Action Needed

BVAS Seeks $1 Million to Purchase 2 Key Properties
—by Andy Mauro

BVAS has entered into purchase agreements with two separate landowners to buy Oceanside properties adjacent to sensitive wetlands. One parcel is next to the Buena Vista Lagoon, across the street from the BVAS Nature Center. The other property is adjacent to the San Luis Rey River, just a few hundred yards west of the Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary. Both represent important opportunities for restoration.

The cost for each property will be determined by appraisals now underway, but the total is expected to be between $3-4 million. BVAS has advanced $50,000 into escrow for the two purchases. BVAS is actively seeking partners to help provide the bulk of needed funding for the two acquisitions. Funding is also needed to restore the land and establish an endowment to provide for on-going habitat management.

Your Help is Needed—Acquiring either parcel will ultimately require an amount of matching funds to be raised by BVAS and the community. Many of the funding agencies being contacted require a tangible level of community support as a condition for land acquisition funding.

The Million-Dollar Clapper Rail Society Fund

In May, the BVAS Board voted to create the Clapper Rail Society Fund, with a goal of raising $1 million from the community. The money will be used to help fund these and future land acquisition, restoration, and habitat management efforts. Donors to the fund will become lifetime members of the Clapper Rail Society. All donations, large and small, are being sought, and all will be publically recognized.

Initial Donations Already Total $120,000—Two conservation groups, Preserve Calavera and North County Advocates, have pledged $50,000 in matching funds to support the acquisitions. As a result, the first $100,000 of donations received from the community will be matched dollar-for-dollar. BVAS Board members have pledged a total of $10,000 in personal contributions to the Fund, separate from funds already being advanced by BVAS. Finally, a $10,000 pledge has also been made by the Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation. Discussions are on-going with major donors, charitable foundations, and public agencies interested in the acquisition of lands for conservation. The Buena Vista Lagoon parcel being sought could play an important role in the restoration of the lagoon. Completion of the EIR on the lagoon restoration project, expected within the next 12 months, is expected to help free up funding for acquisition of this parcel.

The parcel located next to the San Luis Rey River is bordered on the north by Camp Pendleton, and thus represents a unique opportunity for partnership. BVAS has already entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Department of the Navy, providing a mechanism for the two to share equally in the purchase of this parcel. The Navy would also fund the restoration and on-going management of the new habitat.

The Two Parcels Being Sought by BVAS

Buena Vista Lagoon Parcel—This well-known, 3.56-acre property borders the Buena Vista Lagoon and is located along So. Coast Hwy., directly across the street from the BVAS Nature Center. Its southern half contains disturbed and remnant wetlands and provides habitat for the endangered light-footed clapper rail. BVAS would like to acquire the land, restore it to its historical wetlands and edge habitat, and have it included within the Buena Vista Lagoon Ecological Reserve.

BVAS and a neighborhood coalition successfully rallied several years ago against a proposed hotel, condo, and restaurant project on this site. The property was eventually sold and the new owner has expressed interest in having BVAS purchase the land for conservation.

(See “Land Acquisitions,” p. 2.)
Continued from p. 1.

San Luis Rey River Parcel—The second parcel being sought is 31 acres of rolling terrain sandwiched between the San Luis Rey River and Camp Pendleton. BVAS would like to acquire this parcel and see it restored with coastal sage scrub and chaparral, suitable for the endangered California gnatcatcher and several other endangered animal and plant species. Separating the property from the Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary on the east is a small parcel of city-owned land that’s presently being restored to provide habitat for the endangered willow flycatcher and least Bell’s vireo. This acquisition by BVAS would link together four contiguous protected habitats.

BVAS is encouraging the community to join the effort to purchase and restore these important properties. The form below has been provided for your convenience. If you have questions or would like to discuss your possible participation in confidence, please contact Andy Mauro (760-753-1266).

