

SLCA  
P. O. Box 9668  
South Laguna  
CA 92652-7639



# Bulletin

Winter 2011

*"Dedicated to Protecting the Quality of Community Life"*

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION • BOX 9668, SOUTH LAGUNA, CA 92652 • FOUNDED IN 1946 • VISIT US AT WWW.SOUTHLAGUNA.ORG

## A Victory for Laguna Bluebelt Protection

By Mike Beanan

It really is possible to make a difference and increase protection of Laguna's natural treasures. In response to a vigorous campaign by dedicated locals, on December 15, 2010, the California Fish & Game Commission designated Laguna's entire coastline as a Marine Protected Area. Overall, the Commission decided to extend similar protection to approximately 15 percent of Southern California's coastline, extending from Point Conception to the Mexican border.

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), passed in 1999, is designed to protect and restore California's rapidly depleting marine life. Over-fishing has eliminated local abalone, diminished White Sea Bass counts and generally reduced marine life populations to unsustainable levels. While some argue that local sea life is robust and abundant, eminent ocean scientists have documented a 45-percent decline in coastal fish populations along the West Coast in the past 21 years. To these scientists and a growing public, this decline is a signal to take action.

By a 5-0 vote, the California Fish & Game Commission designated three marine protected areas for Laguna:

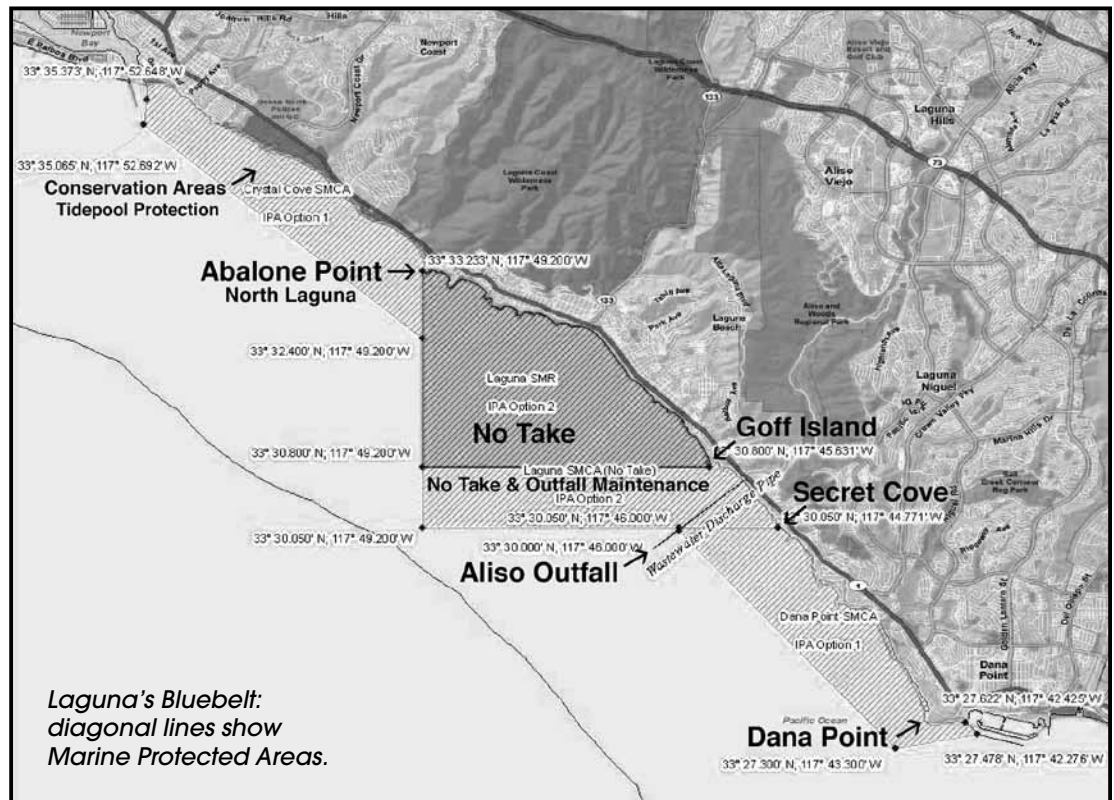
- A State Marine Conservation area (No Take) from Goff Island Point at Treasure Island to Table Rock and Secret Cove near Third Avenue. This allows for maintenance of the Aliso Ocean sewer outfall.
- A State Marine Conservation Area (No Take) to allow maintenance of the Aliso Ocean Outfall from Goff Island Point to Table Rock and Secret Cove near Third Avenue.

