

# SANTA FE DAM NATURE CENTER

## NEWSLETTER



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### New Mobile Water Lab

*Introducing a New Outreach and Presentation Tool of the SGMRC Nature Centers - The Mobile Water Lab!!*

By Dr. Ann Croissant

Long in the planning, the new MOBILE WATER LAB & OUTDOOR CLASSROOM has finally arrived!!

The image below tells the story from sketched design and customization to the mobile lab logo and installation on the finished project. The vision for the tool is represented beautifully by the Mobile Water Lab logo designed by Teresa Young.

The mobile lab will be on the road come January 2011! It will be showcased at the Santa Fe Dam/Nature Center Saturday, January 30. The unveiling of the new resource is coordinated with the Winter Breakfast, Trail Walk & Poetry Read Celebrating Volunteers! (More information on the Winter Breakfast is found on page 2 of the Newsletter.)

Although a dream five years ago, the mobile lab is a research unit, outreach tool, and outdoor classroom. Now a reality, thanks go to volunteer dedication, generous funding, and phenomenal talents! The mobile lab has the versatility to be used for research in



A worker put the last touch on the new Mobile Water Lab.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

New Mobile Water Lab!!!	1
Calendar of Events	1
Nature Center Winter Pancake Breakfast Invitation	2
Clean and green	2
Nature Center 2011 Bird Calendar on Sale Now	3
Life in the world of a piece of trash	4
Photographer's Corner	6

the Field and sharing with Universities, as well as an Auxiliary Lab Unit with on-site laboratories where water quality sampling, testing, and research are a high priority in SGMRC's continuing contribution to water resources data and natural resources partnerships.

Biological Surveys and Research Projects will be greatly enhanced with the availability, access, and quality of research equipment, as well as technology and data-collection possibilities. Technical Workshops and Trainings can also center around the resources and equipment immediately available in the portable unit.

Being versatile, the mobile lab can quickly be transformed into a user friendly educational tool to communicate with children, families and across cultures through a variety of formats and media for nature center programming, schools, colleges, parks, community centers, senior centers, libraries, Earthday, photo shows, mini-fairs, energy demonstrations, nature

*Continue on page 7...*

### Calendar of Events

*Dec 4, Sat 10:00am - Guided nature walk*

*Dec 18, Sat 8:00am - Guided bird walk*

*Jan 8, Sat 10:00am - Guided nature walk*

*Jan 15, Sat 8:00am - Guided bird walk*

*Jan 29, Sat 8:30am - Winter Pancake Breakfast*

## Nature Center Winter Pancake Breakfast Invitation - Breakfast, Short Hike & Poetry Reading

**Saturday, January 29, 2011  
Santa Fe Dam Nature Center**

SGMRC would like to invite you to attend our Winter Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, January 29, 2011. The purpose of this gathering is to celebrate volunteerism and say thanks to Nature Center Volunteers in the valley (Santa Fe Dam, Galster, Glendora, and Whittier Narrows Nature Center). It will be a great opportunity for everyone to relax and catch up. Also invited are SGMRC board members, Santa Fe Dam Park staff, and Friends of Santa Fe Dam.

The pancake breakfast will be served between 8:30 to 10:00 at Santa Fe Dam Nature Center. The menu includes pancakes, bacon, sausage, ham, fruit, etc. Beverages include coffee, juice, and soft drinks. After the breakfast, we will have a trail walk to look for evidence and signs of Spring. Members from Whittier Narrows Nature Center will perform Nature Poetry Readings.

This pancake breakfast is free, but we do need to have a registration for all who attend. The public and friends of your group are also welcomed. Please RSVP with Thomas Chang at [tchang65@gmail.com](mailto:tchang65@gmail.com) to help us to get a headcount for the food. The

### Wish List

*The Nature Center needs aquarium tanks, heating pads, heating rocks, heating lamps, bird feeders, bird seeds, and bird houses. Bring your donated items to Nature Center. We also need volunteers to pull invasive plants along the Nature Trail.*

### CRV Items

*Bring your CRV items (i.e.: plastic water bottles and aluminum cans). We recycle these items and then use the money for the care and feeding of our Nature Center animals.*

pancake breakfast will be postponed to the following Saturday, February 5th, if rain is expected in the forecast. Feel free to contact me if you have any question or comment. Hope to see you ALL there!!

