



FOCL POINTS

Friends of Colorado Lagoon is a coalition of concerned citizens working to preserve and restore Colorado Lagoon



President's Letter by Dr. Christine Whitcraft, FOCL Vice President

As I walk and run near the lagoon, I can almost see past the cloth hanging on the fences around Colorado Lagoon, but not quite! I see neighbors, visitors, bikers, and other also craning their necks to see past the fence and into the construction zone. We all ask the same questions: "What is going on in there? Where is all that mud going?" The Friends of Colorado Lagoon thought this would be an excellent time to update you about the construction progress at the lagoon; consider it your glimpse through the fence!

The goal of this phase of the restoration project is to remove 75,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from throughout the lagoon. This sediment has accumulated over the last 80+ years, brought to the lagoon by storm runoff along with pollutants like lead. The dredging is mandated by the State Water Board who recently set very strict limits for pollutants in the lagoon.

In order to accomplish this, AIS Construction has mobilized several large barges each with its own excavator on top. On any given morning, you can see these excavators slowly crawling through the lagoon, moving the barges into place to begin dredging for the day. Working Monday through Saturday, AIS is dredging approximately 1,000 cubic yards of sediment a day on average. This sediment includes thousands of golf balls and at least one car (so far). Once the material is removed from the lagoon, it is staged and, if needed, treated on site. Then trucks haul away the dredged material, which raises the next question, "Where does the sediment go once it leaves the lagoon?"

The treated sediment leaving the lagoon is headed for the Port of Long Beach, to be used as fill in the Middle Harbor Project. The port has given AIS a specific window of time in which to bring the sediment, and this has driven the schedule and has necessitated the extended working hours. By accepting the sediment, the port has saved the lagoon project significant trucking costs that would have been incurred if the material had to be trucked to another site.

(President's Letter - continued on page 2)



Photo on previous page: the AIS dredge on the water at the Lagoon with FOCL's East Bank Restoration in the background; Photo above: the staging area for the dredged sediment before it is taken to the Port of Long Beach; Photo below: an automobile engine pulled up from depths of the Lagoon. All photos from Dave Pirazzi.



(President's Letter - continued from page 1)

Once dredging is complete, the banks of the lagoon will be re-contoured to increase intertidal habitat at the lagoon. The ambitious goal is for all of this work to be completed by July 2012. Once the heavy machinery is done with its work, FOCL will then manage the revegetation of the intertidal and upland habitats. FOCL has already begun salvaging nine salt marsh plant species that inhabit the soon-to-be-disturbed shorelines. These plants will be nurtured in a nearby growing space and returned to the lagoon in the 2012–2013 planting season. A portion of this work will be funded by the newly received **Rivers and Mountains Conservancy** grant that FOCL received. It will provide lots of opportunities for you, the community, to come out, get your hands dirty, and repopulate the lagoon with plants! Keep checking back on our webpage, Facebook page, and blog to hear about the construction progress.

Also, we're still looking for a few passionate individuals to join our Board of Directors. Specific needs include grant research/writing, event planning/coordination, public relations/communications, and web master, but anyone with passion and a willingness to help is welcome. We are a dedicated group of community members who pride ourselves on working collaboratively with the government, community, and other non-profits to restore, improve and protect the lagoon. We strive to remain non-political, non-confrontational, and focused on our mission, all while having as much fun as possible. If you are looking for a way to channel your passion right here in our community, please contact us at friends@coloradolagoon.org.

Native Trees

by Whitney Graves, FOCL Restoration Technician



Populus fremontii (Fremont's cottonwood) is a large deciduous tree native to the southwestern United States and Mexico. It is partial to riparian zones and therefore grows well at low elevations near streams, rivers, and wetlands. Its leaves are cordate, or heart-shaped.

Fremont's cottonwoods are easily grown by taking branch samples from a mature tree and placing them in soil. Eventually, roots begin to form, new leaves begin to show, and a new plant is made. This plant propagation technique is commonly called striking or cutting.

Native uses for Populus fremontii were numerous and varied; basketweaving and tool making were common, and some tribes used the tree as a favorite wood source for their drums. The inner bark is rich in Vitamin C and was chewed as an antiscorbutic, or treatment for scurvy.

A Salt Marsh Seen

by Eric Zahn, M.S. FOCL's Restoration Director

I have been a contributor to this newsletter now for 5 years and with each article I keep thinking that I will run out of natural muses to inspire my writings about Colorado Lagoon. Thus far I have shared my observations of the Lagoon's salt marsh plant community, invasive plants, insects, encrusting invertebrates, fishes, bioswale system, trash, grasslands, and of course YOU the people (I've never had to write about birds thanks to Rich Sonnenberg's column). Yet, it never fails that between editions something new about this dynamic conservation effort captures me.

