



Summer 2010

Yolo Natural Heritage Program Newsletter

Upcoming Events

- **August 18-22, 2010** The Yolo County Fair
- **Sept 9, 2010** Putah Creek Council "CreekSpeak"
- **Sept 12, 2010** Yolo Land Trust Celebration: "A Day in the Country"

Update: Yolo Natural Heritage Program

Draft HCP/NCCP Plan

Early drafts of the HCP/NCCP document are available on the website homepage at <http://www.yoloconservationplan.org>. A public draft of the HCP/NCCP document is expected in December of this year. Please visit our website to access early versions of chapters and discrete sections of the plan document. We invite your early comments and input.

Riparian Conservation Strategy Workshops

From October 2009 through May 2010, the YNHP held a series of workshops to develop recommendations for the riparian conservation strategy. We want to thank everyone who participated. The

workshops produced a "straw proposal" that is currently the basis for the proposed YNHP riparian strategy. Summaries of the workshops and the "Straw Proposal" are posted on the new "[Riparian Portal](#)" on the YNHP website. A set of 14 maps displaying detailed



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continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

News	2
Community Events	4
Links to Other Organizations and Events	5
About the Yolo Natural Heritage Program	5

Featured Yolo County Landscape

Hungry Hollow Watershed

The Hungry Hollow Watershed is a small agricultural region in central Yolo County located north of Cache Creek, South of Oat Creek, bounded on the west by the ridgeline of the Capay Hills, and on the east by the Dunnigan Hills. This sub-watershed of the Lower Cache Creek Watershed consists of approximately 35,000 acres, much of which is prime agricultural land. Agricultural production in the basin includes tree fruit and nut crops, wine grapes, vegetable crops for fresh markets as well as for processing,

grains, and other field crops. The upper elevations are primarily used as rangeland for grazing livestock. Intermittent streams on the eastern side of the Capay Hills feed the watershed during the rainy season, along with the Hungry Hollow Canal and the West

Hills feed the watershed during the rainy season, along with the Hungry Hollow Canal and the West



Sunflowers and safflowers along County Rd 85 near County Rd 16. Photo by Stewart Murray.

continued on page 3

News

Tracking the Yellow-billed Magpie: Yolo County Participation Strong

Most of us can agree that the Yellow-billed Magpie is one of California's most striking and popular native birds, but did you know that the species is only found in California? Populations are concentrated in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys and adjacent low foothills. The Yellow-billed Magpie, named the 2009 Bird of the Year in an online poll conducted by Audubon California, is at risk due to habitat loss,



Yellow-billed Magpies roosting near Bradley in Monterey County, CA.. Photo by Rich Hansen.

pesticide use, and West Nile Virus. This gregarious bird will benefit from conservation provided in the Yolo Natural Heritage Program.

In a recent survey sponsored by Audubon California, 230 volunteers working in 22 counties documented

3,607 magpies. Yolo County ranked second in number of sightings (behind Sacramento and nearly tied with San Luis Obispo). This year's survey was structured in the model of "citizen science", drawing in serious birders as well as individuals new to birding in an effort to create interest and involvement in conservation efforts to improve habitat conditions for this species.

Data from this year's survey will be combined with data collected in 2009 and planned for 2011 to analyze the distribution and abundance of this species. According to Andrea Jones, Important Bird Areas Director at Audubon California, although it is too early to draw scientific conclusions about the trajectory for the Yellow-billed Magpie population in California, anecdotal evidence from participants indicates that the species is rebounding from its dramatic decline in numbers in 2004-2005, due to its susceptibility to the West Nile Virus.

Audubon California is developing plans to conduct similar surveys for other "backyard birds" using the citizen science model, possibly the California quail or the Burrowing Owl, (another species of concern for the YNHP).

For the full report on the Audubon California Yellow-billed Magpie Survey, follow this link: http://ca.audubon.org/pdf/Report_Magpie_survey10_final.pdf

YNHP Update *continued from page 1*

riparian and wetland vegetation types may also be displayed (and downloaded) at this site.

