



**San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY**  
Connecting communities. Protecting nature.

**2014 Spring**

# 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

Regular monthly docent meetings  
Second Tuesday each month  
9–11 am at the Nature Center

### Guided Nature Walks

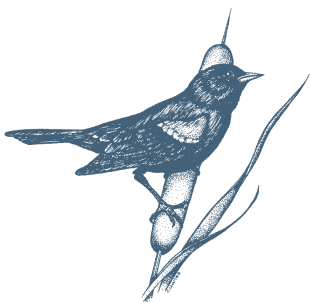
Every Saturday 10–11 am at the Nature Center  
Wildlife Walks—Explore new habitats  
March–April: Rios Avenue Trail  
May–June: Santa Carina Trail  
July–September: Santa Helena Trail  
Family Fun Walks—1st Sunday each month, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Begins March 2, at the Nature Center  
Sunday Strolls—3rd Sunday each month, 3–4:30 pm. Begins March 16, at the Nature Center

### Family Discovery Days

“Eggucation”  
March 29 & 30, 1–4 pm at the Nature Center

### Community Habitat Restoration

Volunteer Restoration Events  
Third Saturday each month (Fourth in April), 9 am–12 noon  
March 15, April 26 (Creek to Bay Cleanup), May 17, June 21, July 18  
RSVP @ [SanElijo.org/restoration-events](http://SanElijo.org/restoration-events)  
Stewards Restoration Workshops  
Every Wednesday 9:30 am–Noon  
Contact [Platoon@sanelijo.org](mailto:Platoon@sanelijo.org) to join



## Explore the Coast Launched during Family Discovery Days

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

In 2013 we were successful in receiving grant funding from the California Coastal Conservancy's *Explore the Coast* grant program to increase the opportunities for inland communities to visit the coast. After working with three Escondido elementary schools over the past four years, this grant was a perfect match for bringing the families from these partner schools to the lagoon to learn about and enjoy a coastal wetland.

During field trips, students often express an interest to return to the lagoon, and although we share the many free programs we offer, adequate outreach and transportation appear to be the greatest barriers to weekend visits. Family Discovery Days (FDD), a County-Conservancy sponsored seasonal event, seemed like an ideal opportunity for these students to share a lagoon experience with their families, so we decided to make participation in FDD a focal point of the Coastal Conservancy grant.



A young student explores the coast during Family Discovery Days' "Wings Over Wetlands". Photo: San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy

In the past, the FDD event tended to be geared towards the younger 4–7 age group. But knowing that the students in the Escondido program ranged in age from 8–11, it was *continued on page 4*

## SELRP Update

By Barry Lindgren, Associate Director

Ninety percent of California's coastal wetlands have been replaced by urban development. San Elijo Lagoon is a valuable part of what remains, but we are losing mudflat and salt marsh habitat. Highways, a railroad, and nearby infrastructure all contribute to restricted tidal flushing and degraded water quality in the reserve. The lagoon's unique ecosystem will vanish unless we act.

San Elijo Lagoon Restoration is a long-range plan more than 20 years in development. The restoration team is now preparing for the very important public comment period. Community input is essential.

The conservancy looks forward to the release of the restoration's public draft *continued on page 4*

**San Elijo Lagoon**  
**RESTORATION**  
Reviving Your Wetlands

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# President's Message

*By Scott Griffiths, President*

Christmas bird counts have been going on in this country since before independence. The counting tool of choice before 1900 was a shotgun. Some things have changed. During the holidays, armed only with 10X binoculars, Linda Jones and I were lucky enough to join Robert Patton and his team of birders for this year's count in the Rancho Santa Fe sector. With an average count of 174 species, this sector is regularly one of the top ten producers in the United States. Due to its wide range of habitat, our own San Elijo Lagoon contributes up to 125 of those species. The count itself is a multi-day effort with dozens of birders staking out rare birds before the actual count day.

