

Summer 2009

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Madrona Marsh Hosts First Torrance Environmental Fair!

—Bill Arrowsmith

(Special thanks to Tracy Drake for photos in this and related story.)

The parking lot outside the Madrona Marsh Nature Center buzzed with activity on Saturday, June 13, as over a thousand people visited the first Environmental Fair held by the City of Torrance.

Mayor Frank Scotto, accompanied by Environmental Quality Commission Chair, Paul McCabe, welcomed a slowly gathering multitude at the 10 a.m. start of the fair.

Councilmen Bill Sutherland, Gene Barnett and Cliff Numark were also in attendance, as was City Manager Leroy Jackson.

A spokeswoman for Congresswoman Jane Harmon presented the Mayor with a certificate lauding the City for its efforts to inform its citizens about opportunities to save energy and improve the environment (at right). State Assemblyman Ted Lieu addressed the crowd later in the morning adding, his own praise.



State Assemblyman Ted Lieu addresses attendees of first Torrance Environmental Fair on June 13.

Over forty exhibits were set up in the parking lot: Environmental groups included our own Friends of Madrona Marsh and Madrona Marsh Foundation, as well as the Environmental Priorities Network, PV Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, Sierra Club, Tree People, Friends of Gardena Willows, SeaLab, South Bay Environmental Services Center and even the Alaskan Wilderness League. The City hosted several Team Exhibits, including Water, Recycling, Storm Water and



Mayor Frank Scotto welcomes attendees to the first Torrance Environmental Fair on June 13 as organizer Linda Cessna (3rd from right) and Councilmen Gene Barnett and Bill Sutherland look on.



Cheral Sherman brings a Friends of Gardena Willows exhibit to the Torrance Fair.

Continued . . .

Green Action, as well as one from the Environmental Quality Commission.

We learned about local history at the Dominguez Adobe display, how to improve our wildlife pictures from Paul's Photo and how to attract birds to our own back yards from Bob Shanman of Wild Birds Unlimited. Jack Walser encouraged us to come to his Torrance facility to dispose of hazardous electronic waste and The Living Christmas Company suggested renting a live tree from them instead of buying a dead one.



A young fairgoer and his mother take the "How Green Are You?" test at Fair, applying a colored dot to the board to indicate their environmentally sound choices.

Four solar panel installers exhibited the latest in clean energy technology for the home, and Solatube installer Gibson's Roofing demonstrated novel devices to bring sunlight into dark rooms. Promoters of two hybrid electric cars, a biodiesel car, a fuel-cell car and one all-electric car showed us how to 'go green' on the road. Brad Bartz, of ABC Solar, demonstrated a solar panel that tracks the sun across the sky powered by its own energy and he cooked several batches of cookies in a solar oven, to the delight of passersby.

The Nature Center Assembly Room featured a new environmental speaker every half-hour on subjects from electric cars and solar panels to water-wise gardening and Green Poetry.



The Nature Center laboratory becomes a craft workshop for younger fair attendees.



A young fairgoer puts the final touches on his environmental artwork at Fair's craft workshop.

In the Nature Center Lab there were Green Crafts for Kids and in the Exhibit Hall, a Green Building and Green City slide show. If all that was not enough activity for you, Marsh tours were offered at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

By any measure, the Fair was a huge success, and it was very well organized. For that we are especially grateful to Linda Cessna of City staff and Preserve Manager Tracy Drake, and also Lillian Light and



Virginia Hilker with 'clean biker'



Virginia Hilker, shown above. Lillian and Virginia were primarily responsible, through the Environmental Priorities Network (EPN) for getting the original Energy Fair started in Rancho Palos Verdes in 2006. (Virginia is also one of original founders of FOMM.)

The EPN has sponsored an Energy Fair in Rancho Palos Verdes for the past two years. This year they asked Torrance to help them continue that work and the inaugural Torrance Environmental Fair was the wonderful result! Thank you, Virginia and Lillian!



