

The Pickleweed

The Newsletter of the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy

Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy, Inc., P.O. Box 5903, Huntington Beach, CA 92615, 714-963-2123

Who We Are

The Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy is a community-based group of private citizens working towards saving our remaining wetlands here in Southeast Huntington Beach. Many of us on its the board of directors are friends and neighbors; we live in the local community and are interested in preserving the quality of life in Huntington Beach. We believe saving our wetlands and wildlife, and assuring these areas are never developed, is essential to this goal. The specific areas of wetlands we are interested in preserving and restoring run adjacent to PCH from Beach Boulevard to the Santa Ana River. As a non-profit corporation, we work with local state and federal agencies and property owners to acquire, restore and manage these wetlands. Much of our funding for land purchases and major restoration projects come from conservation bonds, state and federal grants.

In 1985 The Conservancy restored what is now known as Talbert Marsh, at the corner of PCH and Brookhurst, between Brookhurst and the Santa Ana River. This project was a huge success and has set the standard for our future projects.

Groundbreaking Near

The Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy is close to breaking ground on its new hospital building. This building will be located at Newland and PCH. The Conservancy currently leases the existing hospital building to the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center. While the current building provides a location and equipment to deal with oil spills, wildlife rescue and care and other disaster response needs, the new building will provide additional hospital space, meeting rooms, an office for the Conservancy and a facility to provide educational programs. The new building, funded through a grant by the California Wildlife Board, will be a beautiful structure reminiscent of an ocean wave. The Conservancy will continue the partnership and share occupancy of the new hospital building with the WWCC. The project will also include a surrounding wall, landscaping and additional signage. This facility will connect to Magnolia Marsh, which once restored, will allow visitors access to our educational facilities and hiking opportunities through the wetlands.

Wetlands Acquisition

The Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy, with the help of the California Coastal Conservancy, completed the acquisition of an additional 45 acres of coastal wetlands with the purchase of the property formerly know as the Piccarelli property. This purchase, which has been a goal of the Conservancy for the past twenty years, closed in June of this year, 2003. The land purchased consists of two parcels, 10 acres located between Magnolia and the AES power plant at Newland and PCH, and 34 acres located between Magnolia and Brookhurst Street. The area north of Magnolia is known as Magnolia Marsh and the area between Magnolia and Brookhurst has been named Brookhurst Marsh.

The Conservancy now owns all of the wetlands between Magnolia and the power plant, the "Magnolia Marsh." The Conservancy owns most of the land between Brookhurst and Magnolia, the "Brookhurst Marsh," but there is still approximately 16.5 acres that it is trying to acquire. The land is currently owned by the University of California. The Conservancy is negotiating with the University and is hopeful it will be able to purchase this remaining parcel.

Restoration, the next step. With this recent purchase, the Conservancy is now in a position to begin planning the restoration of these wetlands. The Conservancy's vision includes opening the marsh areas up to the tidal flow that reaches the area through Talbert Marsh. Walking paths and informative kiosks will be incorporated into the plan. While this process will likely take five to seven years, the Conservancy is excited to begin this next phase.

Legislative Success

In 2003 the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy sponsored an assembly bill in the State Legislature, Assembly Bill 13 (Harman, Jackson), that authorizes the California Department of Transportation to transfer "Environmental Mitigation Property," under their control, to qualified non-profit organizations. The first such transfer will be the seven acres of sand dunes along PCH to HBWC. This bill was passed this last legislative session and signed by Gov. Davis. It will become law on

January 1st, 2004. At that time the Conservancy will work with Caltrans to transfer the sand dunes property along PCH, adjacent to the wetlands-. This area, referred to as the Dune Restoration area, has become overgrown with invasive plants and has been known to harbor transients and collect trash. With funds provided by Caltrans, The Conservancy hopes to restore it to a more natural dune habitat. This will compliment and add to the planned wetland restoration. This bill was a huge accomplishment for The Conservancy and has the potential to benefit other environmental conservancies throughout the state.

Membership & Volunteer Opportunities

2003 marked the first year that the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy offered a membership program. While still relatively small in number, the Conservancy is very encouraged by the local support it has received. The Conservancy offers five membership levels, starting at \$10.00 a year. Members receive a brochure and newsletters, such as this one. Membership helps supplement funds for operation, maintenance and insurance, but more importantly it is an indication of the local support for the conservation of our wetlands. It is also becoming extremely important that the Conservancy be able to represent to local and state government that it has an active an interested membership base, giving the

Conservancy the political influence to assure that the interests of southeast Huntington Beach, and its quality of life, are protected well into the future.

Please consider joining the Conservancy. Membership information is included in this newsletter. The Conservancy also sponsors wetlands clean up days, including a clean up site at Talbert Marsh for California Coastal Clean Up each third Saturday in September. This past September over 120 people volunteered. If you are interested in volunteering for one of our clean up days, please give us a call.

Please Join Us.

- Great Egret (\$10)
- California Halibut (\$50)
- Least Tern (\$100)
- Brown Pelican (\$250)
- Double Crested Cormorant (\$500)
- Great Blue Heron (\$1,000)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, ST, Zip: _____

Phone / e-mail: _____

Please mail to HBWC.

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