



AMIA

THE ANDERSON MARSH INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION
*Promoting education & interpretive activities at
Anderson Marsh State Historic Park*

PO BOX 672, LOWER LAKE, CA 95457 (707) 995-2658 WWW.ANDERSONMARSH.ORG FALL/WINTER 2020/21



New Trex railings and other repairs made to the boardwalk on Cache Creek Nature Trail.



The repairs were made by AmeriCorps volunteers, supervised by State Parks staff.

AMIA partners to repair boardwalk on Cache Creek Nature Trail

By Henry Bornstein

AMIA recently partnered with the California Department of State Parks, AmeriCorps and the California State Parks Foundation on a project to repair and upgrade the iconic Boardwalk on the Cache Creek Nature Trail located at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park.

The project, which was just completed, included tightening and bracing the entire structure, repairing broken boards, re-finishing the wood, and installing new upgraded “Trex” railings that will resist the effects of hot summers and cold winters. The work will ensure that the Boardwalk will remain available for many years to be enjoyed by the public, guided nature walks and school field trips.

The work was paid for in part by a “Keeping Parks Whole” grant awarded to AMIA by the Cal-

ifornia State Parks Foundation, a member-supported nonprofit that works to create support for California State Parks. The work was done by an AmeriCorps volunteer crew supervised and trained by State Parks maintenance staff.

The AmeriCorps volunteer team members came from all across the United States to work on this Lake County project. The AmeriCorps volunteers live, eat and work together as a single “cohort,” allowing them to safely work together with minimized risk from COVID-19. While working along-side State Parks staff and in areas in which they could encounter the public, the crew “masked up” to comply with health recommendations.

According to Wendy Lieberg, Park Maintenance Chief, “California State Parks appreciates

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President's Message

By Roberta Lyons

I don't have to tell anyone about what a rough year 2020 has been. I can tell everyone, however, that despite the difficulties of dealing with the



COVID-19 pandemic, fires and ensuing smoke, and having to cancel Christmas at the Ranch and the First Day Hike, two of our favorite events, our Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association (AMIA), along with State Parks staff, have still been able to work together to keep things going at Anderson Marsh State

Historic Park.

One of our accomplishments is a long-needed repair and upgrade of the Boardwalk on the Cache Creek Nature Trail. With help of a grant from the State Parks Foundation, AMIA was able to contribute over \$5,000 to this effort. The work was carried out by a great group of young AmeriCorps volunteers who were a pleasure to work with.

At the beginning of the LNU complex fires, the ranch house was evacuated and since almost everything had been removed, this seemed like a good opportunity to do some "shoring up" of the historic structure to lessen the presence of rodents, improve the foundation, and work on other pest abatement.

This also allowed AMIA to do some "de-cluttering" and reorganizing of our supplies. Hopefully, by this time next year, we will be preparing for a Christmas at the Ranch celebration in a clean and restored historic ranch house.

The AMIA board has continued to meet month-

ly using Zoom and we also had our Annual Membership Meeting using Zoom. We still miss our face-to-face meetings, of course, and look forward to when the day arrives that we can meet in person as a board and with our many supporters.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank two of our board members to whom we said goodbye this year. Nancy Langdon, long-time board member and volunteer, retired from the board because of her move to a new home in Oregon. Lisa Wilson also needed to retire from the board because of her business and civic responsibilities (Lisa owns and operates Clear Lake Campground and is a member of the Clearlake Planning Commission, among other duties!) We will be tapping Lisa for volunteer activities though, like leading our guided nature walks at the park when those are able to resume.

Meanwhile, despite the need to cancel scheduled guided nature walks and other events, the park remains open and the hiking trails are available to the public.

I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to get out into nature by taking a walk in the park, while of course complying with recommended health directives with regard to wearing a mask and maintaining adequate social distance with others.

There have been changes and disappointments in 2020, but there have been positive opportunities and realizations as well. Personally, this year has taught me to not take even the simplest enjoyments for granted. I have a renewed sense of gratitude and appreciation for the beautiful place we live, for my relationships with my fellow volunteers, board members and friends, and of course for Anderson Marsh State Historic Park.



