

Amigos de Bolsa Chica

THE

TERN TIDE



Since 1976

Summer 2009
Volume 34, Issue 3

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THE TERN TIDE

is published quarterly by
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A Glorious History and Legacy

by Shirley Dettloff

As most of you know, Dr. David Carlberg, President of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica and former professor at Long Beach State University has written the definitive history of the Bolsa Chica and the role the Amigos played. This is a must read for all Amigos members as you will not only learn many new things about our history, but you will relive your role in making what we thought was an impossible dream become reality.



On April 30, 120 people gathered at the Huntington Beach Library to hear Dave speak about his book, giving his audience many interesting facts. I think that everyone was surprised at what they learned about Bolsa Chica. Several came up to me during the evening and let me know how pleased they were that Dave had

finally written the book we all wanted written. As time passes, the history of a place is sometimes misrepresented because of faulty memories, inaccurate facts, and rumors that may or may not be true. Dave is a published author and his writing skills are excellent. Most importantly, he did the research, spending hours in the various libraries and museums to make sure that he was presenting the facts. He also lived much of this history (although I am not saying he was around during the ice age!) He presents the facts and much more. This book not only gives us factual information, it tells how a group of individuals came together and worked tirelessly for over 30 years to accomplish their goal . . . saving the Bolsa Chica Wetlands.

The book can be purchased online at www.amigosdebolsachica.org, or by calling the Amigos office, and at various locations in Huntington Beach. Currently the Huntington Beach Library, the Surf City Shop on the Pier, California Greetings on Main St., the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, the Springdale Country Store (Springdale and Edinger) and the Country Store at 5 Points Plaza all are carrying the book. If you want to learn even more than you thought you knew about Bolsa Chica, buy the book and treat yourself to not only an enjoyable read, but the real story of Bolsa Chica.

Save the Date - August 23 - 3rd Annual Celebration Picnic

You're cordially invited! Sunday, August 23, 2009, 4:00-7:00 pm, Lake Park (Lake & 12th Streets). Amigos de Bolsa Chica is celebrating the 3rd Anniversary of the opening of the tidal inlet at the Bolsa Chica Wetlands with the annual picnic featuring great food, a chance to mingle with old and new friends, and many reasons to commemorate the victory of restoring the Bolsa Chica's full tidal connection to the ocean.

Volunteer Coordinator Needed

As warmer days increase, trash around the south parking lot and on the trails is also increasing. Volunteers wanting to do something for Community Service frequently contact the Amigos office. The Amigos need a volunteer coordinator who can facilitate calls about volunteering from the general public, including Boy and Girl Scout leaders and high school clubs. This coordinator would schedule approximately 2 hours (for instance, 3:30-5:30 pm) twice a month (preferably Thursday or Friday) to be at the south lot with a key to the storage shed for access to cleanup tools and trash bags. He or she would also provide instructions and supervision for those who volunteer to pick up trash on a one-time or monthly basis. This would keep the areas along the trails presentable for weekend visitors and more importantly, would prevent trash that harms wildlife from blowing into the wetlands.

In addition to routine trash cleanups, a volunteer coordinator would be welcomed to assist with other types of community service projects at Bolsa Chica, such as trail maintenance. Please contact the Amigos office, 714-840-1575 or info@amigosdebolsachica.org, if you are interested in being a volunteer coordinator.

Parkside Shea Housing Project

by Tom Livengood

On June 1, 2009, the Huntington Beach City Council approved the Parkside Shea housing project on a 5 to 1 vote. The dissenting vote was Council Member Jill Hardy. Council Member Cathy Green was absent due to knee surgery. The property, owned by Shea is located on the West side of Graham between Slater and Warner Ave and is directly connected to the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. In 2002 the City Council approved the plan for 170 single family homes. In May 2008 the Coastal Commission approved the plan reducing homes to 111 and nearly doubling open space to 24 acres including six acres of wetlands. After making many changes to the project required by the Coastal Commission, it was back to the City Council for a final vote.

The public hearing was opened and Shea representatives provided their presentation. The first public speaker was Amigos President Dave Carlberg. Dave presented the main reasons why the Council should delay action. Many changes had been made to the project since the completion of the EIR (Environmental Impact Report) in 2002. The argument for delaying action is that the Coastal Commission addendum does not fully evaluate all of the most recent changes. The historic drop in the water table in the area warrants a new, full EIR to evaluate the impact on the wetlands and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) on the site. There are also concerns with the steel piling placed on the north side of the channel by the County and the impact on the water table. Mark Bixby, representing a large contingent of community members who maintain that the Shea Parkside development proposal does not represent the best use of the land and would prefer to see it restored as part of the Bolsa Chica, prepared a 250 page document outlining why a new EIR was needed.

