

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

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

Colorado Bound: Connie Vadheim & Jim Roth

Suzan Hubert, FOMM President

Connie Vadheim—a long time advocate for the Madrona Marsh and a Board Member with the Friends of Madrona Marsh, is leaving us for Colorado.

Connie is well known to the South Bay community for her classes on native herbal teas, ice cream socials with native plant infused syrups, unusual vinegars flavored with (you guessed it) native plants, and her monthly “Out of the Wilds and Into Your Garden” class. There are many native gardens flourishing in the South Bay because of Connie’s classes.

The Board is going to miss her advice on the proper care and feeding of Southern California Native Plants. I believe Connie knows every plant on the Preserve personally. We will also miss her annual winter gifts of her homemade jams and jellies.

The docent classes are losing a good botany teacher. I can personally speak about these classes. Before I took Connie’s class I didn’t really think much about plants. I do have a garden, I eat plants and I used to grow vegetables. With all that I still didn’t actually think about plants and their lives. Connie truly opened my eyes and mind. I have entirely different opinions about plants now.

Plants are very clever. On my docent tours I tell my students that I want them to meet my friend Catherine who is a very smart plant. When we walk over to the St. Catherine’s Lace plant we consider how could a plant protect its leaves from the hot summer sun? Mostly the students’ conversations are about what the plant can’t do; for example, it can’t move itself into the shade. So it grows its own shade! St Catherine’s lace grows large white parasol-like flowers in the summer



*Jim & Connie.
(Photo by Tracy Drake)*

which shade the leaves. That’s a very clever plant!

Moving on to the cactus and succulents, these plants have figured out how to store and protect water during the hot summers. The leaves are nice and juicy with water, but who would bite into a cactus? Those spines are great protection for the plant and its water. Dudleyas form a white powder on their leaves which

acts as a sunscreen for the plant, protecting it from burning.

These are just a few bits of plant lore I learned from Connie which I try to pass on to all of the children in my tour. I never know; I might be talking to a future botanist.

While we will all miss you Connie, we realize that all the knowledge you shared with us will continue to grow in the Preserve and in the community. (Pun intended.) You have made a great contribution here; I will miss you and wish you all the best in Colorado.

See the rest of you on the Preserve! Come and visit some of our clever plants blooming this

Save the Date for Our FOMM Annual Meeting

January 27, 2019, 1 p.m.

Madrona Marsh Nature Center

See page 9 for details.

Connie Vadheim--A Legendary Lady

Bill Arrowsmith, FOMM Past President

We don't meet too many people who substantially change our lives. I'd like to tell you about one of my favorites. It really started a year or so before the Nature Center opened. I was serving on the Friends Board of Directors and Carol Roelen, also on the board, had suggested that we might consider planting native plants around the new center. There was considerable hesitation by the board, as we thought of cacti and tumbleweeds, but Carol told us of a landscaper who specialized in natives and who had impressed her with the variety of plants available. His name was Tony Baker, and we agreed to let him make a presentation to the board of potential planting around the Nature Center.

Tony came and impressed all of us with his knowledge of native plants and the variety of sizes, shapes and colors available. He showed us a very interesting planting layout with separate areas for each of the major local habitats—from Coastal Back Dunes Prairie to Riparian to Chaparral, and even Channel Islands. And Tony showed us slides of the variety of plants in each. Carol was right, we were soon sold on natives and later managed to convince the Torrance Department of Parks and Recreation to approve Tony's landscape plan. Several of us, with direction, even helped with the April, 2001, planting.

Drought tolerant Native Plants seemed like such a good idea that many of us really wanted to include them around our own homes, but we were daunted by the number of different species of these unfamiliar plants, each with its own soil and watering requirements.

By this time, Connie Vadheim, a professor of biology at CSUDH, had joined the board and was one of our most active members. We were soon to learn that Connie was not only an expert in botany, but that she specialized in California Native Plants, and even though she had a full-time teaching schedule at Dominguez, she began teaching a monthly class at the Nature Center titled, "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden."

