

TRACKS

A Publication of the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends

September–November

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The Role of the Management Coalition

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Frank and Fran Robinson and the members of the Friends of Newport Bay, the Upper Newport Bay became a public treasure for future generations to enjoy forever. NOW, the important question is how we all work together to ensure that this treasure is protected and enhanced. It is essential that all parties involved in caring for the Bay consider themselves team players; working at all

times through collaboration, communication and cooperation to ensure that our goals are met.

The Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends (NBNF), formed in 2000 when the Friends of Newport Bay and the Upper Newport Bay Naturalists

merged, serves as the bridge between the public and the agency partners consisting of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), County of Orange and City of Newport Beach, to help ensure that the agencies are working together in caring for the Bay. The trained volunteer naturalists conduct interpretive tour programs, restore native habitat, survey wildlife and plants, host community educational and cleanup events, raise funds and promote public awareness of the issues facing the Bay.

Also in 2000, the Upper Newport Bay Management Coalition was established. Initial membership included DFG, County Harbors, Beaches and Parks, the City of Newport Beach and NBNF. The mission of the Management Coalition is to act as responsible stewards of Upper Newport Bay, its water quality, its habitat, and its species; and to educate the public about the Bay's resources so that future generations will enjoy the Bay as we do today. The responsibilities of each member include:

- Initiating, creating and/or implementing necessary policies and procedures relating to relationships of the member organizations.

- Ensuring that all agency plans are compatible and that any conflicts between the plans are identified and resolved.
- Coordinating restoration, education, research and other programs at UNB.
- Coordinating public information campaigns to educate surrounding communities about UNB, the restoration and other projects being undertaken, and compatible recreational uses.
- Identifying and resolving issues that may have a detrimental effect on accomplishing the purpose of the Coalition.
- Ensuring that the organizations represented by the members are communicating effectively.
- Providing public information to any requesting member relating to the performance of responsibilities at the Bay, such as correspondence, budgets and financial reports.

The job of the Management Coalition has become more challenging as additional agencies become involved. Two additional agencies became Coalition members in 2002:

- The California Coastal Commission has chosen UNB as the development site for an exciting new Restoration and Education Program that will be adapted for other wetland locations throughout California. The structured community-based program has demonstrated its value in the removal of non-native vegetation, the planting of native species and the development of curricula for promotion of the program throughout the community.
- The Orange County Health Care Agency has established a water quality laboratory on Shellmaker Island. It interacts with the other Coalition members in relation to the water quality data provided and how this data is used in fulfilling water quality reporting and improvement obligations.

To date, the Management Coalition has worked well to accomplish its mission. We are continuing to evaluate and improve the Coalition's objectives and performance to ensure that the standing members of the Coalition have the knowledge and authority to commit their agencies to action. A recent decision has been made to include the Manager of the Design Branch of County Harbors, Beaches and Parks so

continued on page 2



CONTENTS

- Management Coalition
- Back Bay Canoe Trip
- Calendar of Events
- Something Special



Back Bay Canoe Field Trip

Upper Newport Bay (UNB) is a 752-acre estuary located in the upper part of Newport Harbor. Thought famous for its birds, UNB remains a vital floral sanctuary just a lattes lob from suburbia in all directions. A checklist of UNB flora names 195 indigenous plants found at the reserve at one time or another. An additional 180 taxa have joined the party (that's 48% introduced species).

What is interesting is that this salt marsh doesn't have any weeds. It seems the salt marsh with its twice-daily tidal inundations is effectively hostile toward invasion. Twenty-plus species inhabit the UNB salt marsh system, dominated by its one species of cord grass, *Spartina foliosa*, a poa. Now, these salt marsh plants don't need salt; they'll grow in the freshest water. But, for all their special adaptations, they can't out-compete the vigor of freshwater plants, so they take to the refuge of the salt.

A group of California Native Plant Society members gathered together on a Sunday morning to canoe up and down the bay. While our focus would be on the abundant vegetation of the salt marsh, who could resist taking in this place as a whole? With millions of liters of water being acted upon by celestial forces, 15 million-year-old cliffs, and wildlife that is extremely visible and consistent compared to other ecosystems, UNB is inextricably all of these things at once, a whole.

Before we took to the boats, we walked a dry old path out into the marsh to observe the resident endangered species, *Cordylanthus maritima* (salt marsh bird's beak) that does very well here. It seems the big problem for many of California's endangered *Cordylanthus* species is that they haven't enough estuaries. The plant is four inches of flower resembling a crème-colored Indian paintbrush. It is partially parasitic, seemingly on *Distichlis spicata* (salt grass), taking advantage of the poa's high productivity and extensive root system.

