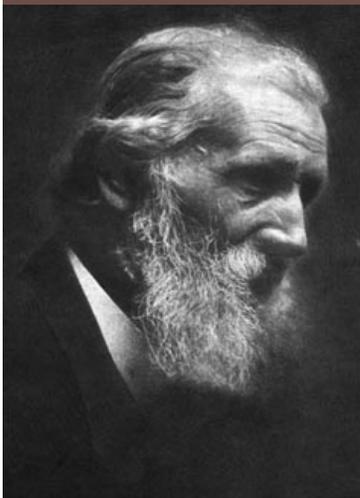




# The View

SPRING 2008

*There is a love of wild Nature in everybody, an ancient mother-love ever showing itself whether recognized or no, and however covered by cares and duties. —John Muir*



The mission of the John Muir Association is to celebrate the life, share the vision, and preserve the legacy of John Muir through education, preservation, advocacy and stewardship, in partnership with the National Park Service at the John Muir National Historic Site.

## John Muir Birthday–Earth Day Celebration

Bring the family to the John Muir Birthday–Earth Day Celebration on April 19 for fun-filled activities and entertainment. The Celebration will be held at the John Muir National Historic Site, the home of nature’s staunchest and perhaps most influential advocate—John Muir. This year’s theme, ***Healthy Planet, Healthy You***, echoes Muir’s quote: “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

Admission is free to all events, which begin at 8:30 a.m. with the hike *In Muir’s Footsteps–Exploring Mt. Wanda* led by ranger Cheryl Abel (see *Schedule of Earth Day Events, page 2*).

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the John Muir National Historic Site opens the gates



Judy Potter

for the Celebration, which includes activities and exhibits for children and adults ranging from journal-making and oral history to wildlife displays and



Tom Zamaria

Recycled Fashion Show 2007

mural painting. Guests will also enjoy live entertainment, self-guided tours of the historic home and grounds—including the new California Native Plant Garden—and much more. Michael Muir, great grandson of John Muir, will have his handicapped-accessible carriages on hand to offer carriage rides.

At 2 p.m., John Muir, as portrayed by National Park Service ranger Frank Helling, will celebrate his birthday with music and birthday cake. Lunch and beverages will be available for purchase. The Celebration is presented by the John Muir Association (JMA) and the National Park Service. Heavy rain will cancel most events.

The John Muir Birthday–Earth Day Celebration coincides with Earth Day events throughout Martinez. The John Muir Earth Day Festival includes a fun run, nature walk and kayak regatta

*(Continued, next page)*



John Muir Association  
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[johnmuirassociation.org](http://johnmuirassociation.org)

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(donation required). Admission is free to events located at the downtown Main Street plaza, including live music, entertainment and the Environmental Living Fair. Green businesses will have displays highlighting better environmental approaches to everyday living. The Trashy Fashion Show, featuring recycled couture, starts at 12:30. The Festival is from 10:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Judy Potter

#### Location

The John Muir National Historic Site is located at 4202 Alhambra Avenue at Highway 4 in Martinez. For directions to the Muir Site, visit [www.nps.gov/jomu](http://www.nps.gov/jomu). Festival events will be held at the downtown Martinez Main Street plaza.

#### Transportation

Using public transportation is encouraged—bus, BART and Amtrak (to the Martinez station) all provide



Tom Zamaria

Frank Helling as John Muir

transportation within an easy walk to all events or shuttles. Free parking is available at the Alhambra High School parking lot (Alhambra Avenue at D Street), and at the Martinez Adult Education parking lot (600 Alhambra Avenue at F Street). Shuttles from the parking lots will transport guests to the John Muir NHS, nature hike and downtown events.

#### More Information

[www.johnmuirassociation.org](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org)  
[www.johnmuirearthday.com](http://www.johnmuirearthday.com)  
 John Muir Association (925) 229-3857

## Schedule of Earth Day Events

### 8:30 a.m.

*In Muir's Footsteps—Exploring Mt. Wanda*, a nature hike led by NPS ranger Cheryl Abel. The hike is presented by the Muir Heritage Land Trust and the Hike for Discovery Program of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Park and board shuttle at the Alhambra Adult School (see *Transportation*). Note: Trail is steep; wear sturdy shoes and bring water.

