

CALENDAR ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—February 26, 2013
Attention Event Calendars, Arts, Nature & Entertainment

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San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY
Connecting communities. Protecting nature.

Spring Programs at San Elijo Lagoon

San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy connects the wonders of wetlands with all ages

ENCINITAS – Spring is a time of renewal at San Elijo Lagoon, and a brilliant season in which to explore one of San Diego’s largest estuarine reserves—through guided discovery or self-guided adventures. Listen for the rising and falling warble of the Black-headed Grosbeak in riparian woodlands or the splash of mullet breaking the calm surface of the lagoon. Enjoy the colors of the season seen in the bright yellow blooms of the bush sunflower, red monkeyflower, and pale white ceanothus.

Free, public programs will occur in the serene environment of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. This county and state regional park protects nearly 1,000 acres of habitat that hosts more than 700 species of plants and animals, many of them sensitive or Endangered. Eight trails wind through diverse vistas including salt marsh, riparian, and coastal sage scrub habitats.

From Family Discovery Days to Winter Wildlife Walks, there’s something for everyone. All programs are free. Registration is required for Lagoon Platoon.

San Elijo Lagoon Guided Walk

Saturdays: 10-11 am at San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center

Bring cameras and binoculars for birding and marine invertebrate sightings that provide an up-close view of life between the tides. This easy walk, led by Conservancy naturalists, provides an overview of San Elijo Lagoon’s important features, and the connection of wetlands with our society. The ¼-mile Nature Center Loop Trail is ADA-accessible.

Wildlife Walks in San Elijo Lagoon

March 9, April 13, and May 11: 9-11 am (second Saturdays)
Rotating Trails in San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve

Conservancy naturalists lead Wildlife Walks on four distinct trails that rotate each season. March is the last month of guided walks featuring Santa Inez Trail. The dike area of Santa Inez Trail was an early part of restoration efforts in the East Basin in the 1980s. This area received an Orchid Award for the creation of nesting islands and restored habitat for sensitive and endangered species. We'll also be on the lookout for migratory and resident birds.

Beginning in April, Santa Carina Trail will be explored during the springtime months. Set out traversing coastal sagebrush with chaparral communities on the hills in the lagoon's south side. Underfoot are broken bits of shells, reminders of the native people who once lived here. You will see the freshwater marsh below, and if lucky, you might glimpse mule deer that reside in this eastern region of the Reserve.

Wildlife Walks are free, and are made possible through the membership support of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. Wildlife Walks occur 2nd Saturdays from 9-11 am, rotating to a different trailhead every three months starting with Santa Inez (winter), followed by Santa Carina (spring), Rios Avenue (summer), and La Orilla (fall). More information is online: www.SanElijo.org/walks or call (760) 436-3944 x 701

Lagoon Platoon

March 16, April 6 and 27, and May 18: 9-Noon
Locations Vary

Join the thrill of hands-on conservation in San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. Lagoon Platoon, an all-volunteer community habitat restoration event, generally occurs monthly on 3rd Saturdays. All the tools we need for restoration are provided, and garden experience is not necessary. Restoration activities include: invasive weed removal, planting native species, debris removal, and trail maintenance.

This spring, we'll focus on three important restoration areas: coastal sage scrub at the Santa Carina Trail, freshwater riparian scrub at the Ford Wildlife Habitat Preserve, and coastal strand adjacent to Scenic Highway 101. Community restoration events are great opportunities to meet others with a shared interest to improve native habitats. San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy biologists lead each Lagoon Platoon event, teach participants about the surrounding plants and animals, and lead everybody on a tour of the site.

Lagoon Platoon is part of Citizens Restoring Coastal Habitat, made possible with funding from Earth Island Institute and USFWS Coastal Program, and support from California Coastal Conservancy, The Wildlife Conservation Board, and Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project.

Register (ages 13+) online: SanElijo.org/restoration-events or call (760) 436-3944 x 709 for more information. Groups of six or more please call for arrangements.

Spring EGG-ucation (Family Discovery Days)

Saturday and Sunday March 23-24: 1-4 pm

San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center

Crack open clues to the secret lives of egg-laying animals in San Elijo Lagoon, through free events, arts and crafts, and nature hikes for all ages.

Kids will get an up-close look at all kinds of critters that hatch from eggs. Families will be treated to an egg find, egg-themed crafts, and a Trivia Hunt around the Nature Center Loop Trail. At 2 pm both days, slither in to see the Live Reptile Presentation and learn more about the fascinating lives of egg-laying turtles and other reptiles you meet.

Family Discovery Days is free, and is presented three seasons a year at San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center, located at 2710 Manchester Avenue in Cardiff-by-the-Sea. San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy and San Diego County Parks and Recreation present Family Discovery Days; additional support is provided by San Diego County Parks Society and The City of Encinitas and Mizel Family Foundation Community Grant.

For more information on Family Discovery Days, contact San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center at (760) 634-3026 or visit www.SanElijo.org/family-days.

About San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy

San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELC) is a community-spirited nonprofit land trust dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve.

SELC acquired the Gateway property, a 3.44-acre coastal parcel at the southern end of the lagoon. This land acquisition conserves irreplaceable view corridors for future generations and provides a buffer for wildlife in San Elijo Lagoon. A fundraising campaign is under way to raise funds to secure this open space indefinitely.

For more information, visit the Conservancy's website at www.SanElijo.org or call (760) 436-3944.

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NOTE: Doug Gibson, Executive Director & Principal Scientist of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy is available for phone interviews at (760) 436-3944 x 707 or cell (760) 803-4824. His email is: doug@sanelijo.org

Print/web images are available online: SanElijo.org/news-releases

Captions:

1. *Community volunteers join the efforts of Lagoon Platoon to remove invasive plants in preparation for native re-vegetation.*
2. *Black-necked stilt and two newly hatched chicks (photo by Chris Mayne).*
3. *Native California encelia (photo by Elizabeth Venrick)*
4. *Families with young children enjoy free Family Discovery Days at San Elijo Lagoon.*
5. *Spotting scopes during Wildlife Walks enable up-close viewing of animals in action.*