

TRACKS

A Publication of the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends

December–February

2009–10

Upper Newport Bay Dredging

Those of you who are regular readers of *Tracks* know that we have published many articles about the \$40 million plus Upper Newport Bay Ecosystem



Restoration Project over the past several years. We are thankful for the efforts of Senator Feinstein and Congressmen Cox, Campbell and Royce to secure the necessary federal funds to undertake this essential restoration project. However, we are mindful of the fact that the project design was completed more than 10 years ago, yet it took the 2009 Economic

Stimulus Package to provide the nearly \$18 million of federal funding necessary to undertake the most crucial part of the project. This money will allow the catch basin at the entry of San Diego Creek into the Upper Bay to be widened and deepened sufficiently to protect both the Upper and Lower Bays from major sedimentation which upsets the ecosystems of the Upper Bay and impairs navigation in the Lower Bay.

It is anticipated that project will be completed the latter part of 2010. While we can all breathe a sigh of relief, we must not lose sight of some important considerations. Sediment will continue to be washed into the Bay during winter storms. All cities and other enti-

ties in the watershed must be working together to address creek bank erosion and other contributors to the sediment load. We must be designing and permitting the projects now, so as to be ready for construction funding whenever it becomes available. We must also be thinking about how to pay for catch basin maintenance dredging the moment it becomes necessary. As sediment accumulates in the basin, as it is intended to do, the capture efficiency of the basin diminishes. At some point, perhaps 20 years from now, we will be back in a situation where sediment carries through and silts up the Upper and Lower Bays. If we are not immediately ready to restore basin capacity we will be repeating the current \$40 million-plus project, and it will have to be paid entirely with local money.

Finally, we need to undertake comprehensive and integrated habitat and wildlife monitoring to ensure that we can establish a new set of baseline conditions as soon as the dredging is done, and respond quickly to changing conditions as indicated by the ongoing monitoring. The development of consistent, integrated monitoring protocols that will allow for reliable and timely trending of critical indicators is an immediate priority. We firmly believe that the Comprehensive Resource Management Program for Upper Newport Bay discussed in previous articles will provide the means to accomplish integrated monitoring and timely actions to head off major ecological and other problems.

Roger Mallett, Executive Director

NBNF Mission:

- To preserve and restore the ecosystems of Upper Newport Bay.
- To educate the public about the ecological value of the Bay and its watershed and help ensure compatible public use.

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Jan Vandersloot

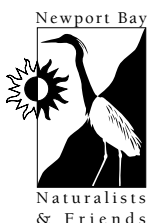
Jan Vandersloot died Thursday the 5th of November. He was at his keyboard, probably knocking out an email calling out the environmental troops for another cause. Our open spaces, wetlands, and parks lost a friend, and most importantly an advocate. Jan was an advocate. Be it a small vernal pool no larger than a puddle, or a grand tidal wetlands such as the Bolsa Chica, he was there doing his research and standing up to protect habitat and open space.

He was always soft spoken but firm; the passion in his arguments always present, but understated. He did his homework. Whether he stood up to address a city council or the California Coastal Commission he was prepared to back up his statements.

The job of protecting open space, habitat, and water quality is going to be a lot more difficult without him. He will be greatly missed.



Dennis Baker, Board Member



Yes, I want to be a Friend in 2010 at the membership level noted:

- \$1,000 Heron \$500 Osprey
 \$100 Egret \$50 Tern (Family)
 \$25 Pelican

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

My check payable to the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends* is enclosed.

Please charge my Visa Mastercard Discover AX

Exp. Date _____

Card # _____

Signature _____

I wish to make an additional gift of: \$ _____

Total Amount given: \$ _____

Please send me information on Planned Giving

*A registered 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Your donation is deductible to the full extent of the law.

Mail completed form and payment to:

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends
P.O. Box 10804
Newport Beach, CA 92658-5008

Membership Benefits:

Heron: \$1000

Two exclusive private guided walking, canoe, or kayak tours for up to 8 people. 11x14 signed color photograph by renowned photographer Russ Kerr. Scheduled kayak tours with 50% discount. Quarterly TRACKS newsletter. 10% discount on NBNF merchandise.

Osprey: \$500

One exclusive private guided walking, canoe, or kayak tour for up to 8 people. 8x10 signed color photograph by renowned photographer Russ Kerr. Scheduled kayak tours with 50% discount. Quarterly TRACKS newsletter. 10% discount on NBNF merchandise.

