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MARIN COUNTY PARKS & OPEN SPACE DEPARTMENT

Summer 2009

Summer News and Events



A Success Story at Bothin Marsh

Scenes from World Wetlands Day, January 31, 2009

55 volunteers removed 1.5 tons of ice plant and planted nearly 300 native seedlings, including marsh gumplant and sticky monkeyflower. For several years, MCOSD, the Girl Scouts, Americorps, SAVE THE BAY and hundreds of volunteers have

conducted many workdays at the preserve. Our intense, long-term efforts are showing great progress in restoring native habitat for special status species including the California clapper rail, salt marsh harvest mouse and Point Reyes bird's-beak. Stay tuned! Photos by Craig Solin.

Summer Staycation—Park Passes on Sale Now!

Buy A Park Pass
\$75.00 Individuals
\$37.50 Seniors 62+
and persons
with disabilities.
Call 415.499.6387
to order.

A Marin County Parks Pass is a great bargain, especially for those staying home this summer. \$75.00 gets you entrance to McNears Beach, Paradise Beach and Stafford Lake Parks in addition to Miller Park and Black Point boat launches. You'll get access to fishing, swimming, tennis courts, playgrounds,

waterfront areas and picnic sites, as well as quiet places to get away and relax. Passes can be purchased at McNears, Paradise and Stafford Lake Parks and at our Administrative Office in the Marin County Civic Center (Room 260).

Marin County Open Space District preserves and trails are open to the public, free of charge, 365 days a year. Visit our website (www.marinopenspace.org) for maps and information to help you explore your neighborhood open spaces. Our summer programs offer activities for everyone, whether you are vacationing close to home or are looking to get outdoors on the weekend. Discover one of Marin's best summer picnic spots. Learn how to backpack. Experience the land on horseback. Enjoy a late picnic dinner while creatures of the night awake. And so much more!

Get Ready for Fire Season

The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) and the Marin County Fire Chief's Association remind you to make your home fire safe this summer. Annual fire safe letters will be mailed to MCOSD neighbors and posted on our web site in mid-May. State fire codes require that homeowners create a low-fuel defensible space zone of 100 feet from habitable structures on their property. Some local fire codes require 200 feet. Please contact your local fire department for details. MCOSD allows its neighbors to mow grasses on MCOSD lands to help meet their local defensible space requirement, with the exception of neighbors abutting Ring Mountain Preserve, which is home to special status plant species. Please see the MCOSD fire safe letter for details. Learn more about creating defensible space and discover other valuable fire safety information at: www.marincountyfire.org, www.firesafemarin.org and www.firewise.org. Remember smoking, fires and open flames of any kind are prohibited on open space lands.

GO GREEN!

Please help us reduce our use of paper and ink by subscribing to the electronic version of this newsletter. Contact Quianne Hunter at qhunter@co.marin.ca.us or 415.507.2818.



Bliethedale Summit is the largest link in the chain of preserves that follow the "Northridge." Photo by Craig Solin.

Marin Conservation League Celebrates 75 Years of Land Preservation



2009 marks the 75th anniversary of the Marin Conservation League (MCL). Everyone is invited to the **June 20 Walk in History** co-sponsored by MCOSD and MCL for a fun-filled hike back in time.

Learn about the history of preserving the "Northridge"—"a key community separator and an open space link between Mill Valley, Corte Madera and Larkspur. It is part of the connecting ridge from Mt. Tamalpais to Richardson Bay; an entrance to Mt. Tamalpais State Park and connects via trails to Muir Woods, GGNRA and coastal beaches". Local historians will talk about the passion and creativity it took to save this ridge. Naturalist David Herlocker will describe the native habitat and the species that live here.

McNears Wins Pacific Sun's Best of Marin 2009



Service with a smile! Visit McNears Beach Park and meet Rangers (L-R) Dan Sauter, Christine Alexander and Audrea Bocchi. Their hard work, high energy and friendly attitude are three big reasons why McNears is special and a favorite Marin hang out.

Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan Underway

The Marin County Opens Space District recently embarked upon an effort to develop a Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan (VBMP) to reduce fire risk on all our preserves. The VBMP will incorporate the most recent science regarding management of fuels and biodiversity. The goals of the VBMP include reducing the risk of wildfire on open space, preserving native species, including special status species, and reducing exotic species and weeds. MCOSD lands are the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) for many communities. MCOSD is undertaking this important effort to develop the tools and strategies needed to address increasing fire fuel loads, the march of exotics onto open space land and the preservation and enhancement of native species and habitats. A critical component of the VBMP is public involvement. MCOSD will host a series of community meetings throughout the VBMP development process. To receive email updates on the VBMP, including community meeting dates and documents available for public review, visit our website (www.marinopenspace.org) and click on the subscribe button under "What's New: Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan."

FYI FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Be prepared: heavy rain cancels some events; dress in layers, wear appropriate clothes, shoes and gear; bring water and snacks; use Google maps to locate meeting points. If you have questions call 415.499.6387 or visit www.marinparks.org.

PROGRAM SYMBOLS



Naturalist Outings

Walks focused on all aspects of flora and fauna led by Naturalist David Herlocker (dherlocker@co.marin.ca.us or 415.499.3647)



Family Naturalist Walks

David Herlocker presents walks especially for young children and their families



Volunteer Workdays

Land stewardship opportunities for all ages and abilities



Ranger Events

A variety of outdoor activities and classes



Site/Event may have limited accessibility to persons with disabilities. If you require program accommodations to participate in this activity, or materials in alternate formats, you may request them by calling 415.499.6387 (voice) or dialing 711 (California Relay Service) to connect to the telephone listed above. **Requests must be received no less than four working days** prior to the event to help ensure availability.

SUMMER EVENTS

JUNE

Thursday, June 4
10am to 2pm
Wildflowers at Bull Point



Bull Point hosts a flora that is reminiscent of a high mountain meadow; there are several plants found here that appear nowhere else in the county. Meet at the Bull Point Trailhead, on Sir Francis Drake Blvd in the Point Reyes National Seashore (between the oyster company and North Beach turnoffs). Be prepared for cool weather, no matter how warm it is at your home.

Saturday, June 6
9am to 12noon
Backpacking Basics at Mount Burdell



Ranger Dave McMullen will lead a seminar on the preparation, gear and skills needed to enjoy a safe and memorable backpacking trip. Following the talk, we'll hike some of the moderate trails with an optional trip to the peak. Bring snacks, water, sunscreen and a backpack. Meet at the MCOSD gate (end of San Andreas Dr, Novato). Do not bring camping equipment.

Saturday, June 6
9am to 2pm
Birds of Mount Tamalpais with David Wimpfheimer



The forests and meadows on the upper slopes of this majestic ridge are home to a variety of birds, and they should all be busily engaged in the business of raising their young. David will cover basic bird identification while he educates (and entertains) us with the intricate details of their lives. Meet at Rock Spring (at the junction of Pantoll Rd and Ridgecrest Blvd).

Saturday, June 6
9am to 1pm
National Trails Day



Go local during this national event: help us keep the popular King Mountain Loop Trail free of French broom! Meet in the Lucky parking lot (570 Magnolia Ave, Larkspur). We'll carpool to the preserve gate.

Wednesday, June 10
10am to 2pm
Devil's Gulch



We'll head deep into this valley to discover the less travelled places on the backside of Barnabe Mountain. There should be plenty of flowers, butterflies and bird activity to keep us entertained. Meet at the Devil's Gulch Trailhead, on Sir Francis Drake Blvd, west of the main entrance to Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

Saturday, June 13
9am to 12noon
Freshwater Fishing



Park Rangers will teach the basics of freshwater fishing at Stafford Lake Park. A limited amount of fishing poles, bait and tackle boxes will be provided on a first come, first served basis. From the park entrance gate, turn right and park at the last lot at the end of the road (3549 Novato Blvd). Parking fee. Fishing license required for participants 16 and over.

