



Spring/Summer 2023

# The View

*As long as I live, I'll  
hear waterfalls and  
birds and winds sing.  
I'll interpret the rocks,  
learn the language of  
flood, storm, and the  
avalanche. I'll ac-  
quaint myself with  
the glaciers and wild  
gardens, and get as  
near the heart of the  
world as I can.  
- John Muir*

## John Muir Birthday-Earth Day celebration is back in 2023!

After a 3-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the John Muir Association is thrilled to announce the John Muir Birthday-Earth Day celebration is back!

For decades here in Martinez, when the weather starts getting warm, and the robins are harvesting their worms, you know spring has sprung! It also means it's getting close to John Muir's birthday, and that's a big deal in Martinez!

Yes, this year, as in so many past years, the John Muir Association, in conjunction with the National Park Service's John Muir National Historic Site celebrates both John Muir's birthday and Earth Day in April.

This year the event is on Saturday, April 22nd, and once again, the event will feature a wide selection of ways to celebrate Muir and Earth Day. It's a day full of fun, learning and history.

Held at the John Muir Historic Site in Martinez, the John Muir Birthday-Earth Day celebration is a joyous full day of activities, informative exhibits and entertainment to appeal to people of all ages. The idea is to ensure that future generations will continue to value the outdoors and sustain the determination to protect them – as Muir himself did.

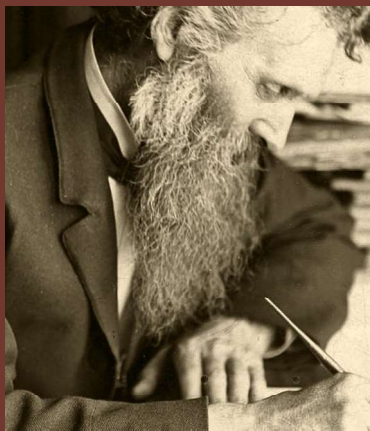
We hope you'll join us for this fun-filled day! John Muir (portrayed by National Park Service Ranger Frank Heller) will be there to tell his tales of adventures, interacting with nature, and inspiration. You'll see the giant sequoia Muir planted over 130 years ago. Naturally (pun intended), there will be birthday cake to celebrate John Muir's 185th birthday!



The Muir house and orchards will be available for self-guided tour. There may also be shuttles to and from the Muir/Strentzel gravesites.

There will also be live music, dozens of booths with valuable information, fun activities and refreshments!

See [www.johnmuirassociation.org](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org) for more information. See you there!.



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.



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**Martinez, CA 94553**

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**National Park Service**

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## **The President's Corner** by Mark Thomson, JMA President

I'm sitting in the midst of a redwood forest thinking about how the life and times of John Muir are much different than mine, but how his vision and purpose has influenced my life and times. I'm a great lover of the forests and all places wild. If it hadn't been for Mr. Muir, I probably would not have been able to enjoy the special places I find so dear as readily. Muir started a movement that hasn't ended. While his love of



the Sierras and Yosemite, in particular, helped preserve wilderness we all love, the impact has become greater as others have followed his lead.

Tonight I am in a county park that is a wonderfully preserved forest that local visionaries protected over the course of fifty years. In the coming months, I will be in state and national parks that have been set aside from development by others who followed Muir's lead. Many have played a role in preserving the wilderness and open spaces that are so essential to our being. The story continues to this day. Our Conservationist of the Year, Jamie Fox, put forth a successful

long-term effort to preserve a part of Muir's legacy and enhance the life of Martinez residents. We all have the opportunity to work toward having the important parts of our world preserved for future generations to enjoy and gain the benefits of readily accessible nature.

I encourage you to join us on Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at the John Muir Birthday – Earth Day event at the Muir House to celebrate and learn about the vision Muir left for us. It's going to be a good time and a good way to spend that time with like minded people. Stop by and celebrate with us.

If you have children or grandchildren in grade school, we have another program that fosters the vision of John Muir. Our Mountain Day Camp is back after a Covid hiatus and we look forward to reaching out to the younger generation. Muir's quest spans generations and camp alumni are presented with a perspective that can last a lifetime.

Hope to see you at our upcoming events. May Muir's spirit be with you.

## 2022 John Muir Conservation Award Recipients

The John Muir Association is honoring the following recipients of the 2022 John Muir Conservation Awards. Please join us in applauding their brilliant and inspiring work!

### Jamie Fox *2022 Conservationist of the Year*

Some say Jamie Fox is the modern-day John Muir. For over 12 years, Jamie has fought tirelessly to protect a 297-acre parcel in Martinez, CA known as the Alhambra Hills, once owned by John Muir. The property was acquired by a developer in 1990 and was approved for a residential housing development, “Alhambra Highlands.”



