

# The Muir Ramble Route: Outdoor Classroom

Hiking and biking the Muir Ramble Route has provided us with an alternative educational forum with diverse opportunities to educate the public about the history and ecology of places along route.

We gave presentations at libraries and local history centers while we walked the route.

We led small group trips of friends as weekend outings and large organized school groups, where students have prepared reports in advance of walking to present on the trail. These trips have fostered interest in Muir's legacy and the history or ecology of places along the route.

We have carried on educational conversations with people we have met on the trail, and with people whose homes, farms, or ranches are along the MRR.

One example:

A five day trip on the Muir Ramble Route  
from Oakland to Morgan Hill  
with Kristen Sullivan &  
nine of her De Anza College students.

After reading about our Muir Ramble Route project, instructors from De Anza College in Santa Clara contacted us to see if we would lead a group of their students on the MRR from Oakland to Morgan Hill.

The De Anza students were involved in a project to preserve open space in Morgan Hill as a migratory corridor for wild animals.

The walk would end with a public event in Morgan Hill. It was the instructor's hope that if people were made aware of how hard it is for humans to navigate around freeways and barbed wire fences, that they might understand the challenges animals face.



De Anza College students at Jack London Square, Oakland



Bay Trail past Jack London Square



Martin Luther King Regional Shore

As with all long distance trails, on the personal level the MRR poses the questions, “Can I do it? Can I walk 300 miles from San Francisco to Yosemite?” It provides an opportunity to set and achieve goals, such as personal fitness and personal growth.

It is our experience that walking on long distance trails provides opportunities for individuals to learn more about themselves and for groups of people to bond together, learning to accept differences.

*“I knew I was in shape – I played football all through high school, but I wondered if I could do it. And I did, I walked from Oakland to Morgan Hill.”*





First night spent at a Boys and Girls Club in San Leandro

The MRR follows the footsteps of John Muir and so poses the question: Who was John Muir? What is his legacy and what does this mean to me?

It is our experience that as the hiker learns about John Muir they are inclined to look a little closer and learn a little more about the natural world and begin to understand the value of preserving open space for the use of future generations.

*“I loved reading what John Muir wrote about a place then seeing it myself.”*



Beside Highway 92



Hayward Regional Shoreline



Alternate route: rail line



Coyote Hills Group Campsite

The Muir Ramble Route follows old stage routes, roads and waterways, and passes through both growing and abandoned population centers posing questions and developing interests related to the local history of the place.

*“This is a major highway now. What was it like when Muir walked through? What is this abandoned railroad line and where did it go? Why is there no town of Hills Ferry anymore when in Muir’s day it was a major city on the route?”*



Coyote Hills



Looking towards San Jose



On the Bay Trail in Newark.

Wait, what do we do here?



