

Healthy Parks Healthy People

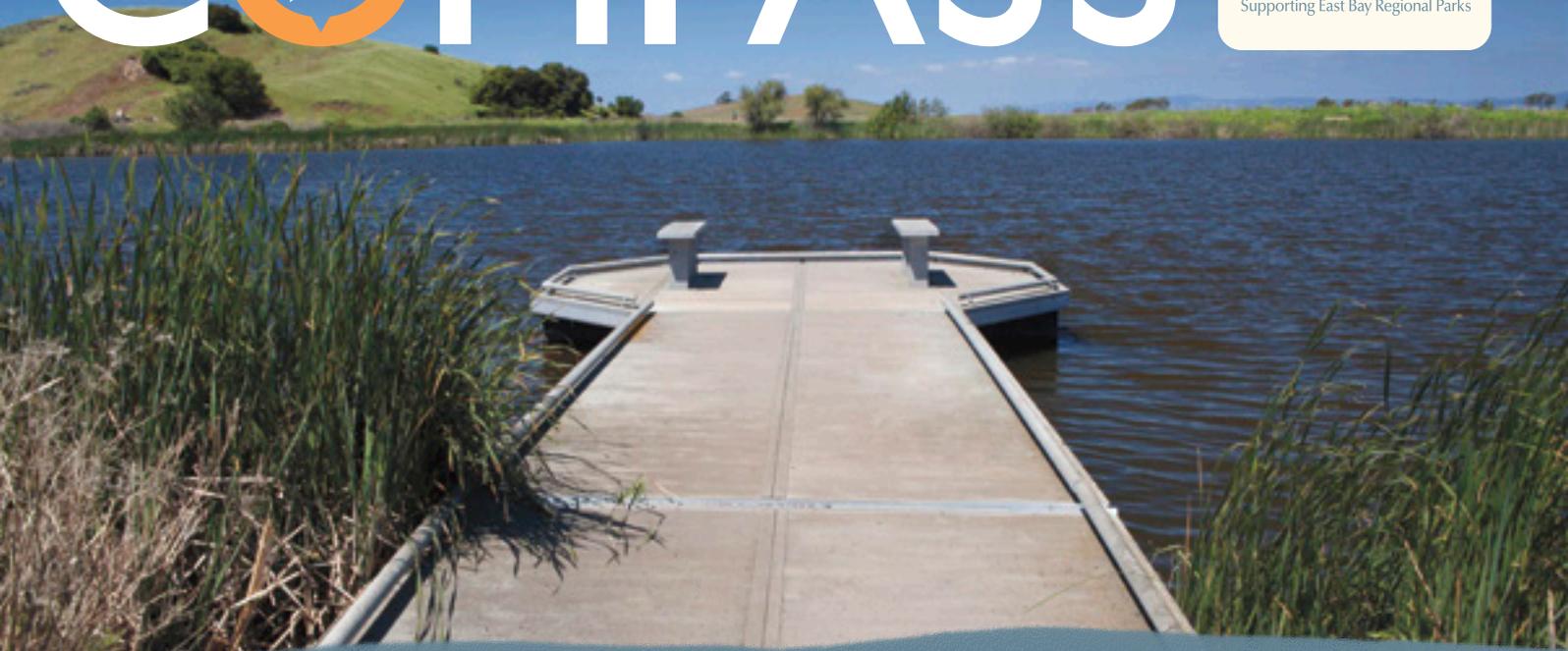
COMPASS

WINTER 2022



REGIONAL PARKS
Foundation

Supporting East Bay Regional Parks



COMING UP DRY

← WILL THE WINTER RAINS PROVIDE DROUGHT RELIEF FOR THE PARKS? →



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REIMAGINING PARKS FOR ALL

▷ This past year has seen the Regional Parks Foundation honor the Park District's past—with anniversary celebrations for the Brazilian Room (80 years) and Tilden Regional Park (85 years)—and look toward the future. To that end, the Foundation just launched a capital campaign in support of a new Environmental Education Center at Tilden, one that is ADA accessible and better serves interpretive programming for a range of visitors and staff

members (read more on page 16).

Making sure that our regional parks remain a haven for East Bay residents seeking exercise, community and connection to nature is even more important as we learn about the positive impact that time spent in the great outdoors has on physical and mental health. Drought mitigation and fuels management efforts (see page 6) help protect wildlife, parklands and recreation activities for generations to come.

