

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Marsh Mailing is also available in full color at www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com

R.I.P. Buford's Legacy

Hello wonderful volunteers,

It is with heavy heart that I must inform you of Buford's passing. Buford joined our Madrona educational animal ambassador family around 2013 at roughly 7 years of age, meaning he lived to the ripe old age of almost 15 years.

Western Toads on average live about 9 years, so our Buford was very special for staying with us so long. His uncanny ability to make children smile was always one of his most endearing qualities and he leaves behind a wonderful legacy, having helped inspire curiosity in many young minds.



Buford will be sorely missed by us all: staff, volunteers and guests alike. Please reach out to me if you have any questions, concerns or fond memories to share.

Sincerely,
Lauren Ellis
Volunteer Coordinator
Madrona Marsh Nature Center
(310) 782-3989 Ext. 7722
Email: LEllis@TorranceCA.gov



A young visitor meets Buford's friend, Snoopy, the gopher snake, here held by volunteer Rebekah at the Spring Extravaganza, as volunteer Sarah looks on.

An Unusual Year

Suzan Hubert, FOMM President

I hope all our readers, family and friends are safe and well. This has certainly been an unusual year thus far. We have to acknowledge the Nature Center staff for their tireless efforts to keep the Preserve available to the public through social media, Zoom and handling reservations.

Speaking of Zoom, the Board of Directors has continued holding our monthly meetings using Zoom. Many thanks to Chris Wendel for donating a Zoom account to the Friends. Thanks also to Cindy Reid who was determined to stay connected with her Friday Fun families.



Cindy Reid leading Friday Fun Zoom session on the Preserve.

Friday Fun is a preschool science program for children and their parents. Cindy worked with Nature Center staff to secure City approval to present the program via Zoom. Her husband, Ken Reid, was also very helpful in designing and constructing a simple filming frame to help keep the tablet used for filming steady.

As a camera person I have to say participating in the filming was an interesting experience. Staff member Jessica Mercado hosted the program from the Nature Center and sent messages to me regarding focus and sound adjustments. Cindy scouted out ideal filming locations. She opened the program and introduced the topic which will be different every week (Poppies, Frogs and Ducks so far).

Cindy wandered a small area of the Preserve showing examples, read a related story and led the children in a craft project which had been

sent to their parents when they were registered. All I had to do was keep up.

At one point we were filming ducks while Cindy read a story about ducks. The story required “quacking”. A real Momma duck heard this and brought her ducklings over to investigate. Cindy is a very good quacker; I do wonder what she might have ‘said’. Meanwhile, I was kneeling in the mud, which was okay until something or some things started crawling up my leg. Not as if I could do anything about it beyond hoping whatever it was didn’t bite. I never did find out what it was. Guess it didn’t care for the taste of sun-screen.

If you have taken advantage of the




Suzan Hubert filming Cindy's Zoom session using a stabilizing device provided by Ken Reid.

reservation system to visit the Preserve you may have noticed that nature has not missed our human visits. The Preserve has prospered and flourished in our absence: many of the paths are overgrown with lush native plants, lizards bask in the sun, rabbits frolic and frogs abound.

Stop by the parking lot at night and listen to the thousands of male Pacific Tree frogs announcing their presence and seeking a mate. Stroll through the Native Gardens and check to see if any bees have moved into the Pollinator House. Or just sit and watch the birds enjoy the new infinity edge water fountain—and bird bath.

Be Well, Stay Safe and See You on the Preserve.

Suzan 

The Positive Impact of Reduced Human Activity on Preserve Plants and Animals

Melissa Loeb, Preserve Manager/Naturalist

Did you know Madrona Marsh Preserve is designated as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) because it contains irreplaceable biological resources? These resources provide food, shelter, and a place for animals to breed.

Of the 750 or more species documented at the Preserve, 101 of those are listed as Special Status Species. This term is used to identify species that should be or have been listed as rare, threatened or endangered by Federal or State government. What this really means is, the Preserve is exceptionally unusual and has significant biodiversity.

