

Los Vaqueros Watershed Visitor Interpretive Program Schedule August – December 2010

The John Muir Interpretive Center is located at
19 Walnut Boulevard, Brentwood, next to the Los Vaqueros Dam.
(Formerly known as the Los Vaqueros Interpretive Center)

August

Birds of Prey

One Saturday and Two Sundays, August 21, 22 and 29

Drop in between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

At the John Muir Interpretive Center

Drop in on the Interpretive Center and meet magnificent birds of prey. Which bird will you meet? That's a surprise! It could be an eagle, an owl, a kestrel, or another bird of prey. It will be a real, live bird, and you will receive lots of information about it: diet, habitat, how to spot them in the wild, and what you can do to help protect them as they share their habitat with humans.

Nighttime Discovery Hike

Saturday, August 28, 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

At the John Muir Interpretive Center

This is a new program to the Interpretive Center! Join Naturalist Michael Marchiano for a moonlit hike along Kellogg Creek. Find out which creatures come out at night, who rules the night sky, and who rules the hillsides and the valleys. Learn what lurks about at Los Vaqueros when the gates are locked and everyone has gone home. Bring a working flashlight and dress appropriately with closed-toe shoes and long pants. Meet at the Interpretive Center at 8 for an introduction. Hike will be over by 10 p.m. Spaces are limited to 20, and participants must be at least 11 years old. **Reservations are required – (925) 688-8010.**

September

Nature Hike: Birds and Trees of Los Vaqueros

Saturday, September 4

Starts at 8 a.m. from the John Muir Interpretive Center

Join Naturalist John Mottashed for a fun-filled nature hike on one of the watershed's easier trails. You will learn about the birds and trees that live there. Bird species we may encounter include red-tailed hawks, great blue herons and woodpeckers. Some field guides and binoculars will be available, but please bring your own if you have them.

Snakes Alive!

Saturday, September 11, 10 a.m. to noon.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Naturalist Michael Marchiano will introduce you to snakes and other reptiles you've always wondered about. You'll meet and learn about the often-maligned western rattlesnake and have a chance to see one face-to-face. You can hold a Pacific gopher snake, and learn about the myths and facts regarding the many scaly creatures that inhabit Contra Costa County.

Primarily Primitive

Saturday, September 18, 10 a.m. to noon

John Muir Interpretive Center

Hundreds of years ago, the watershed was a trading and hunting territory for Native Americans. Naturalist Briana Moore will teach you a little about their history and what their lives might have been like. You'll also learn some of the skills they relied on for survival and have some old-fashioned fun.

Nighttime Discovery Hike

Saturday, September 18, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

This is a new program to the Interpretive Center! Join Naturalist Michael Marchiano for a moonlit hike along Kellogg Creek. Find out which creatures come out at night, who rules the night sky, and who rules the hillsides and the valleys. Learn what lurks about at Los Vaqueros when the gates are locked and everyone has gone home. Bring a working flashlight and dress appropriately with closed-toe shoes and long pants. Meet at the Interpretive Center at 7:30 for an introduction. Hike will be over by 9:30 p.m. Spaces are limited to 20, and participants must be at least 11 years old. **Reservations are required – (925) 688-8010.**

An Afternoon of Autumn Crafts

Saturday, September 18, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Get ready for the fall with hands-on art and craft activities that reflect the season. (The first day of fall is Sept. 22.) This is also a good time to see the inside of the Interpretive Center and discover all it has to offer.

Birds of Prey

Two Saturdays and One Sunday – September 19, 25 and 26

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Drop in on the Interpretive Center anytime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and meet magnificent birds of prey. Which bird will you meet? That's a surprise! It could be an eagle, an owl, a kestrel, or another bird of prey. It will be a real, live bird, and you will receive lots of information about it: diet, habitat, how to spot them in the wild, and what you can do to help protect them as they share their habitat with humans.