Egret: \$100

Laminated color brochure, Local Birds of Orange County. Scheduled kayak tours with 50% discount. Quarterly TRACKS newsletter. 10% discount on NBNF merchandise.

Tern \$50 (family) and Pelican \$25 (individual)

Scheduled kayak tours with 50% discount. Quarterly TRACKS newsletter. 10% discount on NBNF merchandise.

For additional information, please call (949) 640-1751, email info@newportbay.org, or visit us at www.newportbay.org.

A Letter from the President

Do you sense increasing activism and energy around the halls of the Peter and Mary Muth Center Interpretive Center? I do. For those of you who attended the Sunset Celebration at the Muth on November 7, it was easy to see it. 250 people attended. Our old and faithful friends were there, joined by a large number of new faces. I was encouraged by what I saw. The Friends, the Naturalists and the Board were there in force. Lots of intermingling. Lots of questions and ideas were bouncing off the walls. Plenty of laughter and good times. A strong sense of community. Great, great energy. This all promises good things for 2010.

I'm Blake Anderson, newly-elected President of the Board of Directors of the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends (NBNF). I step into this role somewhat in awe of the complexities of the interactions both inside and outside the organization. My career and my personal life have been based on respecting the other person's point of view. In my two years on the Board I have done a lot of listening. I plan to keep on listening, and I look forward to using what I have heard to continue to build consensus and collaboration around the Bay.

Earth Day, Estuary Awareness Day and Cleanup Day were examples of successful single day events that between them brought more than 3,000 members of the community together for a common purpose and gave us a chance to make new friends, form alliances and build trust. We know that only through cooperation and coalitions can we accomplish our mission.

On the political and policy front, Roger Mallett, NBNF's Executive Director, was appointed as the environmental representative to the Newport Bay Watershed Management Committee. This group of city, county and other management personnel helps to form the watershed policies and the budgeting decisions that are so important to us. Roger and I are committed to working with these and other stakeholders to address long-term concerns such as funding of future maintenance dredging of Upper Newport Bay, and to find cost-effective solutions to water quality compliance mandates.

Many of our 2009 accomplishments were described in the previous issue of Tracks. 2010 will have a new set of challenges and opportunities. As your incoming Board President, here are the priorities that are uppermost in my mind:

1. Support the ongoing work of the Naturalists. The best way to engage, educate and thrill the public and then gain support for our mission has always been through the enthusiasm of our volunteers. The overwhelming distractions and demands we all experience living in OC make it hard to be heard and noticed. The Naturalists give the public reason to fall in love with the Bay and to find reason to commit their time, talents and treasures to this unique jewel.
2. Select a few key projects and initiatives and "get 'er done". Today, NBNF and many others have a list of projects that are underway or contemplated. Our challenge is to set a few achievable priorities and then aggressively work to get them completed. Key projects are the new entryway exhibit at the Interpretive Center and the new Back Bay Science Center "Sharkmobile" aquarium on wheels.
3. Work on donor development and our cash flow. Much of our success depends on the unpaid volunteers that contribute thousands of hours per year. But it takes far more than that. Our full-time staff, contractors and suppliers require real cash in real time. But, we oftentimes find ourselves with limited funds. Our unrestricted cash reserves are woefully inadequate at the moment. We must find ways to replenish our reserves so that the work can continue. We need your help in this. It is a vital need.

If I missed your 2010 priority, I'd like to hear about it. If you have questions or comments, please let me know. I invite you to call me at (714) 801-3931 or email me at Blake@BlakeAndersonConsulting.com any time with your ideas and concerns. Perhaps we can talk over a cup of coffee or breakfast or lunch. I really mean it. Let's talk. I'm buyin'.

Blake Anderson, Board President



Upper Newport Bay Calendar of Events

December 2009–February 2010

Kayak Tours — Every Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–noon at the Dunes

Join a trained Naturalist for a guided kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Dunes Resort. \$20/person, 8 & up. \$10/NBNF members. Be prepared to get wet. Reservations (949) 923-2269. Location code: NDR

Kayak Tours — Every Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–noon at the NAC

Join a trained Naturalist for a guided kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Aquatic Center. \$20/person, 8 and up. \$10/NBNF members. Be prepared to get wet. Reservations (949) 923-2269. Location code: NAC

Walking Tour — Saturday, Dec. 5, Jan. 2, Feb. 6, 9:00 a.m.

