

# State of the San Francisco Estuary Conference 2011

## 2011 Awardees

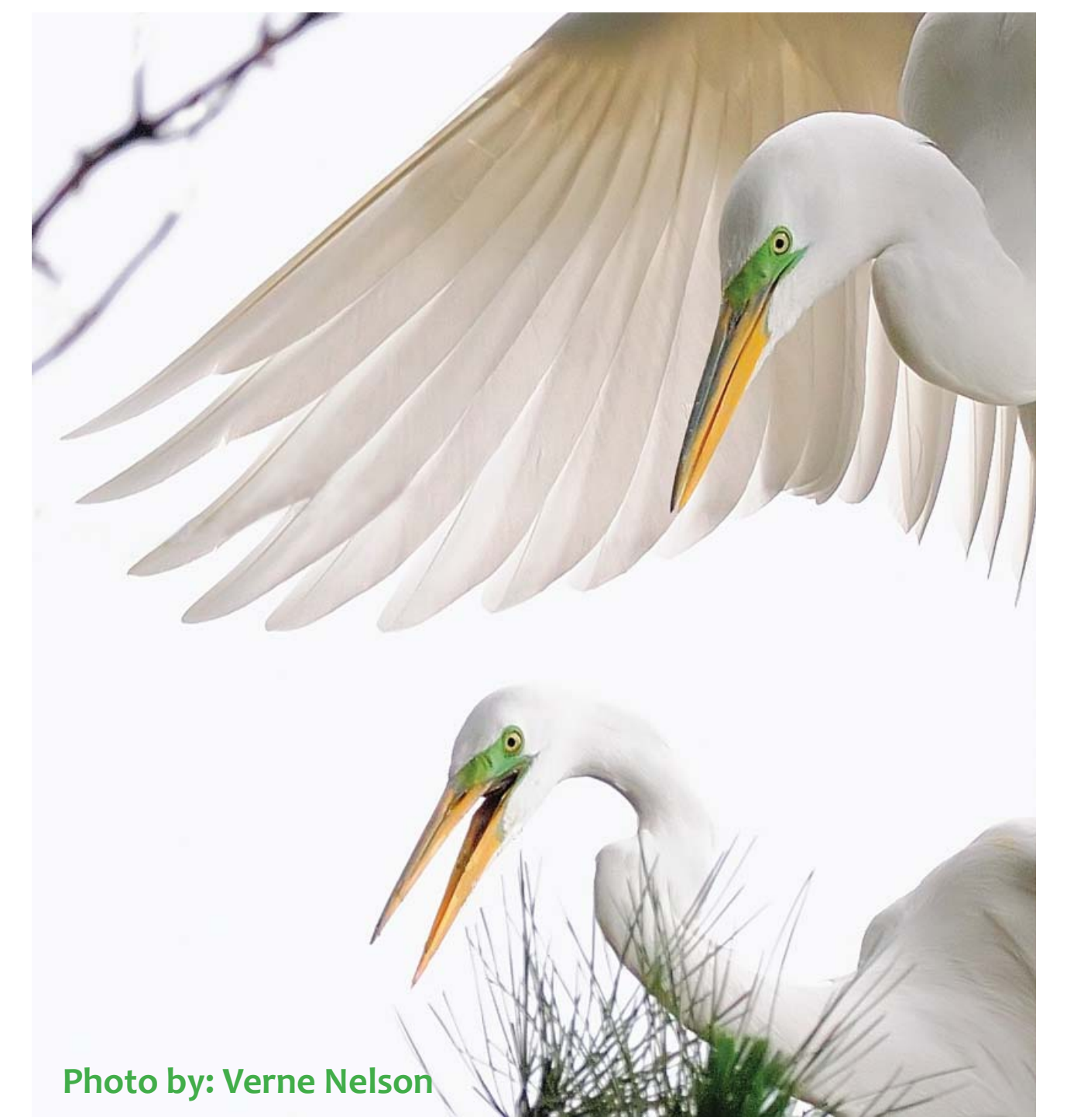


Photo by: Verne Nelson

## Jean Auer Environmental Award



Jean Auer was a prominent player in California's water issues for over thirty years. From 1972 to 1977, Jean served as a public member of the State Water Resources Control Board, where she voted on regulations controlling pollution and establishing water rights.

