

The View

A Visit to Dunbar, Scotland

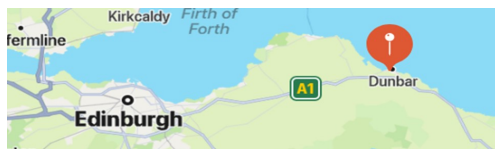
By Susan Garbarino

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



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.

New JMA Board member, Susan Garbarino, visited John Muir's Birthplace in Dunbar, Scotland on June 9th, 2022. She met with Dunbar locals Will Collin and Duncan Smeed, who were instrumental in founding the JM Birthplace Museum located in the house where John Muir was born in 1838. Dunbar is a seaside town about 30 minutes outside of Edinburgh by train, (see map below)



Muir was born and lived in Dunbar until he was eleven years old. Then in 1849, he along with his father and two of his siblings emigrated to Wisconsin where they farmed. Muir later attended the University of Wisconsin for a time.

The Birthplace Museum is a whitewashed building on the main street of Dunbar with three levels of exhibits regarding Muir's life, from his childhood to his time in California. The Museum is run with the assistance of the East Lothian Council (a local government

organization) and receives over thousands of visitors each year. Though the space is not large, the exhibits are excellent and are enjoyed by visitors from all over the world as well as many local school groups. It is especially marvelous to read Muir's words in the exhibit from his book *Story of my Boyhood and Youth (1913)* in the actual building that he is remembering.

The larger brown building next to the whitewashed Birthplace Museum is Muir's childhood home, where the family moved when he was quite young.

His grandparents lived across the street and he was particularly close to his maternal Grandfather, David Gilrey, who was a life-long resident of Dunbar. David Gilrey was well respected in town, working as the town's butcher or "flesher".

In addition to a tour of the Birthplace Museum, Susan was treated to a tour of town including the 16th century Town Hall, the church cemetery



Continued on page 2



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John Muir National Historic Site

National Park Service

www.nps.gov/jomu

K. Lynn Berry,
General Superintendent

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A Visit to Dunbar, Scotland *(from page 1)*

where several of John Muir's relatives are buried, and the historic harbor which has the ruins of the castle John Muir mentions he used to clamber up as a boy. Though he only returned to Dunbar once during his lifetime many years later (1893), Muir clearly remembered Dunbar fondly and his passion for nature and its conservation was sparked as a child in Scotland.

All in all, it was a marvelous day. If you're ever visiting Scotland, drop by the Birthplace Museum, it's a gem.



John Muir Birthplace <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/>

Town of Dunbar

<https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/dunbar-p241151>

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**



Our New Alhambra Hills Open Space!

By Jamie Fox

After a decades long battle against a ridgetop development that would have destroyed our tallest and most historic ridgeline in Martinez (owned by John Muir in 1894), the citizens voted over 68% yes to acquire the 297 acre parcel as public open space.

On November 11th 2022, the City officially purchased the land from the Texas developer and protected it for all future generations as public land open space.

The City is currently working on a plan, in partnership with other agencies, to open the ridgeline hopefully as soon as Spring of 2023... The Alhambra Hills currently have fire roads that are well suited for hiking trails and the enjoyment by all. The amount of birds on the property this year has been staggering, as if the wildlife and trees are rejoicing.

Photo Courtesy of: Cultural Landscape Report for John Muir National Historic Site (edited by Jamie Fox for this article)

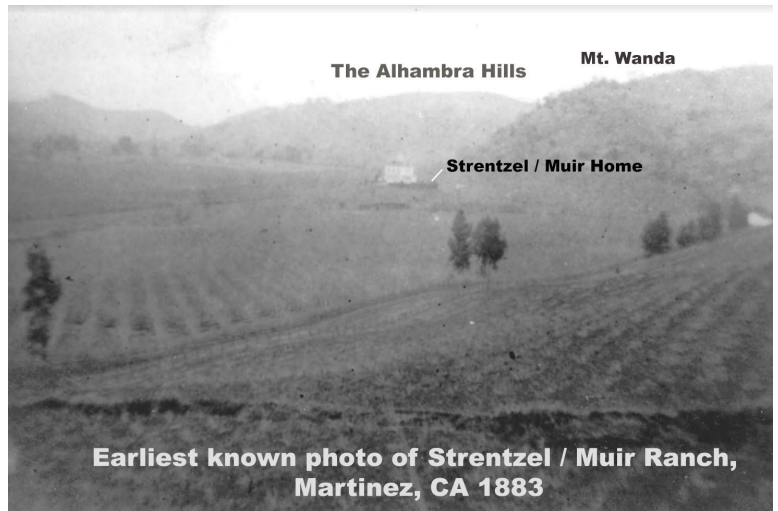


Photo by David H. Collier: atop Mt. Wanda looking East to the Alhambra Hills (pictured with friend Jamie Fox, in 2012, as part of decades of efforts to preserve the ridgeline)

(Continued on page 6)



The View from the President's Desk

By Mark Thomson

As the beautiful autumn in Martinez steadily progresses forward, let's pause to think about the natural cycle of our world – withdrawing inward during the cold of winter only to spring forward with a rebirth as the days become longer. This never ending circle gives us an opportunity to focus on our internal needs before breaking out with a new round of energy as the world around us renews again.

