

COMPASS

FALL 2025



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A LANDSCAPE RENEWED

AN EXPANSIVE PROJECT AT COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK IS COMPLETE,
RESTORING WILDLIFE HABITATS AND IMPROVING PUBLIC ACCESS

MOVING FORWARD WITH INTENTION

Last year saw much celebration of the past in honor of the East Bay Regional Park District's 90th anniversary, but now the Regional Parks Foundation and the Park District are strategically looking toward the future.

To that end, the Foundation recently conducted an in-depth survey of our members to assess their interests and the best ways the membership program can continue to support the Regional Parks. We were thrilled to see the high level of engagement shown among our thousands of respondents (see page 10 for more details) and know that you share our dedication to protecting our invaluable green spaces, now and in the years to come.



The Park District also sought public input in recent months to inform a long-term road map to guide major decisions over the next decade. The initiative will build on past planning efforts while analyzing factors such as sea-level rise and wildfire threats that will impact future projects. You can read more about the District Plan process, which will continue through 2026, on page 14.

It's more important than ever that the Park District and the Foundation hear from members of the East Bay's wonderfully diverse communities. Thank you for your input and ongoing commitment to our Regional Parks.

Lauren Bernstein
Executive Director
Regional Parks Foundation

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Did You Know

The Regional Parks Foundation supports the East Bay Regional Park District, raising funds in support of programs that serve thousands of community members. Here are some of our 2024 highlights:



\$3.25 million

Money raised for park programs and projects

16,098

Number of community members who have been served by Foundation-supported programs



1,138

Number of scholarships provided for summer camps and aquatic programs

6,309

Number of park visitors who received bus transportation to community events



A SHARED PASSION FOR PARKS

Welcoming a new Regional Parks Foundation board member and bidding goodbye to a longtime partner



Rita and Nathan Lasche show their baby daughter Ava (now 2 years old) the joys of Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park.

Nathan Lasche says parks have always been a core part of his life, and now he gets to work on their behalf as part of the Regional Parks Foundation board of directors.

Lasche joined the board last September, hoping to use his business acumen and experience at other foundations in support of the Regional Parks. A group product manager at YouTube since 2016, Lasche earned his MBA from Harvard Business School and BA from Stanford University. He previously worked for the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, helping manage their endowment, and the Clinton Foundation, where he established its Uganda office that provided HIV healthcare services to local residents.

"This is an exciting time to be part of the Regional Parks Foundation," says Lasche. "We are rethinking a lot of how we structure our overall mission and how we focus our

work. I want to help the Foundation move toward our long-term evolution, including the development of a more robust structure for fundraising and membership."

A hiker and mountain biker who lives in Alameda with his wife and three children, Lasche enjoys spending time in many Regional Parks, including Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park, Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve and Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve. "We have this incredible diversity in the Park District. You can have a whole range of landscapes and experiences," he says. "It is unlike anything I've ever seen."

For Lasche, collaborating with Foundation staff and other board members is a highlight of this new role.

"Everyone comes from the same place of love for the parks and providing accessibility to these invaluable spaces," he says. "Being in the room with people who have

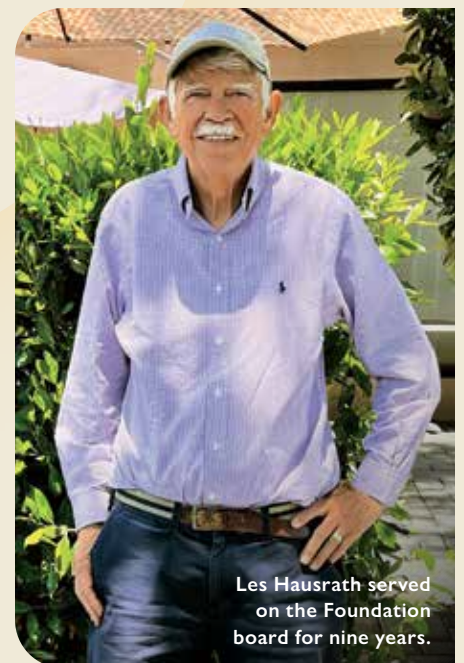
this shared passion for the parks and our community has been special."

That sentiment is echoed by Les Hausrath, who stepped down from the Foundation board in April after nine years.

"The people on the board are really great. It's a pleasure to serve, as people get along and have the same values. It's been a good experience both personally and professionally," says Hausrath.

A retired attorney who worked on Park District matters as outside counsel for 35 years before joining the Foundation board, Hausrath has served as secretary and vice president, among other roles, and helped steer the Foundation through various changes over the years. He will continue to consult with the Park District on a volunteer basis.

"I have a lot of love and respect for the Park District and will miss working with the Foundation staff and my fellow board members, though I will still be involved to some extent," adds Hausrath. "It gets in your blood."



Les Hausrath served on the Foundation board for nine years.



Ori and Josh Goldmiller during a 2022 backpacking trip in the Park District.

