

Amigos de  
Bolsa Chica

The Tern Tide  
Since 1976

Photo by Ross Griswold



Fall 2011  
Volume 36 Issue 3

*In this issue:*

1

**Thanks for Help on  
Coastal Wetlander  
Project**

2

**Coastal Commission  
Executive Director  
Retires,  
Book Review**

3

**Curriculum Developer  
Progress,  
Ralphs Community  
Rewards Renewal,  
Welcome New Members  
Thanks to Donors**

4

**Amigos 3rd Science  
Symposium**

5

**New Docent Training**

6

**2011 Amigos Picnic**

7

**President's Tern  
"This Wetlands  
Your Land"**

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Editor: Carol Rice

## Thanks to Kathryn Boyd-Batstone for Help on Coastal Wetlander Project

By Lori Donohue

A year and a half ago, while I was working at the Amigos table at the Long Beach Earth Day celebration, I decided to take a stroll around to see the other exhibits. I was casually talking to another booth participant about our intended development of a junior ranger-like program for Bolsa Chica and how we were looking for volunteers, when a woman and her daughter excitedly chimed in that they would be very interested in helping with the project. Little did I know from that inauspicious encounter, a dynamic young lady, Kathryn Boyd-Batstone, would help the Amigos produce a polished publication for the Coastal Wetlander program.

Kathryn was a senior at Long Beach Poly and ran cross country and track besides being editor of the school paper. She brought not only the perspective of an editor to the table, but a youthful eye that is acquainted with new media and forms of presentation. As we are appealing to young people 7-12 years of age with this project, her selection of colorful graphics was especially helpful. During September, Kathryn will be off to pursue a journalism career at the University of Oregon in Eugene. She will keep in touch with the project as it moves toward completion via computer.

The heavy lifting now transfers to Tom Anderson, our graphic artist, as he creates images and refines the 40+ pages we hope to include. He will continue to correspond with Kathryn and will also include Joana, our curriculum developer, to see if topics in the publication align with some of the lesson plans that she is producing. As the project proceeds, the committee wishes again to thank Kathryn for the countless hours that she has devoted to this project and wishes her the best in her new journalistic endeavors in Oregon.



*Wetlander Committee: Chair Lori Donohue, Margaret Carlberg, Tom Anderson, Jennifer Robins, Don Thomas, Ross Griswold, Kathryn Boyd-Batstone, Joana Tavares-Reager, Nancy Boyd-Batstone. Not pictured: Dave Carlberg (behind camera) and Jerry Donohue.*

# Coastal Commission Executive Director Peter Douglas Retires

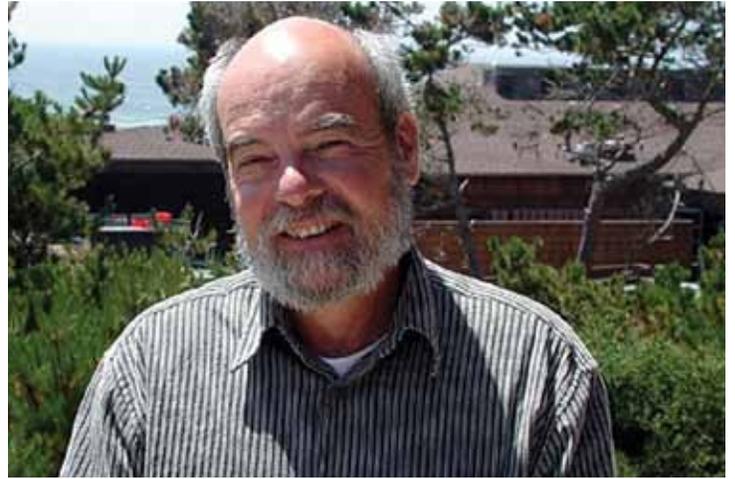
By Mel Nutter

In 1985, the Coastal Commission, with no votes to spare, chose Peter Douglas to be its third Executive Director. In August of 2011, some twenty-six years later, he announced that he would be retiring this November for health reasons. No one has done more over the course of last quarter of a century to protect the health of our Coast.

