




## Meet the New Executive Director!

After an extensive search over the summer, the Yolo Basin Foundation Board of Directors selected Martha Ozonoff as the new Executive Director. She will begin her duties in October. Robin Kulakow, the Founder and Executive Director for 25 years, says, "I am looking forward to working with Martha during the three month transition. I am honored that someone of her caliber will be taking my place." Robin will retire at the end of 2015.

Martha Ozonoff was a major gifts officer in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of California, Davis. She held this position for five years and was

responsible for raising philanthropic support from individuals, corporate donors, and foundations. Before joining UC Davis, Martha was the executive director for two separate urban forestry nonprofits – Tree Davis, from 1993 to 2000 and California ReLeaf from 2000 to 2010. She received two degrees from UC Davis and lives in Davis with her husband and son.

Martha says, "My roots are in the non-profit, environmental community. I'm thrilled to have been chosen to lead Yolo Basin Foundation. The staff and board are exceptional, and I look forward to getting to know the organization's members and supporters." 



Robin (r) welcomes Martha Ozonoff (l) as Yolo Basin Foundation's new Executive Director.

## Farm and Ranch Leases at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Some visitors to the Wildlife Area don't realize what a close partnership the Department of Fish and Wildlife has with agriculture. In fact, according to Manager Jeff Stoddard, he couldn't run the almost 17,000 acre property without the farm and ranch leases. They bring in around \$650,000 a year, which directly supports operations on the Wildlife Area.

In 2002 the Tule Ranch became part of the Wildlife Area, and in 2004 then Manager Dave Feliz selected John Currey, General Manager of the Dixon Resource Conservation District, to become the overseer of the leases. John knew everyone involved with agriculture and wetlands management in the area, and Dave felt strongly that any ag leases needed to benefit wildlife. Thus began a very successful partnership.

Both the current lessees, Jack DeWit and Tom Schene, had leases on the present sites with previous owners prior to establishment of the Wildlife Area. As a result, they already knew the land and the unique challenges of farming in a floodway. The new ag/Wildlife

Area partnership worked well for both sides. For example, the lease income allowed the purchase of permanent elevated pumps for the rice fields, but the pumps also provided a better way to get and keep water on the various wetland ponds.

The program has evolved over the years. The first ten years of leases included 1500 acres of rice and 300 acres of organic tomatoes plus the ranching. For the newest leases Jeff has made changes to maximize wildlife

benefits. The former tomato site is now on the way to becoming part of an 800-acre short grass prairie that supports upland birds, and Tom can graze cattle there.

Recently the Yolo County Resource Conservation District took over managing the lease agreements, and new five-year leases were negotiated. There was a state-run competitive bidding process in which Jack and Tom came out on top. Jack now farms 2,000 acres of wild and white rice, and Tom has cattle on more than 5,500 acres on the Tule Ranch in the southern part of the Wildlife Area.

As part of their lease agreements, both lessees grow food plots for wildlife, like

—continued on p. 2



Tom Schene describes ranching to a group of Yolo Basin Foundation guests at the Tule Ranch.

## In Remembrance — Judy Kern Fazio



**Y**olo Basin Foundation is deeply saddened to have lost a pivotal supporter of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area [and regional leader]. Judy Kern Fazio, wife of former U.S. Congressman Vic Fazio, passed away suddenly on August 7<sup>th</sup>. Our thoughts are with Vic, his family and friends.

Judy was drawn to Democratic politics as a young adult and met Vic while volunteering for the State Assembly. Vic and Judy were married in 1983. While in California she worked for Vic's California district office and previously volunteered for Phil Isenberg's Sacramento mayoral race and George McGovern's Presidential campaign. After moving to Washington, D.C., Judy continued her involvement in national politics, and worked in fundraising for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the Center for National Policy. Before retirement, she worked for Arter & Hadden, a Cleveland-based law firm with offices in Washington.

Vic Fazio currently serves as co-chair of Yolo Basin Foundation's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign, as well as several boards including Northrup Grumman and the National Parks Conservation Association. Vic is a Senior Advisor in the Washington office of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld.

Judy is survived by her husband Vic, her children Kevin and Kristie, her stepdaughter Dana, three granddaughters, Kendra Kern, Karly Kern and Keira Jeske, and her sister Carol Davidson. 🌿

## Thank you to our 2015 Discover the Flyway Grantors

**E**ach school year, Yolo Basin Foundation received grant funding from foundations and corporations throughout the country. This year we received a significant contribution from Monsanto Community Fund and first time grants from the American Water and the Patricia L. Kimball and David T. Kimball Fund of the Shasta Regional Community Foundation.

