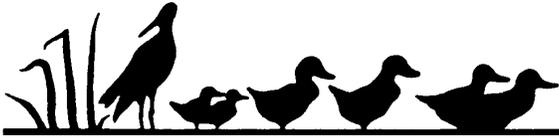


# FRIENDS of FAMOSA SLOUGH



A California Non-Profit Corporation



Box 87280, San Diego, CA 92138-7280

## FALL/WINTER 2017-2018 NEWSLETTER



### In Memory of Famosa Slough's Great Volunteer, Chet Nelson (1931-2016)

by Jim Peugh

Chet Nelson and his wife Yvonne arrived in San Diego in 1998 after a long career with the Defense Department and then the United Nations in New York. He started volunteering and joined the Board of Directors in 2000. He first took on removing the Pampas Grass that was in the way of restoration in several areas in the Slough. He later spent a few years systematically removing invasive acacia from the west bank of the Famosa Channel. Around 2000, he worked with all of us on revegetating the Valeta Street treatment ponds area after the City's contractor finished the construction of the ponds and berms around it. Chet researched and experimented with ways to remove the palm trees that were getting in the way of restoration around the Slough. He negotiated a deal with a crane company that they could take the valuable ones only if they would also remove the ones that had little or no market value. With those palms gone, we were able to finish the revegetation of the bank of the Slough along Famosa Boulevard.

Chet made almost daily tours of the trails along Famosa Boulevard and West Point Loma Boulevard and picked up trash, removed weeds, repaired posts, watered needy plants, trimmed branches that blocked trails, etc. He installed several of the benches around the Slough. Besides his work at the Slough, he had a very environmentally responsible life style, was on the Board of Directors of OB People's Food Co-Op, volunteered at San Diego Audubon Society's habitat restoration events, and was on the Audubon Conservation Committee. We really miss his work and his presence.

### Our coasts are trashed, now what? Seeking effective trash solutions from urban creek monitoring data

by Theresa Sinicrope Talley

A number of trash monitoring efforts in California watersheds have revealed the types and distributions of trash in urban coastal environments. Now we need strategies that will reduce (or eliminate) trash pollution.

The talk will consider potential trash inputs to Famosa Slough based on recent watershed-wide research findings for highly urbanized wetlands. A trash removal tracking effort in mid-city San Diego revealed that 87 cu meters (8.3 mt) of trash accumulated over one year along an only 1 km-long reach of creek. Longer-term monitoring in this and nearby creeks revealed that most trash enters the watershed through illegal dumping, homeless encampments, and storm drain flows. Downstream, salt marshes had the highest densities of intertidal trash; and 12-25% of wetland and bay fishes examined consumed plastics, posing potential health risks to the fishes and their consumers.

Humans are at the source and receiving end of the marine debris issue giving us the ability and motivation to solve this problem. Needed are cross-sector collaboration among industry, government, business and the public; and consumer behavior change to develop long-term solutions.

### Save the date:

2017 General Meeting: 7:00 PM

Wednesday, November 29

**Dr. Theresa Talley of California Sea Grant**

will speak on the state of trash pollution in coastal waterways and the need to translate data into long-term solutions.

The public is invited.

Light refreshments will be provided.

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

## Introducing Our Newest Board Members!

The Friends have gained three new Board members in the last year. Each has unique skills and experience that will benefit the Slough.

**Lesley Handa** is an ornithologist and geographer who has spent years studying the rich facets of flora and fauna that San Diego County has to offer. Her research has focused on patterns of habitat use of birds in urban wetlands, and conservation of wetlands is a high priority.

Lesley is excited to embark on this new journey as a Board member and is looking forward to returning to her resource management roots. Famosa Slough has always been one of her favorite wetlands in the county as she is fascinated with the biodiversity of birds that occur in such a small and heavily urbanized wetland area. During her tenure as a Board member, she hopes to spread her endless enthusiasm for birds and wetland habitats, apply her experience in geospatial analysis to resource management in the area, and participate in education and outreach at Famosa.



**Ally Celones Senturk** is a native San Diegan who graduated from UC Santa Barbara with a degree in Cultural Anthropology and a minor in Latin American Studies. During a yearlong program studying in Chile, she fell into grassroots environmental activism and community agriculture. After graduation, she spent a summer in Alaska exploring some of America's wildest lands and volunteering on a small organic farm. Upon her return to San Diego, she threw herself into multiple environmental volunteer projects.

Ally works as a Data Analyst and is passionate about exploring trends and correlation as well as data visualization. As an environmental activist, she focuses on water quality, resource conservation, and the protection of public lands. For Ally, Famosa Slough represents a local example of community conservation and public engagement. She hopes to continue this legacy by empowering others to become involved in their community.



**Megan Flaherty** is the current Restoration Program Manager with the San Diego Audubon Society. Her work with Audubon focuses on the maintenance of coastal dune habitat in Mission Bay, with an emphasis on the California Least Tern nesting sites, as well as the ongoing ReWild Mission Bay feasibility study. With a background in restoration ecology, field biology and public outreach Megan is most interested in promoting the conservation of wetlands and other coastal habitats through common sense management, hands-on volunteer opportunities, and engaging with the public.

Megan hopes to contribute to the continued protection of the Slough by building upon the existing Friends infrastructure. Another primary goal is to engage with and potentially recruit other young Board members. She is also active in the larger environmental advocacy community of San Diego County and is happy to provide information about goings-on with San Diego Audubon!