Arachnophobia

Saturday, September 25, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Are you afraid of Spiders? Do they make your skin crawl? Would you let a tarantula crawl across your hand? Come and learn the truth behind the myths of the eight legged critters that live in our gardens, homes, garages and park lands. Meet and learn about our local gentle giant, the California Tarantula. Join naturalist Michael Marchiano as he discusses the life and times of tarantulas and their kin.

Senior Hike

Tuesday, September 28, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Meet at the John Muir Interpretive Center

Join Naturalist Mike Marchino for a leisurely hike along the Kellogg Creek Trail. This hike is about 3 miles round trip and mostly flat with low rolling hills, however there are a couple of larger, steeper hills on the route. On the hike, Mike will tell you a little about the ecosystems and history of the watershed and point out any wildlife that happens to be in the area. Feel free to bring picnic lunches to enjoy at one of the picnic areas after the hike.

October

Bills, Beaks and Talons: Fishing for a Living

Saturday, October 2, 11 a.m. to noon

John Muir Interpretive Center

Have you ever wondered why birds' beaks are different sizes and shapes? What makes them unique and why are they shaped that way? There are beaks for probing, cracking, scooping, shoveling, filtering, trapping, picking and hammering. Naturalist John Mottashed will share a wealth of information about this important part of every bird.

Arachnophobia

Saturday, October 9, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Are you afraid of Spiders? Do they make your skin crawl? Would you let a tarantula crawl across your hand? Come and learn the truth behind the myths of the eight legged critters that live in our gardens, homes, garages and park lands. Meet and learn about our local gentle giant, the California Tarantula. Join naturalist Michael Marchiano as he discusses the life and times of tarantulas and their kin.

Harvest Hike

Saturday, October 16, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Meet at the County Line Staging Area next to the watershed's south entrance gate

October is a beautiful time of year to explore the hills of Los Vaqueros. Join Naturalist Briana Moore on this 5-mile loop starting from the Marina entrance staging area. We will enjoy autumn's bounty, learning about the history of Los Vaqueros, native plant uses and the animals that inhabit the hills.

This is a moderately strenuous hike with a few steep sections. Please wear sturdy hiking shoes, bring water, lunch, a hat and sunscreen.

Senior Hike

Tuesday, October 19, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Meet at the John Muir Interpretive Center

Join Naturalist Mike Marchino for a leisurely hike along the Kellogg Creek Trail. This hike is about 3 miles round trip and mostly flat with low rolling hills, however there are a couple of larger, steeper hills on the route. On the hike, Mike will tell you a little about the ecosystems and history of the watershed and point out any wildlife that happens to be in the area. Feel free to bring picnic lunches to enjoy at one of the picnic areas after the hike.

Tarantula Run
Saturday, October 23,
Event starts at 8 a.m.
Kellogg Creek Picnic Area, Los Vaqueros Watershed
5K, 10K, Half-Marathon and Free Kids 1K Races
Go to www.ccwater.com for more information and to sign up

Birds of Prey
One Saturday and two Sundays – October 23, 24 and 31
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Drop in on the Interpretive Center anytime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and meet magnificent birds of prey. Which bird will you meet? That's a surprise! It could be an eagle, an owl, a kestrel, or another bird of prey. It will be a real, live bird, and you will receive lots of information about it: diet, habitat, how to spot them in the wild, and what you can do to help protect them as they share their habitat with humans.

Bats, Spiders and Blood Suckers
Saturday, October 30, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Celebrate Halloween by learning the truth about bats, spiders and blood suckers. We'll have a creepy, crawly good time while we learn some interesting facts.

An Afternoon of Halloween Crafts
Sunday, October 31, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Get ready for the holidays with hands-on art and craft activities that reflect the celebration of the season. This is also a good time to see the inside of the Interpretive Center and discover all it has to offer.

November

Family Fishing Day
Saturday, November 6

Starts at 8 a.m. At the Los Vaqueros Marina (south side)

Bring your family to Los Vaqueros to enjoy a day of fishing in a beautiful setting. The day starts at 8 a.m. with a fishing lesson for all ages and Welcome Bags for families. Then, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, a fishing derby with lots of prizes gets underway for kids. Loaner rods and reels are available, and a wide selection of tackle is sold at the Marina. A parking fee of \$4 to \$6 per car is required. Adults are required to have a California fishing license and a daily fishing permit. The reservoir will be stocked the day before the event. For more information and to sign up, call the Marina at (925) 371-2628.

