



The Dunes Center is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit.

The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center

Promoting the conservation and restoration of the Guadalupe-Nipomo dunes ecosystem through education, research, and the support of cooperative stewardship.

1055 Guadalupe Street
Guadalupe, CA 93434
Wednesday-Sunday 10am-4pm

Tel. 805.343.2455
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info@dunescenter.org

Upcoming Events

April 18th

Dunes Center
Education Station at
Oso Flaco Lake

April 19th

Dunes Photography
Hike

April 25th

National Wildlife
Refuge Open House &
Family Day

April 25th

Guadalupe City Walk
and Talk

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From the Executive Director's Desk

Greetings Dunes Center Members,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you in this New Year! The Dunes Center Board of Directors, Staff, and I are very excited as we head into 2009 with new leadership on our Board of Directors and in our nation's capitol. With the New Year come new Member events, an expansion of our informal education programs, community events, and an expanded volunteer and docent program. As we say goodbye to 2008, we also want to look back, thank, and remember our friends.

In 2008, we have had to say goodbye to two dedicated employees, Kathie Matsuyama and Carrie Rosing; both left the Center to pursue other professional opportunities. We wish them nothing but the best in their new endeavors and offer our gratitude for their many years of dedicated service to the Dunes Center and the local community. Also, with sorrow, in November 2008, we said goodbye forever to our most dedicated volunteer, Florence "Flo" Mathews (see story on page 6). Flo dedicated countless hours to creating and maintaining our native garden and brightened our day with her warm smile and unique sense of humor. We also are sad to relay the news that Al Spierling, volunteer and former AG High School teacher passed away in early February. Our deepest sympathies go out to the families and friends of Al and Flo.

We also want to recognize Sharon Kayser for her years of service and leadership as our outgoing Board President. Luckily for the Dunes Center we will not have to say goodbye, as Sharon will continue serving on our Board of Directors in 2009. With this transition of leadership, please join me in welcoming our new Board President, Paul Seyler, who joined our Board in 2008.

Paul Seyler relocated to the Central Coast from Venezuela, though he hails from Nebraska. He is a dedicated husband and father of three wonderful children. Paul and his family frequently access the dunes and are committed to protecting these valuable resources for generations to come. Paul is excited about 2009 and wants to work with the Board to ensure the Dunes Center continues delivering high quality educational experiences to all who visit these majestic dunes.

Over the years the Dunes Center has delivered rich environmental education programs and has embraced collaboration as way to multiply our efforts and leverage resources. (continued on page 3)

*A quarterly publication of the Dunes Center. Winter Quarter 2008-2009v12.4
Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper.*



Mario Castellanos,
Executive Director

Trees of the Season 2008


On the thirteenth of December the Dunes Center hosted its 4th Annual Trees of the Season event. Over twenty trees filled the first floor of the Green House giving the warmly lit lower level the feeling of walking through a miniature festive forest. As the clock ticked towards 5:00 pm that evening the Craftsman home began to fill with more and more community members and visitors. This evening went from a lighthearted social to a no-nonsense, fingers crossed moment as each tree winner was announced. One by one, each winner shouted for joy with some others exclaiming "That's my friend"! When the final tree was announced, what was a full house; soon become an empty house and many of our guests were eager to share their news with family and friends, as they collected their trees.

We would like to thank all our donors, Board Members, volunteers and visitors throughout the month of November and early December for their hard work and assistance that evening. Please take some time this year to visit the retailers and supporters of the Dunes Center and tell them "Thank You" for their support. Your contribution made this event a success!

A special thank you to these community members:



Diane Alleman-Stevens and Altrusa
International, Inc. of Santa Maria
Shirley Boydston and the Historical
Society Ladies
Ng & Ng Dental & Eyecare
Mayor Alvarez and Mrs. Alvarez
Leslie Mosson and
the Dunes Center Olivier Fourie
Librarians
Christina Bird-Holenda
John Karamitsos
Karla Canby
MKL Development
Barbara Hauck
Paul Seyler
Karen Evangelista and the
Guadalupe Cultural Arts and
Education Center



Julio & Rose Castellanos
Judith Zepeda and JMZ Coffee
Merril Lyn
F. McIntocks
Carol Daniels, Refugio Hernandez
and the weekend volunteers at the
Dunes Center
Lucy and the Stylists at
Whipper Snippers
Jennifer Morgan at the
Far Western
Robin Hayhurst and
Stephanie Claborn
The Guadaupe Post Office
Rose Castellanos and
the St. Louis de Montfort
Community Group #33



Below, from left to right, Board President, Paul Seyler, Executive Director Mario Castellanos, and Rose Castellanos at Trees of the Season 2008.





