

BOLSA CHICA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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Center for Oral and Public History
California State University, Fullerton

Descriptive Summary

Title

Bolsa Chica

Date(s)

1991-1997

Creator

California State University, Fullerton

Extent

Repository

Center for Oral and Public History

California State University, Fullerton

Project Abstract

The Bolsa Chica Oral History project looks at the different and varying components that lead to the preservation of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. This project emphasizes grassroots efforts to preserve natural reserves by residents of Huntington Beach and Orange County. This project also seeks to understand why individuals take environmental action in their communities, how they work with state and federal institutions, and how they alter or reinforce the common understanding of environmental activism and environmental policies.

Bolsa Chica Oral History Project Abstracts

OH# 2531

Narrator: TOM LIVENGOOD
Interviewer: Jim Aldridge
Date: 02/05/1997
Location: Huntington Beach, California
Language: English
Project: Bolsa Chica
Audio Format(s): Digitized.
Length: 1:10:09
Transcript: Verbatim
Ephemera:

Abstract:

An oral history with Tom Livengood, former president of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica, member of the City of Huntington Beach Planning Commission as well as a member of the Bolsa Chica Land Trust. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding Livengood's experiences during his presidential term and how the Amigos achieved their goals of preserving the wetlands. Specifically this interview details how he became involved with the Amigos; discusses his role as secretary, director vice president, and his two terms as president during 1996 and 1997; talks about the Amigo's main challenges in terms of the coalition agreement with Koll Real Estate Group; speaks about the opinions of members of the Bolsa Chica Land Trust opposed to development compromises made in the coalition agreement between the amigos and Koll company; reflects on the importance of a stable relationship between the Amigos and the Land Trust for future challenges.

OH# 2532

Narrator: BOB HIGHT
Interviewer: Jim Aldridge
Date: 3/27/1997
Location: Huntington Beach, California
Language: English
Project: Bolsa Chica
Audio Format(s): Digitized.
Length: 0:49:54
Transcript: Verbatim
Ephemera:

Abstract:

An oral history with Bob Hight, executive officer of the California State Lands Commission since 1971. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding Hight's experiences with the commission and the Bolsa Chica wetlands. Specifically, this interview details his time spent working several roles within the commission; how he started off as an attorney before becoming an appointed officer; discusses the Biona wetlands and his commitment to make restorations for that project; talks about the differences between the restoration project at Biona wetlands and the preservation efforts at Bolsa Chica; speaks about the Amigos' lawsuit in 1976; discusses the importance of public interest groups pushing demands on policy makers; reflects on the success of Amigos and how mitigation was successfully applied.

OH# 2533.1

Narrator: RALPH BAUER
Interviewer: Jim Aldridge
Date: November 23rd, 1992
Location: Huntington Beach, California
Language: English
Project: Bolsa Chica
Audio Format(s): Digitized.
Length:
Transcript:
Ephemera:

Abstract:

“Most environmental disputes concerning coastal wetlands involve government entities at all levels of local, state, and federal government. This participation can be required by legislative mandate or can come about because political considerations have thrust elected representatives into becoming active participants in the dispute resolution process. As informed citizens become more aware of the issues affecting their communities, they also have become less trusting of the existing system of politician/developer cooperation that historically directed the course of development along the coast of Orange County. The Amigos realized early on that most decisions on Bolsa Chica would be politically driven. They are also aware that dealing with elected politicians requires a different approach than with bureaucratic organizations. Because so many members of their own board of directors have been elected to public office or appointed to various boards and commissions, they have been particularly effective in securing political support from elected officials and promoting their interests through the government bureaucracy // Dr. Ralph Bauer is a Huntington Beach city councilman and past mayor whose wife Charlene is a founding members of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica. His extensive experience in local affairs acquired over the past thirty years as a member of various civic organizations together with a professional career as a research scientist in the private sector are brought to bear in his insightful interview. Here is a textbook analysis based on real life experiences that can help demystify the dynamics of local politics. The interview took place on November 23, 1992 in his home in Huntington Beach, California – from V transcript “

OH# 2533.2

Narrator: RALPH BAUER

Interviewer: Jim Aldridge

Date:

Location:

Language:

Project:

Audio Format(s):

Length:

Transcript:

Ephemera:

Abstract:

A follow up interview with Ralph Bauer.

OH# 2550

Narrator: LOCKHART, SHARON
Interviewer: James Aldridge
Date: February 11, 1993
Location: Orange, California
Language: English
Project: Bolsa Chica

Format(s): Cassettes, digitized.
Transcript: Verbatim ()
Other: *Saving the Bolsa Chica Wetlands* by Jim Aldridge

Sharon lockhart in her home in Orange California feb 11 1993

Track 1 of Lockart interview ends on page 6 out of 18,

she discusses her time in the service for the entirety of tape 1

1976 after being gone for 10 years

Gives a background of her experience during the early period of the Bolsa Chica preservation,

Cal dept fish and game biologist during and before restoration

In 1978 she moved to the fish and wildlife services worked in the Bolsa Chica wetlands project

Before /restoration process 1978 she went to work for the fish and wildlife services 1988

Since 1988 shes been a private consultant environmental attorney (educational backgrou8nd masters biology southwest Missouri university

Chief biological consultant

Experience at the Bolsa Chica

Job responsibilities/ involvement in the restoration plans

Cal fish and game started the restoration project5

Flood protection oil wells?

