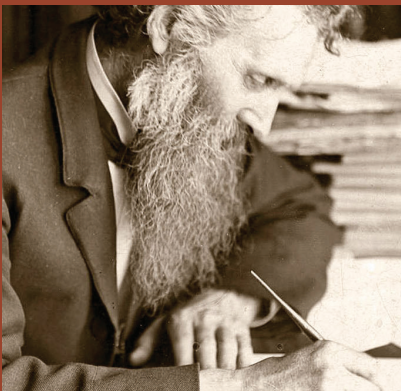




# The View

Between every two  
pine trees lies a  
door to a new life.  
—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 Mountain Day and EcoKids Leadership Camp

By Ellen Concepcion

In early spring, 2024 the John Muir Association (JMA) and New Leaf Collaborative (NLC) jointly signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to embark on a community partnership to enable two weeks of Mountain Day Camp located at the John Muir Historic Site in Martinez.

As a component of this MOU, JMA and NLC entered into a contract for NLC to facilitate the long-standing John Muir Mountain Day Camp with veteran Camp Directors Jill Harcke and Sue Barry. With Jill and Sue ready to retire, NLC was tasked with honoring the legacy of this camp in preparation for a transition. As a part of this agreement, NLC further developed the second week of camp to add a leadership component

with the overarching guiding question: “What do we hope youth will take away from this experience?”

Positive outcomes from this collaboration include a cohesive integration of the values of the John Muir Historic Site National Park Rangers with the campers’ experiences; the vibrant enthusiasm and ecological knowledge, artistic talent and relationship-building skills of the seven extraordinary high school Youth Mentors; the eagerness and interest of the Leadership campers to one day return as Youth Mentors, and of course the positivity, energy and fun that came from being with campers for two weeks in the John Muir National Park.

NLC would like to acknowledge  
*(continued on page 3)*



*The saunter up Mt. Wanda with guide Ricardo Black from John Muir Land Trust*



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## The President's Corner

By Mark Thomson, JMA President



2024 Mountain Day Camp staff: from left, NLC Instructor Julio Magaña-Saludado “Somos”; NLC E.D. Ellen Concepcion; Youth Mentors Dylan, Forest, and Lily; NLC Program Manager Tina Wong; and Youth Mentor Penelope. Right: JMA President Mark Thomson

I'm writing this article on a rainy August morning in Yosemite while looking up at Half Dome partially shrouded in the mist. The legacy of John Muir looms large over the landscape. Glad he had the vision and diligence to keep this part of the world in its natural state.

It's been a busy year again for us at the John Muir Association. Our John Muir Birthday/Earth Day left a good feeling in attendees and participants alike. It was a beautiful day at the John Muir House. We had a particularly good set of Conservation Award recipients this year. Our joint program with the Martinez Historical Society, which featured Ranger Andy Marker speaking to a full house about the Strentzel–Muir legacy, is the start of a continuing series. As the founders of Mountain Day Camp, Jill Harcke and Sue Barry, pass the torch on, we have been working on an exciting new relationship with New Leaf Collective to keep the vision of the camp strong while looking at fresh, new ideas. Our ties with the great staff at the Muir House just seem to be getting stronger and stronger.

We have some great ideas to enhance our existing programs and build new ones. We are looking for a few more board members to help us on our quest to promote Muir's legacy and vision. We are looking for motivated people that enjoy working with others and have an appreciation of nature and history. If you have some experience with fundraising, event planning or education, that is a plus. Send me an email at [jma@johnmuirassociation.org](mailto:jma@johnmuirassociation.org) to start the conversation.

Keep in touch with what Muir-related things are going on at the Muir Historic Site website (<https://www.nps.gov/jomu/index.htm>) as well as our website (<https://johnmuirassociation.org/>). —Mark

## Mountain Day and EcoKids Leadership Camp (continued from page 1)

Jill Harcke and Sue Barry for their decades of service stewarding this camp, NLC lead staff Somos and Tina Wong, NLC volunteer board members Jeanne Jones, Debi Tidd and Kelli Coffman, and NLC's outstanding Youth Mentors. Additionally, both JMA and NLC are grateful to have partnered with some extraordinary special guest speakers, who helped us take a deeper dive into the legacy of John Muir, to broaden our views of what stewardship means today and to reflect on how each of us can make a difference:

- NPS Rangers Wendy Solis, Andy Marker, and Madi Perry, who helped to expand our thinking with the sharing of different perspectives and voices, past and present, regarding the founding of our national parks and the John Muir Historic Site
- John Muir Land Trust Naturalist Ricardo Black, who led us on a guided hike up Mount Wanda
- Director of the Office of Native American Affairs for the California Department of Justice, and member of the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians Merri Lopez-Keifer, who generously shared time with us to answer our questions, and to share some of her family's and her tribe's past and present experiences.