Speaking of recreation, our 29th annual Trails Challenge kicks off in January. We hope you will join the thousands of park visitors who walk, bike and ride the 20 trails featured in this self-guided program. Track your progress—you must complete at least five of the trails—submit your log, and receive a free commemorative pin while supplies last. Visit www.ebparks.org for details. Happy trails to you!



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Executive Director
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DID YOU KNOW

Fun facts about the East Bay Regional Park District



**Consul General
Anibal de Saboia Lima**

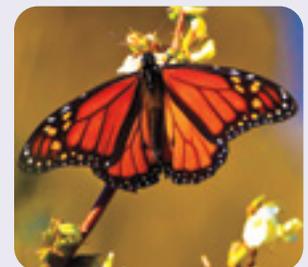
1,500 attendees

Brazil's Consul General Anibal de Saboia Lima (above, on left) was among the guests at Tilden's Brazilian Room dedication ceremony.



2008

The year the Park District formally began observing a Day of Service in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.



Less than 12

The number of butterfly species in the Bay Area—down from nearly 100 species, as a result of factors such as habitat loss and climate change.



Attendees at the peace pole installation in September.

Stronger Together

Lake Chabot's new peace pole highlights the importance of community

You might notice a new addition at Lake Chabot Regional Park in Castro Valley, where a peace pole was installed near the Cove Picnic Area in September as part of the Park District's United Nations International Day of Peace celebration. The 12-foot stainless steel monument is linked in spirit to the 250,000-plus peace poles planted worldwide, expressing the hopes and dreams for peace on earth. The Lake Chabot peace pole features Japanese philosopher Masahisa Goi's peace message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in English, Spanish, Chinese and Chochenyo (the language spoken by the area's indigenous Ohlone people), as well as "peace" in more than two dozen additional languages.

In 1981, the United Nations designated Sept. 21 as an International Day of Peace, to be observed across the globe by actively practicing nonviolence and a ceasefire for 24 hours. The Park District launched its first World Peace event in 2018 at Lake Chabot in partnership with the Eden Area Interfaith Council, after a group of Muslim youth was accosted while praying within the park.

"From the ashes of a hurtful situation arises the phoenix of respect and collaboration," says Mona Koh, community relations manager. "As a community, we seek to be proactive and supportive, to stand by each other ... and also to celebrate all traditions. Peace is a way of life."

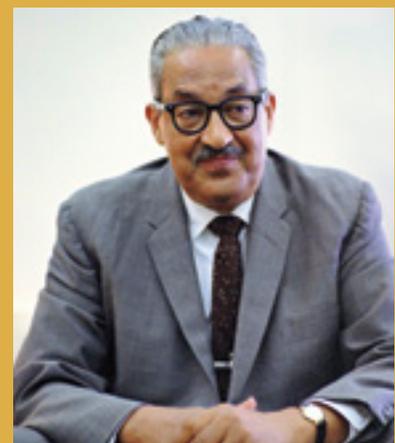
This year's ceremony, held on Sept. 18, was centered around the global theme of "Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World." Among the other activities were inspiring speeches by students from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, including a 9-year old from Antioch; songs from faith-based groups; and peace messages from the Park District and the Regional Parks Foundation board members as well as representatives from the United Nations Association-USA, East Bay Chapter. Participants also enjoyed drumming, singing, storytelling, group sharing, a light lunch and a walk by the lake.

"This is a way of bringing community together," says Koh. "We can observe the day individually; however, there's a power in the community. We can find common ground and peaceful ways to live in harmony with one another and with nature."



HONORING A CIVIL RIGHTS LEGACY

Thurgood Marshall might be best known as the first Black Supreme Court justice in the United States, but among his other storied accomplishments was his civil rights work with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. On July 17, 1944, a deadly explosion at Port Chicago Naval Magazine (located a few miles from Martinez) killed 320 enlisted men and injured hundreds of others; the majority of these men were Black. Subsequently, a group known as the Port Chicago 50 was found guilty of mutiny after refusing to work under such unsafe conditions. As a civil rights attorney, Marshall fought to appeal the ruling and contributed to the eventual desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces. In June, the new park at the former Concord Naval Weapons Station was named Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50, in recognition of his great work and the tragedy at Port Chicago.