Sunday, June 14
9am to 2pm
Birds, Blossoms, Butterflies and Bugs at Mount Burdell



As spring draws to a close the late blooming wildflowers and the insects that visit them should be plentiful. Birds pursue this bounty of bugs to feed their ravenous young. Meet at the MCOSD gate (end of San Andreas Dr, Novato).

Thursday, June 18
10am to 2pm
Dragonflies at Lake Lagunitas



This beautiful reservoir is home to a huge variety of damselflies and dragonflies. We'll learn to identify them on the wing and in hand as we observe and compare these beautiful insects. Meet at the Lagunitas parking area. Parking fee.

Saturday, June 20
9am to 1pm
Thistles of Ring Mountain Workday



Our efforts are paying off: we'll comb the hillsides to remove the remnants of once thriving invasive yellow and Tocolote star thistle populations. Meet at the MCOSD gate (end of Taylor Rd on the right, Tiburon).



View from the Big Trees Trail, Indian Valley Preserve. Photo by May Chen.

Saturday, June 20
9:30am to 1pm
A Walk in History: Blithedale Ridge—Celebrate 75 Years of Land Preservation

The Open Space District and the Marin Conservation League are proud to present this *Walk in History* as part of MCL's 75th anniversary celebration. The Blithedale Ridge above Mill Valley was preserved in 1976—a prime example of a community joining together to save the land. It took 15 years, thousands of volunteer hours and donations from the communities of Mill Valley, Corte Madera, Larkspur and Kentfield to save "Northridge". Everyone is invited to commemorate this landmark and learn about the land. Meet at the Crown Rd Trailhead (end of Crown Rd, Kentfield). From Sir Francis Drake Blvd, go south on College Ave, right on Woodland Rd, left on Evergreen Dr; continue uphill to the intersection with Ridgecrest Rd; 50 feet uphill from this junction, go left on Crown Rd and follow to the end.

SUMMER EVENTS

Wednesday, June 24
10am to 2pm

Nature for Kids: Stafford Lake Park

We'll start the day looking at the bugs, birds, reptiles and amphibians at the pond, and then we'll head up to a shady hillside to see what we can find among the trees. After the park entrance gate, turn right and park in the last lot at the end of the road (3549 Novato Blvd). Parking fee waived for participants.



Friday, June 26
9am to 2pm

Cascade Canyon Open Space

Birds, butterflies, reptiles and a plethora of interesting insects will be our quarry as we travel the trails in and around this lush canyon. Meet at Doc Edgar Park (south of Fairfax, at the intersection of Fairfax-Bolinas Rd and Cascade Dr). Car shuttle, please be prompt.



Saturday, June 27
9am to 2pm

Stafford Lake Cleanup

We'll join forces with Marin Bass Club (MBC) to pickup litter along the shore. MBC will host a barbecue and raffle; proceeds will benefit the park. Meet at Area 3 (3549 Novato Blvd). Parking fee waived for participants.



Sunday, June 28
10am to 2pm

Nature for Kids: Upper Lagunitas Creek

The stretch of Lagunitas Creek that runs below Alpine Dam to Kent Lake is a fantastic place to see wildlife and wildflowers. We'll stop to eat and to explore along the creek, one of the best summer picnic spots in the county. Meet at Alpine Dam (on the Fairfax-Bolinas Rd).



JULY

**Wednesday, July 1 -
Sunday, July 5**

Cool Green Fun: Volunteer at the Marin County Fair

We need volunteers to staff the Parks & Open Space Pavilion and to help with grounds maintenance. Call 415.499.3778 for information and to sign up for a shift. Official Parks & Open Space volunteers will receive free admission to the fair.



Wednesday, July 8
10am to 2pm

Wildflowers at Bull Point

This is one of the best places in Marin for summer botanizing. We visited this site about a month ago, but we'll find a different array of plants in bloom on this visit. Meet at the Bull Point trailhead, on Sir Francis Drake Blvd in the Point Reyes National Seashore (between the oyster company and North Beach turnoffs). Be prepared for cool weather, no matter how warm it is at your home.