As reported on the Coastal Commission's website, "Peter has earned the love, respect and loyalty of his staff, and has served as an inspiration to environmental advocates and stewards statewide and beyond. Peter's commitment and vision for the California coast as a precious and irreplaceable resource for everyone has never wavered. His career has been a labor of love that has enabled him to remain at the helm of the Commission despite numerous challenges over six different administrations. His leadership, mentorship, and friendship have been a guiding light in good times and bad, and his daily presence at the Commission will be sorely missed."

As Executive Director, Peter was responsible for providing Commissioners with his recommendations before every vote. Although the twelve voting Commissioners are responsible ultimately for Commission decisions, for twenty-six years Peter was able to keep a diverse and ever changing set of Commissioners focused on their duty to implement the most comprehensive and protective coastal legislation in the world. This he did in spite of huge political pressures to gut or ignore the law. That is truly a remarkable accomplishment. As he did this, his mantra was "the coast is never finally saved. It is always being saved."

Peter's involvement in Coastal Protection spanned well over 40 years. Before he became the Executive Director, he served as the Commission's Chief Deputy. However, his initial efforts on behalf of the coast go back even further. As an aide to then Assemblyman Alan Sieroty and as an Assembly committee



*Peter Douglas*

consultant he helped draft both the original Coastal initiative (Proposition 20) and the Coastal Act of 1976, under which the Commission still operates.

Peter was born in 1942 in Berlin, Germany and, with his family, fled war torn Berlin at the age of two. Recalling his earliest days, he reported, "though very young, the horrors of war, of death and destruction, of hunger, deprivation and suffering were indelibly imprinted on my psyche." Fortunately for him and for us, he arrived on our shores in 1950 and fell in love with the California Coast.

He expressed that love in many ways, not the least of which was his extensive and poetic writing. Because I had the privilege of being the Chair of the Coastal Commission when Peter was appointed as its third Executive Director and because he has been a special friend and inspiration to me ever since, I want to conclude this short piece using his own words with one small, but significant, change. Upon my retirement from the Commission, he presented me with a plaque that I treasure. He deserves to be honored with his own words:

Thank you, Peter Douglas, "who followed his dream and walked on the seashore with the children of time, embraced its grandeur and magic, and struggled to preserve it with courage, integrity and leadership."

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## Book Review: The Left Coast

By Dave Carlberg

Prize-winning writer Philip Fradkin has recently published a book entitled *The Left Coast: California on the Edge*. It is an historical, geographical, social and personal account of the nature of California's fabulous coastline. Fradkin divides his fascinating book into eight chapters, The Wild-, Agricultural-, Residential-, Tourist-, Recreational-, Industrial-, Military-, and Political Coast. Best of all, the latter chapter is devoted to the rescue of Bolsa Chica from development and the significant role the Amigos played. The book is not the usual feel-good travel book, but a frank view of the good and bad of our fragile coast. Fradkin's narrative is accompanied by son Alex Fradkin's superb photographs. The book is available at the Bella Terra Barnes and Noble bookstore.

## Curriculum Developer Progress

By Thomas Anderson

At this writing, Joana Tavares-Reager, our curriculum developer, is busy putting together the first draft of her lesson plans and activities that will be previewed and tested with interested docents and curriculum developer committee members some time in the next month. The main goals of the curriculum developer project are to develop lesson plans, class activities and teaching materials for classes targeted at 6th through 9th grade students about the connection between wetlands and the ocean with a special focus on the Bolsa Chica wetland environment that is in line with National and California curriculum standards. Lessons will be taught by the Amigos docents at the Bolsa Chica State Beach's Visitor Center facilities and in the field. An additional goal of this project is to publicize Amigos de Bolsa Chica's educational program to schools, educators, community groups and other pertinent organizations and institutions.

Joana and committee members met with Bolsa Chica State Beach personnel in September to finalize the details of

implementing the program. While Amigos and the State are on track to work together to get the program up and running, there is a delay in the timing of the use of the Visitor Center. In addition to the installation of new interpretive displays at the State Beach Visitor Center, the front doors of the building will be replaced in order meet ADA requirements. We are all hoping the construction is completed by late winter of 2012.

