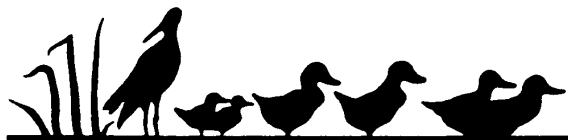


FRIENDS of FAMOSA SLOUGH



A California Non-Profit Corporation



Box 87280, San Diego, CA 92138-7280

NOVEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

A Summary of the Progress in the Enhancement of Famosa Slough

Famosa Slough was bought by the City of San Diego in 1990. We thought that you might be interested in a summary of the major improvements that have occurred since then. Some of the projects were done with grants that the Friends of Famosa Slough were awarded, some were done by City Departments for mitigation, and others were done by volunteers. All were done under the supervision of the City's Park and Recreation Department, which manages the Slough. The projects since 1993 were guided by the Famosa Slough Enhancement Plan which was completed in November 1993.

- Culvert Extension, 2008 - opened and extended a pipe under West Point Loma Blvd. for better tidal flushing into the Slough.
- Wetland restoration project on the north side of the Slough, 2005 - removed historic fill and recreated 2.2 acres of water and wetlands, restored an acre of upland, and added a level trail parallel to West Point Loma Boulevard. We are still working on the upland vegetation on this project.
- Wetland restoration project on north end of the Famosa Channel, 2004 - restored 0.4 acres of wetland that had been filled in the past.
- Sediment basin on the east side of Slough, 2003 - restored about 0.4 acres of wetland and constructed a sediment pond to catch sediments and trash to prevent future damage to the Slough.
- Stormwater treatment ponds at the south end of the Slough, 2000 - These ponds were built to trap sediments, trash, and contaminants from about 100 acres of the watershed of the Slough.
- Stormwater Interceptor on the north side of West Point Loma Boulevard, ~1994 - This system diverts dry weather runoff from the watershed to the Wastewater System so it will not degrade the Slough.
- Revegetation of the west bank of the Slough and relocation of the trail ~1993 to 1995 - This project moved the trail out of the wetland area and put it in a safer location, removed invasive plants, and replaced them with native plants. The junction between the upper and lower trail still needs work.
- Replacement of the 1950s flood gates between the Slough and the San Diego River, ~1992 - This project dramatically improved the tidal flushing from the River into the Slough.

General Meeting and Program

Monday, November 23rd, 7:00 PM

" WETLAND FISHES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA—
NATURAL (AND UNNATURAL) HISTORY "

Speaker: Drew M. Talley, Ph.D.

**Assistant Professor, Marine Science and
Environmental Studies
University of San Diego**

Dr. Drew Talley, Science Director for the Ocean Discovery Institute, will introduce the fishes of southern and Baja California wetlands, and discuss their ecological roles, their natural history, and the challenges facing their conservation.

What do they eat? Who eats them? How do they affect the broader ecosystem? Do they spend their whole lives in the wetland? What have we learned about protecting them? All of these questions and more will be addressed!



The public is invited.

Light refreshments will be provided.

**Location — Loma Riviera Condominium
Clubhouse, 3115 Loma Riviera Drive
(Directions are on the back page.)**

Besides these major projects, volunteers have removed huge amounts of invasive vegetation, with City help, and replaced it with California native plants over the years. The City staff and volunteers have maintained and improved trails, removed litter, and provided education events for the public and for schools.

Birds at the Slough, by Jim Pea

2009 started with a pair of juvenile Hooded Mergansers that were here for a few months. When they finally flew on, it was time for the Avocets to nest. There was really only one nest this year, and it didn't appear that any of the young survived to adulthood. The Black-necked Stilts had several nests that produced eight chicks to adults.

The excitement came with the nesting of Forster's Terns for the first time at Famosa Slough. There were many nests with one or two eggs, and six or possibly eight young were raised. The protective adults kept sight-seers and workers alike alert for aerial attacks. As the terns moved on, there was at least one adult and two immature Yellow-crowned Night Herons on the channel side of the Slough. It is a very unusual bird this far north.

