



2015-2016 Annual Report



American River Natural History Association



Our Mission

The American River Natural History Association and the Effie Yeaw Nature Center are dedicated to bringing awareness of the beauty and diversity of the natural world to children, families, and the community through education initiatives that foster appreciation, enjoyment and stewardship of the unique natural and cultural resources of the Sacramento region.

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Naturalists:

Mary Jane Boxer Rachael Cowan Melanie DuBoce Brena Seck

Associate Naturalists:

Heather Gabel Thom Parrish Jaclyn Teofilo

Development Associates:

Barbara Lezon Jaclyn Teofilo

Weekend Reception:

Rudy Davis Janay Sawdon



The American River, one of California's most important and historic waterways.

From ARNHA's President

Thanks to an extremely generous gift in 2014, we began 2015-16 with substantial operating reserves that gave us a very sound financial basis for the year and a flexibility that allowed us to expand our educational operations and consider some physical improvements to the Nature Center.

In addition to the more than 20,000 children and adults who took part in our formal programs, we welcomed more than 40,000 visitors to the Nature Center, the largest number since ARNHA took over the operation and funding of the center in July 2010. Of the 514 school programs we conducted for 16,687 students, 143 (28%) were provided through our Urban Nature Program at no charge to those schools that enroll students from low-income families. That is the highest number of Urban Nature Programs we have provided in ARNHA's history.

We could not carry on our work without a strong foundation of generous donors, a talented staff, a cadre of enthusiastic and hard working volunteers and a wonderfully supportive community.

During the year more than 200 volunteers worked for more than 16,000 hours – the equivalent of eight full-time positions - at a wide range of tasks, including: teaching children in our educational programs; welcoming visitors to the Nature Center; taking care of our educational animals; looking after the native plant gardens and removing invasive plants from the Nature Study Area; maintaining the Nature Center; providing administrative support to the staff and working on our special events.

Cooperating with other groups with complementary missions and interests allows our small organization to have a bigger impact. So a special thank you to the groups that helped us this year with programs and projects:

- Sacramento Audubon who provided guides for Bird and Breakfast and led a monthly family bird walk;
- Carmichael Rotary who constructed and installed the new directional signs in the Nature Study Area; and
- Carmichael Kiwanis who provided, cooked and served a great pancake breakfast for the Sunday of the Bird and Breakfast weekend.

Helping us to improve the experience of visitors to the Nature Center, ARNHA partnered with the Sacramento Conservation Corps to reduce invasive weeds and remove fire fuel along the bluff. Our board is working with Sacramento County Parks to replace damaged interpretive signs along the bike path in the Parkway. We are also updating the 49 interpretive signs in the Nature Study Area. ARNHA also cooperated with other stakeholders to refine and promote the idea of a Lower American River Conservancy and to expand nature education to other parts of the parkway.

Our programs continued to exhibit strong growth and program revenue grew. Overall revenues were impacted by lower than anticipated fundraising success (including having to move the Gala venue because of rain and also nationwide problems with the online donation system during the "Big Day of Giving" fundraiser). The Board approved increased expenditures as an investment in the future of the organization in terms of staff salaries and benefits, plus program and facilities improvements.

In January the Board held a strategic planning workshop, focusing on board development and on enhancing our facilities, exhibits and grounds. We will be continuing this work in early 2017.

ARNHA is fortunate to attract talented and hardworking people as Board and Associate Board members, staff and volunteers: people who are passionate about educating all age groups in the community about science, natural history, stewardship of the environment and the cultural history of the Native Americans of the Lower American River. We are equally fortunate to have the generous support of ARNHA members, community businesses, foundations and private donors who share our passion.

Thank you to you all.

Liz Williamson
ARNHA President (2014-2016)



ARNHA President Liz Williamson

In February 2016, the Effie Yeaw Nature Center was recognized in the U.S. Congressional Record for forty years of service to the Sacramento community.

