



# Land of the West Wind

Volume 16 Issue 3

December 2016

## Grizzly Island Wildlife Area Waterfowl Harvest Update

By: Orlando Rocha, CDFW  
Environmental Scientist

Opening weekend was not what most would consider a success but our hunters seemed to be happy to be out again chasing waterfowl. We had a good safe opening weekend hunt with no major issues.

The average was down considerably from a 2.81 in 2015/16 to a 1.66 this year; we did have about the same number of hunters as last year. Total numbers are summarized below for opening weekend of the last 2 seasons but a quick overview shows us that there were more mallards shot this year which is possibly due to improved nesting conditions due to early spring rains.

The top five birds of both seasons are relatively consistent: Northern Shoveler, Green-winged teal, Mal-



Northern Shoveler

**(UPDATE, cont. on pg. 5)**

## Tule Red Tidal Restoration Gets Underway

By: Westervelt Ecological Services

Work is underway at the Tule Red Tidal Restoration Project. On September 19<sup>th</sup> representatives from local, state, and federal government as well as private industry gathered together to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Tule Red Tidal Restoration Project on the edge of Grizzly Bay. As the largest tidal wetland restoration project to be initiated in the Delta to date, the project will restore tidal influence to over 400 acres, reestablishing important ecological food web processes for the benefit of native fish species, including the Delta smelt, longfin smelt, and chinook salmon.



Tule Red Tidal Restoration Project area

The ceremony took place on a berm overlooking the site and included keynote speakers Byron Buck and Jason Peltier of the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA), Mark Cowin of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Steve Chappell of Suisun Resource Conservation District, Charlton Bonham of California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and John Laird of California Natural Resources Agency. The event concluded with final remarks from Byron Buck and a blast from an air horn, signaling the ceremonial kick-off of construction.

The Tule Red project is a joint effort between the SFCWA and DWR. SFCWA is a joint powers authority comprised of the public water agencies that contract for delivery of water from the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project. DWR owns and operates the State Water Project. SFCWA is pursuing Tule Red and other habitat restoration projects

## Land of the West Wind

Quarterly newsletter of the Suisun  
Resource Conservation District  
Address: 2544 Grizzly Island Road  
Suisun, CA 94585  
Telephone: (707) 425-9302  
Fax: (707) 425-4402  
Water Manager office: (707) 426-2431  
E-mail: srcd@suisunrcd.org  
Website: www.suisunrcd.org

### SRCD Staff

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Bruce Wickland, *Operations Manager*  
Kelli Perez, *Office Supervisor*  
Tim Edmunds, *Biologist/Water Manager*  
Dean Podolsky *Biologist/Water Manager*  
Jeff Taylor, *Biologist/Water Manager*  
Steve Witherspoon, *Caretaker LJI*

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**SRCD's public meetings are  
held at 2 PM on the second  
Wednesday of each month at the  
Solano County Supervisors Chambers  
675 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA 94533**

SRCD represents private landowners of the Suisun Marsh at the Federal, State, and local levels. Its historic goal has been to achieve a water supply of adequate quality so that preferred wetland habitat values will be retained through appropriate management practices. Through cooperation with landowners and various agencies, SRCD seeks to develop new programs aimed at protecting and improving the Suisun Marsh for future generations.

## SRCD Portable Pump Program Sets New Record

*By: SRCD Water Managers*

Since its inception back in 2005, the SRCD Portable Pump Program has provided a valuable service to landowners in the Marsh. While use has remained consistent over the years, today we find that for the 2015/2016 season we have recorded a new hourly record of 6,895 hours! This is an 84% increase over last year. While we do not anticipate this trend to continue, the pumps and the Water Managers remain available for use and assistance to achieve the goal of effective habitat management, primarily in the late winter and spring when leaching of soil salts from the wetland plants root zone is most critical.



SRCD 8" Pioneer trash pump



SRCD 12" Pumpmaster tow pump

As a reminder, portable pumps used for spring drainage will provide the opportunity to enhance and sustain assemblages of diverse wildlife habitat by providing wetland managers the ability to perform essential leach cycles. They will improve drainage capabilities of many managed wetlands to reduce soil salinities by pumping drainage water that cannot be effectively removed by tidal drainage. Due to siltation of smaller sloughs and low pond bottom elevations many properties cannot effectively tidally drain because of a decreased dwell time at the lowest low tides. The ability to drain managed wetlands within a 20 day period is a goal of each individual properties management plans.