Agricultural Conservation Strategy

Yolo County's dynamic agricultural landscape is home to many common and special status species. The YNHP proposes to include an agricultural conservation strategy that will address the needs of farmers and ranchers in Yolo County while providing conservation benefits for the species that use these important lands. The agricultural conservation strategy will contribute to the preservation of agricultural land in Yolo County

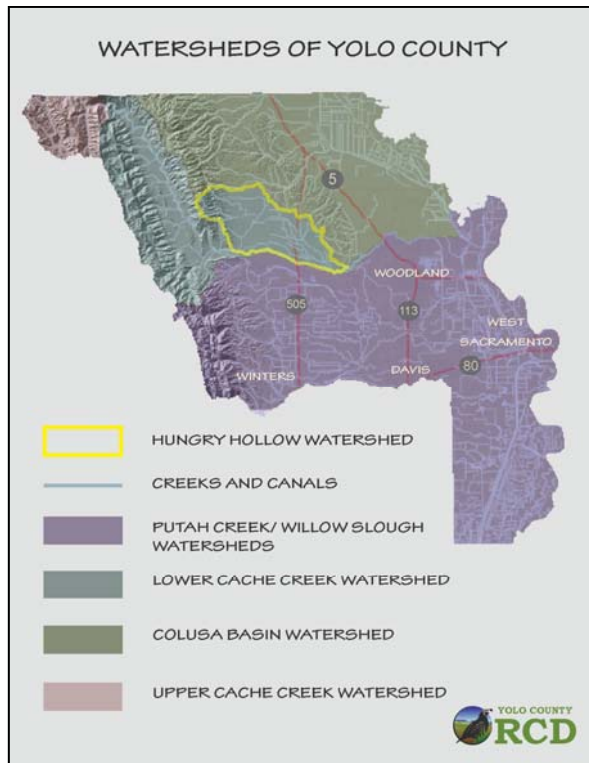
and may serve as a model for other communities that want to include agriculture in their long range land use goals.

The YNHP Agriculture-Habitat Interface Working group, which includes members of Yolo County's agriculture community, is assisting in the development of the agricultural conservation strategy. Details on the draft strategy, along with a report "Summary of Issues Related to Agriculture," are available on the new "[Agriculture Conservation Strategy Portal](#)" on the YNHP website.

Featured Yolo Landscape *continued from page 1*

Adams Canal, which carries water from Cache Creek for summer irrigation.

The Hungry Hollow Watershed Stakeholders Group (HHW Stakeholders Group) was formed in 2007, with the



assistance of the Yolo County Resource Conservation District, with the mission of identifying a set of resource issues and associated actions that are important to landowners in the area. This approach grew out of programs initiated in the California Department of Conservation in the 1990s, which emphasized incorporating local information and expertise into watershed planning to achieve wise stewardship practices on the land and to promote a sustainable and productive agricultural economy. The Willow Slough Watershed Integrated Resources Management Plan (1996) and the Capay Valley Watershed Stewardship Plan (2003) were the results of similar efforts in Yolo County.

Since its inception, about 20 landowners in the region, representing a substantial percentage of the agricultural land in the area, have participated in the HHW Stakeholders Group meetings, which have taken place at Jim Durst's Farm in Esparto. Heather Nichols-Crowell, Yolo RCD Watershed Coordinator, has served as the facilitator for the group's meetings, providing guidance and technical support, and recording the concerns,

priorities, and recommendations emerging from their discussions. These discussions have resulted in the "Hungry Hollow Watershed Stewardship Draft Plan," which is expected to be ready for release in the Fall. It will be available on the [Yolo RCD website](#).

Broad issues identified include addressing concerns about flood waters carrying high sediment loads during storm events; enhancement of wildlife corridors; and preserving and sustaining the agricultural economy, community, and landscape for future generations. The group has agreed upon the following set of overarching goals aimed at addressing these issues:

- Manage watershed lands to minimize unnatural rates of erosion and sedimentation
- Maintain and improve water quality for all water users.
- Maintain and improve watershed habitats to support a diversity of native plants and animals.
- Promote land management practices that support a sustainable and productive agricultural economy.

In addition to undertaking voluntary actions to meet the objectives of these goals, the HHW Stakeholders Group is developing a short-term action plan for accomplishing these goals. Proposed projects include a watershed assessment to implement creek and channel bank stabilization projects and seeking support for flood mitigation, wildlife corridor enhancement, and invasive species management. A trash removal and stream bank stabilization project



View of Capay Hills from Hungry Hollow. Photo by Stewart Murray.

continued on page 5

Community Events

Yolo County Fair

Dates: August 18—22, 2010

Location: Yolo County Fairgrounds, 1125 East Street, Woodland.

Stop by the YNHP Exhibit!

For more information: visit <http://www.yolocountyfair.com>.

Yolo Basin Foundation

Gaggle of Gatherings—Batty for Bats!

Date/Time: Friday, August 20, 2010; 6:00 p.m.

Location: Yolo Wildlife Bypass Area

Be part of an intimate bat experience. You'll learn about their natural history and biology and get an up-close look at live bats. As the sun sets, your private party will enjoy fine wines and hors d'oeuvres in the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area as you await the spectacular fly-out of hundreds of thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats.

For more information: visit <http://www.yolobasin.org>.