The 10th Annual BVAS Film Festival
Wednesday, June 18
“A Birder’s Guide to Everything”
A New Hollywood Feature Movie About Teens and Their Search for a Long-lost Bird
6:30 p.m. Social—7 p.m. Movie

Three teenage boys, best friends who seem to have an unending wardrobe of bird T-shirts, have formed the Young Birders’ Society. One of the boys happens to snap a photo of a hard-to-classify duck, and the trio asks a quirky local ornithological legend (played by Ben Kingsley), to help identify their find. Being encouraged in their obsession, the boys embark on a mission to document what they believe is a Labrador duck, a species thought to have been extinct for over 130 years. To make this into a charming coming-of-age movie, an alluring female classmate is conveniently recruited for the hunt. It is a recipe for some good-natured fun.

The group goes off on an unsanctioned road trip to Cockaponset State Forest in Connecticut on the off-chance they’ll score the bird and a little immortality. The movie provides flashes of birdlife—a hint of nuthatch here, a glimpse of catbird there—amidst the lush woodland vegetation. The director made a serious effort to get the birthing right. Birthing expert Kenn Kaufman was a film consultant and took the cast and crew on scouting trips to Central Park to help everyone get the feel of the sport. The director put it this way: “Birthing as a theme ended up being the gift that kept on giving—it’s a very rich world full of visual wonder and metaphoric and existential possibilities.”

Bring the kids for an evening of armchair birding and reminiscing about the innocence and passion of being a teenager. Enjoy popcorn, beer, wine, soft drinks and studio seating in front of the BVAS “big screen.”

2014 Annual Meeting and Election of Officers and Directors
The BVAS Annual Meeting will be held on June 18 at 7 p.m., just prior to the showing of our film. The short meeting will include the nomination and election of officers and directors for the 2014/15 fiscal year. The current officers have all announced their willingness to stay on for an additional term. In addition to our current slate of directors, several candidates for new positions on the Board will be announced. If you or someone you know might be interested in serving on the Board, please contact our volunteer coordinator, Bob Crowell, at 760-207-3884.

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BVAS Clapper Rail Society Fund

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Phone/Email: Exp. Date; CVR

Donations are fully tax-deductible and will be placed in the BVAS Clapper Rail Society Fund to be used for future land acquisitions and related expenses, habitat restoration projects, and ongoing habitat management costs.

I would like to discuss this further. Please contact me.

San Luis Rey River parcel, with Whelan Lake in the background.
Birding with BVAS

Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk
with John Haddock
First Saturday of Each Month—8 a.m.
June 7, July 5, August 2

Check out the nice variety of lake, riparian, and grassland species that regularly breed at the Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary.

Directions: 1-5 to Hwy. 76 East; turn left at Douglas Dr.; continue to the light at North River Rd.; go left on North River Rd. Pass through the entrance gate and follow the signs to the lake.

Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Second Thursday Surprise Walk
with Steve Brad
June 12—8 a.m.

Note: No 2nd Thursday Walks in July and August

Join our weekday surprise-location bird walk on the second Thursday of each month (except July and August!). Where we go is based on recent reports and Steve’s personal surveying. If you’d like to get on the Second Thursday Walk notification list, please send an e-mail with your name, phone number and e-mail address to: stevebrad1@earthlink.net.

Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

Day-of-trip cell phone, 760-274-5256. 

Upcoming BVAS Pelagic Bird Trips
—June 7, Sept. 21, Oct. 4, and Nov. 1—

The next three BVAS pelagic bird trips out of San Diego will be 12-hour trips out as far as the 30-Mile Bank. The trips are scheduled for June 7, September 21, and October 4. An 8-hour trip on November 1 will close out the year.

Fair warning—the late summer trips are filling fast! Just a few spots were still open on the September trip as of May 1. Once that trip fills, the October trip won’t be far behind. According to trip leader Paul Lehman, the popularity of these late summer trips is due to exciting sightings recorded in 2013. This included Craveri’s murrelet, red-billed tropicbird, brown booby, and rafts of storm-petrels, including least storm-petrel. This trip offers a chance for Guadalupe murrelet. It’s a good time of year for the rare-but-almost-annual Buller’s and flesh-footed shearwaters, as well as south polar skua and long-tailed jaeger.

Please register early to insure your spot and take advantage of Early Bird pricing.

For schedules, fees, and all pelagic birding info, visit:


Sign up at Pt. Loma Sportfishing: 619-223-1627.