This class soon became hugely popular among those of us who wanted to start our own native plant gardens. Not only is Connie an extremely interesting and knowledgeable speaker, she exudes excitement and enthusiasm that is contagious. She is also a master of Power Point presentations, and seems to have an endless supply of beautiful color slides of native plants.

Each month she presented a different set of related plant families, complete with illustrated handouts which detailed the specific areas where each plant grew naturally, its growth characteristics and requirements (Sun, Soil, Water, Fertilizer)—in short, **everything** you need to know to decide if you want to grow this plant and, if so, how to do it. Connie also took us out into the native garden at the end of each class to see examples of the plants we had just discussed. Just what we all had wanted, and soon Connie had dozens of "regulars."

My wife, Fran, and I became two of those regulars and after attending her classes for a year or two, finally felt confident enough to try our own native plant garden. With initial help from Tony Baker planning the layout and obtaining and planting our new natives, we planted three quarters of our back yard in 2006, and a year later, our entire front yard. And we have never regretted it for a moment.

Connie introduced us, and many of our new friends, to what became one of the true joys of our life. Not just the beauty of the plants themselves and knowing that we are using a minimum of water, but we enjoy native butterflies, bees and birds and even the occasional lizard. Connie changed our lives forever and for that we are forever grateful. We have continued to enjoy her classes and to share experiences with the other attendees.

Connie also has offered other classes featuring the use of native plants to make jams, jellies and even syrups for an annual ice cream

"Legendary Lady" continued on page 10

Investing in the Future

Steve Giffin

Since 2013, the Friends of Madrona Marsh have invested over \$200,000 in large-scale restoration of the Upland area of the Marsh. The placement of native plants in the Upland area is creating a buffer to deter non-native species that attempt to encroach from outside the boundaries of the land. The restoration efforts, under the direction of Dan Portway and oversight by the Board, have even qualified us to partner with the Coastal Conservancy to expand the project. Over the past six years, our expenditures for the Upland restoration project have represented about 50 percent of our annual budget.

Why is investment in restoration so important to our mission of preservation? Because the external environment surrounding the Marsh includes residential, commercial, and public-use development, each of our neighbors brings its own environmental impact that can affect the native ecosystem that the Marsh represents.

The land known as the Madrona Marsh saw many uses that changed the natural landscape during the development of the Los Angeles area. By reintroducing native plant species, we are helping the recovering natural ecosystem sustain itself better in the face of the neighboring threats.

As a Board member since 2013 I've seen the natural tension between the Marsh and the surrounding area reflected in the Board's business aspects of managing programs and funding restoration. Since we started the Upland restoration we have run an average deficit in our budget of \$20,000 per year.

Obviously we cannot continue indefinitely just as the Marsh cannot continue without some level of external support. Recently I've sensed a growing like-mindedness in fellow Board members that we need to do more to protect our organization's fiscal future so we can continue investing in restoration and supporting educational programs and activities. In the coming year we will be having more discussions, asking hard questions, and hopefully sharing more information with our members about what we are doing to ensure our organization's longer-term financial viability.

We hope in the coming months if any of our members also have ideas or resources that could be employed, that they will join the conversation about investing in the future of our common goals.

Donations of \$100 or More Fall 2018

Date	Donor	Amount	Comments
October	Mark & Sharon Angelos	\$100	
October	Gary & Shuko Clouse	\$500	
October	Bryan Carey	\$200	
November	Dale Lincoln	\$1,000	
November	Arlindo & Diane Gonsalves	\$100	
November	David & Janice Champion	\$100	
November	CNPS So Coast Chapter	\$800	Donation from Plant Sale held at the Nature Center
November	Michelle Payne	\$500	
November	Smog City Brewing	\$500	Donation at 11/29/18 Environmental Partnership Celebration
December	Pete and Pamela Major	\$100	
December	Derek & Mary Ann Kendall	\$100	
December	Signe Taylor & Joel Stettenheim	\$500	

Marsh Mailing is a quarterly newsletter designed to provide information about activities and upcoming events at or relating to the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Contributions are welcome and may be e-mailed to Editorial Advisor, Bill Arrowsmith, frandbill@att.net or Editor, Diane Gonsalves at gonwild2@yahoo.com or may be dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.