- The remaining portion of South Laguna, including Thousand Steps Beach and Three Arch Bay, was designated a State Marine Conservation Area. Here the tide pools are protected but the area will remain open to fishing.

What's ahead? Implementation of the Marine Protected Areas is scheduled for this summer and community involvement is key to its success. Let's take pride in our accomplishments and cherish our ocean's bounty by cooperating with this effort to restore coastal resources.

We can build on our recent success and further improve local ocean water quality when the sewage outfall permit is up for renewal next October. If you feel a connection to the ocean and want to make a difference, join our campaign to improve ocean water quality and protect South Laguna – the "Little Big Sur" of Southern California.

Information is available at [www.lagunabluebelt.org](http://www.lagunabluebelt.org) and implementation is being coordinated by SLCA Board member Michael Beanan at [mike@southlaguna.org](mailto:mike@southlaguna.org).



## The Little Garden that Could

By Carly Day Andrews

This fall marked the one-year anniversary of the South Laguna Community Garden's creation. Perennials introduced as small plants have grown into a flowering wall, and the citrus trees donated by Laguna Nursery now bear their first fruits. Animals and insects have moved in as permanent residents; there is now an abundance of worms in the formerly barren soil, along with ladybugs, praying mantises, a variety of birds, and even a cat that prowls and guards its new realm. We also have our share of pests: earwigs, grasshoppers, harlequin beetles, and caterpillars of all shapes and sizes. As a first-year venture, we have done surprisingly well and have lost a minor amount of our total crop to bugs and disease while learning our way around an organic and sustainable garden.

In November, folks of all ages gathered at our community garden to give thanks for our prosperous first year. The dishes that people brought to share were truly inspiring: hearty winter fare, bright salads, and festive desserts. My family enjoyed the process of turning one of our 25-pound pumpkins – a wonderful plaything in previous months – into pies. Children made scarecrows and planted seeds while a group of musicians, including Tony Bisson, Tom Joliet, and his daughter Michelle Haynes, set up an amp and makeshift stage amid bales of hay and shared some heart-felt tunes. It was the kind of event that should happen in a community, but seldom does.

As many know, there's something generative and healing about this garden space. Even passersby seem to find repose as they observe its beauty from the street. It is easy to see why the garden recently received its third accolade, a Quality of Life Design Award given by the Southern California Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA, SCC).



From L., Ruben Flores, Ann Christoph, Pamela Galera (president of ASLA, SCC), and Bill Rihn receiving the garden award at the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, Oct. 28, 2010.



Community Garden fair maiden, Corrine Vives, 13, was a great help at our work days last fall.

If you are not yet a part of the garden, and would like to be, there is still a chance to join. Plans to expand into the lower lot are already in motion, including the additions of raised beds, community growing spaces, a sitting area, and vertical plantings to improve the appearance of the concrete block wall of the neighboring building.

If the notion of maintaining a garden plot single-handedly seems daunting, there are some options. Many members share their space with friends. Simply sign up together. Those with youngsters might be interested in the "Children's Sharing Garden," a program that allows families with kids to share the responsibility of keeping a plot. If there is enough community interest, we plan to expand this area and relocate it to the lower lot. There are no fees associated with the "Children's Sharing Garden," as the box and membership were donated by David Mason. Another option is to become a "Garden Member" for \$25 and gain access to the community growing space.

**Those interested in renting a plot** should reserve a space on the waiting list by filling out an application available on the website <http://www.southlaguna.org/garden/Welcome.html> and mail it to the South Laguna Civic Association. Those without Internet access can phone Bill Rihn at 949-415-1312 for more information. To find out more about the "Children's Sharing Garden," contact Carly at [carlyday-art@yahoo.com](mailto:carlyday-art@yahoo.com), or 949-228-8690. Follow us on Facebook by searching "South Laguna Community Garden." ☀

### DUES, DUES, DUES

It may be time to renew your SLCA membership. Check the date on your mailing label. That's the date your membership expires. Please clip the coupon on page 3 and mail it with your check in the enclosed envelope to SLCA, P. O. Box 9668, South Laguna, CA 92652-9639.

Extra contributions are always welcome. ☀



### SOUTH LAGUNA CIVIC ASSOCIATION DUES

- Individual \$15
- Family/Business \$25
- Supporting \$50
- Sponsor \$100
- Contribution for historical research \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Friend of the South Laguna Community Garden \$100

*Additional contributions are welcome!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The SLCA is a non-profit organization; however, your contributions are not tax deductible.

### SLCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Bill Rihn



### SLCA: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

SLCA's constitution says, "The purpose of SLCA ... is to address ... the ambience, quality of life, and historical preservation in South Laguna ...". The beginning of a new year provides an opportunity to assess what our organization has done recently to

carry out its charge, and glimpse at what we would like to achieve in the near future.