### 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

*John Muir Birthday—Earth Day Celebration at the John Muir National Historic Site* Environmental exhibits, children's activities, music, horse-drawn carriage rides, food and much more. Free admission.

### 10:00 a.m.

*Hike the Hills Nature Walk*—meet at the front parking lot of Alhambra High School. The hike starts at the Nejedly Staging Area and ends at the John Muir National Historic Site. Donation required—proceeds benefit the John Muir Association.

*Trail Run Challenge*—meet at the Alhambra High School back parking lot. Donation required.

*Carquinez Kayakers Regatta*—launch at the Martinez Marina. Donation required.

### 10:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Downtown Activities presented at the Main Street Plaza*

Environmental Living Fair  
 Recycled Fashion Show  
 Music and Entertainment

### 2:00 p.m.

*John Muir Birthday Celebration at the John Muir National Historic Site* John Muir will celebrate his birthday, as portrayed by National Park Service ranger Frank Helling. Enjoy music and cake!

## Our Sixth Year! Register Now for John Muir Mountain Day Camp

At the John Muir Mountain Day Camp, children experience naturally good times and learn about the life and legacy of John



Muir. Camp takes place at the John Muir National Historic Site. Campers will: enjoy a carriage ride with John Muir's great grandson, Michael Muir; explore trails; make sourdough bread with 139-year-

old starter; sketch, paint, and sing; create inventions; make a journal; experience John Muir through a National Park Service ranger's portrayal; learn about local plant and animal life; and much more.

Camp is for children ages 8 to 12, and two five-day sessions are offered, Monday through Friday:

July 28 to August 1  
August 4 to August 8

Hours are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$235 per child for each session, which includes a custom camp T-shirt. Space is limited.

For information, visit [muircamp.org](http://muircamp.org). To register with a credit card, call (925) 798-1300 (Willows Theatre Box Office).



## John Muir Association Conservation Awards

A sparkling evening—filled with inspiration, delicious food and good conversation—delighted all at the 30th Annual John Muir Conservation Awards Dinner on January 20, held at the Campbell Theatre in Martinez. The John Muir Association honored those whose work continues John Muir's legacy of environmental preservation. Congratulations and thanks to our winners for the great work they do on behalf of all of us who enjoy a better place to live.

Lennie Roberts was the Conservationist of the Year for her work as the San Mateo County Advocate for the Committee for Green Foothills.

Bank of America received the Business Conservation Award for its 10-year environmental initiative.

GreenInfo Network won the Nonprofit Conservation Award for its work providing high-quality GIS mapping and analytical services to public agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Rona Zollinger, founder of the Environmental Studies Academy (ESA), was awarded the Environmental Education Conservation Award. ESA is an innovative program serving high school youth in Martinez.

We thank our sponsors for making the event possible: Shell Oil Products US Martinez Refinery, Muir-Hanna Vineyards, and Anderson Valley Brewing Company. Special thanks to the Willows Theatre Company.



Award winners (left to right) Lennie Roberts of the Committee for Green Foothills, Rona Zollinger of ESA, Larry Orman of GreenInfo Network and Emily Shanks of Bank of America. Below: Rona Zollinger and ESA students.



Photos: Todd Kiker

### Thanks to Our Earth Day Sponsors

Martinez Community Foundation  
Shell Oil Products US Martinez Refinery  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 302  
Bay Area Air Quality Management District  
Whole Foods  
Allied Waste

### ...and to Our Earth Day Partners

National Park Service  
Access Adventure  
Muir Heritage Land Trust  
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Hike for Discovery Program



## Who Was John Muir? By Sherida Bush

Those of you who don't know who John Muir was—and even those who do—will find it hard to grasp all the facets of the man. He once described himself



as a “poetico-trampo-geologist-botanist and ornithologist-naturalist.” He left out some things. He could have added inventor, farmer, husband, father, explorer, mountaineer, writer and—what he's most known for—pioneer of nature conservation.