One factor that makes Madrona Marsh Preserve so unique is its location in the middle of an urban area. Although it is completely surrounded by malls, parking lots and condominiums, there is so much life thriving in this relatively small area. This is why the Staff and volunteers take such great pride in their job to enhance, restore and protect the natural resources at the Preserve.

The staff and volunteers spend the entire year monitoring, restoring, and enhancing habitat, but the tasks performed depend on the time of year. As the seasons change, so do the plants and animals. Late winter into early and late spring is the most spectacular time of the year, a time when the seasonal wetlands fill, native plants bloom, migrant birds stop to rest or breed, amphibians and insects speed through their life cycles and pollinators forage or deposit eggs on native plants. It is the best time of the year! Of course, we also appreciate and recognize the importance of summer, fall and winter.

This spring the Marsh received over 14 inches of rain. That is just above average. As the wetland filled, the birds flocked in—more than 200 aquatic diving and dabbling

ducks, plus egrets, herons, and numerous Red-winged Blackbirds, warblers, sparrows, finches, flycatchers and many more species of birds. In early to late spring you can hear the male Pacific Tree Frogs' chorus every evening. This is sure to be a unique experience for those who haven't heard it before.

Spring is also the time of year our attendance increases. However, this spring was like none other. With Covid-19 restrictions, people began to crave nature, exercise, and a chance to be outside to retreat from the "Safer at Home" Order. This widely experienced desire serves to validate the importance of immersing ourselves in nature for our collective mental and physical health. I think we could all agree that many of us have realized the value of being outdoors, especially in a natural setting.

Nature reduces anger, fear and stress, and increases pleasant feelings. It not only makes you feel better emotionally, it contributes to your physical well-being, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones.

As a direct result of the Covid-19 "Safer at Home" order, Madrona Marsh attendance tripled in two days—eventually reaching over 1200 visitors in one day. With a significant increase in visitors, there was no possible way the staff could safely and effectively monitor the land without assistance from volunteers.

Volunteers play a vital role in many aspects of the daily operations at both the Nature Center and the Preserve but we lost them when Covid-19 began. The City

"Positive Impact..." continued on page 4

“Positive Impact...” continued from page 3

Manager and Preserve staff eventually made the decision to close the Preserve, with concerns for protecting both the public and the natural resources at Madrona Marsh. This step would allow time for the staff to prepare trails and entry points, following all State, County and City guidelines. It allowed us to train Park Ambassadors, Park Rangers and staff to monitor and understand the new rules and restrictions.

Once staff completed training the Preserve reopened in May, but by then almost two months had passed. What the staff observed during those two months, and continues to observe today, has inspired us to alter and enhance our monitoring and management techniques for the future.

It began with a walk through the middle road of the Preserve early in the morning. I noticed that grasses, native plants and even trees were taking over what had once been a beaten path. Egrets, herons and mallard families were tucked in along the water's edge, resting. Mourning Cloak and Western Tiger Swallowtail butterflies were abundant throughout the Willows. Anna's Hummingbirds, Yellow Warblers and Red-winged blackbirds nested along the trails. It was natural and untouched; and it was truly beautiful.

The transformation in only a few weeks took me by surprise. I observed what seemed like thousands of young Pacific Tree Frogs resting and foraging along the water's edge in the smartweed and yellow sweetclover. Audubon Cottontails were abundant even in the willows. I've managed to visit the middle of the Preserve weekly and sometimes daily ever since. Each time I visit, I make new observations. These observations will surely help us manage our fragile area differently in the future.

Throughout the Preserve, there has been a significant increase in reptiles, insects and especially butterflies. That observation, made by staff, visitors and the Park Ambassadors has truly been exciting and beneficial.

The question to ask ourselves is: How can we continue to allow the community to access these areas while still protecting these sensitive habitats? We know human activity can alter or change habitat significantly. This consideration will alter our upcoming fall maintenance and the way we manage trails in the future.

It makes sense to continue to protect these fragile areas during the most sensitive time of the year, and our staff is working hard to develop a new Land Steward program. This program will enhance our visitors' experience by continuing to provide a safe, educational and fun experience.

The Land Stewards will be responsible for educating the public about our natural resources and for enforcing rules and regulations. They will also assist with trail management and accessibility.

