

Different kind of wilderness adventurer

Descendant of John Muir helps those with mobility issues see nature

BY BARRY EBERLING
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SUISUN CITY — Michael Muir will in his own way be carrying on the work of his famed great-grandfather Saturday with a walkathon and horse fair at the Rush Ranch open space preserve in Suisun Marsh.

Conservationist John Muir is featured in the new PBS series "The National Parks: America's Best Idea." Michael Muir has learned little new from the program about his great-grandfather -- "I'm kind of a student of Muir," he said -- but found the portrayal moving.

"The thing that really impresses me now is that his voice is more powerful than ever, even after all of these years," Michael Muir said.

Michael Muir's contribution is Access Adventure, which offers horse-drawn carriage rides to people who face mobility challenges so they can enjoy such places as the Rush Ranch. Nature can heal and preserving open space and wild places is important, Michael Muir said.

John Muir, who lived from 1838 to 1914, described the wilderness in much the same way.

The Access Adventure event will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. It will feature a 2.5-mile walkathon along the marsh trail on the 2,070-acre ranch owned by the Solano Land Trust.

Visitors will be able to see North America's largest Percheron draft horse. Named Rock, the horse is owned by Simpson Percherons of Rio Vista and stands 6 feet 4 inches tall at the shoulder.

"He's a monstrous, big horse and he's super-friendly," Michael Muir said.

Also during the day, oxen will take a fallen tree to a

At a glance

What: Access Adventure walkathon and horse fair

When: 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday

Where: Rush Ranch on Grizzly Island Road, about 1.5 miles south of Highway 12.

Info: 432-0152

mule-powered saw mill. Visitors can see antique carriages, exhibits and equestrian demonstrations, take part in a raffle and enjoy free wagon rides.

The event is a fundraiser for Access Adventure. It's also a chance for people to enjoy the open space preserve.

"There's lots of free things to do," Michael Muir said. "It's a very family friendly event. We have music and food and lots of things going on."

Go to <http://www.access-adventure.org> or call 432-0152 for more information and to sign up for the walkathon.

Michael Muir for 40 years has had multiple sclerosis. He can't replicate John Muir's physical feats of hiking for days on end in the Sierra Nevada and other wilderness landscapes with crackers in his pockets for food, as portrayed in "The National Parks" series.

"He would go 50 miles at just a blink of an eye," Michael Muir said. "He barely ate. I don't know how he did it."

But the horses and wagon rides of Access Adventure allow everyone to enjoy the outdoors and get in touch with John Muir's vision.

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