

CHRONOLOGY OF BUENA VISTA LAGOON

A summary of important dates, compiled from Department of Fish and Game records in Long Beach and from a proposal for a Buena Vista Lagoon State Park prepared early in 1966 by the Buena Vista Lagoon State Park Committee of Carlsbad and Oceanside, published by the Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation.

- 1769 The first record of the lagoon is found in the diary of Fr. Juan Crespit who accompanied Don Gaspar de Portola on his military mission from San Diego to Monterey:
- Monday, July 17th at three in the afternoon we left the camp (now Batiquitos Lagoon), following the valley in a continued direction (After crossing Agua Hedionda Creek) we continued on our way in the same northerly direction, over hills and broad mesas supplied with good pasture, and after about one more leagues travel we descended to a small, very green valley, which has a narrow plain some fifty varas wide. We pitched camp on the slope of the valley on the west side. The water is collected in pools, and we noticed that it flowed out of several springs, forming about it mashed, or stagnant pools, covered with rushes and grass. We named this place Santa Sintrosa (now Buena Vista Creek and Lagoon).
- 1939 A young Carlsbad resident, Maxton Brown, later killed during World War II, secured the support of 135 organizations in Carlsbad, Encinitas, Oceanside and Vista in obtaining a county ordinance that prohibited shooting around the lagoon, thus, in effect, making it a bird sanctuary.
- The Buena Vista Lagoon Association was formed by property owners adjacent to the lagoon. The association provided financial support for the sanctuary and erected signs for tourist information.
- 1940 Property owners around the lagoon and other interested citizens installed water pipes and flood control gates to regulate the water level in the lagoon, thus assuring a year round water supply.
- 1950 The Buena Vista Lagoon Association had acquired approximately 85 acres of submerged land in the lagoon and successfully assured the continuance of the area as a stopping point for migrating birds and as a haven for those that remained throughout the year.
- 1961 The Buena Vista Lagoon Association conveyed title to 81.70 acres of lagoon property to The Nature Conservancy, a nationwide, nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of vanishing natural lands. The Nature Conservancy then joined the Association in efforts to save the remaining portions of the lagoon.
- 1962 The Bird Island Development Corporation submitted a proposal to the City of Oceanside to fill and develop areas in the lagoon. Local citizens and conservation groups opposed the project. The Department of Fish and Game requested the city to maintain the lagoon as a unique wildlife area.
- 1965-67 The Association Conservancy and the cities of Oceanside and Carlsbad proposed that the State Department of Parks and Recreation acquire the lagoon. A Buena Vista Lagoon State Park Committee was formed. Hundreds of letters and petitions requested the state to develop a state park. In February, 1966, House Resolution No. 10 by Assemblyman Hale Ashcraft authorized the Department of Parks and Recreation to make a feasibility study. The study was completed in December, 1966. It recommended that the lagoon be included in the park system, but there were not sufficient funds in the Park Land Act of 1964 to acquire the land.
- 1965 By this time the discharge of effluent and industrial waste into the lagoon has ceased. Drainage from agricultural land and Buena Vista Creek had become the main source of water for the lagoon. Maintaining a satisfactory water level during drought years became a problem.
- In November the Buena Vista Lagoon Committee made up of city officials, Nature Conservancy and citizens met with the Department of Fish and Game and reviewed the status of the lagoon's water requirements, tax status, cleanup and maintenance of the area, ordinances and the filling of marsh land west of Jefferson Street. San Diego County's Preliminary Regional General Plan listed the lagoon as a regional park.

1965 continued

On November 28th the Department of Fish and Game accepted recommendations from its Southern California office in Long Beach that an acquisition program begin and that the Department accept Nature Conservancy property.

1968 April 26 the Fish and Game Commission authorized the Department to lease approximately 80 acres of land and water owned by The Nature Conservancy, with lease payments applied toward purchase.

In May the Department began discussions with the Division of Highways to modify its design of Interstate 5 or mitigate for any loss of marsh habitat.

On August 9 Dr. Roy Palmeteer called a meeting of the Buena Vista Lagoon Association to discuss a proposed subdivision called Lake St. Malo Unit No. 1 that would have filled 16 acres of the lagoon. A subdivision map was scheduled to be presented to the Oceanside Planning Commission for approval. Fish and Game representatives and Richard Vanek, Administrative Assistant to Assemblyman John Stull, attended the meeting. (Assemblyman Stull's Ecological Reserve Bill was being considered at this time in the state Legislature.)

On August 19 the Oceanside Planning Commission met to consider the subdivision map for Lake St. Malo, Unit No. 1. The developers argued for acceptance of the plan, and the Association, Conservancy and Department of Fish and Game argued for retention of the lagoon as a natural area. The matter was continued until September 3, 1968.

On August 30 the Buena Vista Lagoon Association and Department met with the Lake Shore Developers for discussion of the project.