Thanks for helping us CELEBRATE ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS!!

Dr. Ann Croissant

## Clean and green: People wade in to spruce up Whittier Narrows' riverbanks

By Linda Fields Gold, Pasadena Star-News Staff Writer

SOUTH EL MONTE - Dozens of people braved the rainy weather Saturday to help clean trash from the San Gabriel River at Whittier Narrows.

The event is the first of its kind in nearly a decade, in part to the short staffing of the Nature Center.

"The park is shorthanded," said Bill Wetzel, Scout master of Cub Scout Troop 558. "They are calling more and more on Scouts to support them."

Cub Scouts from as far away as Inglewood came to help with the cleanup by assisting with parking and directions.

"It shows the boys a sense of community,

*Continue on page 4...*



*River clean-up organizer, Terry Young, received a certificate of appreciation from U.S. Rep. Judy Chu.  
Photo by Lou Orr*

## Nature Center 2011 Bird Calendar on Sale Now

By Thomas Chang

### Get Your Calendar Today!

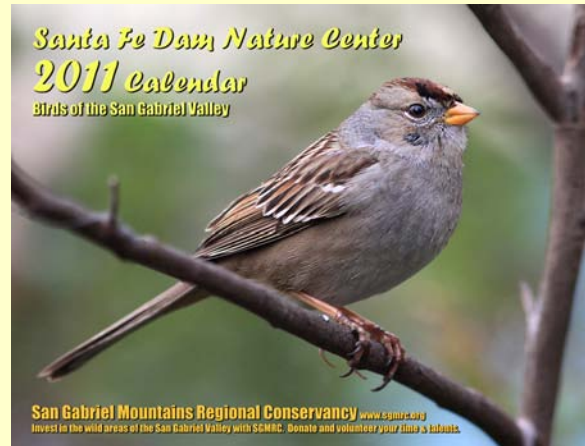
The Nature Center 2011 fundraising Calendar sales are off to a great start! Thanks to everyone who's already purchased a copy and helped support the Nature Center. Special thanks to *Friends of Santa Fe Dam* for their generous sponsorship. Also, thanks to the Nature Center volunteer's help in this important fundraising event.

All proceeds from the sales of the Calendar will be used to promote nature education, and feed the birds and other animals at the Center. The Santa Fe Dam Nature Center is entirely operated by volunteers, donations, and fundraising projects.

The high quality, educationally and artistically collectable calendar makes a great gift for bird enthusiast and people who want to learn the common birds of the San Gabriel Valley, or anyone who wishes to experience the beauty of nature at its best. Every time you turn a page of our Bird Calendar a new and different bird greets you!

The 2011 Bird Calendar is ideal for use in home or office. It is priced at \$10 and available from the following locations:

*Santa Fe Dam Nature Center, Irwindale*  
*Galster Park Nature Center, West Covina* (626)919-0715  
*Glendora Conservancy Nature Center*  
*SGMRC Office, Glendora* (626)335-1771



*White Crowned Sparrow, Calendar Front Cover*

*Village Book Shop, Glendora* (626)335-5270  
*Powell Camera, Covina* (626)332-1253  
 SGMRC Website Store [www.sgmrc.org](http://www.sgmrc.org)

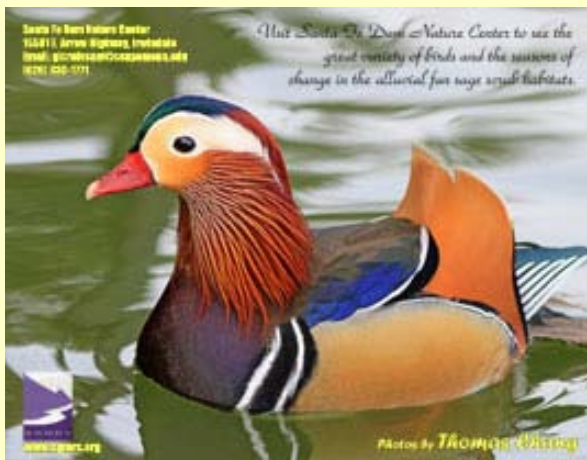
Or, you can send \$10 plus \$5 shipping to

**SGMRC Calendar**  
**P.O. Box 963**  
**Glendora, CA 91740**

Please provide a shipping address and an Email. We will notify you when the calendar is shipped.

