

Quarterly issue • Spring 2024

THE MARSH INSIDER

Official Newsletter of the Friends of Madrona Marsh

FRIENDS OF MADRONA MARSH 50 YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY (AND STILL GOING STRONG!)

BY SUZAN HUBERT

2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the Friends of Madrona Marsh board. We will celebrate all year with a special annual meeting luncheon, our nature festival, City Council recognition, scholarships, tree planting, a fundraising gala in September, and anything else we can think of to commemorate this accomplishment!

During 2024, I will share *memories*- not my memories but those of others who were instrumental in saving the Madrona Marsh and building the Nature Center.

This issue:

Friends of Madrona
Marsh Celebrates 50 Years
(1974-2024)
Venora Lee

Manager's Corner

Wildlife Conservation
Alliance

New Gate Kiosk

Nature Festival

Donors

Calender

MEMORIES

Venora Lee originally wrote and published the following in the 1987 Marsh Mailing.

"Someone said to me, 'The City may try to save a duck pond in the middle of town'.

'That's nice 'I said.

Well not really a duck pond. A natural habitat for lots of local and migrating species.

That sounded worth saving for my two, then young, boys and the generations thereafter. It would make our featureless suburb unique.

Torrance could offer its people something special.

So, a hundred meetings later, trips to Sacramento and a million pleading letters later, my reward is the enduring

memory of people I'll never stop loving. Especially note: Amazing Grace."



Suzan Hubert

California Naturalist

President

Friends of Madrona Marsh



Manager's Corner

BY LIZ EVANS

This was my first winter as manager at Madrona Marsh, and I spent those early mornings walking the land, watching the water levels rise, searching for wildlife, and learning their habits.

The wildlife was not hard to find here. In fact, the number and variety of birds at Madrona was almost overwhelming. Fortunately for me, many experienced birders took the time to help me learn to identify them.

The Preserve had a very wet winter. Three inches of rain fell in January. The vernal pools filled up, and the stands of tule I could once walk to were suddenly surrounded by water. The waterfowl filled the Marsh, diving and dabbling for food.

Then, in February, we were deluged. Almost 13 inches of rain fell—six inches in a single weekend! The trails were washed over and could only be

traversed with knee-high rain boots. Many of the vernal pools are connected to the marshlands, forming an uninterrupted stretch of water across much of the Preserve. Walking the trails as it rained down, I listened to the tree frogs sing. There were birds everywhere I looked, and they were all feasting.

The Marsh was overflowing with life!

One bird quickly captured my imagination above all others. This elegant, statuesque Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) is a known quantity on the Marsh. Miriam Taeubel, our science coordinator, calls her "Blanca".

I first saw Blanca in the sump hunting for food. She moved slowly, lifting one leg cautiously before placing it down gently, then the next. Then, she arched her neck, tilted her head, and smoothly struck out at the water's surface, coming up with her prey.

She made it look *effortless*. It felt like a special treat to watch her work.



PHOTO BY LIZ EVANS

Pictured: A Great Egret (Ardea alba) who is fondly known by the staff as “Blanca”.

Days later, on a walk with some of our regular birders, we spotted Blanca hunting a lizard. She extended her neck upwards, wriggling it slowly from side to side, creating a gentle waving motion like the slither of a snake. The lizard moved, and the egret snapped her head forward and caught it in her beak.

She had her prey! Then came the difficult task of eating it. The lizard put up a good fight as the egret crunched on it and then swallowed it whole. Even then, the battle wasn't over. She raised her leg and kicked at the lump in her long, slender throat, forcing the lizard into her belly.

I haven't been at the Marsh long but have already been rewarded with many beautiful moments.

I've watched children fill the Nature Center and Preserve, and I'm excited to learn about science and the environment from our incredible education volunteers. The staff, led by the ever-capable Steve Ash, welcomed me with open arms. They care deeply about this place, which shows in their excellent work. I look forward to sharing more about the staff in future columns. We are a team at Madrona, and I'm proud to work with them.

