

San Dieguito Lagoon Center Business Plan



March 2010

Contact Information:
Susan Carter
Deputy Director
San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority
susan@sdrp.org
(858) 674-2270

Planning Consultants:



www.npstrategies.org

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	2
2. Introduction	4
a. Mission	4
b. History.....	4
c. Market Need	5
3. Other Coastal San Diego Nature Centers.....	7
4. Target Market and Expected Usage.....	8
a. Expected General Usage	8
b. Expected Student Usage	8
5. Facilities.....	9
a. Location	9
b. Facility Description.....	9
c. Trails and Landscaping	11
d. Operating Hours and Fees	11
6. Programs and Services	12
a. Interior Exhibits	12
b. Exterior Exhibits and Trails.....	12
c. Interpretive Themes.....	13
d. Educational Programs	14
e. Community Programs	14
7. Organization.....	16
8. Strategy & Implementation	18
a. Strategic Alliances	18
b. Marketing.....	18
c. Volunteer Training.....	19
d. Fundraising Strategy	20
e. Milestones.....	21
f. Year 1 Operating Objectives	21
9. Financials and Resource Requirements	22
a. Assumptions	22
b. Pro Forma.....	24
c. Start-Up Expenses.....	25
10. Appendix: Detailed Information on other San Diego Coastal Nature Centers.....	26

Executive Summary

The San Dieguito Lagoon restoration represents an extraordinary example of a community's involvement in coming together to preserve the environment. The lagoon, once one of the largest in San Diego, had degraded into a small, highly saline body, but thanks to the dedication and commitment of everyday people in the surrounding community, it has been restored to a thriving ecosystem.

The story of the San Dieguito Lagoon needs to be told through an interpretive center, and the San Dieguito Lagoon Center will not only tell this story, but provide a valuable resource to the surrounding community. The exhibits and educational programs will promote environmental stewardship, scientific exploration, and teach the importance of understanding the broader ecosystem. The community programs will bring together groups of people to enjoy and appreciate nature and all that the San Dieguito River Park has to offer.

While San Diego is fortunate to have several nature centers in the coastal areas, the San Dieguito Lagoon Center will stand out by offering a unique experience not found in the neighboring centers. It will provide much more hands-on experimentation and classroom-based projects, incorporate students' findings into public displays, and allow students to be involved in monitoring the success of the lagoon restoration. As a regional gateway to the rest of the San Dieguito River Park, the Center will help drive student interest in conservation, environmental stewardship, and an appreciation for nature.

Based on conservative calculations of trail users at the current site and neighboring center educational programs, it is estimated that the new Lagoon Center will attract approximately 29,000 visitors and conduct educational programs for approximately 3,500 students in Year 1, with numbers increasing to 32,000 visitors and 10,500 students by Year 3.

The Lagoon Center will operate under the guidance of the Board of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA). The JPA represents a powerful partnership in environmental protection, involving cooperation of elected council members from San Diego, Escondido, Del Mar, Poway, and Solana Beach. San Dieguito River Park staff will be responsible for managing the Park itself. Executive Director Dick Bobertz and Deputy Director Susan Carter have a combined 30 years of experience at the San Dieguito River Park, and have been responsible for acquiring 2,976 acres of natural open space and overseeing construction of 34 miles of trails, raising in total \$160,000,000 for the San Dieguito River Park over its 20 year history.

The River Park has cultivated strong relationships with partners who will help ensure that the Lagoon Center succeeds. The San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) with over 1,200 members and a history of successful fundraising, represents one of the River Park's most important relationships. The Conservancy has helped to establish a permanent open space corridor in the San Dieguito River Valley and we expect to leverage their expertise and relationship in both the building and volunteer staffing of the Center.

Membership donations, business donations, and a combination of revenue generating programs run by the Center itself will account for roughly half of the revenue needed in the first year of operations. By the third year of operations, these sources will cover all of the Center's operating expenses. Government grants, private donations, and corporate donations will need to cover approximately \$140,000 for pre-opening and Year 1 operations and approximately \$25,000 for Year 2 operations.

The start-up capital necessary to construct and open Phase One of the Lagoon Center is \$7.85 million. The development is planned in phases, beginning with construction of the Lagoon Center and associated infrastructure, landscaping and parking. The first phase also includes the interior interpretive exhibits. The second phase is construction of the ranger maintenance building. The third phase is construction of the amphitheater. Subsequent phases include additional site landscaping, exterior interpretive exhibits and construction of auxiliary viewing structures. The River Park has embarked on a capital campaign to raise the necessary funds and with the leadership and assistance of our influential Board and partner organizations, we are confident the San Dieguito Lagoon Center will become a reality.

Introduction

The San Dieguito River Park, a Joint Powers Authority, exists to preserve and interpret the natural and cultural resources of the San Dieguito River Valley from the river's source on Volcan Mountain, north of Julian, to the Pacific Ocean in Del Mar. Over the past 20 years, the River Park and its partner organization, the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, have been successful in acquiring, preserving and maintaining a permanent open space corridor in the San Dieguito River Valley and developing a system of trails to connect recreational and educational opportunities throughout the River Park. The San Dieguito Lagoon Center will serve as the western gateway and interpretive hub for the entire San Dieguito River Park.

Mission

As the western gateway to the San Dieguito River Park, the San Dieguito Lagoon Center's mission is to provide a hands-on facility where students, scientists, and the public can study and appreciate the ecology of the San Dieguito Lagoon, and to promote natural resource conservation and stewardship throughout the San Dieguito watershed.

A History of Community Activism and Involvement

The San Dieguito Lagoon was once the largest lagoon in San Diego County. Major construction projects and agricultural operations in the San Dieguito River Valley over the last century degraded the lagoon ecosystem and by the 1970's the lagoon had deteriorated to a highly saline body of only about 200 acres.

In 1974, the San Dieguito Lagoon Committee was formed by the City of Del Mar for the purpose of revitalizing and managing the lagoon ecosystem. In 1979, through the efforts of this committee, the Coastal Conservancy, technical consultants, and representatives from numerous public agencies, the "San Dieguito Lagoon Resource Enhancement Program" was developed. It outlined a plan for restoration, proposing that the lagoon and wetlands be restored to an area approximating their historic dimensions, with the neighboring uplands also preserved and restored to ensure a complete, well-functioning lagoon ecosystem.

In 1989, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) was formed by the County of San Diego and Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, San Diego and Solana Beach for the purpose of creating a natural open space park system from the San Dieguito River's source on Volcan Mountain to the ocean at Del Mar.

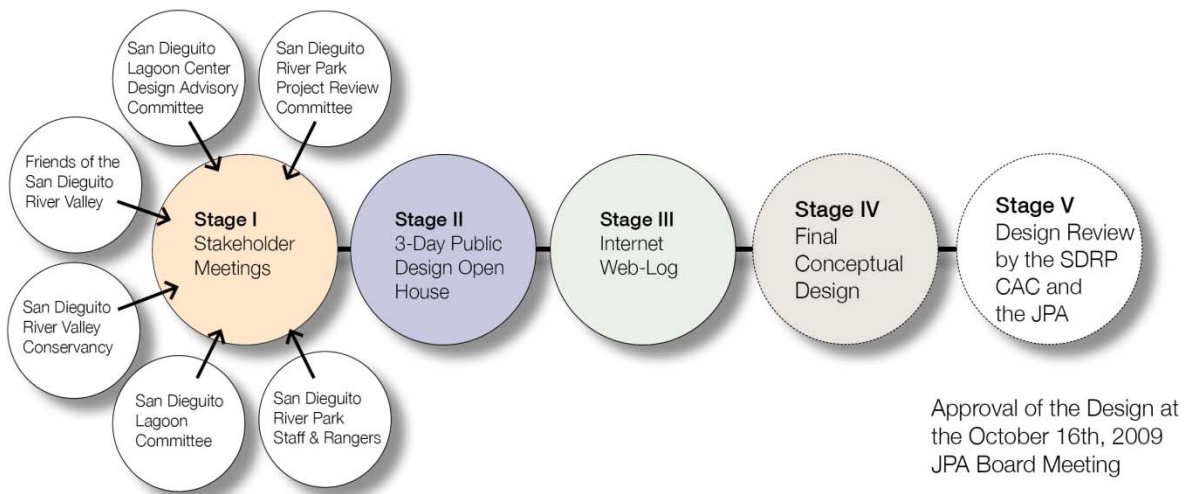
In 1992, the California Coastal Commission directed Southern California Edison (SCE) to create 115 acres of wetlands at the San Dieguito Lagoon and maintain the tidal inlet. San Diego Gas and Electric was also involved, funding approximately 20% of the restoration project's expenses. The JPA obtained funding from the Coastal Commission and US Fish and Wildlife Service to prepare a plan for the associated non-tidal habitat areas and the public access portion of the restoration plan. The final restoration plan, which includes restoring the tidal wetlands and non-tidal habitat, as well as establishing public access and interpretation, was approved by The Coastal Commission and cities of Del Mar and San Diego in 2000.