All the descriptions are incomplete, and unsatisfying for those who want to know more about the man who changed our nation. His legacy is undeniable. Every person who ever enjoyed a national park has John Muir to thank. He not only inspired people to love nature, he worked hard to preserve it. Yet the descriptions of the essence of the man in everyday life—the anecdotes and stories, and reminiscences of those who knew him—leave much unknown.

Muir's surviving letters and voluminous writings are important chronicles of who he was, and even these are inadequate. After Muir died, his friend, writer John Burroughs, called Muir “a unique character—greater as a talker than

as a writer...he hated writing and composed with difficulty, though his books have charm of style; but his talk came easily and showed him at his best.”

We have wonderful photographs of Muir in later life, after he became a public figure. Photos in Yosemite, photos with President Theodore Roosevelt, photos with his family on the porch of his Martinez home. But his father did not approve of acts of vanity, so Muir as a boy went unphotographed. We do have a few portraits of him as a young man. Nevertheless, the Muir we think of most has a face etched by time. These images do not convey a man so vigorous he hesitated taking other people--and even horses--on wilderness trips because he feared they wouldn't keep up with him (they didn't). The missing photos might have helped round out a more balanced portrait of the person for us, even though they are but shadows of the man.

Muir was great friends with John Swett, his neighbor in Martinez' Alhambra Valley. A well-known photograph shows the two men sitting on Swett's porch. It has been said they would talk for hours, yet we know little of those conversations. Swett is known as “The Father of California Public School Education,” and Muir is known as “The Father of the National Park System.” And so, both were pioneers in their fields of endeavor—they had that in common. In a 1893 tribute to Muir, Swett said, “He possesses an

exhaustless fund of humor, and is inclined to look on the sunny side of life as well as of nature.” Another facet the photos don't reveal.

Today, when the earth seems in so much peril, when strife and pollution impact our daily lives in ways we cannot begin to understand, we look to people who can lead us out of troubled times. How much could be gained if, given the chance, we could sit on a shady porch with



John Muir, and ask for his thoughts, guidance, wisdom. A lot, I think. But that conversation can never take place. We have to content ourselves with what he has

written, and those words are a gift. For yourself, your family, your planet, discover what John Muir had to say, and what is known about him and his fascinating life.

If you're not sure where to start, here are some books you might find enjoyable, informative reads.

*The Wild Muir, Twenty-two of John Muir's Greatest Adventures*, Selected and Introduced by Lee Stetson (The Yosemite Association)

*Essential Muir, A Selection of John Muir's Best Writings*, Edited by Fred D. White (Heyday Books)

### *Stickeen*

Numerous publications are available of this harrowing and humorous tale, including illustrated editions edited for children. It's also included in various anthologies, including *Essential Muir*.

## John Muir's Year of Homecoming

By Will Collin

More than 28 million folk worldwide are of Scottish descent. When John Muir's family left Dunbar for the New World in 1849, they were among 200,000 immigrants who entered the United States that year. A large proportion were Scots or Scots-Irish. They clung to their Scottish heritage, and crucial to this were a knowledge of, and love for, the works of Robert Burns. John Muir was no different.



Burns Cottage

The year 2009 marks the 250th anniversary of Burns' birth. It is also the Year of Homecoming, when those of Scottish descent are invited to visit Scotland, seek out their families, take part in the Burns celebrations or simply experience the warmth of the welcome, the beauty of the scenery and the splendour of the heritage.

In 1893, Muir made his only journey back to Scotland. Arriving in Edinburgh on July 3rd, he wrote to his wife Louie "... now I am a Scotchman and at home again." The next day, book publisher David Douglas took him on a walking tour of Edinburgh, "... to all the famous places celebrated in [Sir Walter] Scott's novels, ... around the Calton Hill and the Castle,

into the old churches so full of associations, to Queen Mary's Palace Museum, and I don't know how many other places." He wrote to Louie, "Edinburgh is, apart from its glorious historical associations, far the most beautiful town I ever saw. I cannot conceive how it could be more beautiful."

