

San Elijo Lagoon  
**RESTORATION**  
Reviving Your Wetlands

**Draft EIR/EIS for San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Released August 1**  
*San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy Hosts Community Meetings August 19 & 27*

Solana Beach—The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement that outlines options for the restoration of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve is now available for public review. This is a joint document prepared by County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (as California Environmental Quality Act lead agency) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (as National Environmental Policy Act lead agency). San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy will administer the lagoon restoration. The lead agencies and the conservancy are seeking public agency, interest group, and citizen input on the alternatives provided in the draft document.

“This is an exciting milestone for both the reserve and the conservancy in reaching the next steps needed to enhance this coastal gem,” said Doug Gibson, executive director and principal scientist for San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. “It has taken 18 years of monitoring and observing lagoon habitats to be at this point to provide restoration alternatives which will benefit nature and our community.”

During the 60-day public review period, ending September 29, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy will host two community meetings to encourage the public to share thoughts and concerns about the reserve-wide project. On Tuesday, August 19 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm, a meeting will be held at La Colonia Community Center, located at 715 Valley Avenue in Solana Beach. On Wednesday, August 27 from 6:00-7:30 pm, the second meeting will be held at Encinitas Community Center, located at 1140 Oakcrest Park Drive.

“It is essential to receive community input, especially from residents in neighborhoods surrounding the lagoon, which include Cardiff-by-the Sea, Solana Beach, and Rancho Santa Fe to the east,” added Doug Gibson.

The 979-acre San Elijo Lagoon is one of San Diego’s largest protected coastal wetlands, formed where Escondido and La Orilla Creeks meet the Pacific Ocean. San Elijo Lagoon Restoration will improve tidal circulation that has been historically restricted by the railroad and highways—affecting fresh water and seawater moving in and out of the lagoon.

Restoration will reconfigure lagoon elevations via grading and dredging and will modify water flow through changes to the ocean inlet and lagoon channels. There is the potential to generate

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1 million cubic yards of excess sand, which could be used for beach replenishment, dependent on its characteristics and the restoration alternative chosen.

Improving water circulation will greatly reduce mosquito breeding areas. New walking trails, bike paths, and footbridges are proposed. Vanishing mudflat habitat will be restored. Mudflats are coastal wetland areas of fine sediment and mud, which are exposed and covered by daily tides, and help to filter contaminants and dissipate wave energy. Mudflats are home for bottom-dwelling invertebrates, such as clams and mussels, and shelter a variety of fishes, which migratory and resident birds depend upon.

One of few remaining California wetlands, San Elijo Lagoon is known as a hot spot for biodiversity. The reserve hosts more than 700 species of plants and animals, many rare and endangered. Although birds are most recognized, species of mammals, fishes, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates depend on the lagoon, as do rare coastal dune and coastal sage scrub plants; even diverse life forms from mushrooms to algae.

Seven miles of trails for running, hiking and dog walking, equestrian use in the east basin, and bird watching and wildlife photography offer a natural environment for solace and inspiration.

Public input and comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS will be considered during the development of the Final EIR/EIS. State and federal regulations help ensure that large projects have negligible environmental damage, or that that damage is mitigated. The final restoration decision is a collective one involving San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, lead agencies San Diego County of Parks and Recreation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and 11 stakeholder groups.

The Draft EIR/EIS is online: [www.SanElijo.org/Restoration](http://www.SanElijo.org/Restoration). It is also available for reading in four locations: San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center, Cardiff-by-the-Sea Library, Solana Beach Library, and County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (Overland Ave. office). More information about San Elijo Lagoon Restoration public meetings is online, including frequently asked questions, facts, and maps of the restoration alternatives.

**SanElijo.org**

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*San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve*

The 979-acre reserve is located between Encinitas and Solana Beach, extending inland to Rancho Santa Fe. The reserve is owned and managed by California Department of Fish and Wildlife, County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation, and San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy.

*San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy*

Founded in 1987, and based in Solana Beach, the conservancy is a nonprofit land trust and the premier stewardship organization for San Elijo Lagoon. The mission is to protect and restore the resources of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, its watershed, and related ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations.

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*Images:* Access high-resolution images at [www.SanElijo.org/Press-Releases](http://www.SanElijo.org/Press-Releases)



**San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY**  
*Connecting communities. Protecting nature.*