Even though the willows are showing some damage from disease and drought, the warblers and vireos continue to show at the south end of the Slough. A Plumbeous Vireo was again seen this year in the spring and again this fall. The channel-side Light-footed Clapper Rail was seen several times this summer by various work parties, and a pair of Kingfishers are starting a nest in the area this year.



Immature Yellow Crowned Night Heron



Adult Yellow Crowned Night Heron

photos by Jim Pea

Invasive Vegetation Removal and Replacement, by Chet Nelson

The project to remove invasive vegetation along the west side of Famosa Slough from the Highway 8 freeway fence to the fence along the sidewalk on the north side of W. Pt. Loma Boulevard (known as the channel side) is finished for now. It took about seven years of hard work and involved nearly every member of the FFS Board of Directors at one time or the other. We even had a big assist from Caltrans, who opened their fence and hauled off cut material to the San Diego County mulching facility, with loading help from crews from Mission Bay Parks and the Friends' volunteers.

Chet Nelson supervised the project and cut down and cut up most of the wood with his 13-inch hand saw. Help in hauling the results over to a Park Department staging area to be turned into mulch was provided most of those years by FFS volunteer **Dennis Driscoll** and his pickup. When Dennis' pickup wore out about two years ago, he recruited Parks volunteer **Terry Gaughen** and his pickup to help. Terry also helped removing the larger ones.

Replacement with native trees and shrubs began soon after the project started, with planting of several willows, Mulefat and California Sunflowers (*Encelia californica*) that are now over six years old at either end of the project. David Kimball provided several Torrey Pines for the replacement part of the project, one that David and Chet planted about five years ago that is now over 10 feet tall. Many Sunflowers appeared on their own as soon as shadowing vegetation was removed, and salt grass (*Distichlis spicata*) that was struggling on the edge of the invasive vegetation has now advanced 30 feet up the slope toward the Mariner's Cove fence. Many other Torrey Pines, Mulefat, Arroyo and Sand Bar Willows, California Sunflowers, Spiny Rush, Suaeda and Cottonwoods have also been planted as the invasives gave way.

At our next work event, on November 14, we plan to plant a lot more willows, Mulefat and other species that have done well there. In most places the soil is sand and easy to dig. It is also covered with a thick layer of decaying leaves which provides natural mulch and erosion control.

The project has now moved to the east side of the channel, and several of the invasives there have now been removed by Chet, Dennis and Terry, with more removal and revegetation with native plants to come.

School Groups at Famosa Slough

This year, as in the past, several schools have participated in work parties and tours at the Slough. Some examples were:

- **Pt. Loma Nazarene University** students had a tour and volunteered in the spring;
- **UCSD's Volunteer Connection** was at the Slough for their **Hands On San Diego** event in May.
- **Sunset View Elementary School** 3rd graders worked at the Slough their last day of school in June.
- **City Tree Christian School** had a work event in August.

The Friends of Famosa Slough (FFS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established to protect and restore the Slough as a natural wetland preserve and to promote public awareness of the importance of wetlands. The Slough was purchased by the City of San Diego in September 1990 and is managed by the City's Park and Recreation Department.

FFS Board of Directors

- Chairman: Jim Peugh.....619/224-4591
- Vice-Chairman: David Kimball.....619/224-4975
- Secretary: Chet Nelson.....619/222-7006
- Treasurer: Barbara Peugh.....619/224-4591
- Directors: Ian Cain.....619/223-4939
- Cliff Hewitt.....619/222-9849
- Jim Pea.....619/291-6612
- Jim Prine619/224-3446

For more information about the Friends, see the FFS web site: <http://www.FamosaSlough.org> .

