

Bay Area Council Meeting Notes

October 26, 2019

Vallejo Architectural Heritage Foundation

419 Farragut Ave., Vallejo, CA 94590

Attendees:

Sally Baumer, Napa Solano

Barbara Demeter, Marin

Matthew Dodder, Santa Clara Valley

John Epperson, Sequoia

Diane Hart, Santa Clara Valley

Susan Kirks, Madrone

Carol Pachi, Mount Diablo

Nancy Piotrowski, Bay Area Council Representative

Barbara Salzman, Marin

Lowell Sykes, Marin

Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, SF Bay Program Director

Robin Leong, Napa Solano

Doug Waterman, Marin

Attending by phone: Pam Young, Golden Gate

Agenda Item 1: Council Rep Brief

Following introductions, Nancy described her role as our Bay Area Representative and reported on the September California Audubon Board Meeting by the Salton Sea. She encouraged those present to consider whom they might put forward to replace her once her term has ended.

Agenda Item 2: Staff report and State Update

Rebecca shared a written Audubon California Policy Report on the legislative year just ended and made a Power Point presentation reviewing the current work of the Policy. Key legislative wins included AB 454, which ensures protections for migratory birds in California despite federal rollbacks in enforcement of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. She also highlighted the passage of AB 293, which increases public investment in agricultural lands. Passage of this bill was a goal of Audubon's Working Lands Program aimed at helping farmers and ranchers improve their land to create surrogate habitats for wildlife. The largest disappointment was Governor's veto of SB 1 to reduce the impact of federal environmental policy changes.

Rebecca also presented a brief tour of Audubon's Conservation Program featuring four priority landscapes: Coast and Marine, Central Valley (Working Lands), Desert (Salton Sea restoration), and Urban. This generated a larger discussion as to the possible role of Bay Area Chapters in the development and implementation of National Audubon's San Francisco Bay Conservation Blueprint. Rebecca agreed to keep the participants well informed of opportunities to advise and participate as this project moves forward.

Agenda Item 3: Brief Chapter Reports

Golden Gate: Pam Young reported on staffing changes, a National Fish and Wildlife grant for habitat restoration work, and advocacy efforts related to Altamont wind farms to promote “Bird Safe Wind Energy.” She agreed to share monitoring reports on wind turbine bird mortality with the participants.

Madrone: Susan Kirks reported on several ongoing projects, including an updated Breeding Bird Atlas now available online. She added that fire danger and wildfire evacuations are currently a major concern in her area. She also thanked those present for their support of past fire victims.

Marin: Barbara Demeter spoke of ongoing concerns relating to the farms at Point Reyes, mice on the Farallon Islands, and the creation of defensible perimeters in fire-prone areas. She noted that Marin has received a \$1 million Measure AA grant to increase protection of canal communities and encouraged other chapters to buy or seek the donation of sensitive habitats.

Mount Diablo: Carol Pachi described her chapter’s efforts to shift its newsletter to electronic delivery, revise its Website, participate in bird surveys, and protect local Peregrine falcons. Mount Diablo’s advocacy efforts are focused on habitat preservation and the harmful effects of rodenticides on other wildlife.

Napa Solano: Sally Baumer recounted her chapter’s challenges in terms of future chapter leaders, lost staff, and too few volunteers. Robin Leong advised chapters to contact their county Fish and Wildlife Commission for information regarding potential grants. He also suggested asking local companies such as Valero for financial assistance in support of the Christmas Bird Count.

Santa Clara Valley: Matthew Dodder noted that because of its Silicon Valley location, SCVAS is working on improving the built environment for wildlife with programs such as survey’s Facebook’s rooftop gardens and Egret Office Hours at Google’s urban rookery. Diane Hart described recent campaigns to increase membership and offered to share examples of outreach materials with the participants.

Sequoia: John Epperson described his chapter’s work to reengage with the Williams Sisters Ranch, which has been donated to NAS but is still activity farmed. He noted that these efforts, including recent bird surveys and nest box replacements, mesh well with California Aududon’s Working Lands initiatives.

Agenda Item 4: Needs Assessment for Bay Area Council Meetings

The following decision were agreed on to guide BAC meetings for the next year:

- a. Meeting purposes: To stay connected and informed, to collaborate on common concerns, and to share experiences of mutual interest.
- b. Meeting frequency: In person meetings twice yearly, in fall and spring. Virtual meetings by conference call, email, or Zoom as needed.

- c. Meeting content: Agendas should be flexible, particularly in terms of legislative advocacy needs, but include chapter reports and Cal Audubon program updates.
- d. Meeting length: three hours for in-person meetings, 60 to 90 minutes for virtual meetings.
- e. Meeting location: For the following year we will experiment with holding all in-person meetings at California Audubon's Richardson Bay facility.
- f. Meeting logistics: Nancy will continue to propose agendas in advance, leaving time for chapters to suggest additions and changes. Note taking will rotate from chapter to chapter.
- g. Meeting snacks: We like snacks and will rotate responsibility for providing them from chapter to chapter.
- h. Next meeting date and time: Nancy will propose several weekend meeting dates for next spring and fall and make final selections based on our responses, looking for at least 60 percent participation at each event.

Item 5: Discuss of recent findings on bird declines

Participants were urged to get the word out to their chapters on the decline in bird populations using National Audubon materials.

Item 6: Dates of upcoming events:

November 15, 2019: Audubon Chapter Grant applications due

January 31, 2020: Chapter Reports to National Audubon due

June TBD: Advocacy Day in Sacramento

July 20-21, 2020: National Audubon Convention in Tacoma, WA

Emails:

Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg <rschwartz@audubon.org>, Diane Hart <dianehart@me.com>, Sally Baumer <sally.birder@sbcglobal.net>, Dodder Matthew <director@scvas.org>, office@sequoia-audubon.org, Susan Kirks <susankirks@sbcglobal.net>, <bdemeter@ix.netcom.com>, John Epperson <johnepperson2010@gmail.com>, Carol Pahl <carolpahl@comcast.net>, Barbara Salzman <bsalzman48@gmail.com>, <lwadesykes@yahoo.com>, hoppes1@sbcglobal.net, Gaylon Parsons <gparsons@audubon.org>, Ariana Rickard <arianajrickard@gmail.com>, Pam Young <pyoung@goldengateaudubon.org>, Robin Leong <robin_leong@netzero.net>, Ariana Rickard <arianajrickard@gmail.com>, Maren Smith <marensmithbkk@yahoo.com>, Rycenga Jennifer <gyrrlfalcon@earthlink.net>, Robin Leong <robin.leong@gmail.com>, napiotrowski@yahoo.com, andrea.jones@audubon.org, mfmorrow@comcast.net