Hidden Treasures

Choose your own family adventure with these lesser-known parks and activities

Watching your son or daughter spot a cocooning butterfly, thrill to spring wildflowers or lead the way along a redwood-lined trail for the first time can be a special moment—for both you and your child.

The parks hold many opportunities for families to explore and play together, and while spots such as Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley or Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont are popular destinations for visitors of all ages, there is a wealth of lesser-known gems to uncover.

Young history buffs will love **Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve** in Antioch, home to the Hazel-Atlas Mine. Guests ages 7 and up can take the new 30-minute Coal Mine Experience tour in a replica coal mine and get a sense of what early 20th-century workers went through. Guided tours of the silica sand mine last an hour; advance reservations are required for both.

Or head to the water for biking, scootering, kite flying, picnicking and more at **shoreline parks** such as Radke Martinez, Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach in Alameda, Miller/Knox in Richmond, Bay Point and Martin Luther King Jr. in Oakland. Boating, fishing and bird-watching are other family-friendly options at select shoreline parks; Miller/Knox is also home to the **Golden State Model Railroad Museum**, with model trains running every Sunday from April through December. The observation pier at **Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline** in Oakland is a must for spectacular views of the San Francisco Bay.

Play it cool under the trees at Oakland's **Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park**. The mostly paved Stream Trail provides nature-spotting opportunities (look for wintering ladybugs), stands of redwoods and a children's play structure.

For more green connections, visit the District's many **botanic gardens** where there's always something to see (and smell). The California native plants in the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden start to bloom mid-December and early January, while the Nectar Garden in Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont is a bird and butterfly paradise. Garin/Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Parks in Hayward is home to the two-acre Dry Creek Garden featuring nearly 200 native and exotic plants.

Strenuous hikes on unpaved paths can be challenging for little legs or parents pushing strollers, so why not try **short-loop trails**? There are a variety of loop trails throughout the Park District (look for a full list including details about distances and elevation gains at www.ebparcs.org; search for "short-loop trails"). Stay on the path, bring plenty of water, and watch out for rocky or rough stretches.

No matter the activity, discovery awaits in the regional parks.



Top to bottom: Enjoy bloom times at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden Regional Park; head to the water at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline; take a trip back in time with the new Coal Mine Experience at Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve.



All-Inclusive Camping

Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay offers a new outdoor recreational opportunity in Fremont

Camping enthusiasts rejoice. There is a new family-centric campground in the Park District—one that is grounded in East Bay history.

Located at the former Dumbarton Quarry in Fremont, the Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay in Coyote Hills Regional Park is a milestone in the effort to restore the natural landscape, and one that has been in the works for over 40 years. (The quarry was mined from 1977 through 2006, though the goal was always to return the area to the care of the Park District.)

“You can bring in a tent on a bicycle; you can bring in an RV ... we’re giving a pretty all-inclusive experience for a reasonable amount of money,” says Matt McDonell, park supervisor at Coyote Hills. “To have this site restored is incredible.”

This summer, visitors to Coyote Hills began to access 63 campsites (most of them paved and including electric, water, sewer and Wi-Fi connections). The campground also features a play structure and day-use section; a store (with a planned vending machine that will be devoted to firewood); extensive shower and restroom facilities; picnic areas; an amphitheater featuring naturalist demonstrations; and proximity to Coyote Hills’ trails. The second phase, expected to debut in another decade, will add more camping resources and an event center, as well as access to Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

The project—which, after phase two, will span about 90 acres—is a combined effort from the Park District, DeSilva Gates Construction, Dumbarton Quarry Associates, Pacific States Environmental Contractors and the city of Fremont. The Park

“We’re giving a pretty all-inclusive experience for a reasonable amount of money. To have this site restored is incredible.”

—MATT MCDONELL, PARK SUPERVISOR, COYOTE HILLS

—XXXXXXXX

District celebrated the new campground in August with tours, naturalist presentations, a taiko drumming show, ice cream, and speeches from local and project leaders.

McDonell hopes the Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay makes camping even more accessible to parkgoers.

“Our traffic is terrible these days, and trying to get out of town on a Friday can take you hours,” he says. “This is a place that people can come, within half an hour, 45 minutes of where they live, and be able to get away for a while.”

➤ **Reservations can be made up to 12 weeks in advance, and at least 48 hours in advance, by calling 888-327-2757; option 2. Reserve online at www.reserveamerica.com (search for Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay).**



HIGH & DRY



Photos of Doolan Canyon Regional Preserve taken before and after the drought show its huge impact on the Livermore area landscape.

