



SAVE WETLANDS

Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge

Issue 51

Advocates for the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Fall 2022

Celebrating 50 Years of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge — and a call to action to complete and protect the Refuge



Marbled Godwits with a few friends at pond SF2. Photo by Kate High.

50 years ago, the United States Congress passed the legislation to establish one of the nation's first and largest national wildlife refuges in an urban setting. On October 8th, the Refuge held its official celebration with a memorable and fun-filled day that opened with a land acknowledgement and songs of the Ohlone and Costanoan Rumsen peoples provided by Desiree Munoz. This was followed by remarks from Florence LaRiviere and USFWS Regional Director Paul Souza and ended with a hearty song from the Refuge's Habitat Heroes.

There were informational booths from many of the Refuge's partner organizations, fun activities for families and docent-led tours. Dr. Howard Shellhammer (aka Dr. Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse) was in attendance as

well as members of Congressman Don Edwards' family.

The Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge now spans 30,000 acres. It was our grassroots movement that has been the model for the establishment of urban national wildlife refuges across the country. During the ceremony, USFWS Regional Director Paul Souza remarked:

"This is one of the most important urban refuges in the country. A lot of our refuges are found in very remote locations. What's especially important about this place is its connection to San Francisco Bay. In the end, science doesn't make decisions, people do. And it takes people that care. People like you, to be in a position to protect these important places, for the benefit of wildlife, but also for our benefit."

This year as we celebrate the vision, skill, passion and tenacity that led to the establishment of this wildlife refuge, we also celebrate the crucial role these lands serve for rare and listed species, migratory waterbirds and for our communities. But let us not forget that we have yet to complete the Refuge. In South San Francisco Bay, our history of development has left very few spots where tidal wetlands, so crucial to maintaining the health of the Bay, can move landward as sea levels continue to rise. We must keep on working together to protect and acquire the lands identified in 1990 when Congress approved expansion of the Refuge's original boundaries. 🐦

A special report commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Refuge is inside this issue.

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What CCCR Did in 2022

CCCR advocates devoted 4000+ volunteer-hours defending potential and current Refuge lands, special-status species, wetlands, watersheds and more, at meetings and workshops, in project plan analysis, in document and field research, with written comments, and at times working with expert contractors and nonprofit partners.

Actions protecting threatened lands that lie within the Refuge Acquisition Boundary, particularly:

- Alviso Shoreline Levee: monitoring changes in plans that indefinitely delay restoration of Pond A18
- BCDC Environmental Assessment for Operations & Maintenance Permit for solar salt ponds/Corps PN: monitoring status of review, submitted comments on Corps PN
- Cargill-owned ponds, Redwood City: continued bird observations to document habitat value of ponds
- Fremont, Coyote Hills Regional Park Plan for Recreational Facilities on the Acquired Patterson Ranch Lands: provided oral comments to city
- Monitoring Menlo Park wetlands threats to Ravenswood Triangle; Adams/University: Meta Willow Village, Dumbarton Rail Corridor
- Newark Area 4: continue to monitor; social media posts to further Save Newark Wetlands campaign

Actions to avert threats to lands held by the Refuge including:

- Redwood City Ferry Terminal Project: submitted comments to Port of Redwood City on the draft Business Plan - potential for impacts to Bair and Greco Islands
- Redwood City, 505 E. Bayshore Road (Alan Steel site): DEIR comment letter on potential impacts to nearby wetlands and Inner Bair Island
- Redwood City, 557 East Bayshore Road (Syufy Theater site): DEIR comment letter on potential impacts to nearby wetlands and Inner Bair Island
- Menlo Park, West Bay Sanitary District FERRF Project: comment letters regarding Corps and Water Board permits on potential impacts to Greco Island and other wetlands and waterways

Actions on local projects:

- Alviso illegal fill of wetlands incident: engaged with agencies, seeking regulatory action
- Burlingame Peninsula Crossing Project: environmental advisory to project planners
- CPUC Proceedings: continued to monitor for new commercial ferry operator applications for expansion of service in sensitive areas

- East Palo Alto Ravenswood Business District Specific Plan Update: comments to city, inclusive of multiple projects adjoining the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and the Refuge's Laumeister Marsh
- Eden Landing Strategic Shallow Water Placement Project: attended meetings, submitted scoping comments
- Fremont Parks and Recreation Master Plan: participated in surveys, comment letter
- Google, projects in multiple cities: advisory and advocacy role on development, impact avoidance and mitigation of proposed and existing real estate and trail projects
- Harbor View Project, Redwood City: Review and comments on FEIR
- Hayward, Proposed U-Haul project on former Oliver Brothers Plant site: comments to Corps on application
- Meta (Facebook), projects in multiple cities: advisory and advocacy role, impact avoidance and mitigation on proposed and existing real estate projects
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District: advisory and monitoring roles of management and planning actions in the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and the Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area
- Newark Area 2 - monitoring proposed changes to Specific Area Plan
- Newark, Integral Properties - Mowry Village: submitted NOP comments, site visit and meetings
- Newark Slough Mitigation Bank Proposal: periodic check-in with agencies
- Palo Alto Baylands, multiple projects: Valley Water/USACE Sea Level Rise Levee, Valley Water Flood Basin Replacement Tidal Gate, Palo Alto Regional Water Facility horizontal levee project, Valley Water Purification Plant project, Measure E Lands Rededication - all impacting existing endangered species habitat
- Palo Alto Golf Course: monitoring status of compliance with regulatory wetlands restoration requirements
- SAFER Shoreline levee project in Menlo Park and East Palo Alto: attended meetings and submitted NOP comment letter
- San Francisco Bay Oyster shell mining permit: submitted extensive comments to RWQCB and BCDC

