

**American River College Students Chose Effie Yeaw Nature Center as Study Site**

Desiree Payton and Steve Howton agree on at least one thing: The five-unit Natural History class they took in the spring semester at American River College is the best science class they've ever taken. They both say that they learned methods of scientific observation and documentation during their term projects at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Furthermore, they discovered, once again, the power of nature to instruct and to relieve some of the stress of modern life.



*Desiree Payton and Steve Howton, American River College students, complete Natural History observations at EYNC.*

As a term project, both students set up observation posts and recorded what they saw and heard. Among concepts they studied are how species depend on their surroundings; how ecosystems, e.g. a swamp ecosystem, a creek ecosystem, a grassland, or an oak woodland ecosystem, differ, what shapes land forms, and how water systems change.

They also studied the habits of individual species of plants and animals, species identification, animal signs like tracks and scat, the role of native plants, the impact of non-native species, and the food chain.

Both students say that when they're in nature they see more now than they ever dreamed was possible. They both plan to continue to learn about nature.

**ARNHA Honored by County Supervisors**

On Tuesday, May 23, in a public ceremony, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, honored the members and supporters of The American River Natural History Association on the occasion of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the organization.

Among the contributions noted are support for environmental education and the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, funding for low-income elementary school age children to attend Effie Yeaw Nature Center field trips and environmental education classroom programs free of charge, our book publishing program, and our goal of "Bringing People to Nature and Nature to People."



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**ARNHA Recruits Members at Walk on the Wildside**

On Saturday, May 20, a team of ARNHA members participated in Walk on the Wildside, the annual environment education event sponsored by Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. ARNHA members meet the public, explained ARNHA and our mission, gave out information about our publications and the Nature Bowl, and recruited new members. They explained that ARNHA members get a pass to Ancil Hoffman Park as part of the benefits of membership.

Joining other regional environmental advocacy and education groups is one way ARNHA "Brings nature to people and people to nature." Such participation helps keep ARNHA visible in the community and gives interested people the information they need to be part of our effort at environmental education.

**Bats, Bats, and More Bats**

For a real natural history spectacle, see the "fly-out" of thousands of bats at the Fazio-Yolo Basin Wildlife Area this summer. They come streaming out from under the Yolo Causeway, heading south, at about dusk in quest of mosquitoes and other insects.

The Yolo Basin Foundation sponsors the presentations by the California Native Bat Conservancy at the California Department of Fish and Game area headquarters, 45211 County Road 32B, Davis. They are followed by tours to view the fly-out at the nearby wildlife area. (Directions: [www.yolobasin.org/](http://www.yolobasin.org/) or tel. 530 758-1018).

**The Schedule**

- 07/12/06 - Presentation-6:45 p.m. Leave for Fly-out-8 p.m.
- 07/26/06 - Presentation-6:45 p.m. Leave for Fly-out-8 p.m.
- 08/09/06 - Presentation-6:30 p.m. Leave for Fly-out-7:40 p.m.
- 08/23/06 - Presentation-6:0 p.m. Leave for Fly-out-7:15 p.m.
- 09/06/06 - Presentation-5:45 p.m. Leave for Fly-out- 7 p.m.

The fly-outs were described by Dharma Webber, director of the Placerville-based Bat Conservancy, who brought a live bat to describe the habits and diversity of the flying mammals at an ARNHA public forum at Effie Yeaw Nature Center March 1. She was joined by Dr. Winston C. Lancaster, assistant professor in the California State University, Sacramento, Biology Department, who described some of the myths about bats. For instance, baseball fans shouldn't call an umpire "blind as a bat" because actually some species have excellent vision. Other myths:

Myth: Bats get tangled in your hair. — This is conceivable but highly unlikely. Bats prefer to avoid people.

Myth: All bats carry rabies. — No. Small number of bats in a population may have rabies but they die quickly (The state Department of Fish and Game says that to avoid the small rabies risk, don't pick up a grounded bat.)

Myth: Bats feed on blood— There are three species of bats that feed on blood but none of these live in the United States. What bats do like are insects — a population of 1,000 will eat 25 pounds of insects per night — the equivalent to about two paper grocery bags full of insects, Lancaster said.

**Bird & Breakfast**

More than 60 participants of all ages enjoyed another successful Bird and Breakfast in fair weather at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center March 11, contributing \$1,870 to ARNHA coffers.. Jamie Washington partnered with retiring Events Coordinator Paula Baldi in organizing the annual fundraiser with the help and donations of ARNHA board members.

Jack Hiehle recruited half a dozen experts from the Sacramento Audubon Society to lead small groups through the nature area where they recorded 46 bird species, a couple of active Anna's Hummingbird and Bushtit nests and the area's mascot, a three-legged deer dubbed "Tripod." Other birds included Black-throated Gray Warbler, Red-breasted Sapsucker, and Violet-green Swallows.

Participants returned to the EYNC Assembly building for breakfast of casseroles, fruit plates, salads and coffee. Nancy Oprsal took charge of the sign-ins. Lee and Roberta Wilner picked up the coffee, once again donated by La Bou. Kitty Oliver, nature center naturalist, showed and discussed two of the center's birds of prey.

