Amigos by the Numbers: Help Fund Bus Scholarships for Title 1 Schools

In 2015, Amigos de Bolsa Chica conducted 48 private tours with 2,046 visitors, and of those, 1,694 were students. We also conducted 11 FLOW classes for a total of 405 students. There were 28 public tours and booth events. Amigos Docents and Citizen Scientists volunteered over 800 hours for the tours and booth events.

Thanks to a generous grant from Edison International, which, along with member contributions allowed us to offer 18 bus scholarships to qualifying Title 1 schools in 2015.

For wetland tours, there were nine Title 1 schools that received bus funding from Amigos in order to bring 635 kids to the wetlands.

For FLOW, nine classes that received bus funding from Amigos were from Title 1 schools, introducing 365 students to a unique program that may forever change the way they look at the wetlands and the ocean.

For 2016, Edison has not been able to contribute as much. While we are grateful for whatever the size of their generosity, we want to continue at the same level, if not increase, our ability to introduce local kids to the ocean and the wetlands who might otherwise not have the opportunity. Amigos de Bolsa Chica is gearing up for next year’s celebrations of our 40th anniversary. While we have a number of special events planned, we decided that the way we really want to celebrate our big 40th is by doing MORE OF WHAT WE ALREADY DO!

continued on page 5...
Native Plant Garden at Bolsa Chica State Beach: Terraces Rising

By Rachael Lloyd

There has been a flurry of activity this fall in the garden. Volunteer events were kicked off on October 10 with assistance from Fluor Corporation, an engineering firm located in Orange County. Timing could not have been better as $2,400 in funds had recently been awarded in support of the garden by the State Parks Foundation. Sixteen volunteers from Fluor braved a week long heat wave to assist eight Amigos de Bolsa Chica volunteers in erecting the first of 3 retaining walls in the Bolsa Chica State Beach Headquarters garden adjacent to the headquarters parking lot. Other projects undertaken by Fluor volunteers willing to brave the 97 degree inferno included bagging, transporting and raking mulch throughout much of the garden. In addition volunteers hacked their way into a jungle of dead wood ten feet deep behind the headquarters building. Much to the joy of Eric Dynell, Superintendent of Bolsa Chica State Beach, the volunteers discovered a manhole cover to a missing sand trap under the overgrowth.

State Beach: Terraces Rising

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Since then State Parks volunteer David Lloyd relieved Amigos of spending $1,500 on a retail tool shed by constructing it himself using only $550 in materials. This reserved $950 of the State Parks Foundation grant money so it could be applied to more mulch and retaining wall blocks. Amigos President Jerry Donahue assisted in assembling the tool shed once it was at the beach, and has been responsible for directing most of the mulch distribution. In addition $360 of much-needed tools were purchased and are now housed in the new shed.

Due to continuing efforts by Amigos volunteers and our high school Environmental Club the one terrace built by Fluor volunteers has turned into 3, the pile of mulch is completely distributed and the last thicket of dead wood has been completely removed. Thanks to a plant materials permit issued by State Parks Environmental Scientist Lana Nguyen the Environmental Club has begun propagating cuttings from locally occurring native plants. Once mature, these plants will add future diversity to the rejuvenated garden areas. The Environmental Club will soon be joined by more high school volunteers from the Global Sustainability Project (GSP). One of many garden projects the GSP

2016 Docent Training Class

The next Docent Class will be held in March and April of 2016. If you have an interest in taking the Amigos Docent Training Class to learn more about the Bolsa Chica and to then share your understanding with others on tours and at presentations contact the Amigos at 714 840-1575 or info@amigosdebolsachica.org. The schedule for the classes is on Mondays starting March 7 and running for 6 weeks, one night a week from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The subjects that will be covered include Birds, Endangered Species, Ecology, History and Restoration of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.

The cost of the class is the Amigos Membership plus $50 which includes a Docent Training Manual and a Docent Photo Binder. The classes will take place at Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center, Pacific Coast Highway between Warner and Seapoint. The entrance is across the street from the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on the ocean side of the street.