TOP TO BOTTOM: SCOTT HEIN, EBRPD



**HOW THE PARK DISTRICT IS WORKING TO PROTECT LANDS, WILDLIFE
AND PEOPLE FROM THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF DROUGHT**





Drought reduces ponds in the District, leading to habitat deterioration for threatened species.

C

alifornians are no strangers to periods of drought, which tend to recur cyclically in the West.

That’s why the Park District has been actively conserving water since 2015, from upping irrigation system efficiency, to installing low-flow toilets, to replacing many lawns with less water-hungry grasses and native plants.

With climate change producing hotter, drier weather and stronger winds, the current repercussions are more extreme than in years past. As of late fall, the U.S. Drought Monitor classified the status of Contra Costa and Alameda counties as “exceptional drought,” which is associated with a longer fire season, low survival rates for native plants and wildlife, algal blooms, and high forest mortality. Even recent heavy rains can’t make up for two back-to-back years with low water supply.

The weather conditions are creating a host of challenges for the Park District. Here are some of the steps the District is taking to adaptively manage the impacts of prolonged drought.

HELPING WILDLIFE SURVIVE

The District's seasonal ponds, which form in the rainy months then gradually disappear in drier times, are critical to the survival of several species that inhabit the parklands, explains Matt Graul, chief of stewardship. The threatened California red-legged frog, the California tiger salamander, the western pond turtle and the California newt all depend on these ponds for breeding and habitat during the aquatic phase of their life cycle. "Over time, habitat in the East Bay has been lost," says Graul. "The flatlands once had streams and marshlands. As those have disappeared, species have retreated into the uplands. They've been doing well in the parks, where they rely on the ponds."

Although these species are adapted to seasonal ponds drying up, many ponds are disappearing too soon, notes Graul. "It's critical for these animals to get past the tadpole stage before the ponds dry up. Otherwise, populations can drop." Likewise, migratory birds, waterfowl and other animals depend on the ponds for drinking water.

The rains thus far this season have helped recharge some of the water bodies in the parks, says Graul, but there needs to be a lot more rainfall to make ponds viable for good breeding cycles for many amphibians in 2022.

"It would be ideal if we could get a higher-than-average rainfall that is spread out over the season," he adds. "That would help these areas really recover."

Some of the 500-plus ponds in the District are natural, but most were created. Work is being done to expand several ponds and also ensure their bottoms have a good clay layer to retain water longer. Graul says the District is prioritizing additional funding to accelerate pond restoration.



The western pond turtle is dependent on seasonal waters.



Grazing animals help with fuels management and reduce fire risk.

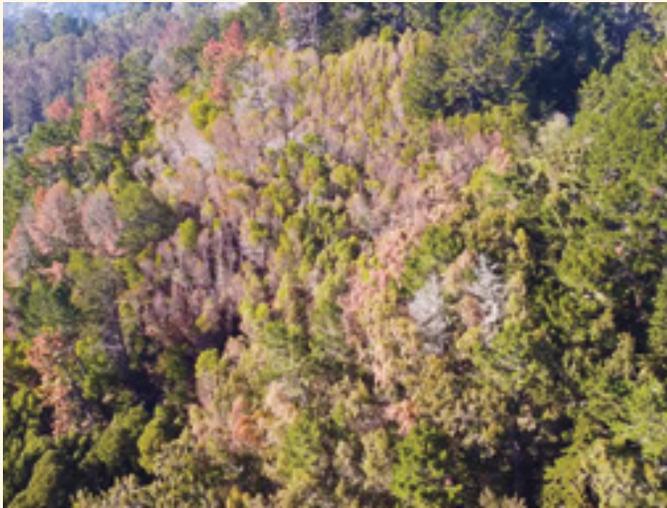
“WE GRAZE MORE THAN 1,600 ANIMALS PER YEAR—SHEEP, GOATS AND CATTLE— [TO MITIGATE FIRE RISK]. WE WERE ONE OF THE FIRST AGENCIES IN THE EAST BAY TO GRAZE.”