Above: Art with Sue Barry  
Left: Community building—I have, I love, I can—campers having fun finding out what they have in common

Special thanks to our Community Partners who helped make this opportunity possible!





## John Muir Birthday/Earth Day Celebration 2024

By Mark Thomson, JMA President

**J**ohn Muir’s 186th birthday was celebrated in fine fashion at the John Muir Birthday/Earth Day celebration held on April 20 at the John Muir Historical Site. Two thousand visitors and fifty exhibitors were on hand to fete Muir’s birthday as well as the 54th anniversary of Earth Day. The day was filled with music and fun-filled environmentally oriented activities. This year we had a special focus on native plants. We thank the National Park Service and all the volunteers that made this happen. We’ve put some pictures in the newsletter for all of us to remember the day.



*Photos by Thomas Rimpel. This page: Top, artistic and environmentally oriented activities abound at the Birthday/Earth Day celebration. Bottom left, the Piedmont Highlanders Pipes & Drums. Bottom right, Jane Moore with this year’s spectacular birthday cake and Frank Helling, portraying John Muir.*

*Page 5: 2023 John Muir Conservation Awardees John Muir Laws, Elaine Jackson, representatives of Merritt College’s Natural History and Sustainability Program, and Jeff and Tina Sherwin are joined by City of Martinez and National Park Service officials.*

### Call for Nominations for 2024 John Muir Conservation Award

By Linda Vida

Nominations for the John Muir Conservation Award will be accepted now through February 15, 2025. For the 46th consecutive year, the John Muir Association (JMA) will present these awards at the annual Birthday/Earth Day event, in April 2025.

Every year since 1978, JMA has honored those who continue John Muir's legacy of environmental preservation. The winners of this award have included conservation groups, government agencies, local businesses and individuals. In 2024, the awardees were: John Muir Laws, Elaine Jackson, Jeff and Tina Sherwin, and Merritt College's Natural History and Sustainability Program. (See JMA Newsletter, Spring 2024 issue).

Do you know of a business that strives to ensure that its operation is sustainable? (Mighty Market received an award in 2022 for keeping thousands of plastic bottles out of the waste stream.) Or someone that has educated the community about sustainability? (Kathy Kramer began Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tours 19 years ago.)

Again, nominations can be sent in now until February 15, 2025. The application is easy to fill out and can be found at [www.johnmuirassociation.org](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org) (click on the "John Muir Conservation Awards" button). Questions, contact the John Muir Association by email at [jma@johnmuirassociation.org](mailto:jma@johnmuirassociation.org).





## Muir Inspires Students in the French Pyrenees

By Susan Garbarino

**D**ominique Marabese, Secondary School teacher in Tarbes, France, has integrated Muir’s writings and legacy into her curriculum since 2007 for her students; engaging them to understand his work and read his writings.

Dominique promotes ecological activities throughout her school. Each year, she organizes different activities to celebrate John Muir’s birthday in April (sound familiar?). This year she organized two webinars with Alexis Jenni, author of the first French biography of John Muir, *J’aurais pu devenir millionnaire, j’ai choisi d’être vagabond* (I could have become a millionaire, I chose to be a vagabond), published in 2020.

It was by working in Scotland in 1990 that Dominique discovered Muir. She has been a member of the John Muir Trust (Glasgow, 2022 JMA Conservation Award winner) since 2011 and has collaborated with the John Muir Birthplace in Dunbar, Scotland.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Pyrenees National Park in 2007, Dominique began including Muir’s role in founding the US National Parks in her own teaching. In 2010, her students were

*Dear John Muir,  
I’m going to give you some news from 21st century planet Earth. The temperature has increased a lot. Global warming created by the greenhouse effect makes the ice caps melt in the oceans? Consequently, the sea level is rising.*

*Now the climate is strange because global warming changes the seasons. These environmental problems and the pollution kill a lot of animals and some species are now extinct.*

*I’m worried about all this because my life is going to change in the future. Maybe I will have to leave my home or my country.*

*In my school, I am an ecodelegate and we planted trees on March 5th.*

*The John Muir Trust is a Scottish association named after you. Its methods (the John Muir Award) encourage us to protect wildlife, discover new things and share what we have learnt and done.*

*All actions are important no matter how small. You have achieved great things and showed that a single person can have a great influence on the world.*

*—Aydon*

*Dear Mr. Muir,  
I hope you’re doing well. I’m a French student. I just wanted to tell you that I admire you a lot! You are a real figure to me because of what you have done for sequoias and Yosemite Valley.*

*You know, things have really changed now. It’s horrible!*

*You know that the scientists say that in 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish?! And let’s talk about forests in Australia! A lots of them have burnt. Our planet is really going bad...*

*Do you know how I got to know about you? Well, during the English class, my teacher made us read your biography and I was impressed. In English too, we also learnt that some people were trying to find solutions to today’s environmental issues.*

*There are individual actions we can take to reduce our carbon footprint. I only eat seasonal local food for example. I’m not perfect but I am trying to change my ways and when I am older, I will take part to some beach cleaning and buy trees to plant them.*

*Your life has really inspired me and given me the motivations to yearn for a better life. I will do every-thing I can to improve my life. So, I thank you for that*

*—Lamyae*

able to visit the Pyrenees National

Park with a guide who had

also visited Yosemite and Yellowstone.

