



Events & Views

Published for active Environmental Volunteers

March 2008

Keeping the EV on Track

by Joyce Friedrichs, EV Board Chair

The EV is in great health. I'm referring to the functioning of the Board, the performance of the staff, and the overall way the EV operates as a business. We are focused, on track, financially solvent, and productive. We carry out our mission, "To promote understanding of, and responsibility for, the environment through hands-on science education," through our many programs, thanks to our wonderful staff and volunteers.

This good health should not be taken for granted and does not happen on its own. Many businesses, both for profit and nonprofit, struggle to define and then carry out their mission. They can flounder due to poor management, a lack of funding, misplaced goals, and a myriad of other reasons. So what keeps the EV heading in the right direction? The answer is straightforward: our governance, which includes our strategic plan process and clear lines of responsibility for both the Board and staff. Here's a quick window into how our strategic plan process works.

Responsibilities: In the broadest terms, the Board of Trustees is responsible for creating a strategic plan; the Executive Director and staff are responsible for implementing it and achieving its goals. In practice, these responsibilities are created in a more collaborative manner, as described below.

Overall cadence: The EV Strategic Plan is conducted on a three-year cycle.

Retreat: Every three years, the Strategic Planning retreat begins a new cycle. At that retreat, the focus areas for the Plan—called "Vision Elements"—are agreed upon. These Vision Elements are broad concepts such as "continued excellence" or "facilitate diversity." The Vision Elements are the goals, hopes, dreams, and, well, the "vision" we hold for the next three years. The Board's intentions for these elements

are voiced at the retreat and begin to give substance to the Plan. A new cycle does not necessarily mean we adopt all new Vision Elements.

Plan Drafts: The Executive Director (ED), with staff (always) and Board members as appropriate, take each Vision Element and develop a narrower list of Suggested Tactics—initiatives or activities that would achieve the goal. The staff's suggested tactics for implementing the Vision Elements are then shared with the Board and discussed.

Plan Finalization: Based on feedback and discussion, the Draft Plan is further refined by the ED with Year 1 activities made quite specific—typically a quarter-by-quarter list of milestones for each Vision Element. At the May Board meeting, the Plan should be finalized and voted upon so its implementation can begin with the start of the Fiscal Year (July 1).

Plan Implementation: Each quarter, the ED reports to the Board the progress against each milestone, and any issues, concerns, or required course corrections are discussed. The ED also uses the Plan as the "filter" for new ideas that come to the EV during the year. Often an excellent new program idea is presented, but it may not fit into the strategic plan. In most cases, we would decline to embrace the new idea if it will take us "off course." In rare circumstances, we will allow ourselves to embrace the new path, but only after putting ourselves through a rigorous review process. The EV is a highly successful organization *because* we remain so focused on our core work as defined through our strategic plan.

Next Two Retreats: Retreats during the intervening two years of the three-year plan may focus on specific Vision Elements that need Board work, on revisions or additions to Suggested Tactics, or other topics within the framework of the three-year plan.

(continued on next page)

This year's Board retreat was very productive. There was a lot of creative thinking about the exciting transformation we, as an organization, are about to experience. With the EcoCenter soon to be a reality, the next three-year plan will focus on creating a healthy transition to the organization we wish to become in our new home. At the February Board meeting, we did some follow-up work on our strategic plan, and now the staff will go to work on it. Stay tuned for a summary of our plan elements for the next three years, which will be very exciting ones for the EV!



Volunteer Enrichment

Wednesday, March 5, from 4:00-6:00pm
EcoCenter Update at EV Peninsula Office

Don't miss a special in-depth update for EVs on the EcoCenter, including:

- Jerry Hearn, Chair of our Project Management Group, and Maryanne Welton, our professional project manager, will present project details.
- We will unveil color images of what the building and its surroundings will actually look like.
- Hear about the groundbreaking ceremony, construction schedule, and move-in date.
- Learn about the sustainable technology and green building elements being incorporated.
- Our E.D. Allan Berkowitz will address emerging plans for leveraging the new location for greater mission fulfillment.

Please RSVP to **Sue Trautman** at suet@evols.org or (650) 961-0545 ext. 335. We hope to see you there!

