A New Nature Center Observation Deck!

No General Meeting Scheduled in September with Remodel in Final Stages

The sound of hammers banging and walls coming down finally signaled the start of the Nature Center remodeling project in early August. Some last-minute delays pushed back the start date by several weeks, but workers quickly began to make up for the lost time. The project was expected to take about six weeks to finish, with an original goal of a grand re-opening of the Nature Center in early September. The delayed start date, however, and allowances for the possibility of unforeseen issues typical with all remodeling projects, have now pushed the anticipated completion date back to October 1.

By late August, the initial demolition work had been completed and new construction was well underway. Workers were building the stairway up to the new second floor, the relocated wall separating the lobby area from the classroom was being framed, and joists to support the new second-story observation deck were being laid. The completed project will include a mechanical lift for those who need a little help to reach the second floor, as well as a remodeled library, gift shop nook, and board meeting room.

As visitors enter the front door to the lobby, they will be passing under the new observation deck. A stairway will be positioned on the right-hand side of the lobby, halfway between the front door and the kitchen. The stairwell will include a new built-in display cabinet for exhibits. The stairway will include two landings, which will allow visitors to pause for a moment to look down at the lobby area and view several suspended bird exhibits at eye level.

On reaching the observation deck, guests will be able to look out over the cattails and bulrushes that edge the lagoon, and finally see the open water of the central lagoon basin. That’s a view that has eluded BVAS members for much of the 25-plus years that the Nature Center has been in existence. Looking to the west, guests will be able to see the mouth of the lagoon, site of the man-made weir that prevents the cleansing ocean tides, fish, and other marine organisms from entering the lagoon. From the vantage point of the deck, people will also be able to gaze across the street at the parcel of land that BVAS is attempting to purchase, restore, and add to the 220-acre Buena Vista Lagoon Ecological Reserve (see p. 2).

The project is being funded by a state grant under the Nature Education Facility Program of the 2006 Clean Water Bond Act. While several smaller projects have been completed over the years to help maintain the Nature Center, this project represents the first major remodel since the Center’s opening in 1988. Old-timers will, no doubt, experience a little nostalgia as they contemplate the new look of the Nature Center. The original design that has stood so well the test of time was the result of many months of careful planning and countless volunteer hours spent building exhibits and assembling the nature-oriented displays. We tip our hats to all those whose hard work and dedication helped make the Nature Center such a friendly and inviting venue for nature education over the years. We also acknowledge those now working so hard to bring a new sense of excitement and discovery to the Nature Center.
With your help,

Yes, We Can!

By Andy Mauro

Editor’s Note: Portions of this story were taken from an article to be published in the September issue of Hi-Sierran, journal of the San Diego Sierra Club.

By now, many people are aware that BVAS is attempting to purchase two key wetlands properties in Oceanside. One is a 3.56-acre parcel in southern Oceanside on the edge of the Buena Vista Lagoon. The other property consists of 31 acres of rolling terrrain adjacent to the San Luis Rey River, a few hundred yards west of the Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary in northern Oceanside.

Hotel Proposed—Back in 2007, over 3,000 residents signed a petition asking the Oceanside City Council to preserve a small parcel of land adjacent to the lagoon. A grassroots citizens group led by BVAS prepared a video and organized a presentation before the Coastal Commission, urging that this property be preserved and made a part of the lagoon reserve. The developer eventually withdrew his development plan in the face of the community’s opposition.

Flash forward to 2014—A new owner of the lagoon parcel has now expressed interest in having BVAS acquire the land for conservation. The property is directly across the street from the Nature Center, a facility BVAS helped finance and build in 1988 and has been responsible for operating ever since. The Nature Center sits on land leased from the City of Oceanside. BVAS was first established over 60 years ago, but has never actually owned any land. Now, with a willing and agreeable seller and a community that has long been dreaming of the preservation of this property, the BVAS Board has decided the time is right.

BVAS has entered into a purchase agreement to acquire the land. While the campaign to acquire the lagoon parcel has attracted the most public attention to date, BVAS has simultaneously entered into a second purchase agreement, this time to acquire a 31-acre piece of land along the edge of the San Luis Rey River in northern Oceanside. Camp Pendleton lies directly to the north of this property, and the 220-acre Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary is just a gnatcatcher’s hop to the east. Approximately 200 species of birds have been sighted at Whelan Lake. Oceanside and the Army Corps of Engineers have just completed a restoration project on a small plot of city-owned land that separates the subject parcel from Whelan Lake. Acquisition of the 31 acres would link these three protected habitats with the vast amount of natural open space that exists on Camp Pendleton.