A few of the many things we have accomplished in the fairly recent past include:

- Saving the South Laguna Post Office
- Preventing a beautiful, 1930s historic house near Camel Point from being replaced by a glass and concrete "modern" house
- Working hard to get the South Laguna Streetscape project completed
- Supporting protection of Treasure Island Beach from commercial kayak rentals
- Persistently following up on the billboard until it was removed
- Instituting a scholarship program for deserving South Laguna high school students
- Holding periodic fall festivals, first at Village Green, more recently at our Community Garden.

And, of course, I count the South Laguna Community Garden as one of the most outstanding successes for the Civic Association.

Looking ahead, I foresee continuing efforts to protect, and perhaps acquire, open space in the hills of South Laguna, restoring Aliso Creek nearer to its historic conditions, and greatly reducing its urban runoff that pollutes our ocean. And I want us to work with the City to develop a more amiable relationship with the Coastal Commission and resolve the land-use issues north of Aliso Creek. ☀

## Sewer Tunnel Renovation: Impacts and Concerns

By Lisa Marks

The South Laguna Beach Interceptor Sewer Tunnel, built in 1954, runs deep inside our ocean-facing cliffs from Three Arch Bay to Aliso Beach, collecting sewage by gravity flow and transporting it to the Coastal Treatment Plant (CTP) in Aliso Canyon. This tunnel houses a sewer line that carries a million gallons of sewage a day from north Dana Point and South Laguna, and it is undersized and deteriorating.

To remedy this, the South Coast Water District (SCWD) recently finalized the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a long-planned project. The tunnel would be enlarged and reinforced, a new 24" pipe installed, and the old 24" pipe encased in concrete and retained for potential emergency use.

According to Michael Dunbar, General Manager of SCWD, the project has two major aims. One purpose is to protect lives of workers during inspection or repair of the pipeline. The other goal is to prevent sewage spills. The existing pipe could last another 10 or 20 years, Mr. Dunbar said, and might be repaired without tunnel enlargement; however, the improved tunnel will allow repairs to occur safely and much more quickly, thus reducing the potential for untreated effluent spilling into the ocean. Project costs are estimated at \$45 million and the reconstructed tunnel is projected to last 100 years.

Impacts to South Laguna will be significant. At certain times during the estimated five-year project, sections of Thousand Steps Beach, Camel Point Beach, and Aliso Beach will house fenced staging grounds adjacent to tunnel access points. There will be an additional access site (the location of which has yet to be determined) in either the commercial or residential zone of South Laguna adjacent to Coast Highway. Removal of stone and sediment to enlarge the tunnel's diameter

*(Continued on page 4)*



**SLCA ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Thurs., Feb. 17, 2011, 7 p.m.**  
**South Coast Water District**  
**31592 West Street**  
**Guest Speaker: John Pietig**  
**LB City Manager**

***Sewer Tunnel, continued from page 3***

from six to nine feet will require 6,000 truck loads carried on Coast Highway over five years, impacting traffic and air quality. This could equate to an average of about eight to ten truck loads a day.

Citizens and organizations contributed numerous comments during the EIR process. They expressed concerns for visual, biological, archeological, historical and geological resources, loss of recreational use and public access, impacts to specific fish and bird populations, traffic, geological stability, noise, property rights, cumulative impacts of increased sewage treatment at the CTP, and many other related matters. These comments, the project description and proposed mitigations can be seen on the Water District's



*Proposed staging area and boat landing at the southern end of Thousand Steps Beach.*

website: [www.scwd.org](http://www.scwd.org).

SCWD will soon apply for a Coastal Development Permit from the City of Laguna Beach. This will provide an opportunity for local residents and organizations to offer additional input to the project. Our efforts should be focused on defining helpful mitigations for the tunnel project during the permitting process. ☀

**Welcome to the Annual Meeting!**

**Thursday, February 17, 2011, 7 p.m.**  
**South Coast Water District, 31592 West Street**

The program this year will feature Laguna Beach's new City Manager, John Pietig. He will discuss some of the key issues facing our city in the years ahead and listen to your concerns.

As usual, there will be an election of board members for the coming year, both regular board members for a two-year term and alternates for one year. The nominating committee will propose a slate, and there will be an opportunity for additional nominations from the membership and subsequent voting. Also, as specified in the bylaws, the annual treasurer's report will be available for all to see.

Finally, great refreshments will be on hand. So come, renew friendships and make new ones. Participate in the happenings and future directions of South Laguna. ☀