Distance shot of south line of exhibitors at Torrance Environmental Fair. Councilman Cliff Numark talks to representative from Congresswoman Jane Harmon's office in foreground; vehicles on right are gas-electric hybrid and fuel cell powered.

Pictured at right, Erin Portway (foreground) selects the winning ticket for the Madrona Marsh Foundation raffle as her friend and MMF President Jill Klaussen look on.



Marsh Mailing is a quarterly newsletter designed to provide information about activities and upcoming events at or relating to the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Contributions are welcome and may be e-mailed to Diane Gonsalves at gonwild2@yahoo.com or Bill Arrowsmith, TheArrowsmiths@sbcglobal.net, or dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center.

Postscripts to the Fair

—Bill Arrowsmith

The first Environmental Fair in Torrance was successful beyond most of our expectations. The weather started a bit chilly, but warmed up nicely by midday – and the crowd seemed to do likewise, increasing in numbers as the temperature rose.

In addition to exciting new environmental information and clean energy technologies that the fair offered up to the thousand or so attendees, there were some unexpected serendipities for some of the environmental groups and exhibitors themselves.



Mary Garrity and Sue Schinke take the first shift at the FOMM Fair booth.



George Walker mans the Madrona Marsh Foundation's booth; items on right side of table were raffled off for a nice profit!

For instance, both the Friends of Madrona Marsh and the Madrona Marsh Foundation had booths at the Fair (shown above)—intentionally set next to each other in an attempt to let fairgoers know that we are, indeed, co-operative sibling organizations with the common goal of continuing and improving the programs, resources and educational opportunities at the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center. We were able to explain that the Friends focus on the near term, helping the City of Torrance run educational and restoration programs and providing occasional educational or maintenance resources as needed. That allows the Foundation to focus exclusively on a goal of long-term financial security for Marsh programs, without worrying about the week-to-week operation of the Preserve. That's it in a nutshell, and just being able to present

that information to fair attendees was a great opportunity for both FOMM and MMF.

Ideally, the Foundation will one day be able to collect enough contributions to create a self-sustaining endowment, but they must start with slightly smaller goals and build up to that level. Which brings us to our second bit of Fair serendipity. Jack Walser, who had his own booth at the Fair, said he would like to discuss an opportunity with the Friends and Foundation; so Jill Klaussen, the President of MMF and I went over to talk with him.

Jack Walser already provides a valuable service to the City of Torrance: he operates Walser's E-waste and Metal Recycle Collection on Kashiwa Court (just north of Torrance Memorial Hospital). This facility handles E-waste—everything from old cameras, computers, and cell phones to fluorescent light bulbs—saving us all a trip to the nearest permanent County collection center on Gaffey Street in San Pedro.

But Mr. Walser told us he sees many items, from refrigerators to TV sets, being recycled when they are still useable, or at least refurbishable. They just need a middle-man to find them a new home. So he plans to expand his operation to do just that—provide a market for re-useable electronics and appliances. Great, but where do we come in?

Mr. Walser has offered to give the Foundation a percentage of the profits from his new operation! This may end up being a triple win: (1) the Foundation will have a new source of funding, (2) Mr. Walser may see an increase in customers, once they know that their discarded items will result in funding for the Marsh, and (3) we all win, as re-use of an item is much more energy efficient and less polluting than recycling.

Details of the arrangement are still pending but will be reported in this publication and on our website when they have been determined. Our thanks to Mr. Walser for this very generous offer!

The FOMM Board of Directors

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The Struggle to Survive and Thrive

A Story of the Say's Phoebe

—Tracy Drake
Manager/Naturalist

4/16/09, 5:56 p.m.--The drone of the pumps providing air to the western toad aquariums hums loudly behind me. The sound almost completely covers up the sound of the singing crickets. Five minutes ago, Linda Gonzales went home for the day, thirty minutes earlier Sue Schimke left. I am trying so hard to sit completely still by the front door of the Nature Center and focus on the sounds around me to cover up the sadness, and hope for their return, but it's not working. I am sad.

