After countless “official” events, we’re doing something different for the 160th anniversary of the founding of the Ammo Depot. Will you join me for a weekend to “find and share your favorite sit spot” in the Mare Island Preserve? It’ll be like a geocache or treasure hunt. You’ve likely already identified your favorite “sit spot”. (It’s not too late to add yours. Send a note with “where and why” to myrnahayes@mac.com. We’ll create a map and make sure they are super comfy and even cooler for gathering at for the weekend).

Want to host your favorite sit spot for an hour? Host a walk to your favorite spot... Or people randomly just meet you there! Add a tablecloth, a bouquet of flowers? What about playing some music? A card game! Serve a morning coffee and pastries, tea and cookies, lemonade or a glass of wine at your favorite spot at a scheduled time? What about offering a little painting time? Story-telling, poetry, reading? We’ll help you make it happen.

I’ve already selected the special spot I will invite you to gather with me at... to listen to the sounds of the Preserve. Train whistles, ship’s horns, osprey calling overhead. I’m mesmerized by the views, too. We’ll have a little cheese, bread and wine together.

We’ll be open after dark this weekend. The lights will be lit on the trail for the evenings. There’ll be a campfire at the visitor center each night. Want to tent camp under the stars in the field near the visitor center? It’ll be free Fri, Sat and Sun nights. Reserve for our Sit Spot Star Camp at Hipcamp.com Call/text Myrna Hayes 707-249-9633.
This year, we honor the 160th anniversary of the founding of the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot. Ten years ago this August, in 2007, we opened the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve to the public for the very first time. What an exciting moment in history! It was 150 years since French stonemason John Gomo had built the black powder storage magazine called Building 1 and quite likely carved the glorious frontis stone that adorns the warmly glowing sandstone structure nestled into the hillside near the mouth of the Napa River/Mare Island Strait. With the completion of Building 1 and probably the laying of the granite seawall and the construction of a pier, the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot was established. It closed in 1975. Yet, history lives on.
Imagine this! Our park was founded 160 years ago. Well, the Naval Ammunition Depot where our Preserve is located, was. Ten years ago, in August 2007, we opened the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve to the public for the very first time. What an exciting moment in history!

We offered a couple dozen guided walks and talks in the Preserve. People were elated to learn they could visit this treasury of history, nature and vistas, a truly magical land, for the first time. The Mayor gave a speech, the Chaplain gave his moving prayer; as all his prayers were. Boy Scouts proudly presented colors. The Regional Superintendent for the National Park Service attended. Two former Ammunition Depot Commanders and their wives joined us, delivered in a horse-drawn wagon.

More than 1,100 people showed up to soak up the natural beauty, cultural history and spectacular scenery of this magnificent and quirky spot.

As we close in on the 160th anniversary of a place whose purpose it was to make, store, ship and dispose of bombs, I've asked myself how we should pay our respects to this land and its historic use and to those who worked here, while at the same time, honoring the “new life” that is reshaping and transforming this sacred space and truly recreating we who visit here.

I find that the more I set foot upon these hallowed grounds and gaze out across the waters to distant views; the more time I spend in the ancient oak forests and reflect in the ruins of an old garden; sweep out an ammo storage bunker for campers; trim trees on the old tennis court; tend to roses at the Naval Cemetery; or sit together with Preserve users and friends on the dock of the 1934 bomb storage magazine we use for our visitor center, I find myself more and more simply, quietly, taking the time to contemplate and to consider the lives of those who have served here.

I imagine forward, too. I find myself daydreaming about where to place another bench along the trail for you...for me. In the heat of the summer day, I find retreat in a garden, in the old tennis court, under an elder oak, in the filtered light and shade of an acacia tree. I can hear the delighted yells of kids at the tire swing. I'm always imagining music, painters, sharing food, drink, moments of solitude, times of gathering and sharing this precious land together. Etching into its quiet spots, our own “sit spots”...“sound spots”...I find a place for a canopy, yearn for a picnic table, a tree fort, a hammock, a pair of chaise lounges, a group of butterfly chairs...I dream it. I see it. I do it.

