

SUMMER 2015

COMPASS

Healthy Parks Healthy People



Petal Power

Celebrate the allure and
marvels of EBRPD's
Botanic Garden

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MANY, MANY CHOICES



In today's frenzied world of electronic diversions—smart TVs and smartphones, tablets and laptops, and more—it's nice to know we have many other appealing, relaxing and inspiring ways to spend our time.

The truth is, we need only look as far as our own East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), the nation's largest regional park system, to find choices that satisfy.

Our regional park system consists of 65 regional parklands, more than 1,200 miles of trails and approximately 119,000 acres of land. Within the bounds of EBRPD are arguably the best remaining natural open lands in the East Bay. There's also an extraordinary assortment of educational and recreational activities available: 10 interpretive centers, picnic sites, camping sites, and a variety of lakes, lagoons, Bay and river shoreline areas that offer swimming, boating, fishing, bird-watching and other water fun.

If you need more specific ideas for your summer's to-do list, we're hoping you'll thumb through the pages of this issue or visit our website. With any luck, we'll see you at an EBRPD park real soon!

Carol Johnson
Executive Director
Regional Parks Foundation

Robert Doyle
General Manager
East Bay Regional Park District



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On the cover: California Poppies in Sunol Regional Wilderness.



DID YOU KNOW?

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) Details



62,000 KIDS

That's the approximate number of school children who took field trips to EBRPD destinations last year—and had the time of their lives!



200,000 POUNDS

That's the amount of catfish and trout planted each year in EBRPD lakes. Anglers, grab your gear!



1,247 SPECIES

That's the number of named plant species growing at the world-renowned Botanic Garden in the East Bay Regional Park District. (For more info, see pages 6–11.)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!



Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline



Sunol Regional Wilderness



Wildcat Canyon Waterfall

Ready for the Trails Challenge?

If you're considering this annual invitation to take EBRPD treks, we'll get you started



What's an entertaining way to tour our regional parks and enjoy a free, self-guided hiking program in the same step? Join in the Trails Challenge, our annual program that features 20 different hikes along various EBRPD trails. To help get you moving, Dave Zuckermann, EBRPD's recreation services manager, recommends three of his favorites on the 2015 list:

- **Carquinez Overlook Loop Trail:** Along Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline, which comprises 1,415 acres of bluffs and waterfront between Crockett and Martinez. "The hike is about 1.5 miles, very easy," says Zuckermann. "It's absolutely spectacular, with high-up, sweeping views many people don't know about."
- **Camp Ohlone Road/Cerro Este and McCorkle trails:** This 3.5-mile loop hike in Sunol Regional Wilderness "is a little more rugged with a fair amount of climbing," says Zuckermann. "You'll walk through a variety of habitats and beautiful rock formations."
- **Vollmer Peak/Lower Big Springs/Seaview/Vollmer Peak:** This 4-mile hike explores the upper part of the Wildcat Creek watershed in Tilden Regional Park, one of EBRPD's original locations. "You're pretty high—almost 2,000 feet, with a clear, incredible view of the Delta, San Francisco Bay, Mount Diablo and more," says Zuckermann. "You'll be reminded of how much of the land we've preserved for green, open space. It's amazing."

FYI: Thanks to a special partnership between the East Bay Regional Park District, Kaiser Permanente and the Regional Parks Foundation, the Trails Challenge is free to residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties and Kaiser Permanente employees. To register, visit www.RegionalParksFoundation.org. Once registered, you can download the free 2015 e-Guidebook or buy an optional hard copy (detailed descriptions of featured trails) and pick up your free T-shirt at selected visitor centers. Participants who send in a completed Trail Log will receive a commemorative pin. While supplies last.

KIDS ZONE

SENDING KIDS TO CAMP

RPF introduces low-income youth to the great outdoors—thanks to your continuing financial support

If spending time at summer camp—or wanting to—is among your childhood experiences, then you can appreciate the Regional Parks Foundation's efforts to expand access to these life-altering outdoor activities.

