MESSAGE FROM THE STATE CHAIRMAN
Eric Rudgers

Greetings!

It is convention time – a time for DU volunteers and members to come together and celebrate our many accomplishments and to hear from DU National. The DU 73rd National Convention will be held Texas style on May 26-30 at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. Registration check-in begins Wednesday, May 26. Fishing and tours are plentiful on Wednesday and Thursday followed by dinner with your friends and a Thursday evening Welcome to Texas Party. Friday and Saturday are packed full of leadership meetings, workshops, flyway parties, and DU Sporting EXPO. Saturday nights annual convention reception and banquet is one not to be missed.

Convention registration fee includes entrance into the DU Sporting EXPO. Information and schedules are available on the DU National website at convention.ducks.org.

California state pins are now available and can be ordered in time for trading at the National Convention (see order form at the end of this newsletter).

Thank you for your work in making DU the world's leader in wetland conservation. If you have any feedback or thoughts to share, please contact me at drudgers@frontiernet.net. Thank you again for your DU membership and all you do for the ducks.
Ducks Unlimited Welcomes New White House Hunting Heritage Conservation Council

Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the reformation of a White House panel devoted to hunting and fishing traditions today. In announcing the renamed and expanded White House Hunting Heritage Conservation Council—formerly the White House Sportsmen's Conservation Council—secretaries Salazar and Vilsack renewed the call to protect and expand America's proud sporting traditions.

The following statement from Ducks Unlimited Director of Public Policy Barton James is in reaction to the announcement:

"Keeping the traditions of waterfowling alive into the next generations of sportsmen is a top priority for Ducks Unlimited. This advisory board will help ensure that public policies are enacted that promote waterfowl and wildlife habitat conservation in all aspects of government, and continue to promote the positive economic benefit that hunters have on the U.S. economy. We have been happy to serve on the council in the past, and thank the administration for the invitation to participate again.

"Waterfowl play an especially important role, as their migratory patterns make it necessary to encourage conservation across all of North America. The conservation decisions made in places like New York and North Dakota can affect the overall experience for hunters in the Chesapeake Bay, on the Louisiana Coast and in the Central Valley of California.

"Ducks Unlimited is pleased that this administration is working with sportsmen to help guide the wise investment of hunter dollars to ensure that future generations can participate in these traditions, and we look forward to having an active role."
UPCOMING EVENTS – CHECK THEM OUT

Tracy Dinner – April 23

Tracy is located in San Joaquin County, about 60 miles east of San Francisco. Tracy is a city filled with history of railroads and agriculture. This year’s dinner will be Friday, April 23 at the Tracy Community Center, 950 East Street in Tracy. Doors open at 5:30 pm, dinner at 7:15 pm, Auction and Raffle start at 7:45 pm. Ticket prices are $50 for single, $35 for youth - includes one gift, dinner and DU membership. $300 for Sponsor - includes two dinner tickets, $100 worth of raffle tickets and one DU Sponsor membership. $450 for reserved table - includes eight dinner tickets, reserved seating for eight, $100 worth of raffle tickets, eight door gifts, reserved table drawing and wine on table. For more information, contact Gian Marcucci at 209 640-073.

Southern Alameda County Banquet – April 24

Alameda is an Island City on San Francisco Bay and is Spanish for "grove of poplar trees" or "tree-lined avenue". Alameda is known for it’s Victorian homes and is also home to the official offices and training facility of the Oakland Raiders Football Team.

The Southern Alameda County Dinner will be held Saturday, April 24 at the San Lorenzo Community Center. Doors open at 5:00 pm; Dinner is at 6:30 pm. There will be a live and silent auction, raffle, and games. Ticket prices are $65 for single, $100 for couple, $40 for Greenwing, $300 for single sponsor, and $330 for sponsor couple. Sponsor package includes $100 worth of general raffle tickets plus one chance at a Sponsor only gun raffle and gift. For additional information or tickets, contact Dan Timmons at 510 264-9353 or Ashley Custodio at 650 678-7328.

Crescent City Dinner – April 24

Crescent City is located on Hwy 101 on the beautiful Northern California coast about 20 miles south of the Oregon border. The area offers an abundance of outdoor recreational activities utilizing the proximity of the Pacific Ocean, the Smith River and Klamath River, Redwood National and State Parks, and the Smith River National Recreation Area.