Then, I cajole you to get up and walk away from your computer, TV, phone (OK, you can bring that), work, laundry, coffee shop, comfort zone, and make a trek to our precious Preserve... And, you do. Come out this weekend, won’t you?!
Schedule of Events, Mare Faire Info.
Friday, August 11

8:00am-8:00pm Self-guided walk San Pablo Bay Wetlands Trail: see description next page →
10:00am-11:30am Hike the Historic Southshore with Preserve Guide Brian Collett and Birding Guide Wally NeVille see description next page ↓
10:00am-12noon St. Peter’s Chapel tours. $5 per person. Corner of 10th & Walnut Ave. near traffic circle on Azuar Dr. Repeats Sat. 1:00pm-3:00pm
10:00am-2:00pm Visit Mare Island Museum: Railroad Ave. @ 8th St. $5 per person. Repeats Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm.
10:00am-9:00pm Self-guided walk Scenic Vista Trail Mare Island Preserve: 167 O’Hara Ct. @ Azuar Dr. Mare Island
12noon-1:30pm 160 years of the Naval Ammunition Depot slide show given by volunteer Preserve Manager Myrna Hayes, Visitors Center. Repeats Sat and Sun 2:00pm-3:00pm: see description Saturday page two, afternoon schedule ↓
1:00pm-2:00pm Mare Island Hospital History slide presentation by Dr. Tom Snyder, The Society for the History of Navy Medicine. Repeats Friday and Sunday: see description ↓
2:30pm-3:30pm Guided tour of former Mare Island Hospital complex grounds with Dr. Tom Snyder. Repeats daily: see description ↓
6:00-7:30pm Wine and Walk Join Myrna Hayes for a walk to her favorite “sit spot”. Meet at the Visitors Center for a guided trail walk to the Rowser Garden followed by a gathering with cheese, bread and wine.
7:00pm-9:00pm Mare Island Aglow Mare Faire Lighted Trail Walk Mare Island Preserve: see description Sunday schedule ↓

WE ARE AN ALL VOLUNTEER, DONATION-BASED PARK. WE RECEIVE NO FUNDS FROM THE CITY OF VALLEJO. YOUR DONATIONS TO MARE ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION OF TIME AND SKILLS RUN THIS PARK!

Join volunteer Preserve Manager Myrna Hayes for a Friday evening “wine and walk” 6:00-7:30pm in the Rowser Garden, one of her favorite “sit spots” in the Preserve. see description above ↑

Image below: Jeff DeSalles A summer afternoon in the ruins of the Rowser/Talbot home.

Image below: Brian Collett, 2010

707-249-9633 text/phone
visit and like us on Facebook
Saturday, August 12

8:00am-8:00pm  Self-guided walk San Pablo Bay Wetlands Trail: see description →

9:30am-3:30pm Visit WWII Landing Craft Support Gunboat LCS-102: The last of its class, the LCS-102 is docked on the Napa River/Mare Island Strait a few blocks south of the Causeway Blue Bridge. It is run by volunteers who will show you around the vessel with the most gun power per ton of any WWII U.S. Navy ship. Located at Nimitz Ave. @ A St.

10:00am-12noon  Learn to make essential oils and salves at Vallejo People’s Garden: corner of Oscar St. and E. Poplar St. off Azuar Dr.– near the Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy and behind the Global Center for Sucess.

10:00am-11:30am  Walk the Historic Southshore with Preserve Guide Gordon McMahon and Birding Guide Michele Troughton. This is a rare opportunity to visit an area slated to become part of our Preserve, but off-limits except through our permitted hikes with Navy escort. Don’t miss out! Repeats Fri and Sun. see description →

10:00am-4:00pm Visit Mare Island Museum: Railroad Ave. @ 8th St. $5 per person. Closed Sunday, so be sure to visit Fri and Sat. Repeats Friday 10:00am-2:00pm.

10:00am-9:00pm  Self-guided walk Scenic Vista Trail Mare Island Preserve: 167 O’Hara Ct. @ Azuar Dr.

12noon-12:45pm Join Cemetery Docent Kyle Green for a tour of the Naval Cemetery. Meet at the Cemetery, a 5 minute walk from the visitor center. Repeats Saturday at 1:00pm

12noon-2:00pm It’s Lunchtime! Fennel pollen harvested on the Preserve and pollen blends season the cheeses and fresh salads offered for lunch at the visitors center. Available to take on the trail for a picnic at one of our featured “sit spots” or enjoy on the Building A-167 dock at our visitor center.

12noon-6:00pm Vino Godfather Winery Mansion Tasting Room, live music 2-5pm. Kansas St. @ Walnut Ave. on historic Captain’s Row. Two miles north of the Preserve entrance, return to traffic circle and veer right in front of the Chapel on Walnut Ave. to Kansas St.