Join a trained Naturalist for a 2-hour walk along the Bay. Bring binoculars and sun protection. Free. No reservations needed. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: BBSC

Friends of Newport Bay Walking Tour — Saturday, Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, 10:00, 10:15 a.m.

Walk along the Back Bay listening to Naturalists and visiting Interpretive Stations featuring natural history specialists. Free. No reservations required. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: VP

Shellmaker Discovery Tour — Saturday, Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Feb. 13, 9:00–10:30 a.m.

Join a Naturalist to learn about Shellmaker Island's rich history; the future of the Back Bay Science Center; and discover unusual and endangered plants, birds and crab habitats. No latecomers. Free. Reservations required. (949) 640-9956. Location code: BBSC

Big Canyon Walking Tour — Saturday, Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Feb. 20, 9:00 a.m.

Join a trained Naturalist for a 2-hour walk along Big Canyon Trail and the Bay. Bring binoculars and sun protection. Free. No reservations needed. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: Big Canyon parking lot.

Steward Days — Every Wednesday, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Support the Bay's unique genetics at our restoration sites by collecting seeds & propagating plants. Learn how to grow natives in your backyard, attract wildlife and conserve water. For information call (949) 640-0286. Location code: BBSC

ROOTS Restoration Teamwork — Saturday, Dec. 12, Jan. 23, Feb. 27, 9:00 a.m.–noon

Help restore Back Bay habitat by installing and maintaining native plants while learning about wetland ecology. Reservations required. Refreshments, tools provided. Call (949) 640-0286 for information, reservations and location.

2nd Sundays Restoration Program — Dec. 13, Jan. 10, Feb. 14, 9:00 a.m.–noon

Join the staff at the IC to enhance the Nature Preserve habitat with non-native plant removal, native plantings and Butterfly Garden maintenance. Pre-registration required. (949) 923-2295. Minors aged 15 and younger must have legal guardian present at all times. Location code: IC

Marine Life Inventory — Saturday, Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Feb. 13, 8:30–noon

Marine biology students ages 12 and up are invited to participate in a variety of hands-on marine life monitoring programs in Newport Bay with the Dept. of Fish and Game. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Free. Reservations (949) 640-9956. Location code: BBSC

Conservation Club — available upon request for groups of 10 or more

Ready to dig in and get dirty? Designed for students aged 2 to 13 years, come work with Preserve staff on establishing healthy habitat for Bay wildlife. Learn the importance of native plants as we clear and protect our own special plot of land. Activities may include weeding, watering, planting and debris clearing. There is no fee for this program. Phone (949) 923-2275, or e-mail unbic@ocparks.com to schedule. Dates subject to staff availability. Location code: IC

Sunset Stroll — available upon request for groups of 10 or more

Join us for a twilight nature walk and discover the wonders of our "not so spooky" night-time wildlife friends. Discover how nature's night shift is essential to our habitats and create your own nocturnal critter to take home! Dress warmly for the evening chill. All ages. \$3/person. Phone (949) 923-2275, or e-mail unbic@ocparks.com to schedule. Dates subject to staff availability. Location code: IC

Scout Programs — Tuesday through Saturday upon request

Join a Naturalist for a 2-hour Brownie or Junior Girl Scout Try-it or badge program, or a Tiger cub, Bear Cub or Webelo badge program. \$7/child including patch. Call (949) 923-2269 or email scoutssi@sbcglobal.net. Location code: IC or BBSC.

Train for a Day, Volunteer at the Bay! — Saturday, Jan. 16, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Become a part of this dynamic estuary! Learn about the habitats and wildlife of the bay. Participate in habitat restoration and special events. Assist with tours. Greet and educate visitors. Registration (949) 923-2296. Location code: IC

For all of the following, call (949) 923-2275 to pre-register or email unbic@ocparks.com. \$5 per child. Location code: IC

Tideland Tots (Ages 2–5)

NEW TIME! Thursdays, 9:00–9:45 a.m.