In 2004, volunteers constructed an interim educational structure called "The Strawberry Stand Wetland Learning Center" near the edge of the lagoon. The temporary center utilized the walls and roof of an original strawberry stand located on the property and used straw bales for seating. Hailed for its minimal intrusion upon the land and reliance on recycled materials, the center won both architectural

and energy efficiency awards. Over the course of its existence, the Learning Center attracted over 1000 students who visited to experience hands-on science experiments, special activities, and events. While many teachers inquired about field trips during the course of the school year, the inability to offer amenities at the structure made that infeasible. The structure was used until 2007, when it was removed to accommodate the lagoon restoration project.

The plans for a permanent interpretive facility, which include the planned lagoon visitor center and associated trails, were developed with extensive involvement and feedback from the local community and funded by Sempra Energy Foundation. In addition to the San Dieguito River Park staff and rangers, the design team (RNT Architects, Spurlock-Poirier Landscape Architects and Acorn Interpretive Planners) met with other key stakeholders, gathering input from the San Dieguito Lagoon Committee, the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, the Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley, and the Lagoon Center Design Advisory Committee. Following these meetings, a design studio was set up at the construction site, where community members, stakeholders, and the general public could come to provide their feedback on the design of the new center. The design concepts were published online to gather further public feedback and help shape the final design of the Lagoon Center. The intensive community input design process is depicted below:

Stages of the Design Process



The permanent San Dieguito Lagoon Center will serve as a park information and visitor center; provide a central location for docent and volunteer programs; and serve as a base for scientific research and educational programs about coastal wetlands. It will also act as the coastal gateway for the regional San Dieguito River Park and its Coast to Crest Trail, which will run 55 miles from Del Mar to Volcan Mountain in Julian.

Market Need

In general, it is recognized that nature centers providing environmental education offer numerous benefits to the surrounding communities. In particular, studies have shown that students receiving environmental education achieve higher test scores and grades, develop more advanced critical thinking

skills, attain greater achievement motivation, and act with more responsible behavior and environmental stewardship¹.

San Diego County residents are fortunate to have half a dozen coastal nature centers available, each with its own unique history and benefits to the community. No two are alike, and each offers the visitor a unique perspective on the local history, wildlife, and importance of preserving the environment.

In San Diego, the coastal lagoons specifically are an important part of the region’s history, as well as its future. Community groups, elected officials and educators agree that each lagoon needs to not only be preserved, but monitored, understood, and fully appreciated for its contributions. The San Dieguito Lagoon in particular has a unique story and lessons for the students and broader community:

- Scientific lessons can be learned from the environmental restoration of the lagoon, which had severely degraded but was brought back to life and now acts as a living laboratory.
- Environmental stewardship can be learned through vivid examples of individuals within the local community rallying together to make a difference and cause their government to take action.
- Lessons on the power of a community uniting together can be learned, as five different cities and the county came together for the purpose of preserving the environment in the form of a regional park.
- Lessons on the importance of understanding a broader ecosystem can be learned, as this center will be a portal to a regional park.

Building on the unique story of the San Dieguito Lagoon, the Lagoon Center will offer a distinct experience not found in other surrounding nature centers. The Center is designed to allow for integrating hands-on environmental experiments with classroom-based projects and then incorporating the students’ research findings into the public exhibits. Neighboring nature centers do not have the capacity to bring students inside their facilities to continue learning and experimenting after the outdoor experience. These other centers simply lack the physical space to integrate the findings of children’s experiments into their public exhibits.

The Lagoon Center, in addition to standing out for the distinct experience and opportunities provided to its visitors, will also play a role within the local network of nature centers. In talking with other neighboring nature centers, a shared belief has emerged that the San Dieguito Lagoon Center will help to grow the market of visitors to nature centers overall, rather than compete for existing visitors. This is especially true for our closest neighbor, the San Elijo Lagoon Center, which has even expressed interest in exploring educational partnership opportunities with the planned San Dieguito Lagoon Center.

The existing coastal nature centers do not compete with each other and will not compete with the planned San Dieguito Lagoon Center because of the high demand for educational information about our coastal resources. The existing coastal nature centers in San Diego County are not sufficient to provide the citizens of our county with the education that they need about coastal wetland resources. Because of the dramatic loss of coastal wetlands in California, with only 3% of our original coastal wetlands remaining, it is a State priority to preserve the remaining wetlands and to educate the public about the value and significance of this habitat type. The County of San Diego is 4,261 square miles in size, approximately the size of the state of Connecticut. With 2.8 million people in the County per the 2000 census, and San Diego as the 7th largest City in the United States, it is necessary to provide additional facilities to serve the population to address this important statewide priority.

#####

¹ Dr. Louise Chawla, University of Colorado at Denver, November 2007

Other Coastal San Diego Nature Centers

There are currently a half-dozen coastal nature centers located in San Diego’s coastal region, ranging in size from large to very small. While each has its own focus and specialty, they all generally include preservation, conservation, protection, education, and stewardship in their mission. The following chart details the operating hours and estimated number of student visitors for the existing San Diego coastal nature centers.

Nature Center	Operating Hours	Total Weekly Hours Open	Estimated Annual Student Visitors ²
Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation Nature Center <i>Carlsbad, CA</i>	M-F: 9-12:30 Sa-Su: 9-3	29.5	1,500
Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center <i>Oceanside, CA</i>	T-Sa: 10-4 Su: 1-4	33	4,000
Chula Vista Nature Center <i>Chula Vista, CA</i>	T-Su: 10-5	42	15,000
San Elijo Nature Center <i>Cardiff-by-the-Sea, CA</i>	M-Su: 9-5	56	2,500 – 6,000
Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center <i>Imperial Beach, CA</i>	W-Su: 10-5	35	1,700
Torrey Pines State Reserve Visitor Center <i>La Jolla, CA</i>	M-Su: 9-6 (10-4 in Winter)	63 (42 in Winter)	6,000

#

Exhibits: The exhibits on display typically include local plants and animals, a history of the Center, and information on the Center’s respective watershed. In general, the larger centers have more interactive exhibits than do the smaller centers.

General Visitors: The neighboring nature centers vary in hours of operation from 30 hours per week to as high as 50 and 60 for San Elijo and Torrey Pines, respectively. Annual visitor tracking is very inconsistent, as some do not track visitors at all, while others have rough estimates for hourly visitors based on occasional observation. All the centers, with the exception of Chula Vista³, offer free admission, although Torrey Pines State Park charges a car entrance fee.

Student Visitors and Programs: The centers receive between 1,500 to 6,000 student visitors, with the noticeable standout of Chula Vista, which reports approximately 15,000 student visitors annually. Due to its previous operation under the City of Chula Vista, the Chula Vista Nature Center has an extensive partnership with its local elementary school district; utilizing the district’s science resource teacher and the elementary teachers to lead their own field trips (Tijuana also has teachers lead field trips). The target for most of the educational programs is students in grades Kindergarten-5th. Programming often emphasizes local wildlife, wetland habitat, and Native Americans. Most centers can accommodate 30-

#####

² Estimated annual student visitor information was provided by the centers themselves

³ Chula Vista admission charges: adults \$11; seniors/students \$8; children \$6

40 students at one time and the programs are generally conducted outside due to limited indoor space. Elementary-school programs are offered free of charge. Some centers utilize a paid employee to conduct the programs, while many others utilize volunteer docents who have been trained by center employees.

Community Programs: Other programs offered by various centers include naturalist walks; Boy and Girl Scout badge programs; classes on subjects such as bird watching, composting, native plants; and various volunteer restoration projects.

Organization structure: The organization and operation of most of the nature centers is heavily reliant on partner nonprofit organizations. Even if these organizations do not actually run the nature centers themselves, they play a critical role. This is especially true for centers which are not government-funded and run, wherein a small group of dedicated individuals was instrumental in building the centers and currently running the nature centers' programs. These centers are dependent on the partnered 501(c)(3) for fundraising, staffing, and leadership. For centers that are government-funded, there is often a 501(c)(3) which partners with the government agency to help lead educational programs (such as through docents) or run the gift shop.

Target Market and Expected Usage

Expected visitors to the Lagoon Center include San Diego county residents, visitors, and students. The Center exhibit and interpretive trails will be designed to appeal to both children and adults, while educational programs will be designed for Kindergarten through 12th grade.

We will target student visitors from the San Dieguito watershed (346 square miles encompassing portions of Julian, Ramona, Escondido, Poway, San Diego, and Rancho Santa Fe) and the coastal communities south of the Center to Mission Bay.

Expected General Visitor Usage

Visitor counts on the trails of the current site (which is under construction and currently has no parking lot or facilities) are up to 7 visitors per hour on weekdays and 15 visitors per hour on weekends. Upon completion of the Lagoon Center, it is expected that visitor attendance will increase significantly. We estimate 10 visitors per hour on weekdays and 20 visitors per hour on weekends. With the Center's operating hours of 10:00am-4:00pm Tuesday to Friday, and 9:00am-5:00pm on weekends, this will result in approximately 29,000 annual visitors, not including students.

Expected Student Usage

While we will develop programs for students in grades Kindergarten-12th, we expect the majority of student attendance to come from elementary schools because field trips are much more common in grades K-5.

There are approximately 35,000 elementary students and 75 elementary schools (both public and private) in the San Dieguito watershed and in the coastal areas from the Center south to Mission Bay. Most schools have approximately 100 students per grade level and unlike most other centers, we will be able to accommodate an entire grade level at one time. In the first year of operation, we expect to attract one grade level visit per week throughout the 9-month school year, resulting in approximately 3,500 annual student visitors. By the second year, this number is expected to grow to 7,000 students and by the third year to 10,500 student visitors.