A TRADITION OF GIVING

Berkeley middle schooler Ori Goldmiller is already an enthusiastic supporter of the Regional Parks

Even at 13 years of age, Ori Goldmiller has a long history of philanthropy. His parents have always encouraged altruism in their two children, regularly setting aside a portion of their allowance for a cause of their choosing. Ori, an avid mountain biker who loves Tilden Regional Park, has repeatedly donated his money to the Regional Parks Foundation.

"I've been going to the parks since I was less than a year old, and I enjoy having that access nearby and a place to be in nature," says Ori. "I've seen

new trails being built in Tilden and trails being reworked all over the East Bay Regional Parks. I find it really meaningful to be able to give back to the community, especially organizations that I interact with, and see where that money is going."

Adds his father, Josh, "We're a Jewish family, and [giving] is a major value of our cultural heritage and tradition. We want to teach that to our kids and give locally to organizations that support work that we can actually touch and feel."

Josh and his wife, Rachel, were even inspired to make a more sizable family donation to the Foundation after witnessing Ori's generosity.

The Goldmillers live near Tilden and regularly spend time picnicking and hiking in the East Bay Regional Park District. Ori has volunteered on trail maintenance projects with his middle school mountain biking team and loved the Little Farm when he was younger. Mountain biking is his true passion, however, and in addition to Tilden, he frequents trails at Crockett Hills Regional Park and Anthony Chabot Regional Park.

"It's amazing to have parks nearby where I can bike and it's not a three-hour drive," says Ori. "They are well-maintained, and the accessibility is amazing."

He and his dad also took a 34-mile, three-day backpacking trip from Wildcat Canyon Regional Park to Anthony Chabot a few years ago.

"It was special to spend the entire day in the park and then camp out there," recalls Josh. "This trip deepened our appreciation of all that these parks have to offer and the importance of continuing to support them."

The family enjoys the diversity of the parklands, the wildlife and witnessing the changing seasons.

"I kind of grew up in the parks," says Ori. "And being able to see how they have changed over the years has been great."



► **Want to make your own donation in support of the the parks? Scan here, or visit RegionalParksFoundation.org.**

“I enjoy having that access nearby and a place to be in nature. ... I find it really meaningful to be able to give back to the community, especially organizations that I interact with, and see where that money is going.”

—ORI GOLDMILLER

TRAINING TO SAVE A LIFE

The Park District is partnering with local schools on a CPR instruction program that teaches thousands of students

More than 350,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of a hospital setting each year, according to the American Heart Association; however, immediately performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can greatly increase chances of survival. CPR is also a critical part of water safety.

In an effort to increase knowledge of this life-saving procedure, the East Bay Regional Park District Lifeguard Services Unit has partnered with nine local high schools to train students on CPR and first aid. Those students then pass that knowledge on to cohorts at the middle school level—creating a ripple effect that has resulted in thousands of students educated about emergency response.

The Train to Save a Life initiative started at Dozier-Libbey Medical High School in Antioch a year and a half ago, with Park District staff providing initial instruction and loaned equipment as well as helping to facilitate the second stage of classes. At one event during the 2024–2025 academic year, the high schoolers certified 350 students at Antioch's Park Middle School in just one day.

"We ended up getting 375 training manikins from multiple agencies," says Pete DeQuincy, lifeguard services manager at the Park District. "When we reached out to the American Red Cross for help, they said no one has ever done anything like this—having students teach other kids."

The Park District expanded the effort even further, working with the American Red Cross to pilot a hands-only CPR course



Students at Bancroft Middle School in San Leandro get hands-on instruction in CPR.

for 14-year-olds—the standard starting age is 16—who would then teach their peers at area middle schools. "We are talking about thousands of kids," says DeQuincy. "No one in the nation is doing this."

The American Red Cross supplied a discounted rate for student certifications, and the Regional Parks Foundation provided financial support for the certifications, manikins, personal safety equipment and awards for the students (such as challenge coins and honor cords).

"The Regional Parks Foundation has been instrumental in this program and in recognizing the kids for their hard work," says

DeQuincy. "We could not have done this without the Foundation's support."

The number of trained students in the region is already astounding, including the entire middle school population of San Leandro. The hope is to eventually include water safety and environmental stewardship education in the program.

Another beneficial side effect of the training has been an increased awareness of the Regional Parks as a result of interactions with Park District staff.

"Once we've made that connection, we've found that the students are more interested in going to the parks or even working for public agencies," says DeQuincy. "It's been a real bonus to see these kids not only step up to provide for their community but also want to know more about the Regional Parks, including the pathway to getting a seasonal job at the Park District."

Adds DeQuincy, "Not only do we want to empower our young people, we want them to become stewards of the parks."



East Bay Regional Park District staff help train middle schoolers in CPR.

A PARK TRANSFORMED



Visitor-serving improvements at Coyote Hills Regional Park include new construction projects and trails.

An ambitious expansion at Coyote Hills Regional Park renews habitats and improves visitor access

Eleven years in the making, the Coyote Hills Regional Park restoration and public access project is complete—and it was definitely worth the wait. With new trails and wildlife viewing areas, improved parking, and abundant territory to explore, the park has more to offer than ever before.

