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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Elijo Lagoon CONSERVANCY
25 years of watershed moments

Winter Programs at San Elijo Lagoon

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

ENCINITAS – The late fall and winter seasons at San Elijo Lagoon are special times to explore one of San Diego’s largest estuarine reserves—through guided discovery or self-guided fun. You’ll see larger numbers of migrating birds that are resting, nesting, and refueling during the Pacific Flyway migration. Enjoy the colors of the season seen in the red berries of the green toyon, and white-flowering coyote brush.

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. Reservations are required for Lagoon Platoon.

San Elijo Lagoon Guided Walk

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

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

Wildlife Walks in San Elijo Lagoon

January 12, February 9, and March 9: 9-11 am (second Saturdays)
Santa Inez Trail in San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve

New in 2013, Conservancy naturalists will lead Wildlife Walks on four distinct trails that rotate each season. First in focus is Santa Inez Trail, where visitors can discover the unique plants and animals in this eastern part of the Reserve. 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. Naturalists will also have spotting scopes available for up-close viewing.

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, followed by Santa Carina, Rios Avenue, and La Orilla. More information is online: www.SanElijo.org/walks or call (760) 436-3944 x 701

Lagoon Platoon

December 15, January 19, and February 16: 9-Noon
(Third Saturdays monthly; locations vary)

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

In December and January, we'll focus on coastal sage scrub re-vegetation; February: restoration site maintenance. Community restoration events are great opportunities to meet others from nearby areas, while helping to improve native habitats. San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy biologists, who oversee activities and lead participants on a mini-tour of the targeted restoration site, lead each Lagoon Platoon event.

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.

RSVP online: SanElijo.org/restoration-events or call (760) 436-3944 x 709 for more information.

Wings over Wetlands (Family Discovery Days)

Saturday and Sunday January 26/27: 1-4 pm
San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center

Approximately 40% of all North American bird species have been observed in San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. This magnificent wetland also hosts our migrating visitors each winter as birds fly from as far as Canada and Chile along the Pacific Flyway.

Join us as we celebrate the arrival of our feathered friends. Kids can sing along with folk-nature rock group, Hullabaloo, at 2 pm each day. Bird-themed crafts, face painting, and nature activities are planned for families. Conservancy naturalists will have spotting scopes and binoculars for use along the Loop Trail that overlooks San Elijo Lagoon, with excellent birding views. Kids will enjoy learning about bird migrations and how to recognize common birds.

Family Discovery Days is free, and is presented quarterly at San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center, located at 2710 Manchester Avenue in Cardiff-by-the-Sea. Family Discovery Days is made possible through the partnership of San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, San Diego County Parks and Recreation, San Diego County Parks Society, SDG&E, The City of Encinitas, and Mizel Family Foundation Community Grant provide additional funding.

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. This year is the Conservancy's 25th anniversary.

SELC recently 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 Gateway Park indefinitely.

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

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Please contact Lydia Cobb for these high resolution images:

1. Community volunteers join the efforts of Lagoon Platoon to remove invasive plant species in preparation for native re-vegetation.
2. Long-billed dowitchers land in San Elijo Lagoon. Photo by Chris Mayne.
3. People of all ages walk the trails in San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. Photo by Susan Hamilton.
4. Families scan for birds during Wings Over Wetlands Family Discovery Days, free at San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center January 26-27, 2013.

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.