In 2014, he discovered a map that showed John Muir had owned the land. This galvanized a new wave of efforts to protect the hills, that ultimately culminated in 2022 with Measure F, a campaign asking Martinez residents to tax themselves to prevent development. It was Jamie’s tenacious diplomacy that won over enough supporters on City Council to get

it on the ballot and it was Jamie’s passionate work and leadership that inspired a team of dedicated volunteers to raise public awareness.

### John Muir Trust (Glasgow) *2022 Conservation Award—Non-Profit Organization*

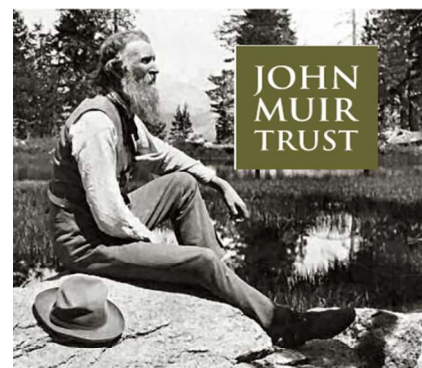
The John Muir Trust believes wild places are for everyone. Their aim is to be the leading voice for wild places and to deliver in partnership throughout the UK. In their commitment to wild places, they’re guided by three freedoms and three actions and seek to develop a network.

**Three freedoms:** Society is enriched when:

- Nature has the freedom to repair itself
- People have the freedom to enjoy the benefits
- Communities have the freedom to thrive.

**Three actions:** We give wild places a voice by:

- Demonstrating exemplary management
- Inspiring people to engage and advocate
- Evidencing their benefits to society.



### Kathy Kramer *2022 Conservation Award—Environmental Education*



The vast majority of ornamental plants in the U.S. in general, and California in particular, are non-native in origin. Returning native plants to residential landscapes is essential to restoring basic function in our ecosystems. This is what Kathy Kramer has been doing for 19 years!

The length of time Kathy has been educating the public about native plants is not just a measure of her commitment, but of her forward thinking as well. Kathy was way ahead of the curve in recognizing the ecological importance of California native plants. By organizing the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour she has exposed more than 20,000 Californians to the potential of native plant landscaping. The native plant garden tour she coordinates has received wide acclaim, and local, state and federal awards.

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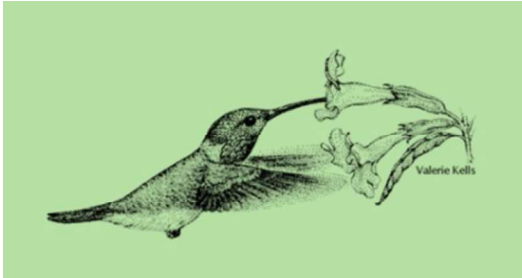


## 2022 John Muir Conservation Award Recipients

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### Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour

#### 2022 Conservation Award—Educational Institution



Almost 20 years ago, the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour in the East Bay was started by Kathy Kramer to encourage people to change their own landscapes.

The Native Garden tour has had thousands of participants, and a legion of followers who are making an ecological difference, one garden at a time. It has received wide acclaim, garnering local, state and federal awards.

"If each of us dedicates some part of the garden to native plants, we would be providing more habitats for wildlife," Kramer explained. "They're easy to maintain. People can save money on their water bill. They don't have to expose their children, their pets, and themselves to pesticides. It's really the way to go for gardening."

## Two Visits to Yosemite, Over a Century Apart

*By Karen Najarian, JMA Board Member*

Muir found joy and fascination in the Sierra, especially Yosemite, just as I have. We've both laid upon granite slabs imagining the nearly 5,000-foot-deep glaciers bulldozing out the landscape that tells its story today. We've stood in the wind, rain, and warm sunshine atop mountain peaks, chatted with wildflowers, and slept in Giant Sequoia Groves under a bowl of stars on an inky night. In a way, Muir and I have transcended time.

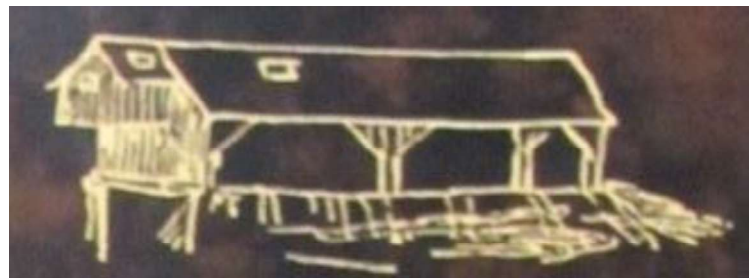
But... while we've done the same things in the same place, we've done them in different centuries, different ways, with differing purpose, which got me to comparing and contrasting Muir's experience with my own.

With 4 million visitors a year, the crush for reservations is intense. I go whenever and wherever I can get a permit. Muir would throw a sack filled with loose tea and dried compressed bread balls over his shoulder and jump over the back fence.