The Foundation funds scholarships for EBRPD's lifeguard training, Park'n It Day Camp and LIT (Leaders-in-Training) program. "Annually, all of these 'camperships' are used, and the experience is transformative," says Dave Zuckermann, EBRPD's recreation services manager. "Without these scholarships, these kids wouldn't be there. It makes a huge difference."

To donate, please call 510-544-2202 or visit www.RegionalParksFoundation.org.



Day Camp Signups for Your Kids

Go online to www.ebparks.org/activities/daycamps or call Reservations at 888-327-2757, option 2, for details about programs, schedules and registration.

- **Tilden Nature Area:** Camp of the Wild (teaches traditional crafts, survival skills, shelter building, etc., for ages 9–12) and Tilden Little Farm Camp (farming, harvesting, cooking, animal grooming for ages 8–11; advanced for ages 12–15).
- **Park'n It Day Camp:** at various EBRPD locations, Monday–Friday sessions, June 15–July 17 (swimming, fishing, nature activities for ages 5–12); Leaders-in-Training program (work experience for youth, intro to park professions).
- **Lifeguard training:** at Contra Loma, Lake Anza, Lake Temescal, Cull Canyon and Shadow Cliffs (different programs for ages 8–12, 13–15 and 14–17).



You Are Here

Big Break Regional Shoreline's interactive map offers a new perspective on our local ecosystem

Looking for a family outing that's fun and educational? A visit to Big Break's Delta Discovery Experience fits the bill. This interactive, 1,200-square-foot scale map, with built-in aerial maps, provides a "bird's-eye view" of the Delta watershed. (Did you know waters flowing past Big Break through the Sacramento and San Joaquin—California's two greatest rivers—drain half of the state?)

Big Break is one of the few places in the Delta that has public access and open land to visit. It's a great park for birding and viewing aquatic mammals—river otters, beavers, even American mink. It's a popular spot for picnics, fishing and kayaking too.

MORE FUN

Big Break's Visitor Center has hands-on exhibits. Arts and crafts for kids under age 12 are on Saturdays/Sundays, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Don't miss second Sunday family campfires, June–Sept., 6:30–8 p.m. For more info, visit www.ebparks.org/parks/big_break.

Get a different perspective on family fun at Garin Regional Park. Below: Tilden Regional Park is popular for the young and the young at heart.

Life's a Picnic!

Five great EBRPD sites that give family mealtime a breath of fresh air

It's the weekend. It's a beautiful day. The kids are antsy. How about a picnic? The East Bay Regional Park District is packed with great spots for a carefree day—and meal—out in nature. Try the following family-friendly destinations.

Briones Regional Park, Bear Creek Staging Area

Briones is known for its beautiful, grassy, rolling hills affording spectacular panoramic views of everything from Mount Diablo to the Delta. The park's Bear Creek Staging Area provides shady picnic spots within easy walking distance of the parking lot. There's a seasonal creek nearby, along with several nice hikes. And if you (or your family) don't feel like making your way to the top of the Briones Crest for the view, those same hills make for a scenic backdrop from the picnic table.

8 a.m.–8 p.m., April 11–Sept. 5
16 Bear Creek Road, Lafayette
www.ebparks.org/parks/briones

Roberts Regional Recreation Area

It doesn't get much better than picnicking in the shade of majestic redwood trees. And you can't beat the amenities. Nearby family-friendly distractions include a swimming pool, disabled-accessible playground and two large grass lawns. There are ample—and excellent—hiking options at adjacent Joaquin Miller and Redwood

Regional Parks. Even the Chabot Space & Science Center is within walking distance.

8 a.m.–8 p.m., June–August
10570 Skyline Blvd., Oakland
www.ebparks.org/parks/roberts

Del Valle Regional Park

There are multiple landscaped picnic grounds scattered across Del Valle. But the main draw at this Livermore outdoor gem is the 5-mile-long Lake Del Valle, offering innumerable recreational opportunities for the whole family. Those include boating, kayaking, swimming and great fishing—the lake is regularly stocked with trout and catfish. (Note: Recreational opportunities may be impacted by drought this season.)