All day the crows have been attempting to take the Say's Phoebe nest down and eat the babies and/or the eggs in the nest. Sue cried "NO" loudly as the nest hit the ground.

Diligence of staff and volunteers kept the babes safe almost all day—that is until a little while ago. The crows won. Two babies and an egg—so carefully cared for by both parents—were dead. The parents were frantically flying from perch to perch as their family was destroyed. The tuft on papa's head, normally just visible, was fully extended. He seemed to sense the measure of his loss; so did we.

But there was not time to mourn; baby finches resided in the nest under the eve, just east of the phoebe nest. It was the next target. What could be done, if anything, to save these wee ones? Within fifteen minutes, Linda, Sue and I had created and installed a cardboard barrier along the edge of the eve that we thought might help.

We even put the phoebe nest back up, hoping mama would come back and try again to have young, as she had done last season. She did not come back, but the crows did! One crow yanked the nest over the barrier and pulled it to the ground again! This one crow put forth so much effort—it was astounding! It had an amazing acrobatic/athletic ability to get under the ledge and then up past the barrier to reclaim the nest.

6:19 p.m. - Sitting perfectly still so I will not frighten mama when/if she returns, I am haunted by the memories of the lost birds and worry for the parents' future. Will they re-mate this year? Is it too late? Where could they be safe? These are the same phoebes that first

nested at the Nature Center in 2006—marking return of the species to breeding at the Preserve after not having bred there (according to Kimball Garrett, ornithologist for the LA Natural History Museum) since 1906! This pair was our success story, proof that our restoration efforts were successful. These phoebes had found, for the past three years, the perfect mix of food, water, and safe shelter to raise a family. Now safety was an issue.

6:26 p.m. - The pumps drone on, no one returns—no crows, no finches and no phoebes. Time for me to go home.

4/21/09 - Ron Melin comes into the Nature Center with a curious observation. "I think the Say's want to nest in the Think Vehicle (electric vehicle) shed or the metal tool shed. They keep flying in and out of both, like they are checking them both out!" he says. I resolve to leave both open and put up caution tape blocking the entrance. Maybe, we think, they will try again....

4/24/09 - Ron reports that the phoebes are building a nest in the Think Vehicle shed. We all begin to hope the phoebes will have a second clutch of eggs soon.

All during the first few weeks in May we stay away from the shed area—even when curiosity comes, we keep our distance. Through binoculars, we see mama and papa bring nesting material into the shed. But neither is spending too much time there. They do not spend their nights in there. They simply come and go. They are just working.

Life on the Preserve and in the Nature Center is much the same. Programs run, people come to learn about native plant gardens, birds, insects; kids learn about dinosaurs. Seniors take walks and we prepare for the upcoming Environmental Fair. High school kids work hard on restoration of the Preserve. Hundreds work in a single month.

It is their work—and the work of Linda Gonzales who grows all of our plants; and Ron Melin and Daniel Marion who run restoration programs and keep the young plants watered—that is the reason the phoebes tried again. We all know the phrase, "If you build it, they will come," from the "Field of Dreams." Only, for us, the "they" are the native insects that return to native plants. These insects are the food source for many of the species of birds that have returned. Entire cycles of life have returned. One, of course, is the life cycle of



Shirley's Turn

—Shirley Turner

When leading walks the question is frequently asked, "What is the source of the water?" Walkers are surprised to hear that it is all rain and street runoff. When I was looking for a poem for my book club in a Children's Literature Collection I was taken with the "Song of the Brook," by Alfred Lord Tennyson. He lived from 1809 to 1892. In 1850 he was Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom, following William Wordsworth. Observation of nature was among Tennyson's several themes.

In "Song of the Brook," Tennyson writes, "For men may come and men may go, But I (water) go on forever." Think of your life. What has man done to the world now? With no summer school, suggest to children poems to memorize, or suggest that they enroll in Wednesday Junior Naturalist Classes at the Marsh.