Saturday, July 11
6pm to 9pm

Nature for Kids: Evening at Mount Burdell

Come enjoy a summer evening on the slopes of this north Novato preserve. We'll walk slowly to a sheltered grove of ancient



trees and enjoy a picnic dinner as the sun sets. We'll discuss owls, bats, moths, badgers and other nocturnal creatures that prowl after sunset. Bring a picnic dinner (something you can carry a mile), a flashlight and a warm coat. Meet at the MCOSD gate (end of San Andreas Dr, Novato).

Thursday, July 16
10am to 2pm

Arroyo Hondo

This lush canyon in the southern portion of the Point Reyes National Seashore is a haven for dragonflies, butterflies and birds. This level, well maintained, shaded trail is a perfect place to enjoy nature on a sunny summer day. Meet at the Arroyo Hondo Trailhead (on Mesa Rd north of Bolinas, just south of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory).



Friday, July 17
5pm to 7pm

Dog Day at the Park

Bring your dogs for an evening of fun and education. We'll discuss park regulations and sensitive wildlife issues that all pet owners should know. Enjoy a free BBQ and raffle prizes. Meet at McInnis Park (350 Smith Ranch Rd, San Rafael). Bring a leash.



Hiking Mount Burdell after a hot summer day. Photo May Chen.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Mount Burdell Preserve hosts an incredible diversity of plant communities including chaparral, woodland, grassland, oak savannah, freshwater marsh and vernal pool. For several species this area is the only known Marin location. Even in mid-summer there are many interesting flowers to be seen here.

SUMMER EVENTS

Saturday, July 18
9am to 3pm



Trail Watch/Volunteer Mounted Patrol Training

Parks and Open Space needs you! We're looking for members of the community to be the extra eyes and ears for our Ranger and Trails staff. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Greg Reza (415.499.3778) to learn about our programs and to schedule an interview. If accepted, you'll be required to attend this training, which will describe responsible land stewardship and exciting opportunities for you to help us protect the land.

Saturday, July 18
9pm to 11pm



Stargazing at Stafford

Local astronomer Larry Brodtkin and Ranger Mike Maraccini will lead this fun stargazing adventure. We'll identify the major constellations and talk about the legends behind them. Wear warm, layered clothes, and bring binoculars or a telescope, flashlight, blankets, water, snacks and star charts. Meet at the Stafford Lake Park gatehouse (3549 Novato Blvd, Novato). Parking fee waived for participants.

AUGUST

Saturday, August 1
10am to 2pm



Abbotts Lagoon

We'll visit this unique coastal habitat as waves of shorebirds and waterfowl arrive from their breeding grounds in Alaska and Canada. We'll also search the marshes and beach areas for interesting flowers and insects. Meet at the Abbotts Lagoon parking area on Pierce Point Rd.

Thursday, August 6
9am to 3pm
Mount Tamalpais, the North Slope



We'll spend the day on the shady side of the mountain as we walk an 8 mile loop that takes us up the Cataract Trail, traverses the High Marsh and Willow trails, down the Kent Trail, and then back on the Helen Markt Trail. Meet at the lower Cataract Trailhead, just south of Alpine Dam on the Bolinas/Fairfax Rd.

Saturday, August 8
9am to 12noon



Creekside Park Workday

We'll walk through the park, on the bike path and along the Corte Madera Creek shoreline to pick up litter. Meet at the Creekside Park playground (on Bon Air Rd in Kentfield, across from Marin General Hospital).

Sunday, August 9
9am to 2pm



Birds of Bolinas Lagoon

Every autumn, our shores are visited by millions of birds that arrive from the boreal forests and tundra of the far north. Some stop here for refueling before continuing south, others stay until spring. Witness the spectacle of migration as we discuss the importance of our coastal wetlands. Meet at the Bob Stewart Trailhead, just east of the Las Baulines Nursery on the Olema-Bolinas Rd.

