

# *Amigos de Bolsa Chica* THE **TERN TIDE**



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## **Coastal Cleanup Day Success**



On the morning of September 15, 2007, well over 50,000 volunteers came to the California Coast to take part in the Coastal Cleanup Day which takes place every year in September. Over 50,000 volunteers participated at over 700 cleanup sites statewide to stem the flow of garbage into the ocean and improve the water quality at our beaches. Since the program started in 1985, over 750,000 Californians have removed more than 12 million pounds of debris from our state's shorelines and coast. When combined with the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by The Ocean Conservancy and taking place on the same day, California Coastal Cleanup Day becomes part of one of the largest volunteer events of the year. Amigos de Bolsa Chica registered over 75 people who came to the south parking lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve as volunteers to pick up trash. Pictured above: students from George Nanoski's class at the Elizabeth Learning Center in Cudahy with the bag of cigarette butts they picked up at Bolsa Chica, just a fraction of the more than 5,000,000 cigarette butts that have been picked up since 1985.

## “Walk to the Wild Side” Bridge Campaign Successful

The campaign to raise money to offset a funding shortfall for a footbridge across the Bolsa Chica channel near Warner Avenue has reached its goal. Recent increases in the price of steel and other costs had outstripped state funds allocated for the bridge. If the shortfall had not been covered by December, the state funds would have been lost. The Amigos together with the Bolsa Chica Land Trust appealed to their membership, who generously responded in short order.

The bridge will allow visitors to the Bolsa Chica to avoid having to cross the channel via the Warner Avenue bridge to get to the mesa trail. Presently the only barrier protecting pedestrians from the street’s heavy traffic is the white stripe designating the bike lane. The final plans for the bridge are now being reviewed in Sacramento, and building is expected to be completed in 2008. Gracias Amigos!

*Artist’s conception of the bridge*



## Volunteer Opportunities Awaiting

by Margaret Carlberg

Do you want to get outdoors and exercise more? Consider spending more time walking in the Bolsa Chica and helping others understand what a wonderful area it is. Have you seen how the plants are growing in the Pocket from our Earth Day plantings or watched gulls grab sea stars off rocks in the new rip rap?

Could you save two mornings a month to be available for giving a Bolsa Chica tour? If you are not already an Amigos Docent, you could become one, and share information at our free Saturday public tours or our popular private tours for schools, Scouts, and adult groups. The Huntington Beach hotels (the Hilton and the Hyatt) are now offering private walks for visitors with our Docents.

Do you belong to or know an organization which would like to have an up-to-date program on the Bolsa Chica? Send us names and contact information. This past year Docents have presented a dozen programs using videos or slides about Bolsa Chica. As this activity continues to expand, we need people with enthusiasm and interest in Bolsa Chica to make presentations to these diverse groups. We also need people with the skills to help us develop more videos. *(continued on page 3)*

*(continued from page 2)*

Are you an outgoing person who could tell the public about the Bolsa Chica or entice them to buy our attractive merchandise? Even without being a Docent you could work with us under the Amigos canopy at various public and environmental events, such as Earth Day celebrations, or community festivals.

If you are not already a Docent, and want to learn interesting details about the early Bolsa Chica history, its recent restoration, its 6 endangered species, its fascinating ecology visible through the changing seasons of bird and marine life migration and share that information with others, please consider taking our Docent Training Class in January 2008. All of these opportunities are available through the Amigos Community Education Committee. Call the Amigos office 714-840-1575 with your name, phone and/or e-mail contact, and we will help you find your own 'niche' in our organization, to share your understanding and appreciation of the Bolsa Chica.

## **Update on Management of the Bolsa Chica**

By Shirley Dettloff

The "Conference on Bolsa Chica: The Work Isn't Finished" held March 23 & 24 of this year, was a great success in not only providing excellent information on the natural resource, but it was also a financial success. With this success we will now be able to be pro-active in making sure that the wetlands and uplands are well managed in an integrated manner. As you know this conference was sponsored by the Amigos de Bolsa Chica, the Western Alliance for Nature and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust. Since the conference, the three organizations have met with Fish and Game and have determined how the money raised from conference should be used. All three organizations felt that it was very important to have a comprehensive plan for the entire Bolsa Chica. A great deal of work has been done on restoration and management planning that was only focused on the wetlands, and now we all feel that there is a need to look at the entire ecosystem which includes the uplands.

We are in the first phase of this planning effort with all three organizations working closely with the Department of Fish and Game and the Bolsa Chica Steering Committee to develop a comprehensive plan with funds raised from the Conference which incorporates the entire ecological system. At this time we are outlining what we feel is important in such a plan, gathering all of the information available and establishing objectives. We want to achieve a plan which will secure the future of the Bolsa Chica ecosystem, not only for all of us, but for future generations. If we can achieve this, we can all be assured of leaving a true legacy that we can be proud of. Amigos will keep you posted as this planning effort moves forward.

