



# The Watch

Newsletter of the Watsonville Wetlands Watch  
Spring 2010

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## Community Lectures & Forums

### Basket Weaving Traditions



An evening with Julia and Lucy Parker was held at the WERC on Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, with a full house in attendance. Master Basket Weaver and national treasure Lucy Parker and daughter Julia shared stories about basket weaving and how it has kept their heritage alive. They shared their knowledge of natural materials and demonstrated basket weaving techniques, showing the different styles with a song and dance of their tribes. This presentation was part of the Watch's free Community Lecture Series. The next lecture will take place in June – watch our website, [www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org](http://www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org) and the local media for details.



### Snakes, Frogs, and Such



The WERC was full on Wednesday, Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>, as 54 people heard US Bureau of Land Management Ecologist Mike Westphal discuss the reptiles and amphibians, some of them rare or endangered, that live on the uplands and coastal terraces of our area. Fascinating slides of snakes, frogs, salamanders, and other critters were accompanied by a lively commentary. This was the first of five community lectures to be sponsored by WWW this year; admission is free to all of them.

### Land Trust Holds Community Forums

Join the conversation to shape a Conservation Blueprint for Santa Cruz County. Share your ideas about how we can work together to protect our county's quality of life and maintain our precious land, water and wildlife. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is hosting four Community Forums in April and May and wants to hear from you. Forums will be held as follows:

Wednesday, April 21st, Watsonville Community Room in the Civic Plaza

Tuesday, April 27th, Simpkins Swim Center in Live Oak

Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, Long Marine Lab Seymour Center in Santa Cruz

Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, Highlands Park Senior Center, San Lorenzo Valley

Learn more about the Conservation Blueprint at [www.conservesantacruz.org](http://www.conservesantacruz.org) or from the Land Trust at 429-6116.

# Welcome!

## Molly Underwood Joins WWW Staff



The Watch is pleased to welcome Molly to our staff as our new Environmental Education Specialist. Molly leads the Wetland Stewards After School Program for middle and high school students and coordinates the elementary school Cycles of Restoration Program.

Molly Russell Underwood graduated from Middlebury College in 2005, with a double degree in Biology and Environmental Studies with a concentration in Conservation Biology. Since then she has worked as a Sea Grant Marine Education intern for the University of Georgia, as an Outdoor Science Teacher for the Los Angeles County Office of Education, as a Lead Teacher for the San Francisco Zoo's 2007 summer camp, and then as the Youth Program Coordinator and Lead Teacher and Coordinator for the Marine Science Discovery Program at the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito for two years.

At the center, she restructured the entire youth program and increased the number of youth volunteers from 15 to 85. She also received extensive training in evaluation and curriculum development under a NOAA B-WET grant for the Marine Science Discovery Program. While assisting Noëlle with educational activities, she is also pursuing an M.S. in Science Education.

## Our On-Going Programs...

### Restoration Pays



The Watch was delighted to be the beneficiary of a donation of \$6,575 from the Wildlife Society. This was calculated as a \$5 carbon offset fee from each of 1315 attendees at their annual conference, held in Monterey last September. Above we see the California Conservation Corps installing native coastal prairie plants on the Watsonville Sloughs Ecological Reserve. Now if more organizations had such a policy....

### Watch Awarded New Trails Contract with City



Toward the end of 2009, the Watch began a new contract for the City of Watsonville's wetlands and trail system, to maintain trails and do native habitat restoration on the 6 miles of trails. The work includes setting up a demonstration restoration area behind the Ramsey Park Nature Center and recruiting and working with volunteers on the sloughs and uplands adjacent to the trails. This contract reflects our successful partnership with the City and our recognized expertise in restoration.

We received over 100 applicants for our new position of Trails Restoration Specialist and have hired John Moreno. John is a Watsonville High grad, and grew up on a farm in the Royal Oaks/Watsonville area. He will be working three days a week for us and two days a week for the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County's Community Restoration Project. He began work on December 2, and has hit the trails running!

## High Ground Organics Partnership



WWW is contracting with the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District for restoration work on a 15 acre conservation easement on the High Ground Organics farm. **Laura Kummerer**, who has managed the project for the past four years, has become an employee of WWW; this brings a new grassland restoration site and part of the slough system into our Restoration Program.

Laura grew up in San Jose and graduated from UCSC with a major in Latin American Studies. She fell in love with the vibrant life of our freshwater wetlands in 1998 when she worked with farmers along the banks of the sloughs. When Laura is not out in the wetlands, she loves to bicycle, swim and hike all over the Ventana Wilderness in search of wildflower blooms and swimming holes.