Nor do Robert and his team stop there. On the second Monday of every month, a subset of the Christmas counters surveys the San Elijo Lagoon area. This survey replicates a ten year effort commencing in 1973 that provided baseline data used for the planning of the reserve. With the regular opening of the lagoon mouth, we have seen an increase in the numbers of endangered Clapper Rails and Belding's Savannah Sparrows. Threatened California Gnatcatchers take advantage of the protected coastal sage to grow their populations as well. Over 320 avian species have been documented in the immediate vicinity of San Elijo Lagoon. If the proposed SEL restoration plan is implemented, as we all hope, Robert expects the numbers of shore birds to increase as more mud flats are restored to the lagoon.

Thank you to Robert and all of the volunteers for maintaining this critical data base during the last 40 years. ♦



*Scott Griffiths*

## FEATURED PHOTO



*Double-crested Cormorant enjoys breakfast in San Elijo Lagoon. Photo: Jo Quinn*

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



# Spring Flowers and a New Plant Guide!

By Elizabeth Venrick, Board Member and Docent, and David Varner, Resource Management Director

Just in time for spring flowers, we are excited to announce the recent web-publication of *Guide to the Plants of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve* ([SanElijo.org/Plant-Guide](http://SanElijo.org/Plant-Guide)). What began as a hobby for the guide's principal author has grown into a comprehensive web-based identification guide that includes information on ecology and human uses as well as on description, distribution, and taxonomy. Each plant is accompanied by numerous photographs, all taken in the reserve. Information is electronically linked to the source, and the extensive bibliography includes everything from the Jepson eFlora to cooking blogs. The Plant Guide is intended as a resource for the botanist, teacher, and docent as well as the casual visitor. At present, it includes only a smattering of species, but since nearly 400 species have been reported in the reserve, Venrick, Varner and the SELC staff will be adding new species to the site for some time to come. Check it out to learn and explore!

March is the peak of our wildflower season, and we hope you'll use this new web-based plant guide to learn about plants you see while out on the trails. To get you started, here are a few suggestions:

Look up on the hills along the trail heading east from Rios Ave. to enjoy the endangered sea dahlia (*Leptosyne maritima*). This plant thrives on the north facing slopes of the reserve. Want to know why it is endangered? [sanelijo.org/plant-guide/sea-dahlia](http://sanelijo.org/plant-guide/sea-dahlia)

Throughout the reserve, you might find the wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*). Look for its white flower spikes and spherical, spiny fruits. Wonder why it is sometimes called "manroot"? [sanelijo.org/plant-guide/wild-cucumber](http://sanelijo.org/plant-guide/wild-cucumber)

The beach evening-primrose (*Camissoniopsis cheiranthifolia*) carpets the sandy area west of Coast Highway in a brilliant yellow. Want to know more? You'll have to wait. This one is not posted yet.

Sea dahlia



Wild cucumber



WELCOME



Patricia Rinaker

## Patricia Rinaker, Board of Directors

Patricia Rinaker is a docent and our newest board member. She brings professional leadership in marketing, fundraising, communications and organizational planning.

Rinaker served as chairperson of the Long Range Planning Committee for Athenaeum Music & Arts Cultural Center in La Jolla. As a board member, she was instrumental in the facility's expansion and community awareness of its programs. She chaired or co-chaired six of its early galas. Before early retirement, she was an advertising manager for SDG&E and account executive for J. Walter Thompson (San Francisco/New York).

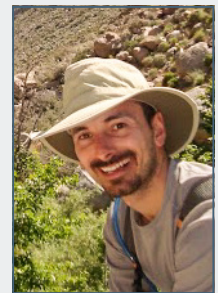
She grew up on a Santa Barbara ranch where her family grew local produce. Her grandfather, a renowned Santa Barbara landscape architect and horticultural teacher, also inspired her love for nature. Rinaker now lives in Pacific Beach.

She holds a M.A. in Guidance & Counseling from Stanford University and a B.A. in Rhetoric & Public Address from UC Santa Barbara. She enjoys playing tennis and piano, reading, walking, and attending cultural and musical events.

