

MARE ISLAND SHORELINE HERITAGE PRESERVE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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4TH ANNUAL MARE FAIRE CELEBRATION

A weekend of guided nature and history discovery and hiking and biking fun at the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve

[VALLEJO}, CA – Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 12-14, 2011 the *4th Annual Mare Faire* will take place at the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and throughout Mare Island 10:00am-8:00pm, with the Preserve and many other Mare Island attractions open earlier beginning at 9:00am Saturday. More than 30 naturalist guided discovery outings, docent led history tours of the Preserve and tours of other Mare Island attractions will be offered over the 3-day weekend. The free public event, headquartered at the Preserve Visitors Center, Building A-167, a former bomb storage magazine, will also feature educational displays, slide shows, movies, music, an art show and plein air paintout for artists and items to purchase. A barbecue is 12noon-3pm Saturday and Sunday and a bake sale and beverages will be available for purchase throughout all three days. Many attractions located on Mare Island will be open for tours all three days, either Saturday or Sunday, or both weekend days. The complete schedule is available online at the Preserve website www.mareislandpreserve.org. Tours throughout Mare Island include St. Peter's Chapel, the Mare Island Museum, the WWII Landing Craft Support Gunboat 102, the Coal Shed Studios, the Vallejo People's Garden and the Mare Island San Pablo Bay Wetlands Trail. The event is free. All ages. Accessible. Pedestrian and bicycle only. Limited vehicle access in the Preserve for disabled. Sponsors and volunteers are needed. For information and directions visit www.mareislandpreserve.org or call 707-249-9633.

Highlights of some new and returning programs

Saturday the U.S. Navy will provide an escort for a Sierra Club-Solano Group guided 3.5 mile roundtrip hike to the Historic Southshore at 9:30am. The Navy has also arranged an escort for Volunteer Preserve

Manager Myrna Hayes' guided tour at 12noon of the Naval Ordnance Workers housing listed on the National Register of Historic Places and contributors to the Mare Island National Historic Landmark. This a rare opportunity to learn what life was like living at an active ammunition depot for the handful of families who called it home, some for more than 40 years, and to explore the grounds of the homes slated for future inclusion in the Preserve. At 2pm at the Visitors Center, Skip Snyder, of Snyder Geoscience, will demonstrate the MetalMapper system, produced by Geometrics, Inc. of San Jose, CA. The munitions classification program of the Department of Defense's Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP) and the Navy are hosting this demonstration of MetalMapper, one of the advanced sensor systems being demonstrated in areas of Mare Island to accelerate the environmental cleanup of military munitions. In the demonstration, the public will learn how MetalMapper is being used to improve how munitions are identified for removal and to more quickly make property safe for public access. Details of the ESTCP program can be found at <http://serdp-estcp.org/> under Featured Initiatives for Munitions Response.

New this year, is an informal fun walk/run both Saturday and Sunday beginning at 9:00am at the San Pablo Bay Wetlands Trail. The entrance to the parking lot and trailhead is at Azuar Dr. and A St. There is no registration and participants may go as far as they like along the 2-mile levee-top trail to San Pablo Bay. No bicycles or dogs, on or off leash, are allowed on the walking trail.

Also new this year, is a Sunday morning 10:00am tour of the Historic Mare Island Naval Hospital complex grounds that will be repeated in the afternoon at 2:00pm, by Dr. Tom Snyder Captain, Medical Corps, USN, (ret.) and Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Society for the History of Navy Medicine. The hospital closed in 1957 after serving as the Navy's oldest hospital in the West. At its peak during WWII, it had more than 2,000 beds. The hospital complex is now the campus of Touro University. The tours are free and do not require pre-registration. Park and meet by the Touro University Library at 1545 Azuar Dr. near corner of 15th St. and Azuar Dr. Dr. Snyder will also give a PowerPoint discussion about the history of the Naval Hospital at the Preserve Visitors Center at 12noon and 4:00pm.

A new Mare Faire activity for kids all three days is an opportunity to climb two trees in the Rowser Garden, one of which has been outfitted with ropes for swinging. They may also use the 'slash' from Eucalyptus trees and other found natural materials to create "tree forts" on the ground under the eucalyptus trees just beyond the Preserve entrance trailhead.

