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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Bolsa Chica Conservancy Announces Plans To Build  
A Permanent Bolsa Chica Wetlands Interpretive Center**  
*Option and Lease Agreement Approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors*

March 17, 2009, Santa Ana, CA — With today’s approval by the Board of Supervisors of the county of Orange of an Option Agreement and Lease for an interpretive center, the Bolsa Chica Conservancy announced its plans to develop and construct a permanent interpretive center at the Harriett M. Wieder Regional Park in conjunction with the agreement. The new center will provide enhanced interpretive and educational facilities to the public, including multi-purpose exhibit halls, classrooms, laboratories for hands-on science activities, viewing decks for birding and wildlife, restoration and native discovery gardens. The Harriett M. Wieder Regional Park is a county park located at the eastern edge of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands overlooking the recently completed wetlands restoration project and the new ocean inlet. The county’s General Development Plan and Resource Management Plan for the park include a proposed interpretive center on land adjacent to the 4-acre playground, including trails linking Huntington Beach Central Park and Bolsa Chica State Beach.

“Among my commitments to my constituents is the protection of environmental resources like the Bolsa Chica Wetlands,” said John Moorlach, Second District Supervisor “The agreement and lease with the Bolsa Chica Conservancy is an important step in expanding programs that complement our current education system while guaranteeing the preservation of a vibrant ecosystem. The Conservancy is a vital partner in delivering science-based and standards-aligned education programs to our youth, and has a strong track record in increasing public awareness of the wetlands’ importance to Orange County’s ecology.”

“The city of Huntington Beach is dedicated to the preservation of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands,” said Keith Bohr, Mayor of the City of Huntington Beach. “Education is a key component to ensure the continued protection of our coastal wetlands, and the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, with its programs in wetland ecology

and marine science, is vital to creating a long lasting and successful preservation program.”

“We are executing on our long-term strategic goal of building a permanent interpretive center and educational facility to showcase this ecological jewel in the heart of the city of Huntington Beach,” said Mark Gaughan, current Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, and Director of Government Affairs for The Gas Company. “Since 1994, the Conservancy has operated a temporary interpretive center on the northern edge of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands, educating and hosting nearly 400,000 youth and members of the general public. This new permanent interpretive center allows us to improve our programs, and continue our efforts to inspire our youth to become the next generation of leaders, scientists and environmental advocates.”

“When we established the Conservancy nearly twenty years ago, we firmly believed in investing in our youth as the future leaders of our community, and we also believed that a private-public partnership like the Conservancy was essential to making it happen,” said Harriett M. Wieder, former Supervisor of the Second District, Chairman Emeritus of the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, and in whose honor the regional park is named. “This new facility will provide expanded opportunities for learning and discovery, and we hope to continue inspiring young people to care for the environment and the community in which they live.”

Under the terms of the agreement, the Bolsa Chica Conservancy will lease 5.3 acres at the Harriet M. Wieder Regional Park to construct the center and ancillary improvements such as outdoor educational and restoration areas, parking and landscaping. The building is expected to be approximately 8,000 square feet with space for lectures, classroom instruction, laboratories, exhibits and administrative offices. The Conservancy will develop the plans, raise the money from private and public sources, and construct the facility under the option. Upon completion of construction, the county of Orange through OC Parks would own the improvements and be responsible for their maintenance, and the Conservancy would be responsible for operating the interpretive center.

The Bolsa Chica Conservancy is a private non-profit organization, established in 1990 to advocate education and public awareness, restoration and preservation of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. For more information on the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, visit [www.bolsachica.org](http://www.bolsachica.org).

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