DEAR FRIENDS,

Four years ago, after an election that boded ill for all of us, including wildlife, our shared air and waters, and our entire planet, I promised that we at River Otter Ecology Project would stand with you and with our conservation work. Eight months ago, when the pandemic turned us topsy-turvy and negatively affected each of our programs, I promised we would find ways to continue. Your support has helped us make great strides despite repeated blows to our planet’s health and our own well-being. We’re energized and thrilled by the coming change in our country’s leadership, though we know the work is just beginning. I’ve spent some time on the Biden/Harris transition website and see hopeful signs, including commitments to environmental justice and work on climate change. It will be our job as Americans to ensure those commitments are honored. I’m promising once again that we will do our part, and with your help we will make further progress toward conservation into the future. Thank you for sticking with us!

Be well,
Megan and the Otter Crew

Support Otters and Watersheds Now!
Otter Spotter ~ What’s next?

Last year we celebrated publication of the new California river otter range map, our community science effort. We are using that range map to increase engagement with conservation for everyone, not just the biologists, ecologists, agencies, and conservation organizations who use the range map in their work.

We’ve partnered with the Institute for Integrative Conservation (IIC) at the College of William & Mary to prepare a StoryMap about our Otter Spotter program. The StoryMap will be a graphical and educational representation of the project, and will include ways for everyone to participate.

We are moving toward effecting an equitable reach for this conservation program by ensuring that the fun of seeking otters is extended to all of the wonderfully diverse Bay Area people. After all, otters are all over the Bay Area, and we can use their charm to promote conservation throughout the region and beyond.

We’re delighted to work with the IIC and intern Kelsey Wright, who studies Public Policy and Environmental Science and Policy at the College of William and Mary. Welcome, Kelsey!

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Environmental education

Marin County Department of Education, UC Berkeley, Bay Area Discovery Museum and River Otter Ecology Project have come together with teachers and outdoor education staff around the impact of climate change on our local coastal ecosystems. Our partnership, funded by NOAA, will provide teachers with curriculum and science teaching strategies that prioritize equity and inquiry-based learning, using the return of river otters as an engaging phenomenon that creates both a desire and the opportunity to learn for students.

Our role is to help train the teachers, providing the data and supporting the analysis, using information and background on river otters and our research results. While we can’t be side-by-side with our students, we prefer at this moment, we can and are determined to reach them. We’re very excited about this project because it is capable of being used with distance learning and the teaching strategies focus on equity and inclusion. Many thanks to our project team!

Webinars!

Rolling with the Otters

a rollicking journey with three of our senior field volunteers. Hear stories and see videos of their field work, otters, and more!

November 19, 4-5PM PST (G-8)

Register here

Mostly Water Art and Poetry SPLASH Awards Ceremony

Join us as we honor the winning contestants!

December 6, Noon-1 PST (G-8)

Register here

Support Otters and Watersheds Now!
This spring we reluctantly said good bye to both our high school educator Board members, Christian Naventi and Stori Oates. Both are committed educators and scientists who needed to make the very difficult pivot to online teaching and felt they could not continue to provide us with the truly remarkable level of hands-on work they had so generously given through the years. Thankfully, they both remain volunteers, for which we are truly grateful.

We have begun the search for new Board members, and I am thrilled to announce that UC Berkeley professor, ecologist, and mycologist Dr. Ignacio Chapela has joined the Board. Ignacio’s deep and broad experience in indigenous, local, national, and transnational organizations brings a visionary and progressive outlook to our project. He joined our Tomales High School panel discussion two years ago, mesmerizing the students with his clear-eyed assessment of their responsibilities to themselves and the planet and his encouragement to pursue their goals. Welcome, Ignacio!

We are preparing to announce new opportunities to join the ROEP Board. Stay tuned!

Support Otters and Watersheds Now!