



# Rose Creek Chatter Fall 2010



~ An occasional newsletter from the Friends of Rose Creek ~

## Connecting Our Communities

### Rose Creek Native Plant Garden

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In the mid-1990s, the Nature School started the Native Plant Garden along Rose Creek just south of Garnet Avenue. Five years ago, the Friends of Rose Creek began an expansion project in conjunction with the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department, San Diego Canyonlands, the Nature School, and San Diego Earthworks. Eagle Scout service projects by local students have expanded the garden and provided other amenities. Now native songbirds flock to the creek and perch in the newly restored coastal sage scrub habitat while bees feed on the blooming natives.

Many hands make light work and we would love to borrow your hands for two hours on the second Saturday of every month from 10 AM until noon. Help weed, water, plant native species, and get involved with your creek and your community. We'll have snacks and beverages. Perfect for community service credit hours. Please wear sunscreen, closed-toe shoes, and a hat. Volunteers should bring water and heavy-duty work or gardening gloves. Visit [www.saverosecreek.org](http://www.saverosecreek.org) for details.



### Creek or Flood Control Channel?

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San Diego's riparian zones in or near our urban areas are struggling for survival. Typically, low flows characterize the coastal creeks and water generally occupies a small portion of the creek's natural floodplain in the summer months. Unfortunately, a lack of understanding of the needs of creeks has resulted in human beings' building houses and business in the natural flood plains of many of our creeks and riparian areas. Noise and numerous human activities often preclude native animals and birds from residing in the area.

When San Diego experiences heavy rains, the creeks try to spread themselves out horizontally, occasionally into the built environment, which causes conflict between the needs of the natural and the built environment.

Historically, the City of San Diego has focused on temporary solutions such as creating concrete channels to speed the storm waters into our ocean or bull dozing precious riparian areas full of willow trees and mule fat in order to increase the velocity of the runoff.



*Which do you prefer?*

While this approach decreases some flood risks, it does nothing to protect the places where Osprey and Red Shouldered Hawks hunt or where the Snowy Egret and the Great Blue Heron fish. This approach also contributes to urban pollutants being washed directly into our oceans, and in the case of Rose Creek, into Mission Bay.

Currently a consortium of groups including San Diego Coastkeeper, San Diego Canyonlands, the Friends of Rose Canyon and the Friends of Rose Creek are working on alternatives to destroying native habitat in order to protect the built environment while creating wild places in our neighborhoods and improving the water quality in our beaches and bays by filtering urban and storm runoff through the natural flood plains of our creeks where ever possible.

Additional assistance is needed to review reports prepared by the City of San Diego, provide comments and help engage with government agencies to insure that no new losses of wetlands occur and that our homes and businesses remain safe during San Diego's

winter storms. Southern California has lost over 90% of its original wetlands and water quality in our oceans has suffered because of the extensive loss of marshes and sloughs. If you're interested in helping out or just want to learn more, call Karin 858-405-7503.

## **Native Trees**

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Planting replacement native trees for the aging Eucalyptus by the creek is a first step in the Friends of Rose Creek's strategy to revitalize the arboretum originally planted in the 1950s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Our first batch of trees including Coast Live Oak, Torrey Pines and Mexican Elderberry were planted by San Diego Urban Corps in the spring of 2008 and are doing well. We hope to plant a second batch of trees this fall if we can find the volunteer labor to help with weekly tree watering in the first year. The trees help absorb carbon emissions and beautify the area for visitors and the children attending Bay View Terrace Elementary School and Mission Bay High School—both schools overlook Rose Creek.

## **The Osprey of Rose Creek**

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Osprey, also known as Fish Hawk or *Pandion haliaetus*, dine primarily on fish and hover above the water searching for prey. When a fish is spotted, the Osprey dives towards the water and grabs the fish with its talons. The fish is then flown to a perch where the fish becomes dinner. Like eagles and hawks, it is a diurnal raptor—feeding during the daytime. In the 1950's and 60's, populations of Osprey declined due to heavy pesticide usage – as impacted so many of our bird species. The good news is that the Osprey are making a come back at the Rose Creek Estuary. Look for the pair of Osprey that fish near the Rose Creek Cottage just south of the Garnet Avenue Bridge. When not air born, they often perch in the Eucalyptus trees adjacent to the Cottage.

## **The Friends of Rose Creek**

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The Friends of Rose Creek is a community group focused on the lower portion of Rose Creek from Hwy-52 to Mission Bay Park.

*Our vision is for lower Rose Creek to be an open space park providing recreational and learning opportunities and a clean, healthy, aesthetically pleasing environment for residents, visitors, businesses, and native plants and animals, while serving as an accessible link for bicyclists and pedestrians to move between Rose Canyon Park, Marian Bear Park, Mission Bay Park, and surrounding communities*

[www.saverosecreek.org](http://www.saverosecreek.org)

*\*A member of the Rose Creek Watershed Alliance*

*\*A Friends Group of San Diego Canyonlands Inc.*