But what happens when man dams and diverts the river for agriculture?

Have you seen the price of salmon? Recent news of the Sacramento river salmon decline tells us why. The March 2009 "Daily Briefing for Politics, Policy, and Progressive Action" gives a very good explanation for banning sport fishing again this year. Among other solutions, sending more water down the river so the fingerling salmon can swim to the ocean is a possible choice.

Where would we be then? Drought tolerant plants will be more of a necessity. Take in some of Connie Vadheim's classes on Native Plants and wander through the Marsh and native gardens to learn what you would like to plant in order to save water.

In recent times "Old Man River" just keeps rolling along (the Mississippi River) is another use of the subject. What other literature deals with rivers?

Another river story is "Down the Nile in a Fisherman's Skiff," by Rosemary Mahoney, first published in paperback by Back Bay Books in 2008. She tells the story of her rowing adventures on the Nile River which flows north into the Mediterranean Sea. She rowed about 120 miles from Aswan to Quena.

The book includes the river's history, landscape on both sides—green and desert, and the Egyptian people themselves. It is as much about perseverance as about crocodiles and currents.

It also is about respecting different cultures while holding on to your own. **L. A. Times** review by Suzan Salter Reynolds states, "Her river is worthy of awe."

"The prose unfurls a poetry of perception," observes Karen Long, writing in the **Cleveland Plain Dealer**. One cannot help but think about and compare our canoe ride observations of the Preserve and be thankful for it. . . .



Tyke Hike Report

—Mary Garrity

May 7, 2009—Where are the ducks? Where are the ducks? Why is the water gone?

A gang of 50 arrived for the May Tyke Hike on an unseasonably warm Spring morning and they were filled with questions. Hermosa Beach Mom's Club, grandpas, uncles, cousins, friends, sisters...they all came!

Daniel did a superb job of gathering the tykes together and gaining their attention for our "Nature Hunt." We passed out their assigned 'popsicle stick photos' and we were off on our adventure. Nearly all of the tykes discovered their photo assignments and they were quite happy to do so as they announced each and every discovery as we strolled along. We discovered a Mom Mallard with her chicks but upon hearing the din of young voices she ran for cover into the nearest tules. We ventured into the "jungle" and found a cool respite from the sun in nature's air conditioner of the willow trees.

We all found our way back to the Nature Center and the tykes and moms remained for a look at the turtles, snakes, and the exhibit hall.

Whew! They were a large crew to keep in tow but they discovered and learned...which is what the hike is meant to do for these pre-schoolers.

June 4, 2009—On a rather grey overcast June 4th morning 10 tykes arrived with their moms in tow.

They were a small yet highly vocal and lively group, with adventure on their agendas. They were completely outfitted properly with their 'bright red ladybug' and 'green froggie' rubber boots and it was evident they were looking for mud.

The previous evening's slight shower gave us a pristine sandy path to begin our hike and our footprints were the first to explore the Marsh, except for a few native inhabitants who left their tracks for us to identify. Harvester ants were engaged in a mammoth battle with the black ants. Who won?

It was very exciting to find Pacific Tree Frogs hopping and jumping everywhere we looked. We picked up a few to view at closer range and the tykes were enthralled. We spotted a swallowtail butterfly flitting about and stopped to listen to a few songs from birds we could not see nor identify. We then entered the "snow cave" an eerie and fascinating path through the willow trees where millions of fluffy seeds were drifting about and resting on the branches and looking just like snow. The tykes were mesmerized and it was certainly a terrific photo-op for the mom's who are always "camera ready."

Beth found us some very tall grasses and they strolled through with great abandon.

Mary—continues on page 8.