On September 17 the Oceanside City Planning Commission met to consider the subdivision map. Approximately 200 people appeared; most opposed to development. The Carlsbad Journal had published editorials recommending against the development and a representative from the National Audubon Society testified in opposition. The Planning Commission denied the subdivision map on grounds it did not meet all necessary restrictions.

On August 22 the Department of Fish and Game requested the Fish and Game Commission to classify Nature Conservancy land as an Ecological Reserve, pending effective date of legislation introduced by John Stull, then an assemblyman. Assembly Bill 1660 was passed by the Legislature and became law late in 1968.

The Wildlife conservation Board began negotiations in October to acquire 60 acres of land owned by Palomar Savings and Loan. This was land which was to have been filled and built upon by Lake Shore Developers.

On October 4 the California Fish and Game Commission classified part of the lagoon as an ecological reserve. This became effective November 13, 1968. It was the states first ecological reserve.

In October owners of lagoon property known as Buena Vista, Ltd., expressed interest in selling their land (33 acres) to the state.

1969 In April the Wildlife Conservation Board and Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation representatives inspected the lagoon in anticipation of acquisition of the Palomar Savings and Loan property. The Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation would supply matching funds from its Land and Water Conservation Fund.

On June 2 the Wildlife Conservation Board purchased 60 acres of the Palomar Savings and Loan property in the middle section of the lagoon.

In July the City of Carlsbad notified the Department that the water control structure had been washed out during the winter floods of 1969. A new structure was necessary. Negotiations with various landowners began. A solution was needed to finance a new water control.

In August the Oceanside Planning Commission meet regarding rezoning of the land owned by Buena Vista, Ltd. Two hundred and fifty protesters filled the city hall. The Planning Commission voted to rezone the area and permit possible development.

In November the Oceanside City Council overruled the Planning Commission.

On December 10 Henry J. Tenaglia presented a statement to the Oceanside City Council that led to solution of the reconstruction of the water control structure on the lagoon. The Nature Conservancy and the two cities raised \$19,941 to construct the weir, and the owners of the Army and Navy Academy and St. Malo dedicated in fee or grant an 80-foot easement from the mouth of the lagoon to the train tracks which totaled two acres of valuable land. This action assisted the Wildlife Conservation Board in continuing its acquisition program.

- 1970 On January 9 the California Fish and Game Commission classified 60 more acres of the lagoon as an ecological reserve. This was the St. Malo Development Company land that the Wildlife Conservation Board acquired from Palomar Savings and Loan.
- In February the City of Oceanside issued a grading permit to allow filling of a northeast section of the lagoon. The city had no choice but to issue the permit. Conservation groups again protested any development.
- 1971 No major changes occurred. Various land projects were examined and negotiations involving various agencies continued. The water level in the lagoon was a concern during the summer of 1971.
- 1972 Early this year land fills were made in the marsh area northeast of Jefferson Street and southwest of the train tracks. The Department of Fish and Game took legal action to stop the fill and required landowners to comply with Fish and Game laws.
- Improvements were made on Jefferson Street along with the major highway development on Route 78. With increased development northeast of Jefferson more marsh property was filled for construction of a shopping center. In all about 100 acres of valuable habitat were lost.
- In April the Wildlife Conservation Board contacted Bernard Citron for discussion of acquisition of the property in the northeast end of the lagoon.
- The Department of Fish and Game sought ways for property owners to mitigate for a portion of marsh area that was filled east of Jefferson Street and a small area filled by the State Division of Highways. The concept of placing small bird islands in the lagoon was refined from a suggestion first put forth by the Buena Vista Lagoon State Park Committee. Check weirs were to be located in the remaining water channel entering the lagoon.
- The Association, Nature Conservancy, and the two cities were contacted regarding an overall management plan for the lagoon.
- On December 20 the Wildlife Conservation Board purchased 23 acres of the north end of the lagoon west of Jefferson. The property owner also paid \$25,000 for development of 3.5 acres of marsh islands in settlement of a state suit for filling a marsh area east of Jefferson Street.
- 1973 On January 9 the Wildlife Conservation Board purchased 33 acres of Buena Vista, Ltd., property adjacent to Conservancy property at the north end of the lagoon.
- In May the two cities met with the Department of Fish and Game regarding management coordination. The cities were to provide trash containers and help keep the lagoon clean. The Department was to post the area.
- 1974 In July The Nature Conservancy deeded 74 acres of island over to the Wildlife Conservation Board. This significant gift was appraised at \$462,000 and made up 39 percent of the Ecological Reserve. This completed the current acquisition program of the Wildlife Conservation Board. A total of 190 acres is under State Department of Fish and Game control. The Wildlife Conservation Board has paid \$798,500 for lagoon property. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in matching funds from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund provided \$652,926 to the Wildlife Conservation Board as its part in preserving the Buena Vista Lagoon.
- In December the Department of Fish and Game began management of the lagoon and development of a long-term plan.
- 1975 In February the Department of Fish and Game examined methods to control water level in the lagoon plus possible pollution problems. State and local health departments were to conduct larvae and adult midge surveillance.
- On May 30 the Fish and Game Commission classified the last 110 acres as an Ecological Reserve. The Buena Vista Lagoon now totaled 190 acres.
- 1976 In June the Department of Health reported to Senator Stull on the midge problem. Solutions under consideration were: biological control through fish management; changing the quality of the water through tidal flushing; removal of bottom ooze breeding media originating from past sewage effluent discharges; reducing the attracting of adult midges to homes by manipulating artificial light sources; the use of insecticides for controlling midge larvae in the lagoon; maintenance of the present ecosystem without change; or combinations of these methods.
- On July 12 the Department of Fish and Game approved the use of Baytex to control mosquitoes. The use was granted under a strict control situation. The San Diego County Vector Control Agency was asked to minimize any adverse impact on the reserve and the Department of Fish and Game would work with their staff in resolving this problem.