March Area Meetings

South Bay Meeting

Tuesday, March 4
 Irene Estelle's home
9:00am

Treats provided by Joan Coston & Ivy Iverson

*Peninsula Meeting

Tuesday, March 11
 Foothill Park
12:00pm

*We will be having a lunch potluck! More details TBA.

Congratulations!

As a follow-up to Allan's cover article for last month's Events & Views, we are proud to announce the first recipients of *The Robert Brownlee Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service*. Please join us in congratulating **Marilyn Hornor**, of the Peninsula, and **Chuck Coston**, of the South Bay, as the honorees for 2007. Thank you, Chuck and Marilyn, for your dedication to the EV over the years! Chuck and Marilyn will have their names engraved on a plaque that will hang in the EV office. In addition, they will receive a stipend to be applied to fun and fascinating continuing education that supports their EV volunteer service. Once both of them have participated in their educational experiences, we will stage an enrichment for all EVs, during which both Marilyn and Chuck will share their new learning and experiences with all of us. Congratulations again!

Welcome to Our Newest Group of Recently Trained EVs!

Peninsula: Kelsey Bechelli & Barbara Turner

South Bay: Carole Hutchinson; Kenyon Mei;
 Julia O'Keefe; & Forall Scott

Their contact information can be found on the Wiki!

Upcoming Trainings

All EVs are welcome to join us for any of our training sessions. You may attend a specific day or the whole series. Please RSVP to Brittany to be sure there is space and that there are no schedule changes.

Quick Start—All About Birds: to introduce trainees to the EV with a shorter time commitment.

Tuesday & Thursday from 6:00-9:00pm
 South Bay Office

March 4: BN lecture and kits

March 6: Trainees present kits

Bay Weekend:

Saturdays from 9:00am – 1:30pm
 Baylands Interpretive Center

March 15: BL lecture and hike

March 22: BL kits and staffing the center

Happy Birthday!



Susanne Mulcahy:	March 2 nd
Lou Weeks-Silverman:	March 3 rd
Neil Hornor:	March 5 th
Vandy Shrader:	March 6 th
Jocelyn Blum:	March 7 th
Karla Broman:	March 8 th
Richard Dworak:	March 8 th
Stan Mantell:	March 11 th
Kelsey Bechelli:	March 12 th
Ivy Iverson:	March 15 th
Ruth Rowe:	March 18 th
Michael Eldredge:	March 19 th
Karen Phillips:	March 19 th
Aidan Sundstrom:	March 20 th
Irene Estelle:	March 21 st
Lori Mann:	March 21 st
Allan Berkowitz:	March 28 th
Bob Dodge:	March 31 st



Education Corner

by *Brittany Sabol*

Energy & Natural Resources

This month, the Energy and Natural Resources committee will be visiting the area meetings to present our work on the new subject area. We will show half of the kits at each area meeting. If you would like to see all of the kits, you are invited to come to the other service area’s meeting. The committee is hoping to get some great feedback on the work so far. Your input is important to make this the best subject area yet!

Kit Renovation Project

A big THANK YOU! to the Forest and Foothill committee for the Kit Renovation Project: **Bob Dodge** (Subject Resource), **Marilyn Hornor**, and **Jack & Jan Tomlin**. As this is the first committee, their help will be vital to establishing a good procedure for this project so the other seven subject areas to follow will be completed even more efficiently. We began our work in February and will keep you up-to-date on our progress.

What’s on the Wiki

This is a new section of the newsletter to bring your attention to the great updates and additions that will be seen as the Wiki continues to grow. This month, we added the **Ask An EV** page. You can leave your questions, and then anyone with the answer can chime in. The first two questions have been posted, including “*What are appropriate dimensions for a birdhouse?*” Anyone wanting to submit a functional birdhouse to the Birds & Blooms auction may find this information useful. You can find Ask An EV on the Main Page under Other Information. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to ask Brittany.



School Services

by *Anita Rodriguez*

As always, it is difficult to put a number or value to the volunteer work you do in order to reach—month after month—thousands of students in the Bay Area. The following numbers have been recorded for the month of January: Peninsula EVs did 28 services (classrooms and field trips), and South Bay EVs did 21 services. Thanks to your effort, 263 volunteer hours were invested in reaching these students. February numbers promise to be even higher!