The Crescent City Dinner will be held Saturday, April 24, 5:30 pm at the Lucky Seven Casino in Smith River. Dinner tickets are $50 for single, $40 for Greenwing. For tickets or information contact Sara Allard at 707 465-3910.

Corning’s 29th Annual Banquet – April 30

Corning is known as the Olive City and home to the Lindsay Olive Company and Bell Carter Olive Company. Situated directly on Interstate 5, two hours north of the State Capitol Sacramento, Corning is an ideal jumping-off point for “Upstate California” travelers.

The Corning Dinner will be held at the Rolling Hills Casino on April 30th. The doors open at 5:30 pm with dinner being served at 6:45 and the auction starting at 8:30. Tickets are available at $100 for couples, $65 for single and $35 for Greenwings. There is also a $1000 price for a Corporate table. For more information or tickets, contact Teal at 530 384-1568.
Fort Bragg Dinner – April 30

Fort Bragg is a beautiful city located in coastal Mendocino County, along State Route 1, the major north-south highway along the Pacific Coast. The harbor bustles with activity from fishermen bringing in their daily haul for the local restaurants and charter boats that offer fishing and whale watching adventures. Spectacular ocean views and charming Victorian Villages dot the scenic Mendocino Coastline of Northern California.

The Fort Bragg Dinner will be held at Silver’s at the Wharf, Noyo Harbor in Fort Bragg. Register online at www.ca.ducks.com. For information, contact Gary Roussan at 707 459-6433 or groussan@yahoo.com.

Wild Game Preparation and Cooking Demonstration at Viansa Winery – May 1

Join Culinary Chef Lisa Freeman for this very special and unique DU event on Saturday, May 1 from 11 am to 2 pm at the Viansa Winery in Sonoma. Come learn to prepare and cook wild game and sample some of the dishes. Chef Lisa and Charlotte Boblitt from Viansa Winery will pair Viansa’s wines with the dishes Chef Lisa prepares. This event allows for a wonderful opportunity to sample Viansa Winery’s signature wines, and tour the winery and wetland preserve.

Tickets are $25 per adult. Ticket includes sampling of the prepared wild game, salad, wine tasting, and tour of the winery and wetland preserve. For more information or tickets, phone Ann Bakey at (408) 737-7410.

Verdugo Hills Dinner – May 6

The Verdugo Mountains are a small mountain range located just south of the western San Gabriel Mountains in Los Angeles County, Southern California. The range is commonly known simply as the Verdugos. It is also sometimes referred to as the Verdugo Hills. The hills are well known to hikers, mountain bike riders and off road sports enthusiasts.

The Verdugo Hills Dinner will be held May 6 at the Brookside Golf Course. For more information, contact John Wooley at 831-601-1275.

Willits Dinner – May 8

Willits is a small rural community located on U.S. Highway 101 approximately 140 miles north of San Francisco. It is a town rich in history with beautiful scenery, from rolling hills to picturesque ranches dotting the landscape. Willits is at the center of Mendocino County and its redwood forests, calling itself the “Heart of Mendocino County and Gateway to the Redwoods”.

The Willits Dinner will be held Saturday, May 8 at the Winnemucca Convention Center. For tickets or information, contact Gary Roussan at 707 459-6433 or groussan@yahoo.com.
Placerville Dinner – May 13

Placerville is a very charming California "gold rush" town named after the placer gold deposits found in it's river beds and hills in the late 1840's. The City of Placerville is centrally located between Sacramento, the State capitol, and South Lake Tahoe.

The Placerville Dinner will be held Thursday, May 13 at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds located at 100 Placerville Drive, Placerville. Doors open at 5:30 pm. For information or tickets, contact Todd Reynolds at 530 676-1288.

Red Bluff Waterfowl Hunter Party – May 13

Centrally located on the Sacramento River in Northern California, Red Bluff is just 120 miles north of Sacramento on I-5, 190 miles west of Reno/Tahoe, and 155 miles south of the Oregon border. Red Bluff not only serves as the gateway to Lassen Volcanic National Park but, with its spectacular calendar of major events and outdoor recreation at its finest, Red Bluff and "Tehama Country" promises a great visit.

