

Bruce Kennedy
- In Appreciation -

The Board of the Friends of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is saddened to announce the passing of longtime Board member Bruce Kennedy.

Bruce was born and raised in the Washington, D.C. area, graduated from Kenyon College (Ohio) and earned a Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania (1963).

Shortly after graduation, Bruce was hired by the California Office of Planning and Research. Three years later he moved to the California Department of Parks and Recreation and went on to have a distinguished career, retiring in 2003.

It was as a fearless concerned citizen, however, that Bruce made his mark. In the early 1970's , a developer proposed to transform a huge portion of rural Sacramento County into a 50,000 person "Newtown" with residential, commercial and industrial areas. The proposal included 2,000 acres that 20 years later became part of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

Concerned about the unchecked sprawl into these important agricultural lands, Bruce and four other involved citizens, spent 4 years working with the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, and the Environmental Council of Sacramento to mobilize opposition and stop the massive leap-frog development.

As the opposition grew, the developers filed suit against Bruce and his colleagues for $80 million in retaliation for their efforts. The suit was eventually dismissed by the court and the developer ended up paying a substantial settlement to Bruce and his cohorts.

Bruce joined the Friends Board in 2002 and was an active member for the next 18 years. His judgment, knowledge and expertise were invaluable assets. He could be counted on to participate in any outreach event — unless he and his wife, Peggy, were off exploring some distant and exotic area of the world.

In addition to his contributions to the Friends, Bruce was a Board member for years on Sacramento Open Space, now the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, an organization whose mission is to preserve the beauty, character and biodiversity of the Sacramento Valley. Bruce also served on the Board of the American River Natural History Association, the organization that operates and funds the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, to support environmental education in that area.

Bruce will be missed for his judgment, dry good humor and companionship as a Board member. His contributions to the betterment of the Sacramento Valley, and especially the Stone Lakes area, will not be forgotten. A memorial plaque has been placed on a bench overlooking a pond at Blue Heron Trails in his honor.