Thanks, also, to the new graduates. Because of you, we have been able to exceed expectations for the past two months! We hope you are really enjoying this experience and continue to be part of our family for many months or years to come.

Students Say “Thank You!”

Dear Environmental Volunteers....

“You have taught us so much stuff. The field trip was the best field trip I ever had. I love the salty taste of the pickle weed. Thank you.”

--student at Bullis Charter School

“Thank you for inviting us to the field trip. I love how you taught us that birds have different size beaks so they eat different things. I like the game you taught us. Thank you and have a Happy Valentine’s.”

--student at Bullis Charter School

Development News

by Laurie (Lorelei) Rubin

EcoCenter Update

Date: Wednesday, March 5th

Time: 4:00pm

(time has changed from previous announcement)

Location: PCC large conference room

RSVP: Sue Trautman, ext 335 or
sueT@EVols.org

Please join us on Wed, March 5th for an update on the EcoCenter, delivered by **Jerry Hearn**, Chairman of the Project Management Group and former trustee of the EV. Jerry will present details on how the historic Sea Scout House, designed by renowned architect Birge Clark, is being restored and transformed into the EV's beautiful new headquarters. The EcoCenter is an ambitious and complex project that integrates historic preservation with eco-friendly design and construction to create a unique community gathering place, meant to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. Jerry will tell the story of how four years of dedication, ingenuity, and vision of the EV community has kept the project moving forward, and where we are going from here.

The EcoCenter promises new opportunities for the advancement of our mission to promote environmental stewardship in the region. The need to educate and inspire people to the wonders of the natural world is more urgent than ever. To this end, we describe the EcoCenter as "the EV's biggest hands-on Learning Kit ever!" The EcoCenter will be located at a key juncture along the 400-mile Baylands Trail, and we are indeed fortunate to have our new headquarters situated inside a protected nature preserve. The tremendous exposure and visibility will support volunteer recruitment, programmatic expansion, and a broadening of our constituencies.

We are planning fun activities throughout the course of the next two years to increase public participation in the EcoCenter project. As devoted volunteers and EV-ambassadors to the community, we want to be sure you are among the first to hear about the progress made so far, and that you are fully informed of upcoming plans. There will be a Q&A session at the conclusion of the presentation, and snacks will be served. RSVP helpful, but not essential.



Birds & Blooms

A birdhouse auction & garden party

Mark your calendars for this must-attend fundraising event of the season, **Sunday June 1**. Developed with the signature style and aplomb of Joanne Johnson Felt and made possible thanks to the substantial contribution of many wonderful volunteers, sponsors, and donors of goods and services, this afternoon affair promises to be fantastic and fun, while supporting the EV's annual programs. Event tickets are \$75 and go on sale April 11th.

In the meantime, you can be a part of the Birds & Blooms event by donating an auction item and/or by promoting business ads in our event program.

1) Can you donate—or do you know someone that would donate—the following items?*

- Airline mileage for 4 people
- Vacation home
- Hosted dinners for 6-10 guests
- Wine Country experience
- San Francisco sailing excursion
- Eco-Tours
- Event tickets
- Special people experiences
- Golf & sports gear and experiences
- High Tech Gadgets
- Other

**Donors will receive an IRS tax donation receipt.*

2) Do you have a favorite gift shop, haircutter, or gardener? For as little as \$100, a business can advertise in the Birds & Blooms event program.

For more information about Birds & Blooms item donation, advertising, and sponsorship, go to the EV website or contact Sue at suet@evols.org / Joanne at jjfelt@aol.com. You may also call the EV office at (650) 961-0545.

Bird & Blooms proceeds will benefit the educational programs of the EV.

Board Briefs

Last month, Jerry Hearn presented the Board with an update on the EcoCenter Project. Overall, the project is in good shape, and we hope to break ground in October of 2008. Costs will go up due to the time lag between the original quotes and the actual construction work. Fundraising is continuing. We remain very confident that we can raise the additional amount. To date, the Fall Major Donor campaign has raised \$22K of the projected \$64K. The Finance Committee forecasts \$582K in revenue with a surplus of \$8K at the end of the year.