Photo Courtesy of Canadian Peregrine Foundation

A Merlin, seen here with a freshly caught Mourning dove.

(continued from Executive Director's Desk on page 1)

In 2009, we have already initiated additional education programs in partnership with our Collaborative partners in an effort to meet the needs of our ever growing community of stewards. Much of this collaborative stewardship relies on our partnerships with key federal, state, private, and non-profit organizations. This network of stewards meets monthly to discuss, plan, and implement projects that conserve and restore the precious natural resources of the Dunes Complex. Key Collaborative members include the Coastal Conservancy, California Fish and Game, California State Parks, the Center for Natural Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the City of Guadalupe, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties, and the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County. Please join me in celebrating the Land Conservancy's 25th year of protecting, preserving, and restoring special places within San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.

As we look forward to 2009 and the successes it will bring, we want to especially thank our Members, who continually provide us with support and gracious words of encouragement. Through our Members, dedicated volunteers and staff, collaborative partners, and leadership of our Board of Directors, we are confident that we will have a successful year.

Sincerely wishing you all the best for 2009,
~Mario Castellanos

ExSightings

This is where we list the animal sightings from the local area. Thank you to those who stopped by the Center to share your exciting sightings.

- Merlin
- Western fence lizard
- Spotted towhee
- Great Blue heron
- Marsh wren
- Downy woodpecker
- Belted kingfisher
- Snowy plover
- Golden eagle pair
- Monarch butterfly
- Northern harrier
- Green heron
- Great-horned owl
- Ctenuchid moth
- White pelican
- Yellow-breasted chat
- American redstart
- Northern harrier

Staff

Executive Director
Mario Castellanos
Education and Administrative Coordinator
Kanani Fox
Director of Volunteers
Dan McElhinney
House Host
Carol Daniels
Education Consultants
Tom Neuman
and
Kim Casazza

Board of Directors

President

Paul Seyler

Vice President

Greg McGowan

Treasurer

Ron Roberts

Directors

Marianne Buckmeyer

Barbara Hauck

David Hoskins

John Karamitsos

Sharon Kayser

Merril Lynn

Jules Reuter

Advisors to the Board

Christina Holenda

Robert Haddad, Ph.D

Ken Wolf

Expanded Programming, The New Education Station, and More

By Kanani Fox, Education and Administrative Coordinator

New Year's Resolution #42: Invest in Airborne

As many school teachers have before me, I too prepare for a new year and new programs. Our budding after school program has blossomed into a fully fledged flower garden of learning. Since our last encounter, we tallied 45 students during spring and summer. In our autumn after school program in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Guadalupe, we added an additional 30 students totaling 75 for 2008. Our goal for 2009 is to increase that number to 120 by increasing our frequency of programming to five sessions, an increase from three sessions offered during 2008.

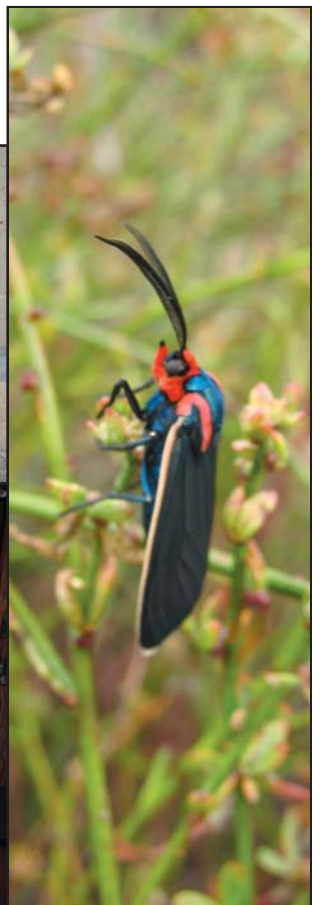
How can we accomplish such a monumental task of nearly doubling our numbers? In one word: interns. The Dunes Center has brought on a talented young lady who is a student at Allan Hancock College in the science department and comes highly recommended by her professors. In addition to her regular studies within the science department Ariana Sarinana has taken most, if not all the courses offered by the college to widen her perspective on the natural sciences. Ms. Sarinana will be assisting our staff with numerous office duties in addition to Sand Bandits. Not only is she a highly experienced science student, she is also an artist and will help to enhance our programming by lending her artistic hand to the arts and crafts component within our education programs.

We have several other interns working hard alongside Ariana. They are, Lindsay Whitaker, a Cal Poly student, David de la Garza, a Righetti High School Student, Mariah Gonzales, a Cal Berkely student, Diana Perez, also a Righetti student, and Joshua Sanchez, a Cuesta College student and former Nipomo resident. Without this handful of hard working students our programs would not be able to exist the way they do.

