COVID-19 Pandemic Update: Trail Reopened on May 6; Nature Center Reopened June 22, Closed Again July 7 (see pg. 10)

This has been one of the most difficult articles that I have written in my years serving BLF President! The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a life-altering change to societies worldwide, defining a new societal normal, requiring behavioral changes on a scale never before experienced for our current generation.

The essence of how we earn a living, socialize, recreate, go out on the town, travel, celebrate family events, shop, and maintain our health has changed. The uncertainty, mental stress, pain, and suffering being felt by everyone is incredible. Our seniors, homeless, low-income families, and those out of jobs are especially vulnerable. Our healthcare professionals, fire, rescue, military, police, and volunteers are heroes who have been selfless with their sacrifice and dedication to our communities. Many even have volunteered to travel to hotspots elsewhere in the U.S. and abroad. No amount of praise can properly thank them for their dedicated service! I could go on, but I am sure you all appreciate and are aware of the challenges of our new normal, and the changes that we face and must deal with over the coming months. As the saying goes, ‘we’re all in this together’ and we will beat this deadly virus!

At a more local level, the BLF board of directors has been discussing the COVID-19 pandemic during many regular and special board meetings now conducted remotely via teleconference calls. The BLF is designated as a non-essential business, and therefore we had to close our nature center and suspend all events and programs in accordance with local health restrictions. The North Shore Trail and associated trailheads are reopened following discussions and coordination with the City of Carlsbad, Aviara Master Association, and Park Hyatt Aviara. Since the trails on the north side of Batiquitos Lagoon are privately owned and not managed by the City of Carlsbad, additional approvals were required. We were successful and appreciated your patience.

Reopening our Nature Center, however, was more complicated. When local health rules were relaxed, we reopened in June 22 with operating restrictions to conform to guidance on physical distancing, sanitation requirements, managing group sizes, health protections for the public and staff, training volunteer staff members, health signage, and the like. A resurgence of the virus forced us to close the Nature Center again on July 7.

The BLF board formed a committee to address all these issues and develop a plan for resuming our normal Nature Center and educational programs and projects as soon as possible. This includes identification of the costs associated with making it happen. We will keep you informed by posting the latest information on our www.batiquitosfoundation.org website.

We are also working with state and local leaders to share our thoughts on the issues that non-profit organizations like ours are and will be facing as virus-related restrictions come and go. We’re also exploring ways to expand public recreation opportunities while maintaining physical distancing and ensuring public safety. Finally, stay safe and healthy. We will weather this storm together!

—Fred C. Sandquist, BLF president
Randy and Belinda Harris

Belinda and Randy Harris moved to Carlsbad from Oakland, Calif., just a little over two years ago. Retired for several years, they were looking for volunteer opportunities that spoke to them individually and also as a married couple.

Ideally, they wanted to find something they could do together. In Northern California, Belinda volunteered as a docent for The Lindsay Wildlife Experience, where she taught wildlife school programs. As a musician and amateur luthier (a craftsman who builds and repairs stringed musical instruments), Randy found a home in Carlsbad's Museum of Making Music as a Visitor Experience Host.

Together they volunteered at the Buena Vista Audubon Visitor Center until they discovered Batiquitos Nature Center and it was love at first sight! Randy likes hosting and working with the adults that visit and Belinda enthusiastically welcomes the children, who are attracted to her playful style like bees to honey. They are hosts in the Nature Center on Sundays — and they’ll be back again once the county health department allows the Nature Center to reopen.

—Deb Mossa, BLF vice president
From the Desk of the President...

While we have focused on the COVID-19 pandemic in our cover article, we have continued to address Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve (BLER) matters. I wanted to share some of these matters with you.

From a restoration and trail maintenance perspective, we are continuing to work on several grant-funded projects. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with some challenges in terms of how we work on them without our regular volunteer base. The good news is that our grants and associated budget allow us to use contractor work. If the workers abide by San Diego County Health directives, we can continue work.

