

Media Release, Monday, July 25, 2011

Contacts:

Ron Brown
Executive Director

w/925-947-3535 & c/925-683-5665
rbrown@SaveMountDiablo.org

Seth Adams
Director of Land Programs

w/925-947-3535 & c/925-381-0905
sadams@SaveMountDiablo.org

Title: Five Locals' Award Winning Contributions to Nature: Save Mount Diablo's 2011 Mountain Star Awards

WALNUT CREEK, CA- Imagine climbing a hundred foot tree to band an eagle chick equipped with six inch claws and a razor sharp beak and you'll get an idea of what it takes to receive a Mountain Star Award from Save Mount Diablo. From banding eagles to founding magazines, the grassroots environmental non-profit organization will acknowledge five accomplished and dedicated locals with three awards. The "Mountain Star Awards" recognize individuals and organizations whose contributions have been significant in preserving the Bay Area's natural lands. This year's pioneering recipients include David Loeb, Executive Director of Bay Nature Institute and Publisher of *Bay Nature* magazine, Doug Burr, Phil O'Loane and Sally Scholl, Co-Chairs, San Ramon Residents Opposed to Measure W, and Doug Bell, Ph.D, Ornithologist and Wildlife Program Manager of East Bay Regional Park District.

David Loeb, Mountain Star Media Award



Caption: David Loeb, Bay Nature magazine Publisher and Executive Director of the non-profit Bay Nature Institute, on Save Mount Diablo's Four Days Diablo trip.

Credit: Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com

David Loeb will be awarded the Mountain Star Media Award for significant media contributions to public awareness of Save Mount Diablo and of the mountain.

Ten years ago, David Loeb co-founded *Bay Nature* magazine. He is publisher of the quarterly and is also executive director of the nonprofit Bay Nature Institute, based in Berkeley.

David goes far beyond being a magazine publisher. In addition to publishing in depth articles about the Mount Diablo area, he attends Save Mount Diablo hikes and events including Four Days Diablo, a four day trek from Walnut Creek to Brentwood entirely on public lands. Whether reading or listening to him, Loeb's passion is clear, "I started *Bay Nature* as a way to share my love for the natural landscapes of the Bay Area and my appreciation for the tremendous work that has been done—and is still being done—to protect and steward them. And I wanted to do this in a form that reflected the natural beauty of the region." Under his leadership *Bay Nature* magazine and its amazing web portal, baynature.org, with its free naturalist-led hikes around the region have become indispensable venues for educating the public about nature, conservation, and environmental issues that are of critical importance to the region, as well as to Save Mount Diablo's mission.

Seth Adams, Save Mount Diablo's Land Programs Director commented, "We could as easily award David a Leadership or an Interpretive Award—he is such an accomplished advocate." In addition to his Mountain Star Media Award, Loeb will receive this year's "Carla Bard Award for Environmental Education" from The Bay Institute.

Like Loeb, Doug Bell has long been committed to the Bay Area's nature and wildlife.

Doug Bell, Ph.D., Mary Bowerman Award for Science and Discovery



Caption: Doug Bell conducting field research beneath the wind turbines near Altamont Pass.

Credit: Janice Gan, East Bay Regional Park District

Doug Bell, Ph.D. is the East Bay Regional Park District's Wildlife Program Manager. As an ornithologist, Dr. Bell has a long interest in raptor ecology and conservation issues.

"Raptors are often key indicators of an area's ecological health", said Adams, "Doug has been the lead scientist monitoring nesting prairie falcons around Mount Diablo." Dr. Bell continues to monitor nest sites on the mountain, banding all nestlings when they are approximately three weeks old and follows their development until fledging. The research that Bell and others are conducting on raptors here in the East Bay will guide major science-based policy and set precedents related to wind energy development and wildlife protection. Bell hopes his work will have lasting results, "Naturalists' accounts from a hundred years ago mention prairie falcons and golden eagles nesting on Mount Diablo. My goal is to ensure that these species, and others, will still be on the mountain a hundred years from now."

Dr. Bell will be awarded Save Mount Diablo's Mary Bowerman Award for Science and Discovery, named in the spirit of botanist and Save Mount Diablo co-founder Mary Bowerman, for his years of dedication to the Park District, wildlife science and conservation, and for his research related to raptors and windmills.