Cuyamaca Mountain Bird Walk
Paso Picacho Campground
Sunday, June 8—8 a.m.
with Steve Brad

Note: No 2nd Sunday Walk in July or August

Cuyamaca Mountain in June is a wonderful place—fresh, clean air for your lungs, warm sunshine on your face, the calming sound of gentle breezes rustling through the trees, the scent of pine needles underfoot, and the melodious songs of beautiful mountain birds. Have we got your attention? You might even want to explore the possibility of turning this into a camping weekend at Paso Picacho Campground.

Directions: 1-8 east to Exit 40, Hwy. 79/Japatul Valley Rd.; turn left (north) on Hwy. 79; go approximately 9 miles to campground. We’ll meet just inside the campgrounds. An annual state parks pass or $8 day use pass may be required.

Leader: Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.

Day-of-trip cell phone, 760-274-5256.

San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk
with John Haddock
Third Saturday of Each Month—8 a.m.
June 21, July 19, August 16

The June and August walks will meet at the San Andres Dr. trailhead east of I-5. The July walk will cover the lagoon overlook and the Crest Canyon trail on the west side of I-5.

San Andres Dr. Trailhead—From I-5, take Via de la Valle east; turn right (south) on San Andres Dr. and go to end of road.

Crest Canyon Trail—From I-5, take Via de la Valle west; turn left on Jimmy Durante Blvd.; left on San Dieguito Rd. Go east to trailhead.

Leader: John Haddock, 760-941-7824.

Basic Birding Workshop and Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count
with Joan Fountain and Tom Troy
Last Saturday of Each Month—8 a.m.

Join the BVAS birders for our basic birding workshop and bird count at Buena Vista Lagoon. No experience necessary. We meet at the Nature Center at 8 a.m. and then caravan around the lagoon to a series of selected stops for some friendly, informal, no-pressure birding.

Directions: Meet at the Nature Center parking lot, 2202 South Coast Hwy., Oceanside.

Leaders: Joan Fountain, 760-729-1379.
Tom Troy, 760-420-7328.
Thank you for thinking of us, Elizabeth and Kyle.

Elizabeth and Kyle McNabb of Carlsbad. The magazine was surprised and pleased to receive the news that it had been entered in a “Birds and Blooms” Magazine contest by BVAS members.

The McNabbs talked about the BVAS Birdhouse Auction in their letter, and suggested the birdhouse could be included in next year’s auction, should the magazine pick BVAS as its winner. (We have confirmed reports that a whole flock of North County birds have been seen crossing their wings for good luck.)

Thank you for thinking of us, Elizabeth and Kyle.

**BVAS Receives a Bountiful Harvest from Cream-of-the-Crop Market**

Cream-of-the-Crop Market and its customers have a strong commitment to the natural world. To celebrate Earth Day, the market set a BVAS donation box, in the form of a birdhouse, on its counter. For a $5 donation to BVAS, customers received a gift bag of product samples, cosmetics, and other items from the store. As a result, BVAS received $530 from Cream-of-the-Crop—a generous nest egg of cash retrieved from the bird box! Cream-of-the-Crop owners Harry and Diane Najjar have been loyal members of the Ruddy Duck Club since its inception. Their daughter, Natasha, has volunteered to help with the BVAS summer nature camp for several years. We understand that Natasha is now considering environmental studies for her educational emphasis. We’re impressed, and not at all surprised.

**BVAS Land Acquisition Speaker’s Bureau**

Do you have a service club, homeowner’s association, hobby group, or just a bunch of friends and neighbors who might like a little more information about the land acquisition efforts and the Clapper Rail Society Fund announced this month by BVAS? Maybe you’re wondering just why these properties are so precious? BVAS would be happy to have a member of the Board speak to your group. Give Andy Mauro a call at 760-753-1266 and let him know of your interest. He’ll arrange an informational meeting for your group at either the Nature Center or at your own location. No obligation, of course.

**BVAS Gift Shop**—T-shirts and hats still 50% off through the summer!
A Limited Summer Schedule for BVAS

This summer, things promise to be a little different around the Nature Center. Final plans are being drawn up for a second-floor deck, and construction is expected to begin in July. During construction, the front desk, lobby, board room, and library will all be closed off. BVAS hopes to keep the classroom open for visitors, and the back door to the parking lot will serve as the temporary entrance. Regular hours are anticipated, however all of this may be adjusted based on the construction schedule.