- San Jose, Newby Island Landfill Berm Repair Project: monitoring status since MND 2021 comment letter
- San Jose/Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility Outfall Update and Replacement Bridge: MND comment letter and comment to City Council amending project lighting
- Santa Clara County, Valley Transit Authority creek/riparian trails encroachment: monitor bike transit along publicly-owned watershed lands
- South Bay Shoreline Levee Project: monitoring and commenting on actions of Phase I (Alviso), Phase II (Palo Alto/Mountain View) and Potential Phase III (Moffett Field/Sunnyvale)
- Strategic Shallow Water Placement Project: attended meetings, submitted scoping comments
- Sunnyvale Moffett Park Specific Plan Update: actions to protect existing wetlands, adjoining sloughs and creek habitat and to improve City consideration of sea level rise risks and adaptation
- TopGolf at Terra and adjoining North First Street property, San Jose: monitor development of entertainment, retail and hotel multi-owner complex, next to lower Guadalupe River
- Valley Water Calabazas and San Tomas Aquino Creeks and Pond A8 Creek Connection and associated Feasibility Study of Pond A4: letter of support
- Valley Water Streambed Maintenance Plan 10-year review: meeting comments

Actions commenting on Bay Region, State, and Federal Plans and Policies:

- Bay Area Regional Collaborative Draft Work Plan: comments submitted
- BCDC Climate Change Policy: meetings, submitted comments
- BCDC Ferry Permitting Policies: meeting on private ferry impacts to wildlife and sensitive sites
- California 30x30 Initiative: numerous meetings, workshops, comment letters
- California Climate Adaptation Strategy: participated in webinars and submitted comments
- California Senate Bill 867: submitted comments, worked with EJ partners
- Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, San Francisco Bay Estuary: stakeholder
- Corps Regional General Permit re Wildfire Response Activities: submitted comments
- Draft Actions for the 2022 Estuary Blueprint: submitted a comment letter
- US Army Corps of Engineers scoping period for changes to WOTUS: submitted comment letter

Actions on projects impacting special-status species and water quality impacts in the Bay Region:

- CDFW PG&E Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Incidental Take Permit (ITP): comments submitted
- Tesla Park, Alameda County: supporting efforts to permanently protect this area from OHV expansion due to many listed and special-status species and habitat
- Upper Berryessa Creek Flood Reduction Project, Milpitas: monitor mitigation outcomes of built project

Actions of CCCR as facilitators, stakeholders, representatives at meetings/conferences and on boards:

- Alviso Neighborhood Community Group member
- BCDC Bay Adapt: oral comments regarding proposed Guidelines
- BCDC – Strategic Plan Workshop: participated and provided public comments
- Capitol Corridor – South Bay Connect: organized and hosted meeting for environmental groups
- East Bay Regional Park District planning for climate change along the Bay shoreline: attended a workshop
- Meta (Facebook) Environmental Community Group Representative, Advisory role, Corporate Real Estate, ongoing planning
- Friends of the Estuary Board Member
- Google Ecology Club Member, advisory role, Corporate Real Estate Planning, ongoing
- Palo Alto Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan
- Plan Bay Area 2050: submitted multiple comment letters; organized and hosted meeting between Plan Bay Area staff and environmental groups
- Santa Clara Valley Conservation Council Member
- San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Management Board – worked on Estuary Blueprint
- San Francisco Estuary Partnership Implementation Committee: worked on update, Restoring the Estuary to Benefit Wildlife and People
- Shoreline Advocacy Workshop
- South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, Phase 2: attended the Science Symposium
- South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Stakeholder Forum, member
- Valley Water Environmentally-Focused Stakeholder Group
- Valley Water One-Water Guadalupe Watershed Planning Stakeholder
- Valley Water Sea Level Rise & Flooding Working Group: Stakeholder
- Valley Water Water Reuse County-wide planning: Stakeholder
- Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) 2050 Service Vision Plan: Community Advisory Group member

Alameda Wildlife Reserve

With some relaxation of COVID restrictions, Tern Watch was re-instated in June of this year. It was much appreciated by those devoted to the program and the terns. Breeding Least Terns had the usual suspects challenge them; including Peregrine Falcons. Terns managed a good season. As usual, numbers are not available until final report is made available.

Ospreys nested at the Seaplane Lagoon again and fledged all three youngsters. They were quite late to start, but had no interruption. They attracted new fans with cameras from the now running ferry that takes commuters to and from San Francisco passing very nearby the nest.



A Golden Eagle being harassed by a Red-winged Blackbird at AWR. Photo by Eleanor Bricchetti.

