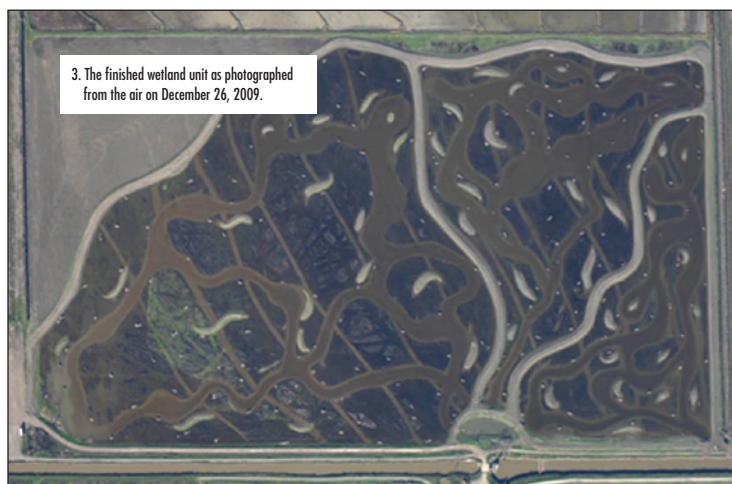
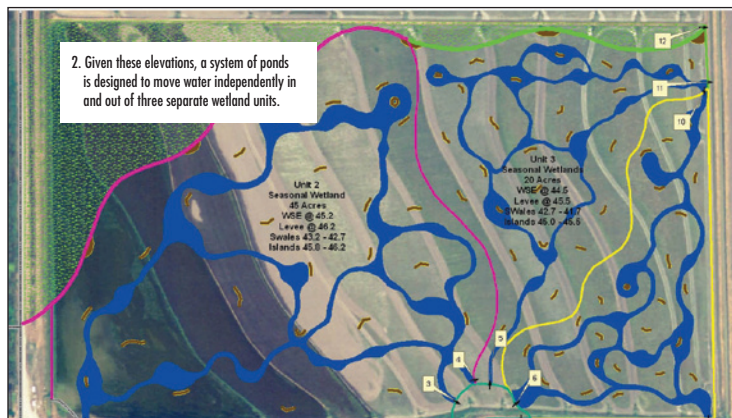
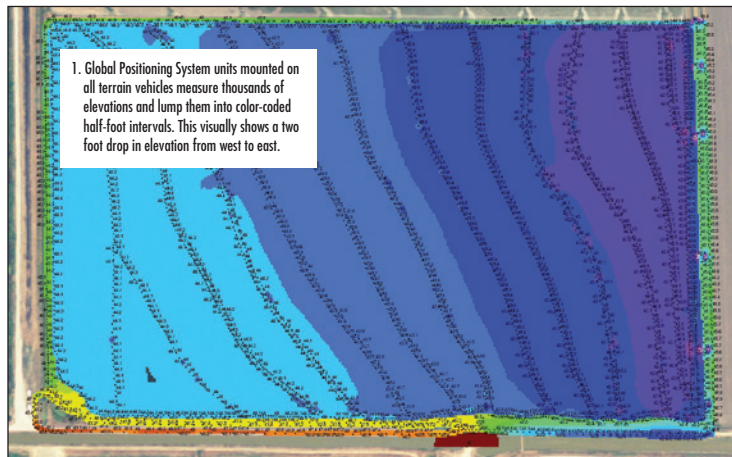




## Wetlands Expand in North Delta

By Dave Feliz, Manager, Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area



Three views of the G60 field, located east of the hunter check station, during wetland habitat restoration.

When future generations look back at the natural world that we passed on to them, they will marvel at the incredible amount of wetland restoration that took place at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the Yolo Basin. One hundred and fifty years after the rapid loss of wetlands following the discovery of gold in California and the subsequent settling of the Sacramento Valley, a wide variety of wildlife are discovering wetland habitat in the north Delta.

As you may recall, the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area expanded by nearly 13,000 acres in 2001 with the purchase of property from Los Rios Farms and the Glide family. These parcels included land along Putah Creek, the rice country near the freeway and the magnificent 10,000-acre Glide Tule Ranch. The State of California spent 16 million dollars to buy these properties. This dollar amount was used as the state match to bring in 8 million dollars in federal funds for wetland restoration through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). Beginning in 2003, proposals were submitted by both Ducks Unlimited and the California Waterfowl Association using these matching funds, along with additional support from the Wildlife Conservation Board. The results have been amazing.

