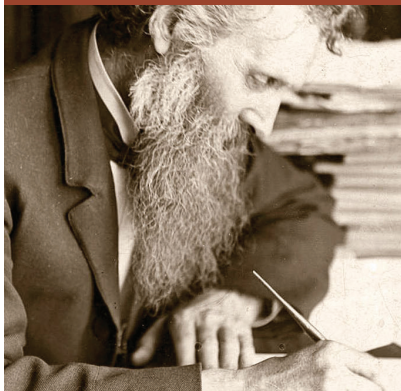




The View

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



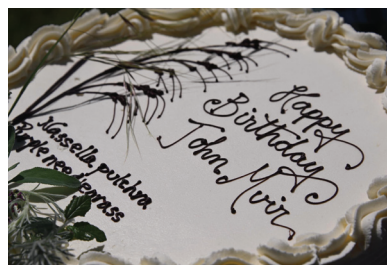
The mission of the John Muir Association is to celebrate the life, share the vision, and preserve the legacy of John Muir through education, preservation, advocacy and stewardship, in partnership with the National Park Service at the John Muir National Historic Site.

Birthday/Earth Day

By Mark Thomson

Come join us for a day of celebrating John Muir’s birthday (April 21st) and Earth Day (April 22nd) on Saturday April 18, 2026. We will have exhibitors, bagpipers, crafts for kids, music on the stage, presentation of John Muir Conservation Awards, birthday cake and a vibrant silent auction with artwork, books, gift cards for local restaurants and other intriguing items to bid on. All proceeds are used to benefit the John Muir National Historic Site. Admission is free and the weather will be beautiful. Enjoy Spring in the John Muir orchard. The house will be open and the piano will be played. “John Muir” will

tell stories. Enjoy a day outside.



Above: Jane Moore and “John Muir” (Frank Helling) at BDED 2025. Left: birthday cake for Muir by Jane, with decorations featuring purple needlegrass—California’s state grass. Photos by Thomas Rimpel

John Muir BIRTHDAY / EARTH DAY CELEBRATION Saturday, April 18, 2026

Event open from
10am to 4pm

- ❖ Meet John Muir and the sequoia he planted 130+ years ago
- ❖ Exhibits and activities for all ages
- ❖ Live music and silent auction
- ❖ John Muir’s 1882 Victorian home and orchards
- ❖ John Muir Conservation Awards
- ❖ Youth activities with National Park Service rangers
- ❖ Food and beverages available for purchase
- ❖ Please bring your own water bottle

At the John Muir Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez

For more information
www.johnmuirassociation.org
Call the John Muir Historic Site
At (925) 228-8860 Ext. 6400



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

Website:
www.johnmuirassociation.org

Board of Directors:
Linda Vida, President
Mark Thomson, Vice President
Jamie Menasco, Treasurer
Juliet Don, Secretary
Nicole Sylvester
Asal Bidokhti-Doyle
Robin Spencer Holmes
Timothy Silsbee
Richard Patchin

Emeritus Board Member:
Michael Muir

Editor:
Linda Vida

Layout:
Jeannine Gendar

Contributors:
Elaine Jackson, Mark Thomson,
Jamie Menasco, Richard Patchin,
Timothy Silsbee, Wendy Solis,
Linda Vida

Photos:
Jeannine Gendar, Thomas Rimpel,
Jeff Sherwin

Our partner:
John Muir National Historic Site
National Park Service
www.nps.gov/jomu

K. Lynn Berry, General Superin-
tendent

The John Muir Association (JMA)
is the official philanthropic part-
ner of the John Muir National
Historic Site.

Printed on 100% post-
consumer recycled paper

President's Message

Linda Vida, JMA President



THIS IS MY FIRST COLUMN as President of the John Muir Association (JMA), an all-volunteer Board, and I am delighted to serve in this new role. I attended my first Board meeting in December 2019, which was really a holiday party. It was a good beginning, as I enjoyed conversations with Board members and discovered that most were great cooks. Mark Thomson, then co-president with Bruce Campbell, made a memorable apple pie.

