What is a Docent?

A docent at Martin Griffin Preserve is someone with an abiding love of nature and a desire to share that love, appreciation and enthusiasm with children aged 8–11.

“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.”

– Rachel Carson

As a docent at Martin Griffin Preserve, you have the rare opportunity to be that person and possibly change a child’s life.

Docents commit to working with 3rd–5th graders for two consecutive spring and fall hiking seasons (March–early June, October–November), participating once a week in the classroom or on the trail. Scheduling is flexible.

Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit environmental conservation and education organization. It was founded in 1962 to safeguard Bolinas Lagoon from irresponsible development, leading the way for the protection of Tomales Bay.

Today, ACR acts as guardian of a system of nature preserves spanning 26 properties in Marin and Sonoma counties. These 5,000 acres of tidal flats, marshlands, coastal prairie, oak woodlands and redwood groves provide significant habitat to wildlife and have been placed in our care by generous donors to steward and protect in perpetuity.

“This is a proud legacy to leave for future generations—and one that we should protect vigilantly at all costs.”

L. Martin Griffin, MD
Martin Griffin Preserve School Program
Bolstering science and natural history education in Bay Area Schools

A Wildlife Sanctuary
The Martin Griffin Preserve is a thousand acres of wildlands and watershed overlooking the Bolinas Lagoon and Pacific Coast. The four canyons of the Preserve feature mixed evergreen forests and freshwater habitats that are home to hundreds of species of mammals, landbirds, reptiles and amphibians.

An Outdoor Classroom and Inspiring Living Laboratory
ACR’s School Program gives students an education-based nature experience guided by trained docents who facilitate inquiry and investigation. Docents lead small groups (no more than six students) through a variety of habitats where their learners explore animal tracks and signs, aquatic ecology, plant and animal adaptations, food webs, watersheds, water cycles, and other relationships in nature. Docents capitalize on teachable moments and model curiosity.

Since the beginning of our classroom program 50 years ago, ACR has provided this nature experience free of charge to more than 250,000 Bay Area children. ACR provides transportation scholarships for under-resourced schools, which ensures that all students can participate.

Live the ACR mission—Connecting nature, people and science in a rapidly changing world—by giving children a hands-on, mind-opening experience in nature.

Immerse yourself in a 20-week program of nature study at the 1000-acre Martin Griffin Preserve in Stinson Beach.

Earn official certification as a California Naturalist and eligible to receive four UC Davis Extension undergraduate academic credits.

Learn special techniques for connecting children to nature.

Meet other docents and naturalists and find your place in the ACR community.

Get exclusive access to ACR preserves in Marin and Sonoma counties

Explore ongoing opportunities for advanced coursework, lectures and field trips.

Join Us!
Sign up at egret.org/volunteer_educate

Enroll Today

1. Submit your application, available online at egret.org/volunteer_educate.

2. Attend an orientation at a Martin Griffin Preserve. The program begins at 10:30 a.m. with a brief overview, then seasoned docents will lead hour-long, small-group hikes and be available to answer questions. Orientation are held on select Wednesdays and Saturdays in 2020:

- May 30
- June 24
- July 29
- June 13
- July 18
- August 15

3. Complete all sessions of the 20-week training, Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., beginning September 2, 2020 through February 10, 2021 (holiday exceptions). Trainees also observe experienced docents on the trails and in the classroom.

There is a materials fee (scholarships are available), and a no-cost background check is required to ensure the safety of children in our care.