from volunteer intern to full-time staff member at the conservancy is an inspiring success story. Shortly after graduating cum laude from UC Irvine with a B.S. in Earth and Environmental Sciences, Michelle joined our Habitat Management Program as a volunteer intern, specializing in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Using her in-depth knowledge of this highly technical field, Michelle organized our GIS, created maps documenting our work, and improved the accuracy of our databases. Recognizing the benefits that Michelle brought to the conservancy, and her strong work ethic, her internship turned into a part-time job while she attended University of Redlands to pursue

a master's degree in GIS. This year, with the completion of her master's degree, Michelle has become a full-time employee as GIS and Database Manager, bringing new capacity to the Habitat Management Program and the broader organization, as well.

Michelle reflects on her tenure at SELC, "Over the last two years I have enjoyed my time at the conservancy, developing my GIS skills and increasing my knowledge of conservation science and habitat restoration. My ultimate career goal is to use GIS to help combat global climate change and protect natural environments."

SELC is pleased to have played a role in Michelle realizing her goals.

As our education program continues to grow both programmatically and geographically, it is critical that we devise a plan that ensures the program moves forward strategically and sustainably, as well. During the strategic planning process, we decided that we will focus on schools in or near the Escondido Creek watershed, and design programs that empower students to take action on behalf of the environment. As a result, the new goal of the conservancy education program is to: connect, educate and engage the community to ACT to ensure the health and wellbeing of their watershed.

The addition of the words 'to ACT' to protect the watershed requires a necessary shift in our programs from informal education to conservation education. Informal education as it occurs in nature settings is defined as immersive, interactive, affective experiences based on learning theories (Brody 2005). Conservation education is defined as

*"Our partnership with San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy is pivotal in starting our students on the right path to becoming stewards for the Earth"*

Debi Iannizzotto, 5th grade teacher at Central Elementary in Escondido

changing behaviors for the conservation and sustainability of the environment (Macinkowski 2004, Schultz 2011). The conservation approach is consistent with the conservancy's mission, which includes engaging and educating the community to promote ecological literacy and environmental responsibility. Consequently, we will continue to use the nature experiences and informal science education strategies of our existing 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade program to engage and educate the students as we incorporate conservation action skills, both key to lifelong conservation behaviors.

Eager to begin piloting some of our new conservation strategies even before the completion of the final report, we tested an activity with 4th grade students studying the food chain. Because of the extremely detrimental impact of plastics in food chains, the added conservation component provided the students with the skills and confidence to use fewer plastics in their own lives. They learned how plastics disrupt food chains, identified ways to reduce plastics in their lives, made pledges to use fewer plastics, and then tracked their own behaviors at meeting these goals. The newly created habits and accountability will be incorporated into end-of-school-year projects that will be shared with their families and other students. As the field trip wrapped up, one of the parent chaperones enthusiastically exclaimed, "What an amazing program—I absolutely loved it! Not only did the students learn about the environment, they learned how to be better human beings." ❖

Continued from page 1, North County Dunes Project

Coastal sand dunes are one of the most impacted habitats in Southern California, and they are important for a variety of native species. As we coastal dwellers know, their location is very important to our human community, too. Because of the overwhelming reduction in undisturbed coastal dunes over the past century, almost all native species that depend on them are at risk.

For thousands of years, several types of birds used our coastal sand dunes as their summer homes where they made nests on the ground and raised their broods. Modern coastal development has resulted in much less area to make nests, an increase in human-associated predators (raccoons and crows), and invasive plant species that encroach on their preferred habitat. Most impacted are the federally endangered California Least Tern (*Sterna (Sterna) antillarum browni*) and threatened Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), both regular visitors to San Elijo Lagoon.

The native plants that thrive on coastal dunes are sparse and low-growing, and they are



*The Seaside Dunes site in Cardiff will be enhanced to improve native habitat conditions and will include educational signage. Photo: SELC*

delicate. They provide just enough cover for a young tern chick to protect itself from the elements, but not enough to hide a prowling predator. Two rare annual plants, coast woolyheads (*Nemacaulis denudata* var. *denudata*) and Nuttall's lotus (*Acmispon prostratus*), occur in low densities.

The initial phase of this project includes

site inventories and biological surveys, seed collection and grow-out, invasive vegetation control, permit development, and site-specific restoration plans. The results of this project will inform the development of the second phase, which will include intensive restoration activities such as plant propagation, fence construction, and substrate management. ❖

# Docent in the Spotlight—Gail Smith

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

Gail had her eye on becoming a docent since 2007 when she met an enthusiastic docent while birding in the lagoon. It was five years before she was able to sign up for training, after she retired from a long career (38 years!) teaching elementary school. “As long as I can remember, I always wanted to be a teacher, my favorite childhood game was ‘school’, so all I ever really needed was a chalkboard and I was happy,” reflects Gail.