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Schedule of Events*

July -October 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Jr. Naturalist	2 10 am-Tyke Hike	3	4 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n-Out of the Wild & Into Your Garden/ Vadheim
5	6 CLOSED	7 8:30 am-Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-Out of the Wilds & Into Your Garden/ Dr. Vadheim	8 8 am-Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Naturalist 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	9	10 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	11 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am- 12 n-Annual Butterfly Count Class
2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "Butterflies" 12	13 CLOSED	14 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	15 10 am-12 n-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Nauralist 5:30-6:30 pm-MMF Board Meeting	16	17 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	18 Butterfly Count-ALL DAY! 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45-Student Serv. Learning
1-3 pm-Photography & Poetry Workshop 19	20 CLOSED	21 8:30 am-Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7 pm-Audubon meets	22 10 am-12 n-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Naturalist	23	24 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	25 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45-Student Serv. Learning 10 am- Nature Walk 2-4 pm-Are We Alone?
10 a.m-Nature Walk 26	27 CLOSED	28 10 am-12 n-Weeders	29 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Naturalist	30	31 Stephen West Exhibit Ends 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	

JULY

**All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. For the very latest on events visit www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com. **See Artists Corner, page 10.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12n-Dr. Vadheim-Gardening on Sand 2-4 pm-Math of Nature/ Nature of Math
2	3 CLOSED	4 Doug Stenhouse Exhibit Begins** 8:30 am-Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm- /Dr. Vadheim-Gardening on Sand	5 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	6 10 am-Tyke Hike	7	8 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 2-4 pm-Understanding Earthquakes 6:30-8:30 pm-Night Hike
2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "What's Buzzing in Your Backyard?" 9	10 CLOSED	11 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 4-6 pm-Environmental Interpretation.	12 8 am-Bird Walk /Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	13	14	15 8:45am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning
16	17 CLOSED	18 8:30 am-Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 p.m.-Audubon Mtg.	19 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 p.m.-MMF Board Meeting	20	21 6:30-8:30-Doug Simms Stenhouse Reception**	22 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-Nature Walk
10 am- Nature Walk 23	24 CLOSED	25 10 am-12 n-Weeders	26 10 am-12 n-Weeders	27	28	29 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 8-10 pm-Star Party
30	31 CLOSED					

AUGUST

Nature Center (310) 782-3989
 Gift Shop (310) 320-8255

Brought to you by
 Friends of Madrona Marsh

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	CLOSED	8:30 am- Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 1	10 am-12 n-Weeders 2	10 am- Tyke Hike 3	4	8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n-"Weeds,Weeds, Weeds"/ Dr.Vadheim 5
6	CLOSED	9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm- "Weeds, Weeds, Weeds/Dr.Vadheim 8	8 am- Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7:15-9 pm- FOMM Board Meeting 9	10	11	8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 12
2-4 pm- Second Sunday Science-Fall Migration 13	CLOSED	8:30 am- Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm-Audubon meets 15	10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Board Meeting 16	17	Doug Stenhouse Exhibit Ends 18	8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 6:30-8:30 pm-Night Hike 19
20	CLOSED	10 am-12 n- Weeders Mark Comon Exhibit Begins** 22	10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 23	24	25	8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. Student Service Learning 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-12 n-Nature Walk 26
10 a.m- Nature Walk 1-3 pm-Writing Wild Workshop/Beth Shibata 27	CLOSED	8:30 am- Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 29	10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 30			

SEPTEMBER

*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. For the very latest on events visit www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com. **See Artists Corner, page 10.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 10 a.m.- Tyke Hike	2	3 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning No "Out of the Wilds" class 2-3 pm-Story Time for Kids
4 1-3 pm-Writing Wild Workshop (fee)	CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour de'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders No "Out of the Wilds class 6	10 am-12 n-Habitat-Weeders 7	8	Mark Comon Artist Reception 6:30- 8:30 pm** 9	10 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-12 n-Bio-diesel Fuel
11 2 - 4 pm-Second Sunday Science-A Closer Look at Raptors	CLOSED	10 am-12 n-Weeders 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh 13	8 a.m. Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10-12 noon-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting 14	15	16 6:30-8:30 pm- Telescope Workshop	17 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 12:30-1:15 pm-Bugs, Birds & Animal Songs (fee) 2-4 pm-A Closer Look at Planets 7:30-9:30 pm-Star Party
18 7 am-12n-Fall Photo Day at the Marsh	CLOSED	8:30 am- Tour de'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm- Audubon Mtg. 20	10-12 n-Weeders 10 am- 12 n-Junior Naturalist 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Meeting 21	22	23	24 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-12 n-Nature Walk 11 am-12:30 pm-Fall Festival of Crafts for Kids
25 10 am-Nature Walk	CLOSED	27	28	29	30	31 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning

