On January 11, 2012, the California Coastal Commission determined that work performed on the D.E. Goodell property at Bolsa Chica, otherwise known as the Sacred Cogged Stone Site, constituted unpermitted development activities and ordered the Goodells to pay $430,000 to fund a mitigation project to benefit Native American cultural resources.

The work performed by Nancy Desautels-Wiley, and her firm SRS, violated a permit to use non-invasive methods to examine the Goodell site. Instead, 16 pits (each 1ft by 4ft) were dug without permits and
A Letter from Bolsa Chica

(Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from a letter by Land Trust member Isabelle Chasse to Executive Director, Flossie Horgan. What started out as a letter about illegal dog activities at Bolsa Chica, quickly turned into nothing short of poetry).

I have seen a dog owner sic his German Shepherd on a 6 foot rattle snake, while his wife screamed for him to stop. I've seen a tiny rattle snake with a rattle no bigger than my finger nail and a few gorgeous snakes that I think were King snakes. I've seen a Great Blue taking 20 minutes trying to swallow the huge fish he had caught, dipping it into the water to wet it, to help it go down easier. I've seen damselflies mating and laying eggs one by one on the surface of the river and I've seen a wasp sting a tiny green worm, then fly away with it. I've been followed by a dog that leaped its fence and been terrified until I finally got sick of being scared, turned around, patted my knees and said, "Come on, come here!" That seemed to give me back some power.

I have picked up stones to keep and pages of porn to put into the trash. I've hurt my back helping on clean up the beach days and hurt my heart when I tried to rescue what I thought was a lost mallard baby, carrying it to where I knew no dog could find it and hoping another mother would adopt it, which I now know does not happen, that you should leave the ducklings alone, even if they look as if they have no cover to hide in. I've seen a venue of vultures looking heraldic in an old tree and a hawk trying to dive bomb a bird that kept going under the water every time the hawk came past, until they were both too tired and stopped the game.

I have watched tiny fish leap up like a silver fountain and big fish churning in groups under the bridge. I have seen a couple sitting on a blanket, trying to start a FIRE on Thanksgiving 3 years ago and I've met some interesting people. I've shaken my cup at a coyote that wanted to get a little too close and I've seen a cat laid open like a scientific experiment, then noticed a coyote waiting quietly for me to walk away from what must have been his snack. (Thank God he didn’t leap at me, I didn’t even see him until after I’d checked out the cat!)

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without a Native American monitor being present.

The staff report recommended a fine of $130,000 which the commissioners thought was insultingly low. The commissioners viewed the un-permitted work, not as a “mistake” as Ed Mountford a V.P. of Hearthside Homes claimed, but as deliberate. The vote to approve the fine was 10 to 1, with Commissioner Sanchez voting no because she thought the fine was too low.

“It is an egregious violation in my opinion, and in this day and age, it is difficult to believe anyone did not know this was an area of great cultural significance,” said Mary Shallenberger, chair of the Commission.

I love that entire place and can’t stand the idea of all the relationships I’ve been privileged to spy on be covered over forever. Not everyone has the patience to be quiet and see all I’ve seen but some do and children especially should be able to come forever, to wander and wonder and learn about how things really are when you leave them alone to live their lives.

The Bolsa Chica Land Trust thanks the Coastal Commissioners for recognizing the importance of the resources on the Goodell property and for acknowledging that the un-permitted work was deliberate.

I would like to thank our Executive Director Flossie Horgan, for coordinating the Land Trust’s outreach to the commissioners, Board Members Carrie Thomas and Laurel Telfer for delivering our presentation at the Commission meeting, and Huntington Beach City Councilman and Board Member Joe Shaw for speaking at the meeting. Thanks also must be extended to archeologist Dr. Patricia Martz for her help and continued dedication to Bolsa Chica, and to archeologist Virginia Bickford who gave an excellent presentation.

In addition, I need to thank Tribal Chairman Anthony Morales of the Gabrielino/Tongva band of Mission Indians; Alfred Cruz, Most Likely Descendent from Juaneno Band; and Paul Moreno. The help from these representatives of the Native American Community is absolutely vital to protecting the sacred sites at Bolsa Chica.

Finally, a huge thanks goes out to Land Trust Board Member Mike McMahan for discovering the unauthorized work, and to Board Member Jennifer Thomas for photographing the pits.

Protecting Bolsa Chica requires continuous work. If you would like to support this work of the Land Trust please contact the office at (714) 846-1001.

Before kids built the bike ramps, I used to sit under the fig tree and watch the squirrels and rabbits interact and that lovely tree with bees in it that no one has yet destroyed.
As we gathered to welcome 2012, we were greeted by a foggy sunrise this past January 1st. Our group of 30 or so toasted the year of the Land Trust’s 20th Anniversary and we also celebrated the friendship and dedication of this year’s Kennedy-Kolpin Bolsa Chica Conservation Award winners. This year the award was given to Elizabeth Neat with the Sierra Club Inner City Outing program and the Cone family.

