



John Muir
ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 2433
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The View

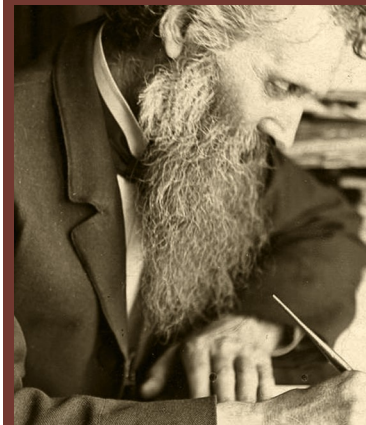
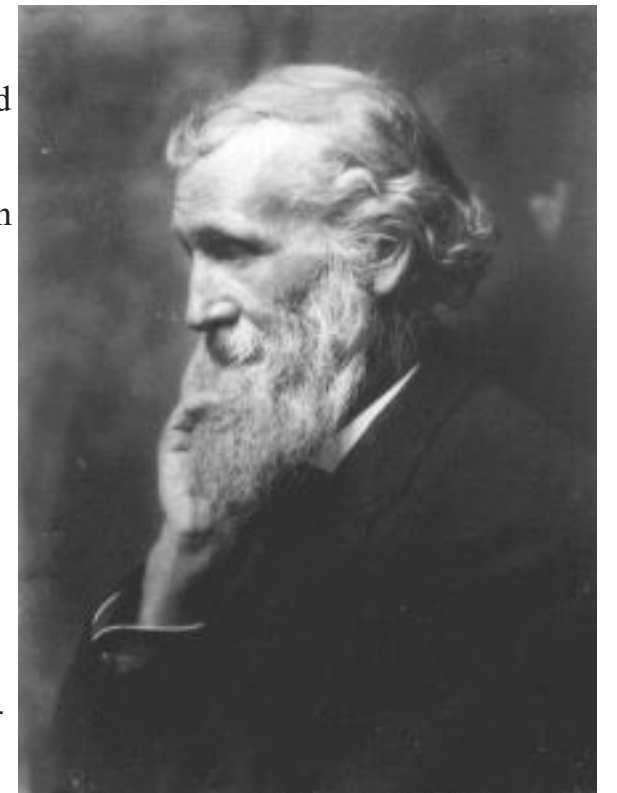
Fall 2020

John Muir's Legacy Endures Recent Scrutiny

By Tom Leatherman, Superintendent John Muir NHS

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

In July the Sierra Club executive director, Michael Brune, published a blog post on the Sierra Club's website calling for a re-examination of John Muir's role in white supremacy and racism and how this shaped the Sierra Club's history. Following this article there were television and newspaper reporters who came to the John Muir site to interview staff and visitors for a response. I was interviewed by ABC 7 television news as the park representative and, when asked, I indicated that National Park Service, at John Muir National Historic Site, is interested in engaging with the Sierra Club and others in a dialogue around any history related to John Muir; after all, this is our job.



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.

As stewards of the National Park site that honors the legacy of John Muir, arguably the "Father of the National Parks," it is critical that we are engaged in a dialogue that helps to shed some light on all aspects of his life, especially parts that are not well known. Understanding how his views and beliefs on racism and white supremacy, as well as his association with others with these same views, might have shaped the formation of the National Park Service and the

conservation movement is still very relevant today. As the keepers and storytellers of our nation's history, only by learning about and sharing a more complete history can we truly fulfill our mission. Our role is not to filter history or provide information about the parts that make us proud. Instead we strive to share a more complete history, without judgement or valuation, so that people learning about Muir and his life can develop their own perspectives on his legacy and contributions.

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Upcoming Events



John Muir Birthday - Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 17, 2021 **Family Fun all day!**
10 am to 4 pm **Don't miss it!**

2021 John Muir Mountain Day Camp

Dates TBA

See www.johnmuirassociation.org
for more details





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Tom Leatherman,
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John Muir Legacy *(from page 1)*

The work that John Muir did to advocate for the preservation of amazing places like Yosemite and Mount Rainier will not be undone. But, to fully understand how he was able to do what he did, it is important to understand the context by which he was able to achieve these accomplishments. John Muir spoke of creating places that are preserved for and used by everyone, not just a few or just the elite.

If the system and context by which the parks were established is inherently racist, then what might it mean for how our parks are used today – and why do we see fewer people of color coming to visit or working for the National Parks?