Saturday some programming highlights

From 10am-2pm on Saturday at the Naval Cemetery, Peggy O'Drain, a cemetery docent and resident of western Contra Costa County, will share results of her most recent research about some of those buried in the cemetery. New discoveries include a "Buffalo soldier" John William Marshall who later joined the Navy; an Alaskan Native American, Stephen Kasheroff; and Marine Sgt. James Melville who joined the

military at age 16, serving as a “drummer boy” and re-enlisting till he became a sergeant. He was known as "Uncle Jim", a kind hearted veteran who spent his allotment treating the little children of Vallejo to candy and trips to the theater. The restoration needs of the cemetery will be the topic of a slide show by Myrna Hayes at 3:30pm on Saturday, followed by a tour of the cemetery at 4:30pm.

Vallejo resident Rokas Armonas, beekeeper and owner of [Bay Area Bee Company](#) will give a talk at the Visitors Center at 3pm Saturday about how bees relate to and adapt to their surroundings; the value of local honey; and he will discuss and give samples of various bee products such as honey and honeycomb. His company’s local honey products are now sold at the Preserve Visitors Center marketplace.

An evening devoted to land restoration movies, a full-moon nature hike and overnight camping in the Preserve starts Saturday at the Visitors Center at 6:30pm with a video from the Center for Land-based learning, followed by the showing at 7:00pm of the widely acclaimed movie, [Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time](#) by filmmakers Ann and Steve Dunsky, from the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest regional office headquartered on Mare Island. The movie was sneak-previewed at the Empress Theater in Vallejo in late February. There are many lessons in the movie relevant for the Preserve and Mare Island in the context of the larger bioregion in which the island located. *Green Fire* is the first full-length, high-definition documentary film ever made about legendary environmentalist Aldo Leopold. Immediately following the movie, a full-moon nature hike begins at the Visitors Center at 8:30pm with camping allowed in three locations in the Preserve beginning at 8pm. Some campsites will require pre-registration at the Visitors Center on Saturday afternoon.

Sunday programming highlights

Sunday from 1:30-3:00pm Myrna Hayes will engage participants in some “forensic gardening” at the Bill and Alma Rowser Legacy Garden, an 80 year-old garden in the Preserve discovered by volunteers nearly 3 years ago. Volunteers are engaged in an ongoing effort to remove invasive French broom from and develop a restoration plan for the garden, which will include rainwater collection demonstration features. The Garden is located on a hillside with dramatic vistas of the Carquinez Strait and its bridges with Mt. Diablo in the background, as well as the Mare Island Strait, the city of Vallejo and views beyond. The Garden entrance is at Guidepost # 6 on the 3-mile roundtrip paved main trail and is open for a self-guided tours throughout the weekend event.

On Sunday, at 3pm at the Preserve Visitors Center, local Vallejo resident and reptile expert Lou Silva will team with Preserve volunteer snake specialist Tim Dayton from eastern Contra Costa County to give a talk entitled, “Get to know snakes of the Preserve– are there any bad snakes here?!” about the Preserve’s reptiles, with hoped for visits by a live rattlesnake and gopher snake.

At 3:30pm adventurers will pick blackberries and return to the Visitors Center to make their own blackberry jam.

Weekend Highlights

Throughout the weekend, the public is invited to commemorate and learn about the Port Chicago Mutiny which occurred at the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot on which the Preserve is now located. The charge of Mutiny for 50 African American sailors followed the largest mass mutiny trial in modern American Navy history. On August 9, 1944, 258 African American Navy sailors refused to return to loading munitions under the unsafe conditions that had killed 320 men, 202, of whom were their fellow African American sailors just 3 weeks before at Port Chicago Naval Magazine. While the group of sailors were barracked in Vallejo under the command of the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot, their somewhat impromptu refusal to return to work without assurances of training and improved safety precautions, resulted in the court martial of the 50 men singled out as having been key instigators of the action. Through advocacy of then NAACP lawyer and later Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, and even Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the Navy's racial segregation practices came to the forefront, leading to a policy shift towards integration by the U.S. Navy and many have said, the founding of the modern American civil rights movement.

