



Generous Hearts are Healthier and Happier

by Michael Herrera, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator

The success of Yolo Basin Foundation's 25th Anniversary Campaign, now in its 3rd and final year, has provided us with the directive and opportunity to increase the reach of our programs. Initiatives funded through the campaign include:

- Expansion of school outreach and education programs to reach even more underserved schools
- Funding to improve and sustain current programs
- New opportunities for the community to experience the beauty of the wetlands

To achieve these goals, Yolo Basin Foundation will look to increase our current volunteer base. In 2016, over 200 volunteers contributed 6000 hours to Yolo Basin Foundation. This includes volunteers such as Colette Kitlas, Dennis Pleau, Dale Wahlberg, Charlie Russell, Marge Kolar, and Nancy Tyler, all of whom contributed over 200 hours last year. It also includes those volunteers who come out once or twice a year for special events such as *Bucks for Ducks* and *California Duck Days*: when there is the need for an abundance of volunteers. As they are to the 1.5 million nonprofits across the U.S., volunteers are essential to our programs and events.

According to the Corporation for National & Community Service, one out of every four adults in the U.S. volunteered through an



Caption goes here

organization in 2013, contributing 7.7 billion hours. An amazing achievement considering that volunteer rates have been in decline for more than a decade. Charitable organizations are hoping to see a reverse in this trend. Hope that hinges on the Baby Boomers. Boomers are retiring at a rate of 10,000 per day and, most assuredly, will be looking for a worthy cause to support with their newly found free time.

Although often viewed as an act of altruism



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or a way of giving back to the community, research is showing that there are a number of social and health benefits gained through volunteering. Studies have shown that older adults (over 60), who regularly volunteer, experience higher levels of happiness, increased self-esteem and life-satisfaction, and lower rates of depression than their non-volunteering peers. Additionally, states with higher rates of volunteerism have lower rates of heart disease and mortality. These benefits of volunteering come with one caveat. The activity or cause must be meaningful to the volunteer. In other words, your heart must be in it.

Yolo Basin Foundation is grateful for the dedicated team of volunteers that are at the heart of our programs. We are currently recruiting volunteers for our summertime Bat Talk & Walk programs. Additionally, we are looking for people available weekday mornings who are interested in becoming *Discover the Flyway* docents for the 2017-18

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Wildlife Area News

by Martha Ozonoff, Executive Director

To say this has been an eventful winter, is to put it mildly. With four months left in the rain year, the Sacramento area has endured the 4th wettest season on record, dating back to 1877. Designed first and for most as a flood protection system, the Yolo Bypass has performed wonderfully, protecting the region from potentially disastrous flooding. As a result, though the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area has been closed for much of the season, closing first in December, re-opening for 10 short days in early January, only to close again in mid-January until the present. According to Chris Rocco, Wildlife Habitat Supervisor, the Wildlife Area has never been closed to the public for this long, "not only is this the longest period of inundation, but it's very rare to be closed this late in the season."

Rocco noted that although it's been a stressful year for wildlife, they have adapted. Waterfowl and local mammals alike have been following the water line south, seeking higher ground higher ground where possible. Because of the deep water associated with the flood waters in the earlier part of the season, waterfowl relocated to neighboring fields, that don't have levees to keep the water from spreading out. And as the water recedes in these later months, wildlife is returning to the Area, with wood ducks, Swainson Hawk, and shorebirds all observed in the last few weeks. As imagined, the flooding was very hard on smaller mammals and reptiles, but larger mammals like otters, beavers, raccoons and coyotes have adapted.

This wet year has also greatly impacted public access, curtailing hunting season by a full month, cutting off access to bird watchers, photographers and nature lovers, and causing the temporary

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**Bucks for Ducks
October 20th**

Volunteers continued from p. 1

school year. If you are interested in becoming a YBF volunteer or would like to know more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Michael Herrera at mherrera@yolobasin.org or (530) 758-1018.

2017 Volunteer Training Dates:

- *Bat Talk & Walk* Training: Tuesday, June 6 – 6:30-9 pm
- *Discover the Flyway* Docent Training: Sept 5, 6, 7, 12, & 13 – 8:00 am-12:30 pm
- YBWA and Davis Wetlands Tour Docent Training: TBA

2017-18 Episodic Volunteering Opportunities

- *Bucks for Ducks*: October 20
- *California Duck Days*: February 24, 2018

Clean-up days for the Demonstration Wetlands Area: Announced quarterly. 🌱

Meet a Great Volunteer

Some life events, such as children moving out or retirement, may create a sense of loss in our personal sense of purpose. **Cyndi Monday**, a *Discover the Flyway* docent, had this experience when she retired after working in education for 36 years. “I felt aimless, plus, I found I really missed kids, A LOT. I would go for walks along the creek and when I would come to the playground I always paused to hear the kids laughing and see them playing. It would give me pangs of regret and OMG moments of ‘Why, oh, why did I retire?!’” Well, we are glad she did. Cyndi and her husband, Tim, volunteer 2-3 times a week for our *Discover the Flyway* program.