Since 1998, Laura has been developing creative strategies to restore the degraded upland habitats of the slough system. She initially worked for the Watch in a community based restoration program to remove invasive weeds on the slough edge, revegetate critical areas, and involve young and old members of the community in all aspects of restoration. We welcome Laura and her restoration expertise!

## Grazing Program to Continue



The projects on the Dept. of Fish and Game property are focused on grassland restoration with grazing animals, and installation of native plants in the coastal prairie and slough edges. We are working on setting the foundation for a rotational grazing program in the coming spring, including writing grant proposals.

We have also just completed the annual monitoring summary data, which will be used as a foundation for student monitoring projects as a part of Project Tierra, our biodiversity monitoring program.

California's native coastal prairie is a rarely recognized old-growth type of environment, greatly in need of conservation. Less than 1% remains undisturbed by urban development, farming, and invasive species. The coastal prairie is a short-grass dominated prairie and supports a huge diversity of plant and animal species. This includes many grassland-dependent bird species whose populations are in great decline throughout the State, such as the Burrowing Owl, Short-eared Owl, Northern Harrier, Grasshopper Sparrow and the White Tailed Kite.

Grazing animals, or human practices which mimic grazing animals, are necessary to maintain and restore native diversity of the grasslands and improve the quality of the habitat.

## Snapshot Day

Saturday, May 1st from 9 am to 3 pm

Spanning more than 300 miles of coast, the Monterey Bay National

Marine Sanctuary receives flows from over 100 freshwater streams and rivers.

This community event provides a one-day 'snapshot' of the health of the rivers and streams that flow into the Sanctuary. We accomplish this goal in partnership with the Sanctuary and hundreds of community volunteers who systematically sample

the stream water on Event Day. To participate, you must attend training on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 p.m. To sign up, contact Kathy Fieberling at 831-345-1226 or [kathyfiebert@yahoo.com](mailto:kathyfiebert@yahoo.com).



# You Can Help!



## Join the 'Keep Our Wetlands Programs Afloat' Campaign

Support the kids, the birds, and the native plants! As you can tell from our news, our programs are thriving. But we need more cash to keep our programs going. We need to raise \$70,000 and have already accomplished \$20,000 with staff time reductions. The first event in **Keep Our Wetlands Programs Afloat Campaign** is the Human Race, to be held on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>.

The first 1800 participants will receive a FREE Human Race T-shirt, and all will receive breakfast and a BBQ lunch. This fun, 6-mile walk starts at Natural Bridges and Delaware Avenue in Santa Cruz. To sign up, go to <http://humanracesc.org/> and then to Home/List of Teams/Watsonville WetlandsWatch, or contact Genie at 728-1156, ext. 7. For more information, contact Phil or Diana Gilman or Joan Rose at [fiskapkg@yahoo.com](mailto:fiskapkg@yahoo.com), [digilman41@yahoo.com](mailto:digilman41@yahoo.com) ,

or [ramblingrosesJoan@yahoo.com](mailto:ramblingrosesJoan@yahoo.com) and walk for the Watch!

**You can also contribute directly** by going to our website, [www.watsonvilletwetlandswatch.org](http://www.watsonvilletwetlandswatch.org) or sending a check to WWW, P.O. Box 1239, Freedom, CA 95019. Your contribution is tax-deductible in accordance with IRS rules for non-profit organizations and is **very much appreciated. All donors of \$50 or more will receive a WWW cap or stainless steel water bottle, available in May.**

## Wetlands Alive! Tours Have Resumed!

Bring your friends and family to this free, fun-filled event! Tours originate from the Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center (the WERC) on the grounds of Pajaro Valley High School. Guests will receive a fascinating view of the birds, plants, and wildlife of the wetlands; binoculars are provided. Tours are ½ to 1 mile and last 1-2 hours, depending on group preference. All tours are free; **reservations are required 48 hours in advance**: call the WERC at 831-728-1156, ext. 7, or send an e-mail to [genie@watsonvilletwetlandswatch.org](mailto:genie@watsonvilletwetlandswatch.org). All tours start at 10 a.m., and occur one Saturday and one Sunday each month through September. The Spring tour schedule is as follows:

**Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup>; Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup>; Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>; Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.**

For a tour flyer, go to [www.watsonvilletwetlandswatch.org](http://www.watsonvilletwetlandswatch.org)



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Watsonville Wetlands Watch Newsletter  
Post Office Box 1239  
Freedom, CA 95019-1239