6 a.m.–9 p.m., May–Labor Day
7000 Del Valle Road, Livermore
www.ebparks.org/parks/del_valle

Tilden Regional Park

It's no secret that Tilden is an outdoor oasis for families. The sprawling park in the East Bay hills features several dedicated picnic spots and is overflowing with fun diversions. Among the most popular are the steam



train; the antique merry-go-round with hand-carved wooden animals; and the Little Farm, offering children an opportunity to see, touch and learn about real farm animals.
5 a.m.–10 p.m., unless otherwise posted
Entrances off Wildcat Canyon Road and Grizzly Peak Boulevard in Berkeley
www.ebparks.org/parks/tilden

Garin/Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Parks

These sister parks are located on former ranch property in Hayward. After setting up at one of the four picnic sites, you can fish off Jordan Pond pier; check out the Visitor Center's historical blacksmith shop; or wander through the restored 2-acre Dry Creek Garden, home to some 200 native and exotic plants. Don't miss the annual late-summer Garin Apple Festival, at which visitors can sample antique heirloom varieties still grown in the old apple orchards.
8 a.m.–9 p.m., May 25–Aug. 26; Dry Creek Garden, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Thursdays–Saturdays
1320 Garin Ave., Hayward
www.ebparks.org/parks/garin

Oxalis oregana

Allium hyalinum

Pseudotrillium rivale

Calypte anna

Arctostaphylos

Garden of Delights

In celebration of
EBRPD's Botanic Garden
and its 75th anniversary

Imagine this experience: As you breathe in the fragrant air, footpaths wind you through the Regional Parks Botanic Garden's lovely naturalistic landscape. A small wooden bridge transports you over a babbling natural creek, as bees buzz amid the bright blooms and a lizard scampers up a little bank. Relax on a bench under a manzanita tree and drink in the scenery, or wander into a forest of towering coast redwoods and rare pygmy cypress, their ground covered in bright green lady fern and fringed corn lily. Then stroll over to the garden's >



Island Shooting
Stars (*Dodecatheon
clevelandii*)

east side, where you'll find cheerful yellow canyon sunflowers, lemonadeberry and rare giant coralbells, all from the Channel Islands in Southern California.

The Botanic Garden, which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, is located in Tilden Regional Park in the Berkeley Hills. The tranquil, 10-acre grounds include a kaleidoscope of plants native to California—many of them rare or endangered.

“Part of the garden’s mission is to create the most beautiful display of the broadest diversity of California’s native plants as possible,” explains Botanic Garden Manager Bart O'Brien, a Harvard-trained landscape architect. To our good fortune, Mother Nature complies with this aim: The site’s remarkable climate allows the staff to grow more plant varieties than other botanic gardens.





Opposite page:
Margo Fremontia
(*Fremontodendron*
'Margo')

Left:
Chestnut-backed
Chickadee
(*Poecile rufescens*)

Take a Walk Through California

The garden is divided into 10 sections that correspond to 10 geographical regions of California. Each plant is labeled with its common name, scientific name and specific locale. At the garden's Visitor Center, guests can pick up a color-coded map of California, which corresponds to a color-coded map of the garden's geographic sections.

"California is remarkably diverse, and you can walk virtually through the entire state of California in our 10 acres and see all of it, which is pretty amazing," says Bart O'Brien, who spent more than two decades at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and has twice received the President's Award from the California Native Plant Society.

FYI: The garden's first director, James Roof, had connections with people in the forest service—and knew a unique plant when he saw it. That's why the garden also boasts some highly unusual specimens, like the rare Santa

Lucia fir tree, which grows in a steep, forbidding habitat east of Big Sur.

"We probably have the best examples of Santa Lucia fir trees," O'Brien says. "They were planted in the 1930s, so they're fully mature. Most other gardens have small ones because they're very slow-growing. We also have what is widely regarded as the best collection of living *Arctostaphylos franciscana* in the world [commonly known as Franciscan manzanita, a rare flowering shrub native to San Francisco]. We also have the best collection of manzanitas in general in the world—over 100 species. And the garden has Matilija poppies, the biggest individual flowers found in the state, with a single blossom that's 6 inches or more across. Another favorite group of mine are some of California's bulbs, and in particular fritillaries like the checkered lily. They have nodding bell-shaped flowers, and we probably have the best collection of the California species, which are especially difficult to grow."