Each year 4,000 students visit the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on a *Discover the Flyway* fieldtrip and one third of these students come from underserved Title 1 schools who don't have available funding for fieldtrips. In an effort to share the wonders of the wetlands with all children, Yolo Basin Foundation offers bus mini grants to in-need classrooms. It is an incredible opportunity to inspire students, introduce them to the natural world, and engage them in hands-on science education. Many students experience nature for the first time on a *Discover the Flyway* fieldtrip. Our grantors and donors make this possible! Thank you to all of our 2015 *Discover the Flyway* Supporters:

- American Water
- Albert and Elaine Borchard Foundation
- Arata Brothers Trust
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Central Valley Joint Venture
- City of Davis
- Gannett Foundation
- Monsanto Community Fund
- Patricia L. Kimball and David T. Kimball Fund of the Shasta Regional Community Foundation
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- UC Davis
- Union Bank
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Wallis Foundation

*Leases continued from p. 1*

milo, safflower, sunflower, Japanese millet, and water grass. Jack also follows 200 acres of rice land each summer and then floods it shallowly for migrating shorebirds. Tom works closely with Wildlife Area staff to have his cattle graze the vernal pool fields, thus lowering the rye grass and allowing the wildflowers to flourish around the pools.

Tom describes the partnership as a give and take. He and Wildlife Area staff have had to be responsive to each other's needs. He has to delay putting cattle in certain pastures during the bird nesting season in the spring, and Fish and Wildlife staff have to be aware that once cows give birth in a given pasture in the fall, Tom can't move them for 45 days even if dove hunters would like to get into the area.

In addition to the partnership with the Wildlife Area, Jack and Tom are both solid supporters of the Yolo Basin Foundation through donations of time and money. Jack give talks about rice to visitors and donates rides in his rice harvester for *Bucks for Ducks*, and Tom grills up tri-tip and explains ranching to visitors at the Tule Ranch in the spring.

Agriculture adds a vital dimension to the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. We're fortunate to have partners like Jack and Tom who understand and support what the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Yolo Basin Foundation are trying to accomplish. 🌿

### Summer Discover Series

This summer, *Discover the Flyway* extended its educational goals by launching a new summer program, the *Summer Discover Series (SDS)*. Based on *Discover the Flyway* curriculum but designed for students entering first, second and third grade and their families, *SDS* adapted three of the most popular science activity concepts, Wetland Pond Study, Feathered Friends, and Animal Tracks, Scat and Signs, and held a two hour evening program at the YBWA Demonstration Wetlands for each activity. Based on registration numbers, feedback from registrants and repeat participants, the pilot program was determined to be a success. Look for more *Summer Discover Series* activities in the summer of 2016.

# Hunting for the Wilson's Snipe

by Corky Quirk, Program Coordinator

Going on a snipe hunt? Got your burlap bag? Have you practiced your calls? Don't head to the wilderness with the pranksters, just head to the wetlands. Yes, snipes are real birds! Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) are visitors to the Sacramento Valley and, specifically the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, during fall, winter and spring. They are typically found in shallow wetlands with low vegetation, in rice fields and in rice stubble. So grab your binoculars and let's go on a snipe hunt.

Wilson's Snipe are plump, long-billed shore-birds in the sandpiper family. With brown and buff coloration, a rusty tail and short yellow legs these widespread shore-birds camouflage well. They are a secretive, skittish bird that does not normally congregate in large flocks or mix with other shore-birds although birders at the Wildlife Area have seen up to 100 at a time in shallowly flooded fields with lots of dirt clumps to hide behind. Males, females and juvenile have similar markings, and there is no seasonal variation.

Carefully scan the edges of wetland ponds for this elusive snipe, which is generally solitary. When flushed unexpectedly, it projects a raspy call, flies in fast zigzags and makes an unusual "winnowing" sound with the tail by air passing over modified outer tail feathers. Wilson's Snipe have massive pectoral muscles allowing it to reach speeds estimated at 60 miles an hour.

These birds tend to be most active at dawn and dusk, sleeping much of the day. They probe for invertebrates in the mud with their long, straight, sensitive bills. The flexible tip of the bill can open and grasp food while the base of the bill stays closed. This allows them to grip food without removing the bill from the mud. They move their head up and down

in the mud slowly, like a sewing machine but won't be confused with the Long-billed Dowitcher which hunts in the open in large groups of birds.

Heading north in spring, Wilson's Snipe nest across Canada, Alaska and the Northern United States. The female builds the nest and incubates the eggs. The male performs a "winnowing" display both for attracting a mate and to distract nest predators. Wilson's Snipe will feign injury to protect the nest and chicks. Soon after hatching, the young leave the nest. Parents feed them at first before they learn to find their own food. Parents may split the brood, each caring for one or two of the chicks. After they leave the nest, the mates have no further contact.