If you are interested in helping sell the calendars to your school and organization, please contact us at [glcroissant@csupomona.edu](mailto:glcroissant@csupomona.edu). Or you can help by simply tell your friends, families, school, neighbors, and coworkers about our beautiful 2011 fundraising Calendar.

Thank you!



*Mandarin Duck, Calendar Back Cover*

NATURE CENTER 2011 BIRD CALENDAR			
Jan	<i>California Quail</i>	Feb	<i>Lesser Goldfinch</i>
Mar	<i>Cactus Wren</i>	Apr	<i>House Finch</i>
May	<i>Western Blue Bird</i>	June	<i>American Kestrel</i>
July	<i>Killdeer</i>	Aug	<i>Great Blue Heron</i>
Sep	<i>Wood Duck</i>	Oct	<i>Mallard Duck</i>
Nov	<i>Lesser Scaup</i>	Dec	<i>Canada Goose</i>
Jan	<i>Burrowing Owl</i>		
Front Cover			<i>White Crowned Sparrow</i>
Back Cover			<i>Mandarin Duck</i>

*Clean and green: Continued from page 2...*

which is in line with our values," said Virginia Wetzel, Scout master of Troop 2005.

Volunteers were given trash bags and gloves to pick up the trash, which mainly consisted of plastic bags and Styrofoam. When left in the water, the trash items are ingested by animals such as birds and fish, causing them to think they are full, eventually dying of starvation.

"We are doing this so the community can wrap their hearts around this," said Terry Young, organizer of the event.

Because of the rain causing the river to rise, participants could not get near to the river and instead cleaned around the river trail.

"This helps to allow the biodiversity of our area to survive," lawyer Jeff El-Hajj said. "If this sanctuary is polluted, the purpose isn't served."

Trash bags piled up, some filled with items such as sweatshirts, liquor bottles and plastic cups. The water from the San Gabriel River seeps into the groundwater, which is the water used by residents.

"It's an accumulation of everyone dumping stuff," bird-watcher Ed Simpson said. "It gets pretty ugly."

Trash could be seen flowing down the river, becoming trapped on rocks and in plants. This trash can be a breeding ground for black



*San Gabriel river clean-up volunteers.  
Photo by Lou Orr*

flies and mosquitoes.

"The black flies attach to the trash," Carol Anne Hagele said. "And there is so much Styrofoam, it's like walking on a mattress, and you can tell you're standing on feet of it."

The event also provided a bonding experience for families and clubs, as children work with parents to make the river a cleaner place.

"This area allows for people to do things they would not ordinarily," Young said. "There aren't that many places to be outside in nature."

This article was originally published in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune of the San Gabriel Valley News Group on October 30, 2010.

## Life in the world of a piece of trash..... At the San Gabriel River Clean-up at the Whittier Narrows Dam October 30, 2010

By Terry Young, M.S.

I was once a tall tree on the North side of a forest in Washington State. I am not sure exactly, but I think I was somewhere where I could, if I had eyes, see the ocean over a ridge. I could feel the water in the air and when it was cold, the sap was slower on the other side of me under the bark.

Well, one day I got cut down and the ground, water and air disappeared. I was sliced and



*Volunteers taking a break.  
Photo by Lou Orr*

shredded into tiny pieces. Most of what I was, was baled and trucked away. Eventually, I became a stack of paper, receipt rolls, toilet paper, and lots of cups for coffee.