Judge Ron Robie, associate justice of the State Court of Appeal in Sacramento, who served with Jean on the board, called her "a marvelous person of great spirit, enthusiasm and intelligence." "This was just the beginning of the environmental movement in America," he said. "Then-Gov. Reagan encouraged our water board to do great things in preserving the (Sacramento-San Joaquin River) Delta and providing flows and streams for recreation and fish as well as cleaning up sewage-treatment plants. She was really courageous and not at all timid."

Jean was born in Youngstown, Ohio. She first learned about water issues with the League of Women Voters and was appointed to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Her interest continued after the family moved to San Francisco, and she was appointed to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Auers moved to Hillsborough in 1973, where she was elected to the Town Council and as mayor.

Starting in 1987, Jean worked on the decision-making management committee of the San Francisco Estuary Project, where Marcia Brockbank describes her ability to forge agreements. "She was a phenomenal woman, a consummate Renaissance woman." In 1991, Jean became the second female president of the Commonwealth Club, after Shirley Temple Black, and for the next decade ran a fellowship program for young professionals at the nonprofit Water Education Foundation. Jean is survived by her three beloved sons, Lance, Grant and Brad Grant Auer.

## Sylvia McLaughlin



Some 50 years ago now, Sylvia McLaughlin became very concerned watching San Francisco Bay shrink at an alarming rate as cities raced to fill shallow tidelands and expand their boundaries. Against overwhelming odds, she and two other women activists built and led a massive citizens' movement, which resulted in a moratorium on landfill in the Bay and then the creation of a permanent Bay regulatory agency, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. To preserve the momentum and provide citizen support for the newly formed BCDC, she co-founded the environmental organization Save the Bay, which is celebrating its 50th birthday this year.

Not resting on past achievements, Sylvia served on the Board of Save the Bay for 38 years. She continues to advocate for Bay protection, mobilize the public, and inspire young conservationists.

Now over 90 years old, Sylvia has seen huge changes. Public access to the Bay has grown from only six miles in 1960 to hundreds of miles. Today, the Bay is ringed with a necklace of shoreline parks, including the Eastshore State Park on land she prevented Berkeley from filling in. There is public pride of ownership in San Francisco Bay, and youth activists eagerly engage in efforts to clean-up shoreline trash, eradicate invasive, non-native plants and replace them with native species.

Sylvia, we thank you for being such a determined advocate for our beloved Bay. We will not take Bay protection for granted, but are inspired by you to continue the fight.

## Carl Wilcox



Carl has a unique command of the ecology of the Bay, and knows its wetlands and sloughs by name, location and function. He uses this base of knowledge productively to make a significant contribution to the restoration and management of the Estuary. As a leader in the Department of Fish and Game, and now as Bay Delta Regional Manager, he has been involved in Bay Area habitat protection and conservation planning work for decades. He helped lead the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Project that developed habitat recommendations for the lands and waters around San Francisco Bay and Suisun Marsh. That effort established the scientific basis for large-scale habitat restoration in the Bay Area. He was also instrumental in the purchase of 20,000 acres of Cargill property and helped initiate restoration efforts of the Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area.

He has taken a leadership role in the development of the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy, efforts which protect vernal pools and other unique habitats. The area has recently been declared a World Heritage site. And he continues to work collaboratively with local, state and federal interests to protect valuable wildlife habitats. Under his guidance, Fish and Game has provided assistance, technical analyses, critical view and editing of the state's wildlife conservation strategy, "Developing California Wildlife: Conservation Challenges."

Carl, we thank you for your efforts to protect plants, wildlife and the estuarine habitats on which they depend so that they may survive and so we and future generations may enjoy a thriving and healthy natural environment.