



News from Watsonville Wetlands Watch

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Jonathan Pilch Receives Community Hero Award



Executive Director Jonathan Pilch pictured with members of WWW Board of Directors. From the left: Dobie Jenkins, Chris Johnson-Lyons, Bob Culbertson, Jonathan Pilch, Jim Van Houten, Kenton Parker, Jerry Thomas

On November 20th, our Executive Director, Jonathan Pilch, was awarded a Community Assessment Project (CAP) Community Hero Award. CAP is a multi-year initiative to measure and improve the quality of life in Santa Cruz County that is sponsored by the United Way of Santa Cruz County and the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County. They conduct quality of life indicator surveys and work with over 800 Santa Cruz County residents to build and compile their data, which is used by a variety of organizations throughout the county.

Jonathan and the Watsonville Wetlands Watch were recognized for our work to preserve and restore Watsonville's wetlands, provide diverse and creative approaches for community education and engagement that fosters conservation and appreciation of the wetlands.

We were also recognized for the work done on World Wetlands Day this past year, where over 400 volunteers came together to plant over 3,000 native species around the City of Watsonville's Upper Struve Slough trail. This project is a part of the Watsonville Wetlands Climate Change Adaptation Project, designed to support the wetlands and Watsonville community as they adapt to a changing climate.

Please join us in congratulating Jonathan and the entire organization!

We're in Santa Cruz Gives!



We are honored to have been chosen to participate in the 2017 Santa Cruz Gives Campaign and hope you will support us with your year-end giving. Anytime between now and December 31, 2017, you can donate by going to the [Watsonville Wetlands Watch page](#) at the Santa Cruz Gives website.

We have a very generous \$5,000 challenge grant made by Patrick Fitz so every dollar you donate will be matched. In addition, a percentage of your donation is also matched by the sponsors of Santa Cruz Gives so this is a fantastic way to make your donation go even further!

Our BIG IDEA! is creating the next generation of environmental leaders. We envision the Watsonville wetlands as a thriving ecosystem and a community that is at the center of its conservation. Our goal is to reach at least 2,500 students in 2018 through innovative education programs in the Watsonville wetlands that work to ensure that Watsonville youth grow into the next generation of environmental leaders, equipped to take on the complex environmental challenges our community and planet face.

Please join us in supporting this important work and [donate](#) today.

Thank you!

Docent Training Starts In January



While there are a variety of ways to volunteer with us here at the Wetlands Watch, becoming a docent is a great way to make a lasting and meaningful contribution to the wetlands, youth, and community! It is a fun and interesting way to learn about the natural and cultural history of the wetlands from experts. Docent trainees



are treated to an inside look at the Pajaro Valley and its wide network of wetlands. Local experts share the ecology, history, and restoration of the wetlands during the 7-week program.

Docent Training starts January 17, 2018 to March 7, 2018.

The interactive sessions include Wednesday evening presentations and Saturday morning field trips, visiting sites not normally seen by the public. Join our dedicated team of trained docent volunteers who help with field trips, lead wetland tours, participate in special events, work in the greenhouse and native plant demonstration garden and a whole host of other things. No previous teaching or wetland experience is necessary - beginners are welcome.

Come join us - the wetlands are calling!

For more information, contact Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Ria Mukerji at 909-680-9872 or email at ria@watsonvillewetlandswatch.org.

Presentation: The Ospreys of Harkins Slough

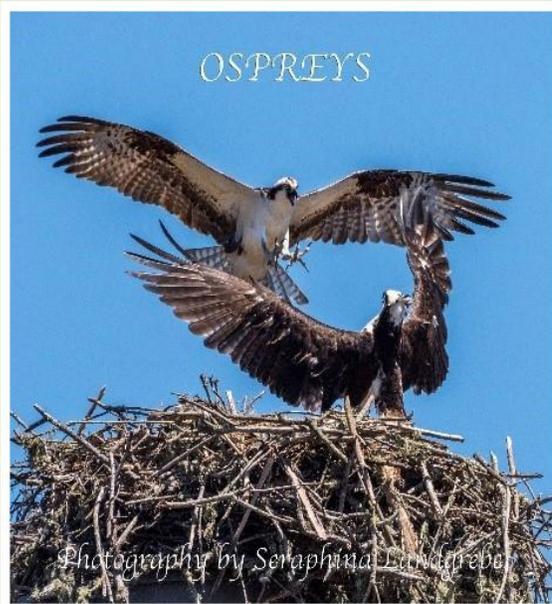


Photo courtesy of Seraphina Landgrebe

Please join us on **January 23, 2018**, when Master Photographer, Seraphina Landgrebe, presents ***The Ospreys of Harkins Slough***.

Seraphina spent five months documenting the life of a pair of Ospreys at Harkins Slough. The result is a spectacular photo journal she captured of the Osprey's life. In this presentation, Seraphina will show the beautiful photos she took and talk about her experience observing and photographing the Ospreys.

Seraphina chose to photograph the lives of the Osprey family because of a growing fascination with their nesting activities. The photo journal tells a story of the trials and challenges of rearing a young chick as the Osprey are attacked by Bald Eagles, other Osprey, and harassed by humans. She

states: "It was a magical experience to photograph and document nature in action. I created this photo journal to illustrate the beauty of nature and the grace of Ospreys. Only through photography can one see the detailed beauty of their wings and feathers." - Seraphina Landgrebe

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 at [Watsonville Wetlands Watch](http://WatsonvilleWetlandsWatch.org).

Studying Aquatic Invertebrates in Harkins Slough as Indicator for Wetland Health



Students participate in a Project Tierra field trip at Harkins Slough

During the past month, 300 Pajaro Valley High School integrated science students visited Harkins Slough for field days as part of our education program called **Project Tierra**. The aquatic invertebrate study is a way to connect classroom learning with the real world while providing an opportunity for students to gain hands-on field work in the Watsonville wetlands. These lessons focused on macro-invertebrates that are indicators for the status of the health of the wetlands.

Students were tasked with tracking the different types of invertebrates in the sloughs and found invertebrates ranging from fairly common water boatmen and aquatic worms to much harder to find mayflies and nymphs. The combination of the organisms found in all of the classes gave the students a water quality rating of 21-23. What does that mean? According to the data sheet, it shows that Harkins Slough has a healthy and diverse invertebrate population!

Students were tasked with tracking the different types of invertebrates in the

Saturday Community Restoration



Volunteers seeding a native grassland at the project site

Join us on **Saturday, December 16th**, for our monthly community restoration day at the Watsonville Slough Ecological Reserve (more commonly known as the 'DFW' for those familiar with our work.) The native planting is part of a long-term climate adaptation project looking at salinity, plant and bird populations in West Branch Struve Slough. We hope to plant over 200 native plants, with the public's assistance.

You don't have to be a scientist or field biologist to help! Come join the Wetlands Watch and be a part of this

along West Struve Slough

project. We will work from 9:30 a.m. to noon (with breaks for birding!). We

supply the gloves, tools, and a snack. Meet at our the Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center. ([map/directions](#))

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

Wishing You the Happiest of Holidays!



It is hard to believe that we are nearing the close of yet another year. It has been a fruitful one for the wetlands and the community we serve thanks to your support.

We at Watsonville Wetlands Watch are deeply grateful to you. With your help we've made dramatic improvements to our wetlands, introduced thousands of youth to nature and science through our educational programs, and raised awareness and appreciation for this unique ecosystem we protect and restore.

We hope that you, your loved ones and friends have the happiest of holidays and look forward to seeing you at many of our upcoming events

in 2018!

Thank you!

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.