



**Bay Area Council Meeting  
Saturday, February 25, 2017**

**Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society  
McClellan Ranch Preserve  
22221 McClellan Road  
Cupertino, CA 95014**

**NOTES**

**Attending:**

Ariana Rickard, Mt. Diablo/Audubon CA  
Nancy A. Piotrowski, Napa-Solano  
Wendy Schackwitz, Napa-Solano  
Marty Morrow, Ohlone  
Bob Hirt, Santa Clara Valley  
David McIntyre, Santa Clara Valley

Ralph Schardt, Santa Clara Valley  
Marshall Dinowitz, Sequoia  
Nelle Lyons, Sequoia  
Karim Al-Khafaji, National Audubon Society

**AGENDA**

**9:10 am      Burrowing Owl Program  
                 Ralph Schardt, Santa Clara Valley Audubon**

**9:30am      Legislative Updates  
                 Mike Lynes, Audubon California**

There are currently 153 bills affecting Audubon interests being considered in the legislature. Of these, 5-10 will be identified as priorities for Audubon California. Audubon California will probably co-sponsor about 3-5 bills.

*Climate Change*

Some bills are trying to extend cap and trade program. Others want to offset impact from polluting interests. Solution on some of these bills probably won't happen until August.

State Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León has proposed a very ambitious bill mandating that 100% of California's energy come from renewable energy.

### *Wildlife and Natural Resource Funding*

State Parks and Dept. of Fish and Wildlife have many unfunded mandates. There is an annual shortfall of \$100 million. Challenges in coming years are even greater with climate change, population growth, and less federal support.

Currently there is a bill for a Parks Bond, will be a two-year bill. Start this year, and then continue next year for inclusion on the ballot in 2018. Bill would generate \$3-3.5 billion.

### *CEQA*

SoCal – developers are creating petitions and submitting them to the city to get around CEQA requirements. The election code trumps CEQA.

AB 8890 will close this loophole. The bill is opposed by the Chamber of Commerce, who call it a job killer bill.

### *Other bills*

Green Shield bill – “Trump insurance”, identify federally listed species and roll them into the CA Endangered Species Act. There are 50-60 species that are federally protected by do not have state status. However, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have the resources to manage these additional species.

### **10:00 am Conservation and Policy Priorities for FY 18**

We would like to amplify the message about Burrowing Owls and make it into a statewide campaign if we have the resources.

Trump administration seems focused on resource extraction, so we anticipate there will be cuts in parks funding and open space.

Chapters are independent 501c3's and can take whatever stance they want on issues.

Advocacy Day is June 8 in Sacramento. <http://ca.audubon.org/get-involved/audubon-california-advocacy-day-2017>

**10:15 am Report on Audubon California board meeting  
Wendy Schackwitz, Napa-Solano Audubon**

**10:45am Bird-a-thons and other fundraisers  
Each chapter share success stories and lessons learned**

### *Napa-Solano*

How do you get the word out? How do you get people to be team leaders? Many people are not comfortable leading and figuring out how to where to go. Suggestion: Recruit a well known leader as a prize.

Trip to see bluebird nest boxes, private tour of Tricolored Blackbird colony – could charge for trip or make it a prize.

### *Santa Clara Valley*

Working people can get their co-workers to join, and also see if their corporations will match donations. Recruit from field trip leaders.

Special events and prizes for teams that raise the most money and see the most species. Also host an annual dinner to recognize people, quizzes and games.

This year, trip leaders from other chapters are participating in other chapters' bird-a-thons.

Other ideas:

- Fun challenges, like Cal vs. Stanford challenge.
- Cute team names – builds loyalty to team. Each year, try to get more species.
- \$50 minimum to join trips.
- Half day field trips rather than 24-hour bird-a-thon.

### *Golden Gate Audubon*

Sends list of trips to all members. EBRPD trip – don't have to raise funds, just pay \$100 to participate.

Not a great fundraising tool, but good outreach and engagement tool.

### *Sequoia*

Big Ride or Big Sit. Raises \$3,000 with little effort.