Pints with a Purpose Perpetual Partnership Plaque Unveiled!

Bill Arrowsmith, FOMM Brewery Liaison

On November 29 our new environmental partner, Smog City Brewing Company, invited us and all its other community environmental partners to a special celebration: the unveiling of a new, perpetual plaque commemorating the dates that each partner has participated in Smog City's generous Pints with a Purpose (PWP) Program.

As we reported in the fall Marsh Mailing, the Friends of Madrona Marsh became the most recent Smog City environmental partner this summer and chose July for our PWP month and then invited everyone to join us each Thursday at the brewery. It was (literally) a "howling success", as we enjoyed fine craft beers, friendly camaraderie and warm summer nights with our new friends at Smog City. After all that "hard work", owners Laurie and Jonathan Porter rewarded us by sharing a generous percentage of

the Thursdays' profits -- \$1105.82, to be precise.



On November 29, the Porters with environmental community liaison, Jenn Hauenstein (center) pictured above, unveiled the new perpetual plaque shown below. The plaque was made in true environmental form by employee Pat

Cross, using recycled bourbon and wine staves, and using recycled pallet wood for the frame.



A brass plate (see photo above) memorializes each Pint with a Purpose date.



Finally, all the community partners present provided a representative for a group picture shown above, at which point Laurie and Jonathan pulled out yet another generous surprise: a \$500 check was presented to each organization! They are truly living up to their commitment to provide "1% for the Planet".

We are all looking forward to our next month of Pints with a Purpose Thursdays – now slated for July 2019. Plan on joining us!



The Truth About Audubon's Cottontail Rabbits

S. Vincent Lloyd

Everybody loves rabbits. They are cute, furry, and harmless. They are celebrated in fable and story. Readers of a certain age may fondly recall the rabbit family of *Watership Down*. Another generation grew up on the stories of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter. Everyone knows the Easter Bunny, a symbol of innocence and youth. It sounds like a beautiful life. Sadly, the reality is very different. It is not fun to be a rabbit: their short lives are filled with fear and danger.

The word *rabbit* is a curiosity. It's been described as a "Germanic word with a French ending." The French took the Dutch word *robbe* and added the French diminutive ending *-ette*. The origin of *robbe* is unknown. Rabbits did not originally live in northern Europe, so there is no native Germanic word. (The Romans introduced the rabbit to England.) Prior to the 1700s, *rabbit* referred only to baby bunnies. The word for an adult was *coney*, which came via French from the Latin word *cuniculus* (whence Spanish *conejo*.) *Coney*, which originally rhymed with *honey*, faded away because it sounded similar to a highly forbidden word. But since *coney* appeared in the King James Bible, it couldn't be avoided completely. The English solved this embarrassing problem by changing the pronunciation to rhyme with *pony*. Hence we have *Coney Island*, the translation into English of the original Dutch name.

Rabbits, like hares, belong to the family Leporidae of the order Lagomorpha. As discussed previously, rabbits differ from hares (in technical usage) in a few ways: their ears are shorter, they are more timid, their young are born naked with their eyes closed, while hares have longer ears, are more often found out in the open, and are born with hair and eyes already opened.

Our local cottontail rabbit is Audubon's cottontail, also known as the desert cottontail. The scientific name is *Sylvilagus audubonii*, which was first described by Spencer Fullerton Baird in 1858, who named it after his mentor, John James Audubon, who had died a few years previously. Baird, a self-trained naturalist, went to work at the new Smithsonian Institution and eventually rose to become its second Secretary. He made the Smithsonian into a major center of natural history research and built up a large collection. He himself described 50 new species of reptiles and was the primary author of the classic *History of*

North American Birds. Many species in turn have been named for him, like Baird's sparrow and Baird's sandpiper.