The East Bay Regional Park District acquired the 296-acre Patterson Ranch property in Fremont back in 2014, expanding Coyote Hills by about 25% and protecting the land from future development. A land-use plan incorporating extensive input from the public was approved in 2019, with construction development focused on approximately 170 northern acres of the new parcel. In keeping with the Park District's mission, the complex project has balanced the goals of preservation and stewardship with enhanced recreation and education.

» RESTORING THE LAND

Having been agricultural land for many decades, the new parcel required help returning to its natural state. The park is home to distinct environments—oak savanna, grassland, riparian forest and seasonal wetlands—and the planting of native trees, shrubs and grasses is helping restore them to their preagricultural condition. The work also provides enhanced habitats for the many species that dwell in the park, including white-tailed kites, northern harriers, California voles, western pond turtles and coyotes.

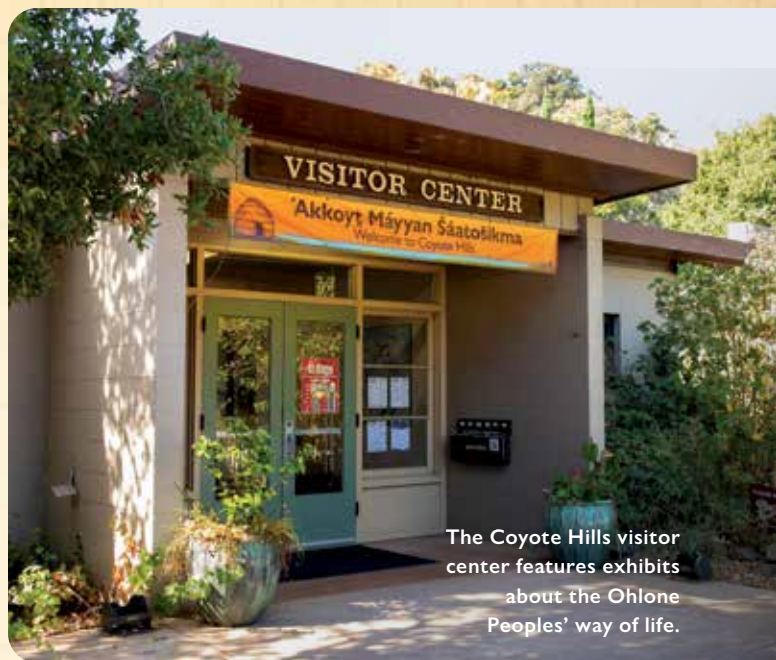
“We’ve planted more than 10,000 plants,” says Karla Jean Meyers, project coordinator of the Park District’s Restoration Project Unit. “A few years [before starting the restoration], we set up test plots with different plants throughout the project area to understand what would be successful—to see what species would be worth investing in.”

Those early efforts have paid off. “Despite some drought, some wet winters and animal browsing, we’ve had more success than we expected,” she adds. “Overall, the plantings are thriving.”

Digging out soil to create lower areas where water can collect seasonally has also been a boon for migratory birds. “We immediately started spotting shorebirds and other wildlife—avocets, stilts, herons, egrets and even a few raptors—species we don’t always observe so easily,” says Christopher Sulots, supervising naturalist at Coyote Hills. The South Bay is a migratory hotspot, he says, with prime time being December through March. “A massive amount of birds pass through here. Some stop for food. Others nest here and rear their young.”

» TAKING A CLIMATE-SMART APPROACH

Park District policy requires that all projects consider climate impacts, and Coyote Hills was no exception. Planting abundant native vegetation is a double-pronged weapon against a changing climate: It boosts the trapping of atmospheric carbon, a greenhouse gas, and promotes biodiversity, which increases resilience to severe weather events.



The Coyote Hills visitor center features exhibits about the Ohlone Peoples’ way of life.

Additionally, the restoration of seasonal wetlands has increased the locale’s capacity to store water during heavy rainfall, reducing the likelihood of flooding in the park and neighboring towns. And the removal of invasive plants, whether by human labor or through grazing, helps mitigate wildfire risk.

» INCREASING AMENITIES FOR PARK USERS

Accessing the park is easier and safer now that the property extends as far as the main road, Paseo Padre Parkway. Whereas the old parking setup was often maxed out, the new 100-car lot can accommodate many more visitors and even offers electric charging stations. Electricity and plumbing upgrades to the park are another benefit. “This part of Coyote Hills didn’t have sewer and water service,” says Meyers, “but now it has restrooms and drinking fountains.” An inviting new picnic area is also part of the revamp.

Miles of new multiuse trails meander through restored areas and link up with popular regional trails. “The beauty of the new trails is that they connect to the Alameda Creek Regional Trail, which gives direct access to Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge,” says Sulots. Coyote Hills hikers and bikers can now connect directly to the San Francisco Bay Trail, and further interconnectivity is planned. Three wildlife overlook platforms along the trails each have an interpretive panel describing the local flora and fauna. “The platforms are a great opportunity for members of the public to be immersed in the restored habitat areas,” says Meyers.