The First Day Hike is canceled, but hiking the park's trails (while following COVID-19 safety guidelines), is still one of the best ways to stay active, healthy, and increase our sense of well-being during the pandemic.

Beloved events canceled due to COVID-19

Two popular annual events sponsored by AMIA will not be held this year due to COVID-19 health concerns.

The "Christmas at the Ranch" Victorian Christmas celebration is held each year in the historic Ranch House at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park and is always one of the community's favorite events. It features tasty Christmas baked goods, hot apple cider and coffee, and performances by local musicians singing Christmas carols and holiday songs. Santa is always present to greet children of all ages.

The Annual "First Day Hike" at the Park is held on January 1st and provides an opportunity for members of the community to start the year off right by taking a walk in the Park. Each year, there have been over 100 people who chose to attend this Hike. Last year was the third consecutive year that the Anderson Marsh hike had the largest number of New Year's Day hikers in any California state park.

AMIA regrets having to cancel these events this year, but COVID-19 restrictions make it impossible to hold these events as they have been held in the past. AMIA hopes that by this time



AMIA is hopeful about reinstating the First Day Hike and Christmas at the Ranch in 2021/22.

next year, we will once again be able to gather together at the Park and that AMIA will be able to once again host the Christmas at the Ranch and First Day Hike events.

Although the Ranch House is closed to the public due to COVID-19 restrictions on indoor events, the trail system is open and members of the public are invited to visit the Park and take a walk on the trails. Visitors are asked to wear face coverings and maintain proper social distance when encountering other hikers.

Treasurer's Report

Please, give if you can

By Henry Bornstein, AMIA Board Treasurer



Like many of us, I have recently been receiving an astounding number of emails and messages asking for my financial support for the many nonprofit organizations that perform so much good work to further causes that I support.

And despite the fact that I do indeed support the work of many of these organizations, I have found myself thinking (or maybe shouting to myself) – enough already!

As Treasurer of AMIA, however, I do understand the situation that has ensnared these organizations. Just when their work is needed more than ever, in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of the pandemic have made it much more difficult to raise the money needed to do this work.

Like other nonprofits, AMIA finds itself in this situation. As many of us have discovered, our local state parks have become even more vital than ever to our community's physical and mental health by providing one of the best opportunities to safely exercise outdoors during the pandemic and find the mental relief that being in nature provides.

Here at AMIA, we believe it's important for people to understand and experience Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. One way that we do this is to raise funds to pay for park staff and for park improvements that ensure that as many people as possible can personally experience the rich resources found in the park. We do this

not only to provide a service to the public, but also to help protect the park, because when people understand what they have, they want to protect it for future generations.

A recent example of the work being done by AMIA is the repair and upgrade project recently completed on the iconic Boardwalk on the park's Cache Creek Nature Trail, discussed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become extremely difficult for some people to support AMIA's efforts, even if they have done so in the past. In order to be able to continue to make sure that the park is adequately maintained and continues to flourish, we are asking those of you who are fortunate enough to be able to do so to renew your AMIA membership today, or if you have not before been a member, to join now.

If you have been a member and are not sure when your membership is due to be renewed, if you have not recently donated, or if you have never been a AMIA supporter, we ask that you take a moment to make a 2021 donation now at any level of support. A membership application is contained on the back page of this newsletter. AMIA is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are deductible from your taxable income as allowed by law.

When this terrible pandemic is finally over, AMIA needs to be in the financial shape to resume the guided nature walks, park tours and special events which have meant so much to the community and which have had to be suspended during the pandemic. Let's make sure that when this strange time is over, AMIA can spring back into action with the resources that it needs.

Please donate now if you can.