—DISTRICT FIRE CHIEF AILEEN THEILE

REDUCING FIRE DANGER

“Low rainfall, low relative humidity and high winds are leading to an increase in the frequency and severity of fires throughout California,” says District Fire Chief Aileen Theile. “We are using every tool in the toolbox to mitigate fire risk across our 120,000 acres.” One method for reducing potential fuel is grazing, which Theile’s team uses on 65% of parklands. “We graze more than 1,600 animals per year—sheep, goats and cattle,” she says. “We were one of the first agencies in the East Bay to graze.”

Removing potential fuel is absolutely critical to preventing wildfires, and that fuel consists of more than just what’s



Clockwise from top left: District fire crews reduce vegetation and dead trees as part of fuels management; sudden tree death is affecting approximately 1,500 acres of trees in parks such as Tilden and Reinhardt Redwood.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CALI GODLEY (2), EBRPD (2)

“LOW INFLOW INTO OUR LAKES INCREASES THE CHANCES OF HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS.”

—MATT GRAUL, CHIEF OF STEWARDSHIP

managed by hungry grazers. “We have 1,500 acres of trees that are dying,” Theile says. “And not just because of scarcer water.” She cites a study that’s looking at how prolonged exposure to smoke can also damage trees. Fortunately, the fire department has been proactive in responding to tree die-off, with a fuels management plan that has been in force since 2010. “If we hadn’t already had a plan in place, this die-off could have been catastrophic,” says Theile. By recognizing the problem early and seeking help from the state, the fire district was able to secure \$13 million in the California budget for tree removal and fire equipment. “All our work is very environmentally driven,” Theile says. Tree removal is done carefully to avoid disturbing any active nests. “We work in lockstep with stewardship to be sure we have the right permits.”

The fire department monitors four weather stations that measure temperature, relative humidity and wind. On red-flag days, the activity of the public and staff is restricted in fire-prone areas, and no equipment that could generate a spark is allowed. “In most cases, we don’t need to shut down the entire park,” says Theile. “That’s because we graze.”

PROTECTING PARK VISITORS

With 2 million visitors a year, EBRPD works hard to ensure people’s safety. One area of concern is harmful algal blooms—colonies of algae growing out of control in bodies of water. The phenomenon is exacerbated by drought. “Low inflow into our lakes increases the chances of harmful algal blooms,” says Graul. These blooms have the potential to produce toxins that are dangerous to people and dogs who venture into the water. And if blooms become so large that they use up all the water’s oxygen, they cause fish die-off.

During swimming season, all bodies of water used for recreation in the parks are monitored weekly. If a bloom is



Low water levels can lead to potentially harmful algal blooms.

detected, monitoring becomes more frequent. Should water become unsafe, signage is posted to warn visitors. Fish are also tested annually. “This year we’ve tested fish tissue from all our lakes. So far our testing hasn’t found any toxins in the fish tissue,” says Graul. “Our guidance [for anglers] is always to rinse any fish caught and not eat the organs. But if we did detect a toxin during our yearly screening, we would change the guidance.”

The District’s fire department, too, regards the safety of the public as paramount, and not just within the parks. Many homes in the East Bay are situated in the Wildland-Urban Interface, the zone where residential areas and undeveloped land meet. “Reducing fire danger within the parks helps protect those neighborhoods too,” says Theile. Her department regularly trains with the fire departments of municipalities that surround the parks to coordinate efforts. “Our fuels reduction coordinators and our project captains also have a lot of interaction with the public, explaining what we’re doing to mitigate fire danger and why,” she says. “They understand the importance of it, and the overwhelming majority of people are relieved to know what we do.”



NURTURED



BY NATURE

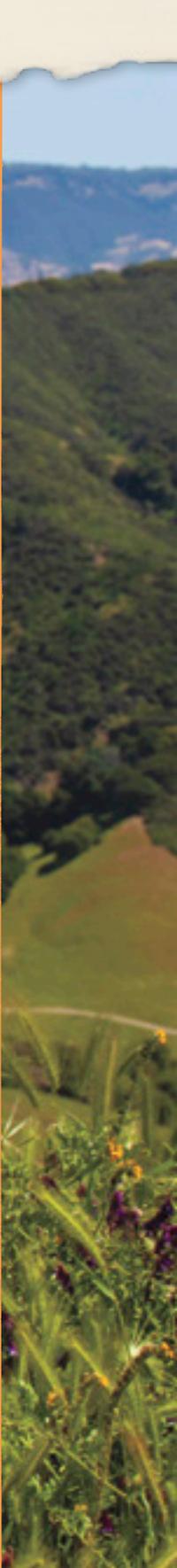
SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS HELPS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

From a heart-pounding hike to the top of Mission Peak to listening to birds in Point Pinole, the parks provide options for exercise, fun and peaceful reflection—all of which benefit body and mind.