Who's News

by Jan Whitmer

Our new Coordinator of Volunteers, **Nicole Wilson**, brings a rich background to the EV, having lived in many fascinating places in the world.

Born in the Pittsburgh, PA area, Nicole and her father spent three months on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. Here, at age 14, she informally taught English to adults and discovered that she loved teaching AND living abroad. So, during her Oberlin College experience, Nicole spent a summer teaching English in South Korea, and, after graduating with a double major in East Asian Studies and Anthropology, she taught English at a university in Wuhan, China for two years. Committed to teaching, Nicole returned to graduate school in Vermont and earned an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language at the School for International Training. She then went on to teach at an elementary school in Pachuca, Mexico, a teacher training college in Hue, Vietnam, and a high school in Luoyang, China.

Most recently, Nicole worked for WorldTeach, a non-profit that provides opportunities for volunteers to teach in developing countries. Her first position involved living in Hunan, China as a Summer Program Coordinator. Her most recent position with WorldTeach was in Cambridge, MA as a Program Manager for several countries, admitting and preparing volunteer teachers going to these areas.

While in the Boston area, Nicole met her boyfriend **Gilberto Soler-Llavina**, who is now working on his postdoc at Stanford. In planning her move to California, Nicole was attracted to the EV because it was an educational non-profit and especially because it meant working with volunteers—a perfect fit! She also loves that she can occasionally bring her cocker spaniel, Sally, to the office.

Outside of work, Nicole enjoys movies, cooking (especially sweets), taking long walks with Sally, dancing (her goal is to learn salsa), and, of course, traveling. She's hoping to continue her study of Spanish and is excited to explore California. She recently attended the Living in California training class and enjoyed getting to know the new trainees while learning more about life in California. Nicole, we welcome your experience and enthusiasm!



Upcoming Events

Explore Peru's Natural Wonders with Cheeseman's Ecology Safaris!

If you weren't able to consider the EV trip to Peru in 2008, what about a trip with Cheeseman's in May of 2009? The tour will explore natural areas that set the standard against which natural purity is judged. The Manu Biosphere Reserve has the highest diversity of life on Earth and is one of the most important conservation units in the world. The beauty of this trip is the variety of habitats visited, from orchid laden cloud forest, where Spectacled Bears and Cock-of-the-Rocks live unmolested, to untouched Amazon rainforest, where many species of monkeys abound and Jaguar and Tapir still roam. After eight days exploring rich Amazonian rivers and forests, you will be refreshed by the high-altitude cool of Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of the Incas, with ample time to discover the immortal remains of the Incan culture. Enjoy the Quechuan culture of Cusco, Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo, and the ruins of Machu Picchu, some of the world's greatest archaeology in a landscape of dramatic cloud forest mountains. Mention the EV newsletter when you sign up! For more information, go to the website:

<http://www.cheesemans.com/samerica.html>.

Nature Notes: Banana Slugs!

by Ana Maria Kelly

Last weekend, we went for a hike along a trail in El Corte de la Madera Open Space Reserve off Skyline Boulevard. We visited a very interesting sandstone formation called a Tafoni, but interesting as that was, I have to say that what I remember the most was the huge number of banana slugs we saw! This was the first invertebrate that I learned the name of when I came to California, so it holds a special place in my recollection of those awkward times. I had never seen such a big (can grow up to 10 inches!) and yellow (although they can be brown, white, or spotted) slug. Of course I hadn't; they are endemic to the Pacific coast of North America, with a heavy concentration in California.