Funds Sought—The combined cost of the two properties is expected to be between $3-4 million. That’s a significant reduction from the values placed on these properties 7 years ago, but still a lot of money. BVAS has advanced $50,000 into escrow for the two purchases, contracted for appraisals, and is now seeking partners to help provide the bulk of needed funding. Funds are also needed to restore the land and provide for ongoing habitat management. The Department of the Navy has agreed to fund half of the cost of the San Luis Rey parcel (priced at $2.2 million), as well as the entire cost of restoration and habitat management.

A number of agencies are currently considering funding requests for the parcel adjacent to Buena Vista Lagoon. Its acquisition and restoration would be dovetailed into an eventual restoration of the entire Buena Vista Lagoon Ecological Reserve, a project now in its final stages of environmental review. Being a land owner on the edge of the lagoon would provide BVAS an important seat at the table as the fate of the lagoon restoration plan is debated. To help guide it through this process, BVAS is working with Ann Van Leer, President of Land Conservation Brokerage, Inc., a firm that specializes in conservation land transactions for the private, public and non-profit sectors.

Clapper Rail Society—In June, the BVAS Board announced the establishment of the Clapper Rail Society, with a goal of raising $1 million from the community. In addition to the funds already advanced by BVAS, the Clapper Rail Society has received approximately $150,000 in matching fund pledges from several organizations and donations from the public. This has all been accomplished in the three months since the announcement of the land acquisition campaign. The money will be used to help fund these and future land acquisitions, restoration projects, and habitat management efforts. Donors to the fund will automatically become lifetime members of the Clapper Rail Society.

The Final Chapter Remains to be Written—Excitement is running high at BVAS. Please help insure the success of this effort by becoming a charter member of the Clapper Rail Society. You can use the form below, or get more information and a donation form at the BVAS website: www.bvaudubon.org.

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<td>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 on-going habitat management costs.</td>
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<td>I would like to discuss this further. Please contact me. □</td>
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This clapper rail appears to be voicing support for the BVAS campaign to protect its nesting site along the Buena Vista Lagoon. —Steve Brad
**Birding with BVAS**

**Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary Walk**
with John Haddock—Saturday, Sept. 6—8 a.m.
It's the end of breeding season and start of winter as far as the Whelan Lake birds are concerned. Come and check out the nice variety of lingering breeders and early migrants at the Sanctuary. Check out the “bee buckets” too! (See p. 5.)

*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—Thur., Sept. 11—8 a.m.
Join our weekday surprise-location bird walk on the second Thursday of each month. Where we go is based on recent reports and Steve’s personal surveying. Steve needs to update the Second Thursday Walk notification list. Everyone, please re-register for the notification list by sending an e-mail with your name, phone number and e-mail address to: stevebrad1@earthlink.net. Thanks!

*Leader:* Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.
*Day-of-trip cell phone:* 760-274-5256.

*September birding—Smaller migrating birds like warblers are flitting through our bushes and trees, most just passing through on their way further south. Shorebirds are showing up in increasing numbers in migration and to spend the winter. Look for the ubiquitous yellow-rumped warblers and white-crowned sparrows to begin appearing in the last week of the month.*

**Upcoming BVAS Pelagic Bird Trips**
—Sept. 21 (FULL), Oct. 4, and Nov. 1—
The 12-hour BVAS pelagic bird trip on Sept. 21 is sold out, but a few seats are still left on the Oct. 4 trip. We’ll be going out as far as the 30-Mile Bank. An 8-hour trip on Nov. 1 will close out the year. According to trip leader Paul Lehman, the popularity of these late summer trips is due to exciting sightings on the fall trips in 2013. This included Craveri's murrelet, red-billed tropicbird, brown booby, and rafts of storm-petrels, including least storm-petrel. This trip also offers a chance for Guadalupe murrelet. It’s a good time of year for the often-missed 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:* www.socalbirding.com.

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

**Oceanside Harbor Bird Walk**
Sunday, Sept 14—8 a.m.
with Steve Brad
The varied habitats of Oceanside Harbor, including sandy beach, jetties, fresh water river mouth, protected harbor, ocean waters, mature pine trees, and even the paved parking lot and well-used play areas offer up a nice variety of bird species. We’ll expect to see plenty of shorebirds, gulls, terns, waders, ducks, and even a few pelagic species we can identify from shore. Of course, we’ll also be adding those blackbirds, crows, pigeons, and assorted sparrows to our lists!

*Directions:* 1-5 to Harbor Dr. in Oceanside; go west on Harbor Dr. and park near Joe’s Crab Shack, or access the free parking lot by going under the RR tracks. Walk a short distance south to the San Luis Rey River and look for people with binoculars.