(Photo 1) Pied Billed Grebe and five eggs in the nest. Photos by Henry Bornstein

The Saga of the Pied Billed Grebe

By Henry Bornstein

Although the Audubon Guide to North American Birds states that Pied-billed Grebes are “secretive in the breeding season, hiding in the marsh,” one pair that didn’t get the memo decided to build its nest this year out in the open in a channel off Cache Creek right across from Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. This provided an amaz-

ing opportunity to have an intimate look as the Grebes worked to raise their young.

The nest was built by the two birds in one day and the five eggs appeared a few days later on July 3. [PHOTO 1] At first, both birds incubated the eggs. After a week or so, the female took over the

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(Photo 2) Shading eggs from the heat.



(Photo 3) Nest covered.



(Photo 4) Chicks on the nest with egg.

The Saga of the Pied Billed Grebe

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job and the male left the area.

This was all happening during the incredible heat spell we had in early July. During the heat of the day, she kept the eggs in her shadow, evidently to keep them from overheating. [PHOTO 2] When the grebe left the nest unattended to grab a quick meal, she covered the eggs in wet tules. [PHOTO 3]

Finally, after almost three weeks, three of the eggs hatched, leaving one egg in the nest. The fifth egg had disappeared, perhaps a victim of predation or a quick roll out of the nest. [PHOTO 4] The three chicks were in the water swimming the same day that they hatched. [PHOTO 5]

Mom continued to incubate the remaining egg

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(Photo 5) Chicks in water as mom returns.



(Photo 6) Sitting on the eggs with chicks.



(Photo 7) Dad with dinner.



(Photo 8) Chicks in the nest.



(Photo 9) Otter in the channel.

The Saga of the Pied Billed Grebe

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as the youngsters climbed onto her in the nest. [PHOTO 6] At this point, the male returned to help feed the chicks as mom incubated the last egg. The youngsters were fed fish and aquatic invertebrates such as crawdads. [PHOTO 7] Two days later, the final egg hatched and there were four hungry chicks to feed. [PHOTO 8]

About a week later, trouble arrived in the form of a river otter that cruised into the channel. [PHOTO 9] The two adult grebes called loudly for the chicks and two youngsters quickly climbed onto each adult grebe. They exited the channel rapidly, all the time calling loudly. [PHOTO 10] The otter followed slowly.

The following day, only one adult and two chicks returned to the nest. It looked like the female, though it is hard to be certain. [PHOTO 11] The other adult and the two other chicks were not seen again.

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(Photo 10) Running from the otter.



(Photo 11) Grebe and two chicks return.



(Photo 12) Chicks swimming.



(Photo 13) Hungry chicks at morning feeding.



(Photos 14) Morning feeding continues.

The Saga of the Pied Billed Grebe

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In the days following the return, the two chicks, now about a week old, spent a lot of time away from the nest with mom, practicing swimming and diving. [PHOTO 12] In the morning, the chicks called loudly when they were hungry and wanted to be fed. By the difference in size between the two chicks, it seems that one of the

survivors could have been that last egg that hatched. [PHOTO 13]

The nest seems to have been located directly on top of an inexhaustible supply of food, which saved mom the trouble of moving off the nest to feed her chicks. [PHOTOS 14, 15, 16] Each

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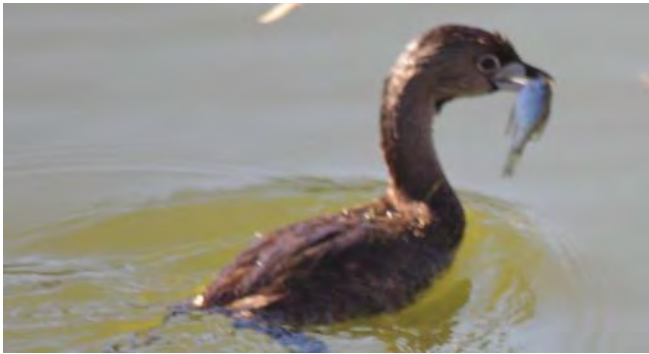
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(Photos 15-16) Morning feeding continues.





(Photo 17) Mom with fish.



(Photo 18) Nest gone, after dissolving into the water.