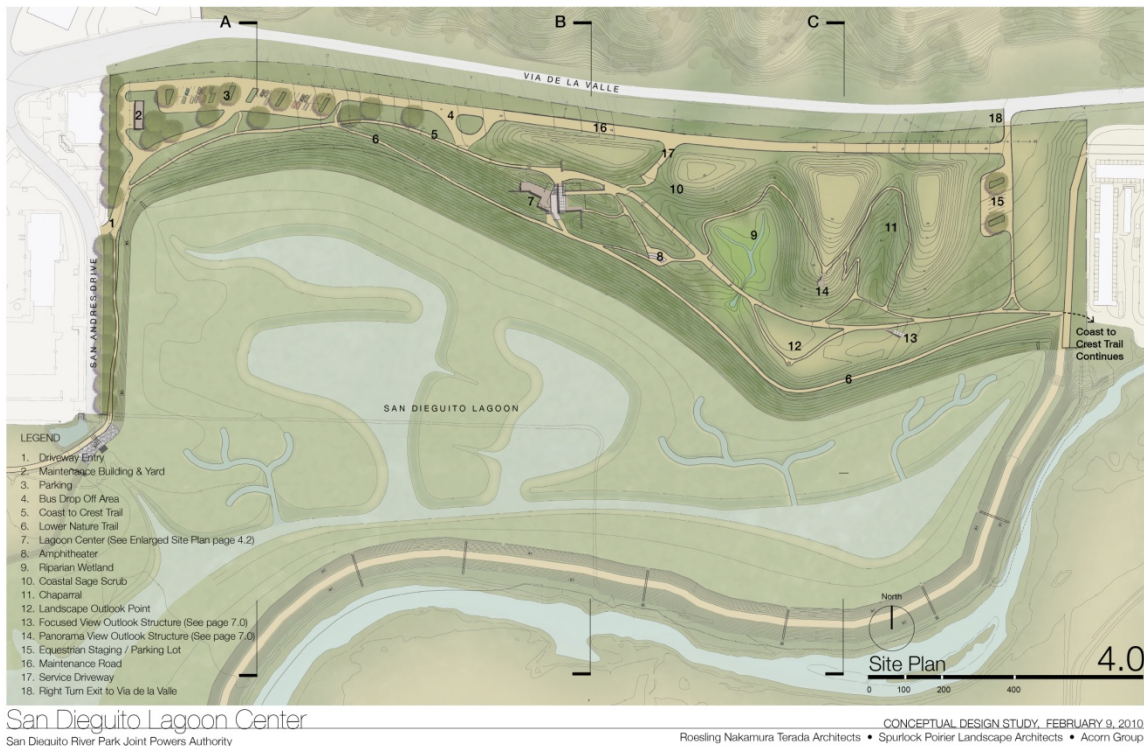
Facilities

Location

The San Dieguito Lagoon Center will be located in the City of San Diego near the intersection of Via de la Valle and San Andres Drive, on the 54.1-acre parcel that was purchased by Southern California Edison for purposes related to the wetland restoration project. The Lagoon Center and the associated landscaping, native gardens and interpretive exhibits and facilities will use thirty-three acres of the site, as shown in the site plan below.

In addition to the Center, the site plan depicted below includes an amphitheater; pedestrian trail; maintenance building and yard; driveway entry; parking lot; bus drop off area, a view outlook structure, and equestrian staging area.

Site Plan



Facility Description

The Lagoon Center will be situated on the hillside and tucked into the existing slope in order to shield street noise, focus views towards the lagoon and the larger habitat context, and “super insulate” the facility for energy conservation. The facility will be designed to blend in with the surrounding terrain and provide panoramic lagoon and open space views.

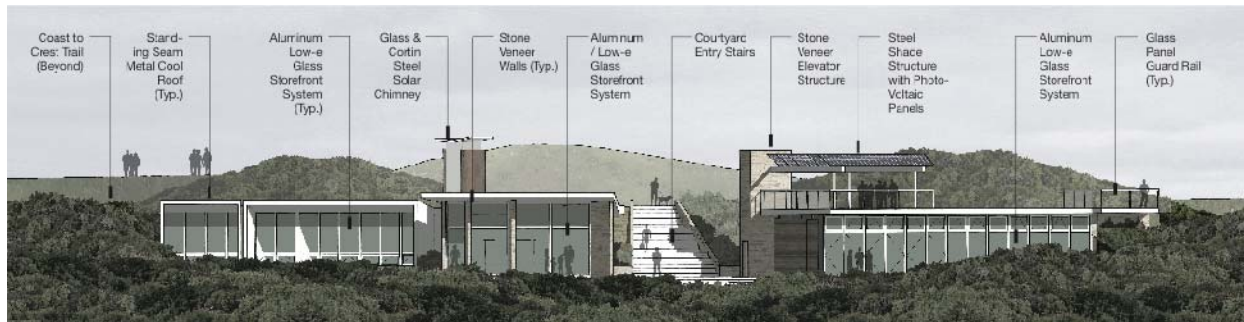
North Elevation (from Via de la Valle)



The north elevation drawing shows how the Lagoon Center is tucked into the landscape, minimizing the visual presence of the new center from the street. From this corridor views to the lagoon are enhanced from the new landscape berms that create a more naturalized landscape character to the site. The Lagoon Center’s solar chimney will become one of few visible elements seen from the street and provides a landmark feature for the Center.

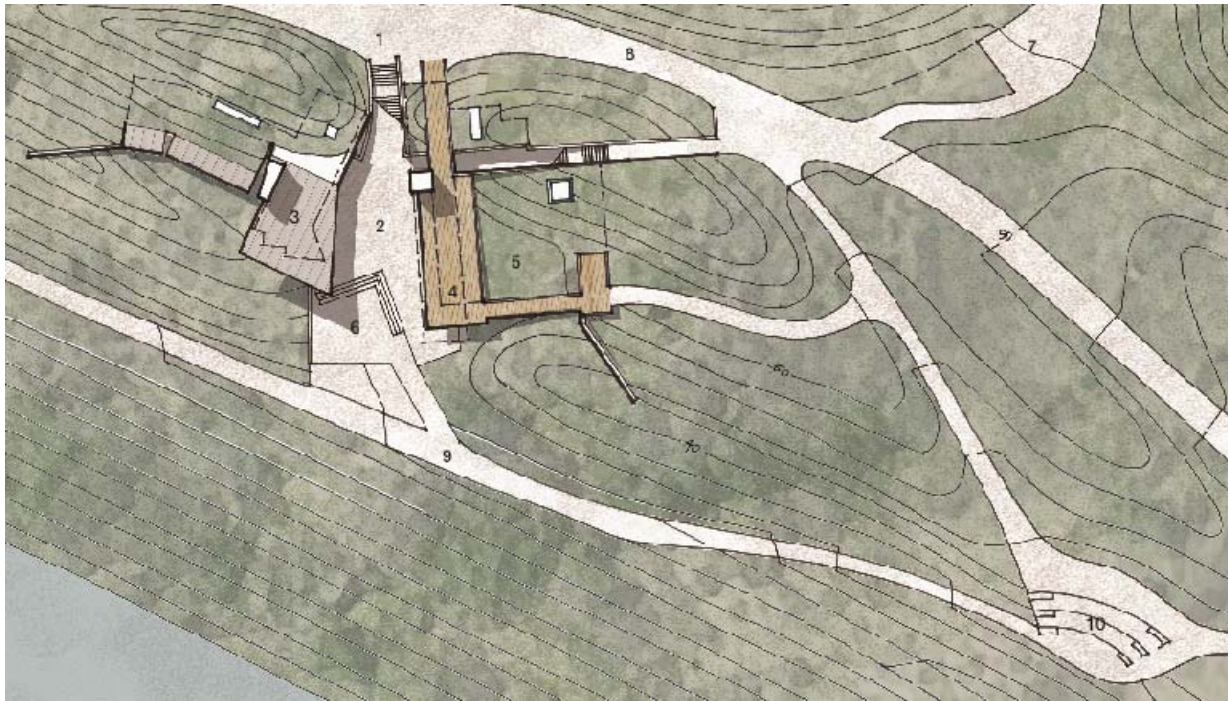
The south elevation below illustrates the design character as seen from the lagoon. Emphasis is made on capturing views from the interior and exterior spaces of the Center.

South Elevation



The Center will be a 6000 square foot, LEED certified building that will include space for exhibits, a marine research lab, classrooms with capacity of 100, workspace, and restrooms. Over 4,500 square feet will be used as public space and approximately 1,000 square feet will be used for administrative purposes. Outside facilities will include a 64-seat amphitheater, a public picnic area, and 75 parking spaces to serve the Center and the Coast to Crest trailhead. Entry to the Coast to Crest Trail will be directly accessible from the Center.