Sulots and his team have scheduled a host of new activities for visitors, from guided naturalist hikes to school field trips to birding programs. He notes that even before the recent improvements, families, hikers, joggers and bikers have flocked to the park, enjoying the proximity to nature so close to the cities of the East Bay.

“Coyote Hills is a unique buffer zone adjacent to a semi-urban area, especially with this addition,” says Sulots. “We’re excited to help people get in there and appreciate the space.”



New interpretive panels highlight the park’s important habitats.

A Day at the Lake participants at a
Sanos y Seguros en los Parques
event in July.



PARKS FOR EVERYONE

An exciting new collaboration promotes access, belonging and water safety among the Latino community

“We want all our community members to know that the parks are for them,” says José González, equity officer at the East Bay Regional Park District. “We want to ensure that people have a sense of belonging, because the parks are meant for everyone to access and enjoy equally.”

González, the Park District’s inaugural equity officer, is passionate about his role, which he describes as helping to “create a comprehensive, coordinated, District-wide approach to equity.” With the right strategies and frameworks in place, he adds, “we are better positioned to ensure the success of our community programs and partnerships.”

An Inclusive Partnership

The Park District has long been committed to community outreach, developing many programs over the years that emphasize inclusiveness, diversity and accessibility. Now, drawing upon González's extensive expertise as an educator, community leader and conservationist, the Park District is adding an important new initiative to its portfolio. Called *Sanos y Seguros en los Parques* (Healthy and Safe in the Parks), the program is an effort that encourages Latino communities to safely enjoy parks and designated swimming sites.

Launched this summer and funded by a grant from the Regional Parks Foundation, *Sanos y Seguros* was developed in partnership with Latino Outdoors, a nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to nature and diversifying leadership among stewardship and environmental groups. Originally a community-building and knowledge-sharing blog, Latino Outdoors has grown into a national organization with new leadership and over 200 volunteers across some 30 locations, offering outings to more than 34,000 participants.

Sanos y Seguros officially kicked off in June with the first of three volunteer-led outings to Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area in Fremont, one of the Park District's most popular swimming areas. Quarry Lakes is also a favorite family-friendly destination for picnicking, boating, fishing, hiking, biking or simply relaxing in one of the shade pavilions.

Supporting Water Safety and Recreation

"We bring our expertise of how to create a welcoming environment and how to invite Latino community members so our community knows where and how to recreate safely in the parks," say Vanessa Herrera, development manager at Latino Outdoors. "People can have perceived barriers to enjoying the parks—[they can be] challenges due to transportation, finances or language, or even what we call outdoor know-how. Many

people don't know how to swim, think they are better swimmers than they are or don't know the safe places to go swimming. And sometimes there's the misperception that park rangers are police officers, and we want people to understand the difference. So we really work to lower those barriers."

Among the water safety tips that the program aims to underscore are when and how to use a life jacket, the importance of swimming at sites with on-duty lifeguards, avoidance of alcohol, and proper supervision of children. Children 12 years old and under are not permitted in the Park District's swimming areas unless accompanied by a supervising individual 16 years old or older. The Park District can also provide information on swimming lessons for those who could benefit from them.

"With the *Sanos y Seguros* program, as with many other programs we offer, we try to answer three questions: What is it? How do I get there? What do I do once I am there?" González says. "We want people to know the answers to those questions and have cultural affirmations through interactions with a trusted community partner like Latino Outdoors. And if we

can help people understand how to safely enjoy the parks, they will feel more included and be more inclined to come back time and again."

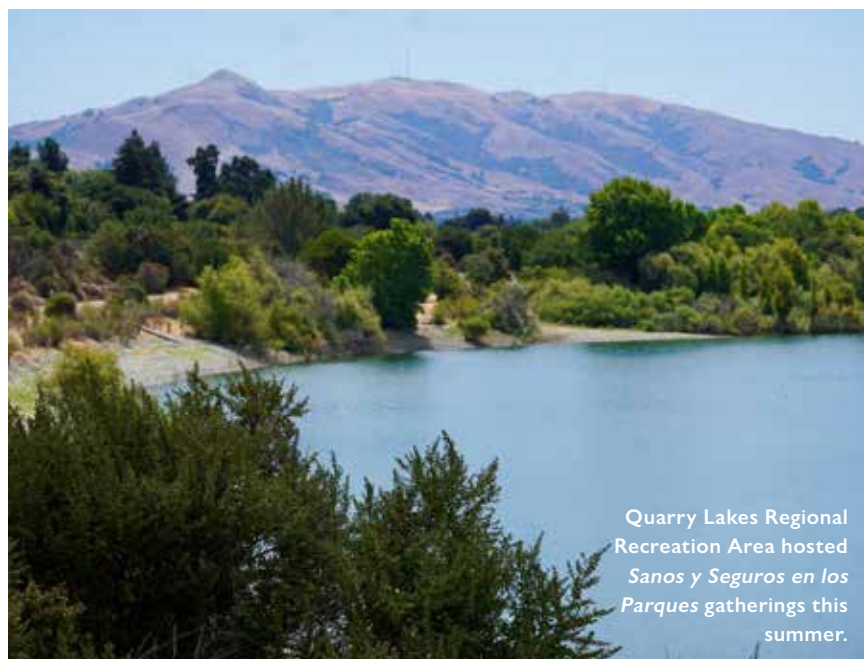
In fact, Herrera notes that some 80% of respondents to Latino Outdoors' post-outing surveys indicate that they want to return and spend more time in the parks. And it is just this kind of regular public engagement that the Park District and its partners hope to achieve and reinforce.