A native of Rhode Island, Gail was drawn to San Diego by the weather years ago and has especially enjoyed camping and exploring throughout the west coast. With her extensive teaching experience, Gail has been a big asset to the education school programs. “I especially enjoy the ‘Aha’ moments when students experience something for the first time, like a mullet jumping or an Osprey flying overhead,” notes Gail. In



Gail Smith

addition to leading school programs, Gail volunteers for Family Fun Days and Family Discovery Days, and served on an advisory committee to help write supporting materials for school program stations.

Gail also volunteers through her church in an elderly shut-in program, visiting seniors who are either unwilling or unable to leave their houses. “As visitors of the elderly, our role is really to help brighten their day, and give them that contact to the outside world,” says Gail. “I enjoy listening to their stories, and simply taking the time to be with

people who don’t have an extensive supportive network of their own.” When not volunteering, Gail tries to fit in a weekly bird walk with the Palomar Audubon Society. Thank you, Gail, for sharing your time and expertise with the conservancy. We greatly appreciate it.

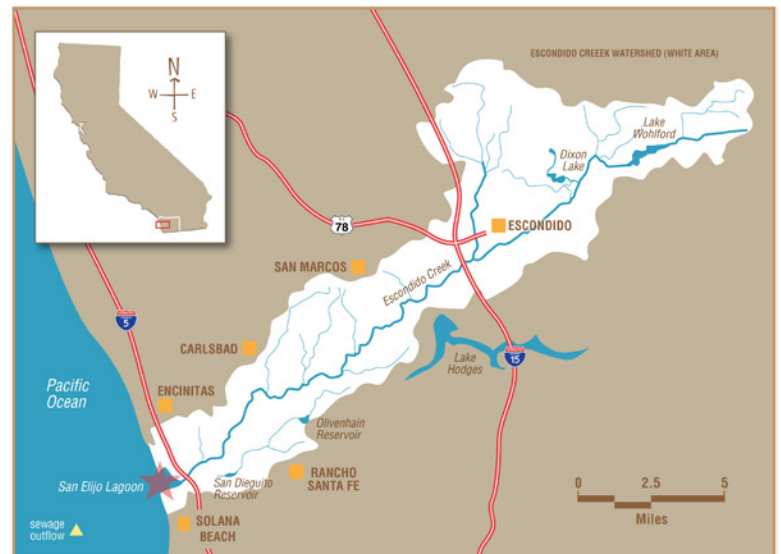
## Middle School Students to Explore Watershed!

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

After partnering with numerous elementary schools for the past five years, the conservancy is well poised to launch a middle school program. We are piloting the program this year with two middle schools, Rincon Middle School and Del Dios Academy, both in Escondido. The program will include classroom lessons, field study, data analysis, and community outreach. The Escondido Creek watershed will be an “outdoor classroom,” providing opportunities for students to explore, compare, and contrast the diversity of habitats found throughout their own watershed. “I am excited to get students outside and learning,” says Susan Scott, Rincon Middle School teacher and 2014 San Diego Science Alliance Teacher of the Year. She adds, “I have no doubt that the authentic learning experiences of getting the students in the field and exploring the natural beauty and complexity of the watershed in

which they live will have huge impacts on their attitudes about science as well as caring for the environment.”

As Education Director, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to expand our program to include middle school. Many may ask why middle school? Aren’t the students, with their limited attention spans, difficult to manage? There may be some validity to that reaction, but by avoiding these grades we are missing an important opportunity to educate and engage a critical population. Other than the first three years of life, this is the age at which kids are most transformed as they begin to solidify perceptions about themselves and their surroundings.



Escondido Creek watershed

The program proposed is fast-paced to keep their interest, and multi-faceted to reach students with a wide range of interests, abilities, and maturity. It is designed to get students excited both about science and conservation and will also provide leadership and public speaking opportunities that encourage intergenerational and intercommunity learning.

This grant was made possible by The Escondido Charitable Foundation, an affiliate of The San Diego Foundation with support from The McLaughlin Endowment Fund of The San Diego Foundation.



# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS



Thank you, Ned Reynolds!

