

Susan Kirks for Mayor of Petaluma

Conservation Leader & Communication Specialist

A strong environmental record, a 22-year community service record, and leadership skills for consensus building, meeting management, and getting things done.

10 Priorities:

A united community, with county, regional and state connections, to address climate-change impacts, quality of life for all residents, and anticipate and strengthen climate emergencies – fire, floods, drought.

A more affordable City for living, supporting economic development that embraces new and forward thinking business opportunities.

A welcoming City for a diverse and growing population.

A safe community attracting and maintaining the best in fire, law enforcement and emergency personnel – and prioritizing a new public safety complex that includes the police station and a new main fire department.

Review City government staff, management and legal department – to improve morale and support a healthy work environment, communication and productivity.

A Parks Master Plan is one of the 2022 City Council priorities, but we must go much further. Parks and Recreation is the function where most cities also embrace and manage open space policy and protocols, priorities for open space and green space conservation, and following through on these priorities, building upon them. Petaluma desperately needs this addition to the Parks and Recreation function. The Parks and Recreation Commission needs to include appointees who will help agendize, learn and understand all facets of both active and passive recreation and the vision and implementation of open and green space conservation. The new nonprofit, ReLeaf, can fill an important gap in terms of tree planting and maintenance, increasing the City's tree canopy, but this is one element of a broader need to strengthen the Parks and Recreation function, train workers to understand and be sensitive to federal law such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and require, without exception, a coordinated and respectful approach to habitat protection, habitat connectivity, open space and green space in neighborhoods, existing parks, proposed new housing and commercial development, and in extremely important surrounding green belts and rural properties in the City of Petaluma. We need experienced leaders in these areas, guiding our City Council and City Management, to bring these long overdue needs into reality – and save what remains while enhancing all possible areas of Petaluma's environment. This will contribute to the quality of life for all Petalumans.

Support nonprofits and groups and follow through on City and County policies to continue to address the unsheltered population's needs in Petaluma.

Consider local decisions through the broader lens of connection to Sonoma and Marin Counties and the Bay Area.

Engage and support the educational community in excellence in education, a safe learning environment, and great opportunities for our students in private and public schools,

Transportation – Support Safe Streets Petaluma and give guidance to City Management about priorities the community wants to see, to be fulfilled through the Public Works Department. Support recruiting and

employing Public Works supervisors and staff with environmental backgrounds and experience, critically important in 2022 and definitely deficient in our Public Works function. Continue to develop multi-modal transit and transportation trails, lanes and opportunities to provide safe routes to work and to school, and to also responsibly address reducing carbon emissions through less gas powered vehicle transport in Petaluma

How Has Susan served Petaluma, Sonoma County and our Bay Area?

President, Madrone Audubon Society, Sonoma County Chapter of National Audubon: A 3000 member organization with many Petaluma members. Five terms as Board President. Susan guided the organization to increase from a 100-member nonprofit to almost 1000 local members and 2000 National Audubon members throughout Sonoma County. Susan's record in conservation action for our environment, birds and wildlife is well known – ranging from litigation support for migratory birds, opposing the Dutra asphalt plant near the Petaluma Wetlands, and leading the way for Petaluma to receive the prestigious Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance for the Petaluma Wetlands (2018). She continues to serve Petaluma and Sonoma County with strength and integrity. Susan's meeting leadership and management are also effective and consensus building, needed skills for our Petaluma City Council in showing leadership for Petaluma voters.

Chair, Board of Directors, and Naturalist, Paula Lane Action Network (PLAN), Petaluma – Susan is the most experienced Naturalist for American Badger, a special status mammal with critical habitat and movement areas in Petaluma and also Sonoma County. Susan has led PLAN, a conservation nonprofit with loyal supporting members and volunteers for over 20 years. PLAN advocated for and achieved a \$1,000,050 grant from the Sonoma County Ag and Open Space District to acquire and conserve the 100-year-old grassland habitat for badgers and multiple other species in West Petaluma. This land, centrally located in a wildlife corridor, is the planned to be home and amenity, Paula Lane Nature Preserve. PLAN has stood firm as has Susan to address the City of Petaluma's mistreatment of PLAN, its leaders, volunteers and service providers, as well as the severe habitat damage caused by the City of Petaluma. As important, PLAN has established boundaries with Petaluma politics, which can be divisive and mean-spirited, and will continue to do so – for the benefit of the land, habitat, wildlife and the greater community of residents, volunteers and education. This is the kind of leadership we in Petaluma need in our Petaluma City Government. PLAN has a plan and is working toward the higher good for the open space land and the greater Petaluma community. This is an important component of Petaluma's future. Environment first, people second, included, but second.