OCTOBER

Tracy continued from page 4.
the Say's Phoebe.

5/26/09 - Emile Fiesler, a volunteer and former board member, and I venture into the shed. She is on the nest!!! And she blows by us to get the heck away from us. Emile is tall enough to get the first photos of the two babies! They're fuzz balls really, with bulging eyes. We quickly leave to the sound of both mama and papa's worried cries. Amazing! But will the crows get them again? We hope not this time.

Their eyes barely open...

5/30/09 - Emile returns to check on the babies. They are resting in the nest. Emile, on his tiptoes, captures the photo shown here. Side by side, they rest, their eyes just barely opened. Mama does not want us around. Again we leave the shed area, keeping visitors and workers at a distance from these precious wee ones.



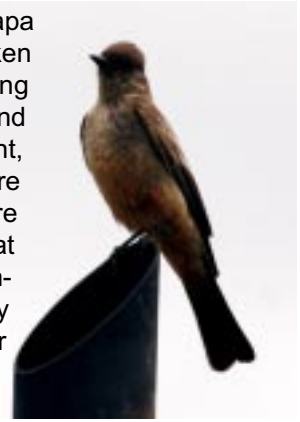
A week goes by. With binoculars we see both parents bringing food into the shed. We hear the urgent calls of the babies begging to be fed. But we stay far away so we do not upset the process.

Another week passes. We are busy in the Nature Center making plans for the summer programs, continuing to prepare for the Environmental Fair, working on other projects. Hundreds of visitors come and go....

6/06/09 - Ron sees the babies make their first attempt at flight. They made it! He keeps his distance, giving the parents room to teach the young to fly.

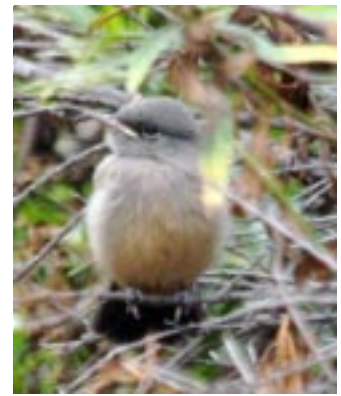
6/10/09 - I can wait no longer. Camera in hand, I head stealthily to the sheds. I just want to capture a few pictures of the wee phoebes. Mama and papa, on the other hand, have other plans! As soon as anyone comes around, they fly like a shot directly at one of the babies, making it ascend high into the air, then they herd it fiercely and purposefully back into the safety of the shed. These parents aim to keep the babies safe no matter what. I watch them perform this aerial acrobatic maneuver many times – even when one of the young ones is just curious and wants to venture out into the world on its own!

6/16/09 - Mama and papa appear very thin for having taken such good care of their young ones. The kids appear fluffy and full. Papa, as shown to the right, is appreciative of the work we are doing on the Preserve. We are scaring up bugs for him to eat as we do survey work, determining the topography of the clay layer that is the water perch for our vernal pools. Papa got a lot of grasshoppers as a result, but also got a bit of survey paint on his chest!



6/20/09 - Mama and papa are feeding the youngsters out on the Preserve and no longer use the shed. One can still hear an occasional cry from one of the young'uns, hoping for mama or papa to provide a meal, but they are learning to fend for themselves.

As I walk the Preserve now, I listen for them, watch for them, and—when I am lucky enough to observe them—I know we are lucky to be able to watch their struggle to succeed. Another generation has come into being. With a sigh, I go back to the Nature Center knowing our efforts count – for that family and countless others—both people and animals. As we so often say, we have created a special place in Torrance where species can survive and thrive.