Through an exceptionally large Ocean Protection Council 4-plus year grant, we will be restoring ~ 34 acres (including the BLF’s Cholla Point property). We also will be restoring ~ 6 acres adjacent to the San Pacifico community of the northwest side of the BLER.

We are also working with Aviara Master Association, the City of Carlsbad, Park Hyatt Aviara, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Coastal Commission to address serious trail erosion issues along the North Shore Trail bluff. This includes bluff stabilization and Eucalyptus grove improvements to mitigate further damage to the trail and improve public safety for our trail users.

We congratulate a sister non-profit, Buena Vista Audubon Society, on achieving another milestone in their arduous lagoon restoration project. On May 5, following a presentation by SANDAG Principal Regional Planner Keith Greer, the Carlsbad City Council unanimously endorsed an agreement between property owners, nonprofits (including Preserve Calavera and North County chapter of the Sierra Club) and government agencies to restore the 220-acre lagoon. The next steps will include approval by the SANDAG Board and endorsement by the City of Oceanside. Well done for achieving this especially important milestone!

The BLF Board of Directors has formed a committee to address the issues associated with operating our nature center safely once the COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed again—an extremely complicated process since we depend on volunteer hosts for its operation. See page 10 for more information on Nature Center operations. We are also exploring how we can provide educational programs in a post COVID-19 setting—the new normal for us all! Now is the time for all of us to think outside the box and let the creative juices flow! Please share your thoughts and ideas with us via email at info@batiquitosfoundation.org.

Finally, stay safe and healthy, and be confident that we will beat this pandemic together!

—Fred C. Sandquist, BLF president

We Need Your Help!

As with any all volunteer organization, the BLF depends on volunteers to fill key foundation positions in support of our programs and operations. We are especially interested in finding volunteers for the key positions listed below. If you’re interested volunteering, please stop by the Nature Center and fill out a volunteer application form.

- Nature Center Hosts
- Docents
- Webmaster/Electronic Media
- Fundraising/Marketing
- Educational & Marketing Materials Maintenance
- Publicity
- Restoration/Trail Maintenance
- Grant Writers

Special Thanks...

...to some of our key partners for supporting the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation by providing direct financial support, discounts, critical services, support, and products.

- Four Seasons Residence Club Aviara
- Hunter Industries
- San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)
- Malk Nature Fund
- City of Carlsbad
- California Coastal Commission
- Aviara Master Assoc. & Aviara Community
- Weyerhaeuser Inc
- AgriService Inc.
- Waste Management
- Park Hyatt Aviara
- Leucadia Wastewater District (LWD)
- REI Outdoor School, San Diego, REI - Encinitas
- Breg, Inc.
- Anderson’s La Costa Nursery
- Thermo Fisher Scientific
- Tree of Life Nursery
- 2nd Street Printing
- Callaway Golf
- San Diego Horticultural Society
- Palomar Investigative Group, Inc.
- National Rental
- Sunbelt Rentals
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife
- California Coastal Conservancy
- Louise Julig Writing & Editing
- HomeLife Village Realtors
- Archer Johnson Foundation
- Kinane Events
- The Coastal Community Foundation
- Marstel-Day LLC [conservation consulting]
- LinkSoul
- North County Advocates
- Living Coast Discovery Center
- Sky Hunters
- Earth Island Institute
- Wildcoast
- Marine Life Coalition

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New Additions to the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation Board

BLF Volunteer Bill McGee Joins, Volunteer & Former Board Member Jeff Regan Rejoins

The nine-member board for the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation is at full strength again, thanks to Jeff Regan rejoining the board in February to fill a vacancy. In our November election, BLF members elected volunteer Bill McGee to the board and re-elected President Fred C. Sandquist and Vice President Deb Mossa. The entire board has been working hard to resume the BLF’s important work amid the COVID-19 restrictions. The bios of the recently added board members are below.

