

# Mare Island Heritage Trust

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## Mission

The mission of the Mare Island Heritage Trust is to protect, preserve, restore, manage, interpret, promote as a destination and provide for an engaging visitor experience of the open space, historic, cultural and natural resources of Mare Island and its vicinity. Along with public and private sector partners the Mare Island Heritage Trust ensures adequate funding, maintenance and public support of its purposes. The Mare Island Heritage Trust engages in comprehensive planning and the implementation of initiatives and educational and recreational programming for the public experience and enjoyment of an array of unique natural and built areas of Mare Island and its vicinity.

## EVENT ADVISORY

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For immediate release

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## Rare Chance to Explore the Historic Mare Island Naval Shipyard and the Napa River aboard Dolphin Charters Cruise

[NAPA}, CA – Friday, June 24, 2011 Dolphin Charters will host a cruise aboard its 40 passenger vessel, River Dolphin along the Napa River departing the Vallejo Marina “K” dock 42 Harbor Way at 10am and returning to the dock at 3pm. Cost: \$60 per person. Passengers are encouraged to bring their own lunch, drinks and snacks, dress in layers and bring cameras and binoculars. Reservations: 510-527-9622 or 800-472-9942.

Following a sold-out cruise in late April that featured a water tour of Historic Mare Island Naval Shipyard aboard the Delphinus with her captain, Ronn Patterson and narrator Myrna Hayes, Mare Island Heritage Trust, Dolphin Charters has scheduled another Mare Island oriented cruise to accommodate those from the April waiting list and others who will wish to join in on the popular cruise.

According to Captain Ronn Patterson, a marine biologist and owner of Dolphin Charters, “A cruise along the Napa River is like a voyage into the past. Our Mare Island and Napa River history trip begins at the historic Vallejo and Mare Island Naval Shipyard waterfront and continues into a different world, one of vineyards, backwater homes, and some of the largest contiguous marshes in the Bay Area. The Napa was once the third busiest commercial river in

California.”

Captain Patterson spends the summer months in Alaska aboard the Delphinus, offering whale-watching expeditions while he cruises the Bay-Delta as well as giving more than a dozen historic and bird-watching trips along the Petaluma River in the fall, winter and early spring months.

The June 24 Mare Island boat trip will be aboard Dolphin Charters’ new vessel, River Dolphin, acquired in response to greater demand during the summertime for local Bay Area bird-watching and history cruises like the Mare Island Historic Shoreline and Napa River trip. According to its captain, Richard Foregger, River Dolphin is particularly suited for river cruising and the June 24 trip will be one of its first outings in the Bay Area. Richard earned his Master license in Seattle, WA where he crewed, captained, and taught on every type of power driven vessel from the steam powered Virginia V, a 1920's vintage 120 foot mosquito fleet ferry, to 56 foot Sea Rays for a local marine dealership. He has delivered boats up and down the West coast and owns a 1960's vintage 39 foot trawler.

A film/video producer by trade Richard is currently working on the development of “CAPTAIN'S LOG, the Boating TV Show”, and also produces video training and marketing programs. He has a Journalism Degree from the University of Houston and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Boston University.

Captain Foregger is joined aboard River Dolphin by Myrna Hayes, Co-founder and President of the Mare Island Heritage Trust and manager of the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and Dr. Tom Snyder of Vallejo, a retired Captain in the Navy Medical Corps and Co-founder and Executive Director of The Society for the History of Navy Medicine.

The five-hour journey takes passengers first down river and into San Pablo Bay and the Carquinez Strait for a rare, closeup view from the water of Mare Island’s Historic Southshore and former Naval Ammunition Depot, now a new regional park, the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve. As it makes its way along the historic shipyard’s southshore from the mouth of the Napa River, passengers will learn the history of and view the West’s oldest Naval Ammunition Depot founded in 1857, where the oldest Naval Cemetery in the Pacific was established a year later. Together with the former Ordnance Workers Housing, this property makes up the Naval Ammunition Depot National Register Historic District.

Along the river’s edge, passengers will view osprey and herons at the peak of the nesting season, nesting on abandoned lightpoles and high points on shipyard cranes and buildways.

Other highlights of the Mare Island tour include stories about the Mare Island Navy Yard's long maritime and naval history dating back to 1854 when Commander David G. Farragut, later first Admiral of the U.S. Navy founded the first U.S. Naval installation in the Pacific on the island, which would later also include its first Marine Corps battalion and training camp.

Clearly visible from the waterway for the first time in some 50 years, due to recent demolition of a building that blocked the view, the first naval hospital on the West Coast will be the topic of an onboard presentation by retired Navy Medical Corps Captain, Dr. Tom Snyder. Passengers will also see the Navy's early air station site and the berth where the USS Wahoo, possibly WWII's most famous submarine, was launched and the submarine base where submarines that served in the Pacific in WWII were repaired and retrofitted. Of keen interest to many passengers, the ship dismantling operations recently initiated at Mare Island to scrap two Suisun Bay mothball fleet vessels, will also be clearly visible in Drydocks Two and Three.

The cruise will continue up the scenic Napa River, where passengers may catch a glimpse of a pair of peregrine falcons perched or in flight near their nest as the boat passes under the Highway 37 Bridge. Just up-river the boat passes by White Slough designated as a Globally Important Bird Area, and alongside the Sonoma/Napa marshes, one of the largest inter-tidal marsh restoration projects in the United States. The entire river is being restored to a Living River as part of a flood control project for the city of Napa. Large mud flats have been constructed along the river edge, creating abundant feeding and excellent viewing opportunities of a host of waterbirds. A variety of hawk species are common and occasionally both golden and bald eagles have been seen. Bull and Edgerly Islands and other spots upriver are reminders of the era of duck hunting clubs, orchards, cattle ranches, boatworks and industrial operations that depended on the Napa River. The hills of the Carneros and Napa Valley winegrape growing regions come into focus as the trip continues further into the Napa Valley.

**For Reservations: Call: 510-527-9622 or 800-472-9942 or visit: [Dolphincharters.com](http://Dolphincharters.com)**

Please note: Tours of the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve are available to any reporter or photographer covering this event. A reporter and photographer may arrange to accompany the cruise. Call Myrna Hayes, 707-557-9816 or 707-249-9633 (cell) to schedule.

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