The Red Bluff Waterfowl Hunter Party will be held Thursday, May 13 at the Tehama District Fairgrounds in Red Bluff. For tickets or more information, contact Pat Swithenbank at 530 529-4672 or swithy@sbcglobal.net.

Santa Barbara Dinner – May 14

Santa Barbara is sometimes referred to as the American Riviera. Her beautiful beaches, majestic mountains and colorful culture make Santa Barbara a premier resort destination. Santa Barbara is a 2 hour drive north of Los Angeles.

The Santa Barbara Dinner will be held at the Carriage and Western Arts Museum on Friday, May 14. For information and tickets, phone Jean-Paul Demeure at 805 698-8022.

South San Luis Obispo Dinner – May 15

San Luis Obispo is known for it’s emerald green vineyards, turquoise blue ocean, amber fields of grain, and spectacular ruby red grapes. San Luis Obispo is midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The South SLO County Dinner in Arroyo Grande will be held Saturday, May 15 at the South County Regional Center. For information and tickets, contact Jim Wilimek at 805 235-4002.
Ripon Dinner – May 15

Ripon is located along the Stanislaus River, where river rafting and fishing are popular pastimes. It boasts a small-town atmosphere with an abundance of parks and wide, tree-shaded streets. Ripon's economy is largely agriculture based, known especially for its high almond production.

This year’s dinner will be held Saturday, May 15 at the Ripon Community Center. Tickets are $60 single, $35 Greenwing, $100 couple, $300 sponsor, $800 reserved table, and $1200 gun table. For more information and tickets, contact Tony Pinheiro at 209 605-4172.

Wetlanders Dinner – May 20

The Wetlanders event will be held May 20 at DU’s Western Regional Office, 3074 Gold Canal Drive, Rancho Cordova. Doors open at 6 pm. They are serving a tri-tip dinner catered by Silver Sage Catering. There will also be an open bar, live music by Blues Unlimited, games, merchandise and fun for the whole family. Wear your favorite camo (not just a hat) and receive $20 in raffle tickets at the door. For tickets or information, contact Jeff McCreary at 916 851-5360 or jmccreary@ducks.org.

East County El Cajon Dinner – May 21

El Cajon is a growing Southern California community within San Diego County located just 15 minutes east of San Diego on Interstate-8. Contrary to popular belief El Cajón is Spanish for "The Drawer" and not "The Box", relating to it being surrounded by mountains in a nestled valley. Another interesting fact is Downtown El Cajon is 27 minutes from the Tijuana, Mexico Border Crossing.

The East County El Cajon Dinner will be held Friday, May 21 at the Singing Hills Golf Club. For information and tickets, contact Vic Burmudes at 619 448-1800.

Attend a local event in your area and take part in the fun while supporting the mission of Ducks Unlimited!

Traveling? Add to your business trip or vacation fun by attending a DU event! You can find an event on the Ducks Unlimited Website at Ducks.Org. Simply select the state and town you will be visiting!

If you are interested in putting on a California Ducks Unlimited fundraising event in your town, contact Tony Pinheiro, California State Recruitment Chairman, at 209 551-1930 or tonyfpin@hotmail.com.
CHAPTER SPOTLIGHTS

Morgan Hill Dinner – February 5  
By Larry Lundberg, Committee Chairman

Committee members from the Morgan Hill Chapter put on a spectacular banquet and fund raiser on Friday, February 5. An outstanding meal was prepared and served by Golden Harvest Catering. We want to extend our sincere thanks for the special pricing to aid in our fund raising effort. A special thanks also goes to Dennis Baker and E & J Gallo Wine for allowing us to enjoy their Redwood Creek Wine.

The Carpenters joined us again this year! In fact, Amy Carpenter (pictured second from left) flew all the way from Japan where she is attending college to be with her family at the DU dinner.

The Carpenter party – left to right are Katherine Hunter, Amy Carpenter, Scott Carpenter, Lisa Sage, Matt Rueckheim, and Debbie Novak.

Misty Liddle and her children (Audrey, Alicia, Christina, and Andrew) smiled for the camera. Misty said that she and her husband hunt with their children and do what they can to instill an appreciation for the outdoors.