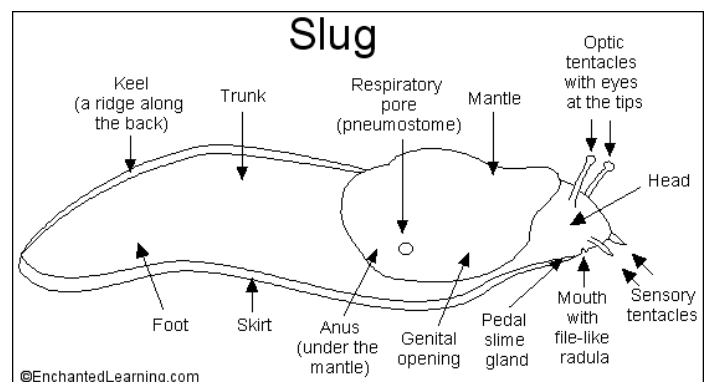
Banana slugs are mollusks, a phylum that includes minute snails and clams to large organisms such as squid, cuttlefish, and octopus. They are in the class Gastropoda, a diverse group found around the world, which includes snails and slugs. Within this group they are contained in the order Pulmonata: the snails and slugs with lungs, which enable them to breathe air. The readily identifiable hole in the front side of the slug is the opening to this lung cavity, called a pneumostome. Lastly, they belong to the Family Arionidae and Genus *Ariolimax*. Three species have been described, namely: *Ariolimax californicus*; *A. columbianus*; and *A. dolichophallus*.

The second thing most people notice after the bright yellow color of the banana slug is the abundance of slime. Slime plays a very important role in the survival of the slug. It allows it to move along the ground more easily and leaves trails that other slugs can follow. It makes them less palatable to predators by virtue of its sticky texture and a mild anesthetic effect. However, clever raccoons have been known to eat slugs by rolling them first in dirt in order to counteract the defense provided by slime. The slime also prevents their skin from drying out, which is a constant problem for an animal with no protective shell and that breathes through its skin. Finally, when

times are too dry, or too warm, slugs cover themselves in dirt and leaf litter using their slime in order to “estivate,” a sort of hibernation. They stay in this state until conditions are improved—sometimes years later!

When children start learning about the ecosystem, they learn about decomposers or detritivores; slugs are in this last group. They eat dead plant material and mushrooms using their radula (a kind of conveyor belt of teeth all mollusks have). In the process, they cycle nutrients back into the soil and disperse seeds and spores. Interestingly, some mushrooms have developed compounds with which they coat their caps specifically to protect against banana slug ingestion. These compounds are called “antifeedants”.

And now for our mature audiences, banana slugs are hermaphrodites; they carry both the female and male organs. However, they only mate with themselves if they can't find a mate. Maintenance of genetic diversity in the population by mating with another slug is preferable. The courting ritual is complex and ends with a remarkable behavior. After mating, if the slugs can't separate, a common problem, they gnaw off the penis of the other slug. This is called apophallation. After this procedure, the organ does not re-grow, and the animal now continues life as a female. Banana slugs can lay up to 30 eggs, which they do not care for, aside from picking a moist, out of the way spot to lay them. They take 3-8 weeks to hatch and can live up to 7 years.



Environmental Volunteers
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 Phone (650) 961-0545
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 Phone (408) 244- 2449
 info@evols.org; www.evols.org

Quote of the month:

“Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you..”

- Frank Lloyd Wright

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Staff: Allan Berkowitz, Executive Director
 Katie Donovan, Education Assistant
 Penny Hutchinson, Weekend Programs Coordinator
 Anita Rodriguez, Program Services Coordinator
 Lorelei Rubin, Director of Development
 Brittany Sabol, Education & Training Director
 Vandy Shrader, Summer Camp Coordinator
 Sue Trautman, Development Assistant
 Nicole Wilson, Coordinator of Volunteers

March 2008

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat./Sun.
			1:30-4:00pm Build a Birdhouse @ RAFT		1/2
3	4 ♥ 9:00am South Bay Area Mtg. @ Irene's; 6-9pm Quick Start Training	5 4:00pm EcoCenter Update @ EV Office	6 6:00-9:00pm Quick Start Training	7	8/9 Daylight Savings! Sat, 11am-1pm Arbor Day Event in Mtn. View
10	11 ♣ 12:00pm Peninsula Area Mtg. @ Foothill Park. Potluck!	12	13	14	15/16 Sat, 9am-1:30pm Bay Weekend Training @ BIC
17 St. Patrick's Day	18 4:30pm Finance; 5:30pm Board	19	20 First Day of Spring!	21	22/23 Easter Sat, 9am-1:30pm Bay Weekend Training @ BIC
24 30	25 31	26	27	28	29