Our Great Blue Heron population keeps growing; we had a total of 43 adults vying for favorite nest sites on the VA-Alameda Point property (or Alameda Wildlife Reserve) in mid-February. House Finches still enjoy their heron nest condominiums. Housing issues solved! Canada Goose goslings were surprisingly culled by the herons

with so many young to feed. Adding to problems for the geese, a visiting not-quite-adult Golden Eagle learned to hunt adult geese. The eagle arrived in late February and stayed through March when geese clearly felt threatened and left. Watching the eagle hunt by stoop diving was a rare lifetime experience. We do see Golden Eagles from time to time over the years, but this is the first time witnessing them taking a goose.

Other unexpected visitors showed up in October. Masked Boobie and Curlew Sandpiper caused delays in bird surveys when identification confirmation became a sudden priority; both had been seen earlier at other locations and then found in Alameda.

We don't get these rarities often. We now have 209 species seen at VA-Alameda Point. Autumn brought Baird's Sandpipers too.

We worry about diminishing species. For instance, male Red-winged Blackbirds arrived and then left before nesting. We miss them and worry.

DePave Park has received a grant for planning and is moving slowly toward reality.

Alameda had two Gray Whale incidents this year, with one found dead in the shipping channel inside our Breakwater Island and another in same area was reported live with crab trap entanglement. Rescue attempt failed. These incidents remind us that large mammals use the SF Bay more often than we know and that there are risks.

FAWR has managed to provide the Alameda Sun with monthly articles of bird species. And an e-news site



Acorn woodpeckers have returned to AWR, and are storing acorns in a palm tree at the reserve. Photo by Sean Feeney.

has requested articles as well. We hope to satisfy both offering different approaches to species and nature stories.

The pier that once held south/north runway lights partially collapsed this year. For safety reasons the pier is scheduled to be removed. Gulls will miss a favorite nesting spot.

Good News in 2022! Alameda, with the arrival of starlings, lost its iconic Acorn Woodpeckers. The last one seen was in 2001! In November 2021, a "family" of five was seen storing acorns in a palm tree and a pair nested in that same tree. Today at least seven are storing acorns using the same palm. They've been seen elsewhere too. They offer so much fun to a neighborhood.

Wetlands continue to be threatened. And there are other issues that raise questions without clear answers. We can only hope that nature and wisdom prevail. 🌿

Leora Feeney

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Point Molate. Photo by Tony Tamayo.

Citizens for East Shore Parks: *State Allocation of Money for Acquisition and Cleanup*

In July 2022, it was announced that the State of California had allocated \$36 million to East Bay Regional Park District for acquisition and cleanup of Point Molate headland in Richmond, California. The allocation of this dedicated money fits within California's emphasis on shoreline protection and preservation to counter global warming and focus on under-resourced communities.

There is much left to be worked out, and litigation to resolve, but the state has provided a significant boost and an important step forward toward the goal of a regional park at Point Molate.

For Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP), and our community partners and our allies, this allocation opens the possibility of a long-held vision to protect this extraordinary headland and ecological treasure as a regional park for Richmond and Bay Area residents.

Point Molate is an extraordinary area. Point Molate's 413 shoreline acres -- one of the most important ecological and historic locations in the Bay Area -- is home to rare native ecosystems; over 600 documented species; coastal scrub; soaring Osprey; unique watersheds; 120 acres of crucial eelgrass beds.

As a regional park it holds enormous environmental, cultural, and recreational benefits.

Point Molate is home to osprey, leopard sharks, otters, carbon-sequestering eelgrass, vital watersheds, and irreplaceable habitat and biodiversity. It is home to Ohlone sacred sites, and a vast and important history. It has enormous recreational possibilities including playing fields, sports, hiking trails, beach front recreation, and more.

The fight to save Point Molate has been intense and fought in a series of skirmishes, lawsuits, pushes by our community allies, and negotiations over the past 20 years. If we can get this settled and create the park Point Molate deserves, we can move on to the next phase.

That phase is for all the shoreline preservation groups to renew our long-shelved program to link all the East Bay shoreline parks and open spaces together. We at Citizens for East Shore Parks look forward to collaborating with our friends at the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge to pull all these shoreline spaces together into a cohesive and continuous shoreland.

Let's do this together. 🐾

Robert Cheasty

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Mayhews Landing Unit

of Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge

1985 began with the US Army Corps of Engineers issuing a Public Notice for a development plan in the City of Newark at Mayhews Landing. The plan would involve filling 14.5 acres of wetlands in order to construct houses and a golf course. The City of Newark was in favor of the plan saying the site was a public nuisance and a fire danger.

As required by law, wildlife studies were conducted and surveys found ten Salt Marsh Harvest Mice, a federally listed endangered species. The Fish and Wildlife Service further noted that Mayhews Landing supports one of the most diverse and significant wildlife communities in the South San Francisco Bay area.

Subsequently, the Mayhews Landing landowner gave orders to have the site disked in order to destroy wetland vegetation and a colony of burrowing owls. A cease-and-desist order was issued by the Corps of Engineers. A mitigation plan was ordered. Meanwhile the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had begun efforts to expand the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

With its habitat and wildlife variety and close proximity to the Refuge, Mayhews Landing was considered suitable for inclusion in the expansion. The mayor, council members and Newark residents who wanted a golf course on Mayhews Landing were not pleased. Discussions between the landowner and the Fish and Wildlife Service began. Former facilities including a clubhouse, restaurant and swimming pool that were part of the previous golf course were unusable. Extensive cleanup would be needed if this filled area was to be added to the Refuge. A determination was made to allow the landowner to keep possession of this section of Mayhews Landing.



