

Winter 2017
Spring 2018

LAGOON TIDINGS

Inside:

77-Acres Saved

Reviving Your Wetlands

Partners, Events & Tours



Cover Image

Westward view from the newly acquired 77-acres of open space lands in Encinitas adjacent to San Elijo Lagoon.

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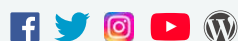
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L–R: Gibson and Gillingham

President's Welcome

Doug Gillingham, Board President

progress (prō·gres) / verb

1. advance or develop toward a better, more complete, or more modern state

Progress derives from the Latin *pro*, forward, and *gradi*, to walk, and evolved through Old French and Middle English to our usage today. Consistent with its origins, our usage implies an element of gradualism to the forward movement, a walking and not a leaping. And that's ok: walking advances us just fine when we persist in the effort.

The Conservancy at 30 has progressed a long way from its early days, thanks to the vision of our founders, the work of our staff and volunteers, and the generous support of our donors. Our budget for 2018 provides for a fulltime staff of 15, a number that has grown over the years not for the sake of growth, but for the sake of educating more school kids in more profound ways, preserving and restoring more habitat, conducting more science, and building more connections between our communities and nature. Happy birthday to us.

Our progress includes building a strong board focused on governance and accountability, policy, and development. Strong boards are dynamic, with new members progressing to committee chair and officer roles, and with board presidents heading out to pasture to make way for new cycles of leadership. Beginning in January our current Vice President Nicolle Selby-Thomas takes over the reins as President and begins the Conservancy's next 30 years of progress. I wish her enormous success, and I thank the Conservancy community for the privilege of serving as board president these past three years.

May your year's end, and the new year to follow, be full of progress. Thank you for your support of the Conservancy and its mission.

Cheers—Doug

Director's Welcome

Doug Gibson, Executive Director | Principal Scientist

As the year ends, I imagine the future and think five years ahead when *Reviving Your Wetlands*—the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project—will be complete. The water is cleaner, fish and invertebrates are abundant, and the birds are happy in their newly revived habitats. New trails make better connections between Solana Beach, Cardiff-by-the-Sea, and our natural communities.

We are entering a new era in community conservation. We are exploring what 6 acres of community agriculture looks like and its connection to open space, like the 87 acres of open lands adjacent to San Elijo Lagoon that we have acquired in the past year.

I also reflect on the history of the Conservancy and its talented team. I met Barry Lindgren in early 2000, when he came to the conservancy as a water quality and stream bio-assessment volunteer. In 2004, Barry officially joined our team and played an integral role in defining many Conservancy moments and major accomplishments as Associate Director. Using one's talents and leaving a legacy is something we all desire to do. Barry's legacy leaves San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy in a better position to accomplish our vision. It is with gratitude and honor that I share that Barry will retire at the end of 2017. We all will miss you, Barry, and know the best is yet to come.

Sincerely—Doug

Southern California Nonprofit Land Trust



L–R: San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy's Associate Biologist Emma Havstad, founding member and former President, Denise Stillinger and Executive Director Doug Gibson survey coastal habitats on the newly acquired 77-acres in Encinitas adjacent to San Elijo Lagoon.

Lands for Wildlife and People

Expand by 77-Acres

Imagine more hiking trails that will connect parts of Encinitas to San Elijo Lagoon. The protection of nature and the connection of communities was strengthened October 30 when San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy closed escrow on the 77-acre property located in coastal Encinitas.

This significant land acquisition was made possible by a generous donation from longtime Conservancy supporter and Solana Beach resident Ann Dunne. "I stared at that jewel of nature, still wild, for hours from the top of Annie's Canyon Trail. It belongs in safe hands, and now it is," said Ann Dunne, who actively supports the conservancy's Sage Environmental Leadership program.

Conserving rare Coastal Sage Scrub and Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub habitats is essential. A recent Conservancy survey of the land identified several special status plants on the property, including California adolphia, Del Mar manzanita (federally endangered), wart-stemmed ceanothus, Orcutt's pincushion, Del Mar Mesa sand aster, cliff spurge, San Diego barrel cactus, beach golden aster, sea dahlia and Nuttall's scrub oak. At least two endangered species call this place home—the San Diego pocket mouse and the California Gnatcatcher.