75th Anniversary of the Botanic Garden

Join a fabulous open house on
Saturday, Aug. 29, 10:30 a.m.–
5:30 p.m. Staff, docents and volun-
teers will present the garden and
California native plants in a variety of
experiences. For details, visit
www.nativeplants.org.

"California is remarkably diverse, and you can walk virtually through the entire state of California in our 10 acres and see all of it, which is pretty amazing."

*Bart O'Brien
Botanic Garden Manager*



Year-Round Challenges and Rewards

Difficult to grow doesn't mean impossible—thanks to the garden's expert staff of five full-timers, four part-timers, and volunteers. "Working with these plants is the best part of this job and the most frustrating part, all rolled into one," says Joe Dahl, park supervisor and horticulture specialist at the Botanic Garden. "We're always experimenting to figure out what makes them tick, and you can pull your hair out some days. We have to protect desert plants from too much water or hail.

"The Sierran plants are really challenging," Dahl adds, "because we're trying to bring something down from 10,000 or 12,000 feet, to grow it at 1,000 feet. But when you see that plant thriving, it's just the best feeling." (All plants are taken from the wild as cuttings or seeds—always with permits—and the staff avoids using chemicals.)

As a result of the plants' natural ebbs and flows, there isn't a bad time to visit the Botanic Garden. "April and May are the peak months for the greatest diversity of blooms, but there's almost always something in bloom here," Dahl says. "And during the rare times when there isn't, there's great fall color." So not to worry about seeing the show in its ever-changing glory, Dahl advises. Just keep coming back!

You've Got Questions? We've Got Answers!

If you visit the Botanic Garden, consider joining a docent-led tour. The garden's volunteer docents have undergone a six-month training program and will focus on any aspects of the garden that interest visitors. The garden also offers specially arranged tours for groups of all kinds, including school groups.

To join a regular weekend tour (Saturdays, 2 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m., 2 p.m.), arrive at the garden at one of the scheduled times and listen for the docent to announce the start of the tour with a bullhorn from the back patio of the Visitor Center.



TOP: ROBIN MAYOFF (2), BOTTOM: LEE GREENGRASS



Left: Bonita Valley Garden Club members gave \$90,000 for the Botanic Garden's new Rock Garden. EBRPD top brass and Friends of the Botanic Garden join the celebration. Page 10: Select garden views.

PRESERVING AND PROTECTING

Our planet sustains a rich tapestry of plant life, but experts estimate that 68 percent of the world's plant species are in danger of extinction. "There are threats like climate change, development and conversion of land for agricultural uses, so we're losing a lot of the genetic heritage," says Bart O'Brien, manager of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden.

Plant diversity not only contributes to nature's beauty but is essential to ecosystems, and even provides lifesaving medications. The cancer drug Taxol, for example, was developed using an extract from Pacific yew tree bark. And dried leaves from the common foxglove plant are used to make the heart medication digitalis.

These are just some of the reasons why the staff at the Botanic Garden is committed to preserving California natives. The Antioch Dunes near Antioch, one of many natural habitats that have been encroached upon by development, is home to plant species that exist only there. "We maintain several here at the garden as reserves, like the Antioch Dunes evening primrose and the Antioch Dunes wallflower," explains Joe Dahl, park supervisor and Botanic Garden horticulture specialist. "We're sort of an ark, really."

Seed banking is one of the best ways to preserve California's plant diversity. "It's preferable to have the plants in the wild, evolving and reacting to inputs into their ecosystem," O'Brien says. "But with the magnitude of the changes happening, we're losing biological diversity. At least this way, we'll have something set aside that can be accessed later." When the Marble Cone wildfire swept through Big Sur high country in 1977 and burned the area's rare Santa Lucia fir trees, for example, the Botanic Garden gave foresters seeds from its own trees for replanting.

While the Botanic Garden has helped lead the charge in California, there's now a coordinated statewide effort, under the national Center for Plant Conservation, to get seed collections into long-term seed banks in California and to get backups of those collections into the National Seed Storage Laboratory in Colorado.