We've witnessed the return of nesting Tri-colored Blackbirds, the establishment of White-faced Ibis colonies, the discovery of a dense population of Giant Garter Snakes, the annual return of thousands of shorebirds, Sandhill Cranes on the ground and the return of such rare species as the Willow Flycatcher, Least Bell's Vireo, Least Bittern and such shorebird rarities as Ruff, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Snowy Plover and Curlew Sandpiper. The number of waterfowl has increased substantially, with nearly 200,000 ducks and geese making the Wildlife Area one of their primary winter destinations. Deer are sighted more frequently along with a great assemblage of aquatic mammal species such as mink, river otter and beaver.

From the very visible ponds adjacent to the Yolo Causeway to the Fireman's Club at the southern frontier, approximately 4,500 acres of new wetlands have returned to the Yolo Basin. They include traditional managed wetlands, brood ponds, ephemeral basins, ancient slough restoration as well as significant tidal wetlands. Additionally, another 2,500 acres of existing wetlands were enhanced with the NAWCA funds.

The process of restoring wetland begins with the reality that the hydrology that originally established these wetlands no longer exists. Irrigation systems must be created first, then the water is controlled to flood and drain in prescribed ways. The fields are surveyed first with global positioning system (GPS) units mounted on all terrain vehicles.

Expansion continued from p. 1

These units link with a satellite array and document existing elevations in the field. Miraculously, water always goes downhill so it becomes obvious where and how to design the water distribution system within the pond. A network of swales is planned to distribute flood waters quickly and also to drain the future pond thoroughly. The excavation of these swales is the source of dirt for islands and the levee that will surround the pond. Scrapers then cut the prescribed amounts of dirt in these swales, guided by a network of lasers that indicate to the tractor operator how much material to remove from the path of the swales. When all the dirt work is done, bulrush is transplanted and the pond is flooded.

The mission of my department is to "...manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public." Together with our many partners, we have created a stunning example of this mission fulfilled and these accomplishments will stand forever as the result of many far thinking individuals working together in the Pacific Flyway. 🌱

## Dean Witter Foundation Matching Grant Goal Met

A generous \$15,000 matching grant was offered by the Dean Witter Foundation, one of our long time supporters, to increase Yolo Basin Foundation membership. We responded by updating our membership benefits and sending out a special mailing to let everyone know of the opportunity to double their donation with a match. We are pleased to announce that we reached our goal and have increased our membership by over 8%.

We are most grateful to Dean Witter Foundation and to all who recently joined or increased their membership support.

## Welcome Ann and Heidi!

Yolo Basin Foundation is full of new ideas and energy with two new employees—Ann Burris, Education Coordinator, and Heidi Satter, Volunteer Coordinator. Ann has been a volunteer for Yolo Basin for several years and has worked in the Discover the Flyway school program for the last two years, so she's well aware of how we do things! Heidi comes to us with a strong nonprofit background including 14 years with the Effie Yeaw Nature Center where she was initially a docent, then a park interpretive specialist and finally the scheduling coordinator for their school program. Most recently Heidi worked for the Department of Fish and Game where she led interpretive tours of the Nimbus Fish Hatchery.

Ann and Heidi replace Melanie Pope and Margaret Kralovec, who made amazing contributions to YBF. Melanie is now a graduate student in education at UC Davis and is busy with classes and student teaching, but she's promised to help us at Bucks for Ducks. And Margaret is the Community Outreach Coordinator for the UC Davis Arboretum and still manages to find time to be on the Bucks for Ducks Committee. It's hard to get YBF and the Wildlife Area completely out of your system! 🌱

*As part of the wetland habitat restoration project, scrapers with lasers shape the G60 field.*

*Photo: Dave Feliz*

## Yolo Basin Foundation Proposes Salmon Rearing Plan

Yolo Basin Foundation strives to make a pro-active contribution to issues facing the Delta as they specifically relate to the Yolo Bypass. We have twenty years of experience working with Yolo Bypass stakeholders and understand the many issues involved in improving fish habitat to meet the goals of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and the Salmon Biological Opinion. To this end, Yolo Basin Foundation, with the advice of several supporting organizations and individuals, recently prepared a paper entitled "Preliminary Description of a Westside Yolo

Bypass Management Option for Rearing Juvenile Salmon" that presents an approach for providing floodplain habitat in the Yolo Bypass to benefit juvenile salmon. This is an alternative to the proposed modification of the Fremont Weir to increase the frequency and duration of eastside flooding that has been described by the BDCP and other documents. This Westside Option would bring juvenile salmon onto the floodplain in a managed way using existing infrastructure, while preserving the flood control function, agricultural productivity, and wetland habitat

values of the Yolo Bypass.

