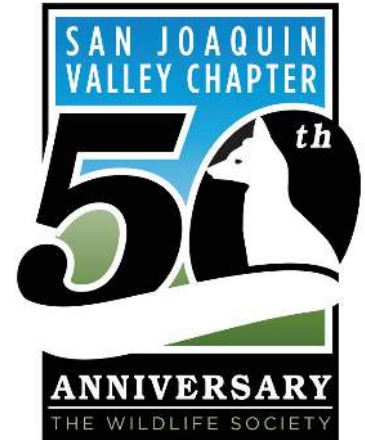


# THE VALLEY FEVER

February 2024



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## Welcome President-Elect Alex Welch

Alex Welch grew up microscoping pond scum, collecting bugs, and hunting for the biggest trees in the woods and wilderness of the Appalachians and the Virginia Piedmont. After a childhood bouncing back and forth between Virginia and Bakersfield, Alex graduated with a B.S. in Biology from Virginia Commonwealth University and moved west. He then served two internships at the Kern and Pixley National Wildlife Refuges where he monitored population trends in waterfowl, San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, Tipton kangaroo rat, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and rare plants. In 2018, Alex joined McCormick Biological, Inc., (MBI) in Bakersfield where he continues his work with San Joaquin Valley species and serves as the botanical lead for the firm. While working at MBI he also completed an internship with the Tejon Ranch Conservancy and earned an M.S. in Biology from California State University, Bakersfield. In his free time, you can find Alex exploring the wineries of Central California, puzzling over a crossword, falling off of walls in a climbing gym, searching for hidden treasures in antique stores, or nerding-out in your local botanical garden.

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## Welcome Michelle Harris as Outreach Coordinator

Michelle graduated from Cal Poly Humboldt with a bachelor's in wildlife in 2017. Over the past several years, Michelle worked seasonally as a field technician on various avian studies, including nest searching and monitoring for Island Scrub-jays on Santa Cruz Island and pinyon-juniper bird species in New Mexico, retrieving and attaching geolocators on Painted Buntings along the southeastern coast of the U.S., and surveying for southwestern willow flycatchers and yellow-billed cuckoos in the Kern River Valley. In between field seasons, Michelle has been employed as an environmental educator for the Fresno Chaffee Zoo and for science centers in Alaska and California. Born and raised in the Sierra foothills of the Central Valley, Michelle returned to Fresno in 2022 to work as a field biologist for Colibri Ecological Consulting. Michelle currently conducts nesting bird surveys, monitors Tricolored Blackbird colonies, performs biological surveys for state and federally listed species on a giant sequoia restoration project, and more. Most of Michelle's free time is spent hiking, rock climbing, open water swimming, pet sitting, and painting landscapes and wildlife.

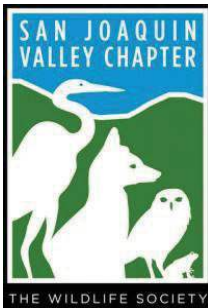
## Welcome Megan McCormick as Merchandise Manager

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Megan earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Humboldt State University in May of 2018, and joined McCormick Biological, Inc., (MBI) as a staff biologist in February of 2019. Prior to this, she gained biological field experience over seven blunt-nosed leopard lizard survey seasons as a biological field technician (2011–2016 and 2018). In 2011 and 2012, Megan worked year round for MBI as a biological technician gaining experience on other resources in the San Joaquin Valley. She also worked as a biological field technician in Arcata, California conducting marbled murrelet protocol surveys for two seasons (2017–2018). Currently, Megan serves on teams of biologists providing biological survey support on oil and gas development, linear, solar, and urban development projects; and participates on teams of biologists conducting inventory and monitoring tasks associated with biological consulting activities including focused blunt-nosed leopard lizard surveys, pre-activity/pre-construction surveys, nesting bird surveys and monitoring, and San Joaquin kit fox den monitoring.

## Upcoming Workshop

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### **Urban San Joaquin Kit Fox Workshop**

**April 2024 (exact dates pending)**

**California State University, Bakersfield, CA**

The San Joaquin Valley Chapter presents the 2024 Urban San Joaquin Kit Fox Workshop to be held in Bakersfield, California. The workshop will consist of three days with lectures covering habitat suitability, kit fox identification, disease, survey protocols, minimization and avoidance measures. A tentative agenda can be found below.

Day One – Afternoon: begin lectures around noon. Evening: view urban kit foxes

Day Two – Morning: set up cameras; check out scats, tracks, dens, and artificial dens. Afternoon: lectures. Evening: view urban kit foxes.

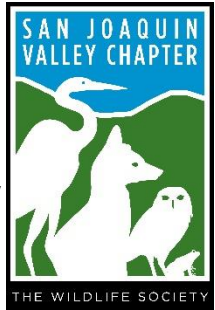
Day Three – Morning: collect cameras and view results + final lectures. End around noon.