Making good use of water that is typically fresher in the spring and early summer to leach soil salts from the wetland plants root zone is critical. Applying lower salinity water will reduce the accumulation of salts in the soil profile, assist in the effective leaching of the existing salinities from the marsh soils, and increase the wetland plant diversity in the Marsh.

If you'd like to discuss your needs and scheduling a pump, please call your Water Manager at 707-426-2431.

**(TIDAL, cont. from pg. 1)**

to assist DWR with meeting existing permit requirements under the 2008 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Delta Smelt OCAP Biological Opinion. A permit that requires the restoration of 8,000 acres of tidal wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and 800 acres of tidal wetland in or around the Suisun Marsh.

The project also advances other restoration goals and contributes to the Suisun Marsh Habitat Management, Preservation and Restoration Plan with a tidal restoration target for the Suisun Marsh eco-region of 5,000 to 7,000 acres and protection and enhancement of 40,000 to 50,000 acres of managed wetlands.

The project's location adjacent to Grizzly Bay makes it ideal for restoration to tidal habitat. In the early 1900's the site was mud-flat and shallow bay habitat. Over the next half century, vegetation encroached, the shoreline receded westward, and water control structures were installed to allow management of the property as a duck club. The site has been managed marsh since the 1950's, but management is extremely difficult due to the fact that there is no outboard levee along the bay front, just a natural berm of thick vegetation and flotsam.

Restoration of the site will involve the creation of a network of channels to convey water from Grizzly Bay through the natural berm to allow for full daily tidal exchange across the interior of the project site. Westervelt Ecological Services (WES) is the current land owner and, under an agreement with SFCWA, has developed the restoration design, completed permitting, and is currently managing the construction. Once construction is completed, WES will assist in turning the management over to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which will manage it with State Water Project funding from DWR.



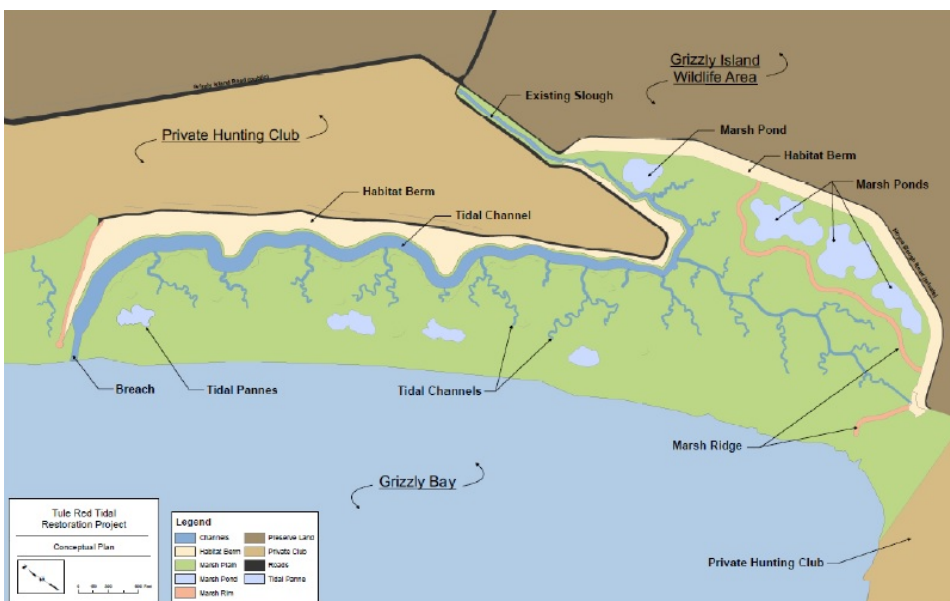
Mark Cowin, Director, California Department of Water Resources



Chuck Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife



John Laird, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency (above), and project area detail (left)



## New Diversion Measurement Requirements & Winter Workshop

*By: Steve Chappell, SRCD Executive Director*

On **December 6th, 2016**, SRCD will have the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Delta Watermaster and SWRCB staff present at a **mandatory** meeting for all Suisun Marsh Duck Clubs that filed a Statement of Diversion and Use form, upon which you claimed water rights for your property's diversions, where we will answer questions and guide you through the required forms for landowners to opt-in to the new SRCD Alternative Compliance Plan for all Suisun Marsh diverters .

**Please bring to the workshop your original Statement of Diversion and Use that you filed with State Water Resources Control Board - Division of Water Rights for each of your individually declared diversions.** This document would have been filed on or before July 1, 2010 and you have since been required to report an estimate of the water diverted by each diversion.

