

CENTENNIAL CARAVAN VOLUNTEERS' PROFILES

Tim Anderson Westminster, California

Tim Anderson is an oarsman, salt marsh naturalist and videographer who traces his passion for wildlife to his childhood on the Gulf Coast of Texas. He was so in love with the outdoors that he dropped out of high school and ran off to follow the trades associated with shrimping, boatbuilding and wetlands.

Over the years, he became alarmed about the rapid loss of wetlands to development and he knew he had to do his part to stem this trend. He became active in local wetland protection and restoration. He built a boat to take people on trips through the remaining estuaries and marshes, hoping he could inspire people to get involved with caring for and restoring these precious resources. He operates his “floating school,” named Le Bateau Du Audubon, in five estuaries along the West Coast: Olema and Walker Creek marshes on Tomales Bay; south San Francisco Bay; Elkhorn Slough Estuarine Sanctuary in Monterey Bay; Morro Bay Marsh; California’s upper Newport Bay, and Bahia Punta Banda in Mexico.

Tim is also building a sailboat, the “Osprey,” that will take people on extended trips along the West Coast’s bird migration routes in spring and summer, the Missouri and Mississippi Flyway in the fall, and the winter in the Laguna Madre in south Texas.

When he isn’t taking people on education trips, Tim spends much of his time volunteering at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge in Seal Beach, California.

John Bradley Riverside, California

John Bradley is the manager of the Seal Beach NWR in Seal Beach, California, which consists of 911 acres of salt marsh, tidal wetlands and coastal uplands within the U.S. Naval Weapons Station. The refuge provides protected habitat for the endangered light-footed clapper rail, California least tern and brown pelican.

John’s work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was the result of a mid-life career change and a life-long love of wildlife and the outdoors. His early career took another route, however. He entered a seminary in his teens and after graduating from college, he worked with the Teachers Corps on Chicago’s south side, then became a house parent in a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed teenagers.

He returned to school to earn a master's degree in public health, spending his summers in Cuernavaca, Mexico, to study Spanish and alternative medicine. Later, he worked for two years as a family planning researcher in Costa Rica while on a Johns Hopkins University internship.

Once again he returned to school, this time to earn a doctorate at the University of California, Davis, where he researched the chronic effects of organic phosphate pesticides on farm workers. He began working in the field of conservation biology in the 1980s and became a volunteer with the National Audubon Society. In 1991, he started working for the Fish and Wildlife Service in the area of habitat conservation planning in southern California. He became manager of the Seal Beach NWR in 1999.

A bird-watcher, hiker and gardener, John also plays classical and folk guitar. He and his wife, Becky, have two children, Joshua and Lily.

Doris Bryce
Seal Beach Leisure World, California

In 1996, Doris Bryce had no idea that the small “blurb” she read in a local paper about an Arbor Day program at the refuge would lead to a whole new chapter of her life. Ever since her first trip to the refuge, she has been helping out, whether it involves pulling out invasive non-native plants or maintaining a scrapbook for the Friends group. Before visiting the refuge, the extent of her knowledge about it and the Naval Weapons Station that surrounds it was the sign at the traffic signal on her street.

Her interest in the birds on the refuge inspired her to study biology at Long Beach Community College. She is active in the refuge's native plant project. She helped prepare items to place in the refuge's Centennial Time Capsule, which was buried on the refuge on March 14, 2003, the 100th anniversary of the refuge system. The time capsule will be opened in 2103.

Doris does the art and research for education handouts for the refuge and she helped set up a Centennial display at the local library. She hopes to encourage children to appreciate the “lesser friends” sharing their planet.

Lori De La Cuesta
Huntington Beach, California

Lori is a retired financial services officer for a large national bank. Upon retirement, she turned her energy to her first love: protecting and restoring natural places and alerting others to our diminishing natural world. Her love of wildlife and wild places dates to her childhood.

Her son introduced her to the Friends of Seal Beach NWR group. She now spends so much time at the refuge that her grown children tease her about spreading her ashes there when she dies. Lori also belongs to the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club and Amigos de Bolsa Chica.