A summary of the progress we have made since Joana's works officially began in April: created an initial structure for the curriculum, defining format, style, breadth and depth of lesson plans; scrutinized National and California Science Standards and identified topics that are pertinent to the curriculum being developed for this program; selected a set of activities that are currently being adapted and transformed into lessons plans; submitted draft of sample lesson plan for preliminary internal review; met with State Beach personnel and discussed common objectives and terms for collaboration agreement; met with ABC docents to learn about their current activities and discussed difficulties, teaching techniques, ways to improve the program; and conferred with selected school personnel and representatives of local organizations that organize and offer environmental education opportunities.

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## Ralphs Community Rewards Renewal

Every year on September 1, Ralph's shoppers who designate the Amigos de Bolsa Chica as their Community Contribution partner are required to re-register for the new term. When you register Amigos as your Community Contribution Partner with Ralphs, Amigos receives a portion of the money you spend when you use your Rewards Card.

Whether it's your first time or you're renewing, go to <https://customer.ralphs.com/Login.aspx>. If you already have an account, sign in. If you don't have an account, create one in a few short steps. Once you sign in, click on Community

Rewards. Then click on enroll, and type in "Amigos de Bolsa Chica." Click on search and Amigos address will pop up. Click the button next to the address, then click to save the changes – and you are done until next September. Renewing does not affect your Ralphs Rewards points.

If you have trouble with the online method, please call Laura Holdenwhite at 714-840-1575 or email her at [info@amigosdebolsachica.org](mailto:info@amigosdebolsachica.org) and she will mail you the scanbar letter that you can take to Ralph's and the checker will scan it along with your groceries. Ralph's Rewards card members do not need to be members of Amigos to participate with this program, so please encourage friends and other family members to sign up too.

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## Welcome New Members and Thank You Donors

Amigos always welcomes and appreciates new memberships! One way that YOU can help increase our membership is by giving a Gift Membership to honor your friends' special days, or to a family in memory of lost loved ones, or for birthday or graduation or Christmas presents for students. Those who receive your gift will appreciate your thoughtfulness, and will learn more about our favorite Bolsa Chica.

We welcome the following new members who have joined recently:

Nancy Balstad, David Baskin, Gary Chow, Diane Goldfarb, Christine Jarosz, Patricia Larkin, Kermit Marsh, Kitty McKnight, Jeannine Murphy, Marvin Nellicks, Willard Zahn, and Jonathan Zschoche.

Amigos is grateful for donations besides membership renewals received recently from: Jim Aldridge, David Casey, Lori DeLaCuesta, Gordon Owens, Barbara Sentovich, Sally Spotts, Jeff Sward, and Ed Zschoche.

# Amigos 3rd Science Symposium

By Dave Carlberg

Approximately 80 attended the Amigos' third Bolsa Chica Science Symposium held at Grace Lutheran School on a warm Saturday in August. Nine speakers covered several aspects of the wetland's physical and biological state five years after its historic restoration.

The highly informative sessions were led off by Bob Hoffman, Assistant Regional Administrator for Habitat Conservation for the National Marine Fisheries Service. Hoffman began by relating his credentials; he had been directly involved in Bolsa Chica since 1976. Hoffman later announced that he is retiring December 30, and appeared quite happy to pass on Bolsa Chica's problems to his successor.

Hoffman explained that while the restoration appears to be highly successful, the financial state of the wetland has not been pretty. Clean up costs exceeded projections due in part to landowner Hearthside's bankruptcy, relieving them of most of their share of the costs. Excessive rains in 2005 caused construction overruns. But the most immediate problem involves the endowment fund of \$15 million that was set aside in 1997 to pay for maintenance. Based on investment returns at the time the fund was established, it was expected that interest income from the endowment would be sufficient to cover maintenance costs, including the anticipated periodic dredging of the inlet. Instead, the fund is now down to about \$6 million, just enough to cover two more dredging operations over the next four years. Dredging is absolutely essential to keep the inlet open and maintain the wetland character of the full tidal basin.

Hoffman suggested one alternative solution to dredging. Water jets from buried pipes could suspend accumulated sand that can then be flushed out by natural tidal action. Hoffman urged members of the audience that if they feel Bolsa Chica is worth saving as a viable wetland, to contact their elected representatives to find ways of supporting the wetland's maintenance costs.