Some may recall the first article I wrote in April 2007 entitled "A Salt Marsh Unseen." In this communication I challenged Lagoon visitor's to "take some time to look a little closer and...see a whole new world at your feet." At that time it was challenging to find the small remnants of salt marsh habitat that existed. This was before FOCL's education and community-based restoration programs had been established at the WAMSEC and well before FOCL began its first restoration project on the East Bank in November 2008. In fact, so much has changed at Colorado Lagoon since that time. This was before the storm drains were diverted and tons of trash trapped from entering the lagoon. This was before the culvert was cleaned and the tidal regime improved. This was before FOCL created the beach garden that runs from the WAMSEC to the Playgroup and before the Termino Avenue Drain Project steamed through the Appian Way parking lot. And of course this was before 4 excavators and an army of trucks were unleashed on the Lagoon to remove its contaminated sediments.

While all of these achievements have been of importance, the biggest milestone for Friends Of Colorado Lagoon was reached on March 26th, 2012 when the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy voted unanimously support of FOCL's grant application for \$500,000 to revegetate 5 acres of habitat in the Lagoon's western arm, along with the installation of trails and interpretive elements (see page 4 for more info). This new project will make the Lagoon's salt marsh and associated plant communities more visible than ever before, but will only be possible with the support of community volunteers. FOCL plans to host over 200 public restoration events over the next 2 years to accomplish this work.

So as this conservation effort moves forward I now ask you, the supporters of Colorado Lagoon, to "take some time to get a little closer involved and create a whole new world at your feet." Together we will build new habitats and restore Colorado Lagoon's salt marsh ecosystem to be seen by future generations to come.

Urban Coast

The Journal of the Center for Santa Monica Bay Studies

Be sure to check out Eric Zahn's article about the Lagoon restoration in SMBRF's Urban Coast Journal: "The Complexity of Urban Tidal Wetlands Restoration Projects Exemplified at Colorado Lagoon" at

SantaMonicaBay.org



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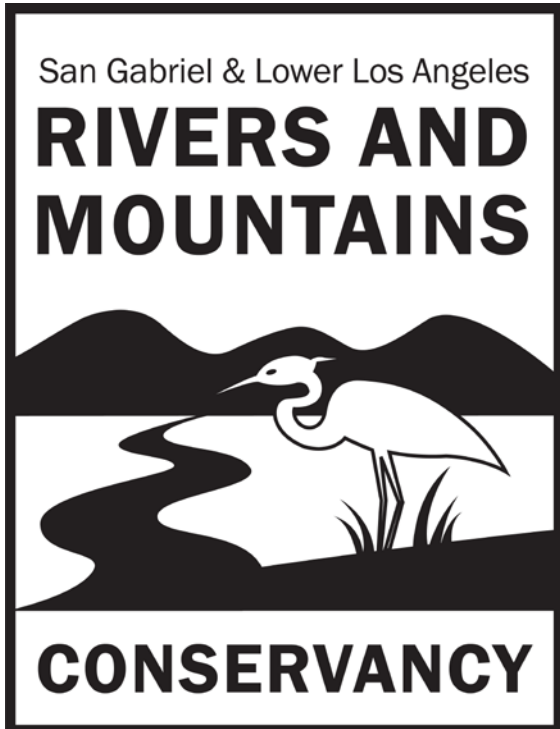
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FOCL Receives \$500,000 Grant from RMC!



On March 19th, 2012 the Friends of Colorado Lagoon were awarded a competitive grant from the San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for \$500,000 to revegetate the Western Arm of the Colorado Lagoon. In addition to restoring the salt marsh and adjacent habitat, FOCL will develop interpretive signage, improve the surrounding trails, and conduct monitoring of the project. The awarded funding comes from Proposition 84 and in coordination with the City of Long Beach, this new project will begin after the current dredging project, which is expected to be completed by August of this year.

FOCL is very grateful to the RMC for this funding as it is an integral piece of the restoration puzzle. This recent award adds to FOCL's history of receiving competitive grant funds for community-based habitat restoration of the Colorado Lagoon. In 2008, FOCL was awarded \$29,800 from the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project and \$73,400 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program to restore the Lagoon's eastern shoreline.

FOCL works with many community partners and local schools to raise awareness and provide education for our valuable coastal habitats while offering opportunities for the general public to help restore Colorado Lagoon. Involvement from local citizens will make FOCL's efforts most successful. Those interested in participating should contact FOCL's education program.