What followed soon after that meet-
ing were three years of a pandemic with
no public events: no Birthday/Earth Day
(BDED) celebrations or Camp. The John

Muir National Historic Site (JMNHS) Visitor Center was closed, and all Board meetings were held via Zoom.

Thankfully, Mark Thomson carried on as President, keeping us focused on things that were possible to accomplish during this period.

In April 2023, JMA and JMNHS staff were finally able to host BDED again. It was a beautiful Saturday in April with approximately 40 vendors, bagpipers, music on the center stage, delicious birthday cake in honor of John Muir, Conservation Awards presented and kids busy with all kinds of crafts.

Mark Thomson restarted Camp in July 2023 even though our longtime Camp organizer, Jill Harke, was only able to advise. In 2026, we have a new Camp partner and signups are going well. JMA camp focuses on getting kids outside to hike, make bread, identify plants and experience other activities that John Muir would approve of.

As President, I will continue the legacy of JMA and keep BDED and Camp alive and improving. I want to tackle some administrative issues to allow the JMA Board to be more productive and explore new opportunities with local partners, e.g. Martinez Museum, Martinez Public Library, and Contra Costa Archives. I want to bring you more news about current happenings at the JMNHS. It takes a lot of work to maintain the Strentzel-Muir House, the grounds and orchards.

I am happy to contribute to the vibrant Martinez community through JMA. Please contact me if you are interested in joining the Board or have ideas for a collaborative project, lecture, or other event.

Lindavida55@gmail.com; cell (510) 917-8648

Summary of Fall 2025 Newsletter Survey Results

By Linda Vida

In the Fall 2025 issue of this newsletter, I asked readers to fill out a survey. I did not get a huge number of responses but the replies are summarized below. The responses were mostly positive, stating that the newsletter was good, interesting, readable, and “just about the right” length. There was a large consensus that readers are interested in articles about John Muir and the National Park Service. In response to those comments, I will add an article about projects and maintenance at the John Muir House and grounds that will appear in each issue.

About 50% of readers did not realize that the newsletter is available on the JMA website ([https://](https://johnmuirassociation.org)

johnmuirassociation.org) and the same number said that they probably would not read the newsletter if it was sent electronically.

Readers also want to know more about the history of John Muir, John Strentzel, the house, and old Martinez. Readers would like articles about local issues, what’s blooming on Mt. Wanda and in the orchards, and conservation activities around town. They are interested in articles about resources available at the John Muir Center, University of the Pacific, Stockton CA.

Please fill out the survey, which is still available at <https://tinyurl.com/JMA-News>. I am interested in your thoughts and suggestions.

JOHN MUIR
MOUNTAIN DAY CAMP

Located @ John Muir National Historic Site

Each week is packed with fun and informative activities including exploring nature trails, painting, baking sourdough bread, journaling as Muir did, and discovering local plants and animals

Children ages from 7 to 12

**TRAILS
CRAFTS
EXPLORATION
FUN**

2 GREAT ONE WEEK CAMPS!
8:30AM - 2:30PM

**JULY 20 - JULY 24TH
OR
JULY 27 - JULY 31ST**

\$400 PER ONE WEEK SESSION

johnmuirassociation.org

JMA Board News

By Linda Vida

The John Muir Association is pleased to announce that we have two new members on the Board. Their short biographies are below. Please contact me, Linda Vida, if you have an interest in serving on the JMA Board—it is fun and rewarding: Linda Vida (510) 917-8648 or lindavida55@gmail.com.

Timothy Silsbee

TIM'S COMMITMENT TO the environment and conservation dates back to the first Earth Day in 1970. Since then, he has been a member and/or a volunteer in groups including the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy, and the Wilderness Society.