John Fitch

Garden Grove, California

John's recent retirement from the Southern California Gas Company has allowed him to turn more of his attention to his work on wildlife and habitat issues, which have been an interest of his since childhood. A native of San Diego, John grew up hunting, fishing and collecting fossils, shells, rocks and historical artifacts with his father, a biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game. He tagged along with his dad and state game wardens, learning about butterflies, birds, plants and animal tracking.

As he watched the effects of development and population growth on the open spaces he loved, his appreciation of the natural world grew. He was so disturbed by the disappearance of entire species, that he stopped hunting and fishing in the late 1970s, turning instead to birding.

In 1988, John joined San Diego's El Dorado chapter of the National Audubon Society and started leading field trips and nature walks. For 13 years he was the chapter's Christmas Bird Count Compiler, contributing to the national census of bird populations. At his suggestion, the chapter adopted the Seal Beach NWR for projects. Twice a month, John conducts a bird census at the refuge. He also helps monitor endangered light-footed clapper rails and avian predation around the refuge's nesting colony of endangered California least terns, assists with night mammal surveys, and has built and installed artificial nesting platforms.

Don May Long Beach, California

Don was born in rural Pasadena in 1934 and has been an environmental and political activist since the early 1950's. Since co-founding the Ocean Fish Protective Association in 1952, Friends of the Earth in 1970, Heal the Bay in 1978 and California Earth Corps in 1988, he has been a local organizer and leader working on land, water, and power issues.

As the Southern California representative for the Friends of the Earth from 1970 to 1988, Don was an early leader in Conserve, Protect and Restore (CPR) for Southern California Wetlands. He co-founded and was chairman of the Wetlands Restoration Society and the Los Cerritos Wetlands Task Force. He currently is chairman of the Los Cerritos Wetland Land Trust.

In 2001, the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project honored Don with its prestigious Wetland Recovery Award.

Starting with the Oil Reform Initiative in 1956, Don has filed and managed a dozen California initiative and referendum campaigns. He helped form the League of Conservation Voters in 1970 and organized the local Los Angeles chapter in 1975. Don was instrumental in winning one of the largest environmental settlements ever awarded in California, involving Edison's and PG&E's operations of the San Onofre and Diablo Canyon nuclear plants. He also was one of the first outspoken opponents of the Ward Valley and Yucca Mountain nuclear waste sites.

A graduate of Pasadena High School and Pasadena City College, Don received a bachelor's degree in molecular biology and electrical engineering at University of Southern California. He worked in biomedical engineering as a post-graduate, and is a retired medical

device manufacturer.

Bruce Monroe
Seal Beach, California

Bruce is the Safety Officer for the Friends' Centennial Caravan. A retired businessman and educator, Bruce spends his spare time as a volunteer for the Seal Beach NWR, which is across the street from his home. He also volunteers at the Aquarium of the Pacific in downtown Long Beach, California, where he shares his knowledge of the ocean with visitors and encourages them to become stewards of the environment. He is a former ocean lifeguard, surfer, scuba diver, and U.S. Navy submarine operator. He has been a sail-boater all his life.

Bruce is the scientific director of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation, an organization concerned about the impacts of urban runoff and plastic debris on the quality of coastal waters. He also is director of the Chumash Tribal Marine Protected Area.

He has set up a website, www.sea-otters.org, on which he advocates coastal and wetlands conservation. He is active in the Ramsar "Wetlands of International Importance" international convention. He has participated in numerous marine-focused Earthwatch Institute research projects from the Arctic Ocean to waters off the coast of South Africa. His next voyage is to the South Pacific to explore the Marquesa, Society, Astral, Pitcairn and Easter Islands.

Mike Mitchell
Chiefland, Florida

Joining the Centennial Caravan is a homecoming of sorts for Mike, who was the first manager of the Seal Beach NWR when it was created in 1996. He helped establish the headquarters and the Friends of Seal Beach NWR group.

Born in Burbank, California, Mike grew up in Hermosa Beach and Newport Beach. He spent 6 years in the U.S. Navy as a Nuclear Reactor Operator, then earned a biology degree from the University of California, San Diego. He worked for the university on a research project in the southern rainforest of Thailand, then joined the staff of the University of California, Riverside, as a biological technician. In that job he collected data on birds and small mammals in the canyons of San Diego County.

