

## What You Can Do to Help

Please use gates, and always close pedestrian gates behind you. Leaving gates open is the primary cause of livestock being where they are not wanted.

Leave vehicle gates as you find them – open or closed. Vehicle gates will normally be left open when livestock are moving between pastures.

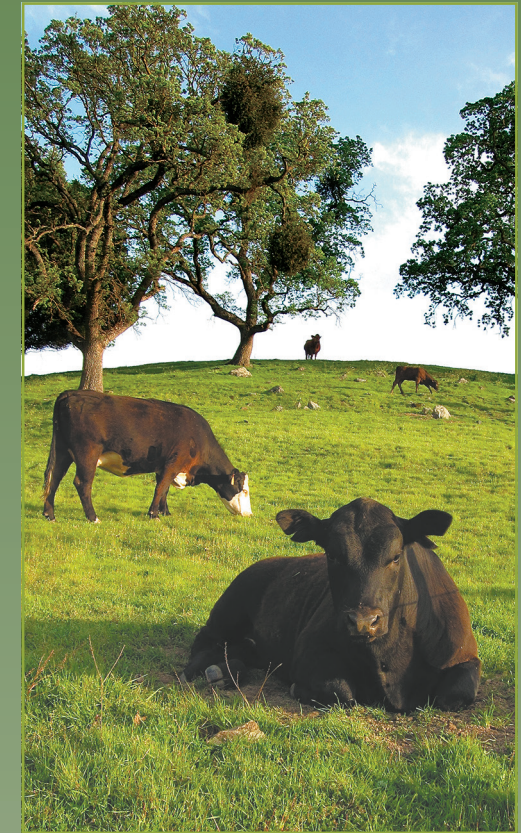
## Safety

Cattle are large animals. They are not aggressive by nature, but, if aggravated or threatened, can respond in a potentially dangerous manner. If you encounter cattle in the park, here are some safety tips:

- Protect yourself, your pets and the livestock. Don't allow your dog to chase or harass the stock. Cows don't always differentiate between dogs and coyotes, and can become agitated if a dog approaches.
- If cattle are blocking the trail, approach them slowly, speak normally, and allow them to move away.
- Cows are protective of their young calves. Don't try to get close, touch, or pet them. If you see a stray calf, leave it alone. The mother is often nearby and will return to care for it.
- If you encounter a cow that appears to be aggressive, injured, sick, or dead, note the location and report it to park staff. Contact information is listed on the back of this brochure.

The East Bay Regional Park District is a two-county special district with more than 119,893 acres of parkland in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The District's mission is to preserve open space and native species, and provide educational and recreational opportunities for area residents.

For more park information, including a list of parks where no cattle graze or with seasonal grazing only, please refer to our website at [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org)



# Grazing Animals

*in the*

East Bay   
Regional Park District

East Bay   
Regional Park District

2950 Peralta Oaks Court  
Oakland, CA 94605-0381  
1-888-EBPARKS  
[www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org)

## Grazing Animals in the Parks

Visitors to the East Bay Regional Parks may encounter cattle, sheep, or goats grazing on the grasslands. The District uses domestic livestock as a practical and economic tool to



Joe DiDonato

Grazing Goats

manage our grasslands. Approximately 6,000 cattle, 1,500 sheep, and 1,600 goats are spread out over about half of the District's 65 parks.

Most of the cattle and sheep grazing occurs during the winter and early spring for the following purposes:

## Fire Hazard Reduction

Grazing helps reduce fire hazard by controlling the amount and distribution of grasses and other potential fuel. Around urban settings, goats are often used in conjunction with human work crews and prescribed burns to create fuel breaks – a proactive effort to minimize future wildfires.



Steven Bobzien

Firefighters work a prescribed burn

## Benefits to Plant Life

Moderate grazing maintains the grasslands. Without grazing, grassland areas begin to be replaced by weedy, undesirable plants, and in some cases will become coyote brush dominated scrublands. Grazing can reduce the cover of annual grasses, which allows for new plant growth like wildflowers and native grasses.

## Benefits to Wildlife

Well-managed livestock grazing increases habitat diversity. Many species, including endangered ones, depend on grasslands for their livelihood. California ground squirrels occur widely within grazed grasslands and develop burrow systems. The protected CA tiger salamander and the CA red-legged frog, along with western burrowing owls, San Joaquin kit fox, and American badgers, all rely on these burrows. Plus, the prey found in grazed areas support the foraging needs of predators like bobcats and golden eagles.

The Park District has over 50 years of experience using grazing as a resource tool.



Nancy McKay

Briones Regional Park



Wilde Legard

Stinkbell, *Fritillaria agrestis*

Our program is conducted under a license based upon current accepted principles of range management. Animals grazing in the parks come with some trade-offs for our visitors. In the rainy season, the passage of cattle can cause damage to sections of trail, making the ground muddy, pocked, and unpleasant to walk through. Like all other animals, cows produce manure, so visitors must watch their step. And, although it is infrequent, there have been some instances of cattle head-butting people in the parks.



Steve Bobzien

Ca. Tiger Salamander



Joe DiDonato

Golden Eagle

Our park supervisors and resource ecologists are constantly evaluating and monitoring grazing practices and making changes to balance resource management with an enjoyable experience for park visitors. To learn more about the important role that grazing provides in protecting the parks and environment, please visit our website – [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org) – under stewardship/resources. We welcome comments and suggestions.