Mayhews sunset. Photo by Wayne Miller.

An agreement was made; the remainder of the property would become part of the San Francisco Bay



Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse on gumplant. Photo by Rachel Tertes.

National Wildlife Refuge. Payment was made to the landowner. Mayhews Landing became another unit of the Refuge. Shorebirds, ducks and wildlife were safe to call Mayhews home.

Seasonal and year-round ponds provide habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl and wildlife. Plans will gradually be made to enhance habitat.

In the meantime, some of the Newark Unified School District schools have initiated plans to teach students about the importance of habitat, clean water and wildlife protection demonstrated by Mayhews Landing. Microscopic organisms can be seen in tidal water, showing their important connection to the food chain. Mayhews can be a buffer against sea level rise. We look forward to the next 50 years of celebrating the addition of these wonderful lands to the Refuge. 🐦

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Ann Spainhower Appointed Don Edwards Refuge Manager

This summer, USFWS and Citizens Committee welcomed Ann (Garrett) Spainhower to her new position as the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Manager.

In July, Ann hit the ground running learning about all the Refuge restoration projects, assisting with a harmful algal bloom and species assessments and working with visitor services to plan a new year of community engagement and outreach. To top off the list, Ann also helped the Refuge team plan and organize a wonderful public event in October to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Congressional authorization for the creation of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

In case you missed the background on Ann in Tide Rising, a publication of the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society, Ann is a native of the Pacific Northwest, a graduate of



the Evergreen State College in Washington and has a Master's Degree in Environmental Studies with particular emphasis on salmon ecology. Ann has worked in habitat restoration and environmental compliance for both the private and public sectors. Her work has also included the conservation of at-risk-species ranging from blue whales and leatherback turtles to the chambered nautilus and corals, including protecting habitat and minimizing and mitigating the effects of development. Ann's career has taken her to many wonderful places, from Seattle to DC, from Arcata, California to Honolulu, Hawaii, and now the Bay Area. Ann is

delighted to be part of the Bay Area community, and looks forward to working with the Citizens Committee and the many diverse communities and partners that call this area home. When not working, Ann enjoys travel, hiking, crafts, and spending time with family and friends. 🐾

New Publications Lay Out the Estuary's Future

Two important publications have been released this year.

The San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) has released the **"Estuary Blueprint"** which is the update to the San Francisco Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and is required by the Clean Water Act. The CCMP has been described as the "most comprehensive plan for the ecological health of the Estuary." Issues of note include the top actions needed for increased climate resilience, improved water quality for wildlife and our communities, improved ecological health of the Bay and its habitats, and thriving communities. SFEP states, "The 2022 Blueprint will drive regional actions to accelerate wetland restoration, sea level rise adaptation, and other multi-benefit nature-based projects along the shoreline." The "Estuary Blueprint" can be viewed at <https://www.sfestuary.org/estuary-blueprint/>

The San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBJV) has just released an **update to its 2001 Implementation Strategy for the**

San Francisco Estuary. Sandra Scoggin, SFBJV Coordinator, describes the importance of this document:

"Over the last two decades, the SFBJV has forged a lasting and effective partnership resulting in on-the-ground conservation projects, scientific advancement, and strong environmental policy support for habitat and bird conservation throughout the region. The 2022 updated Implementation Strategy, *"Restoring the Estuary,"* supports the continuation of this successful trajectory, while also expanding where and how we work to embrace emerging challenges amid the uncertainties of a changing climate. The unique niche of the SFBJV partnership is our focus on conserving natural habitats to support wildlife and incorporating nature-based solutions as the primary way to address climate adaptation. Our updated habitat goals are broader than our original goals and include areas that will provide marsh migration, high tide refugia, and shoreline resiliency." <https://sfbayjv.org/conservation/planning>. 🐾

A National Wildlife Refuge is meant to be a quiet, restive place for wildlife and humans. Currently, that is not the case at the Refuge's Environmental Education Center nor the Alviso Marina as Phase I build of a sea level rise levee is underway. Equipment and crews are working from both locations toward the midway railroad crossing, work that will take several years. EEC and Marina visitors will find trails around the ponds are closed. Meanwhile the project's segments protecting the San Jose water treatment plant and restoration of Pond A18 remain unfunded, build date unknown.

Some news gives us hope. Just northwest of Alviso is the site of a new vision for restoration. A Valley Water project would redirect the flows of lower San Tomas Aquino and Calabazas Creeks through the Refuge's Pond A8 where the buildout of horizontal levees is already underway. The plan would allow San Tomas Aquino Creek to cut through the Harvey (aka CalTrans/237) Marsh. This pilot project's design hopes to recreate natural creek flow dynamics, enabling storm waters to carry sediment to the Bay, reducing channel-clogging sedimentation while building up the shoreline. In a recent addition, the project is looking at how it could modify Valley Water's Pond A4 on the Sunnyvale shoreline. That begins with a feasibility assessment of alternatives – ecological, hydrological and functional.



View during construction of the Alviso Shoreline Levee, looking across Pond 16 in the distance. Photo by Eileen McLaughlin.



American White Pelicans in Pond A16, Alviso. Photo by Carin High.