FRIENDS OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN

In 1996, the Botanic Garden's first docents wanted to support the garden becoming an even greater community resource. So with the help of then-Director Steve Edwards, they created Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden.

Now nearly 500 members strong, the group raises funds for activities not covered by the Park District budget. "It's more expensive to run a botanic garden than a wild garden," explains Sue Rosenthal, board member of the Friends. "Sometimes the staff goes to remote places on dirt roads to collect seeds and cuttings, and the Friends pay for them to rent four-wheel-drive vehicles. The Friends got a grant to rebuild the garden's pond, so when we have a magnitude-9 earthquake, that pond is going to be intact."

The group also plans field trips to spots like Table Mountain near Oroville, where participants can also visit majestic Feather Falls. And it arranges classes on everything from watercolor painting in the garden and nature journaling to sessions on plants found during the Lewis and Clark expedition, and designing native plant gardens.

To join the Friends of the Botanic Garden, or learn more, visit www.nativeplants.org.



ELLEN SOCHOO

Point Isabel Regional Shoreline

EAST BAY

STAYCATIONS

IT'S EASY TO SPEND THE ENTIRE DAY AT AN EBRPD PARK. HERE ARE THREE TERRIFIC OPTIONS.





Top: On or off-leash, dogs can enjoy the variety of trails or romp in the water while their owners take in the many views Point Isabel has to offer.



Point Isabel Regional Shoreline

MORNING: Dog Heaven

First and foremost, Point Isabel is beloved as one of the best spots to bring your pooch in the Bay Area. Comprising 23 acres of prime shoreline, it's one of the largest, and most picturesque, off-leash dog parks in the entire country—which you're sure to notice as dozens of canines, from poodles to bulldogs to mastiffs, run, fetch and swim their way across every inch of it.

NOON: Lunch and Wash

There are several picnic tables, but it's hard to beat the aptly named Sit and Stay Café. This well-loved, little dog-friendly eatery is great for vegetarians (there are several salads and even a tempeh sandwich) and non-vegetarians (the Road House Chili is a perennial favorite). The outdoor patio seating and ample doggie treats make it ideal for Fido, as well. And if things got a little messy during morning playtime, get your pup cleaned up at the adjacent Mudpuppy's Tub & Scrub while you eat.

AFTERNOON: Hooray for the Bay

Even without a four-legged friend, Point Isabel is well worth a visit, if only to check out the spectacular vistas of San Francisco and Marin's Mount Tam across the Bay. In addition, the park connects to the Bay Trail running north and south for miles along the waterfront, offering the perfect path for a walk, jog or bike ride. Bird-watching and fishing (state license required) in the Bay are also fun options.

POINT ISABEL:
2701 Isabel St., Richmond
www.ebparks.org/parks/pt_isabel

2 *Crown Memorial State Beach*

Crown Beach:
Eighth Street and Otis Drive, Alameda
www.ebparks.org/parks/crown_beach

MORNING: Harness the Wind

Take advantage of those unobstructed Bay breezes and protected waters by trying out windsurfing or kiteboarding. Rental equipment and lessons are available at Board-sports, located right inside the park near the corner of Westline and Shoreline drives. A little too ambitious? Stand-up paddleboarding is also an option, and there may be no better location in the Bay Area to simply fly a kite with your kids.

NOON: Go Beachcombing

Did you know that the 2.5-mile-long Crown Beach is the longest beach in the entire Bay Area? And with a recent infusion of 82,600 cubic yards of fresh sand and some of the warmest, shallowest waters in the region, which make swimming a less-than-frigid reality, this might be the closest you can get to a Southern California-style day at the beach. Also look out for the popular Sand Castle Contest, held every June on the north end of the park near the boathouse.

