



March 4, 2011

Contact: Elizabeth Ramos

Telephone: 619-985-8337

Email: [elizabeth@thegarden.org](mailto:elizabeth@thegarden.org)

Web Site: [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 4, 2011**

## **Hoot and Holla Now Showing at The Water Conservation Garden**

*Natural pest control for The Garden and 24/7 wildlife viewing for the public*

**Rancho San Diego, CA,**—A mated pair of barn owls has taken up residence at The Water Conservation Garden just a year after an owl nesting box, equipped with an infrared video camera, was installed. As of today, the owls, affectionately named Hoot and Holla by Garden staff, can be viewed by the public 24-hours a day at the Garden's website, [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org), where the Owlcam feeds live streaming video. The pair is a much anticipated arrival that The Garden hopes will help naturally control an ever-exploding rabbit population that nibbles on Garden exhibits.

"Rabbits, as well as gophers and other rodents are the natural prey of barn owls," said Pam Meisner, The Garden's Educational Specialist, who led the effort to get the owl box installed. "Having a pair of barn owls to hunt the rabbit population means that The Garden does not have to use chemicals or other potentially harmful means of controlling their numbers."

Since Hoot and Holla took up residence mid-February, Holla began laying eggs right away, and a total of six eggs have been verified through the Owlcam. Garden staff quickly went to work to set up the infrastructure for the broadcast of the Owlcam video stream that will serve as a wildlife educational tool for viewers, particularly schoolchildren. The Garden is developing standards-based owl education programs for visiting schoolchildren, and an owlet naming contest will be in place by the time the first egg hatches in mid-March.

On Saturday, April 9, Ms. Smarty Plants (Pam Meisner) will present an owl education program, *Ms. Smarty Plants Gives a Hoot*, at 10:00am in the Garden's amphitheater, during the [Spring Garden Festival](#).

The Garden is grateful to Tom Stephan of [Air Superiority](#) for donating and installing the owl box, and [NetroMedia](#) and [Blacks Design, Inc.](#) for helping to make the live video stream on our website possible.

### About the Water Conservation Garden

Opened in 1999, the Garden is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting water conservation in the landscape through excellent exhibits and programs that educate and inspire the public. The Garden is supported in part by member water agencies, garden partnerships and private donations. For more information, please visit [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org) or call 619-660-0614 x10.

###