



End of Year Newsletter

Winter 2017

Dear Friends,

Sitting in my home office watching crossbills, nuthatches, chickadees, thrushes, ravens, various raptors, and woodpeckers flit among the mixed woodlands outside, I'm forever grateful for the boons granted us.

I'm one of the many who, during difficult times, takes comfort from the endlessly complicated simplicities of nature – nature that's difficult to understand and nurture properly, but easy to love and fight for. No doubt it can be a wearying, uphill battle, as the last year's depraved attacks upon our democracy and environmental protections have illustrated.

But we at ROEP aren't done, quitting or tired, not by a long shot. In fact, we are energized, because there's hope and joy to be had in overcoming enormous obstacles. With every environmental law undermined, with every fresh attack on science, we grow more determined. In truth, we are

stronger now in wisdom and understanding than we were a year ago. Our continuing goal is to use that strength effectively, and to bolster determination at every opportunity. This is our planet.

We carry on in large and small ways. **Today I'll highlight just part of our work in 2017 and look ahead to 2018. It's been an excellent year for our project, thanks to your support in every way, from volunteering to offering advice and financial support.** In the new year, as requested through a member poll, we'll offer quarterly updates with in-depth program news.

It's been almost 6 years since our founding, with lots of otters under the bridge, the pier, the willows, the boathouse, the clouds, and occasionally almost underfoot. I can report with thanks and gladness that our community science project has grown from a tiny bundle of possibilities to a thriving, here-to-stay organization.

We're still small, lean and hungry, a little fierce, extremely adaptable and a lot of fun – just like an otter.

With your continued enthusiastic support, we'll continue our research and our mission to educate and engage the community in working toward conservation of our shared watersheds. Now and onward!

For the otters, for the waters,



Megan Isadore, Executive Director

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Our Board began 2017 with two things in mind. One, we have established that otters are back, they're doing reasonably well, and are expanding their range south and westward.

Now our challenge is to expand our reach, our education and research programs to keep up with the otters.

Our Mission ...

is to engage the public in supporting conservation and restoration by linking river otter recovery to the health of our watersheds through education, research, and community science.

Our Vision ...

is to inspire personal connections and motivate meaningful actions to preserve our shared natural landscapes for future generations.

To that end, we revisited our mission statement and revised our vision statement, the better to express our determination **to turn research and education into action, and to reach every individual we can to truly participate in responsibility for caretaking our beautiful planet.**



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The Year in Review: Highlights



Celebrating the Sentinels of the Watershed

In May we hosted our second large event, a **5th Anniversary celebration** at the Berkeley Botanical Gardens. We were thrilled to invite Dr. Nicole Duplaix, IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group Chairperson as an honored speaker, not to mention our own local heroes, Dr. Sarah Allen and Ranger Mia Monroe from the National Park Service. In difficult political times, we look to our strongest, most intelligent and creative leaders to bolster our determination to continue to preserve watersheds and wetlands for all living beings.



Terence Carroll, Megan Isadore, Nicole Duplaix, Mia Monroe, Bob De Leo

New Partners, New Endeavors

2017 brought us a **long-planned project, a prey species analysis study. We're investigating both Drakes Bay and Tomales Bay prey species during 2017 and 2018**, under the able guidance of Stori Oates, our Board Science Lead. In addition to Stori, our enthusiastic team is composed of interns present and past, four Marin Academy students, several volunteers and four of our own Board members. We're all excited about this project, and it's a terrific way to pass knowledge, experience and skills among generations.



© Carlos Porrata

The need for research on the diet of river otter populations is important to their conservation, as river otters are top carnivores, and diet has direct implications for protecting other aquatic resources. As a potential keystone species in the San Francisco Bay Area aquatic habitat, our study will provide a better understanding of the role river otters might play in the Tomales Bay and Drakes Bay food webs. An understanding of river otter seasonal diets will aid in management of species of local concern, including threatened or endangered species such as Steelhead and Coho Salmon, by providing data on whether, when, and in what proportion otters take such prey, and **will provide a baseline for continuing work to measure the effects of climate change and to understand complex ecological interactions in our watersheds.**

This project is made possible with partial funding through the Sacramento Zoo Conservation Fund and the Pt. Reyes National Seashore Association.

Our Volunteers

I've been following Dan Rather's postings from his trip across America in the past year, and have been both elated and devastated by his observations, but always educated and grateful for his attention and wisdom. A recent post resonated deeply, since we depend upon our volunteers for many aspects of our project.

“And then there are those I've met in my travels around the United States who give of themselves every day to strengthen their communities. They are teachers, firefighters, and guidance counselors. They volunteer in nursing homes and youth centers. They are part of an America of largely unappreciated service, but most who do this work have no interest in seeking recognition. They understand that each act of assistance is a vote of confidence in our common humanity.” Dan Rather

And they are great-hearted people who are drawn to supporting a clean, healthy planet, our shared watersheds and are in love with their home place.
Volunteers, we salute you!

In the Spotlight ~ Jocelyn Winkler



“My first otter encounter was at Rodeo Beach during our training. Through binoculars, I was able to see the otter fishing and eating—whiskers puffed in all directions. The next time I saw otters I watched them for at least thirty minutes, fishing and playing with each other. Such a blast!!

I've been volunteering with ROEP since June and love seeing the wildlife videos that pop up on the cameras each week--otters, coyotes, bobcats! I'm so happy to have the opportunity to learn from such fascinating and genuine people doing such important work in the field of conservation--thank you ROEP!“



2018 Volunteers (not all are pictured):

Sarah Allen, Jordan Arce, Robyn Aston, Peter Barto, Terence Carroll, Beth Cataldo, Frank Cipriano, Daniel Dietrich, Brenden Collet-Grether, Robert De Leo, Barry Deutsch, Jaymi Heimbuch, Megan Isadore, Sierra Jackovics, Kevi Johnson, Dudley Miller, Brett Miller, Holly Groves, Karen James, Nancy Jean, Mary Ellen King, Julie Litwin, Dave Mackenzie, Brett Miller, Dudley Miller, Macie Millstein, Aurelia Moriyama-Gurish, Christian Naventi, Craig Nikitas, Stori Oates, Maia Perry, Carlos Porrata, Yvonne Provaznik, David Schatzki, Tom Serfass, Emma Sharpe, Jouko van der Kruijssen, Jeffrey Wang, Jocelyn Winkler

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With Appreciation

Thank you for your support. Every donation helps us protect and conserve watersheds for all.

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