The public hearing was nearly two hours long. Other speakers supporting delay on a decision on the project included Paul Arms, President of the Bolsa Chica Land Trust and former Huntington Beach Mayor Connie Boardman. There were 10 people in the audience supporting the project and nearly 50 opposing.

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Grunion Adventures

By Dave Carlberg

Our ever capable Amigos office coordinator Laura Holdenwhite receives numerous emails and phone calls each day, mostly about routine matters like making reservations for tours or directions to Bolsa Chica. But in mid-May she got an email with an interesting request. It was from Bill Burhans, the interpretive specialist for Bolsa Chica State Beach. He needed volunteers to count grunion for a researcher at Pepperdine University; could we help? Bill expected a good run on the night of the 26th after 11 PM. Ten enthusiastic volunteers reported for duty: Vic Leipzig, Lou Murray, Chris Epting and son Charlie, Barbara and Frank Stewart, Cheryl and Jerry Searcy, and Dave and Margaret Carlberg. Action was pretty slow until around midnight when the beach near the north side of the inlet suddenly glittered with thousands of spawning grunion. The spectacle extended over several hundred feet along the beach and lasted for at least a half hour. Some of the volunteers then moved to the south side of the inlet and the fish covered the wet sand in even greater numbers.

Grunion are small fish related to the top smelt that are abundant in Bolsa Chica. Because of their bizarre mating habit, grunion were long thought to be mythical. In actuality, the fish spawn in the wet part of the beach sand by first riding waves up onto the beach during the highest tides of the months of March through August. Females burrow themselves vertically, tail first, into the wet sand to deposit eggs while male fish encircle the females and release their milt. As the next wave reaches the romantic couples they are washed back into the sea, presumably holding fins. In about two weeks the next high tide sees the amorous process repeating itself and at the same time the wave action releases fry from the eggs that were deposited in the sand two weeks earlier.

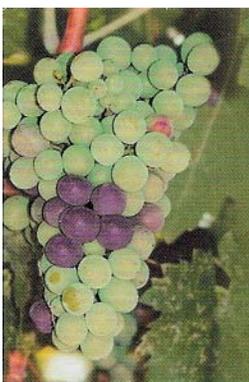
Grunion may be caught by hand only during open season (April and May are closed) and persons 16 and older must have a valid California fishing license. The fish may be fried, baked, or grilled as you would fresh sardines. Email me at carlberg@ix.netcom.com for recipes.

Bolsa Chica Pedestrian Bridge Close to Reality

by Dave Carlberg

After years of delays, construction of the pedestrian bridge to connect the north Bolsa Chica parking lot to the mesa trail appears to be near. Presently if visitors park in the north lot and wish to access Bolsa Chica from the north end of the mesa trail, they must cross the Warner Avenue bridge by walking along the bike lane within inches of heavy vehicle traffic. A walkbridge across the channel will eliminate risking life and limb to enjoy a walk in the wetland.

Planning for the bridge was launched in 2004 when the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) allocated \$141,000 toward an estimated construction cost of \$214,800. After nearly five years of unexpected delays due to paperwork and other factors, inflation had boosted the cost of constructing the bridge to \$555,000. At their May 28 meeting, the WCB voted to provide an additional allocation of \$200,000 for bridge construction. This amount, added to \$50,595 already expended on the project, \$75,000 that the Amigos and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust collected from private donors, \$91,000 that the Bolsa Chica Conservancy received from grants and gifts, and nearly \$139,000 from the Department of Fish and Game, will cover the cost of the bridge. Completion of construction is expected by the end of 2009.



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Earth Day 2009

by Margaret Carlberg

The Amigos de Bolsa Chica and the Bolsa Chica Conservancy officially launched Huntington Beach Centennial Environmental Month with their EARTH DAY 2009 celebration on April 4. Many, many thanks to the 29 Amigos docents and board members who helped make this event a huge success.