We have several sources of funding that enable us to provide these very low cost and free programs. We would like to thank our members for supporting the Dunes Center year after year and for making programs like Sand Bandits possible.

We are also launching three new pilot programs for spring. Staff and interns will be leading two after school programs at new sites, they are the Oceano and the Santa Maria Units of the Boys and Girls Club, tentatively scheduled to begin in March. These programs are an expansion of the current program in Guadalupe. Our second program will center on preschool aged children and caregivers. (more on page 5)

2008 Sand Bandits Program.



(continued from page 4) Still in the planning stages, this program's focus will be interactive field trips to both the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve and Oso Flaco Lake. The program will include a short walk along the beach at Rancho Guadalupe and boardwalk at Oso Flaco; the program's main focus will be on natural history and will include a take-home science lesson. Sessions will be offered in one hour class periods beginning in February. Our third and final new program will be an Education Station hosted at the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve and Oso Flaco Lake. These two hour visitor education modules began on Saturday February 7th at Oso Flaco Lake where we had 18 visitors stop by our table and learn about the skulls we had. These short informal educational opportunities are about the organization, dune ecosystems, and natural history and are a great addition to our already blossoming education programs. We hope that you will join us in our efforts by visiting our next education station on Saturday March 1st from 10am-12pm at Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve. Docents will be standing by!

We hope that the preview of these new programs is as exciting to you as a member as they are to the Dunes Center staff. As in years past, we couldn't achieve these goals without your member help, so, thank you for continuing to support us in our endeavors.



Members Only

March 28th will mark our first annual Dunes Center Members Whale Watching Trip. We will be going out of Santa Barbara Marina on the Double Dolphin Catamaran to look for Grey and Humpback whales. Cost is just \$35.00 person for the private chartered trip. If you have any questions, would like to make reservations, please contact us at dmcelhinney@dunescenter.org or 805.343.2455 ext. 204.



A special thank you to members who have renewed or joined since June of 2008:

Agnes Lightfoot	Donna Eschen	Lauren M. Brown	Rita Furnberg
Adam Pearlman	Douglas & Barbara Hadsell	Libbie Fitzwater	Robert Kump & Family
Alex B Wheeler	F. Reith & L. Sullivan	Louise Pappas	Roger & Alice Flocken
Alice Simas	Franca Bongi Lockard	Marilyn Miller	Ron Thatcher
Andy Zilke	Fred Pratt	Mary Annesley	Steven Lewis
Ann S. Lucas	Gary & Mary Eister	Mary Mosson	Susan Segovia
Bill Dorland	Hal Schartz	Mary Perry	Terence Orton
Blanche Hollingsead	Hector C. Montenegro	Max Tucker	Tim Lowry
Bob Perry	Jean M. MacKenzie	Melissa Boggs	Ruth Huizar Doddy
Brian Gratwicke	Jeff Rohn Miller	Merril Lynn	Rick Rittenberg
Carla Bongi- Levesque	Jeff White	Michael Towbes	John & Rene Deacon
Christopher Ryan	Jeffrey Maenaga	Nita Gibson	Ann Lazo
Chuck Rivera	Joe R. Burnett	Norma Hansen	
Cindy Jelinek	Judith Zepeda	Pamela J. Hamlin	
Claire Shea	Karen Clarke	Pat A Streng	
David Chipping	Karen Ransome	Patrick Fitzgerald	
Deborah Schobel	Ken Levine	Paul Seyler & Family	
Devonna L. Bitz	Kenneth Wolf	Peggy Heathcote	
Dominic Perello	Kimberly Casazza & Family	Rebecca Spellman	
Don Costa	Laura Kass	Richard Welch	

Thank
You!

Florence Mathews, longtime Dunes Center member and dedicated volunteer, passed away on November 19th, 2008 in her home in Santa Maria, CA.

Many of us knew her as Flo; she kept the garden at the Dunes Center since its inception in a storefront with a tiny backyard in downtown Guadalupe. Friends and family recall that she hauled out a huge pile of trash from that small yard in order to prepare for a native plant garden. If you go to that small storefront and tiny yard today, you'll see the garden is still there. When the Dunes Center moved down the street to our current location, our garden grew in size and she more than doubled her efforts. As we wait patiently for this year's coreopsis to bloom, it is easy to remember Flo tending to the plants. Flo always kept us honest and often was here before us in the morning. Every year behind the yellow administrative building, hundreds of wildflowers bloom; Flo told me that one day, she was tired of seeing weeds and dirt so she took a few handfuls of seeds and just threw them in, that year the flowers came in and they come back every year; though Flo isn't here to see them this year, those flowers will always remind us of her.