Join Preserve staff for a fun-filled parent and child experience that may include arts and crafts, story telling, hands-on activities or outdoor nature walks. Come prepared for an exciting outdoor experience! Class fee is \$5.00 per child. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

"Wetland Wildcats" — Dec. 3

"Track the Scot" — Dec. 10

"Frosty Flora" — Dec. 17

"Critter Glitter" — Dec. 31

"Burrowing Buds" — Jan. 7

"Hide n' Seek" — Jan. 14

"Quack, Quack!" — Jan. 21

"Waterworks" — Jan. 28

"Rocky Roads" — Feb. 4

"Wild Hearts" — Feb. 11

"Ancient Animals" — Feb. 18

"Furry Friends" — Feb. 25

Wild Tales (Ages 2–8)

NEW DATE! Thursdays, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

Visit with Preserve staff for story-telling fun! After a story, learn more about the natural history of the Bay through crafts, hands-on activities and nature walks. Come prepared for an exciting outdoor experience! Class fee is \$5.00 per child. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

"Wiggling Worms at Work" — Dec. 3

"Why do Animals Sleep Through the Winter?" — Dec. 10

"When Winter Comes" — Dec. 17

"Nature's Yucky" — Dec. 31

"Why Does it Thunder and Lightning?" — Jan. 7

"Ten Friendly Fish" — Jan. 14

"Who Lives in the Snow?" — Jan. 21

"A House for Hermit Crab" — Jan. 28

"A Day in the Salt Marsh" — Feb. 4

"The Shark Who Was Afraid of Everything" — Feb. 11

"What is a Dinosaur?" — Feb. 18

"A Hummingbird's Life" — Feb. 25

Estuary Explorers (Ages 2–8)

NEW PROGRAM! Wednesdays, 12:15–1:00 p.m.

Attention: Junior Explorers Wanted! Come join park staff as we journey through the bay investigating nature's mysteries. Take part in hands-on activities, experiments and nature crafts. Come prepared for an exciting outdoor experience! Class fee is \$5.00 per child. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

"Predator Play" — Dec. 2

"Chill Out" — Dec. 9

"Stars of the Sea" — Dec. 16

"Walkin' in a Winter Wetland" — Dec. 23

"Nature's Naptime" — Dec. 30

"Winter Waddles" — Jan. 6

"Songs of the Bay" — Jan. 13

"Miraculous Minerals" — Jan. 20

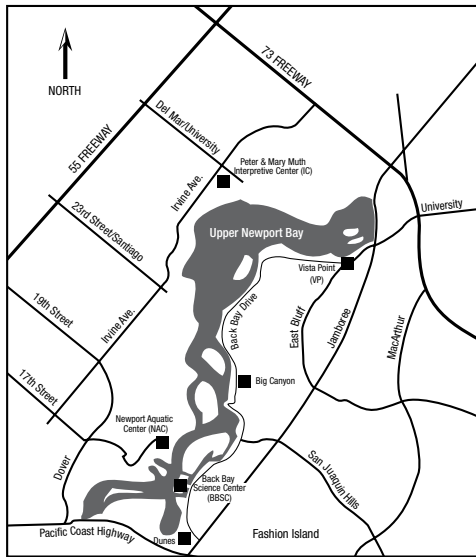
"Leader of the Pack" — Jan. 27

"Animal Freeways" — Feb. 3

"Bosom Buddies" — Feb. 10

"Sagey Scents" — Feb. 17

"Wacky Weather" — Feb. 24



WEB SITES

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends: www.newportbay.org
 Peter & Mary Muth Interpretive Center: www.ocparks.com/unbic
 Back Bay Science Center: www.backbaysciencecenter.org
 California Coastal Commission: www.coastal.ca.gov

LOCATION KEY

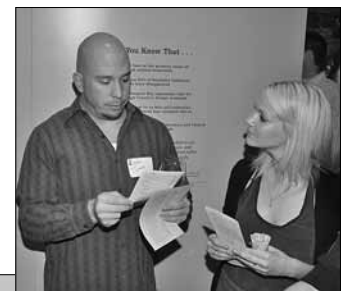
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 Newport Beach, CA 92660

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Sunset Celebration a Success



More than 200 people joined us on Saturday, November 7 for gourmet wine tasting, gentle music, a silent auction, light hors d'oeuvres and a memorable sunset view of the Back Bay. Old and new Friends mingled and enjoyed the ambiance of the Peter and Mary Interpretive Center, a stunning facility nestled in the bluffs overlooking the Bay. We were thrilled that the event sold out in advance, but sorry that we had to disappoint many who wanted to attend.

Thank you to all our supporters, and a special thanks to Avanti Café, Steve Bender, Green Buyers Broker Organization, Cathy Lam and all the others who contributed to the success of the event.