Overhead View of Lagoon Center and Surrounding Terrain



LEGEND

- 1 Upper Level Entry Stairs
- 2 Exhibit Courtyards
- 3 Exhibit Stairing & Offices
- 4 Upper View Deck
- 5 Multi-Purpose Building & Classroom Exhibit
- 6 Floor Plan Exhibit Area
- 7 Service Driveway & Parking
- 8 Coast to Crest Trail
- 9 Lower Foothill Trail
- 10 Amphitheater

Energy efficient design elements include a solar chimney to cool the interior during warm months, earth sheltering, masonry thermal walls, maximum use of natural daylight and ventilation, and high efficiency solar photovoltaic panels.

Trails and Landscaping

Landscaping will include restored foothill terrain with native plants, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and riparian vegetation. There will be a botanical walk, a meandering walkway that connects the Center to the Coast to Crest Trail, and interpretive signs featuring native plants and wildlife.

Operating Hours and Fees

The Lagoon Center will operate from Tuesday through Friday from 10:00am to 4:00pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00am to 5:00pm, for a total of 40 total hours per week. Admission to the Center will be free of charge, and parking will be provided on-site without charge.

Programs and Services

Interior Exhibits

The interior exhibits will focus on the San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration and the San Dieguito River Valley history and ecosystems. The objective of these exhibits will be to inspire visitors with the knowledge that individuals and communities can truly make a difference in restoring and preserving our fragile environment. The messages will promote environmental stewardship, demonstrate the results of failing to take care of the environment (including climate change), and stimulate individuals to take action to improve our environment.

- **The San Dieguito River Valley Story:** The story will include how water shaped the valley and created its many landforms, how water has influenced the specific natural habitats of the river valley, how people and animals are dependent on these fragile ecosystems, how people have used the waters within the river valley and how they may use this resource in the future, and how we must learn to protect the natural environment in order to preserve our own well being.
- **The San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration Story:** The story will include the history of the lagoon, once viewed as wasteland, now protected and being restored, thanks to the vision and efforts of many individuals, agencies, and organizations.

The interior exhibits will be designed to be engaging, interactive, and dynamic. They will involve more than simply reading a sign, and will promote hands-on learning. The displays will also incorporate student activities, which will allow visitors to see the works that students in the community have completed as part of the Center's educational programs. These exhibits will rotate seasonally to maintain their dynamic feel and provide incentive for return visits.

Exterior Exhibits and Trails

As the western portal to the entire San Dieguito River Park, the Center's exterior exhibits will be designed to inspire visitors not just to appreciate the local lagoon surroundings, but to explore the entire San Dieguito River Park. Within the River Park, habitats represented include lagoon and coastal wetlands, riparian, oak woodland, coniferous forest, chaparral, and sage scrub. The River Park corridor is home to 23 sensitive plant species and 55 sensitive animal species. A 3-dimensional model of the entire River Park will introduce visitors to the ecosystems and recreational opportunities available within the park.

Interpretive exhibits featuring local plant and animal life will be constructed along the two trails that can be accessed from the Center – the Coast to Crest trail and the nature trails. The Coast to Crest trail, which will be a contiguous 55-mile trail running from Volcan Mountain in Julian to the San Dieguito Lagoon Center and the beach, caters to hikers, bikers, and equestrians. The Lagoon Center nature trails will be exclusively for hikers, and will be ADA accessible.

Interpretive Themes

Theme 1

Once viewed as wasteland, the lagoon now is protected and being restored, thanks to the vision and efforts of many key individuals, agencies, and organizations.

Messages:

San Dieguito Lagoon was once the home of San Dieguito Paleo-Indians and more recent American Indians, as well as territory within 19th c. Rancho San Dieguito. It underwent significant transformation in the 1900s as a golf course, WWII naval facility, airport, and site of various developments, including the racetrack and fairgrounds.

Recent activity has further degraded the lagoon. Constriction of freshwater flows upstream, blockage of tidal flow, habitat fragmentation due to road construction, habitat destruction due to agriculture and suburban development, and pressure of invasive species all have taken a toll.

The San Dieguito River Park was created first in response to concerns about commercial development in the San Dieguito Lagoon. Decades of commitment and active involvement by citizens saved the lagoon and led to preservation of open space in the San Dieguito River Valley.

Individual stewardship is integral to the restoration effort. Citizen science—scientific projects in which volunteers team with scientists to provide real data—is important to ensure project success over the long term.

Theme 2

After years of degradation, the San Dieguito Lagoon once again is becoming a complex ecosystem that benefits wild-life and people.

Messages:

Restoration of the San Dieguito Lagoon, once the largest lagoon in the county, is the result of a SCE mitigation project.

Successful wetlands restoration requires monitoring, maintenance, and vigilance on everyone’s part.

Compared to restoration, conservation is a more prudent, cost-effective way to save habitats. Restoration is an expensive, long-term experiment.

Challenges, including probable effects of global climate change on the lagoon, lie ahead.

People benefit directly and indirectly from the ecosystem services provided by the lagoon. These services include flood control, water purification, “nursery” support for commercially important fisheries, and the provision of wildlife watching and other recreational and educational opportunities.

The lagoon is located along the Pacific Flyway. As such, it offers a way station for birds migrating annually between the Arctic and Central and South America.

Theme 3

Preserving the entire San Dieguito River corridor ensures preservation and protection of sensitive habitats, wildlife, cultural resources, open space, and water quality.

Messages:

The San Dieguito River Park follows the river course from its source east of Volcan Mountain to the San Dieguito Lagoon to the west.

The San Dieguito River Park is comprised of a variety of habitats ranging from salt marsh, tidal lagoon, and mudflat to coastal sage scrub, grasslands, and riparian woodland, to oak woodland and southern mixed chaparral.

By protecting habitat, the River Park protects wildlife. This region is rich in diversity and home to rare and threatened plants and animals.

The River Park plays an important role as a natural wildlife corridor that allows animals to move between habitats to access resources (food, nesting space, etc.).

By protecting the region’s watershed—the land and waterways that drain into the San Dieguito River—the River Park protects water quality.

The River Park conserves valuable open space, an increasingly rare commodity in Southern California. People benefit from the natural and cultural resources whose protection is ensured.

Educational Programs

The objectives of our hands-on school educational program will be to excite students about the plant and animal wildlife sharing our local habitat and inspire them to help protect and restore our environment.

The programs for grades K-5 will be centered on the theme, “The Kids’ Connection to the Natural World” and the programs for grades 6-12 will be centered on the theme, “Our Natural Legacy – Explore Your World.” The programs will meet California science academic content standards and be compatible with classroom curriculum units. The topics will primarily cover lagoon ecosystems, effects of climate change, and resource conservation.

Our educational programs will be uniquely engaging, as in addition to interpretive trail walks and discussion, students at our facility will be able to participate in field experiments, analyze samples inside a classroom, and leave behind the conclusions and interpretations of their experiments for the public to enjoy. The student experiments and findings will actually become part of the public exhibits. An example of this type of unique experience would be having students study the effects of climate change using pH loggers. The lagoon would have three locations where the equipment would be placed; after a set period of time, the students would raise the equipment, take a sample back to the lab, and then measure and log the pH levels of the lagoon. They would also see, analyze, and photograph the interesting creatures often attached to the equipment. The student observations would then be incorporated into one of the public displays depicting the importance of monitoring the health of the lagoon and the environment. #

#

The educational programs will be developed by Barbara Baker, the San Dieguito River Park Outreach Specialist, in conjunction with our scientific and education partners. To ensure our programs meet the needs of the educational community, we will ask several local school districts for input early on in the program development phase. These programs will be designed to increase students’ environmental literacy and will meet the guidelines of the Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI), which was approved under a 2004 California law and is now undergoing strict review from cooperative entities such as the California Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Education, California Natural Resources Agency, National Geographic Society, State Education and Environmental Roundtable, and California Integrated Waste Management Board.

The educational program tours will be conducted by specially-trained volunteer docents and will be offered free of charge.

We will offer our educational programs Tuesday-Friday and will be able to accommodate approximately 100 students at one time. Based on student attendance at other centers, we anticipate serving approximately 3500 children in Year 1, 7000 in Year 2; and 10,500 in Year 3.

Community Programs

Interpretive Walks:

The Center will offer weekend interpretive walks at least once/month. Topics such as bird watching, native plant identification, and habitat restoration will be included. We will partner with organizations such as the Audubon Society, the California Native Plant Society, and the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy to lead the walks. There will be no fee to participate.

Lecture Series: An adult lecture series will be presented twice each year with the help of outside professionals drawn from organizations with which the San Dieguito River Park has previously collaborated, such as Sky Hunters, Kruisin Kritters, the San Diego Archaeological Center, Southern California Bats, I Love a Clean San Diego, and San Diego Guilds. The six part lecture series will consist of coastal related issues and topics relevant to the lagoon, such as local birds, wildlife, plants, habitats/systems, and how they all benefit us. These lectures will be geared as Continuing Education courses. We will charge a fee of \$10 per lecture or \$60 to attend all six sessions in the series. We expect approximately 20 people to attend each lecture series.

An accompanying activity or program will be planned to complement some of the more popular lectures, for those who wish to learn more about the topic covered. As an example, a lecture on the benefits of native plants for landscaping in the coastal area would be followed up by a water-wise workshop to teach individuals how to take care of specific plants (along with the option to purchase these plants). We will charge a separate fee for the accompanying activities, although the fee will be discounted for those who attended the corresponding lecture.

