



August 2017

News from Watsonville Wetlands Watch

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Summer Seed Harvest



Students from Monterey Bay Academy cleaning common yarrow seed on seed screens

As we move into the summer months and enjoy these longer days, our restoration and stewardship activities have shifted from a busy spring season of planting, maintenance, weeding, and monitoring of restoration areas to collecting and harvesting native plant seeds and rhizomes that will be needed for upcoming fall and winter projects.

This past winter and spring we've seeded and planted native plants on a total of 36 acres of wetland and upland habitat areas along Struve Slough, West Struve Slough, Hanson Slough, and Watsonville Slough. Each project begins with the process of collecting the plant material needed in the form of seed, cuttings, and root divisions. The summer cycle of restoration involves plenty of seed harvesting, drying, seed-cleaning, and processing to prepare the seed to be used in the fall season. Some of the seed collected this summer will be used to grow out plants for

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container planting while the majority of the seed will be broadcast on fields to restore new grassland or marsh habitat throughout the slough system.

This summer we've been able to harvest the fruits of our past labors and have been harvesting native grass, wildflower, and wetland seed from past restoration projects. Volunteers have been instrumental in the collection and processing of the large amounts of seed that are needed. Once the seed has been collected, it must go through a period of drying down, cleaned to separate the seed from the chaff, and stored properly before it can be used for the restoration project.

Want to know more about the native plants used in our restoration projects? Be sure to visit our **Native Plant Sale** this year on **October 7th** and learn more about how they can also be used for creating backyard habitat gardens, attracting beneficial insects, pollinators, and birds.

Save the Date for the Annual Native Plant Sale!



Plants for sale at Annual Native Plant Sale
photo courtesy of Bambi Jones

The annual **Native Plant Sale** will take place on Saturday, **October 7, 2017**, and you are all invited to join us again this year to purchase locally grown natives perfect for your landscape. **Details coming soon!**

Thank You to David Meyers



Whimbrel (left) and Godwit - Photo by David Meyers

This lovely photo of a Whimbrel and Godwit taken by David Meyers was incorrectly credited in the July newsletter. Our sincere apologies go out to David and our thanks to him for allowing us to use his photo.

Presentation: Reconsider the Coot: The Crazy Reproductive Antics of a Common Marsh Denizen



American Coot chicks photo courtesy of Bruce Lyon

Please join us on **Wednesday, September 13th**, when **Bruce Lyon**, Professor of Evolutionary Ecology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, will talk about the American Coot, a bird that is often overlooked because they are so common.

Dr. Lyon has been studying the reproductive antics of American coots for the past two decades and has discovered that there is far more to this bird than meets the eye. He'll highlight discoveries about the parental and reproductive strategies of coots, from both a natural history and scientific perspective. Coots are bizarre when it comes to raising their chicks, and there are many puzzling features of coot parental care behavior. For example, why do coots lay far more eggs than they can normally raise and why do they beat up their kids so much? And, finally, why are baby coots born with such a ridiculously fluorescent orange plumage? He will answer these questions and many more in his talk.

This talk is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center. [Click for map/directions](#).

Admission is free but you must reserve a seat online by [clicking here](#).

For information, email wetlandscoordinator@gmail.com.

Native Traditions Walk with Patrick Orozco



Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council Chairman Patrick Orozco

On Saturday, **September 16th**, Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council Chairman **Patrick Orozco** will lead a special walk along the Pajaro River. He will tell stories, sing, and share his experiences and knowledge about local native culture and history. Patrick, descendent of native Californians, has been researching and teaching about native culture for over 20 years. He goes into schools with remembered songs and stories, dances and regalia.