"When we encourage community members to support and care for the parks, they begin to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for them," González says. "We want them to be the champions and stewards of these beautiful natural environments, so that the parks are here for the next generation."

➤ Scan the QR code below or visit RegionalParksFoundation.org to learn more about the impact of



the Regional Parks Foundation and how you can support community programs in the East Bay.



Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area hosted *Sanos y Seguros en los Parques* gatherings this summer.

LISTENING TO OUR MEMBERS

Regional Parks Foundation Members share their appreciation of local green spaces

Last October, the Regional Parks Foundation partnered with strategic communications agency BrowneMusser to conduct an in-depth member survey to better inform the Foundation's future planning and growth of the membership program.

The survey had a high level of member participation and revealed insights about demographics, communications, program satisfaction, visitor engagement, equity and park usage, among other topics.

"The Foundation wanted to understand how people are finding value in their membership and also identify opportunities to enhance the program in alignment with what members find important," says Jason Wertheimer, director of marketing operations and customer experience at BrowneMusser. "It's not just about parking; people genuinely want to support their parks, and they want to donate to things that are aligned with their values. It's noteworthy that the Foundation cares about what its members want

out of the program—not all organizations take that approach."

The online survey was developed using stakeholder interviews with members, the Foundation team, and East Bay Regional Park District staff and leaders. "We asked people what would help them do their jobs better or improve the park experience. We worked really hard to develop the survey. Respondents were willing to spend a lot of time with it, which also speaks to their commitment," adds Wertheimer.

One of the bigger takeaways from the survey is the passion that members have for their green spaces. "People join to give back to the Regional Parks; 80% of the respondents want to protect and preserve," says Wertheimer. "Health and wellness is another tangible benefit. People view visiting the parks as part of being healthy, and members find a lot of value in that."

Here, three members discuss their love of the parks and why it is important for them to be part of the membership program.

Trek Star: Diana Larson

➤ At 19,341 feet, Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest point in Africa. A trek there is no easy feat, but when Oakland resident and longtime Regional Parks Foundation Member Diana Larson was prepping for a recent excursion to the mountain in northeastern Tanzania, she and her hiking group trained in the East Bay Regional Parks.

"We hiked Murietta Falls, which is probably one of the hardest hikes you can do in the Bay Area," says Larson of the trail that can be accessed from Del Valle Regional Park. "The diversity of the parks here is amazing."

Larson has been a consistent Foundation Member for more than 15 years, initially joining when she and her husband bought a home in the Oakland hills (she now has a Senior Special Access membership). "We were avid mountain bikers and hikers, so we wanted to be near open spaces and places where we spent most of our time," says Larson, who worked at Chevron before her retirement. The company had offered a matching program for donations to nonprofits, and Larson was moved to contribute to the East Bay Regional Park District. "I continue to give because the parks are a big part of my life," she adds.

Her top parks include Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park and Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve in the early spring for the wildflowers. Larson's hiking group meets locally twice a week and loves finding new hikes with the aid of the Trails Challenge (Larson estimates they have hiked more than 300 trails in the Park District). The group also takes hiking trips across the United States and to locations as far flung as Patagonia, Australia, Iceland and New Zealand.

"The Park District is such a gem. I'm very grateful that we have it and this open space to enjoy nature and time with others," says Larson. "I will forever be a contributor to East Bay Regional Parks."



Diana Larson has hiked more than 300 Park District trails.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

The Regional Parks Foundation Membership program has multiple levels, including Regular (Individual, Family and Angler), Special Access (with reduced pricing for military service members, seniors 62 years and older, full-time students, and disabled persons) and Donor Circle.

Primary benefits include:

- Unlimited day-use parking
- Camping discounts
- Horse/boat trailer permit
- Free swimming during the swim season
- Free admission to Ardenwood Historic Farm on non-event days
- Subscriptions to *Regional in Nature Activity Guide* and *Compass*



➤ Find out more information by scanning the QR code or visiting regionalparksfoundation.org/join/benefits.

Supporting Access to Nature: Jenny Mack

➤ Pleasanton's Jenny Mack initially became a member 13 years ago when she was a mom to young children looking for outdoor experiences. "We took lots of trips to Ardenwood Historic Farm to see the monarch butterflies," says Mack, who works in communications for a climate-focused philanthropy and also served on the Foundation board of directors from 2012 to 2018. "More than that, I appreciated the chance to show my support for something I care about: providing access to nature for people of all ages and all walks of life. Being a member of the Regional Parks Foundation makes that possible."

Mack is a Donor Circle member and has taken advantage of corporate matching programs throughout her career. She calls out values she shares with the Foundation, including environmental stewardship and youth development, as well as the tremendous mental health benefits of spending time in nature.