Mary-Continued from page 5.

To their amazement many of their assigned photos were discovered; beach primrose, sunflower, ants, tulles, harlequin beetles, tree frogs and a great number of bees.

Returning to the Nature Center Beth had the turtles waddling around for the tykes' amusement and interest.

Two moms remained and lunched on the outdoor benches. These children were inquisitive, lively, and a joy to escort.

Gardena Willows Festival-A Cool Success!

The Friends of Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve and the City of Gardena hosted their inaugural Environmental Festival on Saturday, May 30, 2009 at Arthur Johnson Memorial Park in Gardena (formerly South Park).



Hundreds of people braved a cold and overcast day to attend the Festival. Music from a local DJ played in the background as several hundred folks explored a wide range of environmentally themed exhibits. Local wetlands organizations present included the Friends of Madrona Marsh and Gardena's own Friends of the Gardena Willows.

A big Thank-You to Ellen Peterson, Bobbie Snyder, and Sarah Noddings for refurbishing the FOMM 'travel kit' in time for the festival!



FOMM booth, with Sarah Noddings at the post.

Among the other environmental organizations at the festival were the California Native Plant Society, the Environmental Priorities Network, and South Bay Wildlife Rehab Center—with live birds of prey. Several dozen other exhibitors included the West Basin Water District, the City of Gardena Environmental Services, several solar panel installers, a Buddhist church, and even a vendor of (electronic) 'smokeless cigarettes.'



Children's activities and a food court were also a fun part of the festival, which ran from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and there were also many give-away items and demonstrations. But perhaps the highlights of the festival were the interesting and informative public tours of the adjacent Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve offered throughout the day by Dr. Connie Vadheim and Mr. John Thomlinson.



Congratulations to Cheral Sherman and the Friends of the Gardena Willows as well as the City of Gardena on a very well-run and very successful first Environmental Festival! We all look forward to next year!

The Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve is open to the public on the second Sunday of every month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and the Friends hold a Restoration Work Day on the 3rd Saturday of the month, from 8 to 11 a.m. Entrance is— at the southwest corner of Arthur Johnson Memorial Park, located at 1200 West 170th Street, Gardena (between Normandie and Vermont, one block north of Artesia).

(Special thanks to Ellen Peterson and Cheral Sherman for supplying photos for this and related story.)

[The following article is taken from the July, 2009 issue of *Popular Science*]

The Perfect Biofuel?

The technology is still experimental, but late last year researchers at Penn State University discovered how to make methane—a main ingredient in natural gas—from the very thing driving climate change: carbon dioxide. The key is microorganisms called methanogens.

Engineer Bruce Logan discovered that the organisms produced methane with nothing but water and carbon dioxide when zapped with an electric current. Build a fuel cell around the microbes, and as long as the electricity that feeds into the device comes from a renewable source like wind or solar, the process can provide a carbon-neutral source of combustible fuel.

—Catherine Price

Donations—\$100 or More

—Ellen Peterson, Treasurer

DATE	WHO	DONATION
4-8-09	Sarah Nodding-- (Sarah donated her van to The People Choice Charities. They then donate \$100 to the charity of Sarah's choice.)	\$100
4-15-09	Bobbie Snyder	\$500
4-16-09	Irma Ruiz	\$200
4-16-09	Dorothy & Anthony Vinter	\$100
4-26-09	Juno & Ethel Uyematsu	\$100
4-28-09	Crimi Roser Foundation	\$100
4-28-09	Susan Gottlieb	\$500
4-28-09	Brian & Joann Bailey	\$300
5-1-09	Teresa Furey	\$100
5-4-09	Chris & Ellen Velline	\$100
5-22-09	Iris McKinley	\$100
6-5-09	Betty-Jo Ravitz	\$120

Thank You!