## The Fiddler Crab

by Ally Celones



Crab photo by Brian Gratwicke (Flickr)

Tiny little creatures  
With funny little features.  
They roam the shore for edible debris,  
Fungi, microbes, detritus, and algae.  
Their mismatched claws help them find a mate,  
It may even grow to a third of their weight.  
Losing a claw is no cause for despair,  
The remainder shall grow larger of the pair.

A male must ensure that his line will succeed,  
By building a burrow in which they can breed.  
He'll wave his claw to draw her near,  
But most of the time, she'll probably steer clear.  
Persistence is key in this game of attraction,  
For females can be picky in their satisfaction.  
There's no doubt that they may be hard to date,  
Fiddler Crabs are one of the pickiest mates.

## News of the Slough

by Jim Peugh

Fall is one of the most interesting times at the Slough. Many of the migratory species have arrived already, such as the Black-necked Stilts, Ruddy Ducks, and other shorebirds, ducks, and land birds.

The early rains this year provided us a new weed to worry about - horseweed. It had never been a problem until this year, but it took over many areas of the Slough during the summer. Each plant produces thousands of seeds. Pulling it was the main activity of several of our work parties. Unfortunately, we have fallen behind on controlling some other species of weeds such as kikuyu grass and Italian rye grass because of the horseweed.

In mid-June, we reported to the City's Water Division that water was bubbling up over a major water pipe that runs under the Slough. It was obviously a steady leak. It was on the west side of the Slough, a little south of Temecula Street. They lowered a very small low-ground pressure excavator into the site with a very large crane to avoid damage to the Slough. When they dug down and exposed the leak, they found that a gasket under an access hatch had delaminated allowing the water to escape. This was probably the easiest possible failure to repair. The hole was quickly refilled and the site restored. We are very lucky that neither the break nor the repair resulted in significant damage to the Slough.

The use of the Slough for camping has increased substantially since the City cracked down on camping downtown. Unfortunately, it is resulting in a lot of vegetation being trampled and, in some places, a lot of litter. We hope that the opening of parking lots for campers around the City will reduce the problem.

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

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

FFS Contact Information: Phone **619/224-4591** or Email [info@famosaslough.org](mailto:info@famosaslough.org).

For more information about the Friends, see the FFS web site: <http://www.FamosaSlough.org> and FFS Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/FamosaSlough](http://www.facebook.com/FamosaSlough).

## 2016/2017 Science Fair Winners

by David Kimball

The Friends of Famosa Slough selected two outstanding projects for student awards at the 2017 Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair. **Emily Shi**, an 8th grade student at **The Cambridge School**, used a microscope to study the structure of Torrey pine needles and to analyze their ability to retain condensed water. **Daniel Bruce** who is a junior at **Canyon Crest Academy** tracked sparrows at Tijuana Estuary, Penasquitos Reserve and San Elijo Lagoon to see how they behaved when approached.

Last year, students from the **Rhodes School** swept the Friends of Famosa Slough Science and Engineering Fair awards. Awards went to 7th grader **Owen Beim**, and 8th graders **Luke Pusateri** and **Austin Birch**. Luke was one of our three winners the previous year and continued his work on the bacteria in effluent water to see its concentration along the beach. Austin did a microscopic observation of pollution along San Diego county beaches. He isolated material taken from the water and found high ratios of plastics to animals. Owen studies the frequency of garibaldi fish in Agua Hedionda Lagoon. Congratulations to all our winners.

## Rare Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Famosa Slough

by Lesley Handa

Bird enthusiasts flocked to Famosa Slough for a treat as a rare sighting of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) was reported by Jim Roberts in a willow tree on July 13, 2017. This was one of several unusual species sightings in Famosa Slough that included Tropical Kingbird in April, Cape May Warbler and Indigo Bunting in June, Clay-colored Sparrow in September, Blackpoll Warbler and Rose-breasted Grosbeak in October.

The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a Neotropical migrant that winters in South America and breeds in western North America. On the East Coast, the bird is smaller and more common compared to its severely declining counterpart in the west that has been listed as a threatened species in California since November 2014.

The ongoing struggle to maintain and increase the population of Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a reminder of the importance in conserving natural habitat, as some species require strict and specific habitat to survive. Contributing factors to the population decline include destruction of riparian woodland, as large areas are required for breeding, degradation of riparian habitat with the replacement of exotic tamarisk, and the spraying of pesticides in coastal southern California during the 1950s, which resulted in the thinning of eggshells in breeding birds.

**MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF FAMOSA SLOUGH**

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL\* \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ \*Please send future newsletters and notices via email.

\_\_\_\_ 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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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:



PO Box 87280, San Diego, CA 92138-7280

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM**

**7:00 PM, Wednesday, November 29**

**Dr. Theresa Talley of California Sea Grant**

***“The state of trash pollution in coastal waterways and the need to translate data into long-term solutions“***

**Loma Riviera Condominium Clubhouse  
 3115 Loma Riviera Drive • San Diego 92110**

**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.  
 Parking is on the street and visitors spaces.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**WORK PARTIES**

**2nd Saturday of odd-numbered months** — January 13, March 10, May 12, July 14, September 8, etc.  
 Meet at 9:00 AM at the intersection of West Point Loma and Famosa Boulevards - **Volunteers needed!**  
**RSVP to [info@FamosaSlough.org](mailto:info@FamosaSlough.org)**

**NATURE WALKS**

**3rd Saturday of every month** — December 16, January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, etc.  
 Meet at 1:00 PM near the kiosk on Famosa Blvd., south of West Point Loma Blvd. - **Beginners welcome!**

**Map Location: W. Pt. Loma Blvd. & Famosa Blvd., San Diego, CA 92107**