Far South Bay

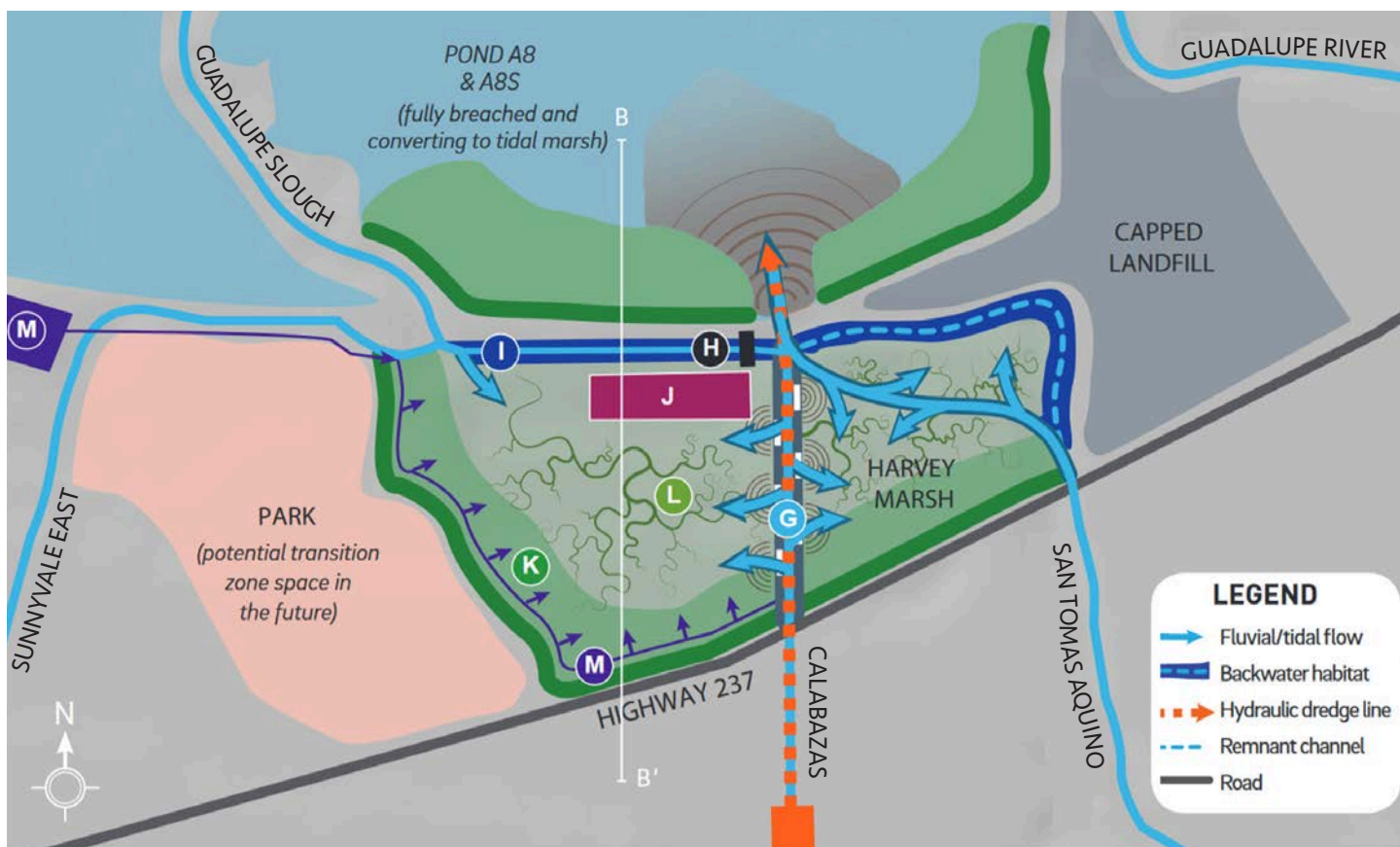


In Sunnyvale, we have been keeping a close eye on the Moffett Park Specific Plan Update. That project area extends from the softball complex by Baylands Park to the boundary of Moffett Field lands. Just south of the Moffett border are lowlands and marshes, remnants of the site's ecological heritage, owned by Lockheed. We are working to fully protect those lands from development and to prevent a proposed trail that would cut through, not around, this wetland and floodplain. A Draft EIR is expected to be released before the year's end.

Continuing north, early this year we commented when the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District was evaluating new actions in its Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area. It was reviewing alternatives prepared by San Francisco Estuary Institute. When the decision was made, we supported the Board's direction taking action to protect and improve the site's existing Western Snowy Plover nesting habitat. In the Bay, every such site needs protection and, at this one, studies show an exceptional 75% nesting success rate! 🐦

Eileen McLaughlin
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New Chicago Marsh with white pelicans and other waterbirds on



Friends of Redwood City: *Proposed West Bay Sanitary District Project Threatens High Value Tidal Marsh Habitat*



Westpoint Slough with West Bay Sanitary District levee on left and Greco Island on right, viewed from Bedwell Bayfront Park, Menlo Park. Photo by Matt Leddy.

CCCR expressed serious concerns in comments submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and to the Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the West Bay Sanitary District's proposed Flow Equalization and Resource Recovery Facility Protection Project in Menlo Park.