I was pushed and then mashed flat into a die, then stacked against myself in rows of hundreds of paper cups. As a tree, I could never see my back ends and front ends all at the same time! Then I was in a shop and hot coffee was poured inside of me. Then, I was crushed and tossed on the street. Then a bus ran over me. Rain fell and water took me to this hole in the street. I fell into the abyss where other cups were mostly made of plastic, a by-product of petroleum. They told stories of what it was like millions of years ago when they, too were plants and when no bacteria could digest them because the bacteria had not yet developed enzymes to break down the carbohydrates they made, which was cellulose. Plants ruled the world and insects could not eat them back then!

As I was wondering what it must have been like to rule the world when we were all flushed out into storm drains. There was more and more plastic things and bags. Then, we were tossed out into a body of water that plunged down a vast open pipe. Birds of various colors followed us. When we landed in some knotted brush and roots of trees and bushes, the birds came at us for the tiny chunks of stuff we carried with us from the drains.

A hand came down and picked me up. It was a young teenage girl who was talking with her

friend. The two of them picked many of the 'me' I had not seen since I was shredded. I even found pieces of me as Q-tips and parking tickets! But there was more of the plastic than of me. In fact for every one of me there was seven or eight times the amount of plastic and styrofoam!

The two girls were met by other young people and we were tied up into the black bags, counted, weighed, and then tossed into a dumpster. The trip to the dump was short. Sea gulls flew over head. A huge backhoe pushed dirt and trash on top and then, it went silent.

I am now wrapped up with pieces of Arundo donax, and some chunks of plants that do not remember what they once were. I can feel the bacteria. Some worms have crawled inside me. I am becoming dirt and giving life to the worms. Maybe, one day I could be a tree again? However, the plastic cups and other stuff look just like the day I first met them, squashed indigestible lifeless.

### **Contribution & Sponsorship**

*Many big thanks to those wonderful people who thought of the Santa Fe Dam Nature Center when giving their donations.*

*Did you know our Nature Center is entirely operated by volunteers and money donations from the public? All donation and sponsorship of projects are welcomed. Your tax deductible contribution will benefit the environment, promote nature education, and keeps the Nature Center open. Thank you.*



*Volunteers putting away the trashes at the river clean-up.*

## Photographer's Corner

These beautiful insects' photographs were taken by Lou Orr, our reader and nature photographer. Lou used a Nikon digital camera and a 200 mm 1:1 ratio Micro lens with the Nikon R1C1 micro speedlight attached. All photos were manually focused using a tripod and a remote shutter release, and they were shot between f16 to f32 to get sharp details.

Please send your photograph and subject line to [sfdnews@yahoo.com](mailto:sfdnews@yahoo.com)



*An adult Katydid which is a "true" bug that hatches from its egg as a nymph. As the nymph grows, it sheds it's exoskeleton many times before it becomes a winged adult.*



*A female Mantis. Notice how fat her abdomen appears! She will lay hundreds of eggs encased in pouches that she will attach to branches. These pouches are made of an insulating material that protects the eggs from freezing during the cold winter. The young will hatch in the spring with their first meal being one of their siblings.*



*Two Mantids mating. In many instances, the larger female eats the male after, or even during the mating process. This guy was lucky as she had just finished eating a honey bee a few minutes before!*



*An adult Praying Mantis which also is a "true" bug having no pupae state. Unlike a butterfly that emerges from a chrysalis.*



*Flowers are among my favorite things to photograph when birds are scarce. This one was my favorite of all the roses I photographed this fall.*

*New Mobile Water Lab: Continued from page 1...*

activities, stewardship training, college demonstrations, and more!

You will have to see it to believe it when the mobile unit is combined with the expertise, training, performing, and talented Mobile Lab Team!

Next year, 2011 is planned to be the test flight, pilot year, for the kinds of research and programming the mobile lab will be tested for. Ideas are certainly welcomed; please let us know! 2012 will then be planned to refine research and programs for more outreach scheduling, and the need to add additional Mobile Lab Teams and/or yet another customized mobile lab, perhaps with different strategies.

