

THE LAKE MERRITT

INSTITUTE AN URBAN RUNOFF AND WATERSHED RESEARCH CENTER

TIDINGS
SEPTEMBER 2007

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Come Help Us at Creek to Bay Day!



By Kristin Hathaway

Volunteers are needed to participate in Oakland's 12th annual Creek to Bay Day event as part of the California Coastal Commission's annual Coastal Cleanup Day. A variety of watershed protection activities will take place at Lake Merritt and creek locations throughout the city, including litter removal, weeding non-native invasive plants, planting California native plants, and marking storm drains with the message "No Dumping Drains to Bay." Events such as Creek to Bay Day protect our local waterways and prevent trash from reaching the San Francisco Bay, thereby

Cleanup Day

By Kaletha Patterson & Lakshmi Rajagopalan



Volunteers working Lakeside

Fifty-two fifth graders from the Lighthouse Charter School and 48 sixth graders from St. Paul's Episcopal School will be sprucing up the lake this year and learning valuable ecological information at the same time.

Every Wednesday, 20 of the 52 Lighthouse science students will donate their services as part of the water ecology project which teaches them about the



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protecting both freshwater aquatic and marine life and leaving the areas beautified. For a complete list of sites, project descriptions and a map of site locations, visit www.oaklandpw.com/creeks or call 238-7611.



Trash removal teamwork at Sausal Creek

components of the lake. Following them on Thursdays are the students from St. Paul's who continue to dedicate their time and energy for the environment as they have over the past years.

In addition, on the Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 15, 2007, around 100 volunteers gather in the Lake Merritt site. Their goal is to remove trash, install storm drain inlet markers, and scrape barnacles, mussels, clams etc. from two aeration fountains and two storm drain outfall booms.

The Institute provides volunteers with gloves, custom-made nets, several pairs of hip waders (sizes 7-11), trash bags and trashcans. Numerous volunteers participate in cleaning up Lake Merritt every Tuesday at 10:30 am and every Saturday at 10:00 am.

Pictures Wanted

By Kendall Flint

We've all heard it said, "A picture is worth a thousand words." What do your pictures say about Lake Merritt? Each of our volunteers has a unique perspective regarding what makes this area special, and we're counting on you to share your vision through your pictures. Beginning in September, each month *Tidings* will feature the best photographs taken by our volunteers and staff members.

To enter, simply email a digital copy of your photo to kpatterson@pmcworld.com. Tell us where the photo was taken, what it shows and why you like



Looking west across Lake Merritt. In the distance are the Rene C. Davidson Alameda County Court House and Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center.

it. Of course we'd also like to have some information about you and your involvement as a volunteer with the Lake Merritt Institute.

It's that easy! We're hoping to compile a beautiful library of images to share with our members and future generations.

The Monthly Bird Report

By Hilary Powers

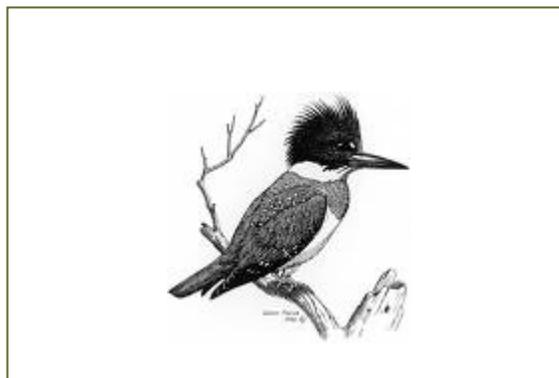
Summer Winding Down (or Up)

July and August are about as quiet as it gets in the bird world around Lake Merritt, but by the end of August, things were already picking up for the 4th-Wednesday Golden Gate Audubon trip. Brown pelicans – some so young their heads were completely dark, showing none of the white of adult birds – were dive-bombing and swimming alongside the Lake's resident white pelican, a flightless rescue bird. An entire flotilla of pied-billed grebes (stocky and bullet-headed little birds) swam around the islands, and a few eared grebes (much more graceful birds of about the same size, with brilliant red eyes) had joined them. All of the birds wore their copper and gold party clothes, though dull and tattered at the end of the season.

The double-crested cormorant rookery on the islands has almost closed down, though a couple of the snaky black birds still had nestlings to shelter from the sun. The year's babies are

spending a lot of time on the floats; you can recognize them by their lighter, bronzy feathers. Things were quiet enough for a belted kingfisher to put in an appearance there, unfortunately too far out to tell if it was our usual resident female. We could see the shape and the overall blue plumage, but couldn't make out the belly bands; females have a burnt-orange waistcoat to go with the black tie both sexes wear.

The herons seemed perfectly cheerful – no



Belted Kingfisher

indication why the rookery failed this year. We even saw two green herons in July, as well as great blue herons, great egrets, snowy egrets, and black-crowned night herons in both months. The latter did bring off a few babies, but not nearly as many as in prior years.

And the first of the American coots (black footballs with white beaks) were back, but otherwise, the mallards and Canada geese had the water pretty much to themselves. By the end of September, that situation should be changing. Come join us at 9:30 am at the circular cage on the 28th to see for yourself. It's bound to be, as these days were, another good day at the Lake.

Bird Watching Day is on Friday, September 28, 2007 at the circular cage at 9:30 AM. Come join us!



Our New Look!

By Kendall Flint

You may have noticed something a little bit different about this month's edition of *Tidings*. We've updated our look and added some new features in our continued effort to share good news about the Lake Merritt Institute and the work of our treasured volunteers. *Tidings* was created for our volunteers and supporters. Our goal is to connect people to the Lake by sharing opportunities to get involved in its stewardship.

We hope that you will each become active contributors to this effort by sharing with us your ideas for stories and maybe even contributing a few of your own. Tell us about your favorite spots at the Lake, work you have completed or projects you need assistance with. We will be accepting articles via email at kflint@pmcworld.com or via

regular mail sent to *Tidings* c/o PMC, 1440 Broadway, Suite 1008, Oakland, CA 94612.

Finally, if you receive *Tidings* by e-mail, thank you! Feel free to forward it to others who may be interested in what we're doing here at the Lake. If you receive *Tidings* by mail, please recycle the paper when you have finished reading it or sharing it with friends and if possible, consider changing your subscription to e-mail. Anything we can do to reduce consumption of our natural resources is a good thing.

We look forward to talking with you!

Tidings

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To contribute to the Lake
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