The next speaker was Rachel Woodfield, representing Merkel and Associates, a firm that has been contracted to perform periodic wildlife surveys of the newly restored Bolsa Chica wetland. Woodfield reported on the results of their year five survey. Bird counts ranged from 4000 to 10,000 birds in a single survey, representing 160 species, with Western Sandpipers being the most abundant species. As many as 360 breeding pairs of Belding's Savannah Sparrows were estimated. Several light footed clapper rails were observed, but none appeared to be nesting. On a per-acre basis, the pocket wetland had the highest bird density.

Sixty species of fish were counted in the full tidal basin and 12 in the muted tidal and pocket wetlands. Nearly all of the fish species were represented by both adult and juvenile forms. Vegetation is flourishing, especially eel grass, which is now covering a large area of the full tidal basin.

Ryan Freedman is a graduate student at Cal State Long Beach under the direction of Professor Chris Lowe. Ryan's research asks the questions, is there any movement of fish between Bolsa Chica and the newly restored Huntington Beach wetlands? To trace their movements, Freedman attached acoustical tags on a number of fish (halibut, smooth hound sharks and guitar fish) and transported them to the other wetland (from Huntington Beach to Bolsa Chica and vice versa). So far one guitar fish found its way back to its original wetland, indicating that what Ryan refers to as "connectivity" may be occurring. The work is continuing.

Kati Patonai has been the Education Director of the Bolsa Chica Conservancy and has been coordinating a year round survey of the birds of Bolsa Chica. Volunteers go out once a month and record every bird observed. In spite of the great popularity of Bolsa Chica as a birding spot, this is the first time a year-round bird count has been conducted. As a cooperative effort with the Amigos de Bolsa Chica and supported by grants from the Pasadena Audubon and Sea and Sage Audubon Societies, Patonai is also preparing a bird check list of Bolsa Chica to provide birders with seasonal and abundance data.

Professor Mike Horn from Cal State Fullerton described studies that he and his graduate students are conducting in Bolsa Chica to learn more about where and on what the various species of terns are feeding. For example, the Caspian and Forster's terns and Black Skimmers forage in the bays, fresh water ponds and the ocean while the Elegant terns concentrate on the ocean. Disparate food preferences also appear in Dr. Horn's research, showing that in food choices, mainly anchovies, sardines and pipe fish, there is only a 40 to 80 percent overlap among the bird species studied.

– Continued from Page 4

Tania McMahon from Moffatt and Nichol, the engineering firm that directed the restoration of the Bolsa Chica wetland, reported on some of the physical aspects of the wetland. For example, tides within the full tidal basin are not perfectly synchronized with the ocean tides. During low tide there is about a half hour lag and a half to one foot difference between the two bodies, meaning the full tidal basin does not drain as designed. If the full tidal basin becomes more muted due to sand build-up at the inlet, there is the danger of losing many of the intended wetland characteristics of the restoration, such as the loss of the lower elevation wetlands and the elimination of pickleweed.

Nematodes are not a well known group of organisms, yet they are among the most numerous in a wetland such as Bolsa Chica, as explained by Professor Paul DeLey of the University of California at Riverside. Populations of these mud dwelling organisms can be as high as 600 in a square centimeter. Sampling five sites in Bolsa Chica and one on Bolsa Chica State Beach, DeLey found 43 species in the wetland and 15 in the beach sediment. Two of the species from the wetland sediments may be new species never reported before. Nematodes are part of the base of the food web in wetlands and their abundance in Bolsa Chica is further evidence of the success of the restoration.

Dr. Christine Whitcraft is a member of the Department of Biological Sciences at Long Beach State University. Her focus was on how restored wetlands evolve. After observing the restoration of a wetland in Mission Bay and Talbert Marsh, she turned her attention to the Huntington Beach Wetlands. These are made up of the Magnolia Marsh, between the Wetland and Wildlife Care Center and Magnolia St., the Brookhurst Marsh, between Magnolia and Brookhurst Sts., and the Talbert Marsh, between Brookhurst and the Santa Ana River. The three wetlands were restored in 2010, 2009 and 1980, respectively. Whitcraft showed that the Mission Bay wetland went through an evolution from bare ground to vegetation accompanied by a step-wise development of its animal diversity. Whitcraft asked the question, is the Brookhurst Marsh showing the same pattern? Within a few months after tidal action was opened, the Brookhurst Marsh began to show a biodiversity more and more like the older Talbert Marsh not only with respect to animals but food sources, including algae, as well. The only difference so far is that the Brookhurst Marsh has not yet achieved the diversity of fish that the Talbert March exhibits. Dr. Whitcraft explained that the type of studies she is conducting in our local wetlands is an ideal method of evaluating the success of tidal wetland restorations.

