



# PETALUMA WETLANDS ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 2182, Petaluma CA 94953-2182  
[Petalumawetlands.org](http://Petalumawetlands.org)

## PWA NEWSLETTER & ANNUAL REPORT February 2022

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### Notes from the President

**John Shribbs, President**

#### Regular work continued through 2021

Even though COVID caused our School Program to be cancelled in both 2021 semesters, PWA continues to be active doing all the other things we do, which are many.

- Bird and Nature Walks continue on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays.
- Bird surveys were done every month alternating SP and EC. Len runs the survey and keeps the records. Swallows, Egrets, and Cormorants were counted and monitored.
- Owl boxes and swallow boxes were cleaned and analyzed by Len's Research Team. We watched a family develop and fledge. The owl cam box was improved by removing the acrylic sheet separating camera and owls making them much more visible and detailed.
- Five Docent Development webinars were well attended.
- Trail work and general maintenance continues weekly from several volunteers who mostly work on their own to clear channels, tidy up trails, and remove invasive plants.
- John Richards and Craig Cherrstrom go out weekly to check on homeless camps and work with COTS Outreach to contact the occupants and clean up left over trash.
- Kathy, Jerry, and Nora went to SP or EC often, at least once a month, to promote PWA, invite new members, and sell Field Guides. We now have 130 active members because of this effort and sold many 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Field Guides.
- Officer elections were held in June and I am serving a second term as President, which is a term limit set by our By-Laws so I will be looking for a replacement at the next election in 2023. Jerry Taylor was elected as Treasurer and Susan Kraemer was elected Secretary. The VP position is still vacant and needing an applicant.

## **Additional work completed this past year**

- The second edition of the Field Guide was printed and displayed in several venues downtown.
- We donated money to COTS for their Outreach and to Friends of Shollenberger to fight the legal battle to prevent construction of the asphalt plant.
- I worked with FOPR and STRAW to create 14 sessions of trash cleanup of the dredge spoils and we hauled off a pickup truck load each session.
- I participated in many committee meetings and webinars. One outcome is Kiosks were filed with posters, mostly on water topics based on the information I gathered. There are also new pages under Science on our website: Flooding, Dredging, Sedges in Our Wetlands, Wetland Processes, Saving Our Wetlands. I am working on local Geology page.
- The wetlands poster was reprinted twice onto aluminum backing and posted on the SP and AL entrance kiosks.
- Two more pamphlet boxes were added to AM kiosk and are being filled on a regular basis.
- We are rebuilding 17 of the tree swallow boxes at Rooster Run Golf Course.
- Trail Guide was put on the website with each station getting a tag and the 16 QR codes were updated and printed connecting posts to web page section. Several other QR codes were created in same format to lead people to our home web page, bird ID page, and Field Guide Sales.
- We started a water salinity testing program by measuring salt in 3 locations at SP. The goal is to find out if the pond water salinity affects bird populations.
- We also held a couple New Member Orientation Meetings to invite greater participation.
- Board added new policy to provide incentives for donation and longer-term memberships by approving a lifetime membership for \$300 individual, \$500 family, \$1000 donation gets a lifetime membership.

## **Plans for Future**

- We will continue all work done in 2021.
- We have 5+ benches coming to Shollenberger Park which will be set on current cement pads. We will work with City and Rebuild Together Petaluma to get them pegged down to the cement.
- The CA Parks grant for the Amphitheater and Kiosk is still possible to finish under deadline which will require large volunteer workday sometime this year to build the gabion benches which are rock filled cages with redwood tops. We are waiting on the city engineering staff to finalize the bid process for foundation work.
- Two other projects are on the waiting list: repair of the fence and gate from walkway in AM north section and improving the wet pathway where water runs off the old tanning factory site into AM south section.
- The Education Program for Spring 2022 was cancelled due to COVID protocols and issues but we hope to have the program up and running in the Fall.
- The Docent Training Program is in full swing currently.
- We hope to translate much of our website into Spanish, which will be done page by page.
- Kiosk posters for future will be on animals and plants and bilingual.

## Community Outreach

Besides President of PWA and advocating for wetlands, I also participate in promoting 10,000 Trees Initiative through Tree Advisory Committee and ReLeaf Petaluma, long term planning for Climate Change through General Plan Advisory and Groundwater Sustainability Advisory, and Watershed Coalition. Friends of the Petaluma River are working on getting a new dock and purchasing land along the north end of the river for a public path. River Park Foundation is developing their plans for McNear Peninsula to create a new central park. City received a million-dollar grant to run Cool Cities program. We are part of a larger movement and many participants can provide synergy across all these intersecting activities. I encourage everyone during these COVID times while isolating to become engaged in the many webinars and meetings at the local nonprofit, city and county level to promote nature-based solutions to long term problems. You can become a Block Captain for Cool Petaluma by signing up on their website: <https://www.coolpetaluma.org/>.