Muir's thoughts on hotel accommodations were that, "Most travelers content themselves with what they may chance to see from... hotel verandas."

While a sawyer in the park, Muir resided in his "hang nest... a small box-like home, a *hammock*, fastened beneath the gable of the *sawmill*", and "...

a hole in the roof to command a view of the glorious South Dome (*Half Dome*)."

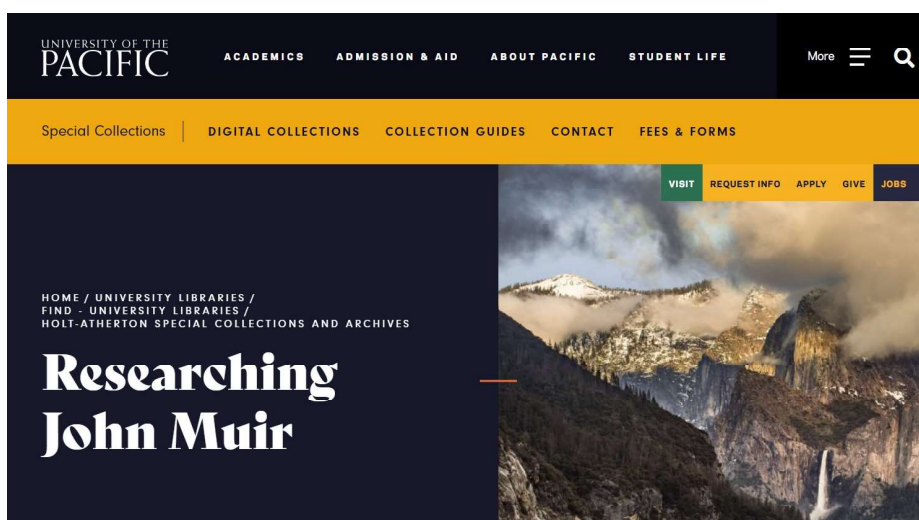


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## Not so hidden treasures: The John Muir Archives and Center at the University of the Pacific

By Susan Garbarino, JMA Board Member

John Muir's literary life, both published and unpublished, was an important part of his global influence and remains a huge part of his legacy today. His published works consist of over 300 books, and articles in periodicals such as *The Overland Monthly*. Familiar titles such as *The Yosemite* and *My First Summer in the Sierra* as well as less familiar ones such as *The Cruise of the Corwin* give us a clue to his experiences and ideas about Conservation. But what else was he writing in his "scribble den" on the top floor of his home in Martinez? And what was he thinking about on his own wanders?



To find out, take a virtual wander yourself through the digital collections at the John Muir Archives at the University of the Pacific (UoP).

The collection is the archival repository of Muir's original "papers"; primarily unpublished materials that together create a more complete picture of Muir the person and his work. From the more than 7000 letters and 84 personal journals (including many drawings done during his rambles), a picture of his life emerges. The Uni-

versity of the Pacific has by far the largest collection of Muir's unpublished works, with about 75% of the total. Thanks to the work of many librarians, much of the collection has been digitized, cataloged, and made searchable.

Scholars from around the world visit the UoP Special Collections to dig deep into Muir's original writings and put them into context by studying the writings and correspondence of his friends and associates.

In addition, The John Muir Center at UoP is a locus of Muir studies and discussion: hosting symposia, courses, a small museum and scholarship around the early Conservation Movement.

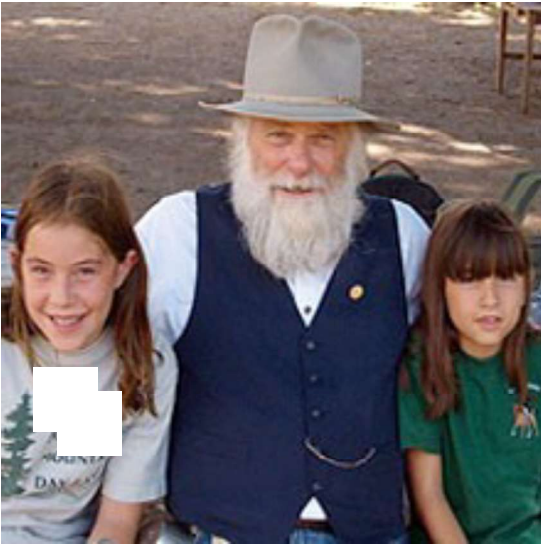
Many of Muir's books are still available in your local public library. In a quick search of the Contra Costa Library, I found 49 books and ebooks of Muir's work. One example is *The Story of my Boyhood and Youth*, written in the last year of his life recounting his memories of his early life in Dunbar, Scotland. Reading this book helped me to understand Muir as a man with all his faults and childhood difficulties.

Do a little exploring and dig deep into Muir's message, you'll be sure to make some new discoveries!



