



## UPCOMING FREE EVENTS:

Check out these upcoming free events at MVSD. Contact Kelly at [kdavidson@mvsd.org](mailto:kdavidson@mvsd.org) or at (925) 228-5635 x19 for more information and to RSVP for any of the events below:

### WETLANDS BIRDING FIELD TRIP

**Saturday, May 28**

**7:30 am - 9:30 am**

Join the District Biologist for a fun and informative hike around the wetlands complex. We will introduce you to the diversity of resident and migrant birds found in and around these marshes. Beginners are always welcome and rain cancels. Bring binoculars. Please RSVP by May 25th.

### RIVER OTTERS: BACK ON THE BAY AREA MAP!

**Saturday, May 28th**

**10:00 am - noon**

River otters are charismatic carnivores and make wonderful ambassadors for wetland conservation efforts. Yet, little is known about their population, range and seasonal habits in the Bay Area. Join River Otter Ecology Project (ROEP) Executive Director Megan Isadore as she shares slides and videos from ROEP's "otter cams" and discusses the role that citizen science plays in this "otterly" exciting work! Space is limited and participants must RSVP no later than May 25th.

### WESTERN POND TURTLE TALK AND WALK

**Saturday, June 25**

**2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

The Western Pond Turtle is our only native freshwater turtle and is considered a species of special concern by the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife. Join us for an indoor presentation and learn about the goals and objectives of the MVSD pond turtle study. Afterward, we will head out to Moorhen Marsh to look for basking and nesting turtles. Appropriate for ages 10 and up. Space is limited and participants must RSVP by June 22nd.

### MCNABNEY MARSH NESTING RAFT PROGRAM

**Saturday, July 9th**

**10:00 am - noon**

Join MVSD's District Biologist for a presentation on the history of McNabney Marsh, including the 1988 Shell oil spill and the 2009 tide gate opening. We will explore the consequences of these events for wildlife and how the nesting raft project could make a difference for ground nesting species in these historic wetlands. We will finish up by walking out to the observation platform to look for bird activity on the rafts! Dress in layers and bring your binoculars. Please RSVP by July 6th.

### UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES

MVSD Board of Directors meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the District office at 3800 Arthur Road and are open to the public.

**Thursday, June 9, 2016, 6:30 pm**

**Thursday, July 14, 2016, 6:30 pm**

**Thursday, August 4, 2016, 6:30 pm**

(Please note that August Board meeting date is revised)

MVSD Board of Directors meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the District office at 3800 Arthur Road and are open to the public.

## Managing the Marshes

Many remember the April 1988 Shell Oil spill that caused detrimental environmental impacts to what was then known as Shell Marsh. The cleanup effort and mitigation required to address the impact of the spill laid much of the groundwork for how the marsh is managed today.

Through Shell's mitigation efforts, the marsh eventually was transferred to MVSD's control in August 2000 and is now called McNabney Marsh. Marsh management is advised by the Peyton Slough Wetlands Advisory Committee (PSWAC). The PSWAC works collaboratively to develop management goals and objectives for the Peyton Slough wetlands complex, which includes McNabney and Moorhen marshes on the south side of Waterfront Road, and several marshes operated by others on the north side of Waterfront Road.

Several marshes within the Marsh Complex, including McNabney, and Carquinez Strait are separated by tide gates. Tidal waters were previously kept from entering the marsh due to fear of contamination from historic industrial activities. However, a remediation project within Peyton Slough to encapsulate the contamination, now allows operation of the tide gates and tidal flows to be reintroduced to McNabney for the first time in nearly a century.

It is believed that the ultimate transition to tidal waters will result in overall improved operations and management of McNabney Marsh. However, balancing the natural habitat of the marshes with manmade infrastructure is a bit of a challenge.



Wildlife enjoying the habitat that McNabney Marsh provides. (photo credit: Kelly Davidson-Chou)

There are a number of constraints that impede the amount of tidal water entering McNabney Marsh, including the narrowness of Peyton Slough where it crosses under the Union Pacific Railroad and Waterfront Road. Much of this could be resolved by increasing the degree to which the tide gates are open, except that adjacent infrastructure and property would then be subjected to routine flooding. MVSD, with the support of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Control Board, is working to reduce, if not eliminate, the constriction of the slough as it crosses under the UPRR, and subsequently improve the quality of the marsh.

For a more detailed history of McNabney Marsh and information about how it is managed, visit [www.mvsd.org](http://www.mvsd.org).



## Did You Know?

Water from pools, spas and fountains should never be drained into the storm drain. This can pollute creeks, the Delta, and the Bay with copper, chlorine, sediments and other contaminants. Storm drains flow directly into our local waterways

without receiving treatment to remove pollutants. Pools, Spas and fountains should only be discharged into the sanitary sewer. However, even partially draining your spa could overflow your sewer line, causing a sewer back up onto your property. Before you discharge into your sewer line, please contact MVSD at 925-228-5635, ext. 10 for a no cost discharge permit.



National Park Service Ranger Keith Park and his daughter Aleksandra with her butterfly ring at the Birthday-Earth Day event on April 23rd.

## MVSD Celebrates Earth Day at the John Muir Historic Site

On Saturday, April 23rd, MVSD participated in the annual "Birth Day-Earth Day" event celebrating John Muir's 178th birthday (April 21st) and the 48th anniversary of Earth Day (April 22nd). The celebration, hosted by the John Muir Association and the National Park Service, attracted an estimated 3,000 participants who gathered at the John Muir Historic site in Martinez to enjoy live music, self-guided tours of the John Muir house and grounds, and learn about the many organizations and public agencies in Contra Costa County that provide education and public outreach on environmental

issues ranging from climate change to reducing trash in our watersheds.

MVSD's booth at the Earth Day event focused on the plight of the monarch butterfly with informational handouts, children's activities including a very popular monarch butterfly ring (we made 200!) and monarch bookmarks and bumper stickers to take home. To learn more about the John Muir Association, visit: <http://johnmuirassociation.org/>. To learn more about the National Park Service and the John Muir Historic site, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/jomu/index.htm>.

**For an update on the status of MVSD's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES), please visit [www.mvsd.org](http://www.mvsd.org).**



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## Get to Know the River Otter!

The North American River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) is a member of the mustelid family (skunks, weasels, badgers, and wolverines). These charismatic carnivores were largely absent from the Bay Area by the mid-1900s because of water pollution, habitat loss, and trapping. Although populations throughout the Bay Area have increased in the last decade or so, very little is known about otter ecology and behavior within our watersheds.

It is not uncommon to see otters in Moorhen Marsh, especially if you are exploring at dawn or dusk - though mid-day encounters are not unusual. Otter signs, including fresh spraints (scat) and slides are easily found. As an apex predator that uses every part of a waterway, from headwaters to the ocean, their return to our watersheds is encouraging for wetland and riparian habitat conservation and restoration efforts. To learn about river otters in the Bay Area, visit The River Otter Ecology Project: <http://www.riverottterecology.org/>.



### May is American Wetlands Month and World Otter Day is May 25th!

We are celebrating wetland habitats and one of the most charismatic wetland ambassadors - the North American River Otter! Each year in May, MVSD sponsors a billboard for American Wetlands month. Be sure to look for it off of I-680 near Arthur Road. To learn more about American Wetlands Month, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/may-american-wetlands-month-learn-explore-take-action>. To learn more about World Otter Day, visit: [http://www.otter.org/Public/Events\\_OurCurrentEvent.aspx](http://www.otter.org/Public/Events_OurCurrentEvent.aspx).



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