The paper is intended as a beginning--a first look at the Westside Option for floodplain management in the Yolo Bypass. If this option gains support, then it can be described and developed further through a process defined by the interested parties. The Yolo Basin Foundation is distributing this document with the goal of including the Westside Option in discussions and studies as the Delta Plan is developed. The paper is posted on the Yolo Basin Foundation website on the Yolo Bypass Working Group page. 🌱

# Mike Reinhart—A Go-To Guy on Outdoor Projects

By Margaret Kralovec, former Volunteer Coordinator

Mike Reinhart, local pediatrician and resident of Davis, is a key member of a group of “go-to” volunteers that Yolo Basin Foundation calls upon for ad hoc needs. Two years ago, he decided to cut back his medical practice by a few hours each week, and now he takes on jobs like tule harvesting, painting, and weeding for us! As long as any volunteer assignment gets Mike outdoors and fits in with his pediatric office schedule, he’s eager to help. “We should all be spending more time outside,” Mike believes. “I think it is fabulous that the Discover the Flyway school program is getting kids outside and introducing them to new ideas. Feeling like I’m doing at least a tiny bit to help with that effort is satisfying.”

Ann Burriss, YBF Education Coordinator, relies on Mike to keep the school programs well supplied with tules that third graders use in their Patwin unit, and for public activities at Duck Days and other special events. Mike collects the reeds from areas around the Demonstration Wetlands and from the Wildlife Area itself.

Mike recalls that as a child in his hometown of San Francisco, he was drawn to birds and other urban wildlife right outside his doorstep. His mother used to say that each fall, she could count on him to get sick so he could stay home to watch the robins, flickers, and Cedar Waxwings eat the berries from the holly tree in the neighbor’s backyard. His uncle, a professional photographer, introduced him to photography, but it wasn’t until 10 or 15 years ago that he “began wrestling with the challenge to get a bird to sit still while I struggle to get the right lighting and the right lens for the shot.” His interest in bird photography led him to become involved with the Bucks for Ducks photography show, both as an organizer and as a participating photographer.

Mike credits his wife Dorothy Yerxa, who hails from a Colusa farm family, with launching his interest in Central Valley wildlife at the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge. Excited by his introduction to Valley waterfowl, he has been a regular visitor at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area since its inception. Mike and his family have participated in YBF regional



Mike prepares tules for visiting school children.

Photo: Margaret Kralovec

tours and special events. His three children, now young adults, share their parents’ love of the outdoors, and have become backpackers and hikers. Elliot, his youngest child and a senior at Santa Clara University, studied wilderness medicine outside of Yosemite this summer to prepare to become a leader in outdoor programs.

The kids in his practice are amazed to see him performing his volunteer duties. Mike smiles as he describes the stares of incredulity he gets from some of his young patients who see him at the Demonstration Wetlands pulling out weeds or tinkering around the property. “It’s always strange for them to see me out of the office because they think that’s where I live!”

And so we salute Mike Reinhart for his dedication to Yolo Basin Foundation and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. 🌿

## Discover the Flyway School Program “Stats” for the 2009-2010 School Year

Total Discover the Flyway student visits since 1997:	<b>38,193</b>
Student visits:	<b>3,487</b>
Chaperones accompanying field trips:	<b>1,006</b>
Teaching days:	<b>124</b>
Participating schools:	<b>61</b> <i>(51 public and 10 private)</i>
School districts served:	<b>14</b>
Counties served:	<b>4</b> <i>(Yolo, Sacramento, Solano, El Dorado)</i>
Teachers trained (Discover the Flyway workshops):	<b>53</b>
Sponsored buses:	<b>29</b> <i>(44 classes and 924 students)</i>
Other student visits (Nature Bowl and Marsh Madness):	<b>124</b>
Discover the Flyway docent volunteer hours (Sept-June):	<b>2,879</b>



## *Thank You Volunteers!*

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