Elizabeth has introduced hundreds of young people to Bolsa Chica. For the past several years she has organized to bring bus loads of inner city kids to experience working with the Stewards. Elizabeth dedicates herself to being a catalyst between these kids and the natural world, and her love for both shines brightly.

The Cone family joined the Stewards and Jr. Stewards a few years ago and have been wonderful friends ever since. The energy this family brings to Bolsa Chica is a great gift to us all. Holly brings her beautiful spirit, Larry is always willing to dig a hole, and the girls are both on the Board of Directors for the Jr. Stewards and are fantastic young leaders. Michelle and Katrina are an inspiration to us old timers, as we watch them nurturing the plants and learning about the wildlife. We willingly go when they lead us out on rainy mornings to walk through the muddy puddles on the trail to find rainbows over the wetlands.
The Miracles of the Marsh program had its kick-off school tour on January 17, 2012. Over a two day period, Village View School of Huntington Beach bussed around 90 children to Bolsa Chica.

Our program consists of presenting information about Bolsa Chica to 3rd graders from the Los Angeles and Orange County area. We present information on four topics: Water, History, Plants, and Animals. Our docents have been training during November and December in preparation for the tours. Most are experienced docents well familiar with the topics and the area.

Before the students come to Bolsa Chica, a docent makes a slide show presentation at their school and gives workbooks to each student so they know what to expect and look for when they make the trip to Bolsa Chica.

Upon arrival, they are separated into four groups. Then they walk from the South parking lot to the mesa. Each group hears presentations on all of the four topics.

In the Water presentation, we address water quality and how Bolsa Chica is such an important part of the local ecosystem. We talk about what the students can do to help improve water quality and our environment.

Our History presentation teaches the children about the Native Americans who lived here over 9,000 years ago and the relics we have found of their life on the Bolsa Chica.

The abundance of plant life and how it contributes to our environment is explained. They learn the importance of our plants. The docents explain how the root system stabilizes the ground, how the plants consume the carbon dioxide we exhale and returns oxygen for us to breathe, all this while supplying food for the animals.

In the Animals presentation, the kids learn about Bolsa Chica being a flyway for the birds migrating north and south and a breeding area for new life. They learn how important the food the birds get here is for their survival. They see all size and types of birds from the small Least Sandpiper to the large Great Blue Herons. They learn about the coyotes, snakes and the other native animals.

We have eighteen schools scheduled to come to Bolsa Chica through June of this year. We expect over 1,900 children will learn of the beauty and importance of the Bolsa Chica. The docents are ready and excited about this year’s program.
Ruth and Gehrig at Bolsa Chica

Over the years, many celebrities have visited Bolsa Chica. But we were unaware that baseball legends Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig had visited, probably sometime in the 1920s. This photo was provided by Land Trust member, and former lifeguard at Bolsa Chica State Beach, Wade Womack. It was given to him by Grace Bixby.

Shea Homes Denied Development Permit

In October 2011 the Coastal Commission voted to deny a Coastal Development Permit for the Parkside project on the Upper Bolsa Chica Wetlands. While it is a great win for ultimate protection, unfortunately, this is not the end of the project. The landowner, Shea Homes, has conducted another traffic study, indicating that they will try once again to get a permit to build on this area of the Bolsa Chica.

You can stay abreast of the latest news by sending your e-mail to bclandtrust@verizon.net to get the Land Trust's e-mail alerts. Please be assured we never give our your email address to other individuals or organizations.
The Bolsa Chica Jr. Stewards Had a Very Successful Year in 2011!

By Mark Hay

A Jr. Steward is a boy or girl between the ages of 5-14 who has attended 4 or more BCLT Stewardship Days in the year. In 2011 we added 10 new Jr Stewards to our ranks. In addition, we hosted over 100 kids, parents, and grandparents at Stewardship Days through the year.

In 2012, the Jr Stewards will continue to host families at BCLT Stewardship Days and help kids, parents, and grandparents plant native plants and learn more about our local native ecosystems at the Bolsa Chica!

The Bolsa Chica Jr Stewards work alongside the Bolsa Chica Stewards and other community volunteers at Bolsa Chica on the first Sunday and third Saturday of every month, 9am -12 noon, all through the year! Come on out with your children or grandchildren!

If you have questions about the Jr. Stewards Program you can contact Mark Hay, BCLT Jr. Stewards Coordinator, at 714-307-9481 or mnhay2000@yahoo.com
The ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.

Steve Jobs