*Leader:* Steve Brad, 760-633-1639.
*Day-of-trip cell phone:* 760-274-5256.

**San Dieguito River Park Bird Walk**
Saturday, Sept. 20—8 a.m.
with John Haddock
The September walks will meet at the lagoon overlook and cover the Crest Canyon trail on the west side of I-5.

*Directions:* 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.

**Buena Vista Lagoon Bird Count and Basic Birding Workshop**
Saturday, Sept. 27—8 a.m.
with Joan Fountain and Tom Troy
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.
BVAS Wins “Birds and Blooms” Contest

We reported in June that BVAS had been entered in a *Birds and Blooms* contest by BVAS members Elizabeth and Kyle McNabb of Carlsbad. Well, we won, our prize has arrived at the Nature Center, and it’s a **Steam Punk Birdhouse**! It features a frosted, leaded-glass roof shaped like wings. The cigar box house is complete with warning label that smoking is hazardous for your health. The front porch is a red faucet knob and the front door is framed with a defining white gear. The side has a big spoon curled to hold a healthy sunset snack, and comes complete with a copper wire perch. Hanging under the spoon is some colorful lint to add the final touches to make a nest a home. The cigar box is reinforced with copper foil guttering on the edges and decorative curved copper wire molding. Finally, its exterior sports a transistor coil, no doubt insuring an excellent reception for this modern steam punk habitat.

The McNabbs have suggested the birdhouse could be included in the **2015 BVAS Birdhouse Auction**. We’ve sent that idea out to the bird community, and the wrens and bluebirds have all tweeted us their approval. Thank you, Elizabeth and Kyle!

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**BVAS OFFICERS, BOARD*, AND CHAIRS**

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Dave Billings*</td>
<td>760-753-7925</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Dennis Huckabay*</td>
<td>760-757-6437</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Kathy Billings*</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Sandy McMullen*</td>
<td>760-944-5690</td>
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<td>Bird House Auction</td>
<td>Kelly Deveney*</td>
<td>760-721-2441</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Jacques Domenq*</td>
<td>760-583-1961</td>
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<td>Center Manager</td>
<td>Annette Schneider</td>
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<td>Christmas Bird Count</td>
<td>Andy Mauro*</td>
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<td>Conservation Co-Chair</td>
<td>Danny DiMento*</td>
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<td>Conservation Co-Chair</td>
<td>Joan Herskowitz*</td>
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<td>Circulation</td>
<td>Lisa Hart</td>
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<td>Ellen Kindsvater</td>
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<td>Andy Brumbaugh</td>
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<td>Susie Martin*</td>
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<td>Migrating Birders Trips</td>
<td>Janine Free*</td>
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<td>Joan Buckman*</td>
<td>760-433-9401</td>
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<td>Nature Storytime</td>
<td>Mary Ellen Marquand</td>
<td>760-918-6622</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletter Editor</td>
<td>Andy Mauro*</td>
<td>760-753-1266</td>
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<td>Pelagic Birding</td>
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<td>Publicity</td>
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<td>Ruddy Duck Club</td>
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<td>Volunteers</td>
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<td>760-207-3884</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webmaster</td>
<td>Larry Spann</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:larry@spannweb.net">larry@spannweb.net</a></td>
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**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 BVAS land acquisition efforts and the Clapper Rail Society? 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 a private meeting for your group at the Nature Center, Whelan Lake, or at your own location. No obligation, of course. Yes we can! (With your help.)

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**New Eagle Scout Project**

Boy Scout Troop 752 has done it again! Joshua DeJong completed his Eagle Scout Project by supervising a group of Scouts and adult volunteers in constructing a new fence along the driveway of the Nature Center. They also created trail signs and a doggie bag station. These items were sorely needed and are much appreciated. The BVAS Eagle Nest now includes 8 Eagles.

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**Location:**

2202 South Coast Hwy.
Oceanside, CA
(East side of street on north shore of lagoon)

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 480
Oceanside, CA 92049

**Phone:** 760-439-2473

**Hours:**

Tuesday-Saturday — 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday — 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

**BVAS Website:**

www.bvaudubon.org

**Pelagic Birthing Website:**

www.socalbirding.com

**E-mail:**

bvaudubon@sbcglobal.net
BVAS Native Plant Club

NOTE: Due to the remodeling project, access to the parking lot will be limited during the months of August and September. People participating in the outdoor gardening activities during this period may need to find parking in public areas north of the Nature Center, and then walk down to join the gardening crew.

Monthly Meeting, Sunday, Sept. 21—2 p.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.