In summary, the benefits of closing the Preserve have enhanced our understanding of nature, and have allowed us to observe the positive impact on our sensitive habitats of no human activity. We will focus on continuing to protect these areas, while allowing visitors access to most trails.

One of the messages we want to leave with you, and all those who visit Madrona Marsh Preserve is what you can do to enhance habitat in your own yard, so that plants and animals can thrive. You'll be surprised what impact you can make by taking a few small actions.

—Melissa Loeb

What Happened to the Calendar?

Bill Arrowsmith, Past President

Dear readers, as you know the “centerfold” of each *Marsh Mailing* is a four-month calendar, not quite as racy as Playboy’s centerfold. We do this as a service to our readers, and attempt to have accurate information on as many events as we can by our publishing date.

Of course, we cannot predict the future. So often the time or place of an event may be changed, or the event canceled, long after our publication date. For that reason, we always publish an advisory suggestion right on the calendar page to “check the calendar on the Friends’ website,

friendsofmadronamarsh.com, for the latest status” of all the listed activities.

In this year of the COVID-19 pandemic, that recommendation is particularly sound and logical. In fact, for this issue of the *Marsh Mailing* we are not printing a calendar, as what is valid today may not be tomorrow, and even less likely in 3 or 4 months. But fortunately our website is in the capable hands of our webmaster, Denise Shiozawa, and we will do our best to provide her with the most current information.

Thank you, and stay safe!

Membership Corner News

We hope that you and your family are staying safe and taking care of yourselves during this trying time. There are no words to properly describe the impact this virus has had on all of us around the world. There has never been a more important time to connect as a community.

As you may know by now, Madrona Marsh Preserve is available on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays for walks within the Marsh during Restricted Hours: 9 a.m. through 3 p.m. To make a reservation, please call the Nature Center at 310-782-3989. Covid 19 restrictions do apply, so please review the guidelines on-line at the following link: <https://friendsofmadronamarsh.com/news-restricted-opening.shtml>.

We have also started Friday Fun for Families, hosted by Cindy Reid. For further information, please go on-line at the following link: <https://friendsofmadronamarsh.com/>

[news-virtual-friday-fun.shtml](https://friendsofmadronamarsh.com/news-virtual-friday-fun.shtml). Stay connected via our Website at www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com to keep informed of access changes and all things happening on the Preserve.

As with all Non-Profit organizations during this COVID19 timeframe, we rely on your memberships and donations to keep our operations running smoothly and to continue with ongoing restoration of the Preserve. Please consider helping us to care for our animals and keep our operations going while we continue with restricted access. Our Restoration team has been continuously working on maintaining the native plants while removing the non-native infiltrators. On behalf of all of us at Friends of Madrona Marsh and the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center, we are beyond grateful for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Donna Wendel
FOMM Membership Chairperson

Pandemic-Adjusted Pints with a Purpose

Bill Arrowsmith, Brewery Liaison

It is July and time for our third annual Pints with a Purpose fund-raiser with our 1% For the Planet environmental partner, Torrance Smog City Brewing. As you may know, 1% For the Planet is an international coalition of environmentally conscious businesses, like Smog City, who have pledged to donate 1% of their revenue each year to their local environmental non-profit partners.

But this year's fund-raiser, in which Smog City will, as usual, donate a generous percentage of revenue to the Friends each night of the event, has had several adjustments in response to the COVID-19 epidemic which still plagues us. In fact this paragraph was rewritten, as Governor Newsom had just closed bars and breweries in LA County and 6 others in response to a recent spike in cases. At this writing, bars which also serve food at the same time as the alcohol (there are always food trucks at Smog City during onsite drinking) may continue to serve alcohol, although subject to much stricter dine-in rules.

It is not clear, at this point, whether Smog City will still be allowed to remain open. We recommend that you check the Friends' website,

friendsofmadronamarsh.com, or Smog City's site, smogcitybrewing.com, for the most current information.