Rabbits are found all around the world, but more than half of them are here in North America. (Most of Eurasia has hares rather than rabbits.) Audubon's cottontail occurs all over the West, from the Canadian border to central Mexico, although not in the Northwest. It is found in a range of habitats from deserts to grasslands to pinyon-juniper forest.

The cottontail hardly needs description: it's a small grey rabbit with a white tail (on the underside). If you see a white rabbit, it is a domestic rabbit (descended from the European rabbit) that some human has released in the Marsh, not realizing that the rabbit will not long survive on its own because it is not adapted to the environment.

The other native rabbit you may encounter in the south coast is the brush rabbit, which is smaller and darker and lacks the white tail. As its name suggests, it hides in brushy areas such as chaparral and so is seldom seen.

Cottontails eat mainly grass and forbs. (I'm not exactly sure what forbs are, except that they have juicy leaves.) The female rabbit will scoop out a hollow in the ground and line it with grass to make a nest or occupy a burrow that has been abandoned by rodents. Unlike the European rabbits of *Watership Down*, cottontails don't form social colonies, but they are tolerant of other rabbits living nearby and are often seen feeding together in small groups.

The litter contains three or four young. Their eyes open when they are ten days old. They start to leave the nest at two weeks and are weaned at about a month. Like all rabbits cottontails are prolific breeders. Cottontails can have five litters in a single year. That's 15 to 20 per year. People chuckle when talking about the rabbit's fecundity, but it's no joke. They produce many young so that a few can survive. Wikipedia wryly notes that "unfortunately for the cottontail, almost every living carnivorous creature larger or faster than the Lagomorph is its predator." They include coyotes, weasels, hawks, snakes, dogs, cats, and human beings (not to mention cars).

"Rabbits" continued on page 10

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center*

Schedule of Events for January through April 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<u>1</u> CLOSED	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc	10 am--12 n- <u>4</u> Friday Fun- donation**	<u>5</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> CLOSED	<u>8</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>9</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>10</u> 10:30 Prop.Soc. 11am--Storytime 1pm- Naturalist	10 am--12 n- <u>11</u> Friday Fun- donation**	<u>12</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> CLOSED	<u>15</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	10 am--12n- <u>18</u> Friday Fun- donation**	<u>19</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor 9am-H.B.Nature Walk
<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> CLOSED	<u>22</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	10 am-Friday <u>25</u> Fun- donation**	<u>26</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk 6:30-8:30 pm-Night Hike
10-am <u>27</u> NatureWalk 1-pm-FOMM ANNUAL MEETING	<u>28</u> CLOSED	<u>29</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society		

JANUARY

*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, **located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street.** **Reservations are required for Friday Fun.. For latest event information, see our website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					10 am--12 n- <u>1</u> Friday Fun- donation**	<u>2</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> CLOSED	<u>5</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc	<u>8</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	<u>9</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
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<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> CLOSED	<u>19</u> 8:30am-Tour d'Torrance 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	10 am--12 n- <u>22</u> Friday Fun- donation**	<u>23</u> 8:30 am-Bird Walk 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 10 am - Nature Walk
10-am <u>24</u> NatureWalk	<u>25</u> CLOSED	<u>26</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u> 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society		

FEBRUARY

Nature Center & Gift Shop

(310) 782-3989

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					10 am--12 n- ¹ Friday Fun- donation**	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. ² & Student.Service
³	⁴ CLOSED	⁵ 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	⁶	⁷ 10 am-Tyke Hike -donation 10:30 Prop.Soc	⁸ 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun- donation**	⁹ 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
¹⁰	¹¹ CLOSED	¹² 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman ¹³ 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	¹⁴ 10:30 Prop.Soc. 11am-Storytime 1pm-Naturalist	¹⁵ 10 am--12n- Friday Fun- donation**	¹⁶ 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. 9am-H.B.Nature Walk
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10-am ²⁴ NatureWalk ³¹	²⁵ CLOSED	²⁶ 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance	²⁷	²⁸ 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society	²⁹	³⁰ 8:45 am-12 n Hab.Restor.

