



PICKLEWEED POST

(VOLUME 6, FEBRUARY 2010)

A Dedicated Member of the Friend's Board of Directors Retires

The Friends would like to thank Dwight Gemar for over seven years of service on the Friends Board of Directors! Dwight's participation on the Board (serving as Secretary for the past year), volunteering for Refuge activities, and his generous support from Weston Solutions (including support for a classroom and printing of the Salty book, among other things), has been a tremendous help.



Volunteers planting at Antioch Dunes Refuge

Friends Help Bring CA Refuge Biologists Together

Refuge Biologist, Giselle Block, organized the first conference to bring together biologists from Refuges all across California; held February 24-26, 2009 at Fort Mason in San Francisco. The Friends contributed funding for food for the conference.

Plants, Plants and More Plants!

The Refuge is still busy planting lots of native plants every year in an effort to restore habitats within Refuge lands. In addition to plantings at Antioch Dunes NWR, plantings are also occurring at Sonoma Baylands/Refuge Headquarters and Tubbs Island.

Do you consider yourself to have a green thumb? Or perhaps you'd like to learn more about local native plants? Give us a call and come join the fun!



Antioch Dunes Primrose

Antioch Dunes

Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge depends on its volunteers and friends to help with habitat restoration. Through the support of friends and volunteers over the past several years, thousands of host plants for the endangered Lange's metalmark butterfly were planted at the Refuge, as well as hundreds of endangered Contra Costa wallflowers, and hundreds of endangered Antioch Dunes evening primrose plants.

A wide variety of individuals and organizations have provided much needed assistance in efforts to restore habitat and endangered species at the Refuge. Included in the vast list of supporters are volunteers from boy scouts, Deer Valley High School, De La Salle High School, U.C. Davis, Futures Explored / Antioch Alive (a developmental disability support group), Refuge neighbors at Verco Manufacturing Company, the California Native Plant Society, and Pittsburgh High Schools Club Power. And several dates are set for 2010 for working with a volunteer group called the Desert Survivors, Mt. Diablo High School, and Girl Scout troops from Contra Costa County. Would YOU like to help restore Antioch Dunes too? It's a great opportunity to learn more about sensitive habitats in the Bay Area and help restore them, as well as have lots of fun and meet great people! Contact the Friends for more information!

Here are some of the fantastic species that can be found at the San Pablo Bay NWR!



California Clapper Rail



California Brown Pelican



Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse

The Friends of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge Get Featured in “The Flyer”

Friends Connection – Friends of San Pablo Bay

While it is best known as the setting of one of the biggest metropolitan areas in the United States, the San Francisco Bay is also one of the nation's largest and most productive estuaries, and home to many endangered and endemic species. There are several wildlife refuges in the Bay Area protecting and complex ecosystems of the region. One of them, located at the northern end of the San Francisco Bay, is the San Pablo Bay NWR.

The San Pablo Bay NWR encompasses one of the largest intact pickleweed marshes in the northern San Francisco Bay and provides habitat for endangered California clapper rails and salt marsh harvest mice, as well as state threatened clapper rails. The marshes provide a critical stopover point for millions of birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway as well as important wintering habitat for thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl, including the largest wintering population of canvasbacks on the west coast. The refuge's pristine marsh gives visitors a taste of what the San Francisco Bay may have looked like before being widely developed. The refuge encompasses a variety of estuarine habitats, which support a stunning array of shorebirds, dabbling and diving ducks, passerines and raptors.

The Friends of the San Pablo Bay NWR support the San Pablo Bay, Marin Islands and Antioch Dunes NWRs and their mission to restore, enhance, protect and preserve the wildlife and its environment while providing educational opportunities and increasing public awareness, involvement, appreciation and enjoyment of the Bay Area refuges. Although West Marin Island is home to one of the largest heron and egret rookeries in the Bay Area, East Marin Island is a former vacation retreat that had been overrun by invasive species. But the Friends, Refuge Staff and other members of the community have been hard at work planting native species and restoring habitat. Friends help with the annual count of the endangered Lange's metalmark butterfly. The rare butterflies depend on the refuge, where the larvae and adult butterflies feed on naked-stemmed buckwheat plants growing on the sand dunes.

The Friends have also been involved in Bay Area environmental education programs. Thanks to a grant the Friends received last year, local high school students were able to attend classroom workshops and field-based restoration projects at Antioch Dunes NWR, where they learned about animal tracking and water quality assessment and helped with dune restoration efforts.

The Friends of the San Pablo Bay are great advocates for the San Pablo Bay and Marin Islands NWRs, and have been hard at work promoting the refuges and conservation in the Bay Area. Upcoming events with the Friends include a refuge photo contest and the San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival. To learn more about the Friends, visit www.pickleweed.org.

(Courtesy of “The Flyer”, The monthly newsletter of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, January 30, 2010)

We Love A Good BBQ!!

The Refuge and the Friends love having BBQs throughout the year! It's a great opportunity to catch up with old friends, meet new friends, maybe do a short hike to work up a hunger. Come out and join us for our next BBQ in the spring --- stay tuned to www.pickleweed.org for dates, or sign up to be notified. We hope to see you out there!

Volunteer Opportunities

Annual Meeting & Plant Sale: The annual meeting of the Friends will be held on February 27, 2009 from 9am-12pm at Refuge Headquarters. All are welcome to attend – please rsvp to friendsofspbnwr@coconutmoon.com. Native plants will also be on sale following the meeting.

Greenhouse: Do you enjoy gardening? Would you like to learn more about plants? The Refuge is always looking for helping hands at the greenhouse. For more information, contact at Refuge Biologist Giselle Block at 707-769-4200.

Nature Walks: Do you love nature? Are you interested in sharing your knowledge of bay area plants, animals, habitats, or birding? The Friends and the Refuge are looking for volunteers to lead walks at Tubbs Island and other Refuge locations. For more information on leading nature walks, please contact Refuge Manager Christy Smith at 707-769-4200.

Monitors: The Lower Tubbs Island levee will be breached!! Then the fun begins! Monitors are needed to survey wildlife (plants and animals) that use the area. Interested? Contact the Friends for more information!