AFTERNOON: Explore Nature

The Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary at the park's southern end is one of the few remaining salt marsh habitats bordering the Bay. As such, it makes for fantastic bird-watching, luring a diverse array of avian life, from great blue herons and brown pelicans to endangered California clapper rails and least terns (for more EBRPD birding info, see page 18). The Crab Cove Visitor Center to the north, meanwhile, offers an educational look at our local estuary. Enjoy a Bay aquarium filled with creatures— crabs, flounder, perch, pipefish and more! Check the schedule and join a naturalist-led program to explore the intertidal mud flats on the edge of San Francisco Bay.



Top: Sanderlings and friends at Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary, Crown Memorial State Beach in Alameda. Bottom: Beachcombing at Crown Beach, the longest beach in the Bay Area.



TOP: JERRY TING; BOTTOM: MARC CRUMPLER



3 *Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve*

MORNING: Miner's Life

The park got its name because it served as a coal- and then sand-mining hub in the Bay Area from the 1860s through the 1940s. More than 4 million tons of "black diamonds" (coal) were extracted during that time. Today, you can get a brief taste for what that rough underground life must have been like by taking a guided tour of the old Hazel-Atlas Mine. The tour leads you 950 feet into the former silica mine, where you can check out ore chutes, a preserved supervisor's office and age-old subterranean geology.

NOON: Historical Perspective

Scenic Rose Hill Cemetery, where dozens of miners and their families are buried, offers one of the last physical reminders of the region's bygone industrial days. Greathouse Visitor Center, located in an underground chamber excavated in the 1920s, offers a glimpse into our ancient geologic past—some 50 million years ago when the area was part of an inland sea.

AFTERNOON: Take a Hike

But perhaps the best reason to visit is to meander a few of the 60-plus miles of trails that traverse the park's more than 6,000 acres of gorgeous, rolling terrain. The rugged, 2-mile Chaparral Loop Trail offers a diverse slice of everything, from wide-open vistas of surrounding Contra Costa County to dense manzanita groves to a rainbow display of wildflowers in spring and early summer. Keep an eye out for wildlife, too, including coyotes, foxes, deer, mountain lions and snakes.

Above left: Perspectives of Hazel-Atlas portal. In the 1920s to 1940s, white sand silica was mined here to make mason jars and other glass items. Top: Greathouse Visitor Center portal dedication, May 2012.

Bottom: A viewpoint of the park's rolling terrain—in all, there are more than 6,000 acres.

Black Diamond Mines:
5175 Somersville Road, Antioch
www.ebparks.org/parks/black_diamond

PAYING IT FORWARD

“Mountain Jack” Ingram’s generosity benefits EBRPD trail lovers—human and canine

“Everybody called him Mountain Jack. He had a really big heart and was happiest being outdoors. He was always dabbling in interesting projects, always helping people, always pitching in when something needed to be done. When the Bay Area Ridge Trail is finally completed, it will be his dream come true.”

—Ingram’s niece Allyson Pate



Above: Family and friends, joined by RPF’s Carol Johnson (l) and Board President Bill Acevedo, gather at the site of Lafayette-Moraga Trail improvements. The improvements honor Ingram (pictured below), his parents and his \$50,000 bequest to RPF.

Left: The decorative stone, water fountain and shaded bench are welcome additions.

Hikers, joggers, bicyclists—and even dogs—now have a place to rest and enjoy fresh drinking water on a popular Contra Costa County trail, thanks to the generous bequest of an avid outdoorsman and former Lafayette resident.

John “Mountain Jack” Ingram, who passed away in December 2007 at age 81, left \$50,000 to the Regional Parks Foundation as a tribute to his parents, Stuart and Venita Ingram, who were longtime Lafayette residents.

On March 13, family and friends of Ingram’s joined with the Regional Parks Foundation and East Bay Regional Park District to celebrate and honor the life of Ingram and his parents. The event, which featured family and friends from as far away as Oregon, took place at the Olympic Boulevard Staging Area of the Lafayette-Moraga



Regional Trail near downtown Lafayette. Park officials dedicated a bench under a shady tree, a water fountain for humans and dogs, and a plaque embedded in a rock at the staging area.

Ingram grew up in Lafayette and served in the Navy, spending time on two different aircraft carriers in the South Pacific. He also worked for many years for *Autoweek* magazine. He loved skiing and hiking, leading excursions in the East Bay and Sierra Nevada.

