

New use for old strawberry stand

The next time you pass the Strawberry Stand on Via de la Valle, imagine an eye-catching structure with a ranger's jeep parked outside!

Renovation of the 300 square foot stand, just east of I-5, as a park ranger's office and information stand for the San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration Project and River Valley Park could begin as early as this year. Conceptual plans have been approved by the Citizens Advisory Board and final plans are expected to go before Community Planning Boards and San Diego City Council this summer.

Although the site of the strawberry stand is earmarked for an Interpretive Center as part of the restoration project (perhaps as long as five years in the future), the Park's Joint Powers Authority (JPA) wanted to bring the project to the public's attention earlier. When County Supervisor Pam Slater secured grant money for the River Park in 2001, JPA Executive Director Dick Bobertz began meeting with Southern California Edison (SCE) to consider a temporary facility for the site. The goal is to serve the interests of both City and County residents in preservation of the area's natural habitats now.

Almost spontaneously there was a consensus among several interested groups that the strawberry stand could be renovated cost-effectively and attractively to accommodate a small interpretive area. SCE donated the stand and agreed to the temporary use of the property. Temporary constructions and landscaping that could be moved when the Lagoon Restoration begins extensive grading on the site, and reused as part of the permanent project, began to take shape.

This Spring the JPA Citizens Advisory Board looked at and liked the idea. They voted in favor of the project with the following comments:

- recycling the strawberry stand is a positive connection to the recent history of the area;
- the unique shape and roof line of the proposed remodel was considered interesting and an attractive draw to passers-by;
- modular buildings that could be easily moved on and off the site should be investigated also as an alternative.

If you live in the area, and especially in Carmel Valley, we urge you to check your community calendar and attend that Planning Board's meeting when the final plans come up for review. If you would like to get more involved in this exciting project and possible related activities, call us at (858) 755-6061.



We hope the area may also become a central location for docent and volunteer programs related to the Lagoon and River Valley Park and even provide a base for scientific research and educational programs on coastal wetlands!

—Ann Gardner

Also in this issue.....

Why protect the river valley?.....	2
Opening of trail segment.....	2
Map of new trail segment.....	2
Grand Avenue Overlook.....	3
Membership.....	4

Why Protect the San Dieguito River Valley?

As it flows through the center of San Diego County, east to west from Volcan Mountain to Del Mar, the San Dieguito River and its major tributaries pass through some of the County's most beautiful natural areas. Over thousands of years, the effects of erosion and subsequent downstream siltation have created an extraordinary array of topographic features that set the San Dieguito River Valley apart from many of the other river valleys in the County. The steep canyon slopes, such as those found in Clevenger Canyon, combined with the broad floodplains that characterize Pamo Valley and San Pasqual Valley support a diverse population of plants and animals. Numerous rare, endangered, and sensitive species occur within this Valley including the California Gnatcatcher, Arroyo Toad, Least Bell's Vireo, and Del Mar Sand Aster. Due to the diversity and abundance of bird species in and around Lake Hodges, the National Audubon Society has designated Lake Hodges as an Important Bird Area. Recent surveys indicate that Lake Hodges supports some 200 species of breeding, wintering, and migratory birds, of which 13 of these species are considered sensitive or endangered.

In addition to its natural resources, the San Dieguito River Valley also has a rich cultural heritage dating back more than 9,000 years. The earliest known Native American occupation in San Diego County is located within the river valley downstream of Lake Hodges. There is also a long history of agricultural activities in the Valley. These activities continue today in the San Pasqual Valley, which has been designated as an Agricultural Preserve by the City of San Diego.

Why protect the San Dieguito River Valley? The San Dieguito River Valley provides one of the last opportunities to glimpse into San Diego's past — to understand what the County looked like, smelled like, and felt like, before it was developed. By preserving the River Valley, we give our

children's children the opportunity to observe and appreciate the valley's diverse assortment of plants and animals. The public lands and open spaces within the valley provide an escape from the hectic world we have created, providing a place to observe the wonders of nature or simply to walk, run, or ride for the sole purpose of improving the health of our bodies and our minds.