## Bradley Nussbaum, Associate Biologist

Bradley Nussbaum joined the Habitat Management Program first as Community Habitat Restoration Volunteer Intern and then Water Quality Volunteer Intern. Hired as a staff member in December 2013, Bradley assists in the coordination of Lagoon Platoon habitat restoration workshops and events. His primary duties include collecting water quality data in the reserve, photo monitoring inlet sedimentation, and managing the hydrologic monitoring database.

Bradley has a B. S. in optical engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. He is currently working on his Masters of Divinity at Claremont School of Theology. When he is not at the conservancy or studying for school, you may find Bradley practicing yoga, hiking, backpacking or gardening.



Bradley Nussbaum



*Continued from page 1, Explore the Coast*

critical to create exhibits that were age-appropriate and that would reinforce some of the knowledge gained through their school visits. Bilingual exhibits were also created to ensure that all family members would be able to engage and explore the stations together.

As event planning geared up, it became obvious that we would need up to sixty volunteers, primarily our docents and board members, to ensure the two day event ran smoothly, and to cover the many stations dispersed along the loop trail at the Nature Center. To boost our volunteer support, we reached out to San Pasqual High, another partner school in Escondido. We offered a full day field trip to the lagoon that included wetland exploration and exhibit preparation, followed by a weekend FDD community service project. The school was very receptive to the idea, and even secured funding to cover student transportation. In the end, 30 students participated in the field trip, while 15 students returned to volunteer at FDD, engaging with the public and serving as role models to the young Escondido students visiting the lagoon with their families.



*A daughter encourages her mom to get a closer look at the hummingbird. Photo: San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy*

"I would definitely like to come back for the next event," said Sydney Schabacker, an enthusiastic student from San Pasqual High who spent Saturday talking about bird beak and feet adaptations with inquiring visitors. "I would also like to learn more about the birds of the lagoon," added Sydney.

Because the *Explore the Coast* grant was a pilot program, we had no idea how many families would sign up and attend the first event. We exceeded our expectations when over 30 families and 130 individuals from Escondido participated in FDD's January "Wings Over Wetlands".

The smiles on the faces seemed to say it all as kids and adults busied themselves making bird houses and feeders, examining bird wings under microscopes, spotting osprey through scopes, listening for bird songs and calls along the boardwalk, and so much more. With continued grant support, we anticipate even more Escondido families at the next two Family Discovery Days events—please be sure to welcome our upstream neighbors! ♦

*continued from page 1 SELRP* environmental document (EIR/EIS) this summer. Our team now focuses on the myriad engineering aspects of actual construction. The potential impacts of construction, and any approaches used to lessen those impacts, need to be explained carefully in the EIR/EIS for each of the restoration alternatives presented. This includes phasing times of many elements of construction with nesting season, as well as providing for additional protected areas of refuge for lagoon inhabitants that may be temporarily displaced.

The team also is coordinating with engineers now working on the design of the new double-track rail system. This cooperative effort is critical not only to improve efficiencies during construction, but also to minimize impacts to sensitive habitat as these two projects proceed in parallel. The recently passed Kehoe Bill (SB 468) requires that all construction operations in sensitive resource areas are conducted such that each affected area will be impacted only once, no matter how many related projects are involved.

Visit [SanElijo.org/Restoration](http://SanElijo.org/Restoration) to view frequently asked questions, facts about restoration, and a timeline of public meetings. If you have an organization interested in learning more about San Elijo Lagoon Restoration in a brief presentation, please contact Barry Lindgren, Associate Director at [barry@sanelijo.org](mailto:barry@sanelijo.org). ♦

## Plant Purple Needlegrass, not Mexican Feathergrass!

*By David Varner, Resource Management Director*

Many homeowners are attracted to grasses, both as turf and as larger, more erect plants among shrubs. If you want to add grasses to your landscape, how about California's state grass, purple needlegrass? This beautiful grass grows well in a variety of soils and with minimal irrigation needs; its leaves are bright green during the cool months and golden with purple specks in the dry months. It can be used singularly as an accent to your garden or you can create soft meadows en masse. Look for purple needlegrass on the living roof of the San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center!