As naturalist John Burroughs once declared, “I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.”

The Park District and Regional Parks Foundation have supported many programs over the years that emphasize the healing power of the outdoors, including Parks Rx and SHINE (Stay Healthy In Nature Every day). Other initiatives such as Multicultural Wellness Walks promote community connections and interaction—vital components of happiness that have become even more important as an increased number of people are struggling with their mental well-being.

“Nature is a great place to get exercise and rejuvenate your mind, body and soul—especially in times of crisis,” said Park District representatives at the outset of the pandemic. “A walk on a trail or around your neighborhood or private backyard will allow you to breathe fresh air and help to reduce stress and anxiety.”





Participants take a break during a Multicultural Wellness Walk at Garin Regional Park.

→ THE NATURE PRESCRIPTION

With a growing body of research linking nature and good health, more and more doctors are prescribing time spent outdoors as a treatment for everything from heart disease to depression. One such physician is Nooshin Razani, M.D., a pediatrician at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, who partnered with the Park District on SHINE. "Nature is absolutely essential to human health," Razani told CNN's Anderson Cooper.

Among the advantages of exposure to the natural world are lower blood pressure, a bolstered immune system, reduced stress hormone levels, decreased inflammation and improved mood. A simple walk in the woods provides more than exercise: Combined sensory stimuli such as the smell of vegetation, the sight of trees swaying in the wind or the sound of buzzing insects can activate a restorative state in the body.

"Natural settings help your brain relax and, over time, become more creative," said Razani.

Outdoor recreation is especially important for children to develop and thrive—boosting mood, helping regulate

emotions, and improving attention span and impulse control for kids with ADHD. Research has also found a correlation with better social relationships, positive behaviors such as empathy and generosity, higher academic performance, and even reduced violence.

"For kids, being in nature is sensory immersive because they roll around the ground, they climb, they taste, they really explore the world through their bodies. In that way, nature is a wonderful landscape for exploration. It helps them become mindful when they play," Razani added.

Mindfulness is a proven strategy to alleviate stress, as is a feeling of connection to the greater world. Giving your brain a break from your problems helps, too. Even a 90-minute walk in nature has been shown to lower activity in the part of the brain connected to negative thought.

A randomized study of the families in the SHINE program a few years ago found that it helped participants of all ages. "Every single park visit substantially reduced parent stress," Razani reported.

In addition to stress relief, other brain benefits of time in nature include improved problem-solving skills, better sleep, sharper memory and reduced anxiety.

→ SHORT AND SWEET

You don't have to take a 10-mile hike in Las Trampas Regional Wilderness to get mental benefits. One study found that participants who spent only a minute gazing at a stand of eucalyptus trees reported feeling less self-involved and entitled. Viewing nature videos or photos can also lead to greater prosocial behaviors and happier moods.

Listening helps as well. An April 2021 study found that the sounds of water bolster positive emotions, and bird songs help combat stress and annoyance. According to Professor George Wittemyer, a co-author of the study, "The positive health impacts and stress reduction benefits of nature are more salient than ever to help offset the concerning increase in anxiety and mental health issues."

Family hikes, scavenger hunts, or meeting with friends and neighbors for a pickup game in a nearby park are easy ways to incorporate activity and natural explorations into daily routines.

Just engaging your senses during an early morning walk—touching the dewy grass or listening to chirping sparrows—helps that feeling of greater connection.

