

# 28th year 2023 *Flyway Festival*

December 30, 2022

Dear Flyway Festival Friends, Fans, Sponsors and Exhibitors and Field Guides,

I am happy to invite you to join me for our 2023 Flyway Festival. As is my tradition, I've written a few words of reflection and welcome.

You might not think of Mother Nature living in a den under my 1920s likely "Sears kit garage" concrete floor. You might not imagine that she needs a privacy shield of plywood to protect her entrance from the rain and prying eyes. But, now for the second time, I have witnessed in the early morning moon and ambient lighting of the neighborhood, a most glorious appearance of her in all her beauty. I have seen a magnificent black and white striped being, not with tail raised in the air, waddling across or along a road, but a sleek, low, long svelte creature emerge and return to its young from behind this simple disguise. I sat on the nearby steps after she left, even more hastily when she saw me, making a precious high pitched little vocalizing.

As I sat there in the dark and cold, hoping for another glimpse as she returned home from her errands, I was treated with a treasured moment every



Photo: Myrna Hayes, blue gum eucalyptus blossom unfurling Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve

bit as magical as seeing Mother Nature cloaked in her warm black and white fur coat. I heard the chorus of voices of baby Mother Natures emanating from behind the plywood protector, hopefully warm and dry in their den. The most darling little "me-me-me-me", just audible in the silence of a December night.

I am honored and privileged to live my life in the shadow of the Great One. She is my constant friend. I feel her near me. I speak often to her. I share her sadness and loss and exuberance and joy with you now and then,

as she reveals them to me in a splendid sunset, a serene river scene or jubilant explosion of flower color.

I tell of bearing witness to slaughtered 200, 300 year-old native oaks and cultural landscape towering eucalyptus trees, the nest sites of thousands of great horned owl families and other birds and squirrels, the attempted decimation of my sacred rattlesnake friends, and gopher snakes, 100 year-old native grasses by city public works.

I reveal to you the horror of witnessing Mother Nature's massive fish who live for more than 100 years, the sturgeon who suffocated in the Bay, landing on the shores of our Island's Western Flank, this fall.



We weep together, the Mother and I, as we find her precious bunny rabbits, dead by the hundreds, now, across the land from a manmade virus meant to kill only rabbits, for the greater good possibly, in Australia, but it has ravaged virtually all rabbit life wherever the "angel of death" touches their beings throughout Europe and now our country and our Island. *(Continued, next page)*



Wild jackrabbit in the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve. Virtually all rabbits on Mare Island have died this fall likely from Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2. (RHDV2), photo, Bill George

# Wilderness—wild near us...closer, still

These are but some of my stories. Some of my journey on the land, the waters, in the trees and skies and even amongst the lightning rods of the old Naval Ammunition Depot.

Since I can remember, I have been welcomed into the arms of my Mother Nature. She led me through her vast West Branch of Feather River, hiking her quartz adorned paths, swimming in her freezing waters, lying in the warm sand by the heat radiating rocks of her swimming holes so far, far, far into her canyon walls. As a tiny tot, I remember being in a boat afloat on that River's great downstream waters and stepping onto its willow and grass covered islands, before it was dammed. She took me deep into her manzanita understory of her black oak and ponderosa pine forests. She carpeted flowers, shooting stars and pussy ears on the floor of that canopy for me to stroke with young fingers. She caused mushrooms to appear from the depths of the dampness.

She blanketed the arroyo below our family home with blackberry thickets to endlessly pick the fruit from to return to turn a white painted and counter-topped kitchen purple with the juices converted to pies and jam in the heat of the summertime in the Sierra



Photo: canvasback ducks along Highway 37, Pam Starr

Nevada foothills. She shared her sunset's light in brilliant reflections onto the tall ponderosa pine "candles" of new growth visible on the hillside above our home deep in the shadows of a wooded valley. She dazzled me with starlight shimmering above me as I lay in the night in my sleeping bag on the wooden floor of our open air tree fort built by my Dad, urged by my Mom.

These, and a million more memories of frogs and water skippers in the creek, poison oak blisters, lizards and lilies. The fragrance of the forest in spring, summer and my favorite, the loveliest of all, fall, when we gathered the oak leaves into giant piles to leap into, arms wrapped in the wet pungent fluff of our Mother Nature and then mesmerized as she was set ablaze and out of her fire came roasted corn and baked potatoes. The glint of woodpecker crests, the rattling of the forest

reverberating with their raspy voice from the smallest tat-tat-tat to the jackhammer of a pileated high in a pine. Life on the land. With the deer as our grazers. Gray squirrels as our storers. Great horned owls as our guardians.

