

Tidings
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 Lake Merritt Institute
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 As an Oakland resident, Mayer explained that it's very important to keep the Lake clean because it keeps the environment clean, but his major concern is the uncertainty of funding for the Lake.

Aside from making new friends through his service, Mayer continues to spread his passion and concerns through impromptu chats with schoolchildren who visit the Lake and learn a piece of history from Mayer's point of view, an experience he defines as enlightening.

Answers to questions in Fun Facts about Our Lake
 1) Twice daily; 2) 60; 3) Urban Runoff; 4) Brackish is a mixture of fresh and salt water; 5) True; 6) False, the depth is 8-10 feet; 7) False, the shoreline is 3.4 miles; 8) False, the lake is the nation's oldest wildlife refuge, however, it is home to thousands of: shrimp, fish, birds, clams, crabs and more not to lobsters, penguins, etc.; 9) True; 10) True.



Volunteer Name
Street Address
City ST ZIP Code

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 568 Bellevue Avenue
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THE LAKE MERRITT

INSTITUTE AN URBAN RUNOFF AND WATERSHED RESEARCH CENTER

TIDINGS
 NOVEMBER 2007



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Measure DD Projects Around Lake Merritt



By Lakshmi Rajagopalan

Measure DD, the Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks, was passed in November 2002 by over 80% of Oakland voters. The \$198.25 million bond measure provides funding for (i) Lake Merritt restoration and water quality improvements; (ii) estuary water-front access, parks and clean up; (iii) Lake Merritt to estuary connection (Lake Merritt Channel); (iv) public recreation facilities; and (v) creeks and waterways restoration.

The planning process is being shaped under the influence of the Measure DD Community Coalition, which includes organizations and interested members of the community to enable effective implementation of the historic bond measure.

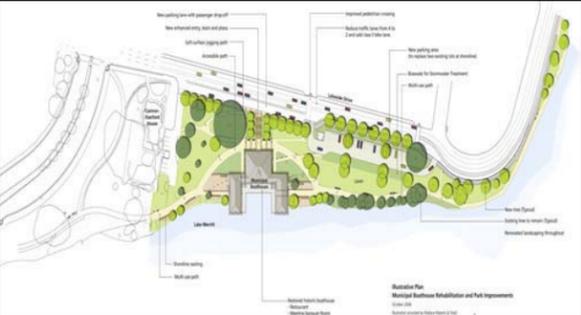
Measure DD projects along Lake Merritt are guided by the Lake Merritt Master Plan. The plan aims to restore the quality and accessibility of Lake Merritt and its amenities. The plan includes goals and designs to provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access to and around Lake Merritt, to create a unified design theme for Lake Merritt, to reduce the visual impact of parking, to integrate educational themes like ecology, history and culture, to provide safe and suitable public amenities, to preserve key views and vistas around Lake Merritt and to provide a safe environment for the public and wildlife.

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Projects around Lake Merritt that have been funded by Measure DD focus on:

- Park enhancements and expansion.
- Facilities renovation, including the Municipal Boathouse, Lakeside Park Sailboat House and Children's Fairyland.
- Water quality and wildlife habitat improvements.
- Interpretive signage and restoration guidelines to promote the historic character of the region.
- Significant enhancements of pedestrian and bicycle access and safety, including new multi-use pathways, seating and dedicated jogging paths.
- A major reconstruction of 12th Street at the south end of Lake Merritt to reduce the width of the road and allow construction of a new shoreline park area.



Municipal Boathouse and Lakeside Drive

Update on 12th Street Reconstruction Project

By Lakshmi Rajagopalan

In the 1915's, civic leaders inspired by the City Beautiful Movement envisioned a scenic boulevard encircling Lake Merritt as a source of civic pride. Today, 12th Street is an expressway-like twelve lane thoroughfare merging and splitting from 14th Street and International Boulevard and thwarting pedestrian and bicyclist access to area landmarks such as: Laney College, the Oakland Museum of California, the Kaiser Convention Center (closed) and the Lake Merritt Channel. The goal of the Lake Merritt Master Plan and Measure DD, passed in November 2002, is to improve the lake area by adding park space and altering infrastructure that surrounds it, furthering the concept of a slower, scenic boulevard that is more in keeping with the beautiful park setting.

12th Street will be redesigned into a tree-lined boulevard with signalized intersections and crosswalks and a landscaped median. The redesign will create significant new parkland at the south end of Lake Merritt Park, remove unsafe and unsightly pedestrian tunnels, provide safer and continuous access for pedestrians and bicyclists along the perimeter of Lake Merritt, and improve access between the Kaiser Convention Center and Laney College. Removal of the Lake Merritt Channel culvert at 12th Street and 10th Streets will provide open-water bridged connections and improve water flow between the Lake and Estuary. The project's removal of these two culverts, implementation of several stormwater treatment measures, and the addition of native wetlands and upland habitats will positively the Lake's water quality and wildlife habitat.

