

***MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
BIG BEAR MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2014***

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Murphy called the Open Session to order at 1:00 PM. Those in attendance included Director Lewis, Director Eminger, Director Smith, District Counsel Wayne Lemieux (via Skype), General Manager Scott Heule, Lake Manager Mike Stephenson, and Board Secretary Vicki Sheppard.

**REPORTS**

General Manager, Scott Heule reported that staff is working on another version of the dais remodel using the wooden Staff table as a template. He explained that it will have a considerably larger usable table top area and will still have a short return at the front to hide microphone wires. He asked that the Directors take a look at it before they leave today and let him know their thoughts. He reported that so far since last October the resorts have only used 670 acre feet of water for snowmaking. He added that this lower than normal figure for this time of year reflects the poor winter season the resorts had. Mr. Heule reported that the Department of Water Resources increased the allocations on the State Water Project from 0% to 5%. He explained that in light of this change the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District has informed him that they will not be taking water from their storage account in the Lake this fall after all. He added that they will meet Mutual's demands mostly with well water using some existing and refurbished wells that are available to them. He reported that Don Evenson is finalizing a draft version of the MOU that addresses the increased Lake releases resulting from the State mandated Bear Creek fisheries maintenance. He explained that once it is signed by both parties we anticipate it will save the District about \$17,600 annually. Mr. Heule reported that in regards to our proposed in-lieu amendment, Don Evenson has essentially completed a revised and simplified term sheet that needs review by Valley District before we move forward. He commented that he is working towards getting the fisheries MOU signed by both parties before the beginning of FY 2014-15. He added that everyone probably read that the City Council approved the purchase proposal for the Trout Pond at their meeting this past Monday night. He added that he will keep everyone informed as this deal moves forward.

Lake Manager, Mike Stephenson reported that most of the 5mph buoys are in place however due to the low lake level, several additional hazard buoys are needed. He added that the wind has shut down most of the work on the lake yesterday and today explaining that it will resume when the wind dies down. He remarked that the East Ramp is in full operation commenting that even with the low lake level, boaters are still coming. He stated that the RV Park opened today adding that it is in good condition. He reported that he visited the Big Bear Middle School STEM class this morning (academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). He explained that they are a select group of students adding that they had some very good comments and questions. He reported that they will make a presentation to the Board at the June 5th meeting. He added that the Quagga training is scheduled for Tuesday, May 6th, and the Adopt-

A-Shoreline kickoff is scheduled for Saturday, May 10th. Mr. Stephenson reported that he received an anonymous donation check of \$8,000 for fish plants explaining that it will be an annual donation.

#### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR**

Upon a motion by Director Lewis, seconded by Director Eminger, the following consent items were unanimously approved:

- Minutes of a Special Meeting Workshop of April 16, 2014
- Minutes of a Regular Meeting of April 17, 2014
- Warrant List dated April 24, 2014 for \$54,934.35
- Approval of a Leave of Absence for Director Skip Suhay

#### **RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE LAKE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE MOST RECENT DRAFT OF STANFIELD MARSH INTERPRETIVE SIGNS**

Mr. Heule made a PowerPoint presentation (see attached) explaining that the Lake Improvement Committee wants to share the design and content of the most recent version of six of the proposed interpretive signs for Stanfield Marsh. He added that the Committee is asking for the Directors comments and suggestions. President Murphy explained that in the *"Welcome to Stanfield Marsh"* sign the names used for some of the birds could prove to be unfamiliar to some people. He questioned the name "gadwall". It was explained by Mr. Stephenson that gadwall is a duck. Director Lewis suggested that we might want to put duck in parentheses for clarification. Mr. Heule reported that one of the original 7 signs was removed and the Committee asked the Acorn Group to develop a replacement sign discussing lake levels, weather patterns, evaporation, and perhaps the in-lieu program. He added that they are working on it now. President Murphy asked how long it will be until they are ready to install. Mr. Heule reported that it is probably 2 to 3 months out. Director Lewis explained that the Committee made multiple edits and the Acorn Group responded immediately adding that they have been very responsive. Director Smith asked how the signs were going to be mounted/displayed on the Boardwalk. Mr. Heule reported that it is still being considered adding that the Acorn Group has offered to come up with suggestions. Director Eminger commented that the Acorn Group has done a wonderful job. President Murphy added that the Committee has also done a great job. Mr. Heule stated that the Committee will approve a final version.

#### **PUBLIC FORUM**

No comments were made

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Heule reported that at the next Board meeting Staff will have a third draft of the proposed Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget for review and comment. He explained that the intent is to have a final version for Board consideration at the meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

He added that Director Eminger and he will be attending the Spring ACWA Conference in Monterey next week. He reported that the next workshop has been postponed until he returns with the report from the Statewide Mercury TMDL meeting in Sacramento on May 16.

**DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

President Murphy announced that he has re-organized the Committee Member assignments while Director Suhay is on leave of absence.

**ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION**

The meeting was adjourned to Closed Session at 1:40 P.M:  
Government Code Section 54957.6: General Managers Performance evaluation.

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**


The meeting was reconvened to Open Session at 1:59 P.M.  
After completing their evaluation the Board of Directors judged Mr. Heule's performance to be satisfactory.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

**NEXT MEETING**

Open Session at 1:00 P.M.  
Thursday, May 15, 2014  
Big Bear Municipal Water District  
40524 Lakeview Drive, Big Bear Lake, CA



Vicki Sheppard  
Secretary to the Board  
Big Bear Municipal Water District

(SEAL)



April 30, 2014 Version

# STANFIELD MARSH INTERPRETIVE SIGNS



# Welcome to Stanfield Marsh

## Stanfield Marsh is a great place to watch wildlife.

Keep your eyes and ears open at the marsh—you might discover a raft of bufflehead, a covert of coots, or even a pod of pelicans. The marsh is a thriving, 145-acre wildlife and waterfowl preserve where visitors can enjoy birding, walking, fishing, and time spent outdoors.

Fall and spring are particularly busy times at the marsh. Migrating waterfowl rest here and even nest here, taking advantage of the island for protection from predators. Bald eagles arrive in the winter. They perch in the tall pines and survey the watery landscape. Open water means open fishing for these hungry birds of prey.

The trail is an easy, flat stroll less than a mile in length. The boardwalk takes you over the water, guiding you past grebes, gadwalls, gulls, and others.



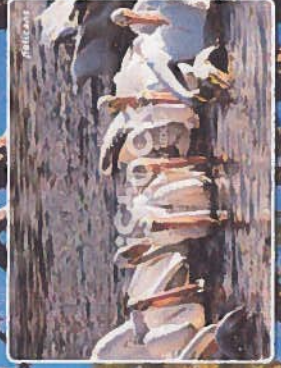
Stanfield Marsh Boardwalk



### Just for kids:

Guess what each group is called!

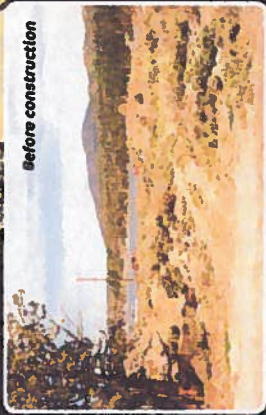
- a. A group of eagles
- b. A group of birds of prey
- c. A group of gulls
- d. A group of herons
- e. A group of shorebirds
- f. A group of terns



Pelicans



# Rising from Asphalt



Before construction



During construction



Marsh's Island

## Did you know?

The marsh's island serves as critical nesting habitat for waterfowl. The moat-like water barrier makes it difficult for predators to reach it. And the island's plants make it easy for nestlings to run for cover.

## The entrance to Stanfield Marsh was once a dumpsite.

By the 1970s this area, known as Bakers Pond, had seen better days. Piles of discarded asphalt lay in a heap. Open space along the shoreline was fast becoming private property. Building pads replaced feeding grounds and the valley's wet meadows had all but disappeared.

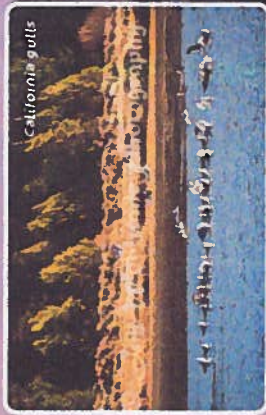
Grants enabled the Big Bear Municipal Water District to clean and restore the site, and transform the landscape into the thriving wildlife preserve we see today. The District removed the asphalt debris, planted trees and shrubs, built the island and boardwalk, and created walking paths. Now the marsh serves as critical habitat for many species of birds, including several that are rare. It also serves as wildlife watching habitat for people.



# Nature Year-Round

## Sunlight, temperature, and water determine nature's palette.

Season by season, the marsh reveals its true colors. With rainfall and snowmelt as the only sources of water, the marsh cycles dramatically between wet and dry, cool and warm. Summers are dry and warm, and hues of brown and gray dominate the landscape. Fall draws out the reds and yellows. If winter rain has been abundant, spring can be a vibrant color spree as wildflowers blossom.



california gulls

The seasons inspire moods among wildlife as well. **Fall**, like spring, is a busy time for birds that rest and feed at the marsh during long trips to points north and south. The travelers and the year-round residents share the marsh, and bird song thickens in the brisk air.