Jeff Regan: My wife and I have been Aviara residents since 1994 and Spinnaker Hill homeowners prior to that (from 1985). I’m a native San Diegan and met my wife at San Diego State University, where we both completed our undergrad degrees and then pursued local careers here in San Diego County. As a BLF Board member from 2015-2018, I’m now retired and have more time to devote to the Foundation to help ensure our continued success as the “caretaker” of this wonderful ecosystem we call Batiquitos Lagoon.

While it's relatively easy to have an “affection” for this lagoon when you live as close to it as my wife and I do, my passion for our environment and natural habitat intensified when I held a seasonal job in Grand Teton National Park as a ranger in the 1970s. From flyfishing to birdwatching, I developed a deep appreciation and affinity for the outdoors and wildlife. Since that time, my support of the environment through local and national groups/organizations has been and will continue to be a priority.

Most importantly, we have a collective responsibility for helping maintain the health of habitats like Batiquitos Lagoon, educating our young and “old” on the wonders that are outside their doors, and being lifelong stewards of our environment.

—Jeff Regan, BLF board member

Bill McGee: Bill McGee is our newest Board member, having been elected in November, 2019. He joined our Nature Center volunteer host roster about three years ago, shortly after moving from the frigid (and humid and traffic laden) northern Virginia suburbs of Washington D.C. A Connecticut native, he attended college and law school at University of Connecticut and was admitted to practice before Connecticut state and Federal District Courts in 1976. He spent three years in a futures-oriented management consulting company in Glastonbury, where he got to see a lot of the world and satisfy his yearning for travel. Then he was asked to start a new 'adjudications' division in the state’s Department of Environmental Protection. He also taught evening law courses at three colleges during this time, and helped start a men's senior hockey league, where he steadfastly chased pucks for years in two different leagues with similarly minded lunatics.

His DEP unit became a model for other state agencies in its unique citizen-input orientation and its liberal use of procedural rules to involve local townsfolk in hundreds of enforcement and permitting decisions affecting their air and water quality. McGee and his staff of six hearing officers issued such decisions during a decade of public service. Lured away to the nation's capital in 1988 by the opportunity to start up a new but entirely different animal of dispute resolution services (this time in the travel industry), he remains the Travel Agent Arbiter Program's President (and sole arbitrator) through more than 7,000 cases dealing with the varied commercial aspects of doing business between international airlines and American travel agents.

Bill and his late daughter Emily used to walk along our lagoon during their many west coast vacations, trips to Del Mar races (at the time Bill was president of a small thoroughbred breeding and racing partnership) and visits to all the zoos and kid theme parks out west, so when he moved here he had to have one of the first bricks in the BLF Nature Center walkway memorialized for her. Emily was a certified equine massage therapist, horse trainer for the Army's Old Guard at Arlington Cemetery, and worked with disabled kids and adults in an equine therapy program. McGee hopes to honor her love of all of nature's diversity through his volunteer contributions at the Nature Center and now with what he calls “this amazing Board of incredibly dedicated and hardworking members.” On a personal note, he's also a diehard New York Rangers/Mets/Giants fan, and he and Sandy have a son Matt and a daughter Jennifer and four brilliant, beautiful (and far above average) grandchildren.

—Bill McGee, BLF board member
Big Crowd Enjoyed February Bird Walk & Talk at the Lagoon

*Binocular-Toting Participants Eyed 20 Different Kinds of Birds From Lagoon Trail*

Our last public program before the pandemic hit was one for the record books. About 70 people joined volunteers Mike Gol-
long (who runs our monthly bird count) and his wife Patti, and former board member Don Rideout for a brief presentation on
the lagoon’s birds and then a walk along the trail to see and discuss them. Many attendees brought their own binoculars, but the
Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation provided a birdwatching telescope and loaner binoculars for those who came without.