Paddling from the dock, we head our canoes for the white cliffs. Just over the main channel, we are flanked on both sides by mud and cord grass. It is



here where we can edge right up to a three-foot wall of cord grass sod draining its water load. Looking right in, we can see the countless wormholes in the rich black mud and the bluish painted crabs reflecting the morning sun. It is said the marsh is four times as productive as a cornfield, but this is definitely a detritivore's economy.

Coming up on our right is Big Canyon, a "fresh water" (turf irrigation) marsh/riparian system. Then the main channel snakes left again and swings a long right and we can finally see just how big the place really is. The largest body of water, mud flats and upland area are all quite a few paddles up the bay. The bluffs straighten out and become lined with little houses on top. Introduced bougainvillea, pampas grass, Algerian ivy and Brazilian pepper all creep slowly away from their yards, but the closer to the water the bluffs get, the more the natives are able to hold their alkali ground.

The washed out salt dike covered in Atriplex (salt-bush) marks our furthest point. The area beyond is off limits to humans, as are all the secondary channels, islands, mudflats, and bluffs. Such tight regulation is good considering the presence we already have here. And so we begin the two-hour paddle back to dry dock, against the tide, against the wind, against fatigue. But that's how it goes; you can only ride the tide one way.

Todd Heinsma, Naturalist

Scout programs are available after school and Saturday

Join a naturalist for our 2-hour Brownie and Junior Girl Scout programs and receive a Try-it or Badge; or join us for Tiger Cub, Bear Cub or Webelo badge programs. Call (949) 923-2269 or email scouts@sbcglobal.net for reservations and information. Fee is \$7 per child. Location code: BBSC

Special Events— Save these Dates!

Cleanup Day

Sat., Sept. 18, 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Join Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends and other local volunteers to help clean trash from the Back Bay. Meet at the Interpretive Center. Transportation provided to other sites around the bay. Donated refreshments provided to all participants. For information call (949) 923-2295. For boating information call (949) 640-9956.

SOCALPAPA Paints Back Bay

Sat. & Sun., Oct. 2 & 3, 10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

An art show and sale will feature works by Southern California artists participating in a Paint Out around the Bay. Hands-on art activities for children of all ages will be available as part of a Nature Festival. For information call (949) 923-2269.

Management Coalition *continued*

that the County habitat restoration projects may be integrated under the Coalition's scope. In addition, the County Director of Watershed and Coastal Facilities will provide senior individuals to represent the Directorate in matters concerning San Diego Creek Watershed Management and the Army Corps of Engineers' Upper Newport Bay Ecosystem Restoration Project, scheduled to begin this year.

With the construction of the new Back Bay Science Center scheduled to begin soon, the Management Coalition will take an active role in establishing policy for integrating the education program as well as operation and maintenance of the facility jointly operated and maintained by the City of Newport Beach, Orange County Health Care Agency, UCI and the Department of Fish and Game.

The fundamental measurement of the Management Coalition's effectiveness is the willingness of all its members to collaborate. Collaboration is essential and all members must be willing to give and take in order to achieve the best result for the Bay. Since the Coalition is also responsible for securing funding for all restoration and education efforts at the Bay, there must be an annual planning process for the prioritization of projects as well as a year-end evaluation of results. There are many challenges ahead for the Upper Newport Bay. With collaboration, the Management Coalition will ensure that these challenges are met.

Jack Keating, Vice-President
Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends



Upper Newport Bay Calendar of Events

September–November 2004

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

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

Canoe the Back Bay—Every Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Join a trained naturalist for a guided 2-hour canoe tour of the Back Bay. Fee is \$10 per person. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: BBSC

Kayak the Back Bay—Every Saturday, 10:00 a.m. NEW in OCTOBER

Join a trained naturalist for a guided 2-hour kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Aquatic Center on Northstar Beach. Fee is \$15 per person. NBNF members pay \$10. Be prepared to get wet. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: NAC

Kayak Tours—Saturday (SEPT. only) and every Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

Join a trained naturalist for a guided 2-hour kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Dunes Resort. Fee is \$20 per person. NBNF members pay \$10. The Dunes also charges a parking fee. Be prepared to get wet. For reservations call (949) 729-1150 (weekends only) or (800) 585-0747. Location Code: NDR