On July 5th, Muir "sauntered down the street," in Dunbar, meeting old friends and visiting cousins. He wrote home, "Dunbar is an interesting place to anybody, beautifully located on a plateau above the sea and with a background of beautiful hills and dales ...." He went to the Lorne Hotel, that "used to be our home," to "take a look at that dormer window I climbed in my nightgown." One evening, he walked along the shore with a cousin, Maggie Lunam, "The waves made ... grand songs, the same old songs they sang to me in my childhood, and I seemed a boy again and all the long eventful years in America were forgotten while I was filled with that glorious ocean psalm."



Loch Torridon

While based in Dunbar, he "... had a good many rides and walks into the country among the fine farms and towns and old castles." He went to Fast Castle because of its link with Sir Walter Scott. Wherever he went, he wrote, "I find fine glacial studies everywhere."

He spent ten days in Dunbar but there was so much more to see and do. First, he made a pilgrimage to

Dumfries and "Burns's country" then travelled through Glasgow to Stirling. Next, he travelled through the Trossachs, sailing on Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, from where he took a train to "charming Oban." His return journey to Glasgow was by steamboat through the islands off the west coast. "... it is all beautiful hereabouts like the coast of Alaska ...."



Loch Katrine

Muir visited both Norway and Switzerland but the pull of home was too strong. On his return, he went to the top of Scotland before sailing along the Caledonian Canal through the Great Glen and returning by train to Glasgow.

Muir sailed for New York on September 16th. In a letter to Liverpool cousins, he wrote, "Among all the memories that I carry away with me this eventful summer none stand out in so divine a light as the friends I have found among my own kith and kin ... again and again while with you I repeated to myself these lines of Burns: 'From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs, that makes her loved at home, revered abroad'."

Why don't you follow in John Muir's footsteps in 2009?

*Will Collin is a Trustee of the Friends of John Muir's Birthplace in Dunbar, Scotland. The Birthplace was recently visited by HRH Prince Edward. Photos by Will Collin.*



## Superintendent's View

By Martha Lee

**B**y now, many of you have met our new Chief of Interpretation, Naomi Torres. She has moved in to David Blackburn's old office at John Muir NHS, but she is quickly discovering that, with our responsibilities at four park sites and in multiple East Bay communities, she will rarely get to sit down in that office! A resident of Berkeley, Naomi is enjoying her new, shorter commute. She has even ridden her bicycle from her home to John Muir NHS—it took her about an hour and a half, so it may not be an everyday option.



Tom Zamaria

We are delighted to welcome Naomi from her last job at Golden Gate National Recreation Area across the Bay. In her years at Golden Gate, she acquired wide experience with interpretive operations and supervision (for example, she supervised the complex Alcatraz interpretation and tour program for several years) as well as with civic engagement and relationships with partners and communities. She has most recently run the Crissy

Field Center with her cohort from the Golden Gate Conservancy. She assisted us part time at Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front in the past couple of years, helping to implement an outreach program in Richmond. Working with Betty Reid Soskin, Naomi was responsible for producing the DVD "Of Lost Conversations and Untold Stories," which documents African American experience and contributions in Richmond during the war years.

We were impressed with the well-qualified candidates who truly wanted to come work with us here in our East Bay national park sites; they expressed a lot of enthusiasm for our parks, their stories, and the possibilities ahead of us. Our management team conducted in-person interviews with the four applicants who we considered to most closely meet our needs, and we are united in our conviction that Naomi is the best fit for this job. I know you will all join us in welcoming her.



Naomi Torres

Sherida Bush

*The four parks tended by "our" hard-working National Park Service staff are the John Muir National Historic Site, the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site, the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, and the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historic Park. Visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) to learn more about these parks.—Editor*

## Muir Home on the Martinez Historical Home Tour

**J**ohn Muir's home in Martinez will be one of the houses featured in the Martinez Historical Home Tour in October. The tour will feature seven homes, and includes the Martinez Historical Museum.

John Muir's seventeen-room late Victorian home (Italianate style) at the John Muir National Historic Site was built in 1882. An article in the *Martinez Gazette*, written while the house was being built, said "with but one or two exceptions, it will be the finest and most complete private residence in the county."