*Top-left:* The birdwatching group in action.
*Top-right:* (on shore, from left to right) Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret and Great Egret; (in foreground sand) Black-
bellied Plover; (in water) American Coots and Ruddy Ducks.
*Middle-left:* Mike Gollong talks to the group before the
walk. *Middle-right:* Attendees review the bird identification
board.
*Bottom-left:* Great American Egret in flight.
*Bottom-right:* A cluster of
American Coots and American Wigeons.

Photo credits: *Middle-left* by Don
Rideout, all others by
Elizabeth Douglass.
Dredge: 114,512 Cubic Yards of Sand from Lagoon to the Beach

Project Shrunk Sand Cap & Improved Tidal Flow; Small Diesel Spill Quickly Cleaned Up

Batiquitos Lagoon finally got its overdue dredge. It was carried out by Curtin Maritime from Nov. 16, 2019 to Jan. 20, 2020, with the beach distribution work completed on Feb. 7. The company piped 114,512 cubic yards of sand from the lagoon’s central basin to South Ponto State Beach. The results are easy to see in the before and after pictures (below) of the sand cap. The greatest benefit for Batiquitos Lagoon — increased tidal flow — is less visible, but is vital to maintaining a healthy lagoon ecosystem. In December, a Curtin employee caused a spill of 5 to 10 gallons of diesel at the California Least Tern Nesting Site (E-1), which was the project staging area. Eight state and federal agencies were notified, and all the affected sediment was removed and disposed of properly, according to the final dredge report by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

*Above-left:* A Curtin Maritime employee operates equipment to redistribute the dredged sand at South Ponto State Beach.

*Above-right:* A ‘before’ photo of the growing sand cap that has been impeding tidal flow through the central basin of Batiquitos Lagoon.

*Middle:* An ‘after’ photo showing the much smaller post-dredge sand cap in the lagoon’s central basin.

*Below-left:* The Curtin Maritime dredge at sunset.

*Below-right:* The pipes that carried dredged sand from the lagoon to the beach, laid out in the staging area before assembly.

Photo credits: Above-left, courtesy of Curtin Maritime; Above-right, courtesy of California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Middle, courtesy of California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Below-left, courtesy of Curtin Marine; Below-right by Jim Brown.
New Coastal Commission Hearing on La Costa 48 Development

BLF Appeal Secured a ‘De Novo’ Hearing at the Coastal Commission on July 8

**Introduction:** The Developer, DCM Properties proposed to develop approximately 14 acres of former agriculture property located on a bluff area facing Batiquitos Lagoon. The site, on La Costa Avenue west of Interstate 5, was in use from the mid-1930s to 2014. All water used on the owners property— which includes two residences, three septic tanks, sanitary waste leachfields and the contiguous 14-acre agricultural property— drains into the soil downward to the water table, which flows into Batiquitos lagoon.

**At Issue:**

1. The pesticides and herbicides that were used by the agricultural operations, known as organo chloride pesticides (OCPs), were banned from use in the early 1970s. Instead of delivering the approximately 7,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil to a treatment disposal site, the developer proposed to bury it under 19 of the project’s 48 single family residences. The Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation objected to the developer’s decision to bury the contaminated soil on the site and appealed this specific issue to the California Coastal Commission (CCC).

2. A water quality issue was also appealed to the CCC. This issue is directly related to the present water quality of Batiquitos Lagoon, which is listed as an Impaired Body of Water as defined by the Clean Water Act, per Code of Federal Regulations, (CFR) 40, Parts 100 to 149, Section 303(d).

   The State of California Water Resources Control Board conducted tests in 2011 and determined Batiquitos Lagoon had high Toxicity Concentration Levels— which classified the lagoon as impaired. Given that designation, under CFR 40 CWA Section 303(d), the developer is required to conduct a study of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of priority pollutants to make sure that the project’s onsite surface water drainage into the water table (and then into the lagoon) does not then add pollutants to the already impaired lagoon. The developer was opposed to this federal requirement being applied to his project in the City of Encinitas. Again, the BLF appealed this issue with the CCC.