"During the pandemic, so many of us were feeling trapped indoors or cut off from family and friends," she recalls. "Being able to get outdoors and explore the East Bay parks was such a help. At one point it felt like my family and I were hiking in the parks every week, so even though it was a challenging time, I have wonderful memories of discovering new parks."

Her top destinations include Pleasanton Ridge and Coyote Hills Regional Parks. She and her husband also enjoy kayaking at Lake Chabot and Lake Del Valle. "My absolute favorite is [Reinhardt] Redwood Regional Park, especially when the ladybugs are there or when it is raining. I love a good walk under the trees in the rain," she says. "We are so lucky to live here and have access to such an incredible variety of park spaces. Being a member of the Foundation allows us to experience them for ourselves and help facilitate access for others."



Jenny Mack (right) and her husband kayaking at Big Break Regional Shoreline.



Daniela Ogden is an avid birder.

A Long History With the Parks: Daniela Ogden

➤ Daniela Ogden's love of the parks goes back to her teen years growing up in Oakland and Piedmont. "As soon as I got my driver's license, I would drive up into the hills and go hiking with my dog," she says.

Ogden even got married in the Madrone grove at Roberts Regional Recreation Area. "Being in the redwoods felt so special," she recalls. "It was the perfect location."

An Oakland resident, Ogden has shared a family membership with her husband for around five years, and in addition to hiking, the pair also go bird-watching throughout the Park District. She is currently the vice president of development and communications at a nonprofit, but she used to work for the National Audubon Society and has been a birder for more than 10 years.

Ogden appreciates the accessibility of the parks near the urban core of Oakland and is supportive of the Foundation's overall mission. "I believe in giving back and want to take care of the places where I find so much solace," she says. "The Park District does important programming with folks of all different means. The Regional Parks help define the Bay Area."



A POWERFUL COLLABORATION

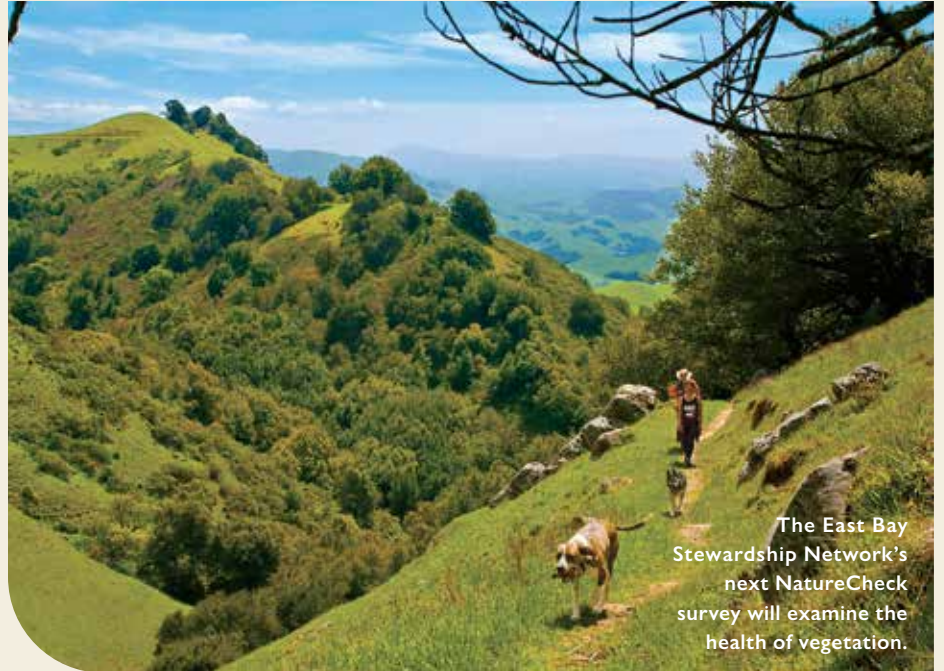
The East Bay Stewardship Network is a multiagency partnership that is working to improve the ecological health of the region

Inspired in part by the One Tam partnership in Marin County, five agencies joined forces in 2018 to form the East Bay Stewardship Network (EBSN). The collaborators—the East Bay Regional Park District, California State Parks, Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission—worked together to carry out NatureCheck, a comprehensive assessment of the state of native wildlife in Alameda and Contra Costa counties that was released in April 2022.

Strength in Numbers

Sharing data and resources for the purpose of improving the ecological health of the land each agency manages proved so valuable that the network has grown to include many more resource conservation groups both large and small. “The NatureCheck exercise opened the gate, showing how helpful it is to coordinate between agencies,” says Lauren Bernstein, executive director of the Regional Parks Foundation.

Sharon Farrell, a San Francisco-based environmental consultant who advises the EBSN, has helped the network evolve into a full-fledged entity. “They had all the seeds,” she says. “They were already working in partnership to achieve more than they could individually.” Farrell helped the



The East Bay Stewardship Network's next NatureCheck survey will examine the health of vegetation.

group realize that it needs a coordinator, a position that will be filled soon. She also facilitated bringing in John Muir Land Trust as the group's fiscal sponsor.