At the Mare Island Preserve, artists of all ages, professional or student, are invited to exhibit their original paintings and photographs. No pre-registration is required. Plein air painters may participate in a "paintout" in which artists fan out throughout Mare Island to paint, returning their work for showing at the Visitors Center as they complete their painting day. The Coal Shed Studios located on Waterfront Dr. entrance at 4th St. off of Nimitz Ave. will be open from 12noon-5:00pm both Saturday and Sunday. From 2:00-4:00pm on Sunday, a free artist's reception will open an exhibit of Night Photography of Mare Island that runs from August 3 through September 15, 2011 at the Mare Island Museum featuring work by Alumni of [The Nocturnes](#) Workshops and frequent visitors to Mare Island at night. During the artist's reception, admission is free. Admission during regular museum hours is \$4 for ages 13 and up. Contact: Tim Baskerville, The Nocturnes, 707-645-9860.

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve is located on the portion of Mare Island that is the original Island totaling 960 acres as compared to the now more than 5,000 acres created by the Navy's filling of the bay and Napa River over its nearly 150 year presence on the island. The Preserve is located on the U.S. Navy's oldest Naval Ammunition Depot in the Pacific dating back to its founding in 1857. Visible from the hilltop vantage point are scenic vistas of seven Bay Area counties, the Carquinez Strait, Mt. Tamalpais, Mt. Diablo and the Napa and Sonoma valleys. The property's 150 years of Navy history and natural wildlands make it a magnet for history buffs, birders and nature lovers and artists and photographers. The property has been off limits to the public until recently due to sensitive Navy munitions manufacturing, storage and transport and environmental cleanup. In the past, regular access was limited to the Second Saturday Access Day founded by Arc Ecology volunteers in April 2008. Since October of 2010, volunteers of the Mare

Island Heritage Trust have opened the Preserve to the public every weekend, Friday through Sunday, 10:00am to sunset during which the public has free access to 111 acres of the future 215-acre parkland for hiking and bicycling on the paved roadway, visiting the cemetery, picnicking and birdwatching. Visitors may view educational displays about the history and natural features of the parkland and an art show of scenes in the Preserve by members of the Benicia Plein Air Group at the Visitors Center.

The first parcels of the property were transferred to the City of Vallejo in a grant from the California legislature through the California State Lands Commission in 2002 for public trust uses for all Californians. The remainder of the 215-acre site is still undergoing environmental cleanup by the U.S. Navy and is not open to the public except through regular hikes on the second Saturday led by the Sierra Club Solano Group.

Please note: tours of the Preserve are available to any reporter or photographer covering this event. Call Myrna Hayes, 707-557-9816 or 707-249-9633 (cell) to schedule.

Directions

- Located at 1595 Railroad Ave. Vallejo, CA 94592 Online maps aren't yet accurate because they haven't found us yet and Railroad is blocked off at 15th St and Nereus St. The best directions are on our website. www.mareislandpreserve.org
- From I-80 east or westbound: Exit Tennessee St., continue west to Mare Island. Follow Mare Faire signs.
- From Napa and Sonoma: Travel south on Highway 29 to Tennessee St., turn right and follow directions above.
- From Contra Costa County: Cross the Benicia-Martinez Bridge on I-680. Take I-780 west toward Benicia and Vallejo. Continue on I-780 for approximately 7 miles. Exit at I-80 east. Continue on I-80 toward Sacramento. Exit on Tennessee St. and follow directions above.
- From Marin and Sonoma: Travel east on Highway 37 to the Mare Island exit just before the Napa River Bridge. Turn right at the north entrance to Mare Island; continue to stop at G St. Turn left. Continue 2 blocks to Nimitz Ave. Turn right.
- Mare Island Directions: Continue on Nimitz Ave. to a right turn at 15th St. Turn right to Railroad Ave. Turn left. Continue to PARKING through gate beyond the Army Reserve.

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