In remembering Flo, a letter was sent to the Dunes Center and in it I read: "it seems to me that when a bright light goes out suddenly, it leaves a much darker space than if it just fades away. And so it was with Flo. She was here, and then suddenly she was gone, and she left a very dark void behind." Now, as we do our work at the Dunes Center and in our daily lives, we all must work a little harder to fill that void with light, though doing that work is easier for having known Flo Mathews.

Eulogy to Flo

by Marge Mauk, sister of Flo Mathews

Don't bury me in a cold dark grave,
With a marker at my head;
Take my ashes to where soft winds blow
And leave me there, instead.

Let me linger with fine white sand
Warmed by the morning sun;
And move at will with the drifting dunes,
Now my work on earth is done.

Please don't mourn me, now I'm gone,
It's how things are meant to be
Just my body left this earth,
And my soul has been set free.

And if you choose in some small way
To remember me;
Then plant for me some flowers, or perhaps a tree.
I want no marker on a grave,
So please, don't bury me!

Florence Mathews



Photo courtesy of the Red Cross.

So it is with sadness that we say goodbye but with hope that we look towards the future. We thought the best way to remember Flo would be to follow her wishes. In her memory, we have renamed the garden Flo's Garden and dedicate it to her memory. We have installed a bench and are working on a plaque to memorialize her in a way we thought she would enjoy.

Wishing you and your family all of the best,
The Dunes Center Staff

To our Volunteers—Thank You!

Every February at the Dunes Center, we thank our volunteers for their service to our organization and this year is no exception. 2008 was an important year in the history of our volunteer program. As you read earlier, we lost one of our most dedicated volunteers, Flo Mathews passed away in November. As I write this, I cannot help but miss her presence. We honored Flo on February 11th, 2009 by dedicating our garden to her. Flo's Garden is and will be a reminder of her dedication to the Dunes Center, her friends, and her community.

We also honored our Volunteer of the Year, Refugio Hernandez, who dedicated over 500 hours to the Dunes Center in 2008. She is an ever-present member of the Dunes Center and of her home town, Guadalupe. We are very grateful for her service and dedication to the local community. We presented Refugio with a certificate for her service and hope that she will continue to be as generous with her time in 2009 as she was in 2008. We are lucky to have her; thank you Refugio!

With those facts in mind, as we move into 2009, the Dunes Center is stepping up its efforts and commitment to have a strong volunteer program and for those of you who have been active recently, we greatly appreciate the support. For those of you who have been meaning to check in and haven't had a chance, please take this opportunity to call me and ask how you can help.

I hope this finds you all doing well!

With warmest regards,
Dan McElhinney

dmcelhinney@dunescenter.org
805.343.2455 extension 204

Yellow-breasted chat
seen at Oso Flaco.



Announcements

February 21-24: USFWS-National Wildlife Refuge-Friends of the Refuge Conference

Month of March: Sand Bandits After School Program, Member's Whale Watching Trip (March 28th)

April 25th: Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge Open House & Family Day

April 22nd: Earth Day Beach Clean Up

Monday, May 25th: Memorial Day

June: Sand Bandits Summer Camp

September 7th: Labor Day

October 9th: Coreopsis Cup Golf Tournament



Refugio Hernandez accepting Volunteer of the Year honors from Dan McElhinney

Wish List

Heavy Duty Paper Shredder
Costco and Office Depot Gift Cards
A Roofing Contractor to Help Fix our Roof
Volunteers for Weekend House Hosting
\$200 to Fix the Glass in the Buffet
Heavy Duty Paper Cutter
Help Refinishing the Front Door of the Green House
Help Refinishing the Bench on our Front Porch
Native Plants
Volunteers



Yes! I want to become a Dunes Center Member.

Membership benefits include: quarterly newsletter, quarterly special events calendar, 10% off book store purchases, access to monthly educational forum, reduced facility rental fees. Please accept my payment of:

- \$2,500.00 Lifetime Membership
- \$60.00 Family Membership
- \$45.00 Couple Membership
- \$35.00 Individual Membership
- \$20.00 Student Membership (student ID required)

Check Enclosed

Please Charge my Visa or Mastercard

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Card #: _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

Expiration Date (mm/yy): _ _ - _ _

Signature: _____

The Dunes Center is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit. Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper. For more information regarding our programs, hikes, or events, please contact us at 805.343.2455 or visit our website at www.dunescenter.org.



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