Wednesday, August 12
6pm to 9pm



Nature for Kids: Evening at Deer Island

We'll take a short walk to a quiet meadow where we can enjoy a picnic dinner while we look and listen as the creatures of the night begin to stir. We'll talk about owls, coyotes, insects and other animals that come out at night. From Atherton Ave, go south on Olive Ave and turn left at Deer Island Rd (Novato).

Saturday, August 15
9am to 3pm



Five Brooks to Mud Lake

This walk takes us into the "back country" of the Point Reyes National Seashore, high upon the ridge that separates the Olema Valley from the ocean. By this date we should be able to check out this season's crop of red-legged frogs. This 6.5 mile hike includes a moderate 2.5 mile ascent, but the rewards are worth it. Meet at the Five Brooks parking area (5 miles south of Olema on Hwy 1).

Saturday, August 15
9am to 11am



1st Annual Stand-Up Paddle Board Race

Feel the Aloha Spirit amongst the palm trees of McNears Beach! We'll start with



David Herlocker and Shannon Burke bring kids eye to eye with nature. Photo by Annie Spiegelman.

a short run along the beach and follow with 3.5 miles of paddling. Registration begins at 8am; the race begins at 9am (rain or shine). Meet at the park's Snack Bar (201 Cantera Way, San Rafael). Parking fee.

Thursday, August 20
10am to 3pm



Tomales Bay State Park

We'll descend slowly through a beautiful forest of Bishop Pines and enjoy a leisurely lunch on one of the finest beaches in the county. Meet at the Jepson Trailhead (just south of the entrance to Tomales Bay State Park, on Pierce Point Rd).

Saturday, August 22
10am to 2pm



Wildlife of Limantour Estero with David Lukas

This area has been through quite a transformation since last summer. The marshes have been altered to allow natural processes to reshape them, and the dam that once created a large pond in Muddy Hollow has been breached to allow easier access for migrating salmon. Come witness how migratory birds and other wildlife are responding to these changes. Meet at the Limantour parking area.

Saturday, August 22
11am to 3pm



End of Summer Family Skate Day

Marin's largest skate park is turning 5! Bring the family and a picnic lunch to celebrate. Meet at McInnis Park Skate Park. Just after the rail road tracks, take the first left then take the first right and follow to the end (350 Smith Ranch Rd, San Rafael). Skateboarders must wear helmets and pads.

SUMMER EVENTS

Sunday, August 23

10am to 12noon

A Rangers Tale: There and Back Again Horseback Ride

Ranger Karen Kilian will lead a fun 2 to 3 hour ride to explore open space, to learn about the Bay Area Ridge Trail and to meet new riding partners. Meet at Willow Tree Stables (3777 Vineyard Rd, Novato). Bring water and snacks and be in the saddle and ready to ride by 10am! If you need to rent a horse, call Willow Tree Stables (415.897.8212). Reserve your horse before the ride.



Horseback riding above the San Geronimo Valley. Photo by Craig Solin.

Tuesday, August 25

10am to 2pm

Nature for Kids: Baltimore Canyon

Let's see how many different animals we can find in the many habitats above Larkspur Creek. We'll compare the cool



redwood forest to the dry chaparral— where do you think we'll find more life? Meet at the Crown Rd Trailhead (end of Crown Rd, Kentfield). From Sir Francis Drake Blvd, go south on College Ave, right on Woodland Rd, left on Evergreen Dr; continue uphill to the intersection with Ridgecrest; 50 feet uphill from this junction, go left on Crown Rd and follow to end.

Sunday, August 30

10am to 2pm

Galls and Gallmakers at Mount Burdell

There are many devious creatures that have devised ways to trick plants into growing structures that shelter and feed them, these structures are called galls. We'll examine an amazing array of bizarre and beautiful galls as we learn the incredible life cycles of the gall makers. Meet at the MCOSD gate (end of San Andreas Dr, Novato).



Marin County Parks and Open Space Department

3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 260
San Rafael, California 94903

www.marinparks.org
415.499.6387

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