An avid fly fisherman, he is a founding member of the John Muir Chapter of Trout Unlimited, which serves the East Bay and Solano County. He served on their board

for several years and still supports this organization. Since retiring, he has been active in the Friends of the Orinda Library, where he volunteers and serves on their board.

A native of Pennsylvania, his early interest in conservation came from a number of sources, including scouting, fishing, and hiking in the woods and streams near his parents' home in Hershey. As an adult, his interest was fueled by literature. Writers such as Ernest Hemingway, John Muir, Edward Abbey, David Brower, Wallace Stegner, Gary Snyder, Rick Bass, Terry Tempest Williams, and Gary Lopez fed his passion for nature, conservation, and protecting the environment.

In 2025, he began volunteering at the John Muir House and was excited to join the board of the JMA this past December. He considers it an honor to support John Muir's legacy.

Richard Patchin

RICHARD PATCHIN HAS recently joined the John Muir Association (JMA) Board. He is a native of Martinez and was born in the Community Hospital. He graduated from Alhambra High School ('65) and received degrees from Diablo Valley College and University of the Pacific. He was doing graduate work at the University of Toledo (Ohio) when he was drafted and served two years in the Army.

He enjoyed many family trips to Yosemite National Park, where he was impressed by the fire fall, all of the waterfalls, massive rock formations, and bears that roamed through the campgrounds. His dad was an outdoorsman and took him on many fishing trips to beaches, lakes, and rivers in California, and they enjoyed many visits to national and state parks across the country.

For many years, Richard was involved with the Martinez Historical Society, serving as a long-time member on their Board of Directors, as well as terms as vice-president and president. He served on the City of Martinez Park and Recreation Commission for twenty-seven years and is currently serving as Cemetery Commissioner. For the past three years, Richard and his wife of nearly fifty years, Barbara (also a Martinez native), have been involved with the Worth-a-Dam organization as auctioneers at the annual Beaver Festival.

Richard has joined the JMA Board and will help with the Birthday/Earth Day silent auction.

Free Concert in the John Muir Orchard, June 6

The Diablo Regional Concert Band will present a community concert on the JMNHS grounds on June 6, 2026, beginning at 1:00 pm. In honor of Martinez's 150-year and the United States's 250-year anniversaries, the sixty-person band will play an open-air concert of patriotic music. For more information, monitor the John Muir Association website, <https://johnmuirassociation.org>.

Come join the celebration!

Conservation Awards

The John Muir Conservation Awards will be announced and awarded at the Birthday/Earth Day celebration. We extended the submittal date this year until February 28, 2026.

Donations

The John Muir Association (94-6130869 501c3) welcomes donations. To donate, please go to <https://johnmuirassociation.org/donate/> or mail to P.O. Box 2433, Martinez, CA 94553.

East Bay Public Gardens Open House

Saturday June 6, 2026 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

By Elaine Jackson

East Bay Municipal Utility District, Contra Costa Water District and UC Master Gardener Program of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties are planning an East Bay Public Gardens Open House on *Saturday, June 6th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.* This Open House will showcase a wide variety of beautiful sustainable landscapes. The purpose of this event is to build public awareness of these unique gardens, inspire and educate about regenerative landscape practices, and provide a free and fun event for the East Bay community.

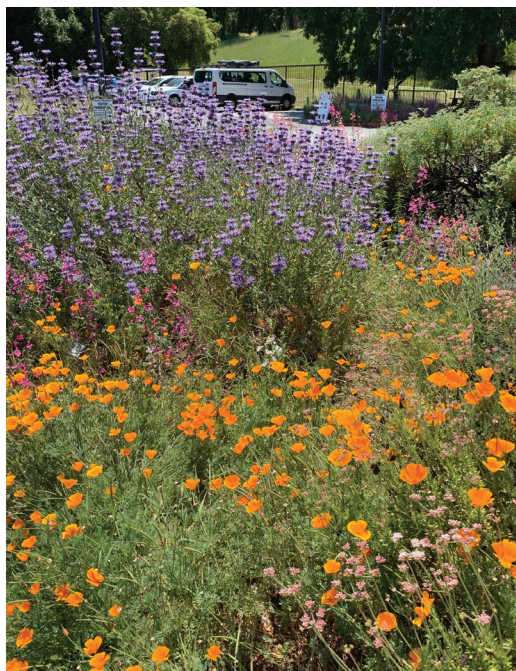
The native plant garden surrounding the Visitor Center at the John Muir National Historic Site (JMNHS) will be one of the gardens on this tour. The JMNHS staff and native garden volunteers are thrilled to be part of this Water Wise tour that will:

- Build awareness of East Bay sustainable landscapes/gardens
- Provide a drop-in-style event for local residents to explore beautiful, environmentally friendly public gardens and learn sustainable practices, i.e leave the leaves, and seeds and stems are your friends
- Encourage you to invite beneficial insects to your

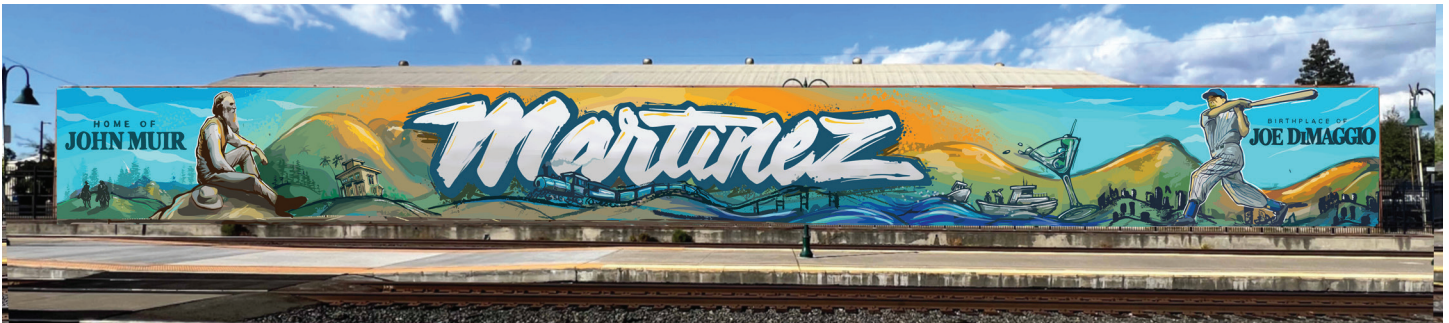
garden by planting native plants and improving biodiversity in your garden

- Advise on how native plants save water in residential gardens
- Provide lists of nurseries that sell native plants, and learn about other resources

Gardens included on the tour: Lake Merritt Trials Garden, Oakland; Richmond Low Water Demonstration Garden, Richmond; Ruth Bancroft Garden, Walnut Creek; the Watershed Project/Booker T. Anderson Recreation Center Bioswale, Richmond; Friends of Sausal Creek, Oakland; and others.



Photos of the native plant garden at the John Muir National Historic Site by Jeannine Gendar



Artists' rendering of what the mural will look like. Art by ©Illuminaries, photo courtesy of Jeff Sherwin

Hometown Heroes Mural

By Jamie Menasco

The City of Martinez will soon have another reminder that it is the Home of John Muir.

By the time this newsletter is in your hand, a massive new mural will colorize the large exterior wall of the old cannery building across the tracks behind the Martinez Amtrak Station. Every driver accessing the Martinez Marina via Ferry Street and every Amtrak rider coming through town will see its two most famous “hometown heroes” depicted: Joe DiMaggio, legendary baseball player, and John Muir, father of our National Parks.

This mural is the brainchild of the *Joe DiMaggio Hometown Hero Project*. Mr. DiMaggio will be on the right side of the mural and on the left side will be John Muir. His house will be depicted with riders on horse-

back reminiscent of historic times. Many entities in town including the John Muir Association (JMA) donated funds to this mural project.