Among Ingram’s many contributions to Northern California outdoor life, he helped establish the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Since its dedication in May 1989, volunteers have expanded the trail to include more than 350 miles of stunning vistas and challenging terrain encircling the Bay Area, with plans to complete the trail—over 550 miles—in the future.

Learn and Do More

To donate to the Regional Parks Foundation, visit www.RegionalParksFoundation.org or call 510-544-2003. Please visit www.ebparks.org/parks/trails/lafayette_moraga, for info about the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail. For details about the Bay Area Ridge Trail, visit www.ridgetrail.org.



Join Our Groundbreaking Volunteers

Learn about the inspired efforts of cyclists and others at **Crockett Hills Regional Park** from **Jim Townsend**, recently retired manager of **EBRPD's Ivan Dickson Volunteer Trail Maintenance Program**

What's up with all the trail building at Crockett Hills?

Back in 2007–2008, the District began updating its master plan and won voter approval of Measure WW, which raised \$500 million for parks acquisition and development, including trails. We wanted to reach out to our constituencies and make sure we were looking out for everyone's interests as best we could. It became evident that the way to address the issue of providing improved riding opportunities for cyclists was to begin a focused program to construct new trails with gentle grades, good sight lines and room to pass for all users—hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, dog walkers. Crockett Hills is one of our best test cases. We built 4.5 miles of trails in 2008–2009 and in February of this year completed the addition of more than 5 miles, which anyone can use but are optimized for mountain biking.

What's been the feedback from the public?

We've gotten tremendous positive feedback. The majority of Crockett's new users are bikers. In the past, bikers would spend a fair amount of time pushing their bikes up old fire roads and have a terrifying ride down steep hills, braking the whole time. Now they can get a good workout without risking their necks and harm to those around them. It's a completely different experience.

What role did volunteers play?

Volunteers played a critical role in tackling the finishing handwork after trailblazing bulldozers did their thing. The first volunteer project at Crockett Hills involved Clif Bar employees on their annual day of service. The Bicycle Council of the East Bay took on the second project. In June, Volunteers of Outdoor California will camp and work for a full weekend. Throughout the District, EBRPD has more than 120,000 acres to maintain. Our professional staff is stretched thin—without volunteers, we wouldn't be able to keep our trails in shape.

What's the payoff?

For volunteers, the most satisfying thing is to be able to use the trails they worked on. For me, it's very gratifying to be part of a sea change in our District in improving the quality of experience for all user groups. I'm proudest of helping to open that door. Our biggest new project is at Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park, where we will add 27 miles of multiuse trails. We are making the pie bigger instead of dividing it into smaller pieces and will continue to do so.

Townsend recently retired as EBRPD's manager of trails development and is a multiuser himself: avid hiker, occasional mountain biker, sometime equestrian.

Want to join a great cause?

Visit www.ebparks.org/ivandickson for details about the Ivan Dickson volunteer program's events, schedule, newsletter and more. Contact the Regional Trails Department at 510-544-2611.

Crockett Hills Regional Park

CALLING ALL BIRD LOVERS

Here are just a few of the shorebirds, raptors, marsh birds and songbirds common in EBRPD environs. To view these and more, get busy and go birding!



The **Northern Mockingbird** has hundreds of songs in its repertoire, including those of its own creation and mimicked sounds—other birds and animals, car alarms, whistling tea kettles and more. During the springtime, unmated male songbirds often sing throughout the moonlit nights.

The rusty-red plumage and bright ruby eyes make the drake **Cinnamon Teal** unique among ducks. The drake proudly escorts his mate to and from the nest but leaves to molt his flight feathers before the ducklings hatch. These marsh birds feed on aquatic plants, snails and insects and can explode from the water and into flight when alarmed.

The **American White Pelican** is among North America's largest birds, with a wingspan of 9 feet. These marsh birds can be seen cooperatively herding fish toward shallow water, scooping up prey with their enormous, orange bills. They are most commonly seen from late August until early spring.