The final speaker was Kelly O'Reilly, Associate Biologist, Department of Fish and Game, Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, who described this season's nesting successes of the Snowy Plovers and the California Least Terns in Bolsa Chica. Snowy Plovers produced 73 nests, which yielded 166 chicks but only an estimated 35 to 59 fledglings. Least terns made 167 nests from which 160 chicks hatched. The number of fledglings was unknown, but may have been as high as 95. Why Least Tern populations are rising but fledglings are declining compared to earlier years is unknown and the question requires further research. Other areas that are in need of research are the wetland's fish and invertebrate inhabitants.

Thanks go to symposium chair Vic Leipzig and symposium committee members Jennifer Robins, Margaret and Dave Carlberg and Dean Elder for organizing an outstanding program. Thanks also go to Grace Lutheran School and Steve Chase for their excellent facilities.

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## New Docent Training Classes for 2012

By Margaret Carlberg

The Amigos de Bolsa Chica is looking for enthusiastic individuals with a love of nature to lead weekday and/or weekend tours at Bolsa Chica Wetlands. Interested individuals should enjoy working with children and will need to be available for one tour per month in 2012.

Beginning February 3, a six week Docent Training Program will be held on Thursday nights from 7:00 to 9:00 at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center (beginning class date and location are subject to change due to construction at the

facility). Each week a different speaker will share with the class their extensive knowledge in their area of expertise. This training will also include two weekend field trips to Bolsa Chica. You will learn about the history, ecology, birds, endangered species, fish, Native American Indians and the restoration project completed in 2006. Docent manuals filled with a wealth of information unique to Bolsa Chica, and a pictorial book of birds, fish and other information to use during tours, are given to docent candidates at the first class after they pay the \$50 charge for materials.

To register for the program, or for more information, contact the Amigos office at (714)-840-1575 or email us at [info@amigosdebolsachica.org](mailto:info@amigosdebolsachica.org)

# 2011 Amigos Picnic

By Margaret Carlberg

On Sunday July 24, 2011 more than 67 people enjoyed a balmy afternoon at Lake Park with lots of friends, old and new. Kelly O'Reilly and Peter Knapp of the Department of Fish and Game attended, along with 15 of our 18 Board members, 28 docents, and various relatives and friends. 12 former Amigos or BC Foundation Presidents and Treasurers attended, along with 4 former Huntington Beach mayors.

The program started early, allowing plenty of time for Vic Leipzig to repeat his "Toast to the Inlet and Restoration," first pronounced 5 years ago August 23, 2006, and for Shirley Dettloff to review the 35 year history of the Amigos. Dave Carlberg recreated some historic dialogue purportedly from the journal of Joaquin Ruiz from 1804 to 1841, and displayed the 1858 map of the Bolsa Chica land grant in celebration of the 170th anniversary of the naming of Las Bolsas and Bolsa Chica. Kelly O'Reilly reported on the successful nesting of the Snowy Plovers and Least Terns. Joana Tavares-Reager introduced herself and her Curriculum Developer project to those in the crowd who were not yet familiar with the project, and Jennifer Robins made other announcements about upcoming events. The grand finale was the sing-along of "This Wetland's Your Land" with new lyrics by Donna Starr sung to the tune of Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land". Song leaders were former Amigos Treasurer Charles Falzon and his wife Anna, accompanied on the ukulele by Patti Cacho-Negrette.

Our traditional backdrop of 25+ Amigos "Running is for the Birds" t-shirts were waving in the breeze. The colorful cloth table covers, and biodegradable plates, flatware and napkins displayed our active support of sustainable living. No one went away hungry, with the variety of delectable foods from Suzanne's Catering—4 sandwiches, 3 salads, 2 dips for chips—and the good assortment of cakes, fruit, lemon bars and lemon cake, brownies, molasses cookies, bread pudding, and other assorted cookies. Pure Water + donated water and a dispenser, and Board members donated an abundance of sodas and ice. The raffle of Ross Griswold's framed photo of courting Elegant Terns and merchandise sales added significantly to the income from the event, so that this picnic was a fund-raiser as well as a great spirit-raiser.