Davis Farm to School Connection The Village Feast

Date/Time: Saturday, August 28, 12:00 noon

Location: Central Park, Davis

Celebrate our local farmers; feast under the sycamore trees, enjoy the silent auction of regional foods, wine, and art.

For more information: Visit <http://www.davisfarmtoschool.org>.

Yolo Land Trust—"A Day in the Country"

Date/Time: Sunday, September 12, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Location: The Elkhorn Basin Ranch, County Road 117

The Yolo Land Trust will celebrate the diverse and bountiful farmland of Yolo County at their annual fundraiser, "A Day in the Country." This year's event will be held at the beautiful Elkhorn Basin Ranch, between the Yolo Bypass and the Sacramento River.

For more information: Visit <http://www.yololandtrust.org>

Davis Farmers Market

Date/Time: Wednesdays 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. [March 17—October 27, 2010]; Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. [all year]

Location: Central Park, 3rd & C Streets, Davis

Offerings include vegetables and fruit, the food vendors. For the kids, there are pony rides, bouncing bungalows, face-painting, and balloon art by Dilly Dally the Clown.

For information: visit <http://www.davisfarmersmarket.org>

Winters Farmers Market

NEW Day/Time: Thursdays from 5:00 p.m. until dark.

Location: Rotary Park, (Railroad Avenue at Main Street) in downtown Winters

The Winters Farmers Market is now held on Thursdays from 5:00 p.m. until dark through the end of October. Features include locally grown fruit and vegetables, fresh cut flowers, baked goods, locally prepared foods, and handmade arts and crafts, as well as live music.

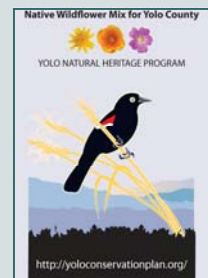
For information: visit <http://www.wintersfarmersmarket.org>

The Yolo County Fair! August 18—22, 2010 at the Yolo County Fairgrounds



Burrowing Owl.
Photo by Charles
Tyson.

*Stop by and visit our exhibit!
Pick up posters with scenes
of landscape and wildlife in
Yolo County, as well as
packets of seeds for native
wildflowers!*



The YNHP will have an informational exhibit at the Yolo County Fair that will enable interested citizens to learn more about our program goals and activities and about habitat and wildlife species in Yolo County. Information about the Yolo County Fair can be found at <http://www.yolocountyfair.com>.

Links to Other Organizations and Events

Bay Delta Conservation Plan
<http://baydeltaconservationplan.com>

Cache Creek Conservancy
<http://www.cachecreek.org>

California Dept. of Fish & Game
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon>

California Waterfowl Association
www.calwaterfowl.org

Capay Valley Vision
<http://www.capayvalleyvision.org>

John Muir Institute for the Environment
<http://johnmuir.ucdavis.edu>

Putah Creek Council
<http://www.putahcreekcouncil.org>

Tuleyome, Inc.
<http://www.tuleyome.org>

Yolo Audubon Society
<http://www.yoloaudubon.org>

Yolo Basin Foundation
<http://www.yolobasin.org>

Yolo County Flood Control & Water
 Conservation District
<http://www.ycfewcd.org>

Yolo County Resource Conservation
 District <http://www.yolorcd.org>

Yolo County Visitors' Bureau
<http://www.yolocvb.org>

Yolo Land Trust
<http://www.yololandtrust.org>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/hcp.htm>

Featured Yolo County Landscape *continued from page 3*

on one of the creeks feeding the watershed is already underway.

In addition to providing a forum for landowners to articulate and communicate their concerns and priorities, the HHW Stakeholders Group creates a context for gathering information (e.g. soil and geomorphological maps), applying for funding and technical assistance for individual restoration projects, navigating the permitting process, and for collaborating with other groups with similar or related goals for achieving wise stewardship of the land. Partners in these efforts include the YNHP, the Yolo Land Trust, the Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Cache Creek Conservancy, the Cache Creek Watershed Forum, the Audubon Landowners Stewardship Program, the Center for Land-Based Learning, and the County of Yolo.

The Hungry Hollow Watershed Stewardship Plan is based on a vision for the future of "a healthy Hungry Hollow watershed locally managed to maintain a balance between human economic activities and enhancing conservation of natural resources," to be achieved "through a collaborative and voluntary community process."

About the Yolo Natural Heritage Program

The Yolo Natural Heritage Program (YNHP) is tasked with preparing a county-wide Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) for Yolo County. The YNHP plan will develop strategies to conserve the natural open space and agricultural landscapes that provide habitat for many special status and at-risk species found within the natural communities in Yolo County. It will also describe measures to allow appropriate permits for urban growth and public infrastructure projects, while preserving Yolo County's rich agricultural heritage.

YOLO NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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