You'll recall that June 24th 2015, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 88 into law. This legislation added new measurement and additional reporting requirements (effective as early as January 1, 2016) for a substantial number of diverters who divert more than 10 acre-feet of water per year, including the Suisun Marsh. The State Water Resources Control Board adopted Emergency Regulations to implement these new provisions of the law on January 19th, 2016. This new law and regulation affects all water users required to file a Statement of Diversion and Use in the Suisun Marsh, including those claiming riparian or pre-1914 appropriative water rights. Reporting of water diversion amounts is now required annually and the past reporting requirement of every three years has been eliminated. As a result, all landowners had to report their 2015 diversion amounts and any past years not previously reported by July 1, 2016.

The second part of the new law establishes a phased-in approach to deadlines for compliance with Measurement, Reporting, Accuracy of Measurement, and Frequency of Measurement, in which SRCD doesn't believe it will be possible for most Suisun Marsh landowners to effectively comply with these new regulatory measurement requirements in the unique corrosive and tidally variable Suisun Marsh environment. The new regulation has an exemption that allows for diverters to propose a measurement method (in lieu of measuring device) or the development of an approved Alternative Compliance Plan.

This year at the April 20th Spring Suisun Marsh Landowner Workshop the State Water Resource Control Board's Delta Watermaster made a presentation about the new laws and requirements of Suisun Marsh diverters. Since that time, on your behalf, SRCD has been working with the Delta Watermaster to develop an Alternative Compliance Plan for all Suisun Marsh diverters to opt in to by **January 1, 2017**. The diversion measurement method of staff gauge and floodable acreage will continue to meet regulatory requirements for the measurement of brackish water used to manage Suisun Marsh wetland habitats. If landowners choose not to opt-in to the SRCD's Plan, then landowners can physically measure their own diversion and report directly to SWRCB or face fines and penalties under the new law. We encourage you to be present at the meeting and to opt-in to the new SRCD Alternative Compliance Plan for Diversion Measurement.



## Managed Wetland Mosquito Reduction for 2016 Fall Flood Season

*By: Richard Snyder, SCMAD District Manager*

With the rains falling in month of October and leaves on the trees starting to turn, it's a reminder of changing of the seasons.

The Solano County Mosquito Abatement District (SCMAD) is on the back side of another year of mosquito control. West Nile virus is present again this year in Solano County with 3 human cases recorded so far. The fall flooding of the Suisun Marsh began in August and continued thru October.

A great number of duck clubs delayed flooding until the second to third week of October which aids in lessening the amount of mosquitoes produced as some species are preparing to over winter. The mosquito larval inspections on duck clubs performed by SCMAD staff indicated mosquito production to be lower this season compared to average years thus requiring minimal acres to be treated by aircraft. The SCMAD staff will continue to monitor and treat for adult mosquitoes by truck-mounted ULV foggers in both the Suisun Marsh, as well as surrounding cities, as needed.

The continued communication and cooperation between Suisun Marsh landowners, Suisun Resource Conservation District and SCMAD has again proven to be a valuable tool in minimizing and managing mosquito production within the Suisun Marsh and surrounding areas.

May the 2016/2017 hunting season find everyone well with many fruitful hunting days ahead!

**(UPDATE, cont. from pg. 1)**

lard, American wigeon and Gadwall. After opening weekend averages have fallen due to November doldrums (nothing new to most who hunt the Marsh), most are looking forward to northern storms to improve hunting here in on Grizzly Island.



2016/2017 Opening Weekend Summary					
Date	Total water-fowl Hunters	Total Ducks	Total Geese	Total Water-fowl	Average
10/22/16	392	652	0	652	1.66
10/23/16	142	136	0	142	0.96
Top Five Birds for opening Weekend 2016/2017					
Bird:	Northern Shoveler	Green-winged Teal	Mallard	American Wigeon	Gadwall
Number Harvested	273	208	203	29	31
2015/2016 Opening Weekend Summary					
Date	Total water-fowl Hunters	Total Ducks	Total Geese	Total Water-fowl	Average
10/24/15	395	1109	2	1111	2.81
10/25/15	152	241	1	242	1.59
Top Five Birds for opening Weekend 2015/2016					
Bird:	Northern Shoveler	Green-winged Teal	Mallard	American Wigeon	Northern Pintail
Number Harvested	812	333	87	71	17