A memorandum from Dr. Peter Baye, Coastal Ecologist and Botanist, included with our comment letters, outlined the potential for serious adverse project impacts, from 3.2 acres of fill for construction of what is essentially a flood control levee **constructed on top of existing high value tidal marsh**. In October, the project was revised and while the revised project has reduced the amount of permanent fill atop wetlands, it would still result in disturbance of 1.19 acres of high value, mature tidal marsh and mudflats for construction of its levee and oyster reef structures.

Adjoining Bedwell Bayfront Park, the site is bounded by Flood Slough and Westpoint Slough. Greco Island, part

of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, lies immediately across Westpoint Slough. A 2020 study of the island's area closest to the project site found the highest count and density of the endangered Ridgway's Rail on the western South Bay shoreline. In addition,



Ridgway's Rail. Photo by Sam High.

salt marsh harvest mouse has been trapped in Flood Slough.

The proposed “ecotone” levee is precedent-setting in that it ignores a

and filling of mature high value tidal marsh. The proposed flood control levee would be constructed in an area subject to erosive forces of wave

slope and adverse impacts to adjacent tidal wetlands.

An alternative that would avoid direct impacts to high value tidal wetlands through reconfiguration of the on-site storage ponds was dismissed by the applicant without any discussion. We are extremely concerned that the misuse of the term “ecotone” levee sets a dangerous precedent that could authorize disturbance of high value, stable tidal wetlands under the mischaracterized guise of nature-based adaptation for flood protection. 🐭

The proposed levee, mischaracterized as nature-based adaptation, would excavate and fill mature tidal marsh in an area with Ridgway's Rail and salt marsh harvest mouse.

fundamental design standard – **that the toe of the levee begins at the high tide line (HTL), not below it,** and not on top of high value tidal wetlands, with the slope of the levee moving landward. It is precedent-setting in the proposed excavation

energy and tidal currents. In contrast, Bay horizontal levee projects CCCR has supported have typically been built in diked baylands, in areas that allow the ecotone slope to become vegetated prior to tidal exposure, reducing the potential for erosion of the ecotone

Gail Raabe and Matt Leddy
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With Carin High, Eileen
McLaughlin, and Rick Johnson



A Word of Thanks to Alex Cho

CCCR has always been so fortunate to have volunteers who are passionate, highly skilled, persistent and as Florence LaRiviere always says, "The nicest people." We'd like to introduce you to one such person who gives us hope for the future of environmental advocacy.

Alex Cho is a seventeen-year-old high school student who began birding when he was eight after some "little green birds" in his grandmother's backyard captured his interest. He quickly drew the birds in a small journal so he could capture how they looked and that was the beginning of his passion for birding and journaling.

Alex is a young man of many talents. He is an active birder, photographer, conservationist, artist, field journaler and researcher. Alex is involved in many organizations that focus on conservation, science and outreach related to birds, and he recently placed Silver in the 2022 ABA Young Birder's



Mentoring Program for Field Notebook, Photography and Conservation/Community Leadership. He is currently studying the morphological differences by region of the Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*).

We first met Alex during our ongoing campaign to Save Newark Wetlands. Alex reached out to us, expressing his concerns about

the proposed project and asking how he could help. Over the course of several years now, Alex has lent his photography and communication skills to that campaign. Recently, we asked Alex if he would create a series for social media by sharing photos of birds that are found on Newark Area 4 and providing interesting facts about the species highlighted. Despite his many interests, and the flurry of work and activities associated with finishing his senior year and applying for colleges, Alex quickly responded that he "would be happy to help out." You can view his posts on CCCR's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages.

Many thanks to you Alex, and we wish you all the best as you enter college! 🐦

Find CCCR on social media!



facebook.com/cccrbayrefuge



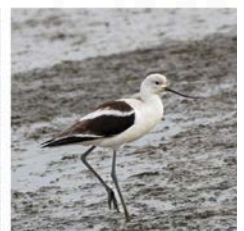
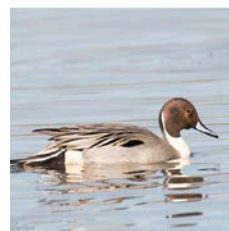
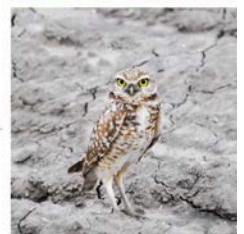
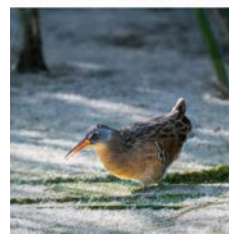
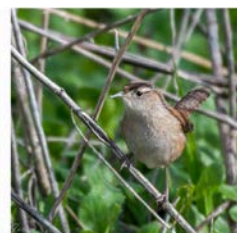
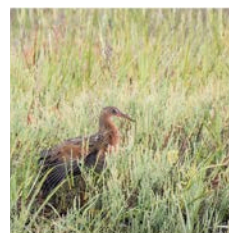
instagram.com/bayrefuge



twitter.com/bayrefuge



High school senior Alex Cho is an active birder, photographer, conservationist, and researcher. Alex has volunteered for several years on the Save Newark Wetlands project, including creating captivating and informative social media posts for CCCR.