Although some Lake Merritt projects have moved ahead, including restoration of the historic Pergola, installation of aeration fountains, installation of stormwater filters, and renovation of the Municipal Boathouse, all of the street and



Proposed reconstruction plan for 12th Street

landscape projects were delayed by a lawsuit regarding tree removal. The Superior Court ruled in the City's favor late last month, so these projects can now move ahead to the bid and construction phase. In addition, the earlier bids for the 12th Street project came in \$9 million above the engineer's estimate, and the City is now working to obtain Federal money to close the funding gap. Construction is expected to begin in 2008.

The Monthly Bird Report

By Hilary Powers

Fall Feeding Frenzy

Musta been a *huge* school of fish that came in through the 12th Street tide gate on the 24th; and boy, did they all regret it. Participants in the regular 4th-Wednesday bird walk were appalled and delighted to see a flock of Double-Crested Cormorants numbering a hundred or more swimming in a tight bunch, beaks up like so many submarine periscopes except when they dove to snag fish with a dozen or so Brown Pelicans and a few gulls of various sorts mixed in. It looked like an oval pot boiling in mid-lake and you could tell which way the fish were trying to go because birds on the trailing edge would haul out and flap heavily toward the front, finding landing spots just ahead of the leaders - not among 'em; there simply wasn't room in the water there.

Elsewhere on the lake, the fall in-migration is well under way. The scaups are coming in strong (probably both kinds, not that you're likely to tell

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Monthly Bird Report continued...

tell the difference; the males all have black heads, white wings, and gray backs, and the females are all brown with heavy white skin around their beaks), and the first few pairs of Bufflehead (the males tiny but brilliant black-and-white ducks looking like bathtub tugboats and the females brown with a white oval on each cheek) came in this week. The Ruddy Ducks (not ruddy at all at this season; they're almost all brown, and their tails stick straight up like handles most of the time) and the American Coots (black with white beaks) have been here a month or so already. Five Clark's Grebes (big gray birds with black caps and black down the back of their long, snaky white necks) were swimming near the Nature Center, and a lot of Pied-Billed Grebes (stocky little birds whose beaks - mostly not pied at this time of year - form a deep triangle with the front of the head) were around the

islands and in the sheltered end of the lake. That leaves just two more grebes and three ducks expected in large numbers, and half a dozen others where we might see a few individuals in the course of the winter.

Across Bellevue in the trees, the warblers are arriving - especially Yellow-Rumps (guess what they've got) and Townsend's Warblers (lots of medium-to-bright yellow and a black burglar's mask). The front of the garden up by the compost class area was full of Anna's Hummingbirds (the green ones we see all year) being nasty to each other, as usual, and the pine trees had attracted a lot of American Goldfinches (not at their brightest yellow, alas) and House Finches (brown and streaky, with a lot of red on the males' heads and chests).

And the weather was glorious, warm sun and cool breezes and altogether another great day at Lake Merritt...

Profile of a Volunteer

By Kaletha Patterson



On any given Tuesday, John Mayer can usually be found strolling along Lake Merritt. He's not just walking the grounds for his viewing pleasure; he's walking and scanning the surface for trash, debris and other forms of waste. "I don't think a day goes by that I don't clean the Lake because I pick up trash as I walk along," he explains. "I think that everybody could be a volunteer if they only picked up one piece of paper as they walked by."

Unlike some retirees who may spend their time in less productive ways, Mayer decided to volunteer and contribute his energy into beautifying Lake Merritt and has been very active since the mid-1990s.

Continued next page

Fun Facts About Our Lake

By Kaletha Patterson

1. Lake Merritt is a tidal estuary. How many times a day is it flushed by high and low tidal flows?
2. How many storm drain outfalls have water running into the lake?
3. What is the biggest source of water pollution in Lake Merritt?
4. The lake contains brackish water. Can you define what brackish water means?

Answer True or False to the following questions:

5. The size of Lake Merritt is 140 acres.
6. The depth of Lake Merritt is 12-25 feet.
7. The shoreline is 4.5 miles.
8. Lake Merritt is the nation's oldest wildlife refuge, home to thousands of lobster, penguins, jellyfish, eagles and flamingos.
9. Aeration fountains in the lake provide oxygen to the water and a beautiful sight to those who pass by.
10. The lake may someday be home to restored docks, restored wetlands, classes in marine science, drinking fountains by paths, and storm drain filters.

Source: www.lakemerrittinstitute.org

See next page for answers