The two-story house was built for Dr. John Strentzel and his wife, John Muir's parents-in-law. The designers were architects Wolfe



and Son of San Francisco. John and Louie Muir moved in after Dr. Strentzel's death in 1890. The house's structure has remained largely unaltered since Muir's time.

The tour will be October 11, from 10 am to 4 pm, and shuttles will provide transportation between homes. Tickets are \$20 and must be purchased in advance. For more information, call Co-Chairs Kathy Radke (925) 370-0648 or June Rogers (925) 689-8726.

*Photos are of the 1882 Muir home at the John Muir National Historic Site*

**Yes!** I want to continue John Muir's legacy as a member of the John Muir Association.

Your donation to the John Muir Association supports our mission to celebrate the life and share the vision of John Muir, through programs focusing on education, preservation, advocacy, and stewardship of the John Muir National Historic Site.

The John Muir Association is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization; donations to JMA are tax deductible.

- |  |         |  |      |
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**John Muir Association  
P.O. Box 2433  
Martinez, CA 94553**

## John Muir NHS Visitor Center Abloom with California Natives

By Lucy Lawliss

As spring unfolds around the Bay Area, you won't want to miss what is happening at the visitor center at the John Muir National Historic Site. A garden of California native plants is taking shape around the entryway, and with the recent rains and warm suns, the first flowers of springtime are popping.

Over the last year, an enthusiastic group of volunteers from the John Muir Association, Contra Costa Master Gardeners, California Native Plant Society—East Bay Chapter and Friends of Alhambra Creek have come together to create a space that will remind visitors of Muir's abiding passion for native plants and his role as one of the



great botanical collectors of his day. Greg Wolford—a dedicated professional in the design and installation of

native plant landscapes—worked with the volunteers to plan and install this first phase.

Greg has created natural settings to display an array of native plants and has tied the plant communities together with interweaving gravel paths and sculpted terrain. An interpretive brochure and plant identification scheme are taking shape to complement the design. The brochure will be published with funds collected in tribute to the dedicated John Muir volunteer gardener, Ray Egbert. The brochure

will give visitors a way to learn the plant names, know where to find them in the wild and how to use them to enhance their own home gardens.

So don't wait. Come by. An ever-changing delight awaits you. Observe the colors, patterns, textures and fragrances of blossoms and aromatic leaves as this new garden puts down roots and takes hold. Learn the preferred growing conditions of a diversity of native plants. You may see one that would enhance your corner of the state and you, too, could restore a bit of native California.



*Lucy Lawliss is the Resources Manager for the John Muir National Historic Site*



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Martinez, CA 94553

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## Spring Schedule of Walks at the John Muir National Historic Site

Spring is a great time to get out onto Mount Wanda. National Park Service rangers will be leading Bird and Wildflower Walks almost every Saturday. The walks are free and registration is not required. The terrain is steep, so wear comfortable clothing and walking shoes. Bring water and binoculars. Rain or unsafe conditions cancels the event. For all of the walks, meet the ranger at the Park and Ride lot, on the corner of Alhambra Ave. and Franklin Canyon Rd., just off Hwy 4 in Martinez. For more information, call the John Muir NHS at (925) 228-8860.

### Bird Walks

Join us at **8:30 am** for a morning Bird walk on the following Saturdays. The two-mile walks take about 2 ½ hours. You may even see a Western bluebird!

April 12  
May 10



### Wildflower Walks

Wildflowers are abloom on Mt. Wanda! Come enjoy the splendor and meet us at **9:00 am** on these Saturdays. The two-mile walks take about two hours.

March 29  
April 5  
May 3  
May 17



### National Junior Ranger Day Walk

Celebrate National Junior Ranger Day on **April 26 at 9:00 am** with a walk on Mt. Wanda. Young people are especially encouraged to join in—bring the family. This walk is recommended for children ages eight and up, as the walk up Mt. Wanda can be steep. By the end of the walk, you will be a Junior Ranger!



Plan to join us at the John Muir Birthday—Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 19, 2008