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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JOHN MUIR CONSERVATION AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED**

**Martinez, CA**—The John Muir Association announced the recipients of the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual John Muir Conservation Awards in four categories. All awards, along with Certificates of Special Congressional Recognition from Congressman George Miller, will be presented at the John Muir Conservation Award Celebration on November 7 at the Campbell Theatre in Martinez.

Named Conservationist of the Year, Jeff Alvarez will be recognized for his lifelong advocacy for wildlife and habitat conservation. Alvarez is the owner and Chief Biologist for The Wildlife Project. His prodigious volunteer work on behalf of wildlife and the environment goes well beyond his business interests. As a volunteer, he has trained professional peers in federal permitting issues for special-status species in order to increase the number of qualified biologists able to work towards the conservation of threatened and endangered species in California. He has lent his expertise, as a volunteer, to assist the Agricultural and Natural Resource Land Trust of Contra Costa County, the Biological Field Studies Association, the Mt. View Sanitation District, and many others. He has created and published techniques for surveying wildlife that minimize impacts on the wildlife. His articles on special-status species have been published in scientific journals, and he shares his expertise by providing gratis presentations on natural history and wildlife

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management to public agencies and nonprofit organizations. Alvarez is currently fulfilling a ten-year volunteer commitment to assist CASA Avian Support Alliance in Belize with the assessment of reforestation and avian populations. He also assists with wildlife rehabilitation and environmental education, including *The Resources of Belize Coloring and Activity Book* to be distributed to children in Belize. Alvarez is one of those individuals whose wide-ranging enthusiasm on behalf of wildlife and the environment influences others to care about the natural world around them.

The Education Conservation Award will go to David Loeb, the founder and driving force behind accessible, high-quality publications about our regional environment. Since 2001, Loeb has served as Editor and then Publisher of *Bay Nature* magazine and Executive Director of the nonprofit Bay Nature Institute. Loeb's curiosity about the rich natural diversity of the Bay Area lead him to launch *Bay Nature*, a publication that educates 10,000 readers per quarter on the habitats, species, geology and climate of the wider Bay Area. The impact of providing accurate—and interesting—environmental information to policymakers and agencies as well as individuals is profound. Issues have been reprinted and are used by agencies and organizations as educational tools, such as the 98,000 copies of “Gardening for Wildlife,” reprinted and distributed earlier this year. As a voice for wildlife, plants, and nature around us, the magazine and its website provide a unique and valuable educational service that encourages people to know more, and to care more, about our local environment.

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The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) will receive the Nonprofit and Public Agency Conservation Award for its 75 years of protecting and stewarding land, and its outstanding recreational and educational opportunities for the public. Created in 1934 in the depths of the Great Depression, the park district has grown to encompass all of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. EBRPD is now the largest regional park district in the nation, spanning 100,000 acres with 65 parks and more than 1,150 miles of trails. Six interpretive centers offer educational programs throughout the year. The park district oversees the environmental stewardship of some of our region's most beautiful open spaces, and manages them to conserve native species and their habitats, including numerous rare and protected species. Thousands of East Bay residents invest in the district's mission by volunteering for more than 100,000 hours each year. EBRPD offers a multitude of recreational and educational opportunities for the enjoyment of current visitors, as well as preserving these priceless resources for generations to come.

Ohio-based T. Marzetti Company wins the award in the Business Conservation Award category. The company, maker of salad dressings, dips and other food items, is being recognized for its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint by reducing energy, waste and water consumption. In one plant, the company installed a wastewater pretreatment expansion that, in one fiscal year, helped decrease water consumption company wide by more than 4,000,000 gallons. T. Marzetti facilities are all evaluating more efficient lighting; one facility that installed fluorescent lighting lowered electricity usage to one-fourth of its former consumption. The company has reduced packaging and improved shipment efficiency, decreasing the use of paperboard and fuel. All offices and

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manufacturing plants have recycling/waste reduction programs in place. The company also looks at the carbon cost of acquiring ingredients for its products. The plant in Milpitas, CA, for instance, was using sour cream shipped from Columbus, Ohio, but now buys sour cream locally. These efforts support both the company and the environment, and are a model for a sustainable future.

All awards will be presented at a gala celebration highlighted by a presentation by Lee Stetson as John Muir. Stetson is featured in Ken Burns's newest documentary, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea," on PBS. His acclaimed characterization of John Muir has been presented for nearly 30 years in Yosemite National Park and around the world.

The John Muir Conservation Award Celebration is Saturday, November 7 at 6 p.m. at the Campbell Theatre in Martinez. Guests will enjoy sumptuous hors d'oeuvres, tasty wines and other beverages, and an evening of entertainment and inspiration. Also featured is special guest Martha Lee, General Superintendent of the John Muir National Historic Site.

Stetson's performance, "The Spirit of John Muir," will be a fun romp through some of the very best of Muir's grand, thrilling adventures in his beloved western wilderness—in his own words—including his remarkable "tree ride" in a Sierra windstorm and his astonishing trip down a Yosemite Valley canyon wall on a snow avalanche! Muir joyfully engaged wildness in all seasons, and this will be a fine introduction to Muir the man,

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his profound love of wildness, and his hearty good humor—all salted with his wilderness philosophy.

Tickets are \$45. Don't miss out on an memorable evening. Visit our website for more information at [www.johnmuirassociation.org](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org). To purchase tickets, call Nancy at (925) 370-7158 or e-mail [info@johnmuirassociation.org](mailto:info@johnmuirassociation.org). Reservations are required; tickets will be held at the door. The Campbell Theatre is located at 636 Ward Street, Martinez 94553, and is a short walk from the Martinez Amtrak station.

Since 1978, the John Muir Conservation Award has honored those who work, as Muir did, for a better planet. The proceeds benefit the John Muir Association (JMA), a nonprofit organization established in 1956. This event is made possible by the support of and our sponsors, the Willows Theatre; Shell Oil Products, US Martinez Refinery; Muir-Hanna Winery; and the Best Western John Muir Inn. JMA is a proud partner with the National Park Service at the John Muir National Historic Site.

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