



Photo by Tim Dunham

President's Letter – A Quick Update on the Construction Around the Lagoon

TADP - The construction seen along Appian Way is Phase I of the Termino Ave Drain Project (TADP), a \$30m county storm drain project that will alleviate flooding in east Long Beach and help clean up the lagoon at the same time. Construction started down at Marine Stadium and is proceeding up Appian Way. The project is ahead of schedule and has already crossed Nieto (now re-opened), Colorado (now closed), and is headed for Park Ave. As I write this, they are currently building the culvert in the lagoon parking lot along Appian Way. Phase I (Marine Stadium to Park Ave) is supposed to be complete by this fall, at which time all work, including re-paving all streets, sidewalks and parking lots torn up during the construction, should be complete.

This project is impacting the Colorado Lagoon and FOCL in three ways: **1)** Water and power have been cut to the Wetlands and Marine Science Education Center, and access has been limited to the beach along Appian Way. Major construction is occurring within a few feet of the WAMSEC, posing a safety hazard to children and staff. As a result, FOCL has curtailed most of our educational activities at the lagoon until Phase I is complete (this fall). **2)** Water that is pumped out of the trench (it is below sea level) is filtered and then discharged back into the lagoon. While this water is clean enough to not pose a threat to the lagoon users/critters, there is concern that the quantity could affect salinity levels, especially during the period when the culvert (to Marine Stadium) is closed for cleaning this Summer (could be for as long as six weeks). FOCL has met with the county and city to discuss impacts and is monitoring the situation. Should problems arise, we'll work with the city to get the culvert periodically re-opened to preserve a healthy habitat. **3)** Testing of ground water along the TADP route has found traces of MTBE, a gasoline additive and carcinogen, in the ground water near the intersection of Appian Way and Park Ave. Because of this, when the excavation gets closer to Park Ave, the workers will be wearing protective clothing and respirators, and additional health and safety monitors will be set up. The Soil removed is not considered hazardous waste, but due to the possible contamination, it will be hauled off site immediately in special trucks. The county is planning a public meeting to inform neighbors prior to this work.

Lagoon Restoration Phase I - Completely separate from the TADP described above is the federally funded Colorado Lagoon Phase I storm drain work and culvert cleaning that started recently and should be complete by year's end. This work can be seen along 6th street between Park and Monrovia. Modifications are being made to capture and divert runoff to the sanitary sewer system instead of directly into the lagoon. This project will also install trash separation devices to keep trash from entering the lagoon via several large storm drains.

Another element of this work is cleaning the underground culvert that connects the lagoon to Alamitos Bay. Cleaning the culvert will help restore a portion of the lagoon's tidal circulation that was lost when the original open channel was filled in. This work will probably start in June or July and should last approximately 6 weeks. During this time, the contractor will be opening up access holes in the culvert, some located in Marina Vista Park, to gain access and provide ventilation. While this is going on, the culvert will be closed to tidal flows, which may impact the lagoon water and flora/fauna. FOCL will be monitoring the situation and working with the city and contractor to minimize impacts.

President's Letter Continued on page 2

President's Letter Continued from page 1

Foot Bridge - The foot bridge across the lagoon had fallen into such bad repair that when a section of the railing collapsed last year the city determined that it could not be repaired safely. Contractor estimates to replace the structure exceeded \$100k, money the city did not have, so the bridge sat for months with signs warning the public to keep off. Calls to the Parks department and Councilmember DeLong's office seem to have been heard, as city workers have now completed demolition of the old structure, and hopefully will begin re-building soon.

Sediment Dredging - Thanks to an additional \$1.8m grant from the State Water Board from their Clean-up and Abatement fund, dredging of the contaminated sediment in the western lagoon should begin next Spring/Summer. The city currently has contractor LSA working on the NEPA documents (National Environmental Policy Act, similar to an EIR done for CEQA, but for federally funded work), and are examining impacts of various dredging methods. The Port of Long Beach has indicated a willingness to accept the dredge material if it can be incorporated into one of their harbor projects, saving the city substantial cost. Additionally, Impacts such as noise, NOX emissions, habitat destruction, and cost (to name a few) are examined and evaluated before deciding on the preferred method. Currently, meeting limits on NOX emissions (exhaust from trucks and other equipment) seems to be a driving factor in deciding which method of dredging (wet or dry) to select. We'll keep you informed as the work continues. Thanks to your support we have come a long way towards cleaning up the lagoon, with your continued support we will ensure the job is finished the right way!
Sincerely, Dave Pirazzi

Creative Arts at the Lagoon

by Timothy Dunham
Creative Arts Facilitator

A few years ago no one would have thought the Colorado Lagoon would have its very own Creative Arts Department. At the time we didn't know what a Creative Arts meant or what roll it would play among our other programs. Through the use of art and music events, a Blog and documenting the Lagoon from a unique perspective, the Creative Arts program strives to help bridge the gap between the Colorado Lagoon and the local community it serves.