From the Executive Director



ARNHA's successful operation of EYNC is now over 6 years old. To most observers, it seemed logical and easy for ARNHA to take over the nature center. Logical...yes; easy...no. When ARNHA took over EYNC, it's budget suddenly quadrupled - unlike most non-profits which slowly grow over a period of years or even decades. So we had to come up with new ways of increasing revenue - whether through grants, events, new programs or by just asking our members and donors. Could ARNHA bring in enough money every year to keep the nature center open 6 days a week for the public while still covering the costs of our school programs? Well, we showed that we can and we did – thanks to your help and support.

Now that our organization is becoming more stable, the board is focusing on our future. We began by evaluating all of our programs. Those results gave us a program baseline for the next 3-5 years. Then we reviewed the nature center buildings and the grounds. The two things we learned were not working well were the exhibit and animal areas of the nature center.

The exhibits ranged from 8 to 40 years old and were built by EYNC when it was run by the County. Their goal had been to choose broader topics that would allow the exhibits to travel to other California locations – and the exhibits are now becoming outdated and much of the information does not fit ARNHA's focus. The theme for our future exhibits will likely revolve around the Lower American River, the Parkway, and its ecosystems.

Another issue that became apparent was the awkwardness of the flow of visitors around the nature center. We have created a bottleneck at the animal exhibits and front counter so many of our visitors never make it through the rest of the nature center.

Our animal display area is the smallest, yet the most visited part of our nature center. Our animals are in a very confined space, often surrounded by 10-15 excited kids. This crowded situation makes it difficult for animal care volunteers to fulfill their tasks, and doesn't allow for any expansion. Thus our board is seriously considering a re-design of the interior of the nature center.

These are exciting ideas! We hired a consultant to help us best define our current interpretive directions and how that might translate into changes in our exhibit themes. Once we work those out, our next steps will be to work with professional exhibit designers and an architect to evaluate our options and decide what changes are needed first – and work closely with the County which still owns the buildings. Then we'll prioritize the options and start raising the money to get them done! It will still be the same Effie Yeaw Nature Center – only better!

Paul Tebbel
Executive Director



Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Executive Director Paul Tebbel

Favorite Photos of 2015-2016

The Nature Center is a favorite location of amateur and professional photographers alike, some of whom share their work with us. We have included many of our favorites on this page and throughout the report. Enjoy!



(Top left) A student learns to identify aquatic invertebrates.

(Top right) Goslings were an unexpected sight for a class on a field trip in spring 2016.

(Middle) Guests enjoy conversation and beverages before the live auction begins at the Spring Gala.

(Bottom left) A dandelion is ready to release its seeds into the nature preserve.

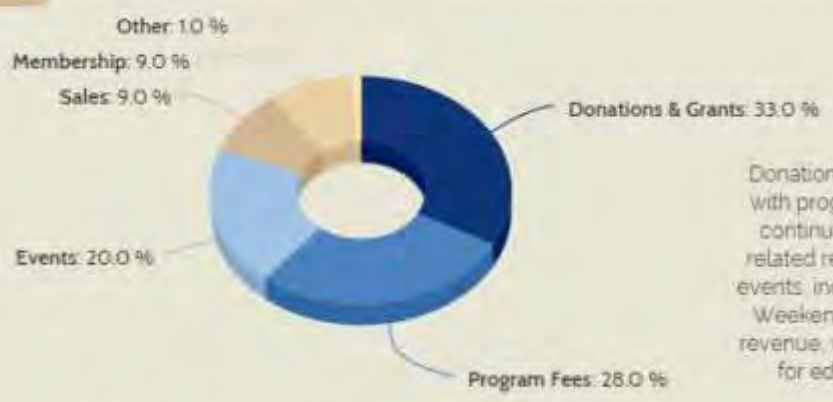


“Although not unheard of, black squirrels are somewhat of a rare sight in the American River Parkway.”