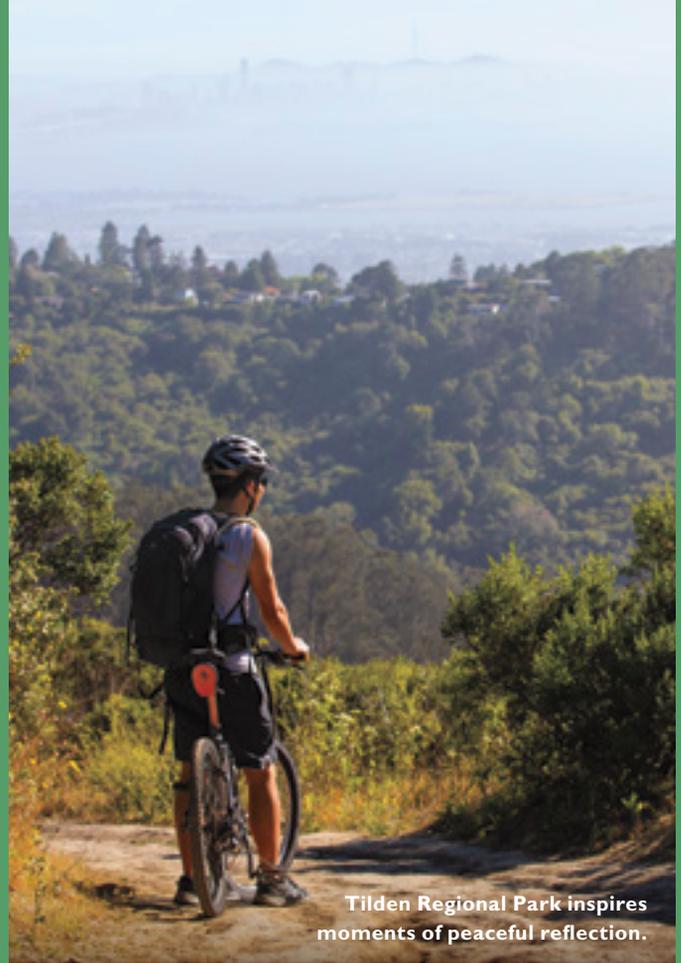
→ IMPROVING NATURE EQUITY

The nature gap impacting underserved communities adds another layer of health inequity. According to the Center for American Progress, more than 76% of people in low-income communities of color live in nature-deprived places. Sometimes that gap can be bridged by improved city planning. A University of Chicago review in 2019 found that green spaces near schools helped cognitive development in children, while green views near homes helped with self-control behaviors.

Other initiatives include providing more opportunities for people to explore nature and wildlife. In July, California established new pilot programs to provide free access to select state parks for local youth.

Efforts to balance the (green) playing field also include the Foundation's longtime Campership program providing young people access to Park District camps, and the more recent introduction of 750 free one-year park memberships for families of color.

"The Foundation's long-standing commitment to access for all, health and youth development is more important today than ever before," says Juliana Schirmer, chief administration officer. "We can't underestimate the tremendous healing power of nature—when it comes to both mental and physical health—for our wonderful and diverse East Bay communities."



Tilden Regional Park inspires moments of peaceful reflection.



Camperships help kids take advantage of outdoor programs such as Camp Arroyo in Livermore.



The Foundation's latest capital campaign will help fund a major renovation of the Environmental Education Center.

Reimagining the Tilden Nature Area

A new Foundation capital campaign supports the future of this beloved nature preserve

At the northern end of Tilden Regional Park, nestled in the Berkeley hills, the Tilden Nature Area remains as integral to exploration and environmental learning efforts today as it was upon its founding more than 70 years ago. As the preserve joined in Tilden Regional Park's 85th anniversary celebrations in 2021, the Park District continues its longtime commitment to outdoor education at Tilden Nature Area—and looks toward the future with the help of a new Regional Parks Foundation capital campaign.

The Tilden Nature Area, established in 1949, features the iconic Little Farm (home to cows, chickens, sheep and more); the well-loved Jewel Lake; and over 10 miles of grassland and forest-based walking paths that offer stunning views throughout its 740 acres. The history of the region includes Huchiun Ohlone

indigenous tribes, Mexican dairy farms and ranches, and water companies utilizing the natural resources; the land was even a base for the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

From Tilden's earliest days, the nature center—which became the Environmental Education Center (EEC) in the 1970s—was a crucial part of the park's education and programming goals.

In 2017, a Park District study found that the 50-plus-year-old EEC needed a major renovation to address its physical programming and ADA accessibility limitations, and to bring it up to current building codes. "The goals of serving the public and making connections to the larger Tilden Nature Area—a lot of that is precluded by the design of the existing building," says Lisa Goorjian, chief of design and construction for the Park District. "There is a desire to make the EEC more welcoming



From top: Park visitors of all ages learn about natural and cultural history at the Environmental Education Center; the Park District honors Tilden Regional Park's 85th anniversary with a concert; the beloved Little Farm in the Tilden Nature Area is home to a variety of barnyard animals.

and connected to the adjacent Little Farm, and to be able integrate the programs and experiences at the EEC with the natural resources surrounding it."