Volunteer for school garden days—Come have some fun in the dirt at our BVAS-sponsored school native plant gardens. Garden times are 2 p.m. Mondays at South Oceanside, 9 a.m. Wednesdays at Mission and 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays at Laurel. Joan Bockman and the kids find bugs and discuss important things like scat and decomposition. Cool!

Trail walkers—While the Nature Center is under construction, we have a dedicated group of volunteers taking turns to walk the trails each day to make sure the trails remain educational and safe. If you would like to join this effort, just walk the trail and make a note on the clipboard so we know you were there. Numbers to call are posted at the trail kiosk near the picnic tables, so don't hesitate to let us know.

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

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.

The Buzz on Brother Blaise’s Bees
If you’ve joined the monthly bird walks at Whelan Lake lately, you’ve perhaps noticed several fiber buckets hanging in trees and bushes around the lake. The buckets are courtesy of Brother Blaise Heuke from the Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside. He is a bee whisperer of the highest order, carefully tending his hives and harvesting the honey to raise money to support the work of the Abbey. Early this year he asked Whelan Lake resident manager Greg Stewart if he could set out his “bee buckets” at the reserve. So far the buckets have attracted several swarms of wild bees. Brother Blaise has taken the bees to the Abbey to augment his hives, some of which have fallen to the bee mortality phenomenon that’s swept across the nation. Brother Blaise has noted the problem is related to the number of cellular phone towers in the area. He now places his hives in spots where there’s no phone reception, and his hives are flourishing once again.

Preschool Nature Storytime

*Cancelled in September due to remodel

To err on the side of caution, we’ve cancelled the September Nature Storytime due to uncertainty about the completion date of the remodel and availability of the Nature Center. Preschool Nature Storytime will return at its regular day and time in October. Next session: Monday, October 27, 10 a.m.

Kids’ Corner At the Nature Center

Joey’s and Johnny’s Clubhouse

*Cancelled in September due to remodel

We’re just not sure if the Nature Center will be available, so we’ve cancelled the September session of the Clubhouse. Date of the next Clubhouse meeting: Sunday, October 19—1-4 p.m.
“Some future day we’ll be pulling into the Nature Center early on a spring morning, and from the reeds across the street we’ll hear the courtship clatter of a clapper rail. That’s when we’ll think back and reminisce about when we bought our first piece of land.” —Dave Billings, BVAS President

NOTE: Because of the Nature Center Observation Deck Remodel Project, several Nature Center activities normally scheduled in September have been cancelled. This includes the General Meeting, Joey’s and Johnny’s Clubhouse, and PreSchool Nature Storytime. The Native Plant Club activities which normally take place outside in the gardens and trails will take place as usual. Also, a full slate of bird walks will still take place in September. We expect the Nature Center will be open for normal operating hours and activities by October 1. Please look for the announcement of the grand re-opening of the Nature Center and dedication of the new observation deck in the next newsletter.

Fri. Sept. 5—Board Meeting—9 a.m.
Sat. Sept. 6—Whelan Lake Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Thur. Sept. 11—Second Thursday Surprise Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Fri. Sept. 12—Nature Guides Meeting—10 a.m.
Sun. Sept. 14—Oceanside Harbor Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Sat. Sept. 20—San Dieguito Bird Walk—8 a.m.
Sun. Sept. 21—Native Plant Club—2 p.m.
Sun. Sept. 21—12-hour Pelagic Birding Trip—SOLD OUT
Sat. Sept. 27—Basic Birding and Lagoon Bird Count—8 a.m.

2014 Oceanside Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 27

The dates have been set for the six Christmas Bird Counts that take place each year in San Diego County. The BVAS-sponsored Oceanside count is scheduled for Saturday, December 27, which we think is perfect timing. After a couple of weeks of holiday parties, food, and festivities, we figure everyone will be looking forward to an early morning wakeup call and a brisk, wholesome day spent out in the field tracking down and recording an impressive list of birds. We could use your help. We’ve been doing the Oceanside CBC since 1946, and we still haven’t found that pear tree, much less the partridge!

2014/15 CBC Schedule
Anza-Borrego—Sun. Dec. 14
Lake Henshaw—Mon. Dec. 15
San Diego—Sat. Dec. 20
*Oceanside—Sat. Dec. 27
Escondido—Sun. Dec. 28
Rancho Santa Fe—Sat. Jan. 3

If you didn’t participate in the Oceanside CBC last year and would like to get on the list, please send an e-mail to the coordinator, Andy Mauro: akamauro@cox.net.
Help Buy this Land!
Join the Ridgway’s Rail Society.

Save This Open Space.
Protect Our Views,
Our Wildlife,
Our Lagoon!

BVAudubon.org
(760) 439-2473

Buena Vista Audubon Society
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