Habitat restoration was something biologists had really little experience with Biologists knew very little about preservation / people were still learning to implement these things/

Her role was more implementation rather than conceptual phase

Deciding where signs should go Did they have enough sand menial tasks picking stuff up putting up signs, giving tours of the place, looking at vegetation

1978 fish and wildlife services instead of cal fish and game her interest was in long term planning, the state had already agreed that most of the bolsa chica would be developed, small relics of systems that really need to be preserved

The state had given the land dispute they had given up most of the land was for development

Clean water act was starting to be implemented permits were issued holding oil companies accountable

People were worried about development/ talk about the wetlands, she really wanted to move to where she could get a better prospective on the wetlands,

She really wanted to move where she could get a better prospective she thought federal agency federal system would have a better chance to preserve wetlands

Signal landmark 3-4yrs about legality of houses built on wetlands but that went nowhere

Aminoil placing small fill throughout the wetlands, accumulatively it was starting to be a concern, so then the federal agencies worked to have these oil companies go and clean up after themselves

Clean water act 1972 permits are required the laws were not being enforced until about 1977

There was never someone there to distinguish between two organizations?

10 agencies is there much coordination/ when working with an agency you have to make sure you're following their

1980s coastal conservation

Track 2:

Just as a federal employee, biona wetlands, the land was always in private hands, because of the wetlands biona was of interest to the fed, it was very much developed land though, no one really took an active role

Track 2 starts

Until 1987 wetland delineation was only as good as people working on the delineation

What she would do would be to go with biologists they had no idea what a wetland was

Distinguished the differences between the state and federal agencies when it came to define what a wetland is

For developers, they have to make sure they're following both state and federal mandates

She continues to discuss the wetlands and the federal agencies interest in the biona wetlands, discusses meeting with summa? biological consultants, summa was looking to develop huge development projects, she was worried about this

The state definition is different than the federal one

Three parameters, lots of plants that wont grow

58 Permits have been granted but the feds replacement of 2 acres for 1 acre lost federal 3 for 1 missing acre

They talk about wetlands the whole tape 2/ Sweetwater project, about 260 acre system, federal project to improve Sweetwater ...

OH#2551

Narrator: MARY ELLEN HOUSEAL
Interviewer: Jim Aldridge
Date: November 12, 1991 (1925-2016)
Location: Huntington Beach
Language: English
Project: Bolsa Chica
Audio Format(s): Digital
Length: 0:56:04
Transcript: Verbatim transcript
Ephemera:

Abstract:

An oral history with Mary Ellen Houseal, one of the leading original members of the League of Women Voters and Amigos de Bolsa Chica. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding Houseal's experiences as an attorney for the Amigos during the early preservation of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. Specifically, this interview details how she drew up the bylaws and articles establishing the Amigos as a nonprofit corporation; discusses her experiences as president of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica, describes lobbying activities to protect the Bolsa Chica from development, restoration and mitigation issues, and the Amigos' efforts to educate the public on wetlands; talks about Harriett Wieder's role in the coalition agreement between the Amigos and development companies; reflects on the Amigos progress as an organization and as a grassroots effort to protect the wetlands.

OH# 2552

Narrator: JOHN ERSKINE
Interviewer: Jim Aldridge
Date: June 1st, 1992
Location: Narrator's office in Irvine California
Language: English
Project: Bolsa Chica Oral History Project
Audio Format(s): Digitized.
Length: 0:59:17
Transcript: Verbatim
Ephemera:

Abstract:

An oral history with John Erskine, a planning commissioner for Huntington Beach, city councilman and mayor. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding Erskine's experiences during his time spent working as a land-use advisor to Orange County Supervisor Harriett Wieder. Specifically, this interview details his early life as a long time Orange County resident; how his father's background in politics influenced his career choices; his early experiences working with local politicians as a land use advisor; what it was like working for Harriett Wieder during the Bolsa Chica land-use approval process, discusses Wieder's involvement in efforts to preserve the Bolsa Chica wetlands; speaks about his term as mayor and the interests of voters in Orange county, how voters favored balanced growth and development; discusses issues between the Amigos and private development companies; how the need for a collaborative approach based on compromise and consensus led to the formation of the Bolsa Chica Planning Coalition.