Be sure to let us know what you think! Share your creative ideas with us as we grow and expand our research, training, and education outreach through the mobile lab!

Thanks from SGMRC for gifts/donations from Macy's, Plegadis, Patagonia, Mosquito & Vector Control, Village Book Shop, Edison, Kaiser-Permanente, Earthquake Solutions, and more. The MOBILE LAB will be taking Registrations and Recruiting Volunteers for

### Volunteer Needed!

*Volunteers play an essential role in the Natural Area, operating the Nature Center at Santa Fe Dam. If you want to help preserve the environment and promote conservation, we offer a multitude of opportunities to volunteer. Please email SGMRC for volunteer information.*

#### 5 Easy Steps to Become a Volunteer

1. Attend orientation
2. Review the Docent Training & Protocols
3. Complete application and fingerprinting
4. Build skills by shadow-training with docents
5. Attend ongoing education classes and outings offered throughout the year

presentations on a variety of topics, workshops, research, and more in January 2011!

Congratulations to the donors and mobile project team for another FIRST for the San Gabriel Valley, River, Watershed Region of Los Angeles County! Maybe the first of its kind in the County with the unique design and focus!

Now you know - WHATTIZZIT??? A versatile Mobile Water Lab and a whole lot more!

Special Thanks to the Mobile Lab Project Team: Teresa Young, Jackie Doornik, and Ricardo Montijo of SGMRC!

Contact Dr. Ann Croissant/SGMRC for more information on 2011 registration and recruitment procedures at [glcroissant@csupomona.edu](mailto:glcroissant@csupomona.edu)

### Nature Center Hours

Tuesday to Thursday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Friday to Sunday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Closed on Monday, holidays or rain

### Saturday Programs

1st Saturday: Guided Nature Walk  
2nd Saturday: Nature Talk  
3rd Saturday: Bird Walk (8 a.m.)  
4th Saturday: Habitat Rangers  
5th Saturday: Bugs / Special Projects

*The Santa Fe Dam Nature Center Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication promoting the preservation and enjoyment of the Santa Fe Dam Natural Area. Please come, enjoy, Learn and volunteer.*

To receive a newsletter via email, Contact Thomas Chang at [sfdnews@yahoo.com](mailto:sfdnews@yahoo.com).

All past issues of the Newsletter can be found at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sqvnaturecenters/files/>



*Santa Fe Dam Nature Center 2011 Bird Calendar  
features 15 common birds of the San Gabriel Valley.  
Get your copy today!*

## Moonlight Fishing at Santa Fe Dam

The Friends of Santa Fe Dam offers moonlight fishing at Santa Fe Dam. This family affair takes place on the last Friday of every month from April through September. Children younger than 15 are welcomed at no charge.

### TIME

The last Friday of every month - 6pm to 6am the following Saturday morning, April through September

### FEE

Adults (Age 18+) \$10  
Youth (Age 16-17) \$5  
Children (15 & Under) Free

For more information call 626-3341065  
Email:

## Nature Center Volunteers

Alex Begg  
Nancy Begg  
Nate Benesi  
Thomas Chang  
Taylor Chen  
Juan Cuevas  
Dr. Ann Croissant  
Dr. Gerald Croissant  
Carolyn Echeverria  
Fred Echeverria  
Jerry Elizalda  
Judy Elizalda  
Michael Hoare  
Dee Dee Hussey  
Ray Jillson  
Carolyn Laskowsky  
Ray Lowe  
Charlotte Luna  
June Luna  
Cathie Lou Parker  
Shaun Molyneux  
Janet Rodriguez  
Terry Young

*The Santa Fe Dam Nature Center would like to thank all the volunteers for their hard work, dedication, and hundreds of hours donated each year.*

*Thank you!*

## Santa Fe Dam Nature Center Newsletter

Editor: Thomas Chang

*If you have an article you feel would follow the interests of this publication, please feel free to submit it. The deadline is the 24th of January, March, May, July, September, and November. All comments are welcomed.*

Email your article and comments to:  
[sfdnews@yahoo.com](mailto:sfdnews@yahoo.com)