Amigos de Bolsa Chica has a free Public Tour the first Saturday of each month starting at 9:00am at the south parking lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on Pacific Coast Highway between Warner and Seapoint across the street from the entrance to the Bolsa Chica State Beach. You are encouraged to attend the tour for an overview of the classes.

"The First Amigos" continued on page 6...

Much of what Signal Landmark was doing with the State Legislature was attempting to make it easier for them to develop the wetlands. They were working to get bills in place that would allow construction of 5,000 homes and a marina with an entrance to the ocean. One bill would have even removed the Bolsa Chica from the jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission. Each bill would eventually be defeated, but it meant that many trips were made by Amigos to Sacramento, meeting with legislators, testifying before committees, and making absolutely sure that we were providing the facts so that the legislator had science to back up their vote.

Each bill that had been backed by Signal Landmark was defeated because the Amigos had learned to become “lobbyists.” We visited Sacramento when a bill detrimental to the Bolsa Chica was presented, and each time we were able to speak with a Senator or Assembly member or with an aide and each time were able to convince the legislator to vote against what Signal proposed. Amigos soon had the reputation of coming with the facts and with information you could trust. If we had not lobbied so effectively, you would now see a marina surrounded by homes instead of functioning restored wetlands.

We testified before legislative committees, a daunting task if you had never done it before. With shaky hands and a sometimes terrified voice we spoke before these bodies and our message gained their respect. They always knew that we did our homework, that they could trust our statements and that what we were trying to achieve was right and most important was legal. It was very difficult to say no to the Amigos! We usually met with success, for they could not do otherwise based on the facts they heard. If one has not participated in these efforts, I don’t think you can imagine how it was done and what a formidable task it was. Amigos members, who initially did not know how Sacramento functioned, walked the halls, usually during the heat of summer, talking with anyone who would take an appointment or just meet us in a hallway.

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I don’t think the early band of Amigos would have signed on if they had known what lay ahead, if they had known they would be involved for multiple decades of their lives, if they had known it would not be an easy battle to win. However, many were young and optimistic filled with doing what was “right.” It became apparent very early that any decisions on Bolsa Chica would be made by governmental bodies and/or the courts, and this seemingly implausible multiple decade fight that was taken to City Hall, State and Federal Commissions, State and Federal agencies, the County Board of Supervisors, the State Legislature and the courts. For the most part the Amigos did not have the backgrounds which allowed them to enter into this arena, but they soon learned. The most important lesson they learned was to always present scientific and factual information when appearing before a decision making body. You may be passionate about your subject, but you would never be successful without good solid information that decision makers could rely upon. The Amigos learned how to meet and influence elected officials or their staffs and gained the reputation of being some of the best “lobbyists” in California.

It was important that every member of Amigos was educated on the scientific values of wetlands, and the Amigos made sure that the community understood the importance of wetlands as well. Huntington Beach had been an oil town for years; why else would we have a respected football team called the Oilers? Something else had happened in the 60s: A large marina project adjacent to the Bolsa Chica Wetlands, Huntington Harbor, had been built without any opposition. It was thought of by many as a wonderful project that turned an ugly “swamp” into a haven for boats and beautiful, expensive homes. It appeared that Bolsa Chica was next in line for development. The public had to be convinced that wetlands were important. Coastal wetlands offered buffers between the sea and homes during floods and possible tsunamis. The Bolsa Chica had long been part of the Pacific Flyway and thousands of birds, some flying thousands of miles twice a year, used the wetlands for resting and feeding. Many birds nested at the Bolsa Chica, including three endangered species. The wetlands also served as nurseries for fish. The fishing industry was dependent upon this relationship, especially in a time when fish populations began decreasing. The need for open space in our urban sprawl, a place for “psychic relief” was also part of the Amigos’ message. But the question remained: how would you turn an oil field into a vibrant wetland?