Coyote Creek Lagoon Day Use Area



Coyote Creek Bike Trail  
Milpitas



San Jose

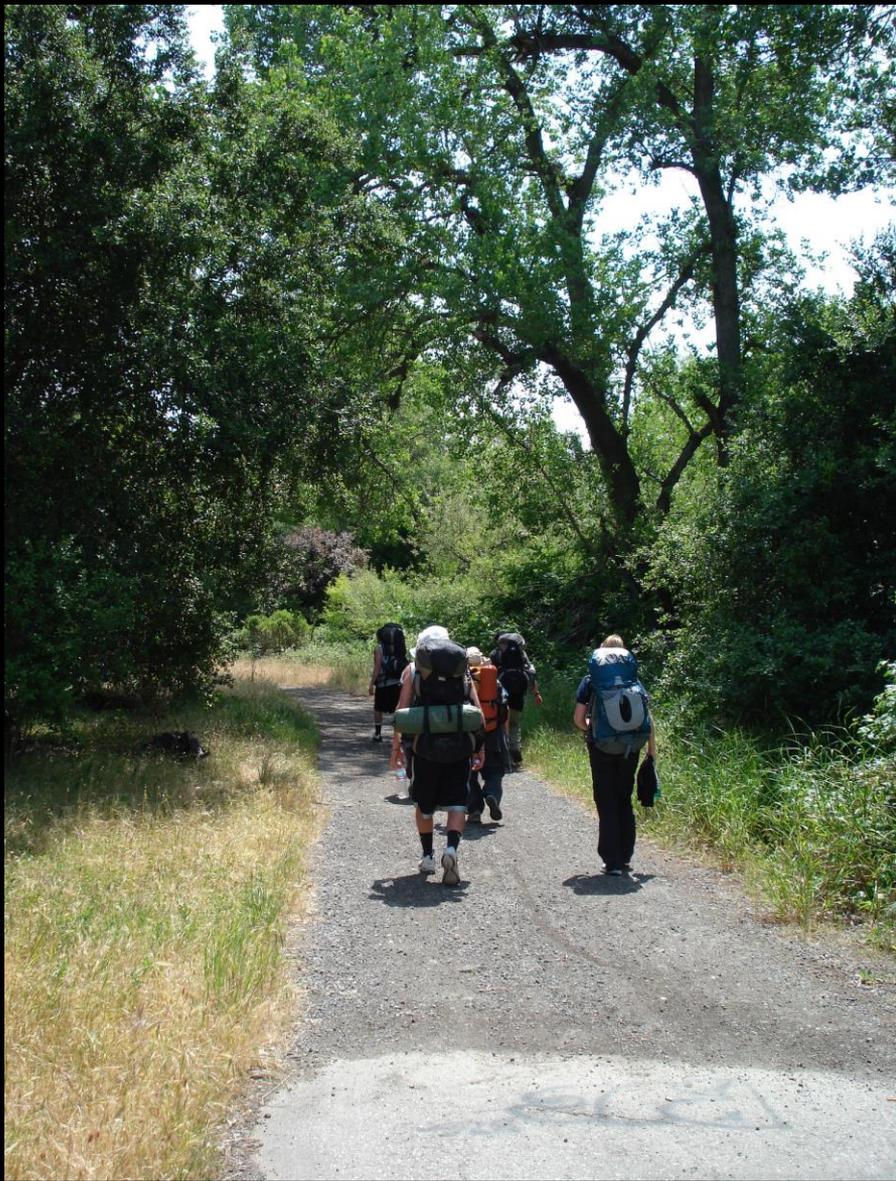


Third night: spent in a homeless shelter in downtown San Jose

The Muir Ramble Route passes through major centers of population and thus presents opportunity to raise awareness of the natural beauty that exists locally in urban areas.

It is our experience that people have found great pleasure in walking through open spaces they had only seen from the perspective of an automobile.

*“When you go to a place like Yosemite you expect beauty, but not in a place like Fremont. I have a whole bunch of family that lives in Fremont and they don’t have a clue about all the natural beauty that is so close by. And if they don’t get out there to see it they will never know what they are missing.”*



Coyote Creek Bike Path

*“I am outside a lot, but on this trip my eyes were opened. I had never noticed all the kinds of trees or thought to look for birds or insects.”*



Fourth night: spent in a local church in South San Jose





Hiking with John Muir

Following Muir's footsteps raises the question, "What was it like here in Muir's time and how are things different?"

It is our experience that following Muir's footsteps creates the opportunity for conversation about the history of preservation and conservation and the modern day importance of preserving open spaces for the public's use and enjoyment.