In 2016 her students created an exhibit (done jointly with the John Muir Birthplace) entitled *At the Origin of National Parks...History and Heritage of the First American National Parks...* The exhibit was chosen to be displayed in the Pyrenees National Park’s Gavarnie Maison du Parc in 2018. There’s a lovely article about it on the John Muir’s Birthplace blog, <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/2019/03/21/john-muir-in-the-french-pyrenees/>. This year, Dominique asked her students to write letters to John Muir about what is happening to the natural environment in 2024. Shown here are two examples.

Congratulations on your years of work, Madame Marabese! It’s wonderful to learn about how Muir’s legacy is so widely known and is still influencing young people around the world.

## Meet Me Martinez! Grant

By Ellen Concepcion, Executive Director, New Leaf Collaborative

On July 2, 2024 New Leaf Collaborative (NLC) received a letter from the Martinez Community Foundation (MCF) approving and fully funding the grant project “Meet Me Martinez! An Introduction to Our Native Flora.” The Mission of MCF is to promote, champion, and enhance an equitable and sustainable quality of life for the people of Martinez, and for this year’s grant proposals, the MCF Board agreed on a theme of “Building Community from the Ground Up,” focusing on community gardens and emphasizing community partnerships.

This project is a joint effort between New Leaf Collaborative, Friends of Alhambra Creek, the National Park Service, the John Muir Association (JMA), and the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District. Our project integrates environmental literacy, stewardship, education, art, and community engagement through providing at least six “Community Garden Events” either at the Native Wetland Garden at Ferry Point in Martinez, at the Martinez Unified School District (MUSD) Community Garden, and/or at the Native Garden at the John Muir National Historic Site Visitor Center.

This project is designed to enhance and expand our community garden spaces by incorporating more native plants and educating youth and community members about the native plant species of Martinez and the importance of biodiversity for a thriving ecosystem. Through this project, we will plant additional native plants in one or more of these project gardens and provide opportunities for participants to connect with nature and each other and foster a sense of stewardship and understanding of the importance of biodiversity during a Community Garden Event.

Our first two Community Garden Events took place during the John Muir Mountain Day Camp in July, where NLC worked with JMA to facilitate one week of nature-based camp for youth focusing on the life and legacy of John Muir, and one week of nature-based leadership camp for middle school students focusing on the legacy of stew-

ardship and ecological literacy of John Muir. These events provided campers with the opportunity to connect with nature and learn about native species found in the John Muir National Historic Site Visitor Center and on Mt. Wanda.

The two Community Garden Events at the John Muir Mountain Day Camps kicked off our efforts to reach the goals of the Meet Me Martinez! project. National Park Service Rangers Madi Perry and Wendy Solis, along with one of our outstanding Youth Mentors, led the way by incorporating education throughout the week about native versus invasive plants. Featured native plants included California Sagebrush, Soap Plant, California Buckeye, Showy Milkweed and Yarrow. Campers also toured the John Muir Visitor Center Native Garden and participated in an engaging native plant bingo scavenger hunt during our hikes up Mt. Wanda. Our guide, Ricardo Black from the John Muir Land Trust, enriched the experience by identifying native and invasive species and teaching campers, Youth Mentors and staff how to distinguish between Live, Blue, and Valley Oak trees.

Looking ahead, we have more Community Garden Events planned at the MUSD Community Garden and the Native Wetland Garden at Ferry Point. Our most recent Community Garden Event took place at the MUSD Community Garden, located across the street from the MUSD District Office at 921 Susana St., on Saturday 9/7 from 9 AM to 12 PM. Participants had an opportunity to rid the garden of invasive plants, take part in an art activity learning about the native plants in the pollinator garden, harvest fruit from the orchard and enjoy the company of community members.

Stay tuned for more updates and join us in nurturing our community’s green spaces! Follow New Leaf Collaborative on

Facebook to stay informed about upcoming Community Garden Events and more ways to get involved, or email [info@newleafcollaborative.org](mailto:info@newleafcollaborative.org).





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*Birthday/Earth Day 2024! Front row, left to right: JMA President Mark Thomson, Frank Helling as John Muir, a member of the Piedmont Highlanders Pipes & Drums, and General Superintendent K. Lynn Berry. Photo by Thomas Rimpel (See page 4 for more Birthday/Earth Day photos.)*