The regular First Saturday tour at the South Lot was very well attended, with special docent-led tours-on-demand offered to visitors until 2:00 pm. Visitors enjoyed refreshments of fresh bananas and apples (donated by Ingardia Brothers), snack bars (donated by Ralphs on Warner) and drinking water in a dispenser (donated by Pure Water Plus on Beach). Fritzankotter sandwiches and sodas were donated by Amigos for volunteers who stayed beyond noon.

Amigos put in more than 60 hours of volunteer community service at the South Lot, with Jim & Jennifer Robins and Laura Holdenwhite spending more than seven hours on Saturday plus many hours the day before getting ready. Docents Patty Overlay, Dean Elder, Jamie Pavlat, Grace Winchell, Bob Johnson, Terry Hill, Al Vari, Tom Anderson, Brian Westcott, Barbara Sentovich and Barbara Stewart all put in at least 4 to 5 hours sharing their knowledge and love of the Bolsa Chica with more than 80 visitors.

At the North Lot well over 600 visitors, mostly families with young children, visited the 26 displays and activities which described nearly every aspect of the Bolsa Chica environment. Amigos were involved with five different components—supplying the fruit, snacks and water, our information and merchandise booth, our History and Restoration display panels, the popular ‘Birds and Changing Tides’ activity at Fisherman’s point, and some new art activities for children. Five senior Girl Scouts helped children with the art projects and the Birds activity. Ron Davis and Margaret Carlberg each put in nearly eight hours each. New docents Lori and Jerry Donohue and Mike Concannon, Jim and Sirkka Aldridge, Kevin McCarthy, Dave Carlberg, Mary Ellen Houseal and Alma Bowman worked many hours in the warm spring sun. The total hours of Amigos’ community service at the north lot was almost 70!

Special thanks go to Tom Anderson, Ross Griswold and Patti Cacho-Negrete who photographed many scenes of the events, and Jim Marshall, Tom Anderson, and Ross Griswold who supplied extra canopies and helped with their set up. Huntington Beach videographer



Amigos Tours-On-Demand of the Ecological Reserve.



Activities and merchandise were available at the Amigos booth in the north lot.



Matt Lifferring was on hand capturing interviews and action shots. His video of “Huntington Beach Centennial Environmental Month” highlighted all of the environmental events around Huntington Beach during April and was shown frequently on HBTv-3.

Special Thanks To Amigos Volunteers

by Jennifer Robins

It's been a busy year for our docents and other volunteers. In March we had a booth at the Los Angeles Environmental Education Fair at the LA Arboretum. Thanks go to Grace Winchell (with her husband Bob), Susan Mickelson, Ed Zschoche, Julia Tafel and Ron Davis for talking with teachers and families and sharing the Amigos story.

In April besides our busy Earth Day/Public Tour on the 4th, we had booths at Rainbow's Earth Day and Shipley's Spring Festival on the 19th and 25th. Thanks go to Grace Winchell, Laura Holdenwhite, Lori and Jerry Donohue, Barbara Stewart, Dave and Margaret Carlberg and Brian Westcott for volunteering on the hottest day of the year, so far, at the huge event at Rainbow. Thanks go to Ross Griswold, Patti Cacho-Negrete, Barbara Sentovich and Dave Carlberg for volunteering at Shipley to talk with the visitors at the Nature Center.

In May Amigos set up a booth at the Deane Dana Nature Center in San Pedro for their Nature Extravaganza. Thanks go to Helen Higgins and Patty Overley for making the drive to San Pedro and talking with the visitors, many of who had never heard of Bolsa Chica. It was a chance to reach a new audience. I can't forget to thank Jim Robins who hauls the informational materials, merchandise, Amigos canopy in his vehicle and helps at all the booths with me. We have lots of fun at these events, meeting and talking with new people and seeing some old friends.

Our next event away from Bolsa Chica will be at the Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks booth at the Orange County Fair. We have volunteers already signed up to manage the booth on July 24th. So be sure and visit this booth if you attend the Fair.



Ed Zschoche, Jim Robins & Julia Tafel field questions from a passersby at the L.A. Arboretum. Photo by Jennifer Robins



At the Earth Day celebration, north lot: a Red-tailed Hawk, above, and a Western Screech Owl, right, courtesy of the Orange County Bird of Prey Center. North lot photos, Patty Cacho-Negrete; south lot photo, Tom Anderson.

Species of Concern - Member Experiences

We are inviting you to send in personal anecdotes and/or photos of how you have personally helped protect endangered species or species of concern. Many of our members have helped with projects in and around Bolsa Chica, such as the Least Tern nest sites protection at Bolsa Chica, Huntington State Beach and Seal Beach, and have likely witnessed some fascinating wildlife activities.