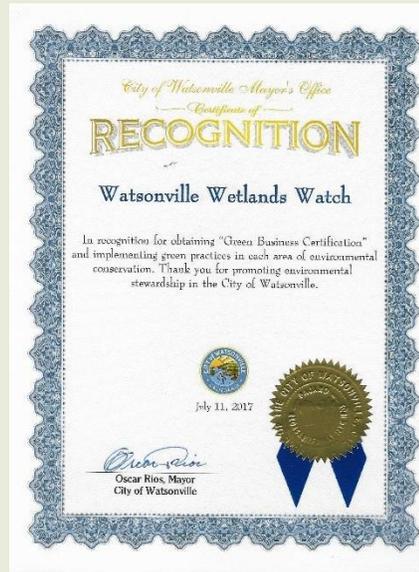
This family-oriented tour, hosted by the Watsonville Wetlands Watch, is from 9 - 11 a.m. Meet at the City of Watsonville's Pajaro River Park, behind the Wastewater Treatment Plant at 500 Clearwater Lane, Watsonville.

Admission is free but attendance is limited and you must reserve a spot online by [clicking here](#).

For information, email wetlandscoordinator@gmail.com.

Certificate of Recognition Awarded for

Green Business Program



Watsonville Wetlands Watch was honored by the City of Watsonville Mayor's Office at the July 11th City Council meeting with a Certificate of Recognition for obtaining Green Business Certification and implementing green practices in environmental conservation for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. WWW originally obtained Green Business status in 2012 and was recertified this year.

The program is a regional collaborative with Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito

County. The Green Business Program offers businesses the opportunity to voluntarily implement environmentally sustainable practices that extend beyond compliance with local mandates. To be green certified businesses have to meet specific requirements focused on four main areas of environmental conservation which are waste, water, energy and pollution.

According to Hilda Peralta, Environmental Outreach Coordinator for the City of Watsonville Public Works and Green Business Program Coordinator, the 34 green certified businesses in Watsonville help support the city's climate action plan goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, divert solid waste from landfill, save energy and conserve water.

Hilda provided the following data from the program's achievements to date:

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Saved: 2.4M lbs. of CO₂ - Equivalent to planting 58 acres of urban trees
- Energy Saved: 2M kWh - Equivalent to powering 185 houses for an entire year
- Solid Waste Diverted from Landfill: 2M lbs. - Equivalent to 128 Garbage trucks on diverted waste
- Water Saved: 1.3M gallons of water - Equivalent to 4 bathtubs of drinking water per hour

The City's goal is to continue to grow participation in the program but most importantly to increase awareness of the current green businesses in town. You can find a listing of green businesses on the [City website](#).

We wish to thank Hilda Peralta, Mayor Oscar Rios and all of the City Council Members for their recognition of Watsonville Wetlands Watch.

Watching Birds in the Watsonville Wetlands with Nanci Adams



Burrowing Owl - photo courtesy of Efren Adalem

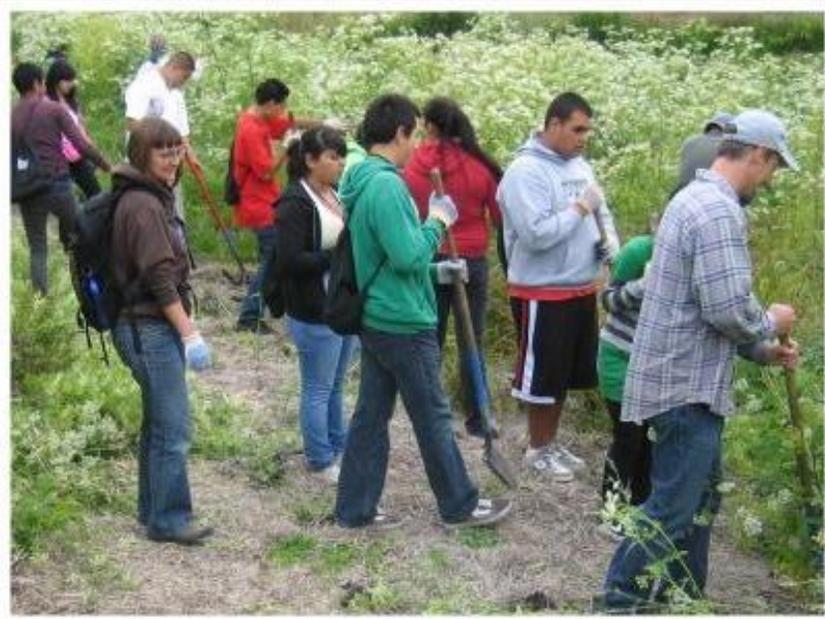
Nanci Adams says that she has the best "job" in the world, and Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW) is one of the biggest reasons. After having taught fulltime much of her life, Nanci finally had time to pursue her passion, birding. Because of WWW's restoration of sloughs and habitat, and thanks to the superb trail system, she can share Pajaro Valley birding spots with beginners and other interested birders. Nanci designed the "Birding Basics" class for Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult Education, and the WERC site became her new classroom.