We've recently experienced a non-native, landscape plant that escapes developed landscapes and has now infiltrated the reserve. You can see Mexican feathergrass growing along Hwy 101 in Solana Beach, and in many other urban locations.

The problem with this plant is that it spreads easily from one yard to another to the reserve, and like other non-natives, since it did not evolve here, it has no naturally occurring adversaries to keep it under control. Without management intervention the invasive plants spread more and more, reducing biodiversity and degrading habitat conditions for native species.

So please, plant purple needlegrass, not Mexican feathergrass!



*Purple needlegrass (Stipa pulchra)*



*Mexican feathergrass (Stipa tenuissima)*



# Docent in the Spotlight—Iris Godbout

By Tara Fuad, Education Director

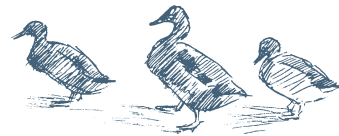
A fan of the environment, kids, numbers, books, and theater, Iris Godbout has successfully blended her many personal interests with community service. As a conservancy volunteer, she is able to meet her environment and kid interests, while as a volunteer accountant at the Encinitas Senior Center, Iris fulfills her numbers 'fix.' A model retiree, Iris still finds time to usher at the North Coast Repertory Theatre and volunteer at the Friends of Encinitas Library book store.

After teaching water conservation to elementary students for the City of Encinitas for 20 years, Iris was undaunted by leading school groups when she began as a conservancy docent in 2009. Iris notes,

"I especially love teaching the kids who come from Escondido... they are so appreciative of the opportunity to visit, and I am always surprised when I hear students say they have never seen the ocean." A native of Honduras, Iris has proven especially helpful utilizing her bilingual skills, serving as translator for some of our school and public programs. A Cardiff resident for 27 years, and a fan of nature, sunshine, sand, and surf, Iris is grateful to live in such a wonderful community, and we are grateful for her generosity through her committed volunteerism. Come tax season, however, don't expect to see Iris on the trails—she will be busy crunching numbers for senior residents of Encinitas!



Iris Godbout, back row 2nd from right, with a group of students and parent chaperones. Photo: San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy



Caption: 2013 Docent Graduation Class from Left to Right: Gail Nugent, Barbara Spiro, Mayme Kline, Jeanette Reynolds, Nancy Everett, Patricia Rinaker, Kenneth Hult, Vivian Lampell Olmos, Jim Stiven, Lea Corkidi, Jim Dietz, Janell Bryant. Not pictured: Jac Flanders, Leslie Shipley. Photo: San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy

# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

## Lagoon Platoon Receives Vehicle Donation

His wheels are in motion—as an active volunteer and in his recent gift. Board member Paul Worthington donated his Chevrolet Suburban to the conservancy for use in Lagoon Platoon community habitat restoration events. Several years ago, we acquired a trailer to transport tools and supplies to restoration sites. But without a reliable work vehicle, the trailer was not always towed. Now, Lagoon Platoon volunteers have ready access to shovels, wheelbarrows, water and trowels. Perhaps you know Paul through President's Council, or you worked alongside him at restoration planting events or Family Discovery Days. He's a SELC trained docent-naturalist and served as *Birds of a Feather* gala co-chair this past summer. When not volunteering, Paul works as a real estate agent for Sea Coast Exclusive Properties. Let's honk for Paul Worthington! Thank you, Paul.



Paul Worthington, left, pictured with David Varner and the Chevy Suburban he donated to SELC.

Photo: San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy

## Join Community Supporters in Saving Gateway

### We're almost there—but your help is needed

Now is the time to lend your name and support to *The Campaign for Gateway Park*.

For decades, Gateway was the site of numerous development proposals. Our communities rallied to defeat each proposal, knowing that commercial affects on Gateway would destroy one of the most beautiful views of the Pacific Ocean still enjoyed from Scenic Highway 101.