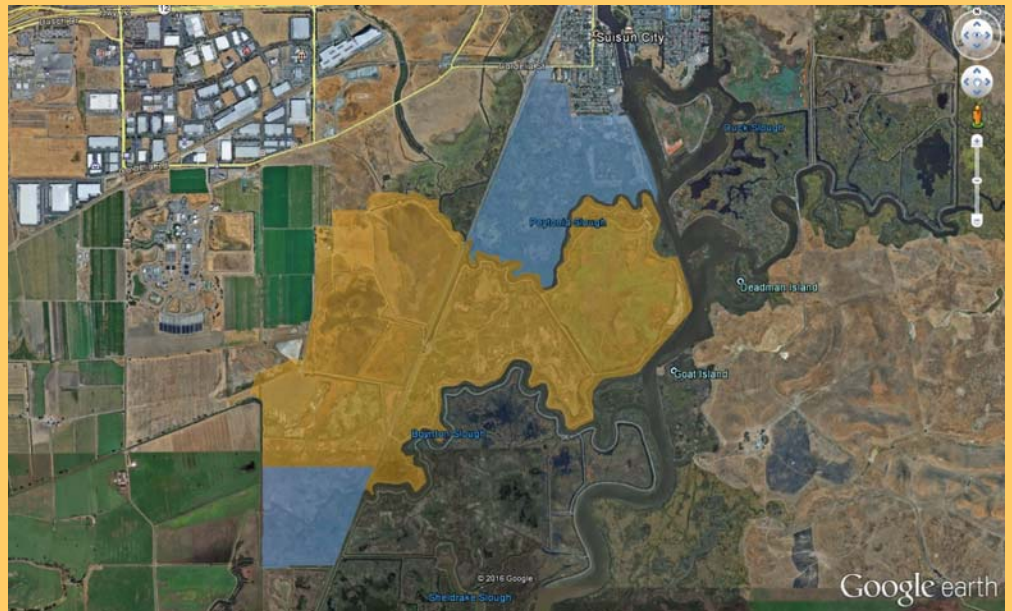
## Suisun Marsh Low DO BMP Implementation Study

By: Stuart Siegel, Siegel Environmental

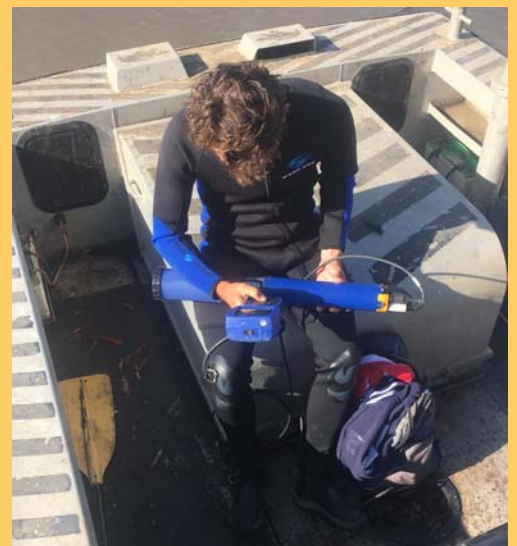
The Suisun Resource Conservation District (SRCD) is a lead partner in field testing water quality improvement strategies aimed to address low dissolved oxygen problems in Suisun Marsh's tidal sloughs that occur during the fall months mostly around flood-up time before hunting season starts. This work is funded by a grant of nearly \$900,000 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with an equivalent amount of matching funds provided collectively by SRCD and all the project partners. The study is focusing on Peytonia and Boynton sloughs where problems have been most prevalent in the past. The study's intent is to find a suite of "best management practices" for club operations and for coordinating timing of water operations among all clubs along these two sloughs, including optimizing use of treated wastewater from the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District (FSSD).

Fall 2016 has been a whirlwind of project activity. SRCD worked closely with all seven clubs along these two sloughs to understand and coordinate all the flood-up operations, help prepare for club improvements where they could be implemented this year (the grant provides funds to help for these improvements), install and operate ten water quality monitoring stations, and collect more water quality samples than anyone dares to count.

Project partners have provided significant support in all this work. FSSD has been providing logistical support for all the water quality sampling. The Regional Water Quality Control Board has been providing field staff, monitoring equipment, and laboratory analysis as well as logistics support and quality assurance. EPA has been providing laboratory analysis. Consultants on



Project (highlighted in orange, tidal areas in blue) area map located in upper northwest of Suisun Marsh near Cordelia Road. The five clubs involved in the study have been instrumental in the success of the project.