## 2023 John Muir Mountain Day Camp Update

Mountain Day Camp is back! We are gearing up for another year of camp at the Muir Historical Site. This year our long-term camp director Jill Harcke will be aided by the staff from the Arts and Wilderness Institute in Los Angeles. Children aged 7–12 will be in for a great experience gaining the vision of John Muir while having a whole lot of fun.



There will be two one-week sessions that run Monday through Friday 8:30-2:30 on July 17-21 and July 24-28. The camp will be held at the John Muir Historical Site. Tuition is \$325 for a one week session. A \$25 discount is available for members of the John Muir Association, additional campers from the same family, or those who attend both sessions.

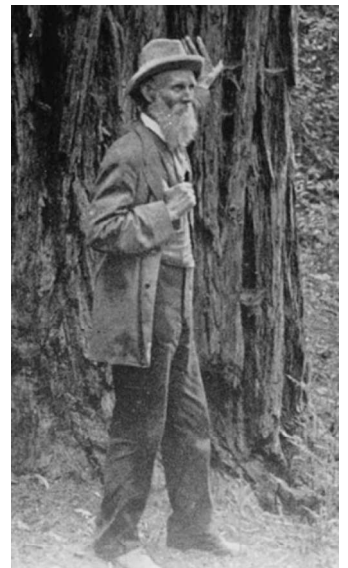


To register – go to our website – <https://JohnMuirAssociation.org> and navigate to our camp page. We look forward to having your youth become part of the John Muir legacy.

## John Muir Trivia—Did You Know?

**The outdoors lured him away from medical school.** Muir studied science, philosophy and literature at the University of Wisconsin with plans to eventually go to medical school. But after spending a summer hiking in the wilderness with friends, he gave up school to study botany and explore the natural world.

**An injury changed his life.** Muir took odd jobs to support himself, including working at a carriage parts factory in Indianapolis. There he suffered an injury that left him temporarily blind. When he regained his sight, he was determined to devote the rest of his life to seeing nature. He said of the accident, "God has to nearly kill us sometimes, to teach us lessons."



After regaining his vision, Muir began traveling the world, and the rest is history!

### The John Muir Association Needs Your Help—Join or Donate Today!

Like most non-profit entities, the John Muir Association needs funds to fulfill its mission 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. Your donations and memberships are very important.



Why join the John Muir Association? Here are some real, valid reasons to do so:

- You believe in our mission, and believe the legacy of John Muir is worth preserving
- You are proud of Martinez's historic connection to John Muir
- You understand the importance of the partnership between the JMA and the John Muir Historic Site and want that to continue.

Membership donations have varying levels of participation – from \$20 to \$1000 and more. Please, re-read our mission statement above, and consider what you could afford to donate to help. See <http://www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/membership.php> for more info.

We will be emailing periodic supplements to our newsletter throughout the year. Email us at [jma@johnmuirassociation.org](mailto:jma@johnmuirassociation.org) and let us know your current email or any changes to your physical address. The emails we send to you will be worth reading so send us your current email address.

### Two Visits to Yosemite, Over a Century Apart

*Continued from page 4*

For the backcountry, my sleeping system is high tech, expensive, and warm. Muir tossed a wool blanket in his pack, cut pine boughs for cushion, and cuddled a fire for warmth, supplemented by dancing throughout the night

For my food, freeze-dried options abound. As for Muir: bread balls. Look for them on the windowsill in Muir's upstairs "scribble den". "There's enough out there to sustain me," he said. For cooking, a Titanium pot and utensils serve me fine. Muir simply heated a metal cup over a campfire to steep his tea. Down-filled jackets, Gortex, and Dynema provide endless options for comfort for me. Muir had no such luxuries and without DEET remarked, "Even to the least-loved mosquitoes I gave many a meal, and told them to go in peace."

I carry a small pharmacy for emergencies. Muir wrote, "...all the wilderness is medicine!" For transportation, I fill my car's tank with gasoline. Muir's first trip to Yosemite in 1868 was done on foot from Oakland. On my first visit in 1971, I made a vow to "get to know Yosemite." Muir made it a life-long passion, as well.

I guided to get people back to their natural roots. Muir guided in order to spread the news of Yosemite's grandeur. We both wrote in journals and fed our souls with Yosemite's natural beauty.

I share pictures without place names lest they be overrun. Muir extolled Yosemite's beauty in national publications to inspire the wealthy and influential to visit so they would advocate for her preservation.

Muir and I both called Martinez, California home. I'm still here living within a mile of his house, the Muir National Historic Site, and a hill away from his final resting place.

Muir planted a Giant Sequoia on the west side of his home. I planted Crimson Columbine. We both brought a bit of Yosemite home with us to remind us of our True Home.

[Italics are the authors words.]



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](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org)  
for more details