When it comes to applying for grants, working across districts is a plus, explains Bernstein. “Funders want to see agencies cooperating,” she says. “A mountain lion doesn't know it's crossing from Mount Diablo into East Bay Regional Park District land.” Likewise, she points out, wildfires don't respect agency boundaries.

Looking Ahead

A new interactive website funded by the Foundation should be up and running early next year, making the copious NatureCheck data more accessible to the public. And the next NatureCheck survey will incorporate an assessment of vegetation health—some studies are already underway—in addition to animal health. “To do that, we've created a fine-scale vegetation map for Alameda and Contra Costa. This was a big accomplishment,” says Dina Robertson, wildland vegetation program manager with the Park District and member of the EBSN steering committee.

The network's mission of stewardship is very much in sync with an evolving approach to conservation. “There is a land stewardship movement afoot,” says Robertson. “In the past the thinking was, you acquire the land, then it's protected. Now there's lots of conversation about how to safeguard that land. We have an opportunity to shift the focus.”

FROM TOP: GREG GREJAMERI, EBRPD



Representatives of EBSN member organizations convene at a meeting at Big Break Regional Shoreline in July.



Fuels management and partnerships with local fire agencies will help protect the Park District in the face of more intense and unpredictable wildfires.

A Road Map for the Future

East Bay Regional Park District General Manager Sabrina Landreth on the development of the next District Plan

The East Bay Regional Park District is currently developing a new District Plan to inform major decisions for the agency and Regional Parks over the coming decades. The process of creating the plan involves extensive research, analysis and public input. It's been over a decade since the Park District's last comprehensive assessment. General Manager Sabrina Landreth shares details about how this new effort will address modern challenges and equip the agency to best serve the public for decades to come.

What drove the idea to establish the next District Plan now?

The East Bay has experienced significant change over the past decade—from growing awareness of climate change to surging park use during the pandemic and a more diverse population of park users. The Park District celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2024. So, as we look ahead to our next

century of service, now is the right time to take a fresh look at our long-term goals and strategies.

What is the overarching goal for the plan?

The District Plan is a big-picture guide for the future. It will lay out broad goals and priorities to help shape what we focus on in the years ahead. This plan is not a list of specific projects or detailed action items. Instead, it's meant to set a clear direction and shared vision, so that future decisions—like which programs to expand, where to invest existing resources and how to allocate new revenue sources—can be made with a strong foundation and community input in mind.

What are the biggest issues facing the Park District in the coming years?

The Park District is committed to maintaining strong environmental stewardship.

We manage over 126,000 acres of open space, and caring for these lands—protecting biodiversity, restoring habitats and managing natural resources—requires sustained effort. We aim to develop strategies that balance a desire for access to open space with the need to preserve and restore natural habitats. These two concepts are not mutually exclusive.

Wildfire prevention is a particularly urgent concern. The changing climate has increased the frequency, intensity and unpredictability of wildfires across California. The Park District must continue investing in fuels management. We have established mutual aid agreements with CAL FIRE and other local fire agencies, including those from Alameda and Contra Costa counties, to ensure a quick response and to bolster available resources to effectively suppress wildfires.

At the same time, responding to climate change more broadly is essential. Rising

“[The Park District manages] over 126,000 acres of open space, and caring for these lands—protecting biodiversity, restoring habitats and managing natural resources—requires sustained effort.”

—SABRINA LANDRETH, GENERAL MANAGER, EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT



temperatures, shifting ecosystems, drought and extreme weather events all affect park operations, wildlife and the visitor experience. The Park District is working to build resilience into its infrastructure, planning and land management practices while also providing spaces for the public to find relief from the effects of climate change.

Another big priority is increasing accessibility for current and future park users and underserved residents. As the East Bay grows more diverse, the Park District must ensure that all communities feel welcome, safe, and supported in accessing parks and programs. This includes identifying and addressing barriers and expanding outreach efforts to engage underserved populations.

Finally, a significant challenge we face is having enough resources in hand to not

only keep up with the current demands of maintaining and investing in high-quality parks and programs, but to expand our offerings. The Park District needs to increase its revenue to respond to growing demands.

The last District Plan was released in 2013. How well did the Park District adhere to the ideas put forth at that time?

The last plan was developed following the 2008 passage of Measure WW, a bond measure that funded land acquisitions and capital projects. The plan laid out an ambitious vision for new parks, acquisitions and trails. Since that plan was adopted, the Park District has acquired over 13,000 acres that have resulted in new parks (the

Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline and Thurgood Marshall Regional Park—Home of the Port Chicago 50), significantly increased trails for all (closing gaps in the [San Francisco] Bay Trail along the Richmond shoreline and expanding multiuse trail access at Briones Regional Park), and implemented several new capital projects to increase access (the Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay, the McCosker Creek restoration at Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve and the renovation of Roberts Pool at Roberts Regional Recreation Area). We have many other projects working their way to completion.

Why is it important to have public input on the District Plan?