Art Exhibits: Local artists will be given the opportunity to showcase feature works on local landscapes, nature, and wildlife. In addition to drawing a broader audience to the Center, we will collect a 20% commission on the sale of each piece. We expect to collect an average of \$100 commission on the sale of each piece. We expect to sell one piece per month.

Summer Community Concert Series: The amphitheater will be utilized for local (non-acoustic) community concerts that highlight local musicians. These concerts will provide guests with a relaxing way to connect with other local residents at the week's end and will expose a greater number of people to the Center. Performances will take place on a weekend evening twice a month during the summer. Admission will be \$5. We expect 50 people will attend 2 concerts per month during the summer.

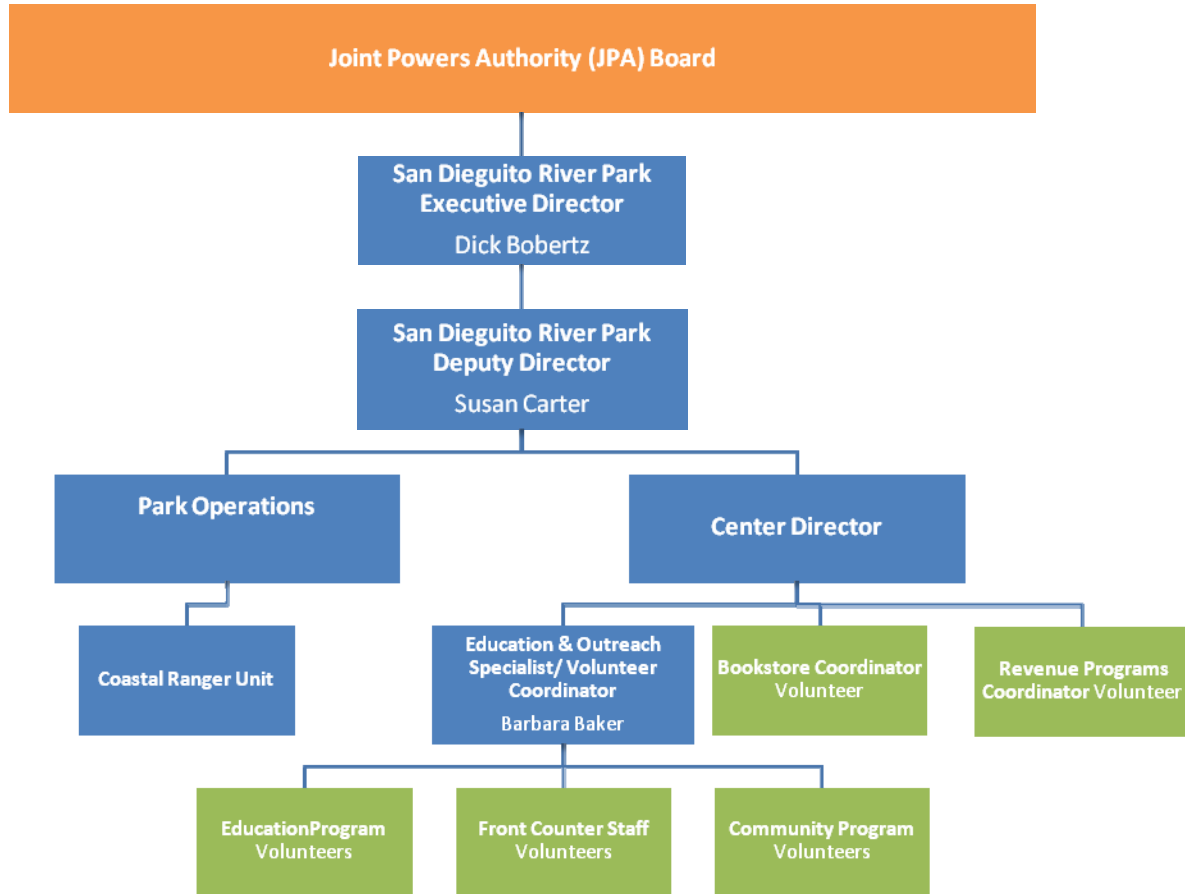
Birthday Parties: We will develop a children's birthday party program that will be targeted towards children aged 4-7. The program will include fun, engaging activities like a nature hunt/bingo game, nature craft, and lagoon "experiment". Center staff will develop the program and volunteer docents will staff the parties. A 1 ½ hour party for up to 12 children will be \$150. We expect to have 2 parties per month.

Additional revenue Programs:

The Center will also offer these revenue-generating services and programs:

- *Room Rentals:* Rooms will be rented on weekday evenings at a rate of \$150/hour.
- *Weddings:* Wedding space can be rented for 2-4 hours at a rate of \$200-\$250/hour.
- *Plant Sale:* Plants grown at the Center will be made available for purchase at yearly events.
- *Bookstore:* In addition to nature books and field guides, our bookstore will offer more unique and higher margin items such as locally made nature-inspired jewelry, art, and note cards; as well as San Dieguito Lagoon Center logo'd items and educational toys.

Organization



The Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board consists of two elected officials each from the County of San Diego and the City of San Diego, one elected official each from the Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway and Solana Beach, and one public member representing the Citizens Advisory Committee. This powerful entity oversees the operations of the San Dieguito River Park and guides its direction. The current 2010 Board members are:

- Chair: Richard Earnest, Del Mar City Council
- Vice-Chair: Sherri Lightner, San Diego City Council
- Olga Diaz , Escondido City Council
- Jim Cunningham , Poway City Council
- Carl DeMaio , San Diego City Council
- Dianne Jacob , Supervisor, County of San Diego
- Pam Slater-Price , Supervisor, County of San Diego
- Dave Roberts , Solana Beach City Council
- Tom Golich , Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee
- Becky Bartling , Ex Officio Member, 22nd District Agricultural Association

River Park Executive Management: The San Dieguito River Park is managed by Executive Director Dick Bobertz and Deputy Director Susan Carter. Ms. Carter has been with the San Dieguito River Park since

1988 and Mr. Bobertz since 1998. Mr. Bobertz reports to the Board of Directors, handles community and media relations, and is responsible for implementing the River Park's goals and objectives over the 55-mile-long park. His educational background is in landscape architecture and prior work experience was in city management. Ms. Carter is primarily responsible for grant applications, budgeting, administrative duties and serves as project manager on many of the River Park's construction projects. Her educational background is in public administration. The River Park management team will be responsible for overseeing and attaining grants for the new Lagoon Center.

Center Director: The Center Director will oversee operations of the Lagoon Center. He/she will be responsible for developing and documenting operating policies and procedures; developing and implementing a front counter volunteer training program; fundraising through membership, local business donations, and other revenue programs; marketing the center to attract visitors, members, and partners; publishing a quarterly volunteer and member newsletter; and bookkeeping. The Center Director will oversee the Center staff and work directly with the volunteer bookstore and revenue program coordinators.

Education and Outreach Specialist/ Volunteer Coordinator: The Education and Outreach Specialist/Volunteer Coordinator position will be held by Barbara Baker, a current San Dieguito River Park employee. In her current capacity, Barbara recruits and trains volunteers for various duties at the River Park, researches and designs interpretive materials, organizes public programs in coordination with partner organizations and produces electronic newsletter communications. In her new role at the Lagoon Center, Barbara will work closely with the school districts to develop educational programs that integrate with their curriculum; reach out to the school districts within the target area to attract students to the program; work with surrounding community and partner organizations to accumulate a group of dedicated volunteers who will staff the Center, lead educational tours, and implement many of the community programs; and train the education program volunteers.

Education Program Volunteers: Educational Programs will be conducted by volunteer docents who will be trained by the Education and Outreach Specialist/Volunteer Coordinator. These volunteers will be recruited with the help of partner organizations such as the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy. During our first year, our objective is to host one elementary school class (up to 100 students) per week. Each docent will partner with one classroom teacher (approximately 20-30 children), so we will need up to 5 docents for each school visit. Anticipating that our volunteer docents will be able to commit to at least one visit per month, we will plan to recruit and train 20 volunteer docents during our first year of operation.

Front Counter Staff Volunteers: Front Counter Staffing will require enthusiastic volunteers willing to interact closely with visitors to the Lagoon Center. These volunteers will be trained by the Center Director. The Lagoon Center will be open 40 hours per week and we expect to staff our front counter with one volunteer at all times. Our Center Director and Education and Outreach Specialist/Volunteer Coordinator will work out of the Center, so they will provide back-up front counter staffing Tuesday-Friday in case of emergency. We expect our front counter volunteers will work a minimum of 8 hours per month and our center will be open 160 hours/month, so we plan to recruit and train 20 front counter volunteers before the Center opens.

Community Program Volunteers: Community programs such as a lecture series, interpretive walks, and birthday parties will be developed by the Education and Outreach Specialist/Volunteer Coordinator in conjunction with our partner organizations. During our first year, we expect to develop and host

community programs with at least 4 partner organizations.

Bookstore Coordinator: The Bookstore Coordinator will be filled as a volunteer position. This person will select, manage, and optimize the inventory; track bookstore sales and profits; and work with the front counter volunteers to maximize sales and profits. As a notable source of revenue generation, the position will work directly with the Center Director.

Revenue Program Coordinators: Community fundraising events are often headed up by an enthusiastic volunteer with a particular passion. We expect that among our diverse volunteer base, we will have many such individuals and we anticipate and have budgeted for a native plant sale in year one. As another important source of revenue generation, special revenue program volunteers will work directly with the Center Director.