I am oh so lucky that I am chosen. To be my Mother Nature's companion and confidant. I am so touched and moved that she comes to me when she is broken in grief and loss. We embrace and weep and share an apple she has hung for me in a secret spot in the Preserve. We eat the ripest wild plums together as we used to suck the sweet nectar from the manzanita on those fleeting Sunday afternoons together in my childhood wildlands homeland of Paradise. Now mostly destroyed by the sweep of evil of the fire hurricane which took all but my memories—from the land. So much like the City has done to our Paradise of the

precious and sacred wildlands park at the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and its wildlands community, too.

Like the Camp Fire that snuffed the Mother Nature of Paradise, leaving it smoldering and stripped of almost all life, that is taking place in our beloved and treasured sacred place that does not belong to us to craft and sculpt in our likeness. Our fantasy. The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and the wilderness (wild near us) is our Mother Nature. She reveals herself to us as she does. In her majesty and magic. It is our purpose on this earth to listen and watch and "do no harm before we do good".

I know in my heart and soul that my Mother Nature, beautiful, splendid, spectacular, subtle, silent and wildly loud with the clap of rain or the voices of thousands of ducks and geese on the waters of our Bay, or the wondrous voices of osprey calls as they wheel above my house and perch and fly through my yard like cooper's hawks, needs me by her side, walking this journey here on earth together, side by side. She guides me. She shields me. She anneals me. She assures me. In her presence, I know that I am loved.

*(Continued, next page)*



# Wilderness—wild near us...closer, still

I ask you to drop whatever you are doing at this moment and step outside into her world for a time. Take a moment. Take five. Take a cup of tea. Take a walk. Take a hike. Take a nap. In her arms. You might not think of her this way. But, she actually needs you. To acknowledge her beauty, her love for you, her kindness and sweetness and all the ways in which she scoops you into her arms and tells you that you will be OK. That you are loved and treasured and appreciated. For all the ways you honor her and do what you can to tread lightly upon her.

Love to you from me and my Nitro pal during these times of coldness and darkness of winter, when we need most of all to be assured that we are cherished and loved.

Love, too, from the Mother Nature. She invites you to her annual “wild party” we have nurtured together for 28 seasons, the San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival. We will celebrate the wonder of the annual migration to and through San Francisco Bay from the North to the South and then, back to summer nesting and feeding in the North. We are privileged that we live on this mysterious and sacred migratory route, where literally millions of birds stop to rest and feed or even stay with us in our nature Bed and Breakfasts.



Photo: kiddos discovering Mare Island, Myrna Hayes

Join us this year, February 10, 11 and 12, 2023 when we will once again celebrate the migration of as many as 1 million shorebirds, a quarter million waterfowl, ducks and geese, and likely tens of thousands of raptors, hawks and millions of songbirds, to and through San Francisco Bay. Isn't it so magical that we live nearby to these gatherings on the waters and in the sky at our national wildlife refuges and state wildlife areas?

After 3 years during which we did not gather together in our Wildlife Expo, due to the pandemic, we will hold an **IN-PERSON** gathering headquartered at Mare Island, again. It will likely not be quite as grand as in some years past, but it will feel so good to be with each other, once again.

Guided hikes are planned throughout the “north shore” of the Bay. We will also continue our Virtual Festival, with some Live airing on our 2023 In-Person/Hybrid/Virtual Facebook Group page.

**Will you join us this year as a Flyway Festival guide, presenter, exhibitor, vendor or a non-profit organization or agency?** The attached exhibitor applications are quick and easy to complete and return to me.

Will you commit to support our Flyway Festival with your generous **SPONSOR** donation? We hope for continued generous sponsorship by the Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club and the local Solano Group, as well as other sponsors. The sponsor form is simple. Visit our [GoFundMe site](#) to donate, effortlessly.

**Will you personally help underwrite the Flyway Festival with a donation? We are truly having to start from scratch to produce an IN-PERSON FESTIVAL. We do not have the source of funds we generated as a non-profit land trust, as we have in the past.**

Click [DONATE](#) OR VISIT: <https://gofund.me/ce3695ba>

Will you tell your friends, co-workers and family about the Flyway Festival in 2023 and plan to attend?

Will you volunteer? Call/text or email me at 707-249-9633 [\[myrnahayes@mac.com\]](mailto:myrnahayes@mac.com) with questions and suggestions.

In whatever way you can, please help us ensure our 28th Flyway Festival is a great event. We are so grateful.



Warmly,

Myrna Hayes  
San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Director/Co-founder  
President, Mare Island Heritage Trust

Website: (Not updated yet — THAT is a whole other project! stay tuned)

[SFBayFlywayFestival.com](https://www.sfbayflywayfestival.com)

Facebook Group:  
[Facebook Group Link](#)

MAKE YOUR DONATION NOW BY CREDIT CARD:  
Click [DONATE](#)  
<https://gofund.me/ce3695ba>

TO DONATION BY CHECK:

**Mare Island Heritage Trust**  
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Vallejo, CA 94590

We are a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit land trust