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relocation of the field portion of YBF’s *Discover the Flyway* school program, from the Wildlife Area to the City of Davis South Fork Preserve.

This wet season has also been very difficult for our tenant farmers. The northern section of the Wildlife Area is normally bustling with activity this time of year, with our rice farmers prepping the fields for planting. The east side of the Area is still inundated and the west fields, although not under water are totally saturated and too wet for heavy equipment, which means the farmers have missed the May 1st deadline for planting and will not be able to plant this year. The Department of Fish and Wildlife will manage the Wildlife Area for water grass to provide food and cover for waterfowl later in the season, helping to in part compensate for the loss of late season rice stubble that would ordinarily provide a bonanza for winter returning waterfowl. In addition to rice, the Wildlife Area has cattle leases in the southern reaches of the Area, which have also been affected. April is ordinarily calving season, but due to the wet conditions and lack of spring grass, that had to take place outside of the Bypass. When and how many cattle end up back in the Wildlife Area this summer will depend on how quickly the grass regrows and how fast the pasture land dries out, but regardless will likely be at diminished levels.

So the million dollar question is, when will the Wildlife Area reopen? Water from the three major northern California reservoirs, Oroville, Shasta and Folsom, all ultimately spill into the Sacramento River, which in high water years feeds into the Yolo Bypass, meaning a tremendous amount of water is still headed our way. In ordinary years, water managers within the Department of Water Resources work to coordinate water releases throughout the system, but in this year with the failure of the Oroville spillway, DWR has had to release extra water from the reservoir to make room for snow melt upstream, which is the reason for the Wildlife Area’s extended period of flooding this year. In ordinary years, water managers would be able to stagger releases meaning the Area likely would have dried out much sooner; but with this being a far from ordinary year, the best estimate for the Wildlife

Area to reopen is mid-to-late May. Once water stops flowing into the Bypass, it takes the west side two weeks to dry out and up to three weeks for the east side. During that time Fish and Wildlife will be busy removing debris, grading roads, fixing pot holes and making the Area safe for visitors.

So stay tuned – it’s been an exciting year, and very fun to watch the Bypass in all her glory, but I think I speak for most of us when I say I can’t wait to get back in to the Wildlife Area and start exploring! 🌱

Thank You!

On behalf of our board and staff we would like to send a BIG Thank You to all who donated to Yolo Basin Foundation on Big Day of Giving 2017! We were overwhelmed with all the support we received and are very happy to report that Yolo Basin Foundation received

**BIG
DAY OF
GIVING**

nearly/over
\$___,000
from ___
generous
donors. In
addition, the
Sacramento
Region re-
ceived over \$
_ million in

financial support for the 600 participating nonprofits on Thursday, May 4.

Thank you, again, to everybody who made the Big Day of Giving such a success. Your generous support will have a lasting impact on our programs! We are so lucky to live in a community that understands the importance of our mission and wants to support us year after year! bats and our other programs, awarding raffle prizes — and even enjoying a wild train ride through the park!

Thank you again to everyone who made the *Big Day of Giving* such a success. Your generous support will have a lasting impact on our programs. 🌱

California Naturalist Program

by Corky Quirk, Program Coordinator • Photos: David Rosen / Wildside Photography

The California Naturalist Program is coming! Yolo Basin Foundation has partnered with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources to offer a California Naturalist course. If you have ever looked at a bug, leaf, or rock and wanted to know more, then this course is for you! California is a vast and diverse place so the focus will be on giving you the tools and skills you need to be successful as an amateur naturalist rather than attempting to memorize every plant. Topics covered will include: Natural History, Geology, Climate, Ecology, Biology, Plants, Animals, Wetlands, Forests, and Energy.

Registration is open through September 20th 2017 on our website www.yolobasin.org and class size is limited to 20. For more information, contact John McDermott, john@yolobasin.org.

The six week, intensive, field based course

will be held on six (6) Wednesday evenings 6:00-8:30 pm with five (5) 8 hour Saturday field trips.