Fremont: *An Enduring Conservation Legacy*

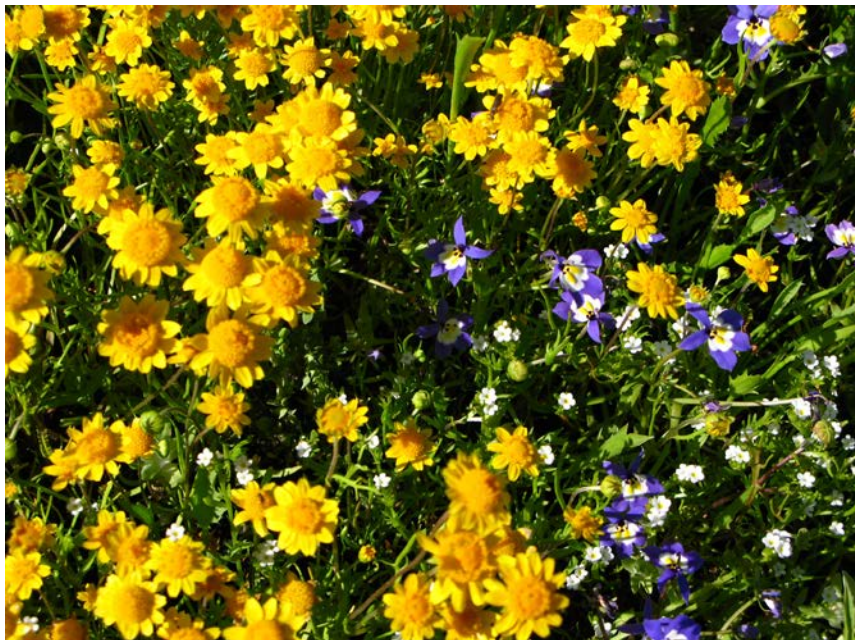
From the Refuge Headquarters one can climb the hill, sit on the Janice Delfino memorial bench and enjoy the wonderful vista that overlooks the bay. Walking along the Refuge trails you can view an abundance of migratory birds, and hear the song sparrows singing while the clapper rails call to each other across the LaRiviere Marsh.

While some might take this wonderful oasis of public open space for granted, many of these lands could have been lost to development. If not for the foresight and persistence of people like Arthur Ogilvie, Florence LaRiviere, Nancy Holmes, Howard Shellhammer, Rick Epstein and of course our congressional champion Congressman Don Edwards, there wouldn't be any sweeping vistas accessible to the general public. Those views would only be visible from the backyards of a privileged few and instead of hiking trails, there would be miles of concrete and asphalt.

There certainly wouldn't be any refuge for weary migratory shorebirds and waterfowl, or the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse or Ridgway's Rail. It would be nothing but continuous development between the edges of San Francisco Bay and the hills of the East Bay.

One story worth retelling is and the awe-inspiring discovery made by Florence and Donna Olsen in the mid-1980's as they (along with Stuart Guedon) walked the recently acquired Carruf property, now known

as the Warm Springs Unit of the Refuge. As they crested a low berm, on what they presumed to be mostly disturbed lands, they saw something no one would have predicted – a beautiful vernal pool, *Downingia* in full bloom and brilliant



Contra Costa goldfields, Plagiobothrys, and Downingia at Warm Springs Unit. Photo by Ivette Loredó.

in the morning sun. Years later, from historical ecology and soils studies, we know that the southern end of Fremont once supported vernal pool complexes.

In the 90's CCCR fought the filling of vernal pool habitat for what is now the Pacific Commons mixed-use development. While we lost a beautiful portion of the site, hundreds of acres were protected as a wetland mitigation area and ultimately turned over to the Refuge to add to the Warm Springs Unit.

The acquisition and restoration of these vernal pool complexes permanently protects a unique habitat that supports several federally-listed threatened and endangered species such as the vernal pool tadpole shrimp, the California tiger salamander, and Contra Costa goldfields. This habitat also supports the California burrowing owl, migratory and resident shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. Without the permanent protection of the Carruf property and the 440 acres of the Pacific Commons wetlands mitigation area, nothing would remain but a solid corridor of buildings stretching down into Milpitas, greatly diminishing the biodiversity and health of our bay ecosystem. 🐾



Ridgway's Rail chick at LaRiviere Marsh. Photo by USFWS Rachel Tertés.

Carin High, cccrrefuge@gmail.com

Baylands Conservation Committee

The cities of Palo Alto and East Palo Alto are encroaching on Baylands for multiple large projects, each with potential to severely impact shoreline ecology.

Parkland Rededication: The Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission considered rededication of the 10-acre Measure E site in two hearings. In September, most Commissioners favored rededication. In October, the proponents who worked to undedicate the Byxbee Park land reneged on their assurance that the land could be rededicated in 2021 if not used as proposed. They advocated for the site to remain available longer for potential new technologies. We reminded the Commission of the limitations of the site, the site's important functions as a loop trail for Byxbee Park, that 2/3 of the site is completed landfill and a pipeline through it provides bay water to endangered salt marsh harvest mouse habitat in the Renzel Wetlands. Essentially acknowledging the Commission's role protecting parkland, the Commission recommended rededication, 4 to 2 with 1 abstention. The matter moves now to the City Council, perhaps this year.