Photo credit: Ann Brice

Wilson's Snipe's eyes are set far back on its head which allows it to see almost as well behind as in front. It is very difficult for a predator to sneak up on a feeding snipe. Hunters find this bird to be very challenging also. The word "sniper" originated in the 1770's referring to a snipe hunter who could hit the fast, erratically flying, difficult target.

Draining and conversion of wetlands as well as market hunting in the 19th century has decreased the abundance of Wilson's Snipe; however they are still widespread and common. The Wilson's Snipe is considered a species of moderate conservation concern in the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. In the California Central Valley the Wilson's Snipe population is thought to be large; therefore the Central Valley is considered of primary conservation importance for the species.

So, head out on that snipe hunt, leave the burlap bag behind, look and listen for the shy Wilson's Snipe. 🦶

## John McDermott Joins the Discover the Flyway Staff

John was an Education Intern with DTF from January to May 2015 and has now joined the team. He has a Bachelor's degree in Geology and a Master's in Structural Geology and Tectonics. He has worked as a Research Assistant and Teaching assistant at UC Davis and, most recently, as a park ranger for the Bureau of Reclamation. He has also he worked as a bike mechanic and travelled the world racing mountain bikes. He's a man of many talents, and the kids love him! 🌍



## Statistics for the 2014-2015 Discover the Flyway School Year

| Category                               | Detail                                     | Numbers |
|--|--|---------|
| Who Served                             | Classes                                    | 142     |
|  | Schools                                    | 57      |
|  | School Districts                           | 16      |
|  | Counties                                   | 6       |
| Field Trips/ Training / Volunteer Time | Teaching Days (one or more field trip/day) | 126     |
|  | Teacher Training Workshops                 | 2       |
|  | Docent Training Workshops                  | 5       |
|  | Docent Volunteer Hours                     | 3,000   |
|  | Staff hours on Docent Trainings            | 180     |
| # People                               | Total Number of Participants               | 4663    |
|  | Students                                   | 3627    |
|  | Percentage from Title 1 schools            | 32%     |
|  | Teachers                                   | 148     |
|  | Attending Workshops                        | 49      |
|  | Parents accompanying classes               | 832     |
|  | Docent Volunteers                          | 53      |
| Mini-Grants for Buses                  | Interns                                    | 3       |
|  | # Buses                                    | 38      |
|  | # Classes                                  | 47      |
|  | # Students benefiting from buses           | 1194    |

## Board of Directors

Chair: Pete Bontadelli  
Vice Chair: Marge Kolar  
Chief Financial Officer: Scott McElhern  
Secretary: Bill Ziebron

### Board Members

|                |                                    |
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| Randy Beaton   | Whit Manley                        |
| Terry Colborn  | Betsy Marchand                     |
| Mike Deas      | Don Morrill                        |
| Jack DeWit     | Jan Smutny-Jones                   |
| Lucas Frerichs | Lindsay Weston                     |
| Mike Lien      | Jim Provenza,<br><i>ex-officio</i> |
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*The Yolo Basin Foundation is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to the appreciation and stewardship of wetlands and wildlife through education and innovative partnerships.*



Yolo Landing Zone by Phil Gross

Oil on canvas, 24" x 30"

## Phil Gross's painting to be auctioned at Bucks for Ducks on Friday, October 16th

Local artist Phil Gross's Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area painting will be auctioned at *Bucks for Ducks* on Friday, October 16th from 5:30 to 9 pm at the UC Davis ARC Pavilion. The evening includes dinner and drinks, entertainment, live and silent auctions, and a raffle.

Phil's oil painting, *Yolo Landing Zone*, will be showcased in the live auction. The painting is named for the hundreds of thousands of birds that visit the Wildlife Area each year as they migrate along the Pacific Flyway. In addition to *Yolo Landing Zone*, the live auction features about 20 exciting items including a chance to win a private boat ride from the Berkeley Marina to a Giants' Game, a two night stay at the luxurious 235 Suites in Healdsburg, and a catered dinner for 8 from Whole Foods Market Davis.

This year we will honor Robin Kulakow, the organization's founder, for 25 years of leadership and vision for Yolo Basin Foundation.



# Bucks for Ducks 2015

a benefit for yolo basin foundation

**Please join us! Go to [www.yolobasin.org](http://www.yolobasin.org) for more information.**

Friday, October 16, 2015 • 5:30 - 9:00 pm  
The ARC Pavilion, UC Davis Campus, Davis, CA