Park Rangers: The park rangers who support the Lagoon Center site will report through Park Operations, rather than through the Lagoon Center Director. 2 1/2 rangers are already working at the site and are funded in perpetuity by the SONGS mitigation project (So. Cal Edison and SDG&E). The rangers are responsible for overseeing and maintaining the trails surrounding the Lagoon Center and will also provide assistance and information to visitors on the trails.

Strategy and Implementation

Strategic Alliances

Our most powerful partnership has been established for over 20 years—with the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) with over 1,200 members and a history of successful fundraising, which helped to establish a permanent open space corridor in the San Dieguito River Valley. The Conservancy has raised over \$2 million in private donations alone for use in land acquisition and trail construction in the River Valley. We expect to leverage their expertise and relationships in both the building and volunteer operations of the Center.

As an agency that has been charged with preserving and interpreting the entire San Dieguito River Park for 20 years, we ourselves have developed an extensive list of partner agencies and organizations we will draw on for front counter volunteers, docents, and program experts. A few examples of these include the Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley, the San Dieguito Lagoon Committee and the Del Mar Rotary.

We will also pursue partnerships with environmental and marine-focused organizations such as Scripps Institute of Oceanography, the San Diego County Water Authority, I Love a Clean San Diego, Cal State San Marcos, San Diego Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, California Coastal Conservancy and Center for Research in Endangered Species (CRES).

Marketing

The four primary goals of the marketing strategy include:

1. Generating usage of our educational programs
2. Driving public visits to the Center
3. Gaining and increasing membership
4. Soliciting volunteers

Achieving these goals will require an understanding of the interests and motivations of each audience and the development of a unique communications and outreach strategy to target each audience.

Education Programs

It will be especially important to understand what the local education community is looking for as the education program is developed. In order to do this, our Education and Outreach Specialist will ask for input from several local school districts early on in the program development phase, in order to ensure that the educational programs will meet their needs. Once the educational programs are developed, the Education and Outreach Specialist will personally introduce our educational programs to target school districts, sharing the program details and benefits and leaving behind brochures for distribution.

Driving public visits, membership, and soliciting volunteers

In an effort to attract visitors, members, and volunteers who are already interested in conservation and nature, we will target other environmental and community organizations. In the months immediately preceding and following the Center opening, the Center Director will contact and visit with other environmental and community organizations to share information about our Center programs and services and leave behind brochures for distribution to each organization's members.

The Center Director will regularly write and distribute press releases to announce the Center opening, invite visitors, and promote our community events. We already enjoy good relationships with local media and have had much success getting coverage of our events.

Once at the Center, visitors will see ample communication about the importance of and benefits to becoming a member. Communications will include a display and brochures.

Marketing Tools

Brochures: A Lagoon Center brochure will be designed to generate visitors and interest among the general public, as well as encourage the reader to become a member and/or volunteer. Because this same brochure will not have enough space to adequately communicate the benefits and features of our educational program, we will utilize a separate brochure to introduce these programs to the education community.

Website: We will utilize existing River Park resources to design and maintain a dedicated San Dieguito Lagoon Center website. The site will feature the Center facility itself, the educational and community programs, and the value/benefits of becoming a member. It will enable the visitor to make a donation online. The website will be linked to our partner organizations as well as San Diego environmental education resources.

Newsletter: We will publish a quarterly electronic newsletter as soon as we begin acquiring members and volunteers. Before the Center opens, the newsletter will provide updates on the building progress, new partnerships, volunteer opportunities, and volunteer training programs. Once the Center opens, the newsletter will also update members and volunteers on the programs and events taking place at the Center.

Volunteer Training

Because the Center will rely exclusively on volunteers to staff the front counter and lead the educational tours, developing a comprehensive volunteer training program will be critical. Fortunately, River Park

management and staff have significant experience doing so. Dedicated volunteers have contributed thousands of hours to the River Park. From 1989 to 2008, volunteers contributed upwards of 77,400 labor hours. Calculated at the 2004 state value rate of \$17 per volunteer hour, this comes out to \$229,500 in the last five years alone. Volunteers serve as trail patrollers, “dust devils” who help rangers build and maintain trails, participate in work parties to restore habitat, and lead public hikes.

Fundraising Strategy

Ongoing Operations

Approximately 50% of revenue through the first year of Center operations will be generated by a combination of membership, programming, retail sales, and local business donations. The remainder of our funding will be generated by the writing of proposals to secure grants. Grant proposals will be written by San Dieguito River Park Deputy Director Susan Carter, who has significant experience in this area and has secured over \$17 million in grants over the past 20 years.

Since membership will be such an important component of our revenues, we will direct a significant amount of resources towards attracting new members. It is intended that the new members will become members of the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, an existing 501(c)(3) organization, with the funds from the new SDRVC memberships attributed to the Lagoon Center to be allocated to the Lagoon Center. This will require a new agreement between the JPA and SDRVC. Our public efforts will begin as soon as construction starts, with large vinyl banners posted at the site. Our efforts will continue with press releases throughout the construction, website development, in-person outreach to local environmental and business groups, and personal appeals to potential large donors.

Solicitation of corporations and small businesses will be conducted by the Center director as part of his/her community outreach efforts.

By Year 2, 90% of our revenue will be generated by a combination of membership, programming, retail sales, and local business donations; by Year 3, it will be 100%.

Capital Costs

We are beginning an extensive fundraising campaign to provide our initial Phase I capital and start-up costs. We believe we are uniquely positioned to raise the start-up capital required for several reasons:

- We have a powerful, citizen-elected Board, made up of council members from the cities of San Diego, Poway, Escondido, Solana Beach, and Del Mar, and the County Board of Supervisors.
- We are an established organization with deep roots in the community and a proven record of raising over \$150 million over our 20 year history.
- The community wants to see this center built and it will be located in an area with the wherewithal and a history of philanthropy and involvement.

We are starting our fundraising campaign by selecting the most appropriate project champions from within our own Board. We will leverage their existing community relationships to set up meetings with potential donors (corporations and individuals) to share the business plan. Our influential board members will accompany us to these meetings and together, we will ask for support. We will offer the largest donors naming rights for key components of the Lagoon Center, such as the Marine Wildlife Conservation Research Lab, and the Amphitheater.

In addition to securing large naming-rights donations, we will leverage the remainder of our Board and the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy to develop prospect lists of persons who may be interested in

providing a financial donation, as well as local businesses that will benefit from having the Center as a neighbor. We will solicit support from these people and organizations.

Lastly, we will identify all appropriate grants and River Park Staff will write proposals to supplement our private fundraising efforts.

Milestones- Pre-Opening

	<u>Months before Opening</u>
Secure commitments for start-up capital	
Secure Private Donations	30 months
Secure Government Grants	24 months
Construction Permit Process begins	21 months
Construction Begins	9 months
Begin membership campaign	9 months
Develop Educational Programs	9 months
Share educational programs with school districts	6 months
Outreach -partner organizations	6 months
Secure operating grants required for Year 1	6 months
Hire Center Director	6 months
Develop Operations Procedures	4 months
Develop Front Counter Training Program	4 months
Develop community programs with partner organizations	4 months
Develop Marketing Materials	3 months
Recruit Volunteer Bookstore Coordinator	3 months
Recruit Front Counter Volunteers (20) necessary for opening	3 months
Solicit local business donations	3 months
Recruit Volunteer Educational Tour Docents (20)	3 months
Train Front Counter Volunteers	2 months
Train Volunteer Educational Docents	1 month

Year 1 Operating Objectives

The San Dieguito Lagoon Center objectives during the first year of operation are to:

- Attract approximately 30,000 general public visitors.
- Serve approximately 3,500 K-12 students.
- Serve approximately 1,000 visitors through our community programs, partnering with at least 4 different organizations

- Generate \$130,000 in earned revenue from a combination of membership fees, programming, outreach, retail sales, and special events.
- Secure \$110,000 in funding sources including foundation grants, government grants, and private and corporate donation

Financials and Resource Requirements

Assumptions

Visitor Assumptions

- Year 1: 10 visitors/hour weekdays and 20 visitors/hour weekends. Visitors increase by 5% annually

Revenue Assumptions

- Members represent 1% of visitors Year 1, 2% Year 2, 3% Year 3. Membership contributions average \$150 per member, per year (San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy's 1200 members average \$230)
- Donations at Door: 25% of visitors give an average of \$1.
- Concessions revenue from 25% of visitors spending \$1.50 each.
- Bookstore revenue from 10% of visitors spending an average of \$8.
- All other revenue increases by 5% annually.