Former Los Altos Sewage Treatment Plant Site: At the 13-acre site on San Antonio Road, Palo Alto has approved a temporary housing location for homeless people and is also considering leasing the site to Valley Water for a water purification plant. When the site was purchased, valuation was based on 6.5 acres of wetlands and 6.5 acres of usable land. City activities have since reduced the wetlands to 4 acres, and used the site for construction and utilities storage. With the current plans we fear the site's potential for nature-based sea level rise protection may be lost.

Baylands Horizontal Levee: Reviews of a pilot horizontal levee in the Palo Alto Harbor Marsh (fronting the City's water treatment plant) is underway. The



vision is that the horizontal levee will provide for future migration of existing high value wetlands.

Shoreline Levee: Feasibility studies are underway by the US Army Corps of Engineers and Valley Water for a levee extending from the County line to Permanente Creek.

Palo Alto Flood Basin Tide Gates:

A project has been approved to replace the current tide gates. During construction, disruption of public access will occur. While some temporary marsh disruption will occur during construction, monitoring by Baylands visitors can help ensure minimal impacts on marsh wildlife.

East Palo Alto's Ravenswood Business District Specific Plan Update:

Proposals for the Update include actions that would have substantial impacts on the Refuge's Laumeister Marsh and the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve. In upcoming months, the City plans to release Draft

EIR documents that require substantial public review and comment.

SAFER Sea Level Rise Flood Control Project:

The San Francisco Bay Joint Powers Authority issued the Notice of Preparation for a levee that will extend from the creek to the Menlo Park Boundary with Redwood City. For this very complicated project, we submitted extensive comments that put attention on parts of the proposal that ignored jurisdictional requirements of the Refuge.

West Bay Sanitary District Bayfront Flood and Recycled Water Project:

Please see details under the comments of the Friends of Redwood City. 🐦

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THANK YOU TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

We would like to express our heartfelt "Thanks!" to Cris Benton, Eleanor Bricchette, Sean Feeney, Carin High, Howard High, Sam High, Kate High, Matt Leddy, Ivette Lored, Eileen McLaughlin, Wayne Miller, Tony Tamayo and Rachel Tertés for allowing us to share their wonderful photos!



The Uneasy Chair

A committed group of passionate friends never believed they were too small to make a difference. And what a difference they have made.

The 50th anniversary of our Refuge has me thinking of

many individuals who were effective then – and how many of them were little pieces in a big puzzle.

Barb and Kevin Monahan called me one day and announced that we needed a good domain name. I had a vague idea of what that meant, but we ended up with the domain name Refuge.org. And over the years since we've had it, we have had numerous phone calls from people wishing to purchase it from us. That couple has maintained the name for over 30 years. The friendship of the two resulted in a lovely wedding we attended in Santa Cruz.

Ginny Becchine and Dan Shattuc arrived at the house one day with pad and drawing pencil. They drew up a sketch that she sent to the Safeway Company; she managed to persuade them to print up hundreds of thousands of grocery bags with our message printed on them.

Although the company had promised only black lettering on the brown bags, we were thrilled when they appeared at checkout stands with white egrets, green marsh grass and our coupon to request literature. We were shocked when we were flooded with responses and I like to think

that those small coupons from decades ago persuaded people who are still advocates for wetlands preservation.

Emily Renzel and Linda Patterson combined art and business acumen to produce a glowing wetlands scene. Linda produced the beautiful artwork for the auto shades and Emily provided the business savvy. Many thousands were produced and proved unexpectedly popular, ending up all over the U.S.

I will never forget the people who encouraged me to a great degree during the agony of getting a bill through Congress. Gina De Ferrari shepherded our bill through committee in 1988 when she was a congressional staffer. She told me that seeing our bill enacted into law was the highlight of her career. She was gracious through constant phone calls from us. Terry Poche, Mr. Edwards' loyal staffer in his district office, was always supportive.

There is much, much more but you will have to wait until next time.

Loss of vision has made me even more grateful to those who've been so supportive of me this year, all the Citizens Committee, my daughters, Anne, Celia, and Ginny – and Pratim, that wonderful patient person who reads me all the comment letters that Carin, Gail and Eileen write. Thank you all.

Florence M. LaRiviere
Uneasy Chair Emerita



Florence LaRiviere at Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Howard High.

Sign Up For Monthly Email Updates!

In an effort to keep our supporters informed throughout the year about our various advocacy activities, we have initiated a CCCR Monthly Email Update.

If you are interested in receiving our monthly updates, please provide your name and email address in the space provided in the enclosed return envelope. Be sure and check the "monthly updates" box.

Alternatively, you can sign up by sending an email addressed to **cccr.update@gmail.com** with "Update Request" in the subject. Please provide your name in the text of the email.

CCCR will not share your email address with other groups or individuals. Our Monthly Email Update will be the only email you will receive from our organization, unless you indicate you would also be interested in receiving action alerts.

Thank you for your support – you make it all possible!



LaRiviere Marsh in Newark. Photo by Howard High.

Save Wetlands is the annual newsletter of the **Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge**, an all-volunteer nonprofit public benefit corporation.

Our mission is to save the Bay's remaining wetlands by working to place them under the protection of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and to foster worldwide education regarding the value of all wetlands.

Support is welcome from anyone interested in saving wetlands; a tax-deductible contribution of \$20 per issue is appreciated.

Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge

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