There is so much to look forward to this spring at Madrona Marsh. The first of the spring blooms are upon us inside the Preserve. The Nature Center's demonstration garden, a masterpiece by local California native plant expert Tony Baker, looks especially stunning with its 15 ft. tall sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*) in full bloom. The ceanothus around the back of the Center is covered in blue flowers, putting on quite the show.

In April, the Nature Center will host the Friends of Madrona Marsh's Second Annual Nature Festival (April 20th) and the City of Torrance's Earth Day (April 27th). We will be participating in the City Nature Challenge is a bio blitz competition featuring cities from all over the world. Any wildlife people document from April 26th-29th using the iNaturalist app, or website will be counted! We will honor some of our

most dedicated volunteers at the City's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (April 18th). If you have volunteered with us for more than 25 hours in 2023, keep an eye open for an invitation in the mail!

I hope you will join us on the Marsh and enjoy everything spring has to offer!



Liz Evans

California Naturalist
Manager

Madrona Marsh Preserve & Nature
Center



Wildlife Conservation Alliance

BY SUZAN HUBERT

In September 2022, the Friends Board of Directors approved strategic plans with the long-term intent that the Madrona Marsh Preserve will remain a preserve. One of our plans describes partnership collaborations with other South Bay/Southern California 501c3 organizations aligned with nature and wildlife.

We believe this will grow the effectiveness of Friends of Madrona Marsh and lead to several possibilities for joint projects such as:

- Hosting an ecology/wildlife conference
- Supporting and or establishing native open spaces within the South Bay, including parks, trails, easements, sumps, local preserves
- Support establishing habitat space, wildlife corridors, or conservation of natural habitats where none may currently exist.

Our intent is to form a group of ‘partners’ associated with local organizations that support wildlife, nature, and wild natural spaces. The purpose of this group is to share plans, help each other, and collaboratively design projects that improve/expand wildlife conservation. We will help each other solve problems and advocate together on behalf of wildlife, nature, and natural spaces.

This is NOT intended to add any work but to strengthen and enhance each organization. It is also NOT a revenue-sharing plan. Donations made to each organization will remain with that organization and will be subject to each organization's bylaws and operating procedures.

The first meeting was held on February 29, 2024 at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

In addition to the Friends (represented by Suzan Hubert, Steve Ash, and Liz Evans), the following organizations attended:

- International Bird Rescue
- Sierra Club
- Native Plant Society
- South Bay Audubon
- Friends of the Air, Water and Earth
- Palos Verdes Land Conservancy

The South Bay Parkland Conservancy and Project Coyote could not attend the first meeting but were invited to join the Alliance.

We are open to other local wildlife/nature organizations.

The initial meeting was to share and clarify the purpose and ideas. The consensus was that this could be a valuable group furthering the conservation of nature and wildlife in the South Bay.

Our second meeting is scheduled for the end of April. We will share our plans, abilities, and what our organizations could contribute to this group.

We intend to improve the local environment for all living things, including humans and wildlife.



Suzan Hubert

California Naturalist

President

Friends of Madrona Marsh



Liz Evans

California Naturalist

Manager

Madrona Marsh Preserve & Nature
Center



Steven Ash

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature
Center





Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for New Gate Kiosk

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Thomas Machian for his incredible Eagle Scout project, crafted with the assistance of Morgan Griffin and Steve Ash, all of whom are pictured here alongside Thomas's family and our front gate volunteers.

*We are returning to our regular hours.