Scout Programs—Tuesday–Friday after school and Saturday

Join a naturalist for our 2-hour Brownie or Junior Girl Scout program and receive a Try-it or Badge; or join us for Tiger Cub, Bear Cub or Webelo badge programs. Call (949) 923-2269 or email scouts@sbcglobal.net for reservations and information. Fee is \$7 per child. Location code: BBSC

Monthly Naturalist Meeting—Thursday, Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Join the Naturalists for a presentation related to the Upper Newport Bay. Refreshments are at 6:30 p.m. and presentation is at 7:00 p.m. Free. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: MIC

Walking Tour—Saturday, Sept. 4, Oct. 2, Oct. 16, Nov. 6, Nov 20, 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

Electric Boat Tour of the Bay—Saturday, Sept. 11, Oct. 16, Nov. 13, 11:30 a.m.

Join a Naturalist on a 2-hour guided tour of the bay on our comfortable electric pontoon boat. Fee is \$10 per person. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: BBSC

Marine Discovery—Saturday, Sept. 11, Oct. 16, Nov. 13., 8:30–11:30 a.m.

Marine biology students ages 8 and up are invited to participate in a variety of marine life monitoring programs in Newport Bay. Anyone under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Fee is \$10. For reservations call (949) 640-9956. Location Code: BBSC

Evening Marsh Prowl—Saturday, Sept. 11, Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m.

Join a naturalist on a guided tour of the bay at dusk on our Back Bay Science Center boat. Use spotlights and binoculars to search for owls and other night creatures. Fee is \$15. Reservations (949) 923-2269. Location Code: BBSC.

Stingray Naming Contest—Saturday, Sept. 11, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

View newly born round stingrays and submit suggestions for naming them. Winner receives a scholarship and recognition at Shark Camp on October 16. Information (949) 640-9956. Location Code: BBSC.

Toddler Time "Native Americans"—Wed., Sept. 15, 9:00a.m. or 10:30 a.m.

Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child playtime with a Native American theme. Enjoy stories, movement and hands on fun. \$5 per child. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Roots Restoration Teamwork—Saturday, Sept. 25, Oct. 23, Nov. 27. 9:00 a.m.–Noon

Join ROOTS in the field and help restore Back Bay Habitat by planting natives. Volunteers get hands-on experience installing, maintaining and identifying plants while learning about wetland ecology. Reservations required for groups of five or more. Refreshments and tools provided. Call (949) 640-0286 for more information. Location code: BBSC

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Train for a Day, Be a Volunteer—Saturday, Sept. 25. 9:00am–4:00pm

Be a part of this dynamic estuary—Volunteer at Upper Newport Bay! Learn about the habitats and wildlife of the bay. Participate in habitat restoration. Assist with canoe, kayak, walking, and school tours. Help greet and educate visitors. Call (949) 923-2295 to reserve a space. Location code: MIC

Marvelous Millipedes & Crazy Centipedes—Saturday, Sept. 25, 2:00–3:30 p.m.

Meet marvelous multi-legged millipedes and their flattened centipede relatives! "Dr. Sue, The Bug Lady" shares these residents of her traveling arthropod zoo. Touch and learn, make and take home models, and snack on edible creatures you create! \$10 per child, ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location code: MIC

Toddler Time "Hungry Animals"—Wednesday, Oct. 6, 10:30–11:15 p.m.

Join us for this parent and child exploration of the food chain. Who eats Who? Enjoy stories, movement and hands on fun! \$5 per child, ages 3-4. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Friends of Newport Bay Walking Tour—Saturday, Oct. 9, Nov. 13

Walk along the Back Bay listening to Naturalists and visit Interpretive Stations featuring specialists addressing different natural history topics. Tours leave every 15 minutes between 9:00 and 10:15 a.m. Free. No reservations required. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: EB

Our Feathered Friends—Saturday, Oct. 9, 2:00–3:30 p.m.

Meet some of our feathered friends at this hands-on program and learn all about birds and why they have become such an important part of our lives. \$10 per child ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Toddler Time "Batty Bats"—Wednesday, Oct. 20, 9:00a.m. or 10:30 a.m.

Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child playtime with a bat theme. Enjoy stories, movement and hands on fun. \$5 per child, ages 2-4. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Spectacular Spiders & Awesome Arachnids—Saturday, Oct. 23, 1:00–2:30pm

Learn the real facts behind "The Very Busy Spider" story. "Dr. Sue, The Bug Lady" will delight with different amazing arachnids LIVE and up close, all in a calm, safe way. Hear the story, make a model and snack on an edible model you create. \$10 per child ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Night Hike—Saturday, Oct. 23, 7:00–8:30pm

Join us for a night hike and learn about the wonders nighttime brings to our nature preserve, including which animals can see and are active at night, the effects the moon has on wildlife and much more. Dress warmly, weather may re-schedule. \$5 per person, ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location code: MIC

Toddler Time "Let's Play Opossum"—Wednesday, Nov. 3, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

Learn all about mother opossum and her babies in this hands-on, fun program. Enjoy stories and activities about this special marsupial. \$5 per child, ages 3-4. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Toddler Time "Birds"—Wednesday, Nov. 17, 9:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.

Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child playtime with a bird theme. Enjoy stories, movement and hands on fun for 2 to 4 year old naturalists. \$5 per child ages 2-4. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Dr. Sue's Traveling Zoo—Saturday, Nov. 20, 10:00–11:30 a.m.

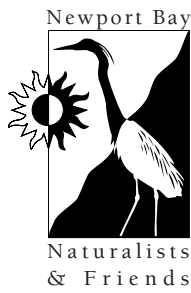
Learn about amazing arthropods—spiders, butterflies, centipedes, millipedes, ants. Touch silky silkworms, see baby beetles, hear cockroaches hiss and watch walking sticks do what they do best! Come and let Dr. Sue bug YOU! \$10 per child ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

Astronomy Night—Saturday, Nov. 6, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Join members of the Orange County Astronomers for an inspirational tour of the night sky. Open to all ages and includes observation with telescopes. Suggested donation \$2.00 per participant. Call (949) 923-2275 to register. Location code: MIC

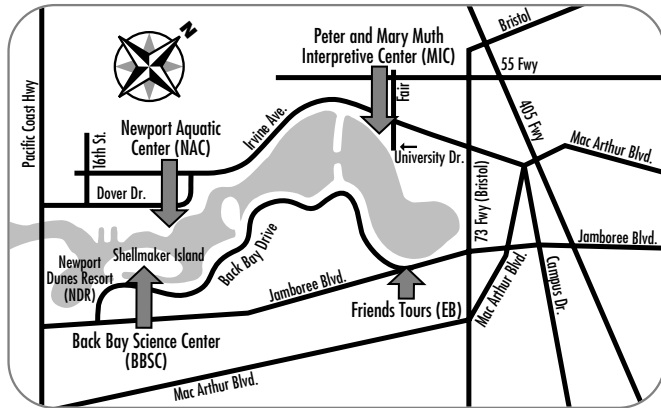
Low Tide Tour of the Bay—Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2:00 p.m.

Join a Naturalist on a 2 hour guided tour of the bay at low tide on our comfortable electric pontoon boat. This is the best time to view the migratory birds at the bay. Fee is \$10 per person. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: BBSC



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Newport Beach, CA 92660

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LOCATION KEY

Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center (MIC)
2301 University Drive
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Back Bay Science Center (BBSC)
600 Shellmaker
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Newport Aquatic Center (NAC)
One White Cliffs Drive
Newport Beach, CA 92660

WEB SITES

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

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Be a Part of Something Special...

Dear Naturalists and Friends:

Thank you for your support of the eScrip program over the past year. With your purchases we have been able to support our education goals.

For those of you who are not aware of our eScrip program, please log on to our website at www.newportbay.org, select 'Naturalists & Friends', select 'Donors and Sponsors' and select eScrip. Here you will find how to register your credit cards so that a portion of your purchases with member organizations will be donated to us, the Naturalists & Friends. This is a wonderful California-based program establishing relationships between commerce and organizations that support children. They protect all information and will not give it to third parties.

For those of you who are already members and shop at Vons or Pavilions, there is an update needed by the Safeway Stores. Please go to the website www.escrip.com and click on 'Renew your Commitment to Safeway Stores'. You will be asked for your club card number or your phone number and that is all that is necessary to continue contributions to us.

eScrip recently welcomed Macy's to their family of merchants. Other members include Vons, Pavilions,

Sharkmobile is available for your school

Sharkmobile is an outreach program that will bring sharks, rays, sea stars and other marine animals to your school. Participants will enjoy learning about local marine habitats through hands-on activities. For more information or to reserve the Sharkmobile please call (949) 640-9956. Location code: BBSC



Bristol Farms, American Airlines, Big 5 Sporting Goods, Budget Rent a Car, Claim Jumper, Coco's, Eddie Bauer, Office Max, Payless Shoes and Pep Boys. Please see the eScrip website for a complete listing.

If you use your credit card at any of these or other participating merchants, won't you please register today and support our organization?

Donna Carroll, Naturalist