As we move into our second year of the Creative Arts program we have learned from our success and continue to move forward. Just a few months ago we hosted over a hundred people at our 2nd Annual Wetlands Day gathering at the Pike Gallery in Long Beach. We displayed the work of four local photographers, premiered the new Friends of Colorado Lagoon video and added a fundraiser aspect to the event. People from around the community came out in support of their local wetland organizations. Many who were unfamiliar with FOCL's work heard about the event from our table at the Farmers Market or read about it in our local newspaper. A testament that word is getting out about events and programs FOCL has to offer at the Lagoon.

In the midst of the construction that Dave highlighted, we push on with FOCL's 2010 summer event: The 2nd Annual Acoustic Tidal Artwalk (ATAW) on July 9th and 10th. This is certainly an exciting time to be involved with Creative Arts as we are in the planning stages of this year's event. We are working closely with the City of Long Beach to achieve our goals and hope to provide a large scale community event. Musicians will be on hand playing your favorite tunes as you stroll along the evening tide line in the sand. We will be showcasing the work of local photographers, painters and artists alike. And, as always, the Colorado Lagoon's Education department will be out in full force with hands-on education and presentations for the whole family. This two night event is not to be missed and will mark another great summer event at the Lagoon. Continue checking our website for updates on the 2nd Annual ATAW.

These events are only possible because of the great volunteers, artists, musicians and FOCL board members who give their time for the Lagoon. If you are interested in being involved with the Creative Arts program please come on down. Events like Acoustic Tidal Artwalk offer a unique way for people to connect with the Lagoon, other great volunteers and their community.

FOCL Earth Day Celebration
April 22nd & 23rd



For More Information on
Both Events:
ColoradoLagoon.org

FOCL Acoustic Tidal Artwalk
July 9th & 10th



Focus on The Big Three The President's letter above talks about how the restoration has begun and the complexity of the various elements can be daunting. Sometimes it helps to step back and look at the big picture. In the simplest terms, there are 3 things we need to do or the lagoon will continue to degrade: **1) Stop new pollutants from entering the lagoon 2) Remove the 80 year accumulation of polluted sediment and 3) Restore full tidal circulation.**

The good news is that we are well on our way toward achieving all three. The combination of the TADP and Colorado Lagoon Phase I projects will greatly reduce the amount of pollutants entering the lagoon. These projects are fully funded and should be complete by the end of 2010. Dredging of contaminated sediment is funded for the western lagoon (the most polluted part) and should commence next spring or summer and funding for dredging the remainder of the lagoon is currently being sought.

Options are being studied for restoring the critical tidal circulation that the lagoon needs to be healthy. The project EIR, which was approved last year, recommends re-establishing the open channel between Colorado Lagoon and Alamitos Bay, and the ocean. The city and the Port of Long Beach, along with resource agencies such as NOAA and the Dept of Fish and Game, are currently studying options, and we hope to have a clear path forward later this year. Focusing on the Big Three will help all of us navigate this large project together.

Building New Communities of Plants & People

by Eric Zahn, Restoration Director

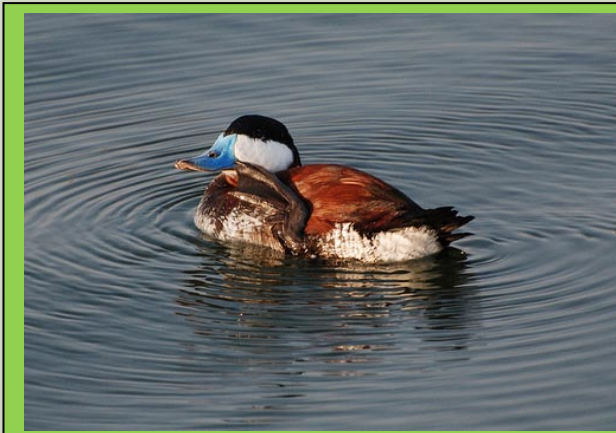
With the cacophony of noises and the monstrous sights of the construction occurring along the perimeters of Colorado Lagoon these days, so many people continue to ask me, "What is going on at Colorado Lagoon?" Well, Dave explains all of the projects in the President's Letter above. The County's Termino Avenue Drain Project, the City's Storm Drain Upgrade project, and the City's foot bridge refurbishment project are all happening at the same time. These projects all make sense; they are tangible, and they will soon be completed and the construction crews will move on to new projects elsewhere.