3. The issue of a major increase in vehicle traffic entering La Costa Avenue, a two-lane major access road from the I-5 Corridor to the Coast Highway 101 represents serious traffic choke points.

**California Coastal Commission Hearing Decision:** At a Sept. 11, 2019 hearing and debate on the issues, the CCC agreed to hold a “de novo” hearing based on an “environmental justice” concern regarding the burial of the OCP contaminated soils (permitted by the City of Encinitas and San Diego Department of Health Services) beneath the project’s designated low-income residences.

   In addition, the CCC suggested that the proposed public access to the Batiquitos Lagoon shoreline from the developed site was totally inadequate and declared that this issue also qualified for a “de novo” hearing. Thereby, with the minimum quantity of deficiencies the CCC voted on a “de novo” hearing and ruled in favor of the appeal.

The BLF is preparing for the CCC de novo hearing, which will be held remotely via teleconference on July 8.

—David Hill, BLF board member and Fred C. Sandquist, BLF president
Pacific Ridge School Students Retrieve, Report on Wildlife Photos

Students from the Trails Service Learning class at the Pacific Ridge School collected and studied photos from several infrared cameras set up by the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation at key areas known to be nearby wildlife corridors. The pre-pandemic project involved motion-activated cameras, which yielded nighttime pictures of a variety of critters to study — bobcats, coyotes, and raccoons, for example (see pictures on the next page). Teachers Dr. Jennifer Paschkow (science) and Hunter Paschkow (robotics and arts) led the seventh- and eighth-graders through the project, while the students collected data and photos from the cameras.

Top-left: A student from the Pacific Ridge School checks photos from the BLF wildlife cameras.
Above: Students from the Pacific Ridge School Trails Service Learning class posed with their wildlife posters outside the Batiquitos Lagoon Nature Center.
Left and Bottom-left: Seventh- and eighth-graders from the school’s Trails Service Learning class (trimester 2) at the lagoon.
Bottom-right: Dr. Jennifer Paschkow, a science teacher at the Pacific Ridge School, leads the class at the lagoon.

Photo credits: Bottom-right picture by Hunter Paschkow. All other photos by Jennifer Paschkow.
Batiquitos Lagoon-Area Residents on the Prowl

Motion-Activated Wildlife Cameras Give Us a Peek at Nightlife by the Lagoon

Special motion-activated cameras mounted along wildlife corridors near the lagoon captured photos of some of the area’s roving animals.

Top-left: A strolling coyote. Top-right: A pair of raccoons. Bottom-left and Bottom-right: Local bobcats coming and going.

Photos from BLF wildlife cameras, collected by students at the Pacific Ridge School and provided to BLF.

Buy a Commemorative Brick & Support Batiquitos Lagoon!

- Proceeds help fund our educational programs, our Nature Center, and the preservation, restoration and maintenance of the lagoon trails and habitat.

- There are two sizes. A brick that’s four inches by eight inches (4 x 8) costs $55, and an 8 x 8 brick costs $105.

For more information about the brick program, stop by the BLF Nature Center or visit our website at:

www.batiquitosfoundation.org
BLF Nature Center Opened, Then Closed Again—Stay Tuned!

*When Open: Masks, Occupancy limits, No-Touch Displays, & No Kids Play Area*

The Batiquitos Lagoon Nature Center officially reopened as of June 22, 2020, with operations resuming seven days a week, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., subject to volunteer availability. We were so happy to be back and to see all of our two- and four-legged friends again. Unfortunately, that happiness lasted about 15 days. The nature center had to close again July 7 because of a local resurgence of the virus.