Connecting Communities. *Protecting* Nature.

One of the key trail access points will connect Lake Drive in Encinitas westward to the 16 acres of land at the western "Strawberry Fields" that we secured last year—**totaling 93 acres of continuous habitat to San Elijo Lagoon**. This is the largest addition to these protected lands in more than 30 years.



The John & Elizabeth Leonard Family Foundation is generously matching year-end gifts of \$100 or more—up to \$35,000—now through December 31, 2017.

For Nature & You

San Elijo Lagoon
RESTORATION
Reviving Your Wetlands



Rendering of the new nature center trail connection—provided by County of San Diego Parks & Recreation
(Landscape photography, courtesy Al Butler)

Reviving Your Wetlands

Envision the flow of healthy waters and an increase in wildlife diversity at San Elijo Lagoon. New trail connections will be worth the wait. In time, lagoon visitors will tour from the nature center—to a bridge span over part of the lagoon—that will connect pathways to Solana Beach trailheads and to Harbaugh Seaside Trails. For you, it means a glimpse of the endangered Ridgway's Rail, or the simple joy of being outside in coastal breezes with birds in the sky and on the water.

Guiding the Way

Reviving Your Wetlands—the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project—is about to begin. San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy is guiding the restoration of the lagoon, estimated to conclude in 2021. This essential restoration project is funded by Transnet tax revenue.

You're going to see the beginning of 20 years of grassroots planning that has culminated into the *Reviving Your Wetlands* project. It means the improvement of tidal circulation in the lagoon. Lands and waters will be enhanced for native plants and animals—including threatened and endangered species.

In Phase I an overdredge pit will be created by removing beach quality sand that will replenish our local beaches. Restoration actions will move efficiently—to get in and get out—and make as little an impact to nature as possible.

Phase I includes the clearing of vegetation and construction of a series of dikes along the main lagoon channel and the channel connecting to the ocean. These temporary dikes will control water elevations and turbidity to allow for efficient dredging and provide refugia for endangered species, like the Belding's Savannah Sparrow.

Surf Monitoring

We engaged in a year-long surf monitoring program in coordination with Surfrider Foundation and restoration stakeholder agencies to ensure that these beach replenishment projects do not impact local reefs. These are headed by Tim Stillinger, the conservancy's Scientific Research Associate (and local surfer).

Places to Go

Restoration will not overwhelm existing habitat, so birds will have the ability to nest where they feel safe. Studies indicate that sufficient alternate habitat is available for species to move within the lagoon basins or temporarily to other lagoons, if needed. This will be a short-term disruption, and long-term, the wetlands are expected to revive and thrive.

Following restoration, public access and education opportunities will expand. As managing partners of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, County of San Diego Department of Parks & Recreation, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, and California Department of Fish & Wildlife will continue to protect sensitive natural resources.