The Friends would like to say a special “thank you” to Gary Kuwahara and his associate, Sue Nagy, for preparing income tax forms for both the FOMM, a 501(c.3) non-profit corporation, and the Friends' Gift Shop, which is also non-profit, as net proceeds are used to support Marsh programs. Gary's accounting firm has prepared our tax returns pro bono for many years, which allow us to use all your contributions for the restoration of the Marsh and education of its visitors. Thank you, Gary and Sue!



Pictured above is one of two handsome new benches in our Native Plant Gardens donated by the Riviera Garden Club. Each bench provides an opportunity for visitors to relax and enjoy the sights and scents of the gardens. Thank you, Riviera Garden Club!

Artists' Corner

Works of local artists and photographers inspired by the beauty of the Madrona Marsh are regularly on display at the Nature Center. Everyone is invited to attend each artist's reception where the artist talks about his/her work or gives a demonstration. Snacks and beverages are included.

August 4-September 18 -**Doug Simms Stenhouse**, “Scenes of the Marsh,” An Exhibit of Paintings.” Artist's Reception - Friday, August 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

September 22-November 6 - **Mark Comon**, “The Magnificent Marsh,” a Photography Exhibit. Artist's Reception - Friday, October 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Display your art at Madrona Marsh. Amateurs are welcome. Submit your portfolio at the Nature Center, 3201 Plaza del Amo. For more information, call 310-782-3989.



At the recent Torrance Environmental Fair, fairgoers indicate their environmentally sound choices by applying colored dots to feltboard.

Bixby Marshland to Open July 16

The Sanitation District of Los Angeles County has restored the 17-acre Bixby Marshland on its treatment plant property southwest of the intersection of Sepulveda Boulevard and Figueroa Street in the City of Carson. Yes—that's the one you've been able to see when you exit the northbound Harbor Freeway at Sepulveda. According to the Bixby Marshland website:

"The Bixby Marshland is a remnant of a formerly extensive, natural freshwater wetland known as Bixby Slough. Due to various development projects, such as the construction of the Harbor Freeway, housing projects, and storm water control projects, Bixby Slough was reduced in size until only the 17-acre Bixby Marshland and the Machado Lake area in the Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park remain.

"To maintain Bixby Marshland, a pump was installed to lift storm water and urban runoff from Wilmington Drain into the marshland. After going through the marshland, the water exits through an overflow structure back into Wilmington Drain."



Construction and enhancement of the marshland took two years to complete.

The new Bixby Marshland is the result of an extensive \$2 million restoration and enhancement project which has improved the hydrology of the area as well as the diversity and amount of native vegetation and wildlife habitat. The new design incorporates a meandering stream with several pools and an island for birds. The habitats represented include wetlands, riparian, open water, meadowlands, and upland areas; and an impressive variety of native plants has been established.

Like Madrona Marsh, this marshland is a vestige of the freshwater and seasonal wetlands that once covered the coastal portions of the Los Angeles Basin.



Marshland before improvement.

Because of their urban setting, both wetlands are all the more valuable now as educational and recreational resources as well as natural environmental filters and cleansers.



Now attractive walkways meander around the marshland property.

The Sanitation Districts invite us all to the opening of the marshland to the public for guided tours and educational purposes on:

Thursday, July 16, 2009
9-10 a.m. - Dedication Ceremony
10 a.m.-12 noon - Tours of Marshland

For more information, contact the Sanitation District at: (562) 908-4288, extension 2301, or visit their terrific website at:

http://www.lacsd.org/about/wastewater_facilities/jwpcp/bixbymarshland.asp

Friends of Madrona Marsh

a non-profit organization est. 1972

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Patron _____ \$35 Club/Organization _____ \$50 Business/Industry _____ \$100

Amount Enclosed _____

Please send your donation or offer of services to:

Friends of Madrona Marsh, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510

FOMM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Your donations are tax free within the law.

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Address _____

E:Mail _____

I will volunteer for: (Gift Shop, Reception Desk, other) _____