As we research and learn more about the history of John Muir, we can begin to explore and understand the answers to these (and other) questions, and gain perspectives that we did not previously have. Ultimately this information may help us realize what John Muir was seeking to do so many years ago – preserve for current and future generations, these special places, for everyone to enjoy.

Support the John Muir Association

Ever read this newsletter, or attend a JMA Birthday– Earth Day Celebration event and wonder “Gosh, those folks have so much fun and it’s all for such worthy cause! How could I join in the fun?”

It’s easy and it is important! We always need volunteers and membership donations are extremely important to support our efforts.

Two easy ways to learn more:

- 1) Go to www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/join.php
- 2) Email us at jma@johnmuirassociation.org



Call for Nominees for 2020 John Muir Conservation Awards

For the 43rd consecutive year, the John Muir Association will present our annual John Muir Conservation Awards at our Birthday / Earth Day event in 2021.

The John Muir Association supports the National Park Service in sustaining the John Muir National Historic Site a center for education, inspiration, and advocacy of the legacy of John Muir. In keeping with this mission, each year since 1978, the John Muir Association has honored those who continue John Muir's legacy of environmental preservation.

The winners of these awards over those years have included conservation groups, governmental agencies, select individuals of all ages, and local businesses. The point is, anyone – people, groups, and companies – can contribute to conservation efforts, and we want to showcase those committed conservationists.



Do you know of a business that strives to ensure that its operation uses energy and resources in a sustainable fashion? Do you know of a community group that has conservation initiatives that help keep our planet and its wild areas, healthy?

Do you know of some individuals who are devoted to conservation, and educating others about the principles of conservation?

Chances are, you do some people or companies that are worthy of this prestigious award from the John Muir Association and you can help them get the recognition they deserve!

Nomination forms can be found at <http://www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/conserv-award-submitnom.php>. There are links at the bottom that page in both pdf and Word formats.

Entries must be received by January 15th, 2021 You can choose to nominate anyone you might feel is worthy, and you can nominate your own business or organization if you like, as well.

Questions? Contact the John Muir Association by email: jma@johnmuirassociation.org

Muir House Celebrates 19th Amendment Centennial



On August 26th, the Strentzel/Muir home was beautifully lit in the colors of purple and gold to recognize the 100 year anniversary of the 19th Amendment.

John Muir National Historic Site was proud to join in the celebration of the Women's Suffrage Movement and the 100th year of women's right to vote. Some of John Muir's good friends and neighbors were very involved in this fight for justice and the town of Martinez, CA, where the site is located, can proudly claim its place in history as a rallying point for this historic moment.

John and Mary Louise Tracy Swett, respected educators who supported and promoted women's suffrage, invited Susan B. Anthony to Martinez for a meeting on October 3, 1896, under the auspices of the Contra Costa County Equal Suffrage Club. Anthony delivered "a clear, logical speech upon the rights of the gentler sex" at the Martinez Opera House. The October 10, 1896 Contra Costa Gazette stated: "Her speech throughout was well received and most heartily applauded at the close."

In 1911, California women won the right to vote and August 26, 2020, marks the centennial of the 19th Amendment becoming law. As we acknowledge and address ongoing calls for justice and equality in America today, the Suffrage movement is a reminder of previous struggles and protests which brought real and lasting change to our evolving democracy. Even though that progress has been made, we must aggressively continue the work necessary to realize the full promise of our nation's founding documents.

Historic Adobe at John Muir NHS Closed During Repairs



A recent thorough analysis of structural and seismic information revealed that the Martinez Adobe must be closed until structural repairs and stabilization can occur. The park consulted with an adobe expert (structural engineer) through the National Park Service's Vanishing Treasures Program to help evaluate the Martinez Adobe. The analysis shows that in its current condition, it is highly unlikely the building would be able to withstand a major earthquake. For safety reasons, access to the Martinez Adobe is now blocked off from the public and remains closed for all use until the structure is stabilized over the coming 2-3 years.

Built in 1849 on the large Mexican California Rancho El Pinole, the Vicente Martinez Adobe is a fine example of rural vernacular architecture of the transitional 1840s period, when Mexican architectural traditions were increasingly influenced by European traditions. The adobe is one of only a few remaining California-Mexican style adobes that were constructed in northern California during this era. Don Vicente inherited the ranch from his father for whom the town of Martinez, California was named. In 1874 John T. Strentzel, father-in-law of John Muir purchased the property and used the adobe as an outbuilding on the ranch. Between 1906 and 1915, John Muir's daughter, Wanda Hanna, and her family made the adobe their home.