What I struggle with explaining is how a group of concerned citizens mobilized and organized to restore the native plant communities along the eastern bank of the Colorado Lagoon. This movement boggles the mind and like the landscaping in your yard, it will be a never-ending endeavor that will require stewardship attention for many years into the future. Moving with a consistent and quiet determination, over **502** volunteers representing FOCL have worked **1213** hours planting over **70** species of locally native plants within about **50,000** square feet of coastal habitat once entirely invaded by ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*). Some of you may recall my article in FOCL's September 2007 newsletter entitled "[Ice Plant: Floral Friend or Foreign Foe???](#)" Well, at Colorado Lagoon, this debate is over.

Thanks to funding from the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (SCWRP), FOCL volunteers removed 30 tons of ice plant in just **9** months from November 2008 to July 2009. What Studs!! Soon after the last sprig of ice plant was uprooted, on October 24th 2009, over **200** members of the public descended on the Lagoon to plant **350** plants; officially beginning the Colorado Lagoon's East Bank Revegetation Project. With funding support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program, FOCL has now planted nearly **3000** plants in this area. These planting activities will conclude for the season on Earth Day this April 22nd. What an accomplishment for our modest conservation organization!!

What is most difficult to describe is the value of the community building that has resulted from this project and what is impossible to measure is the positive impacts this project has had on the lives of all those who participated in it. While there is nothing permanent about installing plants, the friendships and connections to nature that have been forged will last lifetimes. We always ask volunteers to return and visit the plants they install and observe their phenology as they grow, flower, set seed, and eventually perish, making way for their progeny. As our society becomes increasingly separated from the patterns of the natural world it becomes more critical to engage the public in these types of projects.

From beginning to end this project would have cost the City of Long Beach an estimated **\$300,000** to contract out the work. Instead, FOCL raised over **\$100,000** in funding and contributed **\$24,563.25** worth of in-kind volunteer services to make this project a reality. By all accounts this has been a major success! While volunteers will never be able to operate earth movers or jack hammers, this community based restoration project should be used as a template for future planting projects at Colorado Lagoon and other natural areas in Long Beach.



Ruddy Duck Scratching an Itch

Photo by Raphael Mazor

The Ruddy Duck

by Rich Sonnenberg,
former president of El Dorado Audubon

The smallest duck that spends the winter at the lagoon is the Ruddy Duck measuring only fifteen inches long, compared to eighteen inches for the Lesser Scaup, and twenty inches for the American Wigeon. The Ruddy is a chunky little duck with a proportionally large head and bill, giving a rounded appearance floating on the water. It is distinguished by its long, narrow, stiff tail feathers which serve as a rudder, hence its nickname "stiff tail". In winter, the male's body is dull gray-brown. It has a white cheek patch and a black bill. The female differs, in that the cheek patch is buffy with a brown horizontal line. In breeding plumage, the male becomes very colorful, with a chestnut body, white cheek patch, and a bright blue bill. Ruddy Ducks are rarely seen to fly, preferring to dive or run on water to avoid danger. About sixteen to twenty Ruddy Ducks now spend the winter at the lagoon, and are usually seen in groups, with one group at the western end, and another near the 4th street storm drain inlet. By the time you read this article, the Ruddys may already be heading north on their spring migration. There's always next year!

What's New @ ColoradoLagoon.org?

FOCL's getting Interactive! Become a Friend on , upload your photos on



check out our new video on ,

and the blog on 



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Friends of Colorado Lagoon's
**Team of
Innovators**



With your support, we are able to empower dedicated people to help the Lagoon. Last autumn, Geoff Leech and Huy Nguyen, both CSULB students, helped with our restoration and data collection regarding trash impacts at the Lagoon.

This Spring we've got a team of four helping with the community-based restoration through leadership and documenting and maintaining the flora. Whitney Graves, Peter Stearns, Sokanary Sun and Sarah Thomas bring their unique backgrounds and various passions to FOCL's Education Program.

Thank you Innovators and thank you Friends for your support of the program.

If interested in the Innovators program, email us at Education@ColoradoLagoon.org



Photo by Taylor Parker

Photo Above - From Left: Geoff Leech, Sue Considine, Sokanary Sun, Huy Nguyen



Photo by Adrienne Bosler

Photo to the Right - From Left: Eric Zahn, Pete Stearns, Whitney Graves, Shannon Hood, Cheryl Bube, Sarah Thomas, Sokanary Sun, Taylor Parker, Rich Sonnenberg