## Seed Funding Established for Native Plant Nursery

*"When I learned of the conservancy's plans to start a native plant nursery," explained Ned Reynolds, a landscape architect, "I was anxious to support it." Ned promotes the use of California native plants and drought-tolerant plants in most of his projects. His seed funding, along with continued support, will carry the agricultural legacy of the reserve toward a sustainable future. Learn more at [SanElijo.org/Plant-Nursery](http://SanElijo.org/Plant-Nursery).*



## WELCOME Jennifer Bright

We welcome Jennifer Bright who recently joined the conservancy staff as Development Director. Jennifer works closely with the board of directors and staff on fundraising and stewardship campaigns. She also coordinates major donor events, including the biennial *Birds of a Feather* gala that supports school and public programs.

Jennifer has worked for several nonprofit agencies within San Diego County. Prior to working with

nonprofits, Jennifer led the corporate responsibility program at Neiman Marcus San Diego and brings 17 years of sales and management experience.

Jennifer grew up in Maine and fondly recalls her summers hiking, camping, and boating in the wilderness. An avid hiker and backpacker, she recently completed a 30-day solo hike on the John Muir Trail. Her favorite getaway is to be somewhere on a trail in the High Sierra.



Jennifer Bright

## Join Gala Sponsor Team

### Business Opportunities Announced for 2015 Gala



We invite you to consider a sponsorship package associated with one of North County's beloved events, the conservancy's biennial *Birds of a Feather* gala. This unique event celebrates our connection to communities—both urban and natural.

Corporate social responsibility and sustainability initiatives are now more in the spotlight. Attracting eco-conscious clients is one of the leading strategies for awareness and growth. Gala sponsorship is an opportunity for your company to directly support ongoing land, air and water initiatives in San Diego. You can associate your business with a progressive nonprofit organization.

We are currently accepting sponsors for our 2015 *Birds of a Feather* gala. Sponsorship levels begin at \$2500. Benefits are numerous and include company recognition in gala public relations activities and during the event.

We also welcome first-in contributions to live and silent auctions. Please contact us for more details on the partnership offerings at (858) 704-4560, by emailing [jennifer@sanelijo.org](mailto:jennifer@sanelijo.org), or online at [SanElijo.org/Gala](http://SanElijo.org/Gala).

# Ways of Giving



Your year-end gift ensures beautiful lagoon sunsets for all generations.  
Give today to connect communities and protect nature.

[SanElijo.org/Membership](http://SanElijo.org/Membership)

## Giving for Love of the Outdoors

### Gateway Donor's Motivation to Save Gateway Park

Nicole Dowsing learned of *The Campaign for Gateway Park*\* after seeing the conservancy's sign on the property seeking contributions. She had followed the ups and downs of story poles that represented defeated commercial proposals on this land. While most of Southern California's coast has already been developed, Nicole felt compelled to help save a slice of prime real estate—just for its public views and native habitat values.



"My desire to help save open space comes from the fact that I love the outdoors," shared Nicole. In college she began surfing and trail running. These sports also empower Nicole to help conserve native plants and to improve water quality. After college she worked as a lab technician in water quality and as a storm water inspector. Nicole went on to graduate school for ecology and water treatment. She is the environmental project manager at her family's company, Orion Construction.

"Gateway will be a wonderful addition of habitat to the reserve and will be a great place for people to see the transitional relationship between wetlands and uplands," she added. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve a piece of land so it will not be developed."

Nicole looks forward to helping in any way she can with the restoration of the property once the conservancy owns it outright. We appreciate Nicole Dowsing for linking inspiration to action by making a financial contribution to save the property.

\*The 3.4-acre Gateway Park is located on the east side of Scenic Highway 101 at the north end of Solana Beach, south end of Cardiff-by-the-Sea. Contribute now to conserve forever: [SanElijo.org/Gateway](http://SanElijo.org/Gateway) or call (760) 436-3944 x 705.

*Nicole pursues her love of the outdoors.*



# San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY

Connecting communities. Protecting nature.

P. O. Box 230634 | Encinitas, California 92023-0634

## Change Service Requested

### Membership Renewal

Please check your renewal date. If it is soon or expired, please use the enclosed envelope to renew your membership.

Thanks!



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## GO GREEN!

Conserve resources by opting for e-delivery of *Lagoon Tidings*.

Simply send an email to [newsletter@sanelijo.org](mailto:newsletter@sanelijo.org) with 'Subscribe' in the subject line and your mailing address in the message.

Thanks for helping to save paper!



## California 10/20 has contributed \$15,000 total toward Gateway Park

**Run or Walk 10 scenic coastal miles through Del Mar, Solana Beach and Encinitas**

**20 stages of live music on course - including one at Gateway Park!**

**Headliner Finish Concert at Del Mar Fairgrounds**

**All participants receive stunning finisher medals and high quality tech shirts.**

**Join Team San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy**  
**Register: [CAL1020.com](http://CAL1020.com)**