He later was hired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the biologist for the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex, where he worked from the Mexican border to north Orange County.

Mike transferred to the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR in 1999. In August 2002, he took his current position of assistant refuge manager of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys national wildlife refuges.

Mike's hobbies are surfing, gardening, cooking and traveling.

Karen Morey

Long Beach, California

A native of Los Angeles, Karen has lived in Long Beach for 30 years. She graduated from the University of LaVerne and is a retired master planner/cost analyst for Northrop-Grumman Corp.

Karen has been hooked on birding since June 2002, when she held a baby Cooper's hawk on a banding trip at Starr Ranch Research Sanctuary. She is now in training for the water quality monitoring project at the Starr Ranch. Karen started volunteering at Seal Beach NWR in February 2003. She also belongs to the Sea and Sage Audubon Society, El Dorado Audubon Society, Friends of the Starr Ranch Sanctuary, San Diego Zoological Society, Fullerton Arboretum and the Huntington Library and Gardens. She is a director of Fosteria Glass Collectors Inc., which is dedicated to the study of all handmade American glasswear.

Besides birding, Karen's hobbies include gardening, glass and antique collecting, traveling and needlework.

Tim Morey Long Beach, California

A 52-year resident of Long Beach, Tim recently retired after 28 years in law enforcement, most recently as Crime Scene Supervisor for the City of Downey. He went for his first tour of the Seal Beach NWR in January 2003 and was so smitten, he became a volunteer the next month. He is also in training for the water quality monitoring project at the Starr Ranch Research Sanctuary.

Tim also belongs to the Sea and Sage Audubon Society, El Dorado Audubon Society, Friends of the Starr Ranch Sanctuary, San Diego Zoological Society, Fullerton Arboretum, and Huntington Library and Gardens.

His hobbies include birding, woodworking, fishing, gardening and traveling.

Patti Smith Seal Beach Leisure World, California

Patti spent 20 years traveling to Asia as an import consultant but now she spends much of her time volunteering at Seal Beach NWR, where she serves as a docent and works on the native plant project and the Eyes-on-the-Colony predator control project.

Her love of wildlife and nature began in childhood, when she camped and hiked with her family. She enjoys watching wildlife and learning about the birds, animals and plants that make up the ecosystem of the refuge's salt marsh.

Each year, Patti spends at least one month going to national parks and wildlife refuges to study with Elderhostel about nature and wildlife and how citizens can help preserve and enlarge natural habitats and protect the wildlife in them.

Rudy Vietmeier
Lakewood, California

When Rudy, a businessman, went to his first Sierra Club open house in 1988, he didn't know what a wetland was. He soon learned and ever since then, he's devoted most of his free time to preserving wetlands. He has worked to limit development in wetlands and to educate the public about the value of them. His work with the Seal Beach friends group is a part of that devotion.

Nine years ago, he joined the effort to protect the Bolsa Chica Wetlands, helping the Bolsa Chica Land Trust oppose development and getting the State of California to acquire the wetlands for the benefit of the public. He continues to serve on the Bolsa Chica Land Trust's Board of Directors.

John Wilks
Long Beach, California

John is a veteran of Vietnam and the Gulf War of 1991 in addition to being a career civil servant with the U.S. Customs Service. He serves as the Caravan's recorder, journalist and educational assistant.

John grew up in rural San Diego County and fell in love with the area's wildlife and wild places. He watched with alarm as the places he loved were replaced by development. He's been a member of the Sierra Club for 25 years.

In Vietnam he witnessed the destruction of nature by herbicide, explosives and clear-cutting. In Europe, in the 1960s and 1970s, he observed the pollution caused by unregulated industry. In Mexico, he was dismayed by the industrial and commercial waste and the destructive mining, logging and animal management practices he saw. All of those experiences inspired his call to environmental activism.

As a Customs Inspector, John received training from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on laws, regulations and treaties governing the importation and exportation of wildlife. In his job with the Customs Service, he works to control the black market in wildlife smuggling.

John has been active in wildlife, habitat and human health issues in the greater Los Angeles and Long Beach Harbor areas since 1992. Besides being a friend of Seal Beach NWR, he is active with the Audubon Society and the San Diego NWR.