## **Talbert Lake Project Update**

by Dave Carlberg

The city of Huntington Beach is pursuing a project that will improve water quality in outer Bolsa Bay and ultimately Huntington Harbour. The city was awarded a \$2.3 million grant from the state to begin implementation of the project. Additional sources of funding are being sought.

Preliminary plans have been completed to divert water from the Wintersburg flood control channel through a series of small wetlands in Huntington Central Park and then into a rehabilitated Talbert Lake. As the water flows through the wetlands it will be purified by several natural processes: plant roots will filter out particulate matter and absorb nitrogen- and phosphorus-rich pollutants while bacteria and other microorganisms will break down much of the organic content of the water. Sunlight will add its purifying effects.

It is estimated that between three and five million gallons of urban runoff will undergo treatment each day. From Talbert Lake some of the water will be used to enhance habitat values in the park such as the Shipley Nature Center, or used in groundwater recharge and seawater intrusion barriers. Any unused water, now considerably cleaner, will flow into the Slater Channel to be returned to the Wintersburg Channel at a point about one mile upstream from the tidegates where it flows into Outer Bolsa Bay.

## What's Become of Running is for the Birds?

Almost every year since 1979, Amigos de Bolsa Chica has relied on the 5K/10K Run & Walk, "Running is for the Birds," to raise much needed funds and awareness for fighting the battle to preserve the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. 25 years ago, few organizations were doing this sort of awareness and fund raising, and none were doing it close to the Pacific Ocean at Bolsa Chica State Beach. Running is for the Birds was Amigos' main source of fuel for paying legal and lobbying costs, maintaining an office and staff that would ensure our guard was never let down. Thanks to all the race participants and our membership over the years, Amigos' was victorious. The wetlands were purchased, restored and are now protected by the State.

One of the key elements in making Running is for the Birds a successful fundraiser was the State's willingness to waive several thousand dollars in fees to hold our event on their Beach. Other than insurance and miscellaneous fees, Amigos never had to "rent" the beach or the parking lot. In 2005, due to the

## Parkside Update

by Dave Carlberg

Shea Home's Parkside development has come before the Coastal Commission more times than I can count, and each time it was continued to a later meeting. The latest appearance occurred at the commission's July meeting in San Luis Obispo, meaning an overnigher for most of us. To bring you up to date, Shea Homes is proposing to build a single family residential tract on about 39 acres of a 50 acre parcel off Graham and south of Warner. For many years the vacant property has been used to grow beans, barley and other crops.

In order for the development to go forward, the City of Huntington Beach must apply to the Coastal Commission to amend its Land Use Plan to reflect the new use of the property. Historically the property was an arm of the Bolsa Chica wetlands before construction of the Wintersburg flood control channel cut the parcel off from the main wetland area in the 1950s. The amputation did not impair Nature's resilience. Over the years the wetland character of the property such as the growth of certain plants and other signs typical of wetland habitats would emerge periodically. Often the plants were plowed under in the name of weed abatement and other signs were bulldozed beneath layers of soil. But for many years activist

restoration construction along the beach, Amigos opted to postpone the race rather than hold it at a different location. When we brought the race back in 2006, the situation at the State Beach had changed. They told us it would be the last time they could waive all the fees. Indeed, they did not waive the parking fees, and Amigos was charged for every car that brought race participants to the beach. That fee alone suddenly made Running for the Birds cost prohibitive, and for the first time we lost money. For a small grassroots organization, Amigos is not equipped to absorb such a loss.

It has been a sad decision to discontinue Running is for the Birds, at least until we can find a solution to the challenge of paying several thousand dollars in fees. Until then, Amigos wishes to thank all the thousands of loyal runners who have made this a very special event for so many years, and who have called and written to express their appreciation for the event. Without you, Bolsa Chica would not be the much needed protected and restored open space it is today.

Mark Bixby had been documenting the wetland signs and the attempts to cover up the property's wetland character. When he offered his evidence to the Coastal Commission staff, he got their attention.

At the July meeting, when the City once again appeared before the Commission, the evidence of extensive wetlands on the Shea property was so compelling that even before public testimony was heard, the City requested withdrawal of its application, citing the limited time the City and Shea had to review the latest staff recommendations. The staff recommendations were awesome. They had reduced the buildable footprint for the residences from 39 acres to 17, the balance of the property being set aside as open space (wetlands, buffers and other protected areas).