Since becoming part of the John Muir National Historic Site in 1964, the Martinez Adobe has been open to the public for touring. The adobe houses the only permanent bilingual exhibit about the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. The Anza Trail commemorates the route taken by Spanish Colonists in 1775-76 to found the Mission and Presidio of San Francisco. The Adobe is located near the historic corridor of the colonizing expedition. Anza Trail exhibits will go "virtual" during this period of closure--please visit www.nps.gov/JUBA for more information pertaining to the Anza Trail. Please visit www.nps.gov/JOMU for more information pertaining to John Muir National Historic Site.

The View from the President's Desk

By Mark Thomson

Well, Covid can't keep me down. It's time for another one from the President's desk. We are in the midst of a few organizational changes and I will detail those a little further down the page.

As you know, the pandemic has curtailed our events drastically this year. We were in the middle of preparing for the John Muir Birthday-Earth Day event when it became clear it could not be safely held. Shortly after that we had to make a similar decision with our annual Mountain Days summer camp. When we had to cancel, we had already filled one session. It was a great disappointment to have to call off both of these events this year. We are hoping for brighter days in 2021 and have started planning for next year's John Muir Birthday-Earth Day event and Mountain Day Camp



One of the bright spots for 2020 is that we had a great set of conservation award winners. The Spring 2020 newsletter had a great writeup on all of them. If you missed it, check our website at johnmuirassociation.org. We've got all the details there. Speaking of conservation awards, it's time for nominations again. See the article in this newsletter for details.

Now on to the organizational changes. At this moment, I am a lonely Co-President. Bruce Campbell has stepped down from the board and left me all alone. Luckily he is staying involved with the John Muir Association and will continue to be newsletter editor and handle some other key roles for us.

Come December, JoAnne Dunec will become the Board President and I will move to the Vice President position. Linda Vida, a board member, will become the Treasurer. We anticipate a smooth transition.

It has been a tough year for many of us. The necessary impacts on our life due to the Covid crisis and the disastrous fires of 2020 remind of us of our strong interdependence with nature. I'm sure that John Muir would have had the perfect words for our challenges, but lacking his insight on today, I will rely on one of his earlier ruminations "Going to the woods is going home." With the addition of West Hills Farm to the John Muir Historical Site and the dedication of the Almond Ranch adjacent to the park, we are going to have a lot more opportunities to go home via the woods. Check out the John Muir Land Trust site at jmlt.org for more information.

A last note from me – I want to thank Bruce Campbell for being such a great person to share a leadership role at the John Muir Association. Bruce is an incredibly creative, responsible and humorous fellow and I truly enjoyed working with him to further the legacy of John Muir.

Superintendent's View

By Tom Leatherman

The last six months have been a challenging and stressful time for us all. Even though the visitor center and home closed on March 17, Mt. Wanda has remained open and has been a popular place for hiking and people trying to get away from home isolation.

On June 23rd we were able to open the orchards and grounds around the Muir house five days a week, to allow visitors a chance to see the historic site and enjoy a picnic among the trees. On September 28th we began offering limited tours of the Muir House again, by family groups, on a first-come first-served basis.

The site opened again for 7 day a week visitation on October 17th, and we are working on plans to allow for more regular access to the Muir House and for the re-opening of the visitor center in the coming months. The safety and health of our staff and the visitors is our primary concern, so please be patient with us as we work through any changes that might be needed to maintain your safety.

One important reminder is that we ask anyone accessing the indoor spaces, like the Muir House, to please wear a mask at all times, even if you don't see other people around your immediate area. The more we minimize the amount of air we share, the less chance there will be that someone can unknowingly spread the virus to someone else. If you are thinking about coming to visit I would encourage you to check out our website at www.nps.gov/jomu for the most current hours and conditions.



John Muir on Automobiles in Yosemite

Ever wonder what John Muir thought of automobiles in Yosemite Park? Here's an excerpt from a letter he wrote to a friend after attending a planning meeting on that very subject:

"All signs indicate automobile victory, and doubtless, under certain precautionary restrictions, these useful, progressive, blunt-nosed mechanical beetles will hereafter be allowed to puff their way into all the parks and mingle their gas-breath with the breath of the pines and waterfalls, and, from the mountaineer's standpoint, with but little harm or good." John Muir, Dec. 12. 1912.