## Finance

**Jerry Taylor, Treasurer**

- COVID has curtailed many activities this year. A good part of our expenses has been posters for the several kiosks that we have at Schellenberger Park and Alman Marsh. The saving account has nearly \$49,000 in it so the almost @2,000 deficit had little impact.
- We have renewed our website, donation buttons and web page support with Tim Fleming. The owl house camera has been continued for another year. A donation was made to the “Friends of the Petaluma River” through the O.W.L. foundation. The publication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> addition of the Field Guide was paid by PWA.
- Field Guides have continued to sell both retail and wholesale but at a slower rate than in the past. Promotions at the park have helped recruit members and promote the Field Guide. Promotions will start up again as the weather and COVID improve this spring. Included is a summary of the income and expenses for last year.

	<b>Jan - Dec 21</b>
<b>Income</b>	
43400 · Direct Public Support	\$ 3,237.08
46400 · Other Types of Income	
46420 · Inventory Sales	
46425 · Field Guide Sales	\$ 1,758.46
46427 · Field Guide Wholesale	\$ 979.40
Total 46420 · Inventory Sales	\$ 2,737.86
46460 · Interest	\$ 4.29
46470 · CA Sales Tax	\$ (62.32)
46480 · Dividends	\$ 100.00
Total 46400 · Other Types of Income	\$ 2,779.83
47200 · Program Income	
47230 · Membership Dues	\$ 2,535.00

Total 47200 · Program Income	\$ 2,535.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 8,551.91</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
60300 · Awards and Grants	\$ 1,375.00
60900 · Business Expenses	\$ 1,721.51
62100 · Contract Services	\$ 500.00
62800 · Facilities and Equipment	\$ 244.67
65000 · Programs	
65020 · Postage, Mailing Service	\$ 131.62
65030 · Printing and Copying	\$ 4,016.69
65040 · Materials and Supplies	\$ 926.15
65120 · Website hosting	\$ 735.00
65130 · Wet site Maintenance	\$ 197.00
65140 · Miscellaneous	\$ 246.00
Total 65000 · Programs	\$ 6,252.46
65200 · Other Types of Expenses	\$ 318.42
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 10,412.06</b>

### **PWA School Program 2021**

**Carol Homrighouse, Chair**

Due to COVID, the PWA School Program has been on hold since our last classroom visit in March 2020. In order to assure that all students and docents would be safe and healthy, following the COVID guidelines of the CDC, FDA and school district recommendations, it was decided to cancel the remaining Spring 2020 program and the Fall 2020 program. The School Program committee has continually monitored the COVID situation and its implication for the PWA School Program. Although the Omicron variant seems to be waning, the risk of modifying the PWA School Program without knowing whether we would be allowed into the schools, or whether docents would still be willing to participate, was judged to be too high. We remain hopeful that our education program will resume in the fall.

### **Docent Development 2021 Report**

**Anne Taylor, Chair**

#### **Presentations and Webinars**

During the pandemic, we couldn't have in-person meetings, however, we were able to continue Docent Enrichment by holding several online presentations on topics of interest to our docents and other members. We also found that we could partner with other organizations and make their programs available to our members.

***“Who’s Who among the Oaks”***, January 27 – Kate Marianchild described the many types of oak trees in California. The talk was sponsored by the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and over 500 people participated!

***“The Status of the Dutra Issue: Is Shollenberger Park Threatened?”*** On February 15, Joan Cooper of Friends of Shollenberger and David Keller of the Petaluma River Council reviewed the history of

Dutra’s application to build an asphalt plant across from Shollenberger Park. They discussed the efforts to stop the plant and encouraged donations to support litigation.

**“Groundwater Sustainability in the Petaluma Basin”**, February 23 – Some of our Board members attended this presentation by the Groundwater Sustainability Agency Advisory Committee. Our own John Shribbs spoke about the local geology and hydrology. The mission of the agency is to preserve sufficient groundwater for the next 100 years.

**“Geologic Origins and Evolution of the Petaluma Watershed”**, March 10 – The North Bay Rowing Club sponsored this presentation by Nicole Myers of Sonoma State University. She described the Petaluma Valley as “a small, perfect watershed”.