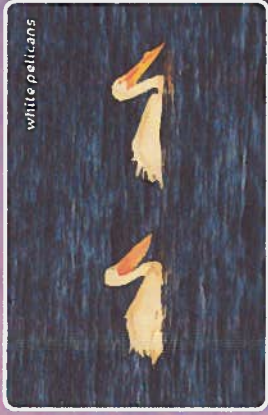


great blue heron

Late **spring** and early summer bring nesting waterfowl and shorebirds to the island and, soon, the chorus of baby birds.

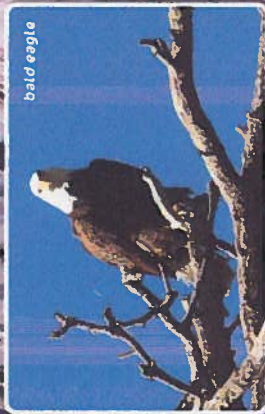


mallards



white pelicans

In the warmer **summer** months, white pelicans cruise the water, resting and fattening up for their journey back north to the Central Coast.



bald eagle

**Winter** signifies the reign of the eagle. Big Bear boasts the largest overwintering population in the state. Tune your ears for their shrill, raspy whistles or piping calls.

### Just for kids:

Scan the shoreline and reeds. Can you find any great blue herons? What behaviors do you see? Defense of feeding territory (watch for the head and neck extended at a 45-degree angle) Flock behavior (roosting and feeding together during winter) Flying (gliding over the water) Hunting (wading while staring into shallow water) Eating (plucking a fish or frog with the bill)



# Marsh Stewardship



## Vision, funding, and grit built Stanfield Marsh.

What was once rooted in debris piles is now rooted in grasses and willows that beckon wildlife. In 1982 work began in earnest to transform an eyesore into a preserve. Working closely with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Big Bear Municipal Water District dredged basins, laid culvert pipes to allow water to flow under the Stanfield Cutoff, and planted the shoreline. They built the first segment of the boardwalk in 1993, the second segment in 1998, and the Island in 2003. Local elementary students and Big Bear Municipal Water

District staff members pitched in, planting rush, yarrow, and 14 other plant species on the Island and helping create a haven for nesting waterfowl.

Thanks to their efforts, many animals now call the marsh home. Depending on the season, you can see waterfowl, wading birds, and even bald eagles. Some stay for a season. Others stay year-round. Either way, they all contribute to the rich fabric of life at Stanfield Marsh.



bird



bald eagle

### Did you know?

Big Bear Valley supports the highest concentration of native, endangered, and sensitive species in the continental United States.

Stanfield Marsh contributes to this biological diversity, its habitat for thousands of wading waterfowl, bald eagles, and other birds.

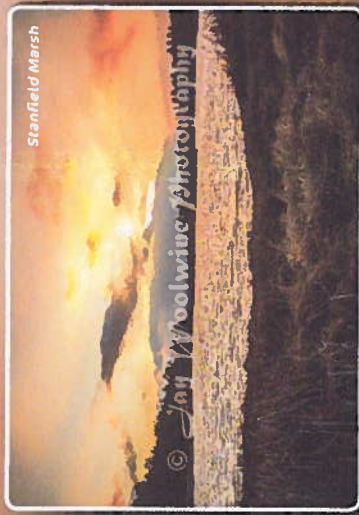


# More than Birds

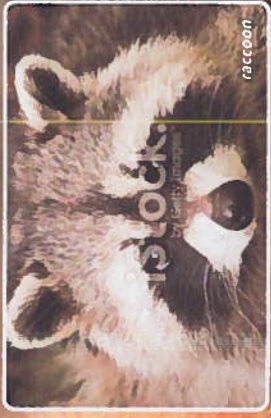
## Catfish, coots, and coyotes also call the marsh home.

This valley supports more species diversity than what you'd see traveling down the coast from Alaska to Baja California. Stanfield Marsh plays a significant role in this. It is not just home to birds, but also to fish, amphibians, and mammals.

Measuring the level of biological diversity in an ecosystem is like reading a thermostat. Generally speaking, high levels are associated with ecosystem productivity, health, and resilience. The fact that the marsh cultivates so much life means it is a busy place around the clock. The shoreline is wildlife's buffet line, and tracks in the mud hint at who dined out. Raccoons knead the mud for toads. Coots slurp down lake plants and fish fry. Coyotes trot through the brush. In the shallows, fish loaf and nip at insect larvae. We also play a part in the marsh's biodiversity, both through our presence and the stewardship values we hold.