We had a number of Greenwings in attendance and every one of them went home with a gift and participated in a special gun raffle.
Our dice game gave attendees a chance to win a special prize. All they had to do was roll a 7! Any other number allowed attendees to win raffle tickets in varying amounts depending upon the number that came up on the dice. Everyone who played won at least $20 worth of raffle tickets!

Attendees enjoyed the Davey Duck Raffle. Those little ducks floating around in the water all had a number code on the bottom. Raffle tickets were purchased for $20 a duck which gave attendees a chance to win a Mossberg Silver Reserve Over/Under 12 gauge shotgun.

Sacramento Valley Chapter Dinner – February 13
By Jan Young, District Chairman, El Dorado, Placer and West Sacramento Counties

On February 13, the Sacramento Valley Chapter hosted a Valentine’s Crab Feed at the Scottish Rite Temple in Sacramento. The event had a huge turnout with over 280 people in attendance. Female attendees were treated with a single rose as they walked in the door and the men with a traditional Ducks Unlimited hat. The food was provided by a local high school baseball team, with their coach acting as chef. They donated their time by waiting tables and helping in the kitchen. The Crab Feed was fabulous with a first course of Caesar salad and homemade clam chowder, followed by fresh crab and prawns, along with bread.

Left to right are Liza Morris (committee member), Stacy Griffith (attendee), and Dave Morris (committee member).

Left to right are committee members Johnny Shelman and Sam Kouri working the gun table.
Pictured here are happy attendees from the Watson Table enjoying their meal. From their thumbs up, it looks as though they are having a wonderful time and enjoying themselves.

Michael David Winery of Lodi donated all the wine for each table. They also had a wine tasting table set up in the room for attendees to sample their wines.

We used the DU California Limited Edition Basket for our live auction. One was a Hunters Themed Basket and the second was a Ladies Themed Basket full of incredible merchandise. Both were used in the live auction. We also had a great Wheel Barrow raffle with wonderful merchandise including alcohol, gift baskets, DU items, candles, lotions, and tools. Both the Silent Auction and the Live Auction were a great success.

The Dinner Chairman, Colby Craig, has put on many successful events thus far in the Sacramento Valley. His attention to detail always makes for really fun events. All the extra touches and organization are something to be proud of Colby! Thank you!

The Crab Feed netted around $20,000 for the ducks, so all in all, it was a successful event. Donations were abundant compared to previous years. With Donations for trips, duck calls, trailers, wine, and many more.

On behalf of the Sacramento Valley Chapter Committee, I would like to say Thank You to all of our patrons who attended this year’s event – for your attendance, membership or sponsorship, and for your charitable contributions to help make our event successful. I also want to say Thank You to the Sacramento Valley Committee Volunteers for their incredible work; all worked hard to gather donations for the raffle and auctions. We could not have put on the dinner without them! The Sacramento Valley Valentine’s Crab Feed is a great addition to the area. The committee is already looking forward to next year!
Atwater Dinner – February 20
By Wayne Austin, Committee Chairman

The Atwater Annual Dinner is a family event that the community looks forward to year after year for fun, prizes, auction, and good food. This year was no different! A delicious rib and chicken buffet was served to 171 attendees. Our attendance was up over 100% from last year. We also doubled our revenue and netted $13,000 plus for the ducks.

We were excited to have 41 Greenwings in attendance and they all had lots to do before the dinner and auction started – things like decoy painting, air rifle shooting, an inflatable bounce house and much more. Greenwings even had their own raffle game (pluck the duck) where they could win prizes! The Atwater Chapter believes that recruiting the next generation is critical to the future of the resource and our hunting heritage.
Milpitas Sportsmen Dinner - March 18
By Steve Rodgers, Dinner Chairman

The Milpitas Chapter held their 26th Annual DU Sportsmen Dinner on March 18. We always start our festivities with the pledge of allegiance and this year was no exception.