Registration will open in March. SJVC members will have early access registration.

**For workshop questions contact [tws.sjv.president@gmail.com](mailto:tws.sjv.president@gmail.com)**



**Save The Date!**



## **Natural Communities Conference San Joaquin Valley Chapter – The Wildlife Society**

**Thursday, March 21, 2024**

Hodel's Country Dining Restaurant

Liberty Hall Meeting Room

5917 Knudsen Dr., Bakersfield, CA

8:00AM - 5:00PM (Check-in starts at 8:00AM)

Join us for an exciting in-person event, the Natural Communities Conference! Get ready for a day filled with knowledge-sharing, networking, and fun. This one-day conference is an opportunity for biologists conducting research, management, regulation, and conservation activities for natural communities and biota in the San Joaquin Valley Chapter area to network and exchange information, ideas, results, and progress of their work. The conference is set in a casual and informal environment. Anyone is welcome to attend!

Presenters will be giving 20-minute talks, 5-minute Quick-Talks, or displaying a poster. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are included with your registration.

This conference will take place at the **Liberty Hall Meeting Room - Hodel's**. Don't miss out on this opportunity to connect with fellow professionals in the industry and gain valuable insights. Come and be a part of this enriching experience!

### **Registration Information:**

General admission - \$35

Student admission - \$15

Presenters – Free

Registration will open at 8:00AM on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Registration will end 6:00AM on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Presenters will be registered by the host. General and student admission can be purchased through Eventbrite.

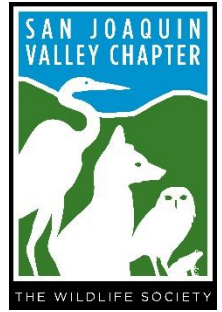
<https://tws-sanjoaquinvalleychapter.eventbrite.com>

For questions or to submit an abstract, contact Kiersten Abarca at  
[tws.sjv.president@gmail.com](mailto:tws.sjv.president@gmail.com)

## Abstract and Presentation Guidelines



### Natural Communities Conference San Joaquin Valley Chapter – The Wildlife Society



**Thursday, March 21, 2024**

Hodel's Country Dining Restaurant  
Liberty Hall Meeting Room  
5917 Knudsen Dr., Bakersfield, CA  
8:00AM - 5:00PM (Check-in starts at 8:00AM)

- The Natural Communities Conference provides 3 different ways to share your information
  - 20-minute presentation (includes time for questions) or 5-minute Quick-Talk (Does not allot time for questions, but attendees can reach out to you during the breaks or lunch to discuss your presentation)
    - Presentations on PowerPoint with two screens
    - E-mail your PowerPoint in advance to Kiersten Abarca at [tws.sjv.president@gmail.com](mailto:tws.sjv.president@gmail.com) or bring it the morning of on a thumb drive.
  - Poster presentation
    - You will be able to discuss your poster with attendees during breaks and lunch.
- Abstracts should be submitted to Kiersten Abarca by March 8, 2024, at [tws.sjv.president@gmail.com](mailto:tws.sjv.president@gmail.com)
- Indicate “NCC Abstract” in Subject title
- Specify in your email whether you will be giving a 20-minute presentation, 5-minute Quick-Talk, or presenting a poster
- Submissions should contain: a title, name of the presenter (and coauthors if applicable) and affiliation(s), email of the presenter, and a body ≤ 300 words

#### Abstract Submission Example:

#### IMPACT OF A SARCOPTIC MANGE EPIDEMIC ON A POPULATION OF ENDANGERED SAN JOAQUIN KIT FOXES

ERICA C. KELLY; California State University, Stanislaus  
Brian L. Cypher; California State University, Stanislaus  
Tory L. Westall; California State University, Stanislaus  
Nicole A. Deatherage; California State University, Stanislaus

[ekelly@esrp.org](mailto:ekelly@esrp.org)

A robust population of endangered San Joaquin kit foxes (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) occurs in...



# Workshop Summaries

**Kiersten Abarca**, San Joaquin Valley Chapter, Past President; [kabarca@mbioinc.com](mailto:kabarca@mbioinc.com)

## Special Training in Mammal Tracking Workshop – April 2023

In April we hosted a two-day special training in mammal tracking workshop at the Pyramid Lake Los Alamos group campground. Twelve individuals participated in an overnight camping workshop with Jim Lowery and Mary Brooks of Earth Skills to learn and/or hone their mammal tracking skills. The workshop involved a combination of lecture and extensive hands-on training for identifying not only what animal a track belonged to, but what the animal was doing at the time it made the track. Participants followed and interpreted trails, were introduced to reading movement, posture, speed, and behavior from tracks, and how tracks aged over time. It was a fun workshop that involved getting your body moving as you mimicked the animal you were tracking.



Photo highlights from the tracking workshop. Photos by Kiersten Abarca.