Tuesday-Saturday (10:00 am-5:00 pm)

PRESENTED BY THE CITY OF TORRANCE AND
MADRONA MARSH

JOIN US AT THE NATURE FESTIVAL



Date: Saturday, April 20th 2024

Time: 10 AM to 4 PM

**Location: Madrona Marsh & Nature Center 3201
Plaza del Amo Torrance, CA**

ACTIVITIES

- SEED BALLS
- CRAFTS
- STORY TIMES
- WHAT'S UNDER THE WATER?
- EXPLORE LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGS.
- FREE PARKING AVAILABLE

**DONATIONS
\$100 OR MORE**

Month	Donor	Donation	Comments
December 2023	Lynda Kraemer	\$100.00	
December 2023	Joyce Stout	\$100.00	
December 2023	Dorothy Austin	\$150.00	
December 2023	Anne Bellemin	\$250.00	Donated for Jeanne Bellemin projects
December 2023	Regine Snitzer	\$100.00	
December 2023	Natarajan Bhaskar	\$100.00	
December 2023	Brian Currie	\$125.00	Scholarship Fund
December 2023	Gary Moir	\$100.00	
December 2023	Stettenheim Foundation	\$500.00	Wendy Jones
December 2023	James & Beth Shibata	\$500.00	

**DONATIONS
\$100 OR MORE**

Month	Donor	Donation	Comments
January	Henry Rasof	\$12,445.79	In memory of Beatrice Leplin Rasof
January	Paul De Alleaume	\$150.00	
January	Anne Bellemin	\$250.00	Donated for Jeanne Bellemin projects
January	Heather Lee	\$100.00	
February	Ashok & Geeta Gupta	\$100.00	Scholarship
February	Ashok & Geeta Gupta	\$100.00	Donation
February	Claire Lew	\$150.00	
February	Rebecca Moore	\$200.00	
March	Junichi Yamayoshi	\$150.00	
March	DuckDuckGo	\$150.00	

MARCH



**Adult Supervision required*

*** Registration required*

**** Adult supervision & registration required*

To register for events, call (310) 782-3989

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	2
3	4	5	6	7 <u>Tyke Hike*</u> Ages 3 mos-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM - 11AM	8 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	9 <u>Nature Walks</u> All ages 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM <u>Night Hike***</u> 6:30 PM-8:30 PM
10	11	12	13	14	15 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	16 <u>Henrietta Basin</u> <u>Walk</u> All ages 9AM-11AM
17	18	19	20	21	22 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	30

PV/SB Audubon Society Bird Walk is on hold until further notice

Occasionally events are canceled due to weather. Cancellations are announced on FaceBook and Instagram.

APRIL



**Adult Supervision required*

*** Registration required*

**** Adult supervision & registration required*

To register for events, call (310) 782-3989

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 <u>Tyke Hike*</u> Ages 3 mos-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM - 11AM	5 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	13 <u>Nature Walks</u> All ages 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM <u>Night Hike***</u> 6:30 PM-8:30 PM
14	15	16	17	18	19 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	20 <u>Henrietta Basin</u> <u>Walk</u> All ages 9AM-11AM
21	22	23	24	25	26 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	27
28	29	30			<u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	

PV/SB Audubon Society Bird Walk is on hold until further notice

Occasionally events are canceled due to weather. Cancellations are announced on FaceBook and Instagram.

MAY



**Adult Supervision required*

*** Registration required*

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To register for events, call (310) 782-3989

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 <u>Tyke Hike*</u> Ages 3 mos-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM - 11AM	3 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	11 <u>Nature Walks</u> All ages 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM <u>Night Hike***</u> 6:30 PM-8:30 PM
12	13	14	15	16	17 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	18 <u>Henrietta Basin Walk</u> All ages 9AM-11AM
19	20	21	22	23	24 <u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	25
26	27 CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF FEDERAL HOLIDAY	28	29	30	<u>Friday Fun***</u> Ages 3-6 yrs \$5.00 per child 10AM-12PM	

PV/SB Audubon Society Bird Walk is on hold until further notice

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VOLUNTEER AT MADRONA MARSH

Join the team!
Open to
applicants 18
years & older.



Positions Available

- Reception Desk
- Preserve Entry Greeter
- Gift Shop
- Animal Care



Scan QR Code
For information



Contact for information
naturel@torranceca.gov
(310) 782-3989