The High Use-Low Impact Project design for this very reality – how to protect sensitive habitat and also accommodate human access and enjoyment – is part of the City of Petaluma's Climate Action Framework and should be utilized and followed for every existing and new park and open space area in Petaluma.

Member, Policy Committee, Together Bay Area, regional Open Space Coalition, 2021-present.

Member, Environmental Technical Committee, State Route 37 Plan for Replacement, 2021-present.

Treasurer, Farallones Ecosystem Coalition – Opposing the Proposed Poison Drop over the Farallon Islands.

Member, Board of Directors, Rebuilding Together Petaluma, 2008-2012.

2nd District member, 2008-10, Citizens Advisory Committee, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

Advocate with Friends of Tolay for Cardoza Ranch open space acquisition to become Tolay Lake Regional Park, early-mid 2000s.

Docent, Petaluma Wetlands Alliance, 2006-2008 (first class of docents).

Participant in all City of Petaluma and Sonoma County General Plan update meetings for General Plan 2025. Current participant in all General Plan Update meetings as well as Work Group meetings for Open Space, Natural Environment and Species Protection.

Participant, statewide Wildlife Corridor Work Group – evaluate/support legislation and policies for wildlife connectivity and wildlife corridor protection.

Naturalist, American Badger, Field Study & Observations, 20+ years. Advise property owners, organizations/agencies on habitat protection, species conservation and human coexistence with badgers. Guest Naturalist, Bay Nature. Identified and documented 3 wildlife corridors in the West Petaluma area. Assess properties for American Badger presence, activity, and protection.

Madrone Audubon Society, Sonoma County – additional roles and achievements:

- Co-Chair, Renewable Energy Committee (contributed significant portion of Sonoma County Wind Energy component of Renewable Energy Ordinance).
- Created nesting support project (in 7th year) for large heron and egret nesting site in SW Santa Rosa. Install and maintain project each year, supporting Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County volunteers. Manage encroachment permit with City of Santa Rosa, interface with the local community, CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and City of Santa Rosa Police.
- Board Member 2008-present, incl. Membership Chair and Vice President roles.
- Representative to Bay Area Audubon Council (8 Bay Area Audubon Chapters coordinate activities and information).
- Recipient, Bowen Award, from Madrone Audubon Society.
 - Oversee Phenology Project, citizen science research on climate change impacts on mammals, birds and plants at 2 locations in Petaluma since 2016; part of National Phenology Project. Provided background and information to add American Badger to the National Phenology Project and consult for questions/information.
 - Led organizational advocacy for Measure M – Parks for All Funds – for 2 nonprofit organizations.
 - Led organizational advocacy for AA Parcel Tax measure, establishing San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority and grant funding for restoration of San Francisco Bay Estuary, Petaluma wetlands and River being the northernmost part of the estuary..

#

Personal

Education

Master of Science, Communication, Syracuse University

(Teaching Assistant, Newhouse School of Communication)

Master of Science, Traditional Oriental Medicine, Emperor's College, Santa Monica

Graduate study-American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine/San Francisco, two

Graduate Colleges in Hawaii-Maui and Big Island.

Bachelor of Science, Speech-Communication, NC State University, North Carolina.

(Honors, Outstanding Senior Woman, Student Commencement Speaker)

Participant, Inaugural Leadership Academy, Center for Ecoliteracy, Berkeley

Martial arts: 2nd degree Black Belt, Aikido; 1st degree provisional black belt, Go-Ju Kai Karate Do.

Professional

Conservation Consultant – (2004-present) Accepting donations for nonprofits I lead, providing assessments, insights and guidance for habitat protection, bird and wildlife protection, American Badger research and education, open space and green space strategies and plans, and wildlife corridors and crossings protection.

Acupuncturist, California 1999-2017 (ret.)

Past: Adjunct Professor, Undergraduate Business School, Golden Gate University; Management Training, Westinghouse Broadcasting; Associate Producer, WBZ-TV, Boston; Medical Language Specialist/Technical Writer.