OH# 2554

Narrator: CHARLES MOORE
Interviewer: Jim Aldridge
Date: November 16, 1994
Location: In the home of Charles Moore in Long Beach, CA
Language: English
Project: Bolsa Chica
Audio Format(s): Digitized
Length: 0:30:23
Transcript: Verbatim
Ephemera:

Abstract:

An oral history with Charles Moore, an environmentalist and long time member of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding Moore's involvement with the Amigos de Bolsa Chica and the preservation of the wetlands. Specifically, this interview details his background as an environmentalist; his life memberships with the Amigos, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Surfrider Foundation, and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust; discusses his family connection to Signal Oil and Gas Company, owners and proponents for development of some of the land at Bolsa Chica; why he donated his inheritance of Signal stock to the Amigos to be used for the preservation of the entire Bolsa Chica, including the upland mesa area

OH# 2556.1

Narrator: ADRIANNE MORRISON

Interviewer: Jim Aldridge

Date: March 9, 1993

Location:

Language:

Project:

Audio Format(s):

Length:

Transcript:

Ephemera:

Abstract:

An oral history with Adrienne Morrison, succeeded Shirley Dettloff as the second executive director of the Amigo and remained in that capacity until the position was eliminated following the acquisition of the Bolsa Chica wetlands in 1997 by the State of California. She presents a revealing account of the very intensive negotiating sessions she and Dettloff participated in over a six-month period as the Amigos' delegates to the coalition planning group. Morrison was responsible for public and media relations and had been the Amigos' liaison to the myriad of other environmental organizations and elected officials at all levels of state and federal government. Two interviews with Adrienne Morrison took place, the first on, and the second on April 13, 1993.

OH# 2557.1

Narrator: CHARLES NELSON

Interviewer: Jim Aldridge

Date: November 11, 1994

Location: Huntington Beach, CA

Language: English

Project:

Audio Format(s):

Length:

Transcript:

Ephemera:

Abstract:

An oral history with Chuck Nelson, president of the Amigos in 1994, Chuck Nelson hoped to use his experience as a financial planner to improve their financial situation. Instead, the focus was on the controversies that had split the community environmental organizations and threatened the internal operations of the Amigos. Looking back over the challenges and conflicts of the previous two years, Nelson states that the major accomplishment was moving the coalition concept from an idea on paper to a binding contract with the Koll Real Estate Group.

Notes:

Started taping 1 Of 4 side a of nelson Charles

He joined in 1994, his wife got him to join the group, the amigos are open to somr development?

Mesa areas would have to be accepted, strongly disagree what people said 14 minutes in, legal basis legal disagreement , lawsuit filed in 1979 about land , the amigos in the settlement, public document came out "everyone" agreed, and the confidential agreement, signal landmark and it successors and amigos successors, he talks about what the confidential agreement of settlement,

Dec 1993, restoration would be the best way to fix bolsa chica wetlands, that was in 93 environmental impact report,

29 minutes in, land swap,

Side b of tape 1 of 4:

Bauer is mentioned, 19 minutes in,

Side a of tape 2 of 4 or T03 notes

Side b of tape 2 of 4 or

Tape 3 or 3 of 4 is janky audio tape sounded funny like it got stuck so I put those to the side,

Gave to Natalie – 2557 3 of 4 tracks 5 and 6

Side a of 4 of 4 2557 T07 / T08

T07 notes:

The bolsa chica concept plan some exceptions mesa areas development would have to happen because of comprise , many members of our group who celebrated the accomplishments of the coalition agreement felt like they should have protected the whole areal; the amigos could not do that because of compromises; there was nothing they could do about the development in the costa mesa

State land commission vs signal landmark // the land trust is against anything coming from kohl the company; accepting development plan that kohl wants to compromise // the land trust plus some individuals believe there can be a possibility for a land swap,

CN: “the amigos explored land swap after coalition agreement was signed, this past spring it’s a wonderful idea but its just a idea there’s no concrete evidence that a land swap is a possibility...Landowner has to request it, development with orange county, koll is already in the process”

Nelson believes koll group would not be interested in land swap

“Land swap for bolsa chica is so far down the line you cant even see it , discusses the unlikely hood of a landswap for the bolsa chica wetlands”

OH# 2558.1

Narrator: FRANK AND FRAN ROBINSON

Interviewer: **Jim Aldridge**

Date: **03/04/1992**

Location: **Newport Beach, California**

Language:

Project:

Audio Format(s):

Length:

Transcript:

Ephemera:

Abstract:

Notes from V01:

“With grace and humor he related an absorbing tale of their frustrations and failures in grappling with the Irvine Company, Orange County politicians, and often with some of their neighbors. Resistance from these quarters only fueled a commitment that became a crusade to save the bay. Together they have carried their message to over forty thousand people, while Frances's talented pen has reached many more through her attention-grabbing letters to the editor and state politicians. They also assisted the Amigos de Bolsa Chica and the Friends of the Ballona Wetlands in their early organizational stages.”

“This account of Orange County history focuses on the Upper Newport Bay, but the lessons learned and applied by the Robinsons go beyond there. Even with the final victory seemingly in hand with the establishment of the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve in 1975, Robinson cautions that you can never really win a conservation battle, but you can lose it: "If you don't have staying power, don't get involved." Because the Robinsons did have it, the citizens of Orange County have access to this ecological treasure, for themselves and all those who follow. Interviews with the Robinsons were conducted on March 4 and 24, and November 23, 1992.”

2558 1 of 6 robinson, frank

Talks about Upper Newport bay

They bought a home in Newport beach area, goes on to talk about his involvement in the project