

# Baylands Tidings

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR MARIN BAYLANDS

## More Than 2,000 Bayland Acres Saved

### FIELD TRIPS

#### Walking Tour of Bahia Wetlands

*Saturday, May 1*

*10 AM to 1 PM*

Join Marin Baylands Advocates for a field trip to Bahia wetlands and forest, and, as time permits, our new properties in the Simmons Slough Wildlife Corridor. Plan on 2 to 3 hours and wear comfortable shoes and layered clothing. Veteran guide, Lowell Sykes, will lead this walk that will start at 10 am at the end of Bahia Drive.

#### DIRECTIONS:

Highway 101 to the Atherton exit in Novato. Exit, turn right and follow Atherton for almost a mile to intersection with Bugeia Lane. Turn left on Bugeia, which becomes Bahia Drive at the large Bahia sign. Drive to end of Bahia Drive, which ends at hikers' entrance to forest and wetland area.

#### INFORMATION:

Contact Lowell Sykes  
(415) 388-2821



Photo courtesy of Karen Jo Rippens

**F**resh on the heels of our successful Bahia acquisition, two new properties have been protected, bringing the total acreage saved as part of the Marin Baylands Campaign to 2,608. The most recent acquisitions are:

#### 632 ACRES AT BAHIA

Though the remarkable purchase of Bahia on January 13, 2003 gave Marin Audubon (MAS) title to the entire 632-acre property, the project was not actually completed at that time. Marin Audubon (MAS) still owed the former property owner, Art Condiotti, \$2,107,000. In July of 2003, MAS received its CALFED grant funding, which was immediately turned over to Mr. Condiotti. As this *Baylands Tidings* goes to press, we just received the final payment needed, \$107,000 from the Bay Institute's San Pablo Bay Program funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The money is on its way to Condiotti Enterprises,

and this concludes the first phase of the protecting Bahia project.

Acquisition also did not settle the property in permanent protective ownership. That happened on June 16, 2003 when MAS transferred to the Marin County Open Space District title to 207 acres of oak wooded hills, and to the California Department of Fish and Game title to 362 acres of diked bayland. MAS retains ownership to the one-acre former RV parking lot and the 60 acres of peninsulas surrounding the lagoon.

#### 60 ACRES AT OLIVE & ATHERTON AVENUES

In our last Baylands Tidings, we told you we were expecting the donation of an addition to the Simmons Slough Wildlife Corridor. We are happy to announce that on August 29, 2003, escrow closed on a 60-acre L-shaped bayland parcel at Olive and Atherton Avenues in unincorporated Novato. The property was donated to Marin

*continued on page 3*



**MARIN BAYLANDS  
ADVOCATES**

# Report on Restoration Efforts



**1 PETALUMA MARSH EXPANSION** Restoration of the 100 diked acres on this recently purchased property is just beginning. A levee to protect the railroad tracks (which run adjacent to the property), internal berms, and sloughs, will be constructed, and the outer levee will be lowered and breached. Material excavated from the Triangle Marsh site will be used to assist with the levee construction. This project is expected to take three years to complete.

CALFED and Caltrans are funding the project. Philip Williams and Associates, hydrologic engineers, have developed the restoration plan, and Cooper Crane and Rigging will carry out the construction. The California Coastal Conservancy is managing our funding grant from Caltrans.

**2 BAHIA** Using funds from its CALFED grant, MAS has begun planning restoration of the 361 acres of diked marsh now owned by the California Department of Fish and Game. Consultants working on the plan include Philip Williams and Associates, the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and Plant Ecologist, Peter Baye, Ph.D.

MAS is seeking additional funds to prepare a design to restore its 60-acre property. So far, grants have been received from the Forrest C. Lattner Foundation and the Orvis Company, Inc.

Another problem at Bahia is the potential for significant impacts to the California Clapper Rail that could occur as a result of a proposal by some Bahia homeowners to construct a lock and lagoon project. The largest known population of Clapper Rails in the North Bay resides in a tidal lagoon and channel owned by the homeowners association of the existing Bahia community. The lock/lagoon project would destroy that habitat. MAS is trying to ensure protection of the rail habitat through various means, including working with the homeowners and considering uses of its property that would protect the endangered species and maximize habitat restoration opportunities.

**3 SIMMONS SLOUGH WILDLIFE CORRIDOR** The consulting firm of Wetlands and Water Resources is in the process of preparing a plan to enhance the properties purchased along Simmons Slough.