Saturday Afternoon and Evening schedule is continued next page ↓

Friday and Saturday evenings, Aug 11 and Aug 12. Visit Hipcamp.com to reserve a free “Sit Spot Star Camp” in the field next to the visitor center. Bring your tent and camping gear. Share our communal cook area. Enjoy a campfire and s’mores.

Questions? text/call Myrna 707-249-9633

HIKE THE ISLAND

Walk the 2-mile San Pablo Bay Wetlands Trail on your own anytime daily till sunset. Trailhead at end of Dump Rd./A St. Entrance on Azuar Dr. There’s a bathroom at the Trailhead, now!

The Historic Southshore is a future addition to the Mare Island Preserve. Only accessible through our guided walks, it contains the oldest building in our Preserve, Bldg A-1, built in 1857. Come experience history. Fri, Sat and Sun, 10:00am-11:30am. Meet at visitor center. No dogs. Navy escorted.

FAVORITE “SIT SPOTS”

When you arrive at the Preserve this weekend, pick up a map that guides you to some favorite “sit spots”. Sure, some are obvious… the benches along the route to the Hilltop. Some, you may pass right by.

Volunteer Preserve Manager Myrna Hayes shares a “Wine and Walk” to one of her favorite “sit spots”, the Rowser Garden. see description Friday, 6:00pm. Repeats (minus the party) Sunday, 4:30pm.

Join Kay Flavell at two “sit spots” Saturday evening 7pm on the Old Lighthouse Trail and Sunday, 2pm at the Naval Cemetery.

GUIDED HIKES IN THE PRESERVE

Meet at the Visitors Center, 167 O’Hara Ct.@ Azuar Dr. Mare Island for all Preserve hikes and bike rides.

10:00am-11:30am Fri, Sat and Sun. The Historic Southshore is a future addition to the Mare Island Preserve. Only accessible through our guided walks, it contains the oldest building in our Preserve, Bldg A-1, built in 1857. That’s 160 years! Come experience history. Meet at visitor center. No dogs. Navy escorted.

7:30pm Saturday. View the sunset from a unique location in a walk to the Mare Island Hill with Preserve volunteer docent Gordon McMahon.
Saturday, August 12, cont’d.

1:00pm-2:00pm Mare Island Hospital History slide presentation by Dr. Tom Snyder, The Society for the History of Navy Medicine. Repeats Friday and Sunday. This slide show is followed at 2:30pm by a guided tour of the Naval Hospital grounds, now the Touro University campus: see description and directions to tour meet up on the previous page ↓

1:00pm-1:45pm Join Cemetery Docent Kyle Green for a tour of the Naval Cemetery. Meet at the Cemetery. Repeats Saturday at 12noon.

1:00pm-3:00pm St. Peter’s Chapel tours. $5 per person. Corner of 10th & Walnut Ave., near traffic circle on Azuar Dr.; Repeats Fri. 10:00am-12noon

1:30pm-2:30pm Learn to make fruit liqueurs and cordials with Sarah Cain. Bring either gin or rum and please let us know if you plan to attend so we know how much fruit to have on hand. At visitor center.

2:00pm-3:30pm 160 years of the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot slide show given by volunteer Preserve Manager Myrna Hayes, Visitors Center: Repeats Fri, 12noon and Sun, 2:00pm: see description →

2:00pm-4:30pm Mare Island bike ride with Kayaking and Biking Vallejo. Use our Free bikes and helmets. Meet at visitor center. see description →

2:30pm-3:30pm Guided tour of former Mare Island Hospital complex grounds with Dr. Tom Snyder. Repeats daily, Fri, Sat, Sun: see description and directions →

6:30pm-9:00pm, Evening campfire and s’mores at the visitor center. 167 O’Hara Ct. @ Azuar Dr.

7:00pm-8:00pm Favorite “sit spot”, McDougall Lighthouse Memories: Honoring Commander David and Captain Kate with Kay Flavell. Meet at the end of the Old Lighthouse Trail. Repeats Sunday, 2:00pm-3:00pm at the Naval Cemetery. Kay is an avid local history buff and passionate about the history of Kate McDougall and her family, who kept the Mare Island light for 35 years. The Mare Island Lighthouse was closed in 1917 and razed in 1930. If you’d like to experience it in many ways, today, check out the Bed and Breakfast East Brother Lighthouse in Richmond.

