Vallejo Celebrates Federal River and Trail Programs

Celebrate the beauty of rivers and trails at Visions of the Wild in Vallejo. The fifth annual film and arts festival takes place September 20-23.

The U.S. Forest Service along with local partners will bring people closer to nature through art, music, science and outdoor experiences. Except for the river cruises, all of the activities are free and open to everyone.

The theme for the 2018 festival is Wild & Scenic in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and the National Trails Act. In fact, the festival will take place less than ten days before the actual date that these landmark bills were passed by Congress on October 2, 1968.

The festival kicks off with a Thursday night reception (September 20th) at the Vallejo Naval & Historical Museum. Author and filmmaker John de Graaf will speak about the And Beauty for All campaign. The City of Vallejo is an early adopter of this national program. Vallejo Mayor Bob Sampayan will also speak, and help present awards during this festive evening of food, drink and music.

Wild & Scenic is also the theme of the 2nd annual Chalk Art Festival Vallejo, which takes place the same weekend. The chalk artists will be creating their work on Georgia Street from Friday to Sunday.

Join the Bay Area’s Ridge Trail Council on a Friday morning hike through Solano Land Trust’s Vallejo-Swett property which connects to the Ridge Trail via the Hiddenbrooke Trail. This 6-mile moderately strenuous hike will take you along the Hiddenbrooke Trail and through the Vallejo-Swett property. You must register in advance to participate in this free event and space is limited, so register now.

On Friday evening, the Empress Theatre will host the on-tour Wild & Scenic Film Festival. A two-hour program of short films will explore rivers and trails in the United States and around the world.

Saturday activities will be located at the Vallejo Farmers’ Market. Explore the natural world with fun activities for children and adults. The Nature Discovery Zone features a variety of organizations and
people who help conserve forests, rivers and animals. This year they will feature outdoor recreation on our local and statewide rivers and trails.

Saturday and Sunday river cruises are scheduled to explore the Napa River and Carquinez Strait. Details about the natural history talks and specialty events are listed on the festival website. Seats are limited and the $50 tickets are sold on a first come-first served basis through the Empress Theatre website and box office.

On Sunday afternoon September 23, the Empress Theatre features a concert of modern classical music inspired by rivers and trails. The festival is collaborating with the Landscape Composers Network to present this selection of new compositions, including world premieres.

The U.S. Forest Service is the primary sponsor of the festival with additional funding provided by other agencies, businesses and individuals. The Vallejo Community Arts Foundation is the non-profit fiscal sponsor. Additional details can be found at the Festival’s website, visionsofthewild.org.

Local CNPS Meeting features Bart O’Brien

Bart O’Brien, a Fellow of the California Native Plant Society, will be speaking at a joint meeting of the Willis Linn Jepson Chapter of CNPS and the Solano Community College Horticulture Club. This free event is scheduled for September 10, 6:00 PM at Solano Community College, Horticulture Building 1000, 4000 Suisun Valley Road in Fairfield.

His talk will cover the fundamentals of California native plant horticulture and includes recommendations of outstanding native plants for hot inland gardens and specific information on how to care for these plants in both gardens and landscapes.

Figure 2: Bart O’Brien

Bart O’Brien is one of the State’s leading experts on native plant horticulture. A long-time member and former president of the California Native Plant Society’s Santa Clara Valley Chapter, he is the current director of the East Bay Parks Botanic Garden in Berkeley. Before that, he served as the director of special projects for Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, during which time the Southern California Horticultural Society named him the 2005 Horticulturist of the Year. Among his many accomplishments, he is credited with compiling a list of more than 7,000 California native cultivars and co-authoring multiple books, including Care and Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens.

Plants will be available for sale and light refreshments will be served. Directions: Use north entrance to campus (second campus driveway going northbound on Suisun Valley Rd). Park in Lot 6, purchase
parking permit at the permit kiosk for $1 and place it on your dashboard. There is a $25 fine for parking without permit.

**Jepson Native Plant Nursery Prepares for Fall Plant Sale**

The Chapter’s [semi-annual plant sale](#) is coming up on October 6th and volunteers are busy at the nursery getting our container plants ready. Regular workdays at the nursery are every Thursday from 9:30 to 11:30 AM. This month an extra workday has been scheduled on Saturday, September 8th, from 10 AM to noon, to catch-up on the tasks that need to be completed before the sale. These tasks include grooming the plants, potting-up plants into larger containers, washing empty pots, weeding in the pots and on the ground, and general nursery cleanup.

Volunteers don’t need to bring anything except maybe water, sunscreen and close toed shoes. Hardhats and gloves are provided. The nursery is situated in the Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District’s corporation yard on Solano Avenue in Vallejo, which is a secured area. All volunteers must RSVP to our Plant Sale Chair, Barbara Reiley, at breiley45@yahoo.com because we need to provide the Wastewater District with the names of all guests on their property, and give you directions for getting through the gate.

We also welcome volunteers who want to help with the plant sale, which is held at Heritage Presbyterian Church, 1400 East Second Street in Benicia. Tasks include transporting plants and equipment from the nursery to the plant sale, setting up tables and the pop-up, signing plants, cashier duties, and transporting unsold plants and equipment back to the nursery. Let Barbara know if you want to help.
Figure 3: Volunteers at the Jepson Chapter Native Plant Nursery wave at the camera.
Volunteer for Coastal Clean-Up on September 15th

Coastal Clean Up Day events are scheduled at 23 locations throughout Solano County. Some of these sites are habitat restoration projects of the Solano Resource Conservation District, which is helping to coordinate this statewide event on Saturday, September 15th, from 9 AM to noon.

Spend a portion of a day in a communal effort to make our County a better place. Cleanups are a great way for students to earn community service hours, clubs and service organizations to participate in an organized service project with a big impact, and for families, friends and individuals to spend some quality time giving back to the County, in the company of other like-minded people. Information on how to sign up at the various locations is available here and at solanovolunteers.org.

Plant of the Month: Ceanothus ‘Dark Star’

This broadleaf evergreen shrub is a prize winning California lilac hybrid with one of its parents being Ceanothus impressus. It is known for its tiny rough black-green leaves on arching branches and abundant fragrant cobalt blue flowers that last for about a month in mid-spring. It grows quickly and rather easily to 5’ or 6’ high, and 8’-10’ spacing is recommended for this imposing plant. Dark Star grows best with full sun in coastal areas, but needs afternoon shade inland. It is drought tolerant, but will not object to some summer water. Any pruning should be done during summer dormancy. See ‘Plant of the Month’ on our website for more info on this plant.

Figure 4: California Maritime Academy Cadets promote Coastal Clean Up in Vallejo.

Figure 5: Ceanothus 'Dark Star'