Reviving Your Wetlands

Spotlight Marathon Construction

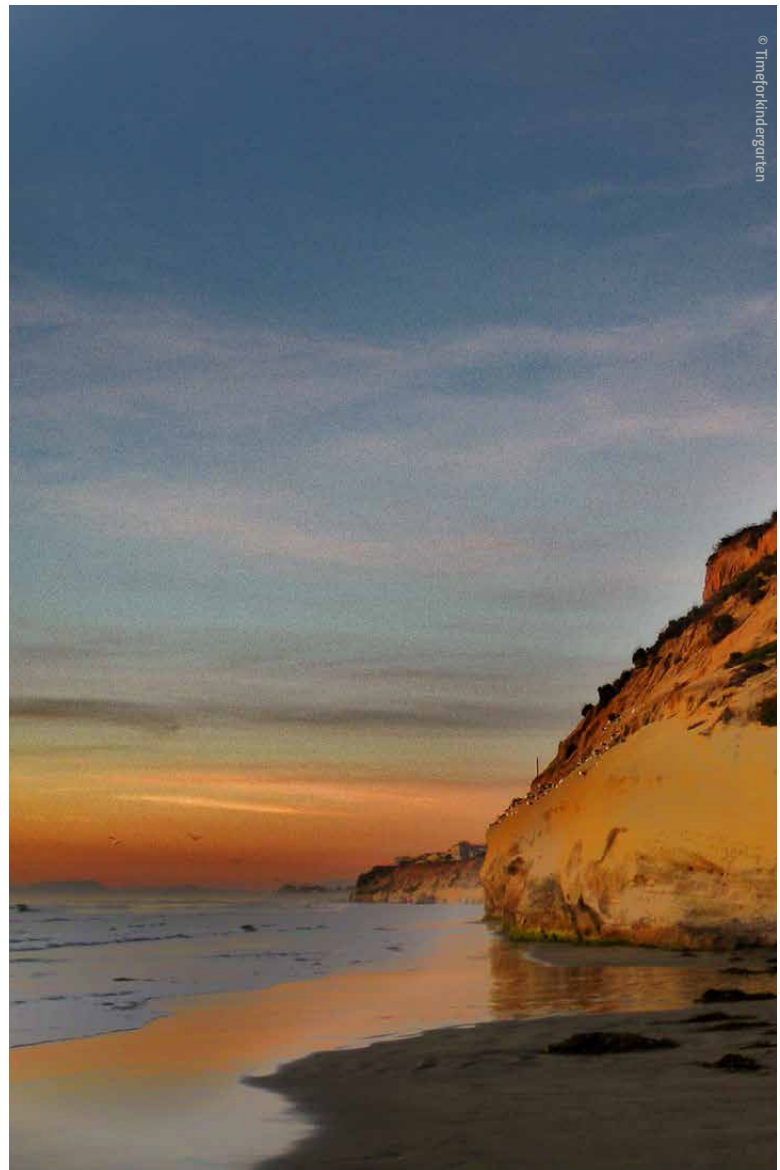
Marathon Construction Corporation is a San Diego-based heavy general engineering contractor specializing in waterfront construction and environmental restoration projects since 1981.

"Marathon Construction looks forward to a very successful restoration of San Elijo Lagoon and the preservation of this beautiful San Diego natural resource and open space," said President Mike Furby. "The definition of success in coastal saltwater marsh restoration work, such as the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project, includes improving tidal exchange and lagoon capacity, water quality, the biological features of the lagoon including flora and fauna, and improved coastal, public access and trail systems."

You may be familiar with several of their signature projects, including the San Dieguito Wetlands Restoration Project in Del Mar.



L-R: Jon Ruth, Chief Operating Officer and
Mike Furby, President Marathon Construction



Sand replenishment projects at Fletcher Cove and Cardiff State Beach are scheduled for the beginning of 2018.

Approximately 450,000-cubic yards of sand will be pumped to these beaches via a small 24-inch diameter pipe that reaches under the Pacific Coast Highway. Confirmed dates will be provided online and in *Lagoon Connections* blog.

Questions about #RevivingWetlands?

- Learn as we go in Lagoon Connections: [SanElijoConservancy.blog](https://www.sanelijoconservancy.org/blog)
- See Frequently Asked Questions: [SanElijo.org/RevivingWetlands](https://www.sanelijo.org/RevivingWetlands)



Del Mar third grade students get a close-up look at a California horn snail.

Exploring Lagoon Life

This fall, the conservancy invited more than 500 students to explore their natural world at San Elijo Lagoon. Our newest school partnership is with the **Del Mar Union School District**. All third-graders from the district's eight elementary schools participate in a lagoon field trip that addresses how living things are adapted to their environment.

By exploring different habitats and focusing on plant and animal adaptations, students hone their observation skills, practice asking questions, and become curious about their surroundings; all essential building blocks to thinking like a scientist and supporting the state's Next Generation Science Standards.

I love that the students are allowed to explore and take ownership of their learning.