~ Thom Parrish from Wild Blog, Black Ops Squirrels



2015-2016 Revenues and Expenses

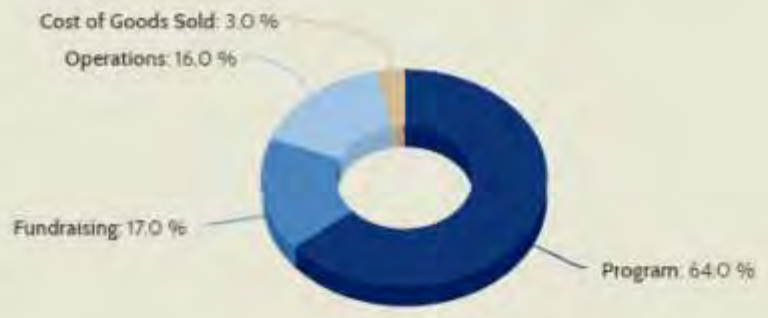


Solid Growth Continues

Donations and grants are a major revenue stream with program income close behind. Our programs continue to exhibit strong growth and program-related revenue rose by 26% this year. Our popular events including the Spring Gala, Bird and Breakfast Weekend and NatureFest bring in one fifth of our revenue, while simultaneously providing a platform for educating and informing our community.

Informed Spending with a Focus on the Future

A typically fiscally conservative organization, ARNHA's expenses were higher in 2015-16 than in previous years. After careful consideration and participating in a strategic planning workshop, the ARNHA board unanimously approved several spending increases that would provide for the security and longevity of the organization and its service entity, the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.



Membership



Since 2010, when ARNHA assumed oversight of the Nature Center, membership has increased by 60.8%.

Planning for 2017 and Beyond

In 2015-2016 ARNHA took steps to invest in the future of the organization. Increased expenditures were made in terms of staff salaries and benefits as well as program and facilities improvements that were board-approved. This includes an ongoing strategic planning effort with consultants that will position us well for future improvements to the interior of the building, to the grounds, and interpretive facilities to the benefit of the community. The strategic investments made were covered by ARNHA's savings and we always maintain at least 6 months of operating capital in the bank.





Educating Our Community



Programs Presented in 2015-16

During 2015-2016, we presented 51 more programs than in the prior year (an increase of nearly 8%) and served over 22,500 students, families and visitors. Our free weekend programs continue to draw many visitors throughout the year. Some of the most popular topics were owls, our resident critters, pond-scooping activities, trail hikes, and family birding walks with Sacramento Audubon Society. A very special "thank you" to our outside speakers who volunteered their time to host programs on behalf of the Nature Center.

A Valuable Resource to Many



A 2016 survey of more than 300 Nature Center visitors conducted by a private consulting company, showed that the majority of visitors bring friends or family in order to share their experiences and enjoyment (*Facilitators*). Many others come for the quiet and solitude (*Spiritual Pilgrims*), or to enjoy a hobby such as photography or birding.

90,000+ People Served

annually through our programs, events and Visitor Center



The most common words describing why people visit are:



Media and Publications

The Acorn

The Acorn, our quarterly newsletter edited by Peggy Kennedy and Peter Hayes, continues to inform ARNHA members and other Parkway stakeholders about the natural and cultural features of the Parkway, both electronically and in print. In addition, it reflects ARNHA's new mission of the last six years - funding and operations of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Articles about the art gala fundraiser, the annual meeting, Bird and Breakfast Weekend, American River Parkway Clean-Up, ARNHA as recipient of the Carmichael Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit of the Year, and the passing of long-time ARNHA supporter Peter Cross shared pages with articles and illustrations about parkway flora and fauna, volunteer activities, EYNC exhibits and educational programs, docent training, NatureFest, the annual wildlife count, nature camps, the Nature Bowl, and ARNHA's participation in the UC Naturalist Certification program. New members and donors were honored in each issue, and each issue featured an excerpt from *An American River Journal*.