We encourage you to experience the San Dieguito River Valley by visiting one of the many areas within the valley open to the public.

—Vicki Touchstone

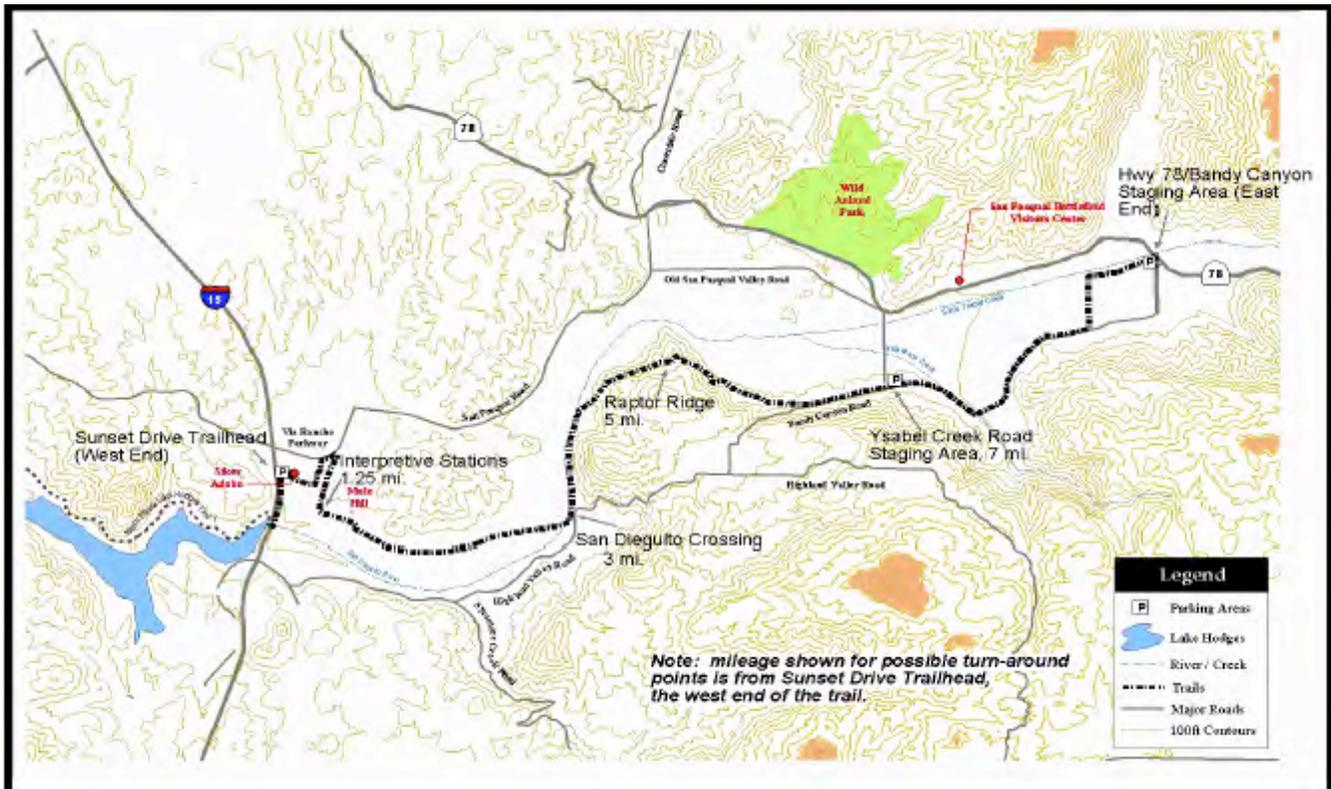
San Pasqual Valley Trail Grand Opening.