Nanci enthusiastically states: *"The Watsonville sloughs provide great birding, especially East Struve Slough, the Watsonville Slough at the Kearney-Ford loop, and Watsonville Slough at Pajaro Dunes. The trails and habitat restoration have made such a difference for both birds and humans."* Nanci loves taking students to places they've never seen, even though they've lived here for decades. *"It opens up a whole new world for them. Nature can revitalize one's spirits, adding a richness that's hard to find elsewhere."*

Nanci is dedicating this season's birding to two staunch proponents of the Watsonville wetlands, Patricia McQuade and Steve Gerow. She worked with both Patricia and Steve as they promoted education and conservation of the wetlands, and feels that it is important to keep their legacy alive.

Nanci's birding classes start August 17th and all are welcome to participate. People may register online at the Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult Education website or go to the office at 294 Green Valley Road. It's also possible to register by mail or in the class on the first day. Both classes are held on Thursdays, with the first class beginning August 17. Birding Basics is 9:30-11:30 a.m. and starts each week at the WERC classroom. The 5-7 p.m. Brown Bag Birding class meets at the Ramsay Park Nature Center the first time and then meets at a different locale each week. Join us for the best "back yard" birding in the county!

Saturday Community Restoration



Community volunteers making a difference in the wetlands

On **Saturday, August 26th**, we invite you to help restore wetland habitat as part of our fourth Saturday Community Restoration events. We will work from 9 a.m. to noon, and we always make time for birding or a short hike around the wetlands. We supply the gloves, tools, and yummy snacks.

Meet at our Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center

([map/directions](#)).

For questions, please contact Mary Paul at mary@watsonvillewetlandswatch.org or 831-566-4938.

You Make the Spring Appeal Ideal!

Thanks to you, this year's Spring Appeal is off to a fantastic start! We are incredibly fortunate to be able to count on the loyalty and generosity of so many members of our community.



The flyer features a circular logo with a bird and water. The text includes: 'Watsonville Wetlands Watch Spring 2017 Appeal', 'We are fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful places in the world, but a changing climate puts us at risk in many profound ways.', 'At Watsonville Wetlands Watch we believe now is the time to act. Many of our projects offer real solutions to climate change and have been a part of our organization's focus for many years.', 'We are also launching new initiatives to develop and pilot strategies that address climate change and sea level rise, make a greener and more resilient Watsonville and Pajaro Valley community, and provide new ways for our youth and community to be part of creative solutions. We urge you to read more about these in our annual report.', 'Thank you for your support of this work! Your gift will help us sustain and renew our focus to address these unprecedented challenges and help us to pursue our ambitious goals that have never been more critical than they are today.', and 'Turn the page to learn what members of our community have to say about climate change and how you can help.' A photograph of a duck and its ducklings is also present.

Your support allows us to continue our work of restoring the Watsonville Wetlands with plants nurtured in our own nursery, providing critical nesting and foraging habitat for resident and migratory birds and animals. It also supports our mission to develop and deliver new educational programming, engaging more than 2,500 students and hundreds of community members in wetlands ecology, green careers, and peer-to-peer learning.

The appeal is still in full swing so if you would like to support the mission and goals of Watsonville Wetlands Watch please [Donate](#).

Thank you for all the ways you support the Watsonville Wetlands Watch and the community that we cherish.

Watsonville Wetlands Watch advocates for wetland issues, educates elementary, middle, and high school students, restores degraded habitats, preserves what remains whole, and teaches appreciation for the unique beauty and life of the Pajaro Valley wetlands. In cooperation with numerous other agencies, we support studies of and planning for these sites.

Watsonville Wetlands Watch is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, federal tax i.d. #77-0519882.