- 1978 In September, 2.6 acres of land were added to the Ecological Reserve. The land was previously owned by the California Department of Transportation.
- 1979-80 Winter storms inundated the upper lagoon with sediments washed down from the watershed. The governor proclaimed San Diego County in a state of emergency because of these storms. As a result of this damage, application was made to the federal government for funds to restore and repair the lagoon. This request and a subsequent appeal were denied.
- Upon the encouragement of the City of Carlsbad and others a Buena Vista Lagoon Action Committee was formed chaired by Mr. Anthony Skotnicki. The committee was made up of appointed citizens, City Council liaison people, and representatives from various organizations within the Tri-City area (Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista). The basic goal of the committee was to investigate means to obtain money for lagoon restoration.
- 1981 The Department of Fish and Game began to investigate and document current erosion control practices in the Buena Vista Lagoon watershed. This effort was undertaken to encourage the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside and Vista to strengthen and enforce grading ordinances in an attempt to lessen damage to the lagoon due to unwanted sedimentation.
- One million dollars was appropriated for a lagoon repair and restoration project. One half of the money came from the Department of Fish and Game budget (Energy Resources Fund) and the other one half came from Senate Bill 13 (Craven).
- As a result of this funding, Department personnel embarked on a course of action to repair and restore the lagoon. Preparations of conceptual plans, soil analysis, and application for necessary permits were among the tasks begun. Additionally, the decision was made to enter into a cooperative agreement with the City of Carlsbad. Via this agreement the Department would provide the money for the project and the City would prepare final project plans and specifications, and administer the contract.
- The California Coastal Conservancy began staff work concerning the Buena Vista Lagoon. The main thrust of this work was to ascertain whether or not the Conservancy could be of assistance in planning and funding for a watershed-wide management effort for the lagoon.
- The size of the Ecological Reserve was expanded by approximately 4.6 acres with the dedication of a parcel of land owned by John Zanderson. The parcel was made into a passive-type park with a kiosk containing wildlife information and was part of a mitigation package for adjacent development.
- A Buena Vista Lagoon Tri-City Advisory Committee was formed. The members of the committee are one Council member and one staff member from each of the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside and Vista. The committee will review and investigate a wide range of matters such as ordinances, other organization actions, and other occurrences within the watershed affecting the Buena Vista Lagoon. Recommendations will be made to each City Council as appropriate.
- 1982 The Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation was formed. The purpose of the non-profit organization is to work to conserve and restore the Buena Vista Lagoon. To create greater public awareness and promote the educational potential of the lagoon are also key goals of the Foundation.
- The State Coastal Conservancy allotted \$40,000 to develop a watershed enhancement plan for the Buena Vista Lagoon watershed.
- Phase engineering study completed by Brown & Vogt. This study included computer modeling of the watershed. Various situation control methods were discussed but no final solutions were proposed.
- Buena Vista Foundation was contracted by State Coastal Conservancy to do a Stewardship and Public Access Plan for the Buena Vista Lagoon.
- 1983 Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation and Buena Vista Audubon Society signed an agreement to jointly erect and operate a nature center on land leased from the City of Oceanside.
- The Tri-City joint powers agreement was signed. This agreement provides for a committee composed of two council members and one citizen from each city (Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista), and is charged with the management of Buena Vista Lagoon watershed.
- Dredging begins at east end of Buena Vista Lagoon in March.
- Water Quality Control Board 205J funding of \$52,500 approved for phase 2 engineering study of Buena Vista Lagoon watershed.

1983 continued

Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation completes stewardship plan.

Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation establishes Environmental Hotline (942-67011) for erosion, situation, boating, hunting, and vandalism violations.

Dredging completed with four new islands created east Buena Vista Lagoon. Two are named (Isla de las patitos, Nido Segural) in Buena Vista Lagoon island naming contest

1984 Public Access Plan completed by Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation.

1988 Nature Center opened.

1989 Habitat enhancement on the 2 islands.