7:00pm-8:00pm Mare Island Aglow Mare Faire Lighted Trail Walk Mare Island Preserve: see description next page ↓

7:30pm Guided sunset walk with Preserve volunteer docent Gordon McMahon. There’s no better experience of the Mare Island Preserve’s “sit spots” than sunset at the Mare Island Hilltop or even on the “western bench” at the bunkers below the Hilltop. The Mare Island Aglow Mare Faire Lighted Trail makes the trek even more spectacular! Follow your walk making s’mores at the campfire at the visitor center. Meet Gordon at the visitor center.

HANDS-ON LEARNING

Learn to make fruit liqueurs and cordials with Sarah Cain. . . yep, she’s also our NightMARE Island Director! Bring either gin or rum and let us know if you plan to attend, so we know the amount of fruit bring. Gather Saturday afternoon 1:30pm-2:30pm at the visitor center.

Pick blackberries. Self-guided. If you have never picked blackberries, you have missed out on one of summer’s most memorable experiences. Plenty to go around in the Preserve.

SLIDE SHOWS & HISTORY TOURS

1:00pm(slide show) and 2:30pm(tour) Fri, Sat. & Sun. History of the Mare Island Naval Hospital by Dr. Tom Snyder, Captain, Medical Corps, USN, (ret.), Co-Founder, of The Society for the History of Navy Medicine; 2:30pm join a guided tour of the hospital grounds complex, now the Touro University campus given each day. Meet at the Touro University Library, 1545 Azuar Dr. for the tour. You must show ID to the University security service. See next page for additional slide shows

GUIDED AND SELF-GUIDED BIKE RIDES ON THE ISLAND

2:00pm-4:30pm Saturday. Come join a fun, easy 5-mile roundtrip ride with Kayaking and Biking Vallejo’s Steve Souza and John Crossley. Don’t have a bike? Borrow a bike and helmet from the Preserve (yes, that’s in those new shipping containers!) The route is on the flat part of Mare Island.

2:00-2:30pm Meet and greet, check the air in your tires and grab a cold drink at the visitor center before your adventure. Watch for railroad tracks. Railroad tracks are NOT nice!

Can’t ride with us? Self-guided bike ride. Anytime, anywhere (pretty much) on the Island.
Sunday, August 13

8:00am-8:00pm  Self-guided walk San Pablo Bay Wetlands Trail: see Saturday morning page for description ↑

10:00am-11:30am  Come join a morning docent guided walk on the Navy's Historic Southshore, including a visit to Building A-1, 160 years old, in the Naval Ammu Depot. Meet at visitor center, 167 O’Hara Ct. @ Azuar Dr.

10:00am-9:00pm  Self-guided walk Scenic Vista Trail, Mare Island Preserve: 167 O’Hara Ct. @ Azuar Dr.

11:00am-2:00pm Waffle breakfast/brunch featuring our Pollen Ranch fennel pollen dessert seasonings and Bay Area Bee Co. Mare Island Preserve honey with fresh fruit and Sarah Cain’s amazing waffles served with our pastry chef Jules Blanc’s breakfast specials all with with Moschetti coffee or hot tea. Mimosa’s anyone? Served at the visitor center. No reservations required.

1:00pm-2:00pm Mare Island Hospital History slide presentation by Dr. Tom Snyder, The Society for the History of Navy Medicine: see previous page description ↑

2:00pm-2:30pm 160 years of the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot slide show given by volunteer Preserve Manager Myrna Hayes, visitor center. Repeats Fri, 12noon and Sat, 2:00pm: see description →

2:00pm-3:00pm Favorite “Sit Spots” featuring McDougal Lighthouse Memories: Honoring Commander David and Captain Kate with Kay Flavell. Meet at the Naval Cemetery. Repeats Saturday, 7:00pm at the end of the Old Lighthouse Trail.

2:30pm-3:30pm Guided tour of former Mare Island Hospital complex grounds with Dr. Tom Snyder. Repeats Fri and Sat: see previous page slide show and tour description ↑

4:30pm-5:30pm Discover a few “sit spots” in the Rowser Garden maybe new to you on a guided walk and sit stops with volunteer Preserve Manager Myrna Hayes. Meet at Visitors Center. Repeats Fri, 6:00pm-7:30pm.

7:00-9:00pm Mare Island Aglow Mare Faire Lighted Trail Walk Mare Island Preserve: see description →