MARCH

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²⁸ 10-NatureWalk	²⁹ CLOSED	³⁰ 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance				

APRIL

Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies seen at Madrona Marsh Preserve in 2018

This extensive list, if read carefully, also reveals the story of the year's weather. The number of species of birds is about what we usually see yearly - breeding, residing and passing through on migration - including uncommon sightings. It tells the story that we had abundant habitat of the birds. But, while the species count was in the normal range, the number of individuals was down. Also drought-affected were the pollinators. Because the uplands never greened up this year, few pollinators were seen and this is reflected in the reduced number of both butterflies and dragonflies who rely on other insects or on nectar that was simply not present in abundance this year. Taking into consideration the low rainfall total and thus habitat restrictions, Madrona remained a vital place for these animals. Many people acting as Citizen Scientists came, submitted lists and helped us understand the importance the Preserve. The main people who contributed to this list include: Mark Rubke, Melissa Loeb, Steve Ash, Tracey Dunn, Jonathan Nakai, Dinuk Magammana, Tommie Hite, David Moody, the Tour-de-Torrance group, Brooke Keeney, Vincent Lloyd, Chris Dean, Manuel Duran and Tracy Drake. It takes much effort to keep records on these species and we thank them for their time and dedication. --Submitted by Tracy Drake.

BIRDS			
Canada Goose	Great Blue Heron	Warbling Vireo	Savannah Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Great Egret	California Scrub-Jay	Song Sparrow
Cinnamon Teal	Snowy Egret	American Crow	Lincoln's Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	<i>Cattle Egret</i>	Common Raven	California Towhee
Gadwall	Green Heron	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Spotted Towhee
American Wigeon	Black-crowned Night-Heron	Tree Swallow	<i>Yellow-breasted Chat</i>
Mallard	White-faced Ibis	Barn Swallow	<i>Yellow-headed Blackbird</i>
Green-winged Teal	Turkey Vulture	Cliff Swallow	Western Meadowlark
Ring-necked Duck	Osprey	<i>Oak Titmouse</i>	Hooded Oriole
Ruddy Duck	<i>White-tailed Kite</i>	Bushtit	Bullock's Oriole
Pied-billed Grebe	Sharp-shinned Hawk	House Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
Rock Pigeon	Cooper's Hawk	Marsh Wren	Brown-headed Cowbird
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Red-shouldered Hawk	Bewick's Wren	Brewer's Blackbird
<i>White-winged Dove</i>	Red-tailed Hawk	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Great-tailed Grackle
Mourning Dove	<i>Barn Owl</i>	<i>California Gnatcatcher</i>	<i>Northern Waterthrush</i>
Vaux's Swift	<i>Great-horned Owl</i>	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Black-and-white Warbler</i>
White-throated Swift	Belted Kingfisher	Western Bluebird	Orange-crowned Warbler
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Red-naped Sapsucker	Swainson's Thrush	Nashville Warbler
Anna's Hummingbird	Downy Woodpecker	Hermit Thrush	MacGillivray's Warbler
<i>Costa's Hummingbird</i>	Nuttall's Woodpecker	American Robin	Common Yellowthroat
Rufous Hummingbird	Northern Flicker	Northern Mockingbird	<i>American Redstart</i>
Allen's Hummingbird	American Kestrel	European Starling	Yellow Warbler
<i>Virginia Rail</i>	Merlin	American Pipit	Palm Warbler
Sora	Peregrine Falcon	Cedar Waxwing	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Coot	<i>Rose-ringed Parakeet</i>	Phainopepla	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Black-necked Stilt	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	House Finch	Townsend's Warbler
Killdeer	Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>European Goldfinch</i>	Hermit Warbler
<i>Marbled Godwit</i>	Western Wood-Pewee	Lesser Goldfinch	Wilson's Warbler
<i>Long-billed Curlew</i>	Hammond's Flycatcher	<i>Lawrence's Goldfinch</i>	<i>Summer Tanager</i>
Least Sandpiper	Gray Flycatcher	American Goldfinch	Western Tanager
Western Sandpiper	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow	Black-headed Grosbeak
Wilson's Snipe	Black Phoebe	Clay-colored Sparrow	Blue Grosbeak
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	<i>Black-chinned Sparrow</i>	Lazuli Bunting
<i>Solitary Sandpiper</i>	Say's Phoebe	Brewer's Sparrow	House Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Lark Sparrow	Northern Red Bishop
Western Gull	<i>Tropical Kingbird</i>	Fox Sparrow	<i>Indian Silverbill</i>
California Gull	Cassin's Kingbird	Dark-eyed Junco	Scaly-breasted Munia
Caspian Tern	Western Kingbird	White-crowned Sparrow	Pin-tailed Whydah
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Bell's Vireo</i>	Golden-crowned Sparrow	<i>Italics = uncommon {28}</i>
<i>American White Pelican</i>	Cassin's Vireo	<i>Vesper Sparrow</i>	Bold = bred this year {23}