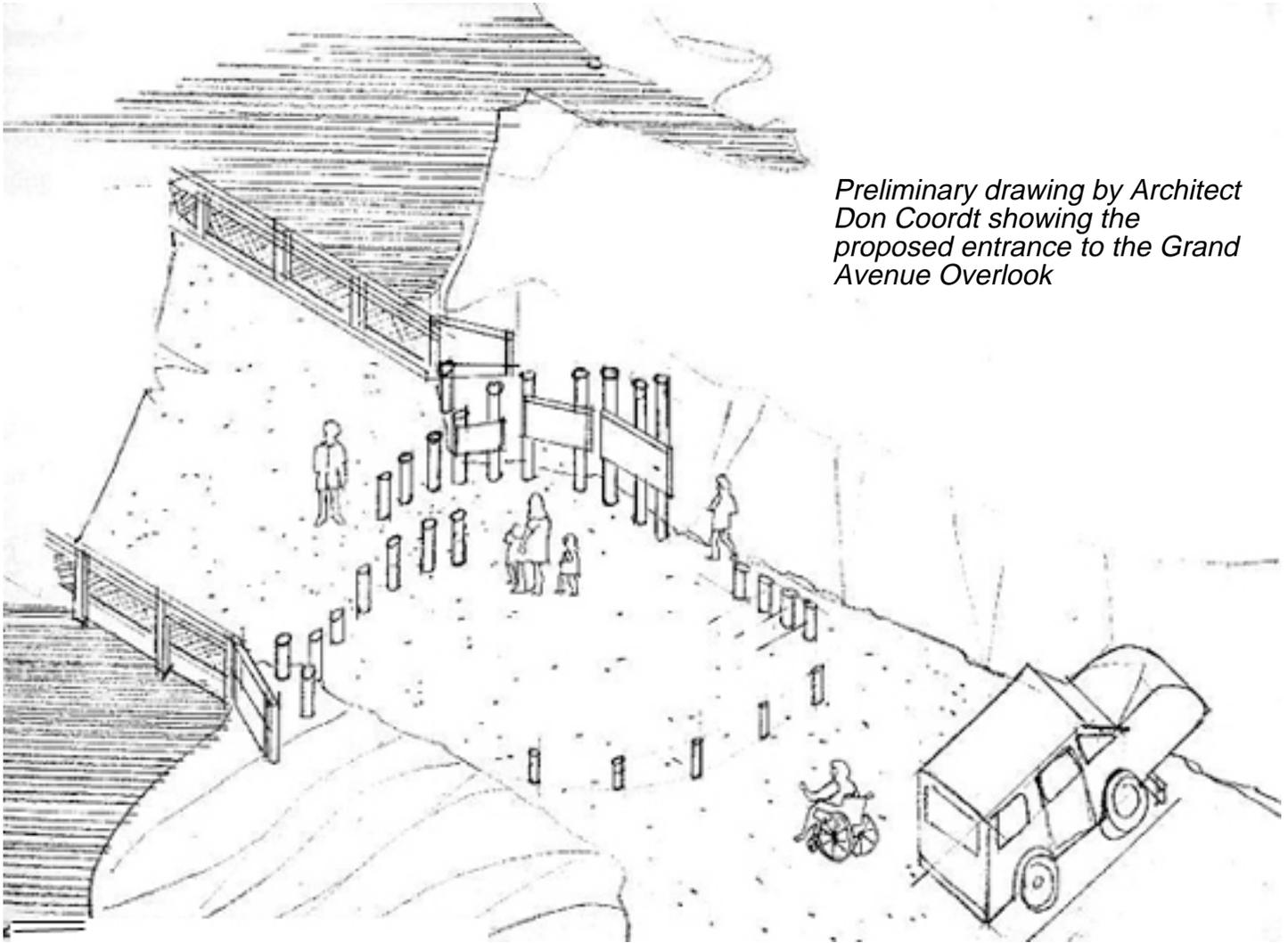
On June 1, 2002, public officials and many volunteers inaugurated the Mule Hill/San Pasqual Valley Trail, a 10-mile segment of the Coast-to-Crest Trail. The trail, shown on the map below, was constructed with a combination of local, state and federal funds amounting to \$1.3 million and is managed by the San Dieguito River Park.