**“Water Issues in Petaluma”**, November 10 – The President of PWA, John Shribbs, discussed fresh water, salt water, groundwater, water management, water conservation, and sea level rise within the Petaluma Valley Watershed.

## **Docent Training**

Since the school program was cancelled due to COVID restrictions, the 2021 docent-training program was also cancelled. Despite the pandemic, potential volunteers continued to contact us and some of them helped with Restoration and Maintenance or Research (bird survey and monitoring). In November, the School Program and Docent Development Committees had a joint meeting for planning. We decided that we could do a reduced program in the classroom and the full program at Shollenberger Park. Then we planned the docent training to start January 13, 2022. There would be 7 sessions, plus a refresher for current docents. We arranged for docent recruitment through newspapers, social media, and posters at the park and elsewhere. Since then, the Omicron surge started and the Spring School Program was suspended again, but the docent training is proceeding with a combination of Zoom meetings and outdoor sessions.

## **Annual Information Chair Report**

**Kathy Cherrstrom, Chair**

### **PWA 2021 Annual and Quarterly Volunteer hours (note: all self-reported)**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Docents</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>23.0</b>
<b>Bird Research</b>	<b>150.5</b>	<b>117.25</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>119.8</b>	<b>433.3</b>
<b>Field Guide</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>177.0</b>
<b>Habitat</b>	<b>250.5</b>	<b>297.0</b>	<b>186.5</b>	<b>99.5</b>	<b>833.5</b>
<b>Board</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>104.0</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>287.3</b>	<b>534.3</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>583.0</b>	<b>551.3</b>	<b>329.3</b>	<b>537.5</b>	<b>2,001.0</b>

This is a 2700 hour decrease from prior year, due to cancellation of School Program.

## **Homeless Encampment Monitoring Report**

**John Richards**

Since 2020, our first contact concerning campers in the wetlands and near Adobe Creek has been COTS. Previously the PWA “Camp Scouts” had reported to the Petaluma Police Department. Jeff Schueller has been our main COTS contact for the past couple of years and was again our go-to-guy in

2021. In early February 2021, after getting the go ahead from COTS, Craig Cherrstrom and David Fueling helped to clear a site from the east side of Adobe Creek, back in the willows off Corporate Circle. In March and April there were tents along Adobe Creek near the Tree Swallow boxes that were reported to Jeff, and said campers left. Again in May and June there were some issues near Adobe Creek by the Technology Lane entrance to the Alman Marsh Trail. In mid-July there was a blanket and the usual odds and ends associated with the typical camp we find. Things remained calm for the latter part of 2021 for the deer and wildlife in the greater Shollenberger area. Hopefully 2022, will continue to be such. We did receive word that Jeff Schueller has moved on from COTS, and we wish him well.

## **PWA Membership Report**

**Kathy Cherrstrom, Chair**

Membership as of 1 January 2022: 161

Membership as of 1 February, 2022: 137. Twenty-seven people had not renewed their membership. There has been no response to reminders.

New Members: 3 Beverly & Paul Alexander, Thomas Bradley

Jerry Taylor and I are planning Membership Events at Shollenberger Par in February and March.

### **Future Meet & Greet Events will be held in late February/March 2022.**

New members will be sent an email invitation of attend with a follow-up phone call a week prior to the event.

Location of the event is weather-dependent and will be announced a week prior to the scheduled date.

We will have sign-up sheets for Members who would like to volunteer at the Park.

## **PWA Monitoring Program**

**Len Nelson, Chair**

### **Great Blue Heron and Great Egret colony at Ellis Creek**

The 2022 nesting season for these 2 species plus Double-crested Cormorants begins in early March when the Great Blue Herons arrive to scout for nesting sites along Ellis Creek. A bit later, the Cormorants arrive and then the Egrets. We will wait in anticipation of what this year produces.

In 2021, the colony had 9 Great Blue Heron nests from which 15 chicks fledged, 4 Great Egret nests produced 7 chicks that fledged and 35 Double-crested Cormorant nests produced an estimated 70 chicks.

### **Tree Swallows**

The PWA has been monitoring the Tree Swallows in our local wetlands since 2007. These birds are voracious insectivores catching their prey in mid-air. Their breeding cycle goes from mid-April to the first week of August. We initially installed 10 houses in 2007 at Shollenberger but now have 60 located at Shollenberger, Ellis Creek and Lake Tolay Regional Park. In the course of those 15 years, we have recorded 5,152 eggs laid, 4,336 chicks hatched, 3,387 fledged with a mortality of 21.9%. We install houses for them because their natural habitats, cavities in aging or dead trees, are no longer in our environment in the numbers needed to accommodate the demand. They have been removed for use

as firewood, to clear the land for farming or simply because they were deemed to be unsightly. A small portion of the birds that use our bird houses are Western Bluebirds. Most of these are at Tolay with a few at Ellis Creek. Unlike the Tree Swallows, the Bluebirds catch most of their insect food on the ground.