In 1979 Amigos de Bolsa Chica filed a lawsuit which stated that the 1973 agreement between the state and Signal Landmark was not valid. The complaint stated that the state could not trade the wetlands that historically belong to the public. The lawsuit was supported by the National Audubon Society, Sierra Club and the League for Coastal Protection. Since the Bolsa Chica was under the jurisdiction of the County of Orange when this all began, the Orange County Board of Supervisors made some of the early decisions. In general, the County was development oriented. Many of their decisions weighed heavily in favor of allowing a marina and housing to be developed at Bolsa Chica. It is also important to remember that when we were getting started in the mid-seventies, the Coastal Commission was in its infancy, and we did not yet have the Clean Water Act that would later give many more protections to wetlands.

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Of course with the manmade ocean entrance comes the responsibility for man to make sure that this entrance is always kept open so that the wetlands can receive the nourishment it needs to thrive. This has been accomplished by dredging the entrance periodically to remove the sands that have accumulated in the entrance so that the waters can flow into the wetlands. The original plan was to dredge every two to three years, but the Bolsa Chica Steering Committee, made of federal and state agencies, determined that this plan was inefficient and too costly. So after conferring with a coastal engineering firm they made the determination to dredge a reduced volume of sand every year with smaller equipment and at less cost.

Currently dredging is done during the permitted period from October through February every year and so far has been successful. This reduced dredging program began in October 2014 and the current contract expires in April 2017. Of course this process is monitored to determine if there are additional cost effective measures that can be adopted to ensure that this is the best way to address an issue that will always be necessary with the inlet. Ocean access to wetlands throughout the state must depend on dredging operations to keep their wetlands viable.

Amigos are updated periodically on the success of this program and as we have always done, will continue to keep informed on all that is taking place at the wetlands. The Amigos have always felt that it is not only our responsibility to save the wetlands, see that they are restored, but we monitor the success of the restoration to ensure that future generations will always have a healthy, viable resource in their community.
President's Tern
Amigos Are FLOWing
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Since it was conceived by Joanna Tavares-Reager two and half years ago, the FLOW program has become a major part of Amigos life. We have done weekly phytoplankton draws from the tidal inlet at Bolsa Chica State Beach and from the walk bridge at the south parking lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Water samples would then be mailed to the California Department of Public Health as part of the Biotoxin Monitoring Program. This was done as a public health matter since certain species of phytoplankton contain neurotoxins which would accumulate in filter feeding bivalves, (mainly mussels). Consumption of these creatures could lead to serious medical complications. Fortunately, only on one occasion did the State Biologists at the Richmond, CA lab show concern with our data and asked us to scrape some mussels off the rocks at the tidal inlet and mail them intact so that tissue samples could be studied. After examination, it was determined that the quantity of the toxin was below levels where signs needed to be posted warning individuals of the danger. We have had a variety of college students and Amigos docents run the program over the years. Some of our college students have moved on to other environmental related positions once they graduated. To offer new college students a more in depth experience, we are now pursuing ties with HABWatch, a SeaGrant program from USC. Linda Chilton, Director of Education Programs, visited FLOW on Friday, November 20 to see how we run our program and to start the process of establishing ties. Over the next few months we will be working with Linda to align our protocols with those of HABWatch, so that the data gained is consistent with standards necessary to publish findings. We will be visiting USC to gain additional training and we will use their excellent website to guide our new volunteer citizen scientists. As Joanna has moved to Pasadena and can no longer devote the amount of time she would like to the program, we are fortunate to have acquired the services of Tanya Murray, PhD, to be our science advisor. Dr. Murray is in the Biological and Marine Sciences Department at Coastline Community College. Tanya’s “can do” spirit bodes well for this program. She would like her Biology classes to become more involved in research projects and the FLOW program provides that opportunity. New Partnership with Segerstrom High School
On December 5, 10 Segerstrom High School students and their instructor, Thomas Pfeiffer, began the first 5 hours of their 40 hour commitment with Amigos that will run through June. These students will spend selected Saturdays doing FLOW monitoring, and garden projects designed by Rachael Lloyd, as part of their Global Sustainability Project. This project, funded by the Kenneth A. Picerne Foundation, affords high school juniors the opportunity to spend 40 hours on an environmental project that benefits the community. In return, these students will be able to spend 10 days at the Mankwe Wildlife Reserve in South Africa helping Earthwatch scientists study endangered rhinos. You will see these students at our Video Premier, Feb. 26th and our Science Symposium, April 30th. Their work day schedule will be posted on the Amigos website so come out and meet them and see their efforts.