To find the trail head, look in your Thomas Guide 2002 on page 1150, B3. The trail head is located south of the North County Fair Shopping Center, at the Sikes Adobe Ranch house. The trail leads 1.5 miles east to the Mule Hill Interpretive Station. The remaining 8.75 miles will take you through the San Pasqual Valley Agricultural preserve. The trail can be accessed from the east as well as the west and from points in between.

Many years in the making, this trail segment has benefited from the long, arduous efforts of public officials, staff members and volunteers who made the dream come true.

—Jacqueline Winterer





Preliminary drawing by Architect Don Coordt showing the proposed entrance to the Grand Avenue Overlook

Grand Avenue Overlook

Several months ago, Supervisor Pam Slater secured an award of \$35,000 to help create the Grand Avenue Overlook Interpretive site. At a time when the implementation of the San Dieguito Wetland Restoration Project is delayed by lawsuits filed against some aspects of the project, planning for the preservation of a large section of the bridge has sustained our spirits.

Although most of the Grand Avenue Bridge, located in Del Mar, was slated for demolition because it led to an abandoned site, the San Dieguito River Park JPA, at the urging of local community members, has reconsidered this drastic measure and will try to salvage most of the handsome bridge to be redesigned as a viewing platform overlooking the lagoon and its wildlife.

The Grand Avenue Bridge is a wooden structure over the lagoon, built in 1943 to provide access from the west to the naval facility. It is considered "historic" in that it is more than 50 years old. It was, at the time, a common type of bridge built during the war effort, using local materials and workmanship. The wood used and the methods of construction are typical of the technology and materials available at the time.

With the participation of interested parties, Don Coordt, a local architect and long-time member of the Del Mar Lagoon

Committee, has developed a plan for the demolition of 2 sections of the old bridge and the restoration of the remainder as an interpretive site overlooking the San Dieguito Lagoon.

The plans are now almost completed and wait for the San Dieguito Lagoon Wetland Restoration Project to get underway.

—*Jacqueline Winterer*

FOR TWO YEARS YOU COULD
SERVE A TERM AS A BOARD
DIRECTOR AND HELP PRESERVE
RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE AND
VALUABLE HERITAGE

We would welcome new members to our Board.
 Please call 755-4460 for information.

The **VALLEY ALERT** is the Newsletter of the Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley, a citizens' group, incorporated in 1986, whose purpose is to preserve and protect open space in the San Dieguito River Valley system through the legislative process.

Board of Directors:

Jacqueline Winterer

Ann Gardner

Jerry Finnell

Mary Farrell

Candice Bowman

Vicki Touchstone

Bill Michalsky

Ed Greene

Associate Director:

Alice Goodkind

Add your voice and become a Friend of the San Dieguito River Valley — before it's too late.

\$25 Individual
\$50 Sponsor
\$100 Patron
\$ Other

Name _____

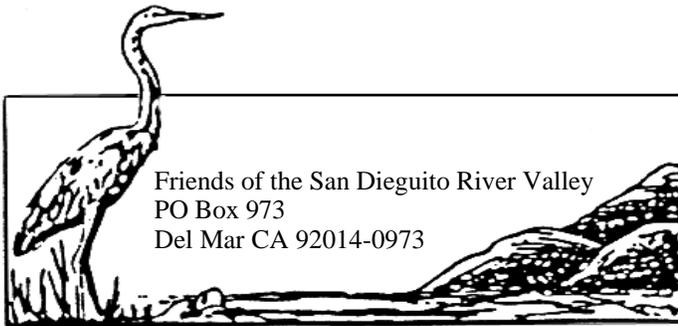
Address _____

_____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Contributions are not tax-deductible.

Detach and mail to: FSDRV, PO Box 973,
Del Mar, CA 92014-0973



Bulk Rate
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 160
Del Mar CA