The project will include removing fill to expand the seasonal wetlands, and other improvements. Existing funding is not sufficient to complete the enhancement. MAS hopes to be receiving funding through the Wetlands Reserve Program.

In the meantime, MBA activist Lowell Sykes reports that since the cows were removed from the site, the grass and other native vegetation have increased and birds are returning to the area. Lowell has constructed 39 nesting boxes on these properties. In 2003, an estimated 167 tree swallows fledged from this location. The number of fledgings of other species is inestimable.

**4 BEL MARIN KEYS UNIT V** Alternatives for restoration of the 1,600-acre Bel Marin Keys property have been developed. It is expected that the project will be implemented in conjunction with restoration of the Hamilton runway. However, Congress has not reauthorized the Water Resources Development Act that is needed to provide the federal funding for both projects. The State Coastal Conservancy is the lead agency and property's owner.

**5 TRIANGLE MARSH** This was the first property purchased under the Campaign for Marin Baylands. Wetlands and Water Resources prepared a restoration plan and the most of the construction is completed. It has included excavation of approximately 10,000 cubic yards of fill to restore the elevation suitable for tidal waters to return and marsh plants to recolonize naturally, construction of a low berm, removal of invasive non-native species, and revegetation with native plants. The construction contractor is Cooper Crane and Rigging. Construction will resume in September, after the Clapper Rail nesting season.

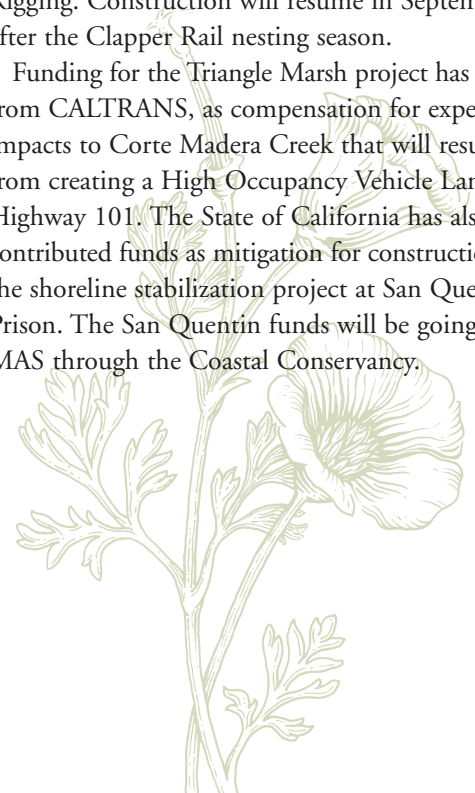
Funding for the Triangle Marsh project has come from CALTRANS, as compensation for expected impacts to Corte Madera Creek that will result from creating a High Occupancy Vehicle Lane on Highway 101. The State of California has also contributed funds as mitigation for construction of the shoreline stabilization project at San Quentin Prison. The San Quentin funds will be going to MAS through the Coastal Conservancy.



## CALIFORNIA CLAPPER RAIL

*MAS is working to protect the endangered Clapper Rail population in the vicinity of the acquired Bahia property.*

Photo courtesy of Don Freundt





## More Than 2,000 Acres Saved

*continued from front page*

Audubon Society by Mission Valley Properties, which is developing adjacent lands. Generous donations to the Marin Baylands Fund at the Marin Community Foundation covered the costs of closing.

The Mission Valley Properties donation is the third property acquired along Simmons Slough, bringing the total acreage – so far – to 172 acres. It is immediately adjacent to the 84-acre parcel, purchased in 2001, along Atherton Avenue and just across Olive Avenue from the 20-acre parcel purchased in 2001. This is an important acquisition for assembling the Simmons Slough Wildlife Corridor.

### 182 ACRES PURCHASED FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT INC.

After six years of planning and negotiations, and an almost 20-year history of interest in the property, on September 16, 2004 MAS closed escrow on the this 182-acre property at the Sonoma Marin border. Redwood Landfill, a subsidiary of Waste Management, Inc., sold MAS the property at a bargain sale price of \$275,000.

The property, barely visible from Highway 101, is east of Highway 101 and the Corda ranch. It consists of 100 acres of tidal marsh and 82 acres of diked former tidal marsh along San Antonio Creek. The property sits adjacent to the Petaluma Marsh, a 2,000-acre historic tidal marsh, the largest in the state that has never been diked. It has several unusual characteristics no longer present in younger marshes:

- tidal ponds, shallow unvegetated areas in marshes, that fill with water during high tide and function as foraging and resting habitat for birds,

- sinuous channels of water, and
- complex vegetation patterns.