"Species" continued from page 8

BUTTERFLIES			
Monarch	American Lady	Monarch	Eufala Skipper
Striated Queen	West Coast Lady	Striated Queen	Fiery Skipper
Gulf Fritillary	Anise Swallowtail	Gulf Fritillary	Sandhill Skipper
Mourning Cloak	Western Tiger Swallowtail	Mourning Cloak	Checkered-white Skipper
Red Admiral	Giant Swallowtail	Red Admiral	Funereal Duskywing
Painted Lady	Checkered White	Painted Lady	
DRAGONFLIES			
Common Green Darner	Variegated Meadowhawk	Common Green Darner	Blue Dasher
Blue-eyed Darner	Wandering Glider	Blue-eyed Darner	Pacific Forktail
Flame Skimmer	Spot-winged Glider	Flame Skimmer	



Save the Date for our Annual Meeting!

Please join the Friends of Madrona Marsh for our
Annual Meeting

January 27, 2019

1 p.m.

Madrona Marsh Nature Center

Enjoy some tasty munchies

Be the first to peruse our 2018 Annual Report

Sit back and listen to Marsh Manager/Naturalist Melissa
Loebl's annual update about what's happening on the
Preserve

Meet and greet old friends and perhaps make some new
ones

We look forward to reconnecting with all the Friends of the
Marsh

Moon Over Madrona

by Vincent Lloyd

The first full moon of 2019 is marked by a Total Lunar Eclipse. In California, the event will take place on the evening of Sunday, January 20. During a lunar eclipse, which always occurs at a full moon, the moon plunges into the Earth's shadow. During the total stage of the eclipse, the Moon turns a beautiful coppery red color, caused by sunlight reddened by passage through the Earth's atmosphere. Lunar eclipses are completely safe to watch and require no special equipment. Local times for the event:

7:33 pm partial stage begins

8:41 pm total stage begins

9:43 pm total stage ends

10:50 pm second partial stage ends

"Rabbits" continued from page 5

It is legal to hunt rabbits in California (except for the breeding season from February through June). There is a daily limit of five rabbits, but with a catch: there are no limits on jackrabbits. The Department of Fish and Game evidently thinks that a youthful hunter with a fraction of a second in which to make a decision can distinguish a jackrabbit from a cottontail.

With all these predators, a mother rabbit is lucky if even one of her brood survives to adulthood. The adult is lucky to see its second birthday. Fortunately, the species as a whole is doing OK and is officially classified as a Species of Least Concern.