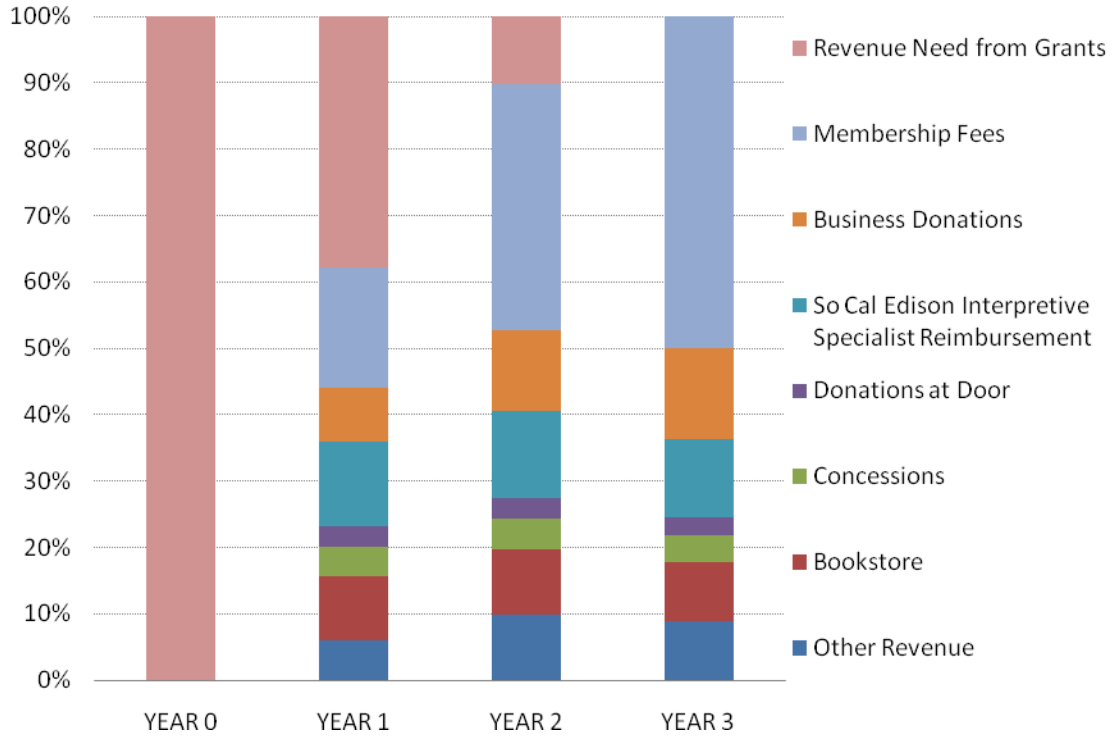
Calculations for Other Revenue

- Room Rentals are calculated with an expected charge of \$75-\$250 per hour for evening rentals (\$50-\$200 for daytime rentals). Using the lower-end estimate of \$75/hour, we estimate 2 evening rentals each month of 2 hours each (\$300 per month).
- Weddings will be charged at \$750 for 4 hours. With 10 weddings per year, the annual revenue is expected to be \$7,500. These will not begin until the amphitheater is completed in Year 2.
- Art Exhibits will provide a commission of 20% per piece sold (estimated at \$100), with an expected sale of 1 piece per month.
- Adult Education will be charged at \$10/person per session or \$60 for a 6-week series. 20 people are expected to attend a series, which held be twice a year, providing annual revenue of \$2,400.
- Birthday Parties will be charged at \$150 per party, with 2 parties expected per month, resulting in \$3,600 annual revenue.
- The Plant Sale will generate \$5-\$10 per plant. Assuming 250 people buy 3 plants each, at \$5 per plant, this results in \$3,750 in annual revenue.
- Summer Community Concert Series will charge \$5 admission. Assuming 50 people attend 2 concerts per month, this will generate \$1,500 during the 3 months of summer. This revenue will not be attainable until the amphitheater is completed in Year 2.

Expense Assumptions

- Expenses increase by 3% annually, excluding concessions, bookstore, and marketing.
- Center Director is paid for 6 months in Year 0 (this is the only expense incurred that year). Director will work out of the River Park offices.
- 25,000 brochures will be distributed Year 1; 15,000 Year 2; and 16,000 Year 3 -at a cost of \$.25 each.
- Concessions and bookstore operate at a 50% margin, or 100% mark-up.

Expected Sources of Revenue



Pro forma

	YEAR 0	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Visitors (5% increase/year)	0	29120	30576	32105
Members as a % of visitors	0	1%	2%	3%
Members	0	291	612	963
OPERATING REVENUE				
Membership Fees	\$0#	\$43,680	\$91,728	\$144,472
Business Donations	\$0#	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000
So Cal Edison Interpretive Specialist Reimbursement	\$0#	\$30,517	\$32,043	\$33,645
Donations at Door	\$0#	\$7,280	\$7,644	\$8,026
Concessions	\$0#	\$10,920	\$11,466	\$12,039
Bookstore	\$0#	\$23,296	\$24,461	\$25,684
Room Rental	\$0#	\$3,600	\$3,780	\$3,969
Weddings	\$0#	\$0	\$7,500	\$7,875
Art Exhibits	\$0#	\$1,200	\$1,260	\$1,323
Adult Ed.	\$0#	\$2,400	\$2,520	\$2,646
Birthday Parties	\$0#	\$3,600	\$3,780	\$3,969
Plant Sale	\$0#	\$3,750	\$3,938	\$4,134
Summer Community Concert Series	\$0#	\$0	\$1,500	\$1,575
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$0	\$150,243	\$221,619	\$289,357
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Center Director Salary + Benefits	\$47,351.00	\$94,702	\$97,543	\$100,469
Education/Outreach Specialist Salary + Benefits	\$0#	\$65,312	\$67,271	\$69,290
Insurance - property and liability	\$0#	\$2,000	\$2,060	\$2,122
Cleaning Service	\$0#	\$6,500	\$6,695	\$6,896
Maintenance	\$0#	\$7,500	\$7,725	\$7,957
Utilities (phone, water, electric, internet)	\$0#	\$12,000	\$12,360	\$12,731
Office supplies, copy machine	\$0#	\$4,200	\$4,326	\$4,456
Security, fire monitoring, pest control	\$0#	\$3,000	\$3,090	\$3,183
Car (or mileage reimbursement)	\$0#	\$1,000	\$1,030	\$1,061
Maintenance Reserve Fund	\$0#	\$12,000	\$12,360	\$12,731
Programming, education materials and supplies	\$0#	\$10,000	\$10,300	\$10,609
Marketing materials	\$0#	\$6,250	\$4,000	\$3,750
Website maintenance	\$0#	\$0#	\$0#	\$0#
Concessions	\$0#	\$5,460	\$5,733	\$6,020
Bookstore	\$0#	\$11,648	\$12,230	\$12,842
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$47,351.00	\$241,572	\$246,724	\$254,115
OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	\$(47,351.00)	\$(91,329.00)	\$(25,104.67)	\$35,242.50
GRANTS	\$47,351	\$91,329	\$25,105	\$0
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,242.50

Start-Up Expenses

	Phase 1			Phase 1 Subtotal
	Lagoon Center w/ associated landscaping	Lagoon Center Parking & Utilities	Interpretive Exhibits Internal	
Construction Cost Summary	\$3,345,048.00	\$1,638,795.00	\$250,000.00	\$5,233,843.00
Indirect Costs & Contingencies (% varies)	\$1,087,140.60	\$483,116.77	\$-	\$1,570,257.37
Arch/Eng Docs. LEED & Permit fees (20%)	\$669,009.60	\$327,759.00	\$50,000.00	\$1,046,768.60
Total	\$5,101,198.20	\$2,449,670.77	\$300,000.00	\$7,850,868.97

Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4		Phase 5	TOTAL
Ranger Maintenance Building	Amphitheatre	Site Grading / Landscaping	Interpretive / Art Exhibits External	Outlook Stations (2)	
\$493,581.00	\$161,033.00	\$983,103.00	\$200,000.00	\$128,079.00	\$7,199,639.00
\$150,937.07	\$89,759.79	\$279,299.56	\$0	\$82,175.49	\$2,172,429.28
\$98,716.20	\$32,206.60	\$196,620.60	\$40,000.00	\$25,615.80	\$1,439,927.80
\$743,234.27	\$282,999.39	\$1,459,023.16	\$240,000.00	\$235,870.29	\$10,811,996.08

Phasing Groups:

1. Phase One includes construction of the main Lagoon Center, as well as the parking area, lighting and infrastructure, fixtures and furniture, interior interpretive exhibits and landscaping and is anticipated to cost \$7.85 million.
2. Phase Two includes construction of the ranger maintenance building, which is anticipated to cost \$750,000.
3. Phase Three includes the amphitheater, at a cost of \$283,000.
4. Phase Four includes remainder site grading, auxiliary trails and exterior exhibits at a cost of \$1,700,000.
5. Phase Five includes auxiliary viewing platforms at a cost of \$235,000.

APPENDIX

Detailed information on other San Diego Coastal Nature Centers

Mission

Center	Mission
Batiqitos	"Preserving, protecting, and enhancing the Batiqitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve and its associated watershed, riparian, coastal sage and upland habitats."
Buena Vista	"Conservation through education, advocacy, and monitoring."
Chula Vista	"The Chula Vista Nature Center is dedicated to serving the public by providing a quality nature center/living museum experience while promoting coastal resource conservation and environmental stewardship through education."
Muth	"To promote and support the protection and preservation of the CA coastal wetlands through environmental education."
San Elijo	"To preserve, protect and enhance the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve and its watershed."
Tecolote	Restoration and preservation of Tecolote Canyon.
Tijuana	"To preserve, protect, and manage the natural and cultural resources of the Research Reserve, enhance scientific understanding and education, ensuring compatible recreation and resource use for the benefit of present and future generations."
Torrey Pines	Conservation of the Torrey Pine, and the preservation and interpretation of the natural features of the Torrey Pines State National Reserve.
Other- Back Bay Science Center (Newport Bay)	"Provide a hands-on facility where students and the public can study and enjoy the estuarine ecology of Newport Bay and the marine ecology of the ocean, and to promote natural resource conservation and stewardship throughout the watershed."