Well – enough philosophy for the moment. The John Muir Association is ready to go after a long Covid induced time of inactivity.

We are happy to say that the John Muir Birthday – Earth Day event is set for Saturday April 22 in 2023. We've started the preparation and are planning to make the event one to remember. Mark your calendars and get ready to celebrate Muir's birthday and Earth Day at the Muir Historical Site. We will have the bagpipers, plenty of interesting exhibits, Conservation Award presentations, birthday cake and more. If you are looking for a way to get involved send us an email at jma@johnmuirassociation.org. We can use the help and it's a fun event to be involved with.

Plans are being made for Mountain Day Camp in 2023. We will have two one week camps starting July 17 & July 24 at the Muir Site. The camp is designed for 7-12 year olds and besides being fun, the Muir way of doing things is imbued in all the activities. Check out our website for more details. Registration will open in January 2023.



New John Muir Association Board Members



Our newest board member, Jamie Menasco, and her husband, Mike, became neighbors of John Muir in 2002. That is when they purchased their house, located next to the Strentzel/Muir gravesite and they have been exploring the life story of John Muir and taking advantage of the National Historic Site ever since. As Alhambra Creek runs behind her house, Jamie joined the Friends of Alhambra Creek (FofAC) to learn about how to care for the Creek. FofAC and the National Park Service have partnered on many projects over the years, exposing Jamie to JMA activities along the way. Jamie is proud to join the board, to work to share the John Muir story and conservation efforts with a wider audience. Jamie is now the Treasurer of the John Muir Association

Susan Garbarino grew up in Berkeley and El Cerrito. She remembers visiting the John Muir Historic Site as a child as well as with her young daughter. Her now grown daughter lives in Edinburgh, so Susan has a special fondness for Scotland and is enjoying making connections between two places that were important to Muir.

Recently retired, Susan worked as an academic librarian for many years, including positions at UC Berkeley, Mills College, Saint Mary's College and briefly at the Library of Congress. She has also worked as a project manager for software implementation and digital library collections. An avid hiker, camper, and gardener, Susan now spends her time traveling and studying Horticulture with great abandon.



Superintendent's View

By K. Lynn Berry

Hello! I am excited to have the opportunity to introduce myself, as the still-relatively-new Superintendent of the John Muir National Historic Site. My name is K. Lynn Berry, and I arrived in April of this year to lead the team at John Muir and three other wonderful National Park units in the East Bay. I have felt quite lucky, to be working in such a great place, with such a stellar team. I want to share with you some of the great work they've overseen in your National Park.

This year we did a pavement preservation project in the parking lot; repainted the steps of the Muir house; cleaned and repaired windows; cleaned up the Muir gravesite; completed a project to prune and maintain the historic orchards; removed hazard trees; designed a replacement irrigation system; repainted and reconfigured staff office space in the house; and removed wildland fire fuels from around the structures at Strentzel Meadow.

In natural resource management, we conducted the 6th annual Alameda whipsnake survey. This year only three whipsnakes were captured. We completed our 11th year of phenology data collection. We also initiated two new intern projects collecting data for the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program and California Bumble Bee Atlas projects. We developed an agreement with the California Invasive Plant Council and initiated an Invasive Plant Management Strategy. We treated roughly 2 acres of Black Mustard, 0.5 acre of Italian Thistle, and 0.5 acres of Yellow Starthistle on Mt. Wanda.

In the planning realm, we conducted a review of the Gravesite Adaptive Management and Monitoring Plan and continued work on the Gravesite project, including neighbor coordination, signage, and installation of a traffic counter. Significant progress was made on the Mt. Wanda Comprehensive Site Management Plan. We formally initiated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, including public scoping and outreach. We also completed a related Transportation Study, which included an abbreviated value analysis workshop with the City of Martinez, Contra Costa County, and the California Transportation Department.

Interpretive programs were back up and running more fully after the pandemic modifications of the past couple of years. School groups starting coming back this October, and we welcome the return of that meaningful work. We also hosted 123 scouts looking to earn their Jr. Ranger Badges or specific patches at our park, such as Boy Scouts weeding and Girl Scouts plant identification. We hosted a night sky program with telescopes and hands-on art projects. We also did a Full Moon Hike, and three different bird hikes this year. Interpretive rangers participated with JMA in the Beaver Festival; assisted with the EcoKids summer program through the New Leaf Collaborative; joined a downtown Martinez reception for Bay Area Studio Artists; and were featured as part of a "Zip Trip" broadcast via "Mornings on 2."

