Dear Volunteers,

Happy New Year! Can you believe it’s 2011? Here’s wishing all of us a prosperous 2011 with of plenty time to enjoy the natural world. With all the rain we’ve been having perhaps we can see some wildflowers this spring.

Make a resolution this year to log those volunteer hours. I just ran a report on the 2010 hours and it’s 47,243. For those of you logging 150 hours or more in 2010 (and that’s 90 of you!) expect a little surprise in the mail. We appreciate all you do for the Museum. Our science department volunteers deserve some special recognition. Many of you have volunteered more than 300 hours. Wow! Think of all those tasks you help our scientists accomplish that would otherwise never get done.

Another group that deserves special recognition is our Wednesday Docents. Come in any Wednesday and you’ll seem them busy in the Docent office creating new programs or working the floors educating the children on the wonders of the natural world. Thank you, Wednesday Docents.

Best of Nature Photography Show

There’s still time to see this international juried competition, in The Ordover Gallery on Level 4 at the San Diego Natural History Museum. Traditional and digital photographic works, which range from landscape and wildlife images to abstract/impressionistic nature-based images, are represented in the show. All artwork in The Ordover Gallery at the San Diego Natural History Museum is for sale.

Mark Your Calendar

The annual Volunteer Recognition Event is Thursday, April 14 at the San Diego Natural History Museum. The event will include the ever-popular staff centerpiece contest. I know it’s crowded in that atrium but, this year, please make sure you look at all the centerpieces. Every one is unique and designed by the staff with you in mind.
New Canyoneers

Please welcome the graduating class of 13 new Canyoneers. This year the class was shortened to nine classes so graduation was held on November 22. Forty current Canyoneers welcomed the newbies at the celebration. Newbies: Alan Bennett, Tim Cordoza, Israel Diaz de Leon, Bill Edwards, Mark Hammer, Martha Jenkins, Sidney Lynch, Stacey Miller, Susan Nelson, Jean Sacher, Andrew Schlossman, Maggie Thompson, Maritza Witmer.

New Museum Whalers

Congratulations to our class of 23 new Museum Whalers: Laurie Adams, Douglas Aguillard, Ruth Anderson, Terry Baird, Joyce Bell, Jerry Clarkson, Katie Estes, Barbara Farran, Cara Hagaman, Carol Herr, Vanessa James, Dylan Jones, Elizabeth King, Karen Ladley, Dave Lemox, Meggie Moore, James Nelson, Wayne Paulus, Suzanne Rawlings, Vicky Samuel, Megan Stranksy, Philip Young, Shannon Zeman, Adam Zeman.

Whale-watching and Nature Cruises

Now’s your chance to see the magnificent Eastern Pacific Gray Whale on its annual migration. During the winter months, the gray whales travel some 6,000 miles from their northern feeding grounds in the Arctic to the lagoons of Baja California to give birth and mate. Peak time to see the most whales is mid- to late-January and early February, but they are spotted through most of mid-April as they return north. In recent years, the Museum Whalers have seen many cow/calf pairs just off our coast consistent with recent research by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. There is speculation that the whales are leaving the Arctic later in the year, leading to more cows giving birth before reaching the lagoons.

The Museum has partnered with H&M Landing and the Bright and Morning Star cruises to offer nature cruises to the Los Coronados Islands. These six-hour trips are held Thursday–Sunday beginning at 10 AM. These guided nature tours take you into international waters for an up-close view of Los Coronados Islands. In addition to whales, you could see dolphins, harbor seals, sea lions, kelp forests and up to 80 varieties of sea birds and other marine life—much of which is just a few feet away!

Museum Whalers are onboard both whale-watching and nature cruises to provide naturalist interpretation. Come see our Museum Whalers in action.

To find out more and purchase tickets, check our website. Whale-watching and Nature Cruises

Take a Hike

If you have not been on a Canyoneer hike lately, please go. A weekly email to all volunteers gives the hikes for the coming weekend. If you know someone who would like to be included on the email list, have them contact me (jmorris@sdnhm.org).