New Amigos docent Ross Griswold has been volunteering at the Huntington Beach State Beach Least Tern Natural Preserve at the mouth of the Santa Ana River this spring, and these are some of his photos of California Least Terns.



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The President's Tern

by Dave Carlberg

One of the missions that the Amigos has pursued during the 33 years of its existence has been public education about Bolsa Chica. One would think that after three decades of publishing books and newsletters, producing videos, setting up displays at public events, holding public forums, appearing in interviews on radio and TV, and taking advantage of every other means of modern communication, the entire world population (or at least that of Orange County), would know about Bolsa Chica. Not so. Just the other day I was at a meeting and one of those attending mentioned that she had taken a group of local friends to Bolsa Chica. Not only had none of them ever visited the wetland, most had not even heard of it. To those of us who have had Bolsa Chica swamp water circulating through our arteries for so long, the story seems incredible. But yet on further study, it is actually quite plausible.

Yes, Bolsa Chica has occupied more column inches in our local newspapers than just about anything you can think of. But, sadly, newspapers are not a significant source of information for much of our population. From circulation figures, it appears that only around one Orange County resident out of five reads the Register or the L. A. Times or one of their community partner papers, the Wave and Independent. So in spite of the fact both major and community papers have published a fair number of stories about Bolsa Chica over the years, their printed word apparently fails to reach a majority of the county's population.

It's said television has become the principal source of news for most people. But the major network evening news programs seldom if ever cover Bolsa Chica, and local TV station cameras rarely show up at Bolsa Chica events. The few exceptions usually involve key issues such as the glass "Wall of Death", the opening of the tidal inlet, and the sorrowful situation involving the Native American burial sites on the Bolsa Chica Mesa. Local PBS television outlets, KCET and KOCE, have broadcast a few outstanding stories on Bolsa Chica, and Huntington Beach's own cable TV news outlet HB3, has produced occasional features about Bolsa Chica on its news magazine Surf City Highlights. But the overall conclusion is that we cannot depend on the print or electronic media to spread the word widely about Bolsa Chica. That leaves it up to you and me.

Wait a minute. Why is it so important that everyone with a heartbeat has to know about Bolsa Chica? I don't feel it necessary to preach to the choir; you all know the importance of coastal wetlands like Bolsa Chica. As you also know, about 1200 acres of Bolsa Chica are now in state ownership, but here's some food for thought. California is in such dire economic straits that there is talk of the state selling off the more valuable pieces of its properties, like the L. A. Coliseum and the Orange County Fair Grounds (not the first time the idea has been launched, by the way, and it may be political bluffery, and maybe not).

What if someone in Sacramento realized that if it were possible to remove Bolsa Chica from Coastal Act protection and if the ports were to retain their mitigation credits from the wetland's restoration, the property would be worth maybe ten to twenty times what the state paid for it. I'm afraid I'm a graduate of the "Anything's Possible" school of thought and that gets me to the question I raised earlier, "Why is it so important that everyone with a heartbeat has to know about Bolsa Chica?" I believe there are enough folks around who know and love the Coliseum and the Fair Grounds who might be able to avert the sale of those sites. But are there enough citizens around who know and love Bolsa Chica? We think so but we're not sure. That is why the major activity of the Amigos has been educating the public about our favorite wetland. Leading the way in this endeavor is the Amigos' enormously busy Community Education Committee. Committee members spend hours reviewing our educational materials, looking for new and innovative ways of training docents and informing the public of the significance of Bolsa Chica. The Amigos, along with the Bolsa Chica Land Trust and the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, plays host to thousands of school children and adults each year. It is hoped that our message will be carried away by sufficient numbers of visitors that it will eventually establish a sizeable, informed population that could stop a possible future bureaucratic raid on Bolsa Chica. We cannot rest on our laurels; with your help, we must continue our campaign to preserve and protect Bolsa Chica.



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AMIGOS DE BOLSA CHICA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I support the specific and primary purpose of Amigos de Bolsa Chica, which is to advocate the preservation, restoration and maintenance of the Bolsa Chica, to encourage the public acquisition of all the wetlands and sufficient surrounding open space to create a viable ecosystem, and to provide education about the importance of wetlands.

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Please check if you are interested in volunteering for:

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