Cottontails are most often seen at dusk, when they come out of the brush to feed. They can be found all over southern California. One place I've seen them during the middle of the day is at the Los Angeles County Arboretum in Arcadia.

There are too many predators at the Marsh for cottontails to successfully breed, but individuals are occasionally seen, probably would-be pets that have been released here. There is one rabbit now living in the shed area. If you happen to be there at dusk, you may get a glimpse of this lonely little rabbit.

Good luck, little guy!!

No eclipse will occur during the next full moons on Tuesday, February 19 and Wednesday, March 20.

Meanwhile, as winter wanes, the Sun gets higher in the sky and the days get longer. Between January 1 and April 1, the height of the noon Sun increases from 33° to 61°, while the hours of daylight increase from 9 hours 56 minutes to 12 hours 33 minutes. The spring equinox will occur on March 20, when the Sun crosses the equator from south to north, it rises due east and sets due west, and day and night are both 12 hours long. This year the full moon will be rising in the east as the equinox sun sets in the west.

"Legendary Lady" continued from page 2

fest. She is an expert photographer, as well; her photos of the Preserve were magnified and used as background for four of the display cases in the Exhibit Hall. She and Barbara Sattler also recently exhibited the use of native plants to dye yarns which they wove in interesting patterns.

But all good things, they say . . . must come to an end.

Connie and her husband, Jim, have chosen to continue their retirement in the crisp clean air of a small city in western Colorado. For all of us who have served on the Friends Board with Connie, attended her masterful monthly "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" classes on California native plants, or worked with her to restore Madrona Marsh or The Gardena Willows, or who have simply experienced her boundless excitement, her departure will be a palpable loss.

But we thank you, Connie, for all the enthusiasm and knowledge you have shared with us and we wish you and Jim the best of new pleasures and new discoveries in Colorado.

South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills

Photos by Dr. Vadheim



Fremont Cottonwood

Populus fremontii

Nothing adds character quite like the large trees that dominate local wetlands. Willows, sycamores and cottonwoods play key roles in maintaining wetland/river health. They also provide unrivaled habitat for a number of creatures. One of our local favorites is the Fremont Cottonwood. You've probably walked through its leaves, if you've been out on the Preserve recently.

Populus fremontii is a large riparian tree common throughout the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Like many riparian species, Fremont cottonwood grows quickly—as much as 6 feet a year—and has a lifespan of 100-150 years. It can grow as tall as 100 feet and as wide as 75 feet, affording a lot of summer shade.

The leaves of *Populus fremontii* are heart-shaped, providing a good way to identify it on the Preserve (see photo inset). Leaves turn yellow in fall, producing some of our best fall color. The trees then lose all their leaves each fall/winter. This helps protect branches from the strong winter winds. It also makes for efficient pollination in spring.

Fremont cottonwood is entirely wind pollinated. The small, yellow flowers cluster on

dangling catkins (see photo). Each tree is either male or female; only female plants produce fluffy seeds. The seeds are also distributed by the wind.



The roots are relatively shallow (less than 20 feet) but are good water-seekers. Like the willows, cottonwoods can re-sprout from stumps and roots. This facilitates their spread into areas with reliable water. It also allows them to grow back, when broken by wind or flooding.

Fremont cottonwood provides cover and nest sites for birds from large raptors to the tiny hummingbirds. Cavity-nesting birds, like woodpeckers, also utilize cottonwoods. Count the number of birds in a cottonwood tree—you'll be amazed!

Like willows, Fremont Cottonwood has a long history of medicinal use, both as a disinfectant and pain medicine. The roots are used in traditional basket-making; the wood can be used as well. Cottonwoods provide good habitat for humans and many other creatures. We're fortunate to have these trees growing in our Preserve.

Plant Information Sheets and Plant Lists are available at the Nature Center.

Friends of Madrona Marsh

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