Event in support of keeping green space for animal migration

Another form of classroom



Talking at the San Jose Public Library while on our walk

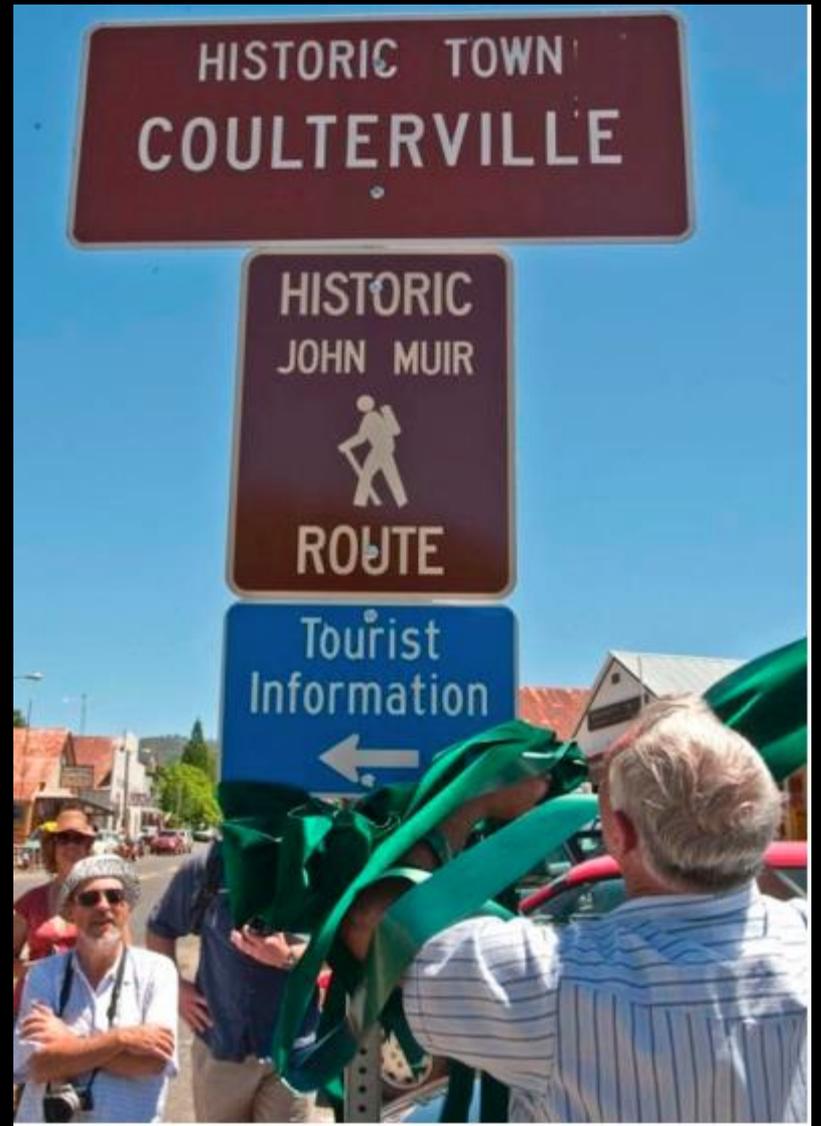


Presenting to the Delhi Historical Society while on our walk.

## Results:

As a direct result of our talk to the local history society in Coulterville, local residents Ken and Terri Pulvino were inspired to lobby local government to designate the highway 132 as the “John Muir Highway” and to create the John Muir Geotourism Center and John Muir Festival in Coulterville.

The next festival will be held May 16, 2015.



Opening the John Muir Highway in Coulterville



Ribbon-cutting for the opening dedication of the Historic John Muir Route through Coulterville. <http://www.johnmuir.us>

What do we hope and dream for?

We would like to see folks walking from San Francisco to Yosemite for their vacations.

We would like to see infrastructure built along the route to support through-hiking including campsites, hostels and cafes, and a way to shuttle from camp to camp.

We would like to find a governmental agency to sponsor the designation of the Muir Ramble Route as a publicly supported trail.

End talk here! Are there any questions from the audience!



Educational opportunities with friend  
and family:

Bike Trip on Section 4  
through the San Joaquin Valley



Meeting at the starting point:  
O'Neil Forbay, Los Banos



California Aqueduct



Biking along Main Canal



Gustine



Turlock Irrigation District

Beside dairy farms









Mc Connell Campground, Ballico, CA

# Following Muir on the Merced River



The start: McConnell State  
Park



Merced River