In anticipation of an event like today's closure, we had delayed this year's Pints fundraiser to the last week of July, to give us all a little more time to monitor the local situation. And this year the event, if held, will be on two consecutive days: **Thursday, July 24 and Friday, July 25**, rather than the usual four Thursdays of July. Finally, and most importantly, the staff at Smog City is committed to making your visit as safe and comfortable as possible, and will diligently attempt to enforce the new rules in the table on the following page.

Your health and safety are of paramount importance to the Friends Board of Directors and to the staff at Smog City. We are taking as many precautionary steps as we can before offering this event to you, but we realize that the final decision on whether to attend this year's "Pints" will be yours, as it should be. We hope you are all well, and that some of you will be able to join us on the 24th or 25th at Smog City.

****** LATE NOTE: AT PRESS TIME JULY 1, 2020, THE ABOVE PLANS TO RE-OPEN FOR ON-SITE DINING HAVE BEEN SUPERSEDED BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM SMOG CITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.**

****** THE HISTORY OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ABOVE WAS LEFT FOR YOUR INFORMATION.**

Stay Safe, LA!

New regulations from the state and county put in place to help slow the spread of COVID-19 means we're returning to to-go sales and 7 days a week home delivery and CA Shipping for now. It was so amazing to see everyone at our taprooms for beers over the last few weeks, but as of right now there will be no more onsite drinking until further notice. We support a safe path forward for our community and are committed to doing our part.

The good news is that you can still get your Smoggy fill safely. We have a bunch of fun stuff releasing this week and we are making it easy for you to stock up! Order beer through our simple [home delivery](#) site (delivery fee is waived for orders over \$50), [CA State-wide shipping](#) OR pick up from any of our taprooms.

Check out our current to-go taproom hours below:

Torrance Brewery & Taproom

To-Go Beer Only

Monday - Sunday: 12 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Please note all taprooms will close at 6 p.m. on July 4th

These are insanely difficult times for everyone but know that we remain here for you, bringing fresh Smog beer to you as we navigate through uncharted waters. Please stay safe, wear your face masks, socially distance, and indulge in a little Smog beer.

Thank you for your patience and continued support!

Donations of \$100 or More Spring 2020

--Ellen Peterson

Date	Donor	Amount	Comment
March	Michael Heffner	\$100.00	
April	Duane & Susan Allison	\$100.00	
April	Kathleen Waldron & Barbara Weaver	\$100.00	
April	Charlene Lee & Eric Hardin	\$250.00	
May	Gerardo & Susan Soto-Campos	\$100.00	
May	James Montgomery	\$100.00	
May	Constance Vadheim Roth	\$1,000.00	Happy Earth Day
May	John & Louise Bye	\$100.00	
May	Jack & Barbara Epstein	\$100.00	
June	Torrance Teachers Assn.	\$300.00	
June	Fran & Bill Arrowsmith	\$250.00	

My Mason Bees

Jeanne Bellemin

This spring I decided to jump start native bee study in my yard by purchasing the California Mason Bee *Osmia californica*, a deep blue-black bee, slightly larger with a more rounded abdomen than the common



Osmia on Coreopsis

honey bee. Females have their pollen collecting hairs, or scopa, on the ventral surface of their abdomens rather than their hind legs like honey bees. Used commercially to pollinate orchards, mason bees are actually also good with apricots, broccoli, carrots, raspberries and some melons.

I have a large pollinator house just like the one in the native garden outside and directly east of the classroom at Madrona Marsh Nature Center. The frames were both built at BioQuip by Ken Fall in 2018. I added the various nesting materials, drilled holes in 4x4s, logs, and added reed tubes, so I might document which materials bees preferred. The native bees were slow to utilize the pollinator house and I grew impatient.

The mason bees purchased for my yard arrived April 10th and were already emerging out of their pupal stage. I placed their tubes

in the bee house and confidently began to observe their activities.



Finishing last chamber

The surrounding garden is filled with native sage, poppies and sunflowers, but also non-native purple and white cosmos and other composite flowers. The mason bees liked the open flowers which they could sit on top of and bob their scopa-bearing abdomens across the pollen.