The Acorn, ARNHA's quarterly newsletter

Werner Raab, Peter Hayes, William Avery, and Dick Laursen wrote lead stories. Articles were written by Betty Cooper, Rachael Cowan, Melanie DuBoce, Brena Seck, Mary Jane Boxer, Barbara Lezon, Heather Gabel, JoLynn Jarrett, Jamie Washington, Cheryl Romo, Melissa Shumate, and ARNHA Media/Publications Committee members Peter Hayes and Margaret Leavitt. President Liz Williamson wrote a quarterly column. Local expert William Avery wrote about the Wild Animal Count. Committee member James Scott authored a new feature showcasing photos of the lower American River. Dan Lombard created layouts for articles and illustrations. Molly Keller served as artist. Kari Bauer and Linda Thomas donated their skills as photographers. All committee members helped proof each issue. Claudia Hulbe's labeling crew, including Marjorie Boulton, Peter Hayes, Chris Hulbe, JoLynn Jarrett, Janice Speth, John Speth, Brian Stinson, and Sally Weinland readied copies for mailing to members.

ARNHA Books

The Classic Edition of *An American River Almanac*, the 2013 edition of *The Outdoor World of the Sacramento Region*, with color illustrations, and the 2011 edition of *Biking and Hiking the American River Parkway*, *American River Journal*, *Ooti – Child of the Nisenan*, *Wild Neighbors*, and *History of the Lower American River* continue to sell well in prominent local bike shops and bookstores, in the EYNC Discovery Shop, at nature and birding festivals, and online at ARNHA.org. In early 2016, for the first time, the Gift Shop at The National American Indian Museum in Washington, D. C. began selling copies of *Ooti-Child of the Nisenan*. ARNHA books account for almost 20% of total sales.

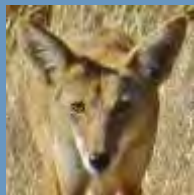
Peter Hayes is marketing chair. Molly Keller keeps inventory records.

Web Pages and Social Media

Liz Williamson maintained the website for ARNHA.org and SacNatureCenter.net. Pete the Parkway Coyote continues his FaceBook page as written by Kari Bauer. Barbara Lezon manages the EYNC Facebook page, creates and sends the Center's email communications, and assists with the SacNatureCenter.net website.

My curious nature,
sharp eyes and keen
sense of smell
make me a great
ambassador for the
American River
Natural History
Association.

~ Pete
The Parkway Coyote



More Favorite Photos of 2015-2016

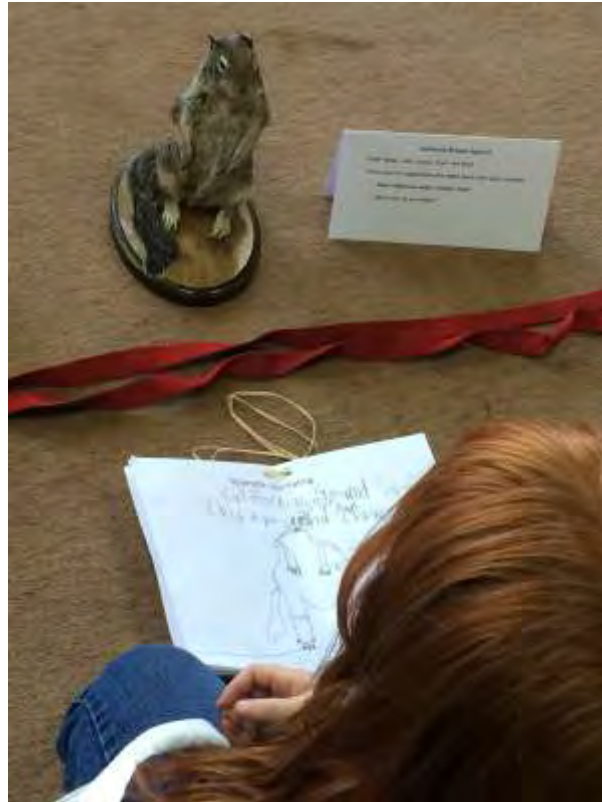
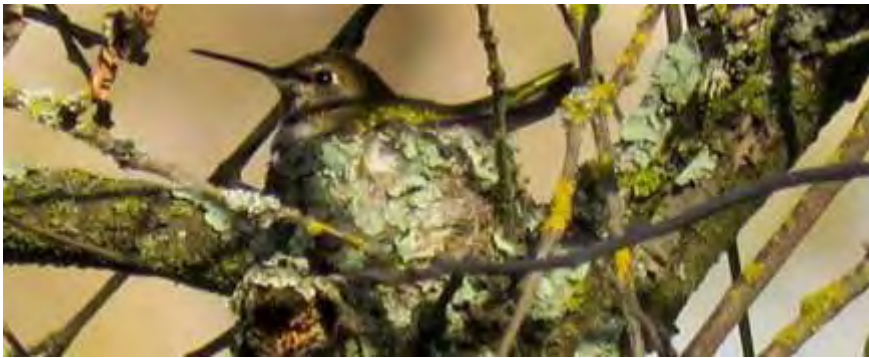