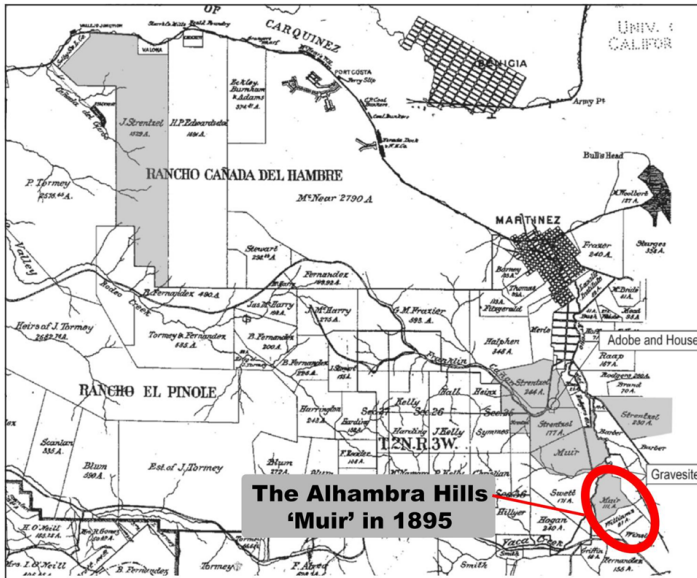
I want to leave you with some great staffing updates, each of which will mean even more wonderful things in the year ahead. We will once again host interns for phenology monitoring in the spring and summer of 2023. An invasive plant management internship will begin this winter. We are also currently recruiting a Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) intern—apply at <http://form.jotform.com/StewardsIPP/cva-member-application>. And, finally, we are very pleased to announce that Wendy Solis was selected as the new Supervisory Ranger at the park. Since she completed a temporary assignment in that role earlier this year, we know how lucky we are to have her join us on a permanent basis!

I look forward to seeing you in the park soon!





New Alhambra Hills Open Space *(continued from page 3)*



Historic Map from 1895 showing “Muir” owned the northern end of the Alhambra Hills, above Alhambra Creek and the Muir family Gravesite, and across from Mt. Wanda. This area is the highest elevation ridgeline in the City of Martinez

The National Park Service *Cultural Landscape Report for the John Muir National Historic Site* offers the following information about the Muir heritage:

“Conservation vs. Profits

Excursions amongst the quiet rolling hills undoubtedly renewed Muir after endless days and weeks of toiling in the fields. With wife Louie and

daughters Wanda and little Helen, looking east from the upper hills they saw the looming Mt. Diablo. Not all of the lands at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch were brought into production, however. Mrs. Strentzel had long admired the hills south and west of the Alhambra ranch house – a range which includes the park’s Mt. Wanda unit – and the “dark green of the buckeye, laurel (also called California bay), and live oaks.

She envisioned a time when “other generations will be here to enjoy the scene.” In the same spirit, Muir also chose to preserve these hills for their beauty, natural character, and botanical variety, maintaining it as a preserve for frequent walks and botany excursions with his daughters, friends, and colleagues. Views from the top were, in Muir’s words, “delightful in color like a fairyland,” and on clear days, the pencil-like outline of the Sierras was visible. The excursions to this untouched area would become an important part of Muir’s life at the fruit ranch.”



Alhambra Highlands (aka Alhambra Hills) are the 297 acres recently acquired by the City of Martinez on November 10th, 2022 as permanent open space.

This is an important acquisition that further preserves the legacy of John Muir. The Alhambra Hills Open Space is scheduled to open to the public in the Spring of 2023.

Come saunter in the hills that John Muir roamed!

Call for Nominees for 2022 John Muir Conservation Awards

For the 44th consecutive year, the John Muir Association will present our annual John Muir Conservation Awards at our Birthday / Earth Day event in 2023. 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, everyone – people, groups, and companies – can contribute to conservation efforts, and we want to showcase those who are committed to conservation.

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, and the chances are also high that these organizations and people are more concerned about conservation than getting awards, but we think they deserve some recognition. Nomination forms can be found at [http:// www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/conserv-awardssubmitnom.php](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/conserv-awardssubmitnom.php).

There are links at the bottom that page in both pdf and Word formats. Entries must be received by February 1st, 2023. 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





P.O. Box 2433
Martinez, CA 94553

Upcoming Events



John Muir Birthday - Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 22, 2023
10 am to 4 pm

Family Fun all day!
Don't miss it!

2023 John Muir Mountain Day Camp

July 17-21 and July 24-28
See www.johnmuirassociation.org
for more details