This purchase was made with funding from CALFED and Caltrans. The Redwood Landfill property is a long-awaited acquisition. We are thrilled that these 100 acres are being restored to the Petaluma Marsh!

### MORE TO DO... OR WHAT'S AHEAD...

At Simmons Slough, we remain committed to purchasing the two additional properties at Olive and Atherton Avenues that would complete the Simmons Slough Wildlife Corridor: 300 Olive Avenue and another, neighboring property. We have been in touch with both owners and hope to have more to tell you soon.

In addition, we continue to look at important properties in the San Rafael area, St. Vincent's and two others. We will keep you informed as news develops on these properties.

## MBA and MAS Plan for the Future

In December, the Marin Baylands Advocates (MBA) and MAS Boards met with consultant Janet Cobb, from Community Conservation Partners, in a planning session designed to increase the effectiveness of the Campaign for Marin Baylands. Our meeting resulted in recommendations that will enable us to be more effective and efficient in protecting baylands. Both groups confirmed their shared goal of protecting Marin's baylands. Ms. Cobb recommended changes in MBA's organizational structure, revisions to our cooperative agreement, outreach, and other processes and procedures. We will be considering and implementing the recommendations during the coming months.

- Funding partners over the past several years: CALFED, Marin Community Foundation, The California Coastal Conservancy, Marin County Open Space District, Caltrans, Marin County Supervisors Murray, Kress, Brown and Rose; Wildlife Conservation Board, North American Wetlands Conservation Council, NOAA through The Bay Institute, Mission Valley Properties for their donation of property, Waste Management Inc. for a discounted sale of bayland property, Marin County Wildlife and Fishery Advisory Committee, the Forrester C. Lattner Foundation, and the Gabilan Foundation.
- The many generous donors to the Marin Baylands Fund at The Marin Community Foundation and Marin Baylands Advocates (see insert)
- MBA Business Donors:
  - Above Board Construction
  - Advanced Fibre Communications
  - All Marin Painting Company
  - Autodesk, Inc
  - Greg Bellows Plumbing
  - Buschert Construction
  - Craft Press
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  - STW Associates
  - Terra Linda Veterinary Hospital
  - Valentino Enterprises
  - Wetlands & Water Resources
  - Whole Foods Market
  - Willow Tree Stables
  - Nita Winter Photography
- Volunteers who helped make the Bahia celebration event a success. It is hard to name them all, but a few stand out:
- Janet Beardsley, who coordinated the event, helped with publicity, production, and obtaining donations
- Marin Co. Open Space District
- Donors of food, beverages, and other items. Moylan's Brewery, Huhtamaki, Crystal Geyser, Korbel Cellars, Ed Nute, Warner Brown (graphics)

Marin Baylands Advocates  
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## MARIN BAYLANDS ADVOCATES

### Other Bayland News

#### INDIAN GAMING CASINO

Applause to the Sonoma Land Trust for taking on the job of raising funds to purchase the lands of interest to the Indians of the Granton Rancheria! They are doing this at a time when they also need funds to purchase another key bayland property in Sonoma County. Donations can be sent to:

The Sonoma Land Trust  
966 Sonoma Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

### How We Work!

Marin Baylands Advocates works jointly with our fiscal sponsor, Marin Audubon Society, to acquire and restore properties. Marin Baylands Advocates works on negotiating and fundraising to purchase sites. Marin Audubon takes title, assumes insurance and other ownership costs, and oversees restoration and/or enhancement as needed. Acquired properties will eventually be turned over to a public agency, such as the Marin County Open Space District or the California Department of Fish and Game, for permanent ownership. Marin Baylands Advocates is an all volunteer group with no paid staff.

Assistance with bayland acquisitions is needed. Donations to the Marin Baylands Fund may be sent to:

Marin Baylands Advocates  
P.O. Box 415  
Larkspur, CA 94977 *or to*  
Marin Baylands Fund  
c/o Marin Community Foundation  
17 East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Suite 200  
Larkspur, CA 94939  
Information on giving:  
Bruce Bajema, (415) 456-6271

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

THE MISSION OF THE  
MARIN BAYLANDS ADVOCATES IS TO  
ASSURE THE PERMANENT PROTECTION,  
RESTORATION AND BIOLOGICAL  
ENHANCEMENT OF MARIN BAYLANDS  
AS PART OF THE ECOSYSTEMS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO AND SAN PABLO BAYS.



THANK YOU DONORS TO THE  
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AND SINCE THEN...

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