**11:45am      Plants for Birds program**  
**Ariana Rickard, Audubon California**

<https://works.audubon.org/groups/native-plants-native-birds/plants-birds-engagement-and-outreach-toolkit>

<http://www.audubon.org/native-plants>

<http://www.audubon.org/native-plants/service-survey>

<http://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>

<http://www.audubon.org/native-plants-resources/94523>

Ohlone – native plant garden that chapter maintains. Not an education tool.

Santa Clara Valley – garden here, presentations to local organizations.

Napa-Solano – works with local garden club.

Google grant – created a Google sheet. Find at

<http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/Main/NativePlants>

California Birds in a Changing Climate booklet. Charge \$1, people give \$1-5 for booklet. Get different people at table and interest.

Native Plant installation. Three spots. Volunteers from Parks and Recreation.

## **12:00 pm Chapter Reports – Lessons learned and/or current challenge**

### *Golden Gate*

100<sup>th</sup> anniversary – bird walks. Photo displays, rotating, currently at Tilden now. Trying to leverage event to reach new constituencies and new audiences.

### *Madrone*

- 1) Attendance is between 70-100 at membership meetings.
- 2) Continuing the Phenology Project at the Paula Lane Nature Preserve
  - a. added an additional avian species, and have facilitated having American Badger added to the Nat. Phenology Project for the U.S. as of Jan. 2017
- 3) Begin observing at the Petaluma River Bridge for the Phenology Project at that location in March 2017, and observe for Cliff Swallows there Mar-Aug.
- 4) Fundraising
  - a. Bird-a-thon has begun - February through April, for fundraising.
  - b. Very good response to our end of year fundraising appeal letter.
  - c. We are fortunate to have received a bequest from one of the Chapter founders, Ernestine I. Smith, who passed away and remembered several conservation organizations, including Madrone Audubon, for donations via a trust.
- 5) Breeding Bird Atlas data gathering has completed and is being analyzed.

- 6) Preparing bird checklists for Sonoma County Regional Parks, will provide the data files and complete a few parks at a time, and Regional Parks will print lists and provide them at kiosks at the County Parks.
- 7) Expanding our habitat gardening programs - to include a program that originated via Audubon Rockies in Colorado - Habitat Heroes and Wildscaping, as well as other programs - these will be led by Veronica Bowers of Native Songbird Care & Conservation and Cheryl Harris who is an Ex Officio member of our Board.
- 8) May have a candidate for Treasurer, for which we've been recruiting.
- 9) 50th year anniversary this year and will have an upcoming newsletter focusing on the 50th year, as well as special features for our annual membership meeting in May, and another special program of 50 birds in 50 years later in 2018 to conclude our 50th year activities.
- 10) Membership - continue to see new members join our Chapter and are heartened by this. We had 12 new members in December and January join the Chapter.

*Marin* - Current activities:

- 1) Updating our insurance
- 2) Northern spotted Owl law suit against Marin County Parks - mountain bikes on trails
- 3) Anchor-outs in Richardson Bay
- 4) Highway 37 planning - interest from American Bridge Partners and various counties to make it a toll road

*Napa-Solano*

- 1) Education program – With an Education Coordinator, reached 800 students last year, completed a year-long monitoring program of the Napa creek restoration with Jr Audubon volunteers and presented to the WICC.
- 2) Citizen Science
  - a. In addition to the BBoxes that Solano Land Trust has installed, we have installed 50 in Napa County. The latest trail is at Newell Preserve. The SLT boxes fledged more than 150 birds last year.
  - b. We continue to monitor AmCan wetlands for BirdSeasons on a weekly basis.
  - c. Participated in NAS ClimateWatch – completing 8 blocks with >12 point counts in each block, which was a huge feat given the weather.
  - d. Completed our 2 CBCs (Benicia and Angwin) and participated in Solano's.
  - e. Received 2 TRBL grants – will monitor all known colonies 2X/week during nesting season, attempt to locate foraging locations, and evaluate historical colony location. Hoping to identify a candidate or two for restoration and a future grant. Will be utilizing Soundscape technology to

determine if we can use it to get extremely detailed info about the TRBL colonies w/o disrupting them. Peeps to indicate fledglings.