Thank You to Amigos Supporters
Thank you to all the members who have recently donated to Amigos de Bolsa Chica, including Ms. Terri K. Taylor, Mr. Raymond Sherrard, Marilyn L. Harris, Terry Hill, Bob Hogan and Dave and Sharon Telford. All donations help us carry on our mission which includes educating people about the importance of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. 

Native Plant Gardening Progress and Thanks
I cannot let this year end without acknowledging the work done at the Visitor Center by the gardening/restoration crew, (Rachael and David Lloyd, and Radi Ali). They have put in endless hours transforming the barren slopes surrounding the Visitor Center and preparing the garden for El Nino. Pictures of the retaining walls that have been constructed and clearance of dead brush were posted in our year end solicitation letter. We will be putting new plants in the ground while trying to control erosion this winter. If you have some free time on a Saturday morning, come pay us a visit.

Amigos Unveil New Logo for 40th Anniversary
In preparation for our 40th Anniversary in 2016, Amigos de Bolsa Chica has created a new logo. It took weeks of collaborative brainstorming and the input of many volunteers, but at last, it is done and we think it is beautiful! A huge thank you to Radi Ali, new Amigos member who donated his time and talent to the crafting of this masterpiece! Rady, you rock! Thanks also to Rachel Lloyd and Tom Anderson, also Amigos Members, for collaborating with Radi on the design work. We have asked our Facebook followers what kind of items they would like us to make with our new logo. Here is their wish list: T-shirts and sweatshirts (for those cold bonfire nights in HB), key chains, hats, tote bags, yard stakes and flags. What would you like to add to this wish list? You can send your ideas and pre-order any of these items by emailing us at info@amigosdebolsachica.org or by calling 714-840-1575.

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"President’s Tern" continued from page 4...
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$400 per bus, 18-20 buses brings 1,000 kids to the Bolsa Chica. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to Amigos for bus transportation for low-income and at-risk students. Any amount is appreciated, not by the Amigos, but by the kids who may have never seen the ocean before. The more these kids know about the environment now, the better everyone’s future will be!
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Native Plant Garden at Bolsa Chica State Beach: Terraces Rising

By Rachael Lloyd

There has been a flurry of activity this fall in the garden. Volunteer events were kicked off on October 10 with assistance from Fluor Corporation, an engineering firm located in Orange County. Timing could not have been better as $2,400 in funds had recently been awarded in support of the garden by the State Parks Foundation. Sixteen volunteers from Fluor braved a week long heat wave to assist eight Amigos de Bolsa Chica volunteers in erecting the first of 3 retaining walls in the Bolsa Chica State Beach Headquarters garden adjacent to the headquarters parking lot. Other projects undertaken by Fluor volunteers willing to brave the 97 degree inferno included bagging, transporting and raking mulch throughout much of the garden. In addition volunteers hacked their way into a jungle of dead wood ten feet deep to assist eight Amigos de Bolsa Chica volunteers in erecting the first of 3 retaining walls in the Bolsa Chica State Beach Headquarters garden adjacent to the headquarters parking lot. Other projects undertaken by Fluor volunteers willing to brave the 97 degree inferno included bagging, transporting and raking mulch throughout much of the garden. In addition volunteers hacked their way into a jungle of dead wood ten feet deep behind the headquarters building. Much to the joy of Eric Dynell, Superintendent of Bolsa Chica State Beach, the volunteers discovered a manhole cover to a missing sand trap under the overgrowth.

State Parks Foundation grant money so it could be applied to more mulch and retaining wall blocks. Amigos President Jerry Donohue assisted in assembling the tool shed once it was at the beach, and has been responsible for directing most of the mulch distribution. In addition $360 of much-needed tools were purchased and are now housed in the new shed.

