



Introduction to Prospective Docents for Fall 2011

Dear Prospective Docent:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy docent. For nearly 25 years, the Conservancy has worked to preserve, protect and enhance San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve and its watershed.

We depend on our trained docents to educate school children, scout groups, and the general public to ensure the continued protection of the lagoon. Because of our strong docent program, we are able to offer hundreds of docent-led walks each year, **with more than 3,000 adults and school kids benefiting from docent led walks annually.**

Most walks are offered Wednesday through Saturday mornings, with the exception of scout groups, which are also offered in the afternoons. **Our busiest seasons are fall and spring**, but we offer walks year-round. School groups ranging from kindergarten through college represent the largest number of walk requests, with grades K-3 representing nearly half of the school groups.

Becoming a docent is a rewarding commitment, and our "Docent Community" is friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable. **Docent training takes place on Tuesdays from 9 am—Noon, beginning October 4th through November 29th, with the exception of Thanksgiving week.**

During training, you will be expected to:

- Attend training sessions that will take place at San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center located on 2710 Manchester Avenue in Cardiff-by-the-Sea, but will include field trips into different parts of the reserve. Experts will cover topics on the plants, animals, geology, hydrology, and archaeology of the reserve.
- Read materials assigned from the Docent Manual
- Attend at least two Conservancy weekend walks offered every Saturday at 10 am at the Nature Center, or every Second Saturday of the month at 9 am at the Rios Avenue trailhead
- Shadow at least three school programs that are offered on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings

A docent graduation party will be held on Tuesday, December 13 from 10-Noon. This is a fun and festive event and all docents are encouraged to attend.

Most docents begin leading walks on their own in February when school groups start visiting the lagoon after the Holiday break. Before you lead a walk on your own you will need to:

- Become a County volunteer. This requires filling out County forms and completing a background check that takes place at county offices located in San Diego at 444 West Beech Street
- Shadow additional walks as needed
- Co-lead a walk with the Education Director or one of the of docent mentors

As a docent, we ask that you be available to **lead a minimum 12 walks per year**, keeping in mind that the busiest times are fall and spring. In addition, we encourage you to participate in our monthly meetings which will give you an opportunity to interact with other docents, learn from guest speakers and stay abreast of lagoon and conservancy issues and events. Docent meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month from 10-Noon, with the exception of August, and the months of October and November when docent training takes place.

The cost of training is \$75 for members of the Conservancy and \$110 for non-members, which includes membership. After September 16, the cost of training will increase to \$90 for members and \$125 for non-members. Each participant will receive a docent manual, as well as a Conservancy hat, name tag, and polo shirt. Checks should be made out to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, with Docent Training written in the memo.

We hope you will share our enthusiasm for the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy docent program. Please fill out a docent application form and return it with payment to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, P.O. Box 230634, Encinitas, CA 92023. We will be accepting 20 new docents this fall, so apply now to ensure this valuable opportunity.

Once we receive your completed application and payment, we will contact you regarding your confirmation. Please feel free to call me at 760-436-3944 x701 or email me at tara@sanelijo.org if you have any questions. Thank you again for your interest. We look forward to your participation in the docent program.

Sincerely,

Tara Fuad
Education Director