During our 15-day resumption of operations, visitors got to try out the changes we implemented to comply with County of San Diego requirements—these requirements will be in effect when the county allows to reopen again. Masks were required for entry into the Nature Center, for your safety as well as that of our volunteers. Many of our volunteers are retired, and in the vulnerable age group. We also limited the number of people inside of the Nature Center to five people at a time. The displays were still there to be viewed and appreciated, however we had to limit the touching of any surfaces to prevent the spread of germs. We encouraged the use of the sanitizer we stationed throughout the Nature Center. Our hosts took their temperatures every day, and we encouraged hosts and visitors who don't feel well to stay at home. We were spraying the touched surfaces throughout with a virus-killing spritz every two hours.

Unfortunately, we had to discontinue our fountain and courtesy water to prevent contamination, so visitors were encouraged to bring their own water. The tables and benches outside the Nature Center were not sanitized, but visitors could ask the host for some sanitizing wipes to clean them. The chairs on the deck were available and sprayed every two hours. Physical distancing of six feet was required inside the center and on the deck—with decals to help with staying at the proper distance. Last, but not least, there were no lines allowed inside, so visitors waiting for the restroom had to form a line outside. Everyone should wash their hands thoroughly after using the restroom. It seems like a lot of rules, but it is important for all of us to stay healthy. Happy trails to everybody!

—Deb Mossa, BLF vice president

### Nature Center Notes

COVID-19 regulations forced us to re-close the Nature Center. When reopened, these rules will be reinstated until further notice.

- Masks required inside the Nature Center.
- Five-person occupancy limit.
- Six feet of physical distance required inside & on deck.
- Line for the bathroom must form on the deck (see decals for distancing).
- Children’s play area and courtesy water dispensers discontinued for now.
- Nature Center displays, bathroom & deck chairs regularly sanitized by hosts.
- Host can provide sanitizer for picnic tables.

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**FOR YOUR SAFETY**

BLF public programs are suspended because of COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions.

We are working on ways to safely resume our speaker series and other events.

*Please watch for updates at our Nature Center and our website: www.batiquitosfoundation.org*
Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation
Membership/Donation Form

The foundation needs your financial support to continue its valuable work protecting Batiquitos Lagoon and its surrounding habitat ~ It’s a precious resource for North County residents! ~

Membership (check only one box) ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Address Change
(If you prefer, you may join, renew or donate online at www.batiquitosfoundation.org)

Name ___________________________________________ Phone __________

Street Address ____________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State _______ ZIP __________+ _______

E-mail (optional) ___________________________________________________________

Sponsorship Level (check one) Annual Membership Dues (check one)
☐ Kestral $250 ☐ Student/Senior Citizen $20
☐ White Tailed Hawk $500 ☐ Individual $25
☐ Red Tailed Hawk $1,000 ☐ Family $45
☐ Great Egret $2,000 ☐ Sponsor $100
☐ Great Blue Heron $3,000 ☐ Patron $175
☐ Osprey $5,000 ☐ Sustaining $500
☐ Additional donation $________

TOTAL AMOUNT (sum of all the above) ____________

Paid by: ☐ Check (payable to BLF)
☐ Credit Card ___ VISA ___ MasterCard
Account No. ____________________________

Security code* ___________ Expiration ___ / _____
* (three- or four-digit code on the back of your card)

Signature _______________________________________

The Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit. Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law

Please send this form & payment to:
Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation
P.O. Box 131741
Carlsbad, CA 92013-1741

Thank you for your support!
Membership in the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation is a great way to support our efforts to maintain and improve this beautiful natural resource.

Categories for annual membership are:

- Student/Senior Citizen: $20
- Individual: $25
- Family: $45
- Sponsor: $100
- Patron: $175
- Sustaining: $500

Join & pay via bank debit or major credit card through our website. Memberships and donations are tax deductible.

www.batiquitosfoundation.org

The Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation was established on January 7, 1983 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve and its associated watershed, riparian, coastal sage and upland habitats.

Reminder To Members
Check the expiration date at the top of your mailing label to find out when you need to renew your membership.

The BLF Nature Center Closed Again on July 7 — Stay Tuned for Updates!