Facilities and Exhibits

Center	Facility	Interior Exhibits	Exterior Exhibits
Batiquitos	Tiny construction trailer with a few items for sale	Stuffed birds, mammals	Kiosk for posters/upcoming events
Buena Vista Audubon	Small building with small classroom and gift shop	Stuffed birds, mammals	Kiosk with Fish and Game posters: Wetland, Flora/Fauna; Your watershed; Water conversation
Chula Vista	12,000 square foot building, with a gift shop, and room rental space.	'Shark & Ray' viewing at aquarium, coastal wetlands interpretive displays; interactive exhibits at Discovery Center including sea turtles, moon jelly, and marsh zones.	Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden (native & drought-resistant plants), Aviaries
Muth	10,000 square foot building with separate classroom, theater, office space; gift items on counter	Interactive displays: Uncover hidden animals, How a wetland is like a sponge, eggbeater, Video-birds in different seasons	Kiosk for posters/upcoming events
San Elijo	4,200 square feet with limited classroom space	History of region, what is a watershed, lagoon, estuary; live snake, lizard, frog	Interpretive signs
Tecolote	Building with office, separate education building	Different habitats, Kumeyaay tools, live snakes, terminals to watch bird videos	Kumeyaay Village reproduction, trails
Tijuana	Large main building with small gift shop; additional office/meeting room building	Interactive displays: What birds eat (probe for food), 7 min. video "The Science Guy", Turn lens sideways to see secret life	Minimal interpretive signs
Torrey Pines	Small building with small theater, small office, gift shop	Stuffed birds, mammals, Kumeyaay tools	Small interpretive signs

K-6 Educational Programs

Center	Who Developed	Who Conducts	Grade Levels	Curriculum	Approx. No. Students at one time	Approx. No. Students Annually	Fee
Batiquitos	Volunteer docents	Volunteer docents	K-12, but get mostly K-5 students	Catered to request of teachers, and topics have included: Wetland habitats; Birds; Insects; Geology; Native American heritage; Mud creatures; Water quality.	Try to limit 10 students per docent	1,500	None
Buena Vista Audubon	Education Coordinator (volunteers previously developed the programs)	Volunteer nature guides Native Plant Club	Grades K-5	K (The Senses); 1-2 (Neighborhood Animals); 3 (What Makes a Bird a Bird); 4-5 (Wetland Habitat; Lagoon History; Predator Prey; Our Insect World; Plants); Native Plant Walks	40	4,000	None
Chula Vista	Elementary School District's Science Resource Teacher	School teachers (self-conducted, w/ docents' help)	Grades K-5	Developed to integrate into science & social studies curriculum – learn about wetlands, water sheds, and other natural resources.	30	15,000	None
Muth	OC Parks staff	Park rangers, volunteer naturalists	Grades 1-3	1 (Critter Connections); 2 (Mud Meals and Soil Stories); 3 (Avian Adaptations)	Classrooms can fit around 30 students	81,000 to 94,000 (estimate)	None
San Elijo	Education Director	Volunteer Docents	K-12 w/ focus on Grades 3-5	K-2 (Habitat Hunt); 3-5 (Adapt to your Habitat; Eat or Be Eaten; Living off the Land-Kumeyaay); 3-12 (Wetland Wonders)	3-4 classes/day	2,500 – 6,000 (estimate)	None
Tecolote	Rangers	Rangers With Ocean Discovery Institute	Mainly K-5, but also serve Pre-K to college	1-2 (Plant & bird walks; canyon hikes); 2 (Kumeyaay pottery); 3 (Kumeyaay lifestyle); 4 (Owl pellet dissection)	1 class (20-30 students)	4,500	None
Tijuana	Education Director (Parks and Recreation employee)	Teachers are taught by Director and 2 assistants to lead their own classes	Grades 1-12	Incorporate multiple class subjects and involve actual class-time prior to and after the visit. 1-6 (Marsh Awareness with Resources for Slough Habitats); 3-6 (Estuary Explorers); 9-12 (high school curriculum-adapted guide for teachers)	35-40 students	1,700	None
Torrey Pines	Interpreter	Volunteer docents	Grades 2-5	Can choose from : Reserve, Plants and Habitats; Ecosystems and Food Chains; Geology; Kumeyaay Indians; Ocean, Whales and Dolphins	Must be of same grade (or adjacent grade)	6,000	None

Other Programs

Center	Program	Who Conducts	Audience	Details	Frequency	Fee
Batiquitos	Club Pelican summer camp	City of Carlsbad and volunteer docents	Ages 7-11	Offers art classes alongside nature explorations; Very popular	3 weekly sessions per summer	\$65 to cover expenses (very little profit)
Buena Vista	Birding classes & fieldtrips	BV Audubon Society	Adults	Classes to improve birding skills; Trips and bird-counts	Monthly counts	Varies
Chula Vista	Sweetwater Safari	School teacher(self-conducted)	Grades 4-6	Hands-on program for classes which already visited.	By apt.	Free if qualified for grants, otherwise \$6-7 per student
	Guided Tours Birding Tours	Docents Docents	General Public Adults		W, Sa, Su Sundays	Admissions Admissions
Muth/ Newport Bay	Preschool programs	Park	Ages 2-8	Activities, crafts, stories, and walks	Weekly	\$5
	Summer Camp	Staff	Ages 6-12	6 hours	10 sessions	\$255/wk
	Walking Tours	Mountain & Sea Adventures	General public	Nocturnal creatures	Monthly	Free
	Sunset Stroll (Group)	Volunteer Naturalist	Groups of 10 or more	2 hour program	By apt.	\$3
	Scout Program	Park staff	Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts	Hands-on marine monitoring program	By apt.	\$7
	Marine Life Inventory	Volunteer Naturalist Dept. Fish and Game	Students aged 12+		By apt.	Free
San Elijo	Birding 101 Educational Program	Volunteer docents	Grades 9-12	Birds, biodiversity and the impact of human activity.	By apt.	None
Tecolote	Restoration	Friends of Tecolote Canyon	General public	Removing non-native vegetation, public & school education	Periodic	None
Tijuana	Jr. Rangers, Scout Groups	CA Dept of Parks and Rec., Fish & Wildlife Services	Ages 7-12	Learn about ecology of estuaries and disappearing ecosystem through hands-on activities	By apt.	None
Torrey Pines	Docent-guided walks	Volunteer docents	Nonprofits, college classes, private groups	Public weekend walks and walks for colleges/nonprofits are free	By apt.	\$5-10 for private groups

Organization Structure

Center	Who operates [Status]	Paid Employees	Who pays employees	Volunteer Organizations Involved	Volunteer Organization Role	Volunteer Staff/ Committees
Batiquitos	Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation [501c3]	None	n/a	Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation	Staff nature center, lead trail walks for students	President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Chair, Newsletter
Buena Vista	Friends of BV Audubon [501c3]	2 Part-time	Friends of BV Audubon	BV Audubon Society (chapter of National Audubon Society) Friends of BV Audubon	Staff center, outreach, bird counts, trails/grounds maintenance, Lead educational programs, fundraising	President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer, Christmas Bird Count, Conservation, Facilities /Exhibits, Field Trips, Gift Shop, Native Plant Club, Newsletter, Programs, Publicity, Volunteers
Chula Vista	Friends of the Chula Vista Nature Center [501c3]	Director, Secretary, Aquarist, Avian Specialist, Grounds Maintenance, Program Manager, Specialist, Veterinarian	Friends of the Chula Vista Nature Center	Friends of the Chula Vista Nature Center	501(3)(c) to staff and operate nature center, collect tax-exempt donations. Individual volunteers: Docents, staff gift shop, and work as aquarium, bird, garden, and maintenance crew.	Board of Trustees
Muth	Orange County [Govt Agency]	Park Rangers	County	Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends	Staff front desk with rangers, help lead educational programs, fundraising, gift shop	President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer, Volunteer, Programs, Business
San Elijo	San Diego County (OC Parks) [Govt Agency]	Park Rangers ED, Outreach Coordinator, Development Director, 2 Scientists, Program Asst.	County San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy	San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy	Educational Programs, Scientific Monitoring, Land acquisition, fundraising	Docents, trail maintenance, habitat restoration, bird counts
Tijuana	CA Dept of Parks and Rec. [Govt Agency]	Rangers, visitor center employees	State	Friends of San Diego Wildlife Refuge	Operate gift shop, train docents to lead walks	President, VP, Treasurer, Communications, Refuge Liaison, Bookstore, Membership
Torrey Pines	Torrey Pines Docent Society [501c3] Torrey Pines Association [501c3]	None	n/a	Torrey Pines Docent Society Torrey Pines Association	Staff Visitor Center, lead educational programs, newsletter Advocacy, fundraising	President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary, Communications, Programs, Children's Program, Training, Duty Coordination President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership

#

#

#