So the next episode is scheduled to play in San Diego on November 14, 15 or 16. Call our office after November 1st for the precise day and time, or check their agenda available on the commission website at <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/mtgcurr.html>. And we'll also keep you posted of the results of the hearing on these pages and on our web site. Incidentally, the commission now webcasts its meetings live on its website as well.

## Alaskan Family Takes Carbon-Free Birding Tour

Proving that it is possible to take a fossil fuel-free 10,000 mile birding tour, Ken Madsen, Wendy Boothroyd and Malkolm Boothroyd have embarked on an incredible bicycle journey from their home in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Alaska to Southern Florida. It was 15 year old Malkolm's idea. An avid birder with over 400 birds on his life list, Malkolm completed 10th grade during his 8th and 9th grades in order to take off for the year.

The family embarked on their adventure in July, 2007 and plan to return in July of next year. Staying at campgrounds most of the time, they are keeping a record of their sightings as they pause at prime birding spots along the way. At about 1:00 pm Monday, October 1, they rolled into the south parking lot at Bolsa Chica with escorts Scott Thomas (Sea and Sage

Audubon), Barbara and Mike Sentovich, and Stephanie Pacheco. Joining them at the wetland were Dave and Margaret Carlberg, their son and grandson Howard and Bryce, Peter Knapp, Mary Parsell (Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust) and Flossie Horgan (Bolsa Chica Land Trust).

After about an hour's birding at Bolsa Chica the group headed south to Newport Back Bay. In the coming days Malkolm and his parents planned to be in the San Diego area, then turn east to the Salton Sea and by next June, their ultimate goal, Southern Florida. For more information about this extraordinary family, visit their website at [www.birdyear.com](http://www.birdyear.com) or the Sea and Sage Audubon website at <http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org/SpecialEvents/MalkolmsBirdYear.html>



Amigos president Dave Carlberg with Peter Knapp and 15 year old Malkolm Boothroyd and parents Wendy Boothroyd and Ken Madsen.



Malkolm Boothroyd and parents enjoy a short stint at birding and photography at Bolsa Chica with Peter Knapp.



Malkolm Boothroyd and parents Wendy Boothroyd and Ken Madsen head south for Newport Back Bay after birding at Bolsa Chica.

## Amigos Picnic in the Park

THANKS to the great team of Amigos workers, old-timers and newer, the August 24 Amigos Picnic in the Park, celebrating the First Anniversary of the Tidal Inlet opening was an even greater success than was anticipated. Suzanne's Catering provided enough gourmet sandwiches and salads to satisfy everyone's appetites, along with simple appetizers from BrewBakers and the delicious assortment of desserts from the Board members. This resulted in messages as "It was the best picnic I've ever been to." Unfortunately no one took pictures that evening of the 70 members who came out to Murdy Park on the windy evening to reminisce about the years and accomplishments of the Amigos.

Every part of the program was good: all of the speeches had good and current information of interest to all, and each described the work that Amigos needs to continue. As Dave Carlberg's first public appearance as President of the Amigos, he outlined our continuing focus on Education and the Management of the 1200 acres of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. The excellent review by Shirley Dettloff of the many stages of Amigos' work through the years was really appreciated by the many long-time members who were a part of the early years (but maybe not so active recently), as well as informative to our newer members. It was nice to see again Steve Hess's video of August 24, 2006, and relive the moment--or for those who weren't there to sense the thrill and pride of the Amigos' long years of work as well as admiration of that engineering accomplishment. The importance of continuing and expanding the education activities was very well presented by Barbara Sentovich, and helped remind the 30 or more docents who were present how much we and the Bolsa Chica need and depend on them. Jeff Stoddard, Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist now half-time with Bolsa Chica, gave a brief report on the recent Cord Grass transplanting in which 21 Amigos members assisted working in the mud.

A Swedish crystal sculpture of a great blue heron was given to honor retiring President Tom Anderson, and a crystal pelican with fish sculpture and gift card were presented in absentia to Executive Director Alexia Swanepoel. Al Vari was pleasantly surprised to receive an "I was there August 24, 2006" T-shirt which he had admired on the 7 activists who were sporting theirs.

The Amigos Picnic in the Park August 24, 2007 was indeed a Spirit-raiser, and one that we propose be an annual event -- if some of you are willing to help again, as did the 2007 committee of Shirley Dettloff, Tom Livengood, Jim and Jennifer Robins, and Dave and Margaret Carlberg, with extra help from Barbara Sentovich, Vic Leipzig, Brian Westcott, Mel and Peggy Nutter, Kevin McCarthy, Terry and John Hill, Lois Tolles, Nancy Kealer, and others.