## Workshop Summaries — continued

**Kiersten Abarca**, San Joaquin Valley Chapter, Past President; [kabarca@mcbioinc.com](mailto:kabarca@mcbioinc.com)

### Safe Rattlesnake Handling Workshop – August 2023

The rattlesnake handling workshop was held at the San Joaquin River Center's River house in Fresno, California and had a total of 14 attendees. It was a wonderful event where Dr. Emily Taylor, founder of Central Coast Snake Services, presented some valuable information about the ecology, conservation, identification, behavior of rattlesnakes, and tips and tricks on discussing rattlesnakes with the public. Individuals took turns learning how to properly and safely handle a rattlesnake using the bucket and tong method and were even able to get up close and personal with a tubed Pacific rattlesnake.



Photo highlights from the rattlesnake handling workshop. Photos by Kiersten Abarca.



# Workshop Summaries — continued

**Kiersten Abarca**, San Joaquin Valley Chapter, Past President; [kabarca@mcbioinc.com](mailto:kabarca@mcbioinc.com)

## Small Mammal Trapping Workshop – November 2023

The small mammal trapping workshop was a great success! The workshop hosted a total of 41 attendees with 30 individuals participating in trapping activities and 11 individuals as lecture-only participants. The 3-day event involved an 8-hour lecture day followed by night trapping targeting giant kangaroo rats, and day trapping targeting San Joaquin antelope squirrels. The lecture day focused on species identification, trapping techniques, agency regulations, and life history for listed and special status species within the San Joaquin Valley. Trapping participants were split into groups of 3 and worked alongside permitted instructors on how to safely conduct trapping activities. Individuals learned how to properly handle, collect data, and identify species. We were successfully able to capture multiple individuals for our target species allowing everyone a chance to get up close and personal with small mammals.

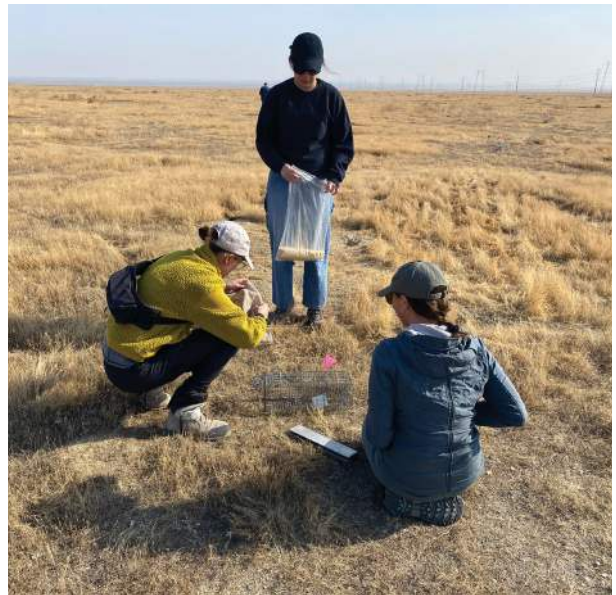


Photo highlights from the small mammal trapping workshop. Photos by Howard Clark and Kiersten Abarca.

# Chapter Executive Board and Committee Chairs

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Kacy Twist	President	tws.sjv.president@gmail.com
Alex Welch	President-Elect	awelch@mcbioinc.com
Kiersten Abarca	Past-President	kabarca@mcbioinc.com
Julie Vance	Secretary	julie.vance@wildlife.ca.gov
Ryan Lopez	Treasurer	tws.sjv.treasurer@gmail.com
Howard O. Clark, Jr	Chapter Representative	sjv.website@gmail.com
Ashleigh Pryor	Program Development	tws.sjv.prodev@gmail.com
Jeff Davis	Historian	jdavis@colibri-ecology.com
Lori Bono	Granting Committee Chair	lori.bono@wildlife.ca.gov
Mitchell Coleman	Membership Coordinator	tws.sjv.membershipcoordinator@gmail.com
Skip Moss	Conservation Affairs	smoss@natural-resources-group.com
Michelle Harris	Outreach Coordinator	mharris@colibri-ecology.com
Megan McCormick	Merchandise Manager	mmccormick@mcbioinc.com

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**Mailing Address:** San Joaquin Valley Chapter, PMB 165, 1099 E. Champlain Drive,  
Suite A, Fresno, CA 93720-5033

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## The San Joaquin Valley Chapter Area

The San Joaquin Valley Chapter covers a nine county area that includes areas of the San Joaquin Valley, Coastal Range, Sierra Nevada Range, and western Mojave Desert.



## The Goals of the Society and the San Joaquin Valley Chapter

- Develop and maintain professional standards for wildlife research and management.
- Enhance knowledge and technical capabilities of wildlife managers.
- Advance professional stewardship of wildlife resources and their habitats.
- Advocate the use of sound biological information for wildlife policy decisions.
- Increase public awareness and appreciation of the wildlife profession.