### **Barn Owls**

There are currently 14 Barn Owl houses in our local wetlands. They are cleaned out once annually in October by the PWA. Except for one, the contents of each house is weighed and disposed of onsite once pellets are collected for use in the PWA's school classroom exercises. In this particular house, we have a camcorder, so we know that 5 eggs were laid in late February 2021 and that 4 eggs hatched, and all 4 chicks lived to fledge beginning in late May. To determine what those 4 chicks consumed in the course of one year, we dissected the nest contents (weight of 10.7#) late last year and here is what we found: The remains of 791 creatures were identified by their skulls & or mandibles. 64% were voles; 15% gophers; 11% mice & 9% birds. How many chicks will be produced in 2022? We will not know until the season concludes and we tally the results of our monitoring activities.

### **Restoration and Maintenance**

**John Shribbs**

Trail work and general maintenance continues weekly from individual volunteers who mostly work on their own. Several docents go out on a weekly basis to clear channels, tidy up trails, and remove invasive plants. The wetlands poster was reprinted twice onto aluminum backing and posted on the SP and AL entrance kiosks. Two more pamphlet boxes were added to AM kiosk and are being filled on a regular basis. Kiosks were filed with posters, mostly on water topics based on the information gathered during the many webinars available.

### **Electronic Media**

**John Shribbs, Chair**

There are also new pages under Science on our website: Flooding, Dredging, Sedges in Our Wetlands, Wetland Processes, and Saving Our Wetlands. I am working on a page for local Geology. The Trail Guide was put on the website with each station getting a tag and the 16 QR codes on trail posts were updated and printed connecting phones to each web page station. Several other QR codes were created in same format to lead people to our home web page, bird ID page, and Field Guide sales.

### **Field Guide**

**Nora Pearl**

In the outlets where we sell our books we have different arrangements: Copperfield's Petaluma and Petaluma Art Center books are on consignment wholesale. Petaluma Field Works, Petaluma Seed Bank and Petaluma Historical Museum buy the books wholesale. In June we swapped out all their 1st edition books with the newer 2nd edition books. The first edition of 1,000 PWFG books in 2 years sold out except for the 51 copies now held by Nora which will be used as class sets for teachers to borrow as preparation or follow up to our 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade School Program. This was during the pandemic and shows a great interest from the community.

In late May 2021 we printed 365 copies of a newly updated 2nd edition with a new ISBN number with updated sections and life descriptions by co-authors Marion Parker and John Shribbs. At our late June 2021 Annual PWA business meeting at McNear Park we showcased the book selling many. This new 2<sup>nd</sup> edition is available online from our web page and in local venues.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition accounting from printing in May 2021 to end of January 2022**

<b>Consigned books</b>	<b>52</b>	In local venues (Copperfield's, others)
<b>Free books</b>	<b>21</b>	Distributed to people who worked on the book and for other reasons.
<b>Held books</b>	<b>192</b>	Future sale: Susan Kraemer who stores the books, Diane Paleczny-Stevenson who ships our book, Kathy Cherrstrom who sells them at Park venues, John, and a few others.
<b>Sold books</b>	<b>74</b>	Retail and wholesale
<b>Swapped books</b>	<b>36</b>	Exchanged for the 1st editions
<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>	



## PWA Opportunities

Vice President, an Officer on PWA Board  
 Public Relations/Outreach/Marketing, a Chair on the Board  
 Restoration and Maintenance, a Chair on the Board  
 2 Members at Large to sit on the Board with voting rights  
 Various volunteer duties to do our many tasks and add new ones, e.g.:  
     Park Volunteer  
     Dogs Off-Leash  
     Homeless Encampments  
     Guided Walks

### PWA Board

<b>Officers:</b>	
President	John Shribbs
Vice President	vacant
Secretary	Susan Kraemer
Treasurer	Jerry Taylor
<b>Chairs:</b>	
PR/Outreach	vacant
Docent Development	Anne Taylor
Education	Carol Homrighouse
Research	Len Nelson
Maintenance and Restoration	vacant
Electronic Media	John Shribbs (position available)
Members at Large	2 vacant positions