Career long dedication can accomplish amazing results, as evidenced by Loeb and Bell. However, in just a few months, Doug Burr, Phil O'Loane and Sally Scholl, found preventing change proved equally important.

Doug Burr, Phil O'Loane and Sally Scholl, Mountain Star Leadership Award



Caption: Left to Right: Brenda de la Ossa, Seth Adams, Sally Scholl, Phil O'Loane, Matt Vander Sluis and Doug Burr celebrating the defeat of Measure W on election night.

Credit: Julie Seelen, Save Mount Diablo

Last summer the San Ramon city council placed Measure W on the ballot. It would have expanded the voter-approved urban growth boundary (UGB) to add 3.5 more square miles, including much of the Tassajara Valley and would have created the potential for thousands of new houses.

San Ramon residents were frustrated by the actions of their City council, and three residents led a community group to challenge the city's ballot measure. **Doug Burr** is a management consultant. When the San Ramon city council refused to put stop signs near a neighborhood school, he wrote an initiative to require it. **Sally Scholl** has lived in San Ramon for 45 years, taught in San Ramon Valley schools for 25 years and was both District and County Teacher of the Year in 1999. In her retirement she works on clean water projects in Africa. **Phil O'Loane** is an executive at Kaiser Permanente and was Chairman of the San Ramon Planning Commission.

Burr, O'Loane, Scholl and nearly every resident who attended the Planning Commission and City Council meetings were opposed to Measure W, as were community groups like Save Mount Diablo. O'Loane explained, "Urban Growth Boundaries are a linchpin of our community's ongoing commitment to maintaining a balanced approach to growth."

"Burr, O'Loane, and Scholl were leaders at every level from strategy to fundraising to doing the day to day work of a grassroots campaign like hand addressing thousands of postcards", said Adams. When the dust settled, over 71% of San Ramon voters defeated Measure W, the UGB stayed where it was, and the city was stopped from expanding into the Tassajara Valley.

Doug Burr, Phil O'Loane and Sally Scholl will receive the Mountain Star Leadership Award for their vision, hard work, and leadership maintaining San Ramon's Urban Growth Boundary through Measure W. Reflecting on the election and nomination O'Loane commented, "I am proud to have been able to team up with people who share a vision and an energy for open space preservation in the Tassajara Valley and our Western Hills. These areas are treasures worth preserving."

The Mountain Star Award presentation will take place at Save Mount Diablo's 40th Anniversary celebration, Moonlight on the Mountain on Saturday, September 10th. The event benefits Save Mount Diablo's land preservation programs. Tickets can be purchased by calling (925) 947-3535.

Summary

Who: David Loeb, Executive Director of Bay Nature Institute and Publisher of Bay Nature Magazine

Doug Burr, Phil O'Loane and Sally Scholl, Co-Chairs, San Ramon Residents Opposed to Measure W

Doug Bell, Ph.D, Ornithologist and Wildlife Program Manager of East Bay Regional Park District

Save Mount Diablo, non-profit organization in Walnut Creek, CA

What: Mountain Star Awards

Where: Save Mount Diablo's 40th Anniversary celebration, Moonlight on the Mountain at Mount Diablo State Park's China Wall

When: Saturday, September 10, 2011

Why: Mountain Star Awards recognize individuals and organizations whose contributions have been significant in helping Save Mount Diablo's land preservation programs.

How: The 2010 Mountain Star Awards are sponsored by Dave & Dana Dornsife. Save Mount Diablo thanks them for their continued support.

Save Mount Diablo is a non-profit 501(c)(3) conservation organization, which has been preserving lands on and around Mount Diablo and educating the public to the mountain's natural values since 1971. Preserved lands have increased from 6,788 acres in one park to more than 100,000 acres in 40 parks and preserves. Save Mount Diablo continues to preserve, protect and restore the remainder of the mountain. Contact: Save Mount Diablo, telephone: (925) 947-3535, fax: (925) 947-0642, 1901 Olympic Blvd., Suite 320, Walnut Creek, CA 94596; www.SaveMountDiablo.org