- f. Applying for a grant to fund "Project OwlNet" – a Northern Saw-whet Owl banding project.

### 3) Conservation

- a. Received climate grant to hire an advocacy intern. Plan is to:
  - i. Collect >300 individuals willing to be on an email advocacy team.
  - ii. Hold monthly Advocacy Meetups discussing current policies of concern.
  - iii. Intern will join us in Sacramento, participate in BirdSeasons, and ClimateWatch.
- b. Finished our Climate Booklet! Free download from our website. Will likely need to reprint.
- c. Finished our Plants For Birds tool and have it on our website. Hoping to add improvements.

- 4) Birding – have resurrected our Birds and Brews Meetup. Have had two meetings so far. Have had repeat customers! Nice mixture of novice birders and seasoned "millennials": <https://www.meetup.com/Birds-N-Brews/>

- 5) AmCan eco center planning underway. I'm on steering committee. Long process.

- 6) Plans for Bird-a-thon: The tours will be 1) Tricolored Black Bird colony, 2) Heron Rookery, and 3) Bluebird Box trail.

### 7) Help I could use

- a. Does anyone have access to some basic "contractor" agreements? And/or volunteer agreements?

## *Ohlone*

- 1) 2016 efforts for fundraising were successful.

- a. May 2016 we held Pelican Dreams fundraiser —matinee movie and reception held in the old silent film movie theater in Niles (Fremont). The filmmaker, Judy Irving spoke and answered questions.
- b. We held a silent auction at the same time. We made about \$1,500 profit which went to Friends of Tesla Park to help pay for the legal costs of the battle they're waging against the state regarding Carnegie Off Road Vehicle site.
- c. We are discussing having another fundraiser in 2017 possibly to continue to raise money for the Tesla Park effort.
- d. In the fall, our annual appeal letter brought in about the same amount of extra money to OAS as usual - around \$6,000.

- 2) Scholarship - We are offering scholarship money this year for someone who would like to attend a camp or workshop that is nature-related or bird-related. The board would like the money to go to someone in our region (young person or adult) but so far there are no takers.

- a. Suggestion – connect with advisors, counselors, science teachers at school to reach students. Ask for two paragraph recommendations and share scholarship opportunity with environmental clubs.
  - b. Could also go straight to the school board and tell them you have money and are having trouble getting into schools.
- 3) We are continuing to sponsor the Habitat is Home poster contest with the Committee to Complete the Refuge. This contest is for elementary school kids in Fremont, Newark, and Union City. It focuses on the habitat of Coyote Hills Regional Park.

*Santa Clara Valley*

Being more effective and more efficient with regard to outreach events, as they take a lot of volunteer time. More strategic with timing of events. Cut out some activities. Trying to target younger audiences. Went from 26 down to 12 outreach events.

*Sequoia*

- 1) Conservation issues – Radio Road doesn't exist anymore, been drained.
- 2) Wild Equity Institute – Sharp Park golf course. Sierra Club and Golden Gate provided comments too. Board of Supervisors separate it from their current park land. Golf course is in San Mateo County, but owned by city of San Francisco.
- 3) Crystal Springs watershed – open up to more biking.
- 4) Bioblitzes
- 5) Marine signage program – effort to get groups to sponsor signage. Marine sanctuaries. Educational signs.

**1:00 pm      Hanging Chads – new and unresolved issues to put a button on**

**Tour of Sonoma Creek restoration project at San Pablo Bay NWR – September 23, in lieu of BAAC meeting**

**National Audubon Convention, Park City, Utah, July 14-17**

**March for Science, SF, April 22, 2017 – Audubon California will co-sponsor, Mt. Diablo Audubon plans to march with banner and binoculars**

*Next Bay Area Council meetings:*

May 6, 2017 – Hosted by Ohlone Audubon, at Evelyn Cormier's house in Hayward.

September 23, 2017 – Tour of Sonoma Creek. Meet at San Pablo Bay NWR in morning, tour restoration site, return to San Pablo after tour for chapter reports.