Together, the Park District and Foundation boards decided to prioritize the EEC project, which will involve removing the current structure to make way for a new facility within the same location. Design efforts are slated to debut in 2022. The funding for the project will be led by a Foundation capital campaign—its first in support of a facility of this size—and the hope is to establish the space as a one-of-a-kind experience that underscores youth development.

"We want to create a space that has more of a campus-like feel—where it's intuitive for visitors to go to all of the different components and participate in everything that the site has to offer," says Juliana Schirmer, chief administrative officer for the Foundation. "It felt like this facility is ready on all fronts for us to undertake the challenge."

The Foundation also plans for the capital campaign to help supplement the revitalization of Jewel Lake, located a short distance from the EEC. The reservoir, surrounded by idyllic woodland and adorned with an extensive bridge-like boardwalk, is a favorite of many park visitors but has been battling excess sediment that has severely reduced its size in recent years. "The District has been analyzing what's happening and coming up with proposals for how to [put a sustainable process in place] to remediate the issues," says Schirmer, adding that the Foundation is willing to put money toward those solutions if there is enough donor support.

The Foundation's capital campaign officially launched in September, during concurrent happenings to honor Tilden Regional Park's 85 years and eight decades of its iconic Brazilian Room event space. During the festivities, visitors were able to explore the park's past and present through naturalist presentations and experiences at the EEC and Little Farm, and speakers and memorabilia highlighting the history of the Tilden Park area—in addition to contributing to the park's future. The capital campaign team also hopes to gather input on maximizing the center's potential in the months to come.

"Tilden Regional Park, and specifically the Tilden Nature Area, have been a draw for families for decades," says Schirmer. "We wanted to give people an opportunity to celebrate it, and then help us kick off this next phase—so the next generation can have the same sort of experiences learning about nature and the environment that so many before them have been able to enjoy."

➤ To find out more about the campaign or contribute to the effort, visit www.RegionalParksFoundation.org.



Celebrations and Cleanups

Along with stewardship efforts, park visitors and staff honor anniversaries and new beginnings



1 Left to right: Susan Candell, Avon Wilson, Lynn Hiden, Sabrina Landreth, Dee Rosario, Don Goode, Jerry Kent and Mike McCluer honor the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail's 45th anniversary. **2** California Natural Resources Agency Deputy Secretary Jessica Morse (pictured fifth from right) reviews fire mitigation efforts at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park. **3** **4** Park staff and visitors mark the 30th anniversary of the Oakland Hills firestorm. **5** **6** Volunteers work hard during a Coastal Cleanup Day in September. **7** **8** Celebrating the Park District's newest campground, Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay.



A Tireless Advocate for Open Spaces

The late Judge John Sutter leaves a lasting imprint on the natural landscape of the East Bay

A true guardian of his community, Judge John Sutter believed that urban areas must not only offer jobs, opportunities for commerce and housing—they need to provide people with open spaces and parks as well.

The stalwart environmentalist, 20-year member of the Park District board of directors, Oakland City Council member and former Alameda County Superior Court judge passed away on May 10, 2021, at age 92.

His legacy lives on in countless ways, however, including the Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline Park—named in his honor in 2020 in recognition of his tireless work to establish the park—and a \$2 million bequest he and his wife, Elouise (who passed away a few weeks before he died), made to the Regional Parks Foundation in 2019.

The funds are earmarked for the design, development and construction of a new park/rest area at the Crowley site in Oakland's Brooklyn Basin. The plan is to create a spot—complete with seating and outdoor art works—

where residents can enjoy the natural setting and lovely views from the shoreline.

Described by Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf as a city legend and environmental champion, Sutter served on the first San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and was a founding board member of the Greenbelt Alliance (when it was known as Citizens for Parks). He was also instrumental in conservation efforts to protect land around the San Pablo Reservoir, create the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline and ward off development of Oakland city parklands, among other achievements.

Of his decades-long advocacy for the 22,000-acre Oakland park now bearing his name, Sutter once said, “Sometimes you can get a lot done with perseverance and a little luck.”

His enduring protection of open spaces is proof that passion, vision and commitment to public service play their part in success as well.

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