Participants will complete a variety of projects including: a field journal, observation log, class citizen science project, and an individual course capstone.

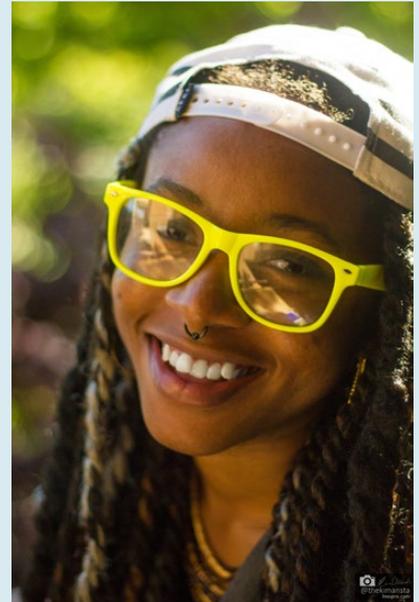
Cost for Yolo Basin Foundation members is \$375 before August 1st, \$400 after and for non-members \$450 before August 1st, \$475 after

Dates will be

- Wednesdays (6-8:30 pm): 10/11, 10/18, 10/25, 11/1, 11/8, 11/15
- Saturdays (~8 hours): 10/14, 10/21, 10/28, 11/4, 11/11

For more information about California Naturalist: <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/> 

Welcome Chido!



Please join us in welcoming our newest staff member, Chido Macharaga. Chido is our new Administrative Coordinator, coming to us with a background in sustainability and agriculture, and has a depth of experience teaching and empowering youth both in a classroom setting and outdoors as well. She earned her Bachelors of Science from UC Davis, and has since worked with local nonprofits in the Sacramento and Davis area around the growing farm-to-fork movement, public education reform, and curriculum development.

Her curiosity for the outdoors started in her youth where she and her family spent the majority of their time exploring Zimbabwe's expansive landscape and wildlife. Upon moving to Davis, she later developed a deeper appreciation and interest in environmental stewardship and farming after volunteering with farms and environmental organizations around the area.

Chido looks forward to learning more about the Yolo Bypass and maybe even becoming an expert birder one day. The board and staff of the Foundation are pleased to have Chido join us. Swing by the office to say hello!

Registration is Open!

Summer Camp: *Discover the Wetlands*

Join *Discover the Flyway* staff and docents for our five-day summer camp program. Campers will explore the world of wetlands through different science themes including water, soil and animal adaptations. They will participate in outdoor activity stations, conduct experiments and create art. All activities take place outdoors at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Headquarters Demonstration Wetland.

Camp size is limited to 12 participants. The suggested donation is \$90 for Yolo Basin Foundation members and \$115 for non-members. Preregistration is required: www.yolobasin.org

Each session runs Monday through Friday, 9 am–12 pm. Two sessions of each camp will be offered. Sessions repeat; register for one camp only.

Wetland Wonders: 1st and 2nd Grade

Step into the world of wetlands by conducting a wetland pond study, tracking wetland

animals, creating watercolor art and more! For students entering 1st or 2nd grade in the fall.

Session Times:

- Monday through Friday, 9 – 12 P.M.

Session Dates:

- Session #1 June 12-16
- Session #2 June 26-30

Soil Scientists – 3rd and 4th graders

Explore the geology of wetlands by taking your own core sample, making a soil horizon and participating in the Great Percolation Race. Get the dirt on soil! For students entering 3rd or 4th grade in the fall.

Session Times:

- Monday through Friday, 9 – 12 P.M.

Session Dates:

- Session #1 June 19-23
- Session #2 July 10-14 

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BAT TALK AND WALKS



It's bat season! Join us for our summertime Bat Talk and Walk events and learn all about these amazing and beneficial mammals. Following an exciting indoor presentation on bat natural history, groups will carpool out to the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area to watch the "flyout" of the largest colony of Mexican free-tailed bats in California.

Tickets: You may reserve up to six spots per family. Adults are \$12 each. Children 15 and under are free. If you wish to bring a larger group (e.g. scouts, PTA school trip, church group, or a bunch of your friends), there is a minimum fee of \$240/group. Maximum number of attendees is 70.

For more information, updates, or to arrange a private tour, contact Corky Quirk, CQuirk@yolobasin.org or visit our website www.yolobasin.org.



Bucks for Ducks 2017
a benefit for yolo basin foundation

Save the Date! Please join us for Yolo Basin Foundation's annual fundraising gala.

Friday, October 20, 2017 • 5:30 - 9:00 pm
The ARC Pavilion, UC Davis Campus, Davis, CA