(Top left) A curious student is fascinated by aquatic invertebrates living in this specimen jar.

(Top right) A young fawn hides curled up in the summer grass.

(Middle) A hummingbird keeps her eggs warm in a nest that's just wide enough to hold a quarter.

(Bottom left) A mother and son take a late summer stroll in the preserve.



Nature Plus

This year Nature Center staff and docents developed and launched a new educational program called Nature Plus. This half-day program allows 1st - 3rd grade teachers to immerse their students in nature activities, giving them ample time for discussions, questions and even nature sketching and journaling (like this student to the left).

Our Volunteers July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

This fiscal year, over 250 volunteers kept the Nature Center open by greeting visitors; leading tours; caring for our resident wildlife; through daily maintenance, special projects, landscaping and habitat restoration; clerical work and data entry; leading school tours and helping with Nature Camps; assisting with fundraising; planning and hosting special events including our annual Gala and the Nature Fest; writing, publishing, and distributing books and our quarterly newsletter; and other activities to support our mission of bringing people to nature and nature to people.

Total volunteer hours topped 16,370! According to the Independent Sector, volunteer time in California, as of 2015, is valued at \$27.59/hour. *At this rate, our volunteer support this fiscal year equates to \$451,648—nearly half a million dollars.*

Some of our volunteers have just started this year and have already contributed *significantly* to the well-being and success of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. *One hundred twelve* other volunteers have been here longer and given anywhere from *100 to over 5,800* hours for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and ARNHA. Their names are listed below.

Jamie Washington
Volunteer Coordinator

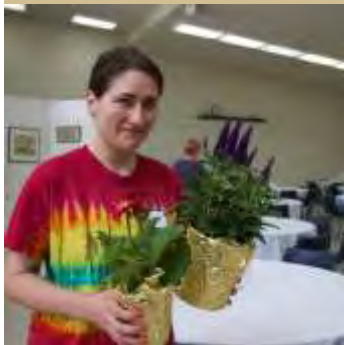
We have 29 active volunteers who have served between 1,000 and 5,800 hours:

Susie Abbott
Kari Bauer
Noah Baygell
Kelly Cohen
Jackie Delu
Walter Dong
Marilyn Escobar
Peter Hayes
Elaine Hujambojoie
Claudia Hulbe
Gregg Hutchison
Joey Johnson
Molly Keller
Peggy Kennedy
Jennifer Kerr

Suzanne Krale
Bev Lewis
Don Mongeau
Nancy Oprsal
Gail Philippart
Diane Ramsey
Margaret Rogers
Bill Spaller
Linda Thomas
Greg Voelm
Larry Washington
Betsy Weiland
Nancy Westlund
Liz Williamson

23 active volunteers served between 500 and 999 hours:

Bud Banker
Marsha Bedwell
Sue Bristow
Lindsley Cross
Susan Davis
Jackie DeWeese
Colleen Draffin
Cindy Dunning
Cathy George
Rachel Freund
Hollyn Johnson
Margaret Leavitt
Jean Marcy
Phyllis McGrath
Deborah Moskovitz
Lestelle Manley Nichols
David Peterson
Carol Thomas
Sigrid Trevino
Connie Wade
David Wade
Dorothy Wagner
Trudy Ziebell



(Top) Paige Logsdon sets centerpieces on tables.