One of the tallest birds in Bay Area marshes, the **Great Blue Heron** has a 6-foot wingspan and is equally at home hunting fish in the shallows and gophers on hillsides. Great blue herons form nesting colonies in tall trees, often with egrets and cormorants as neighbors.



Greater Yellowlegs are long-legged waders with pale plumage and, as advertised, bright yellow legs. Be on the lookout for these shorebirds in the fall. They can be found on mudflats and in other wetland habitats where they forage for invertebrates and small fish. Listen for their strident and distinctive *tew, tew, tew*, call.



With its vivid red legs and dapper black and white plumage, this eye-catching shorebird is unmistakable. The **Black-Necked Stilt** wades in tidal waters and uses its needlelike bill to prey on small crustaceans. Adjusting for body size, only the flamingo has longer legs than the black-necked stilt.

The vociferous **Red-Shouldered Hawk**, a raptor, is often heard before it is seen. This relative of the red-tailed hawk is adapted to woodland edges and riparian habitat. Hunting from a perch, the red-shouldered hawk searches for a wide variety of prey, including mice, snakes, frogs, crayfish and even earthworms.



The **Burrowing Owl** is a raptor and is listed by the state as a "species of special concern." It has grown increasingly scarce in Northern California. This owl coexists with ground squirrels, nesting in abandoned burrows amid grassy meadows. It is one of the few owls more likely to be seen during the day.



Ardenwood Historic Farm,
Fremont

SPECIAL EVENTS

More Campfire Programs: Summer campfire programs are offered at Anthony Chabot Regional Park (Castro Valley/Oakland) and Del Valle Regional Park (Livermore). Check dates, times and programs at www.ebparks.org or call 888-EBPARKS.

Old-Fashioned Independence Day
July 4, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Ardenwood Historic Farm, Fremont.

Concerts at the Cove
July 10, Aug. 14, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Crab Cove, Crown Memorial State Beach, Alameda. Start your weekend with free music and family fun as the sun sets over the bay. Bring a lawn chair and picnic, or purchase food and beverages here. Parking on Webster Street or at the Crown Beach lot at Otis.

Hazel-Atlas Mine Open House
July 11, noon–4:30 p.m., Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, Antioch.

Second Sunday Campfire Programs
July 12, Aug. 9, Sept. 13, 6:30–8 p.m., Big Break Regional Shoreline, Oakley. Gather the family for an evening in the park! Bring a picnic dinner before the festivities begin. We will explore the wonders of Big Break through activities and a family campfire—and s'mores, of course!

Historic Wheat Harvest
July 19 and 26, 1:30–3:30 p.m., Ardenwood Historic Farm, Fremont.

SAVE THESE DATES

Mark your calendar and join these highlighted EBRPD programs and activities—perfect for the young and young at heart. To view complete listings of EBRPD events, visit www.ebparks.org/activities.

Ardenwood's 30th Anniversary
July 25, Ardenwood Historic Farm, Fremont.

Historic Rail Fair
Sept. 5, 6 and 7, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Ardenwood Historic Farm, Fremont. Special event fee: \$10 adults, \$8 seniors, \$6 children ages 4–17.

Apple Festival
Sept. 12, noon–4 p.m., Garin Regional Park, Hayward.

Hazel-Atlas Mine Open House
Sept. 13, noon–4:30 p.m., Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, Antioch.

Coastal Cleanup
Sept. 19, 8:30 a.m.–noon, EBRPD shoreline parks and Del Valle Regional Park. Help remove shoreline litter and invasive plants. Check locations and register at www.ebparks.org.

30th Annual Harvest Festival
Oct. 10 and 11, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Ardenwood Historic Farm, Fremont. Special event fee: \$10 adults, \$8 seniors, \$6 children ages 4–17.

Cowboy Hootenanny Folk Festival
Oct. 24, 11 a.m.–4 p.m., Sunol Regional Wilderness, Sunol.



Regional Parks Botanic Garden
75th Anniversary Celebration
Aug. 29, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Botanic Garden,
Tilden Regional Park.

Regional Parks Foundation
P.O. Box 21074, Crestmont Station
Oakland, CA 94620
www.RegionalParksFoundation.org

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