

Belkin Memorial Lecture to feature Lee Stetson presenting "An Evening With John Muir--A Conversation With a Tramp"

March 26, 1987

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BELKIN MEMORIAL LECTURE TO FEATURE AN "EVENING WITH JOHN MUIR"

Lee Stetson, an actor who portrays the legendary naturalist and conservationist John Muir, will be the ninth David Marc Belkin Lecturer at the University of California, San Diego on April 9.

Stetson will present "An Evening With John Muir--A Conversation With a Tramp" at 8 p.m. in Mandeville Auditorium. The public is invited and admission is free.

Stetson is an actor, writer and director who has an M.A. in American Studies from the University of Hawaii. He wrote "Conversation with a Tramp" after spending more than two years researching Muir's books, letters, and journals. He first performed his production at the visitor center in Yosemite National Park in 1983, and has since performed it at colleges, universities, museums and wilderness organizations from Hawaii to Washington, D.C.

Stetson's one-man performance is set in Muir's home in Martinez, California, on December 19, 1913, as he waits to hear the result of a highly controversial piece of legislation to create Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in the Sierras.

The legislation requires an immediate signature or veto from President Woodrow Wilson. It would authorize construction of a large dam to provide water for the city of San Francisco, but would also destroy a beautiful mountain valley. For Muir, the battle over Hetch Hetchy caps a 25-year struggle to preserve the fledgling national park system, which he has helped to create.

The Scottish-born Muir worked for the creation of Yosemite National Park and founded the Sierra Club in 1891.

The annual Belkin Lectures are sponsored by Muir College and in-the past have featured such well known environmentalists as David Brower, Peter Matthiessen, and William Ruckelshaus.

The lectures were created in 1979 by the parents and friends of David Marc Belkin, an honor graduate of Muir College, who lost his life while hiking in the Sierras in 1978. Each spring the program brings to UCSD a distinguished figure associated with wilderness conservation and environmental studies.

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