The City's contact is the **Mission Bay Senior Park Ranger, phone 858/581-7602.**

Sempra Energy Foundation's Awards

The Friends of Famosa Slough was the recipient of a \$25,000 award announced in October as an **Environmental Champion Award winner from Sempra Energy Foundation in conjunction with KFMB-TV 8 and I Love a Clean San Diego** .

The award will be used for planning and permitting to help restore Pond 1 of the Treatment Ponds at the south end of the Slough. The pond has been trapping sediments, trash and contaminants since it was constructed in 2000 and will need to be cleaned out from time to time to keep it functional. The program will help to preserve the water quality, habitat and wildlife throughout the Slough.

The big winner of a **\$100,000 Environmental Champion Award** was the **San Diego Audubon Society** to support the **San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative (SDCaN)** which includes over 80 local environmental groups, including the Friends. Here is the web site: <http://www.sdchildrenandnature.org/> .

Also, the November 2008 **KGTV-10 News Leadership Award** to **Jim Peugh**, in honor of his work for the environment, came with a \$5,000 grant to the Friends from the **Sempra Energy Foundation** to be used to assist in the acquisition of property adjacent to Famosa Slough and for habitat restoration.

Watershed Improvements

The City is replacing the water and wastewater pipes in the neighborhood to the west of the Slough. This should prevent the occasional water pipe breaks there. Stopping them will reduce the amount of sediments that wash into the Slough from the breaks.

Correia Middle School has completed a number of erosion control measures on the campus and has installed a collection device. These should reduce the sediments and the trash that has come into the Slough from the Valeta Street end.

Thank You to Our Supporters & Partners:

- **The California Native Plant Society, San Diego Chapter**, has been generously donating unsold plants to the Friends at the end of their annual Fall plant sales for many years. This year, CNPS-SD gave us over 200 plants that we will get into the ground at our November work party. These include wetland and upland California natives.
- **The volunteers** who come to our bi-monthly work parties and help us with clearing exotic vegetation, building trails, planting, and general clean-up, and those who help with our education programs and other projects of the Slough.
- **Our members and donors** who have funded most of the improvements that have been made to Famosa Slough.
- **The San Diego Park Dept. rangers and maintenance crew**, especially **Ranger Lisa Wilson**, who has been working at the Slough for two years, and **Grounds Maintenance Worker Tafi Tafileli**, who has taken care of us for several years.

MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF FAMOSA SLOUGH

_____ FULL MEMBERSHIP. Yes! I/We support the goals of FFS and submit \$10.00 annual dues. \$ _____

_____ ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP. Yes! I/We support the goals of FFS and wish to be counted. \$ _____

(Contributions are tax deductible to a 501(c)(3) organization.) ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION: \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

NAME(S) _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ E-MAIL _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

I/We volunteer to: _____ assist with administrative tasks, _____ clean up around Slough, _____ help with educational activities, _____ distribute flyers, _____ assist in park planning, _____ collect environmental data/do research, _____ assist in special events, _____ anything.

Other pertinent skills:

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, November 23rd, 7:00 PM — FFS General Meeting

"Wetland Fishes of Southern California"

Loma Riviera Condominium Clubhouse (see page 1 and below)

WORK PARTIES

2nd Saturday of odd-numbered months — November 14, January 9, March 13, etc.

Meet at 9:00 AM at the intersection of West Point Loma and Famosa Boulevards - **Volunteers needed!**

BIRD WALKS

3rd Saturday of every month — November 21, December 19, January 16, etc.

Meet at 1:00 PM near the kiosk on Famosa Blvd., south of West Point Loma Blvd. - **Beginners welcome!**

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Speaker

Dr. Drew Talley, University of San Diego

**Loma Riviera Condominium Clubhouse
3115 Loma Riviera Drive**

Directions: From West Point Loma Boulevard, one long block west of Midway Drive and Sports Arena Drive, turn north at Loma Riviera Drive (at the Riviera Liquor House), and proceed a couple short blocks to the clubhouse on the right. Park on street.



American Avocet and Chicks

photo by Jim Pea

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED