



CONSERVATION  
BIOLOGY  
INSTITUTE

COORDINATED COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR HABITAT CONSERVATION

## Volunteers Brave Conditions to Enhance Habitat

**Cold rain. Sticky, slippery mud. Perfect conditions for a successful volunteer event? You bet!** Twenty hearty volunteers including 4 children showed up to help plant native seeds at a San Diego National Wildlife Refuge restoration site on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Over the morning of the event, these dedicated and cheerful folks (some were literally singing in the rain!) raked and seeded about an acre of land with a mix of seeds that will help a native grassland appear where a few years ago stood mostly non-native plants.

Refuge Manager Jill Terp greeted the crew and showed them maps of the refuge. Refuge Biologist John Martin described the ecological value of the site and the technique to use to get the best results from the seeding. The crew spread out with most raking to roughen the surface, creating lots of nooks and crannies in which the seeds could snugly lodge. Then, the seed sowers followed, sprinkling the seed mix over the soil, nicely moistened from the recent rains.

The biggest challenge early in the morning was negotiating the sticky clay soil, which created natural platform shoes for all. A few sprinkles along the way helped the seeds settle in and kept the work cool and comfortable. Later in the morning however, the rain intensified and the amusingly sticky soil transformed into increasingly heavy and slippery muck. After about 3 hours of work, Jill declared conditions to have crossed over from fun to frustrating and the group retreated. All were rewarded with T-shirts, snacks, and several other 'take home' goodies. More importantly, everyone left smiling! The refuge extends a warm (and dry) thanks to all who lent hands, raking, seeding, singing, and snapping photos. If you'd like to volunteer at future events, contact Cathy Chadwick at [chadgroup@cox.net](mailto:chadgroup@cox.net) or Jill Terp at [Jill\\_Terp@fws.gov](mailto:Jill_Terp@fws.gov). Photos by escphoto.com.