Stingers, Fangs and Venom. What Do You Fear?
Saturday, November 13, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

This is one of the Interpretive Center's most popular programs. Learn the facts about the sometimes maligned local fauna of Contra Costa County. How dangerous are Western Pacific Rattlesnakes, Black Widow Spiders, Scorpions and Tarantulas? Are these creatures really deadly? See living examples of the venomous and non-venomous creatures, and learn to tell the difference. Find out which critters are really the most dangerous. Lead by local Naturalist Michael Marchiano, who will share his animals and their stories with you.

An Afternoon of Thanksgiving Crafts
Saturday, November 13, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Get ready for the holidays with hands-on art and craft activities that reflect the celebrations of the season. This is also a good time to see the inside of the Interpretive Center and discover all it has to offer.

Birds of Prey
Two Sundays and One Saturday – November 14, 20 and 21
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Drop in on the Interpretive Center anytime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and meet magnificent birds of prey. Which bird will you meet? That's a surprise! It could be an eagle, an owl, a kestrel, or another bird of prey. It will be a real, live bird, and you will receive lots of information about it: diet, habitat, how to spot them in the wild, and what you can do to help protect them as they share their habitat with humans.

Vista Grande Hike
Saturday, November 20, 10 a.m. to 1p.m.

Meet at the John Muir Interpretive Center

Join Naturalist Briana Moore, on this 5-mile hike that will get your heart pumping as you enjoy the view of the Central Valley and Delta and learn about the watershed's history and wildlife. This is a moderately

strenuous hike with a few steep sections. Please wear sturdy hiking shoes, bring water, lunch, a hat and sunscreen.

Nature Hike: Bent Blue Oak Hike

Saturday, November 27

Starts at 9 a.m. from the Kellogg Creek Staging Area

Did you happen to eat too much turkey and stuffing after Thanksgiving? Well, we have just the cure for that! Join Naturalist John Mottashed to burn off some calories on a steep hike where you will discover the unusual bent blue oak tree. We will examine the tree and attempt to determine if this oak was bent by the wind or bent by Native Americans years ago so that it could serve as a marker.

December

Birds of Prey

Two Saturdays and One Sunday – December 11, 12 and 18

Drop in between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Drop in on the Interpretive Center anytime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and meet magnificent birds of prey. Which bird will you meet? That's a surprise! It could be an eagle, an owl, a kestrel, or another bird of prey. It will be a real, live bird, and you will receive lots of information about it: diet, habitat, how to spot them in the wild, and what you can do to help protect them as they share their habitat with humans.

Nature Walk: Bare Naked Trees

Saturday, December 18

Starts at 10 a.m. at the John Muir Interpretive Center

The approaching winter solstice is the official first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. It is the shortest day and longest night of the year. Come out and see why do these Los Vaqueros trees lose their leaves and observe these trees in a different season. We will observe some trees right outside the door of the Interpretive center and continue down to Kellogg Creek. This is a great opportunity to see trees in a way we might not see them.

An Afternoon of Holiday Crafts

Sunday, December 19, Noon to 1:30 p.m.

John Muir Interpretive Center

Get ready for the holidays with hands-on art and craft activities that reflect the celebrations of the season. This is also a good time to see the inside of the Interpretive Center and discover all it has to offer.

Los Vaqueros Interpretive Center Programs are free, unless otherwise noted. There is a \$4 per-vehicle parking fee charged at the LV entry booths. (It is a \$6 fee for non-ratepayers.) The Center is located at the southern end of Walnut Boulevard, about 9 miles south of Brentwood. Advanced sign-ups are helpful, but not required. Call (925) 688-8010 for more information or to sign up, or e-mail goltman@ccwater.com.