Over the past 26 years the Milpitas Chapter has raised more than 1 million dollars for DU. The Milpitas Chapter was honored in 2005, 2007 and 2008 to be one of the top 100 DU Chapters in the nation. Over the years we have given away more than 7500 prints, 300 decoys, 2,000 pieces of DU merchandise, 4 jeeps, 4 Viking Barbeques, 2 Honda Quads, 2 Hondas and a Harley Davison Motorcycle, 1,500 shotguns and rifles, served 9,500 steaks, 1,200 gallons of beans, 1,300 loaves of garlic bread, 1,400 pounds of calamari, 2,900 bottles of wine, and over 4,000 pounds of wild boar sausage.

I’m proud of the dinner our committee traditionally serves. Again this year, we started with sausage, calamari, and scampi hors d’oeuvres, and then follow this with filet mignon and quail, mushrooms, garlic bread, beans, salad, and burnt almond cake.

340 people were in attendance, including 50 Sponsors and 8 Greenwings. All of our Greenwings left with a Daisy BB Gun!

All of our Sponsors left with a gift. Pictured below is the Sponsor table. Each sponsor’s name was drawn randomly throughout the evening and each had the opportunity to pick one item from the Sponsor table.
BIG WATER DUCK CLUB WETLAND ENHANCEMENT MEANS BIG REWARDS FOR CENTRAL VALLEY WETLANDS
By Chris Hildebrandt, Regional Biologist, South Pacific Flyway/Western Region

The Wetlands of California’s Central Valley provide some of the most critical wintering waterfowl habitat in the Pacific Flyway. As important as the Central Valley is to ducks, it is equally important to the World’s food supply, as this region produces the majority of the vegetables for the planet. Ducks Unlimited understands the need for agriculture in the Central Valley, and has worked to develop water friendly wetland projects to do our part in conserving the water in the Central Valley.

Ducks Unlimited recently completed wetland restoration and enhancement work on the Big Water Duck Club located in Merced County in the heart of the Central Valley. With funding help from the California Wildlife Conservation Board, Big Water Duck Club, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the San Luis Canal Company, this Ducks Unlimited project enhanced over 400 acres of critically important wetland habitat. The 817-acre Big Water Duck Club comprises 400 acres of managed seasonal wetlands and associated uplands, and an 84-acre semi-permanent wetland that is also utilized as brood-rearing habitat. These habitats are utilized by a diverse array of local and migratory waterfowl including green-winged teal, pintail, gadwall, mallard, and ring-necked ducks.

The partners enhanced 400 acres of managed wetlands by constructing or improving water conveyance swales, removing unnecessary levees to increase wetland size, improving existing levees, and installing new water control structures to improve wetland habitat conditions and increase water use efficiency on the Big Water Duck Club. This project will allow managers to better utilize the amount of available water through improved water conveyance facilities, thus increasing the quality and quantity of available wetland habitat.

The Central Valley supports up to 60% of the waterfowl wintering in the Pacific Flyway, yet has lost more than 95% of the original wetlands. Thus, it is of critical importance to make these remaining habitats as productive as possible while conserving our precious water resources. This project will allow for optimal water management capabilities, thus increasing moist soil management options and providing more waterfowl food production opportunities.

With these water conveyance enhancements and subsequent increases in available high quality food sources, the far reaching impacts of local wetland enhancement projects such as these can be witnessed as waterfowl are sent back to their northern breeding grounds in excellent condition, preparing them for subsequent breeding success. In addition, the far reaching impact of Ducks Unlimited with support from you is witnessed through projects such as these that make a direct improvement to the wintering habitat in California’s Central Valley. As showcased through their generous commitment, several members of the Big Water Duck Club are Life Sponsors who have pledged their support to other areas such as the breeding grounds, aiding in fulfilling our critically important mission of habitat conservation.

Following the dedication, members and guests enjoyed a delicious meal prepared and served by club members.
EDITORS NOTE

Whether you are a longtime DU supporter, or a first time member, the News from the Nest is YOUR California DU newsletter. For any inspiring writers and photographers, what makes the News from the Nest truly ours are stories and photos by California DU members. Please take the time and send me a story or photos of your events, members, conservation projects, Greenwing activities, trips, or whatever you feel is important to share.

It is my goal to provide articles relating to national and local conservation news, events, outdoor adventures, hunting, regulations, and much more. With your help, we can make News from the Nest a publication that we all look forward to reading.

Rich Dengler, California Ducks Unlimited Newsletter Editor

rich.dengler@sbcglobal.net
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