Unfortunately, because of the remodeling, the BVAS Nature Summer Camp will not be offered this year. As usual, there will be no General Meetings in July and August, and no editions of the Lagoon Flyer. Finally, some regular monthly walks have been cancelled (See p.3.)

Hey, it’s summer vacation—go take a hike!

BVAS Native Plant Club

Third Sunday of Each Month—2 p.m.
June 15, July 20, and August 17

Garden Work Party: Every Monday—9 a.m.

The Buena Vista Native Plant Club support group regularly meets at the Nature Center at 2 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month. Everyone’s welcome, regardless of their native plant knowledge or gardening expertise. Club members answer your questions and help solve your gardening issues, as well as offer tips for native gardening activities appropriate for the season. We always spend time among the native plants in the gardens or along the trails.

Monday Morning with the Natives—Interested gardeners are invited to join the gardening group at the Nature Center every Monday at 9 a.m. for some casual gardening and friendly chatter.

Become a Part of the BVAS Team

BVAS is an organization that draws its energy from a wonderful group of volunteers. Whatever your interest or talent, BVAS has a place for you. We invite you to become a part of the “inner circle” of core volunteers. There is a wide variety of volunteer opportunities available for members—from serving on the board as a director to greeting visitors to the Nature Center as a host. Is there a Nature Center activity you think might be fun to help out on? Give us a call! Perhaps you know of a new activity, a different function, an underserved segment of the community, that you think would be perfect for BVAS. Let us know—we’d love to hear from you! Give Bob Crowell a call at 760-207-3884, and he’ll be happy to discuss your interests.

Preschool Nature Storytime

Monday, June 23, 10 a.m

Hiss! Snakes might seem a little scary at first, but when you learn about them you find they really don’t care much about causing us any harm. We’ll read a story about a friendly snake, make a craft, sing a song or two, and dip into our treasure box.

Note: This will be our last Nature Storytime until September. Questions? Please call Mary Ellen: 760-918-6622.

Kids’ Corner At the Nature Center

Joey’s and Johnny’s Clubhouse

Kids and parents are invited to stop by the Nature Center for some informal nature fun.

Third Sunday of Each Month—1-4 p.m.
June 15, July 20, and August 17

Note: Schedule could be affected by remodeling project.
Join the Clapper Rail Society!
Your donation will be matched 2-to-1 and will help buy and preserve two precious parcels in North County.

(See p. 1.)

BVAS Quick Calendar
Fri. June 6—Board Meeting—9 a.m. Repeats July 11, Aug. 1.
June 7, Sept. 21, Oct. 4—12-hour Pelagic Birding Trips—6 a.m.
Reserve Early for Early Bird Discounts (See p. 3.)
Sat. June 7—Whelan Lake Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Repeats July 5, August 2.
Sun. June 8—Cuyamaca Mountain Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Thur. June 12—Second Thursday Surprise Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Fri. June 13—Nature Guides Meeting—10 a.m.
Sun. June 15—Joey’s and Johnny’s Clubhouse—1 p.m.
Repeats July 20, August 17.
Sun. June 15—Native Plant Club—2 p.m.
Repeats July 20, August 17.
Wed. June 18—Annual Meeting and Film Festival—6:30 p.m.
“A Birder’s Guide to Everything”
Sat. June 21—San Dieguito Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Repeats July 19, August 16.
Mon. June 23—Preschool Nature Storytime—10 a.m.
Sat. June 28—Basic Birding and Lagoon Bird Count—8 a.m.
Repeats July 26, August 30.
Note: There will be no General Meetings in July and August.

Labrador Duck
John James Audubon painted this pair of Labrador ducks for his *Birds of America* portfolio. As his model, he used a pair of specimens he had received as a gift from Daniel Webster. This species wintered along the New England coast as far south as Chesapeake Bay. It was a coastal duck, with a diet that favored mussels and other shellfish. Some 30 years after Audubon painted this pair, the species was deemed extinct in the wild, perhaps victims of egg hunters or the feather trade. Could one still exist? Come see our June movie and find out!