



MEDIA RELEASE

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**Vernal Pool Presentation at the San Diego Natural History Museum
Expert Panel to Focus on Rare San Diego Habitat**

San Diego, CA: January 20, 2006—The San Diego Natural History Museum will host a presentation and discussion about San Diego County’s vernal pools in the Museum’s Charmaine and Maurice Kaplan Theater on Wednesday, January 25 from 9 to 10:30 AM. Students from around the county will attend the presentation, including students from San Diego Cooperative Charter School, High Tech High, and Roosevelt Junior High. Admission is free.

Vernal pools are a unique habitat in San Diego, and are extremely endangered: only 3% of San Diego County’s original vernal pools remain. Vernal pools occur on mesa tops where winter rains collect—many areas that supported these pools are now developed. Unique and mysterious animals, specifically adapted to vernal pools, live only in this habitat and nowhere else. Some seeds and eggs lie dormant in the soil until moistened by rainwater. As the weather warms and the water dries up, the plants and animals have reproduced and completed another life cycle.

Experts on the panel include Mary Ann Hawke, Ph.D., of the San Diego Natural History Museum; Rick Halsey of the California Chaparral Field Institute; David Hogan of the Center for Biological Diversity; and Al and Mary Anne Pentis of the Vernal Pool Society. The presentation will be moderated by Allison Rolfe of the Chula Vista Mayor's Office. Students from High Tech Middle Media Arts, under the direction of Steve Smith, will videotape the presentation. It is organized by the San Diego Natural History Museum, in collaboration with San Diego Cooperative Charter School.

For more information, please call 619.255.0174 or email nrenner@sdnhm.org.

The San Diego Natural History Museum is celebrating its 131st anniversary this year. An active research institute, the Museum specializes in the study of biodiversity; the results of the research are passed on to the community through the Museum’s numerous education programs and exhibitions. Admission is \$9 for adults; \$6 for students, seniors and military; \$5 for children ages three and under; and always free for members. The Museum is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM with the exception of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

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