## 2007 Bird Breeding Season at Bolsa Chica

By Peter Knapp

The 2007 Breeding Season at Bolsa Chica included the following species: "Beldings" Savannah Sparrow, Western Snowy Plover, Least Tern, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, Royal Tern, Elegant Tern, Black Skimmer, Green Heron, Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Killdeer and Red-winged Blackbird. This list is not inclusive of all breeding species, but is a list of the most prominent species. Surveys of breeding success of individual species were conducted for Least Terns and Western Snowy Plover. For the other species only a general idea of success is available.

Western Snowy Plovers nested in the Seasonal Pond area, Nest Site 3, South Tern Island and Nest Site 1. Nest Site 1 is visible to the general public at the eastern end of the boardwalk and you may have seen plovers nesting under mini-enclosures (wire cages) at the north end of Nest Site 1. Nesting success for 2007 was

below expectations with 25 fledgling from 50 nests.

Least Terns nested on the South Tern Island and Nest Site 1. Their success was limited by predation most likely from Black-crowned Night Herons and nest loss from Black Skimmer nesting activities. The estimate of fledgling is 15 for 2007. This compares with over 250 in 2006.

Elegant, Caspian, Royal and Forster's Terns all had some breeding success but fledgling counts were not made. Black Skimmers are the last to nest and they had a good year at Bolsa Chica. The Green Heron produced 2 fledgling. Killdeer, Stilts and Avocets had a poor year. Identifiable cause(s) is unknown for poor results. No raptors or birds of prey were known to have nested at Bolsa Chica in 2007.

## President's Tern

by Dave Carlberg

Three is an interesting number. It has a lot of uses, such as in the sayings, "Three's a crowd", "Three strikes and you're out" and "Three times is a charm". It is considered a lucky number in China, for "three" in Chinese sounds like the word for "alive". But in Vietnam it is unlucky to take a photograph of three people. It is the minimum number of legs that is needed to make a successful chair or stool. Google the word "three" and you will get 1,040,000,000 hits, which would take you a little over 6 1/2 years just to scroll through them. I bring all this nonsense up because I find myself having the honor of being president of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica for the third time. The first time was in 1979 when we filed our lawsuit that challenged Signal Landmark and the State over their 1973 agreement. In that deal the state acquired 300 acres but handed 900 acres that contained supposedly protected wetlands over to Signal with no strings attached. The 1989 settlement of that suit resulted in Signal abandoning their massive marina plan and eventually led to the acquisition of nearly all of the Bolsa Chica wetlands in 1997. My second try at was in 1999, as plans for the restoration of much of the Bolsa Chica were just getting underway. But that's ancient history. We need to focus on the future.

Now, in 2007, with the major portion of the restoration essentially done, we must look forward to a completely new phase for the Amigos and for the Bolsa Chica. Just as when a family moves into a brand new house, the Bolsa Chica will need a lot of TLC to keep it running smoothly. The management of the Bolsa Chica has been turned over to the California Department of Fish and Game. Although the wetland is under the thoroughly competent supervision of F&G biologist Kelly O'Reilly, her resources are limited. She'll need help from the community in so many ways.

Recognizing the need for a community connection, the State Lands Commission, which is the landlord of the Bolsa Chica, last year formed the Bolsa Chica Local Advisory Task Force. Membership of the group consists of representatives from the three leading environmental organizations in the Bolsa Chica, the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, the Bolsa Chica Land Trust, and the Amigos de Bolsa Chica. In addition, representatives from the County of Orange, the City of Huntington Beach and the Department of Fish and Game complete the group. The Task Force's goals are pretty clear: advise and assist the wetland management team in every way we can. Future discussions will include additional public access into the Bolsa Chica, new interpretive signs and repairing the PCH trail, among other items that are brought to our attention.

Clearly the work at the Bolsa Chica is not over, just shifting to a new and in many respects a more challenging and exciting phase. As you know, the link between the Amigos and the Bolsa Chica Wetland has been a 31 year phenomenon. We will continue to monitor the management of the wetland and to conduct our popular Saturday public tours, plus offer expanded choices of private tours and off-site programs. As your president I am truly looking forward to seeing what the coming years will bring to the Amigos and the Bolsa Chica, and to share that experience with you. On another page of this newsletter you will find information about our education committee and the many ways you can help us in achieving our goals. Please take the time to read it.

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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.

#### ANNUAL DUES

- \$ 20 Individual
- \$ 30 Family
- \$ 50 Patron
- \$ 75 Sponsor
- \$100 Sustaining
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Additional Contribution:

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Fund operational expenses

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed

Please check if you are interested in volunteering for:

Office assistance \_\_\_\_\_ Community Education \_\_\_\_\_ Grantwriting \_\_\_\_\_

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