Due to continuing efforts by Amigos volunteers and our high school Environmental Club the one terrace built by Fluor volunteers has turned into 3, the pile of mulch is completely distributed and the last thicket of dead wood has been completely removed. Thanks to a plant materials permit issued by State Parks Environmental Scientist Lana Nguyen the Environmental Club has begun propagating cuttings from locally occurring native plants. Once mature, these plants will add future diversity to the rejuvenated garden areas. The Environmental Club will soon be joined by more high school volunteers from the Global Sustainability Project (GSP). One of many garden projects the GSP

Since then State Parks volunteer David Lloyd relieved Amigos of spending $1,500 on a retail tool shed by constructing it himself using only $550 in materials. This reserved $950 of the State Parks Foundation grant money so it could be applied to more mulch and retaining wall blocks. Amigos President Jerry Donohue assisted in assembling the tool shed once it was at the beach, and has been responsible for directing most of the mulch distribution. In addition $360 of much-needed tools were purchased and are now housed in the new shed.

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With information you could trust. If we had not lobby so effectively, you would now see a marina surrounded by homes instead of functioning restored wetlands.

We testified before legislative committees, a daunting task if you had never done it before. With shaky hands and a sometimes terrified voice we spoke before these bodies and our message gained their respect. They always knew that we did our homework, that they could trust our statements and that what we were trying to achieve was right and most important was legal. It was very difficult to say no to the Amigos! We usually met with success, for they could not do otherwise based on the facts they heard. If one has not participated in these efforts, I don’t think you can imagine how it was done and what a formidable task it was. Amigos members, who initially did not know how Sacramento functioned, walked the halls, usually during the heat of summer, talking with anyone who would take an appointment or just meet us in a hallway.

2016 Docent Training Class

The next Docent Class will be held in March and April of 2016. If you have an interest in taking the Amigos Docent Training Class to learn more about the Bolsa Chica and to then share your understanding with others on tours and at presentations contact the Amigos at 714 840-1575 or info@amigosdebolsachica.org. The schedule for the classes is on Mondays starting March 7 and running for 6 weeks, one night a week from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The subjects that will be covered include Birds, Endangered Species, Ecology, History and Restoration of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.

The cost of the class is the Amigos Membership plus $50 which includes a Docent Training Manual and a Docent Photo Binder. The classes will take place at Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center, Pacific Coast Highway between Warner and Seapoint. The entrance is across the street from the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on the ocean side of the street.

Amigos de Bolsa Chica has a free Public Tour the first Saturday of each month starting at 9:00am at the south parking lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on Pacific Coast Highway between Warner and Seapoint across the street from the entrance to the Bolsa Chica State Beach. You are encouraged to attend the tour for an overview of the classes.

“The First Amigos”continued from page 6...
In 2015, Amigos de Bolsa Chica conducted 48 private tours with 2,046 visitors, and of those, 1,694 were students. We also conducted 11 FLOW classes for a total of 405 students. There were 28 public tours and booth events. Amigos Docents and Citizen Scientists volunteered over 800 hours for the tours and booth events.

Thanks to a generous grant from Edison International, which, along with member contributions allowed us to offer 18 bus scholarships to qualifying Title 1 schools in 2015.

For wetland tours, there were nine Title 1 schools that received bus funding from Amigos in order to bring 635 kids to the wetlands.

For FLOW, nine classes that received bus funding from Amigos were from Title 1 schools, introducing 365 students to a unique program that may forever change the way they look at the wetlands and the ocean.

For 2016, Edison has not been able to contribute as much. While we are grateful for whatever the size of their generosity, we want to continue at the same level, if not increase, our ability to introduce local kids to the ocean and the wetlands who might otherwise not have the opportunity. Amigos de Bolsa Chica is gearing up for next year’s celebrations of our 40th anniversary. While we have a number of special events planned, we decided that the way we really want to celebrate our big 40 is by doing MORE OF WHAT WE ALREADY DO!