“Bees...” continued on page 10



Just emerging

“Bees...” continued from page 9

Sometimes one bee would chase another bee away from a flower. Male bees, denoted by a mustache of white hairs, actively chased females. Within a week I noticed the bees were inspecting other sites and females were using some of the holes in the 4x4s.

Mason bees get their name from the manner that they fashion their nesting chambers. The other characteristic behavior was flying down to sandy soil, collecting sand and returning to their chosen nesting hole to construct the chambers.

In each chamber the females leave a pollen ball upon which they lay one egg. The chamber is then sealed off by making a wall out of the collected sand. The bees seemed occupied in both the $\frac{1}{4}$ " and $\frac{1}{2}$ " holes, but after a while I noticed they were more successful at filling the $\frac{1}{4}$ " holes.

I noted they had some sand walls deep inside the $\frac{1}{2}$ " holes, but they were not finished. If the holes are too wide, the bees waste time and energy trying to fill them. It is recommended that

clay be provided for them, but in this case they seemed to prefer making a mortar out of the available yard sand.

The mason bees taught me several things about how to provide for them. First, the hole size they prefer depends on the size of the bee, which for mason bees is about $\frac{1}{4}$ ". The holes must be cleanly drilled without rough wood shards and splinters that might tear their delicate wings.

The depth of the hole is also important since mason bees lay fertilized eggs (females) at the backs of the holes and unfertilized eggs (males) at the front of the holes. In order to maintain a good ratio of females to males, a 4 to 6-inch hole depth is recommended. It is also necessary to clean out old abandoned nests, because over time they may accumulate fungus, viruses, and kleptoparasitic mites. It is more difficult to clean these permanently drilled holes at the end of the season than it is to clean out tubes or blocks that can be separated. There may be an increase in the presence of parasitic wasps, parasitic flies

“Bees...” continued on page 11



Jeanne's pollinator house

Untold Consequences

Dave Jamieson

When everything was different, I used to be a docent. I used to have the honor of sharing with young children, and even adults, a path to assuaging some of the scary, hurtful and negative things that can happen to all of us through introductions to some of the treasures of Madrona Marsh. The sight of their eyes when they filled with a new understanding, or had a new question when told about the natural ways that problems are solved and needs are met, was heartwarming.

When everything was different, I was able to spill out my passion to all who were within my circle of influence. I have always lived by a personal axiom that nothing good ever happens without passion, whether it is a moon landing, the creating of a National Park or the successful raising of a responsible and caring child.

Another maxim might be that to stop momentum, the first thing to do is to discount or remove the passion that drives it.

When everything was different, my passion for Madrona Marsh was my most important tool for creating curiosity and excitement with people of all ages. This was one of the biggest successes of my life, and I cherished it. I call it a success because the benefits went not only to myself and my contacts, but to the Marsh and other places that can use motivated volunteers. Passion is addictive and can only be spread through interaction unless you are an extremely gifted writer.

When everything was different, being a volunteer at Madrona was so invocative of good things that I always thought of it as a good example of an environment that demonstrates an ecosystem where everything (no matter how seemingly insignificant) has both a cause and

an effect. This is now so changed from a normal, that it will not be back for a long time, and for that reason, we are all diminished.

My hopes are that the hearts and minds that I am not allowed to touch are not solely exposed to the negative items that are so abundant on the news during these very troubling times.

If I had a child that I was isolating with, I would spend as much time as I could climbing trees and digging in the ground. I would be planting seeds (maybe gift a small garden to the child) and even creating a diary of observations in my back yard or planter box.

So, here's wishing you all safe adventures wherever you can find them, and asking you to send love and good wishes to every single person that you know, or even think about because that just may be the thing that saves us.--**D.J.**

"Bees ..." continued from page 10

and parasitic bees as the bee house ages. I witnessed one wasp visiting a bee nest during construction.

During this Spring of 2020 and our Corona Virus confinement, I have enjoyed daily mason bee visits, often spending several hours with my iPhone photographing their activities. Mason bees live only about six weeks and are far less active now. It is early June; I see they have filled and sealed off six nest chambers, and I hope for the best as I wait for my next generation of leaf-cutter bees to emerge.

--**Jeanne Bellemin**

Friends of Madrona Marsh

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