The Illuminaries, local artists who specialize in large-scale, high-impact murals, will paint the mural. They have painted over one hundred public murals around the country and have donated murals to local schools and community projects. The JMA previously donated to another Illuminaries mural in Martinez, located on Alhambra Way under Highway 4 near the John Muir House, featuring larger-than-life-sized native plants and animals found in and around local waters.

The colorful new mural will be 270 feet in length by 26 feet high. It will be a “welcoming landmark, inviting Amtrak passengers to step off the train and discover the charm of Martinez.” As stated on the Illuminaries website, “Beyond beautification, the mural will serve as a cultural touchstone—sparking curiosity, encouraging tourism, and sharing the rich, often-overlooked history of Martinez with visitors and locals alike.”

We hope that seeing John Muir on this mural will encourage people to make a trip to his home—the John Muir National Historic Site, approximately 3 miles east. There they can learn the story of Muir, tour the home where he settled in his adult life with his family, managed a large ranch, and wrote in his “scribble den” to inspire our nation to set aside wild lands for future generations.

Find more information here:
<https://illuminaries.art/martinez>.



A view from the Martinez Amtrak station of the new mural site, on the wall that faces the tracks. Photo by Jeff Sherwin

NPS Update for the John Muir National Historic Site (JMNHS)

By Linda Vida in discussion with Wendy Solis
(JMNHS Supervisory Interpretive Ranger)

I intend to have an article about current programs and projects at the John Muir House and grounds in every issue of “The View” newsletter going forward. Much effort and planning is required to maintain this vintage site.

The Park

The John Muir National Historic Site is located in the City of Martinez at 4202 Alhambra Ave. The Visitor Center is open Tues.–Sat. from 10:00 am–5:00 pm. Website is <https://www.nps.gov/jomu/index.htm>.

The calendar for tracking upcoming programs is updated often at: <https://www.nps.gov/jomu/planyourvisit/calendar.htm>. There are many programs on Fridays and Saturdays, as they have many school groups visiting on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

New Staff

There is a new interpretive intern, Ava, who will be leading programs at JMNHS through September. Seth, a new seasonal ranger, has also joined the staff. Seth has had experience at Muir Woods and other national parks.

House Maintenance

The house was repainted by brush in December 2025, in keeping with the historic nature of the house. In November 2025, the inside banister was restored to historic preservation standards.

Gift Shop

The JMNHS has an excellent gift shop that is run by the Western National Parks Association and is located in the Visitor Center—a great place to

visit if you are looking for books by and about John Muir, activities for children, hats, shirts, puzzles, stuffed animals, etc.

Orchard Maintenance

Irrigation in the orchard is being completely replaced, as it was leaking severely. A contractor is digging the trenches and laying new pipe.

Volunteers work every Monday morning in the orchard to maintain the fruit trees.

NPS has an arborist on staff who trains and monitors their work. They recently planted several young apple trees taken from the stock of an historic apple orchard in Yosemite Valley.

Native Plant Garden

The Visitor Center is surrounded by a beautiful native garden. This was not always the case: the native garden was planted in 2006 to replace a lawn. Every Monday morning, five to seven volunteers led by Elaine Jackson (California Native Plant Society and Friends of Alhambra Creek) are in the garden from 9:00 to 10:00 to prune, pull weeds, plant if needed, water in the summer and pick up trash.

Volunteer

If you would like to volunteer at the John Muir National Historic Site, please go to: <https://www.nps.gov/jomu/getinvolved/volunteer.htm>.



JOHN MUIR ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2433
Martinez, CA 94553



The Hometown Heroes mural is coming along—this photo was taken February 25. By the time you get this newsletter, the mural (which features John Muir on the left side) may well be complete. See the article on page 6 for more information. Photo by Jeannine Gendar

Save the Dates

April 18

Birthday/Earth Day

June 6

Water Wise garden tour
and Diablo Valley Regional
Band concert in the orchard

July 20–24 and

July 27–31

Mountain Summer Camp