In 2011 the property went into foreclosure. San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy secured loans to purchase Gateway for \$3.75 million. Acquiring Gateway was the first step taken to ensure that it would

never be developed. The final step is to raise all the money needed to repay the loans. By this newsletter's publication deadline, we've received nearly \$3.1 million in gifts and pledges from 1055 donors.

We have a generational opportunity to do what was not possible before: add the Gateway property to San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve and permanently protect it for native plants, wildlife, and community enjoyment.

You can be part of this historic campaign for Gateway Park by contributing today so that the property can be conserved forever. Your tax-deductible gift will be part of your family's legacy: a permanent reminder of the values that you hold dear.

YES! I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE NOW  
TO CONSERVE GATEWAY PARK forever!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my/our contribution of:

☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$2,500 ☐ \$5,000

☐ \$ Other \_\_\_\_\_



☐ Enclosed is a check payable to San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELC).

OR

☐ Please charge my credit card.

Card Type (circle one):    MasterCard    Visa    Discover    AMEX

Name (as it appears on the card) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ 3-Digit Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_



# Ways of Giving



## Welcome New Legacy Circle Members

Our Legacy Circle grows. Renee and David Evans, Janie DeCelles, and Ann Pogue recently joined 24 members of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy's Legacy Circle. Ten years ago, Renee and David included the conservancy in their estate plan. Janie and Ann made their planned gifts at year-end.

Planned gifts, unless otherwise indicated, when realized become a part of our operating endowment. The conservancy has established an operating endowment fund to ensure the perpetual protection of the reserve. The fund assets are maintained at Rancho Santa Fe Foundation and The San Diego Foundation, where they are carefully and professionally invested. Contributions to our endowment secure not only the future of the reserve, but your personal legacy as well.

Legacy Circle members receive special benefits, including exclusive tours and picnics in the reserve and invitations to the annual major donor reception. Planned gifts may be made in many different forms. Examples include:

### Gifts by Will or Trust Agreement

Donors can make a gift of cash or property by naming the conservancy as a beneficiary in their will or trust. This technique can reduce estate tax upon the death of the donor.

### Charitable Remainder Trust

Appreciated assets can be placed in a Charitable Remainder Trust, sold, and the proceeds reinvested without realizing capital gains. The donor receives a payment for their lifetime or a specific term, after which the assets are donated to the conservancy. Benefits can include an income tax deduction and an estate tax deduction.

### Charitable Gift Annuity

A charitable gift annuity creates an annuity payment to the donor and a remainder payment to the conservancy. Are you interested in exploring planned giving this year? Please contact Elaine Dodge, Development Director, for more information.

## Memorial Gifts in Honor of Tom Clotfelter

We honor and remember Tom Clotfelter of Rancho Santa Fe who passed away in January. He was a longtime member of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy and a founder of its predecessor organization San Elijo Alliance. He was also featured in the conservancy's video *We Saved a Place for You* (2012) because of his pioneering efforts in raising awareness about the need to protect our remaining wetlands. In the video, Tom says of his beloved lagoon, "It's a beautiful break of nature in what otherwise could have been just another flat subdivision."

The family of the late Tom Clotfelter named San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy as the recipient of donations gifted in Tom's memory. Donations made in his honor will be added to the conservancy's endowment fund at Rancho Santa Fe Foundation. His legacy will continue through these memorial gifts and in the hearts of all who knew him.



## 2013 Annual Report Now Available

Read the 2013 Annual Report online at [SanElijo.org/membership](http://SanElijo.org/membership). Each year, we highlight donors to the conservancy. Thank you, members, for continuing our journey of connecting communities and protecting nature with San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy.





## 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!



## Coastal Land Solutions

donated survey services on behalf  
of *The Campaign for Gateway Park*.

**Coastal Land Solutions, Inc.** is a full service company of dedicated professionals providing land surveying, land planning, civil engineering, expert witness and GIS services throughout Southern California. We have provided quality service since 2004 for public and private residential, commercial, industrial and institutional projects. Based in Encinitas, California.



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**[Coastal-Land-Solutions.com](http://Coastal-Land-Solutions.com)**