Stanfield Marsh



raccoon



catfish

### Just for kids:

Pick a marsh animal from the list and play "Who Am I?" with a friend.

**Beaver** **Egret** **Duck** **Fish** **Raccoon** **Eagle**  
Don't tell your friend what animal you are. Just give them clues and let them guess. Tell them about the food you eat, where you sleep, what kind of feet you have. Describe your day and the animals you meet. Can your friend figure out who you are?



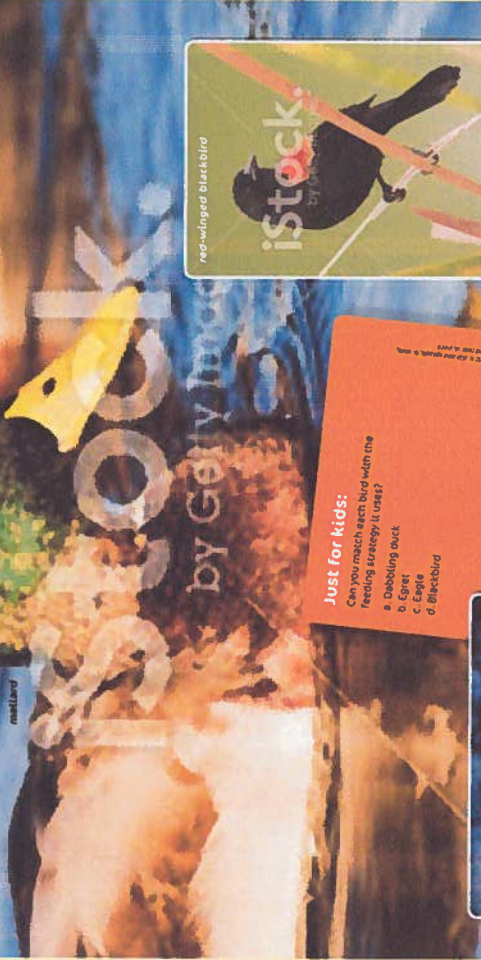
# Wildlife Forays

## The marsh is a vibrant place throughout the year.

The landscape and wildlife change with each season, creating rich opportunities for wildlife watching year-round. Carp and catfish venture from the lake to the shallow water. Amphibians and songbirds find haven in the marsh vegetation, while herons, egrets, and other wading birds stalk the water's edge. Osprey and bald eagles also make grand appearances.

Keep an eye out for ducks, like mallards, teal, and buffleheads, which nest on the grassy island. This marsh is rich in riparian and marsh vegetation, making it a bed-and-breakfast for waterfowl needing a rest during long journeys along the Pacific Flyway. In the winter bald eagles

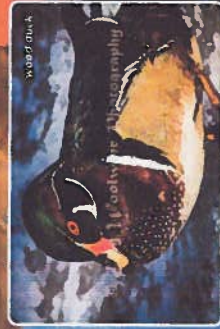
and even more herons arrive at the marsh. While ducks dine on the lake's "plant soup," the eagles and herons go fishing. The marsh is a sushi bar and a salad bar, depending on your bill.



### Just for kids:

Can you match each bird with the feeding strategy it uses?

- a. Dabbling duck
- b. Egret
- c. Eagle
- d. Blackbird



mallard



red-winged blackbird



great egret

### Did you know?

The Blue Heron has the longest wading bird's neck in the world. It can reach over the water or shoreline, then quickly bring its long neck back to the water to catch its prey. Herons also teach their young to swim and encourage their first swimming lessons when the time comes.



# The Worth of the Marsh

## Part sponge, part filter, Stanfield Marsh benefits people too.

Beauty aside, the marsh provides important services that benefit us. The soil, vegetation, and basin help manage storm events by slowing down floodwater and letting it spread out. During calmer times the marsh serves as a settling pond for sediments that otherwise could affect lake clarity. Suspended particles sink in the shallow water and become trapped in the silty bottom. Beneficial bacteria break down any contaminants into harmless components, while plants absorb other ones. Nature's services are effective and they come without a price tag!

You've come to a place where nature is hard at work. It's also a great place to unwind after you've been hard at work.

*Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike.*

— John Muir, The Yosemite (1912)

© Jay Woolwine Photography



Marsh vegetation traps soil and silt.



### Did you know?

Ecosystem services often translate into a specific job or financial equivalent. But sometimes these "services" are priceless, like watching an eagle or enjoying sunset on the boardwalk.



The marsh helps manage storm events and a spring snowmelt.

the marsh beauty benefits us