JT Love, SRCD temporary seasonal employee, proved an integral part of the team in helping with equipment installation and weekly sampling throughout the project.

## Recent Legislation and Proposition 63 Update

By: Bill Gaines, Gaines & Associates

During the recently completed 2016 State Legislative Session, numerous firearms-related bills were considered. The outcome of those bills of greatest concern to California's sporting community is below:

AB 1135 (Levine/Ting) – Assault Weapons – SIGNED  
AB 1511 (Sanitago/Chiu) – Firearms: Lending – SIGNED  
AB 1664 (Levine/Ting) – Assault Weapons - DIED  
AB 1674 (Santiago) – Firearm Transfers – VETOED  
SB 880 (Hall/Glazer) – Assault Weapons – SIGNED  
SB 1235 (de Leon) – Ammunition – SIGNED  
SB 894 (Jackson) – Lost or Stolen Firearm: Reporting – VETOED

But not all the serious threats to our Second Amendment rights and our sporting arms and munitions are taking place inside the walls of our State Capitol. Buried among many other initiatives on our November 2016 state ballot was the most aggressive single gun control package ever brought forward in California -- Proposition 63, Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom's "Safety for All Act of 2016".

Proposition 63 passed by a margin of 63 percent to 37 percent. Unless successfully challenged in court, the combination of Proposition 63 and the bills signed into law this year would mean the implementation of a statewide "high capacity" magazine ban and ammunition background checks, among many other things.

Chuck Michel, President of the California Rifle & Pistol Association said that "With our victory in the presidential election, successful legal challenges will now be filed against all these new ill-conceived and unconstitutional laws, and those cases will be heard by a new Supreme Court that will see these laws as the Second Amendment violations that they are".

Gaines & Associates will continue to work alongside the California Rifle and Pistol Association, California Waterfowl Association and a small handful of other united interests to achieve the shared goal. If you'd like to learn more about the legislation discuss here, please send an email to [info@gainesandassociates.net](mailto:info@gainesandassociates.net).

### **(STUDY, cont. from pg. 6)**

the project, including Tetra Tech, Siegel Environmental, Bachand Associates and Gillenwater Consulting, have been providing field staff, monitoring equipment, and more logistics coordination than anyone imagined. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has been helping support the monitoring equipment, as has the National Estuarine Research Reserve (of which Rush Ranch is one of its Reserve sites).

The equipment will be in place and sampling will continue to just past Thanksgiving. The project then shifts into analysis mode and preparation for summer and fall 2017 activities, including implementing a range of club improvements and other coordination actions along with next fall's water quality monitoring effort. The project will wrap up in 2018. Expect an update at the April 2017 Annual Landowners meeting. Our sincere appreciation goes out to all the club owners and managers we have worked with this fall as well as our project partners. We have asked for a lot and the high level of cooperation and participation we have received is outstanding. And lastly, hats off to the SRCD water managers and field crew who have exhibited great resourcefulness in doing work well outside what they normally do!



Yerae Seo and Michelle Pond of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board taking samples.

Land Of The West Wind  
SRCD Newsletter

2544 Grizzly Island Road  
Suisun CA 94585

Address Correction Requested



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### Chinook Salmon Gate Monitoring Started November 1

The Suisun Resource Conservation District started gate monitoring for the Fall run of Chinook Salmon, starting November 1, 2015 through January 31, 2016.

During this restriction period, intake gates along the designated sloughs can only be opened to 25% capacity. SRCD staff will be inspecting all intake diversions along these areas at various times during the winter months. Below is a conversion table for varying sizes of intake gates.

<u>Diameter of Pipe</u>	<u>25% Open</u>
12 inches	3 inches
18 inches	4 inches
24 inches	6 inches
30 inches	7 inches
36 inches	9 inches
48 inches	12 inches

Should an intake be found out of compliance, SRCD is required to report to the appropriate agencies and the landowner will be contacted and asked to reduce their intake immediately.

## Save the Date!

**December 6th, 2016**  
**2:00 PM**

**Mandatory** meeting for all Suisun Marsh Duck Clubs that filed a Statement of Diversion and Use claiming water rights for your property's diversions

Rush Ranch Education Center  
3521 Grizzly Island Rd.  
Suisun CA 94585

A Presentation of the Suisun Marsh Alternative Compliance Plan and an Opportunity for Landowners to Opt-in to the Plan

**SEE PAGE 4 INSIDE**  
**FOR DETAILS**