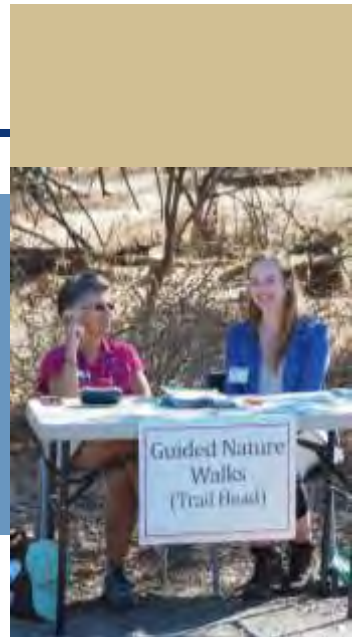
(Middle) Phyllis McGrath helps prep bid sheets for the silent auction.

(Bottom) Volunteer Dusti Gentile manages the volunteer food station - perhaps the most critical part of the Gala!

Volunteers Helped Save the Spring Gala!

When forecasted rain threatened to ruin the annual Spring Gala, it took many hands to move the entire event indoors. Without our wonderful and dedicated volunteers, we would never have pulled it off!

“I’ve been going to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for as long as I’ve lived in Sacramento. ...Effie Yeaw has always opened up a more adventurous and curious side to me that I’ve never seen manifest anywhere else. It is an essential part of my life here in Sacramento, and will always be recalled clearly in my fondest childhood memories. Volunteering here is my way of trying to give back to a place that’s given me so much..” ~ Noah Howard, volunteer



Linda Melching and Kendall Burke were two of many volunteers who helped staff NatureFest.

25 active volunteers served between 250 and 499 hours:

Jan Ahders
 Katie Baygell
 Michele Beckwith
 Mike Cardwell
 Stephanie Cyr
 Krystin Dozier
 Roz Eliaser
 Marilee Flannery
 Denise Garland-Cardwell
 Ethan Hall
 Mary Howard
 JoLynn Jarrett
 Bruce Kennedy
 James LaNier
 Bob McCleary
 Abi Mead
 Linda Melching
 Hunter Merritt
 Smokey Murphy
 Linda Melching
 Karin Richardson
 Melissa Shumate
 George Wagner
 Ilana Weisberg
 Lynn White

19 active volunteers served between 160 and 249 hours:

Dick Barbar
 Bob Brown
 Susan Brown
 Jean Burke
 Kendall Burke
 Donna D’Amico
 Bill Dillinger
 Rich Draffin
 Sandie Dunn
 Steve Flannery
 Chris Hulbe
 Michael Kwong
 Dan Lombard
 Beryl Michaels
 Susie Niemann
 Susan Solarz
 Janice Speth
 John Speth
 Ruth Younger

16 active volunteers served between 100 and 159 hours:

Keegan Ball
 Nicole Bilaver
 Katy Blakely
 Abi Bristow
 Angie Cha
 Andrew Guthrie
 Ross Harper
 Jim Jackson
 Jay Kumar
 Alexandra Magda
 Max McGregor
 Delia Ramirez
 Kimberly Rider
 Felice Risling
 Sally Weinland
 Chris Wren



Volunteer camp assistant, Meagan, shares a rare quiet moment with a nature camper.

Animal care volunteers Max McGregor, Renee Covey, and Abi Mead with staff member Jackie DeWeese.

Our Donors *July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016*

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The Gala's live auction gets exciting as guests try to outbid one another!

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More Favorite Photos of 2015-2016



(Above) A day camper enjoying one of the newly installed interpretive signs in the preserve.

(Below) Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars on a milkweed plant.



(Below) Two of the Red-shouldered Hawks born in the tree behind the Nature Center in spring 2016.



(Above) Campers write in their journals by the water at William B. Pond park.
(Left) Students show off the array of life they found below the water's surface.



(Left) Two bucks lock horns during rut season.

Our thanks to contributing photographers:

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Front cover photo by Kari Bauer
Back cover photo by Thom Parrish