Photos by Tom Anderson

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# President's Tern: Thanks to Margaret Carlberg

By Jennifer Robins

Amigos de Bolsa Chica is very fortunate to have Margaret Carlberg as a member and advocate for our organization. I couldn't have made it through my term as President without her invaluable assistance. Margaret works tirelessly for Amigos as Co-Chair of the Community Education Committee and as a member of many sub-committees. Whenever there is an occasion that we are having an event or work party Margaret is there to lead the project or help with the many details that go into making everything happen seamlessly.

Margaret has been the coordinator for the Docent Class with Patty Overley that happens each January for 4-5 weeks. We couldn't be adding to our faithful list of docents without their help. They enroll the docents and attend every class to make sure the presenters and docents get the best training available. Margaret also mentors individuals who wish to become docents but have to wait for the class. We've had new docents Donna Starr and Sanford Adelman working with her throughout 2010 before taking the 2011 class.

The Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor's Center's landscaping has a different appearance because of Margaret and a small but diligent group of docents who have been weeding and planting for the last three years. Jerry Donohue, Ross Griswold and Mick Siroy are among those who come out on the second Sunday of each month to beautify the landscaping around the center. This is also the location where our Curriculum Developer, Joana Tavares-Reager, is planning for educational activities for the "It's All Connected" program. Margaret also helps on the Advisory Committee for this project.

Margaret attends the Working Group meetings with me every other month in order to keep up to date on the happenings at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve with DFG, BCLT and BCC. This is information we relay to our members so we are all well informed.

Margaret co-chaired Earth Day with Jerry Donohue this year as well as chairing it previous years. This event requires the assistance of many Amigos members to staff information, history, merchandise, food and activity booths. So it requires coordination to solicit the help and assign people to appropriate booths.

Our picnics held each year since the Tidal Inlet opening have been chaired by Margaret who has spent time calling members to encourage attendance, ordering the food, arranging for staffing of the many tasks to plan and setup for the picnic. Each picnic has been successful with 65-80 people attending each time due to her excellent management skills.

Amigos has had booth events at the Green Expo, 5 Points Plaza, LA Environmental Education Fair and other locations at which Margaret can always be counted on to assist with staffing the booth.

The California Coastal Clean-up is a favorite of Margaret's because she encourages clean-up activities year-round at the BCER to maintain a beautiful place for the many visitors that are attracted to Bolsa Chica for walking, photographing and bird watching.

Yes, Margaret is invaluable to Amigos. Many thanks to her for this work that shows the love she has for Amigos and the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.

## "This Wetland's Your Land"

This wetland's your land, this wetland's my land  
From Upper Mesa to the South Tern Island  
From the low tide mud flats to the high tide marshes  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.

I roamed and I rambled and I followed my tour guide  
To the shallow waters where Egrets feed  
And all around me an Osprey's singing  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.

This wetland's your land, this wetland's my land  
From preservation to restoration  
Thanks to the Amigos who stepped on big toes  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.

As I went walking by beautiful primrose  
I saw above me the Pacific Flyway  
I saw below me some floating plankton  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.

This wetland's your land, this wetland's my land  
From Upper Mesa to the South Tern Island  
From the low tide mud flats to the high tide marshes  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.

As the sun was shining, and I went strolling  
Some ducks were dabbling, some ducks were diving  
As the fog was lifting, an Osprey's singing  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.

This wetland's your land, this wetland's my land  
From preservation to restoration  
Thanks to the Amigos who stepped on big toes  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.  
Bolsa Chica was saved for you and me.



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***Inside this Issue:***  
***Coastal Wetlander Project Thanks***  
***Coastal Commission***  
***Director Retires***  
***Curriculum Developer Progress***  
***Ralphs Rewards Renewal***  
***Amigo's 3rd Science Symposium***  
***2011 Amigos Picnic***

**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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*Return application to: Amigos de Bolsa Chica, P.O. Box 1563, Huntington Beach, CA 92647*