The Saga of the Pied Billed Grebe

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morning, after she fed the chicks, she left the nest to fish for her own breakfast. [PHOTO 17]

A little over three weeks after the eggs were laid, the nest began to sink. After the nest disappeared, the grebe family left during the day, but continued to return for about two weeks to spend the night where the nest had been located. [PHOTO 18]

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Group effort of AMIA board members, State Parks personnel, and AmeriCorps volunteers to pack up AMIA’s materials and supplies that had been in the Ranch House for transport to a safe place after the August Complex wildfire.

Ranch House Updates

As has happened in the case of previous wildfires, in order to ensure the safety of historical artifacts and objects contained in the Ranch House during the progress of the 2020 “August complex” wildfire, the contents of the Ranch House were once again packed up and moved to safety.

To take advantage of the empty Ranch House while “inside” gatherings were on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, State Parks scheduled a deep cleaning of the Ranch House and its contents. This required AMIA to pack and move all of its materials that it had stored there, including supplies for events, books and the office.

After AMIA board members sorted and carefully packed everything, the boxes were taken to the AMIA storage shed, located at Clear Lake State Park. The actual move of AMIA materials was completed by AMIA volunteers, State Parks personnel and a team of AmeriCorps volunteers.

AMIA appreciates the support of State Parks and the AmeriCorps in helping with the move, and doing the heavy lifting of loading, unloading & moving the boxes into the AMIA storage shed.



(Photo 19) Leaving the channel for the last time.

The Saga of the Pied Billed Grebe

Finally, about three weeks after the first chicks hatched, the grebe family made its last visit to the channel. They swim away early in the morning. [PHOTO 19] The older chick is growing fast and is now almost the same size as the adult, but the chicks have still not lost

their distinctive adolescent markings.

It is amazing to contemplate the millions of times every year a similar saga plays out in the over 10,000 worldwide bird species. Will Pied-billed Grebes return to this spot next year? We will have to wait to discover the answer.

AMIA partners to repair boardwalk on Cache Creek Nature Trail

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the help of the AmeriCorps volunteers, who give their time and energy for the benefit of all of us. We also appreciate the continued help and support of our partner Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association. In times of need, they are always there to help keep the Park safe and maintained.”

While guided public tours at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park have been temporarily suspended in compliance with current COVID-19

guidelines, the hiking trails remain open and the public is encouraged to visit the newly-refurbished Boardwalk and take advantage of the opportunity to get into nature and take a walk in the Park, while observing recommended guidelines regarding social distancing, face coverings and hygiene.

More information about hiking at the Park can be found at www.andersonmarsh.org, by emailing info@andersonmarsh.org, or by calling AMIA at 707-995-2658.



AMIA thanks our generous supporters

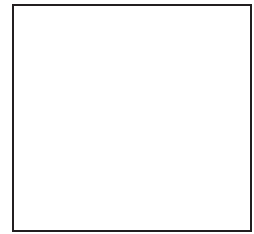
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ANDERSON MARSH INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to the preservation of all facets of the park. New members are always welcome! Come Join the Fun!

2021 AMIA Membership Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Special Interest (music, education, history, ecology, archaeology, other): _____

I would like to know about volunteer opportunities

AMIA members receive two (2) newsletters a year, special invitations to attend events being held at the park and the satisfaction that comes from supporting a community treasure and working to preserve it for future generations.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

Annual

Amount	Membership Level	Member Benefits
<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	Educator/Student	Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	Individual	Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	Family	Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	Supporter	Newsletter and Newsletter Mention
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	Sustainer	Newsletter, Newsletter Mention, Donor Event and DVD of "A Walk Through Time" film
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	Patron	Sustainer benefits + special recognition at event
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	Business Supporter	Newsletter, Donor Event, Newsletter Mention, Website Link
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	Business Sustainer	Business supporter benefits +DVD of AMSHP film

Please send check and completed application to

AMIA

**P.O. Box 672
Lower Lake, CA 95457**

Or join online by
visiting us at

www.andersonmarsh.org

For more info call AMIA
at 707-995-2658