—Third Grade Teacher, Torrey Hills Elementary



Pollinator plants include narrow leaf milkweed which is a host plant for the Monarch butterfly.

We Love Pollinators

Students from **R. Roger Rowe Elementary** in Rancho Santa Fe visited the reserve in October. They spent part of a Saturday propagating 100 native pollinator plants at the San Elijo Nursery. They returned December 2 to install the seedlings around the *Butterfly and Pollinator Education Amphitheater* at the Rios Trail, providing more valuable habitat for native pollinators. This nourishing habitat site is made possible by the **Rancho Santa Fe Garden Club**. After planting, the students and their families enjoyed a naturalist-guided nature walk to learn more about the plants and animals they are helping to thrive.

One for Tomorrow



Clarke, a public health company, is grounded in discovering and developing more sustainable solutions for mosquito control and aquatic habitat management. They annually acknowledge organizations that work for solutions in climate change, environmental education, land and water conservation, pollution, wildlife protection and food quality. Clarke's **One for Tomorrow** award of \$23,333 is presented for our conservation efforts. Clarke gives back 1% of revenues from its NextGen products and services.

We loved our time with you all. We admire you and your group for the wonderful work you do.

—Erin Arnott, Clarke Western Regional Manager



Check presented by Clarke Western Regional Manager, Erin Arnott and Dave McLaughlin, Vice President Marketing (Chicago office)

EVENTS

On the Horizon

Register SanElijo.org/Events

Volunteer for Coastal Habitats

Jan 20 | Feb 17 | Mar 17

If it's been a while since you've buried your hands in soil, we have a nature workout for you. On third Saturdays this winter, community volunteers can assist with riparian and wetland transition restoration. Thousands of native seedlings are leaving the San Elijo Nursery and going into the ground in January at Santa Carina; in February at La Orilla and in March at Rios Trail. Thank you for loving your lagoon.

Conservancy Board member Megan O'Toole Lyons and her son, Will Lyons a member of Teen Volunteers in Action



Keep Touring

Guided Tours from the Nature Center First & Last Saturdays
SanElijo.org/Events



Love Birds?

January 7 | February 4

Free

Fly over for the **FAMILY FUN DAYS** series that's all about the birds this winter. Kids and families can explore **Birding Basics** January 7 and **Nests & Eggs** February 4.



Wings Over Wetlands Family Discovery Day

January 21

Free

Celebrate the arrival of our feathered friends during the winter bird migration. Kids can meet live birds and enjoy bird-themed crafts, face painting and interactive nature activities. Co-presented by Conservancy & County.

Splashes of Spring

March 4 | April 1 | May 6

Free

As flowers begin to brighten nature with splashes of color, the **FAMILY FUN DAYS** series rotates to springtime fun and tours, where children explore the world of **Pollination** March 4, **Life Cycles** April 1 and **Lagoon In Bloom** Family Discovery Day May 6.



Watershed Journey Series

Jan 28 | Feb 25 | Mar 25 | Apr 22

4-Part Series: \$20 Member | \$40 Public

From mountain headwaters to the coast, explore the Escondido Creek watershed in a 4-part discovery series with guest experts. With so little fresh water to go around, it's important to understand where water comes from, how it moves through the watershed, and what you can do to keep it healthy. Learn about the history of how we manage our shared waters. At Dixon Lake take in panoramic



views from Double Peak Park. Downstream, stroll along a freshwater creek at Elfin Forest before hiking up through oak woodland and chaparral. The series will conclude at San Elijo Lagoon where you will learn about the important functions this unique and rare habitat provides.



San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY
Connecting communities. Protecting nature.

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Go Green!

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suggest editorial online.
Magazine published
3x annually.

 Printed with soy ink on recycled paper.

Our vision

is a world where biodiversity is preserved and
people act to conserve nature and embrace it
as central to a healthy community.

Our mission

is to protect and restore the resources of San Elijo
Lagoon Ecological Reserve, its watershed, and related
ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations.



The California Gnatcatcher is
one of several endangered
species on the newly acquired
77-acres in Encinitas.

Photo: Jo Quinn