Community feedback helps the Park District understand what matters most to park users—whether that's protecting natural areas, improving access, supporting youth programs or preparing for climate impacts. Public input ensures the plan is grounded in real experiences and guides decisions that benefit all communities, now and in the future.

What can you share about the timeline for the plan process, results and start of implementation?

Gathering community input began on Earth Day 2025 and will continue throughout the year. In 2026, we will synthesize all we've learned into a forward-looking, actionable District Plan ready for public feedback before submission to the board. Implementation will kick off in 2027 and involve establishing work groups to address priorities identified in the plan.

➤ Visit ebparks.org/district-plan or scan here for the most current information about the plan process and opportunities for public engagement.



Among the potential effects of climate change are rising sea levels that may impact shoreline parks.



Public input will inform future Park District priorities and projects.



More Than Just a Walk in the Park

The annual Trails Challenge has inspired participants to exercise and get out in the Regional Parks for 32 years

Since it launched in 1993 as a partnership between the East Bay Regional Park District, the Regional Parks Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, the Trails Challenge has encouraged tens of thousands of East Bay residents to explore more of their parks. Now, 32 years later, the annual program continues to expand, welcoming new participants to connect with nature—and each other.

The free program provides a guide of 20 trails, handpicked by Park District staff, at various levels of difficulty and with options for all abilities. Guidebooks, including a Spanish-language version, are available at Park District visitor centers at the beginning of the year and via download year-round at ebparks.org/trails-challenge. Users can also see the selected routes on the AllTrails hiking app or website. A link to the AllTrails list is also found at ebparks.org/trails-challenge.

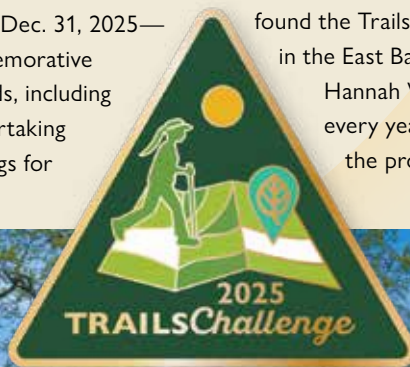
Participants who log a total of 26.2 miles or five trails by Dec. 31, 2025—biking, hiking and horseback riding all count—earn a commemorative pin. This year saw the introduction of new prizes and awards, including a free one-month membership to AllTrails for anyone undertaking the Challenge. Finishers are also entered in monthly drawings for

AllTrails gear, a commemorative bandana or a one-year membership to the Foundation. Additionally, there are now age-specific prize patches for kid, tween, teen and senior finishers, along with All-20 Club patches for people who undertake all of the year's trail options. Social media users who tag their selfie posts with #TrailsChallengeEBRPD are entered into prize drawings as well.

Sylvana Casuga concluded the Trails Challenge in March, earning a finisher pin, and received a pair of AllTrails socks in the February prize drawing. This was her second year taking the Challenge but her first time doing all 20 trails. "I loved winning a prize! It was a fun little push to complete the Trails Challenge," says Casuga. "I have a group of friends that meet up for hikes; everyone is taking part in the Trails Challenge this year."

Casuga counts Coyote Hills Regional Park as her favorite park and while she says she is glad she finished the Trails Challenge early, she still plans to keep hiking. "I found the Trails Challenge helped me explore more trails in the East Bay that I never knew about," she adds.

Hannah Weil has undertaken the Trails Challenge every year since 2021 and also appreciates how the program has exposed her to new parks.



The 2025 Trails Challenge guide includes a hike at Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve. Inset: Regional Parks Ambassador Diane Petersen is a longtime Trails Challenge participant.



Sylvana Casuga won a prize drawing and earned a finisher pin.

“I have a group of friends that meet up for hikes; everyone is taking part in the Trails Challenge this year.”

—SYLVANA CASUGA

“We did the Morgan Territory [Regional Preserve] hike in April, and it was absolutely gorgeous,” says Weil. “We’ve been doing the Trails Challenge long enough that we’ve seen a couple of repeat hikes or new routes in parks we’ve been to before, and it’s been nice to see what’s changed.”

She won a pair of hiking socks in a prize drawing, but “the real prize we’re excited about this year is the patch for completing all hikes in the challenge,” adds Weil. “In previous years, we’ve joked about going for the blackout but never achieved it; that patch definitely lit a fire under us to get it done.”

Reducing Barriers

In addition to inviting participants to exercise, enjoy spectacular views and find new recreation destinations, the Trails Challenge also promotes improved access to the Regional Parks.

“The Trails Challenge is such a great program. The guide is a really important resource that tells users so much about park trails, including the distance, elevation and accessibility,” says Lauren Bernstein, executive director of the Regional Parks Foundation. “It makes it a lot easier to come to the parks and know if a walk is appropriate for everyone in your group; if you are bringing a stroller or an older family member, you can still be outdoors together. The guide also shows the variety of trails all over the Park District and encourages exploration of new places.”

Expanded outreach and increased public awareness brought many new participants to the Trails Challenge in 2025, due in great part to longtime sponsor Kaiser Permanente. “We couldn’t do this without their support,” says Bernstein. “This is the first year we have Spanish-translation printed guidebooks, thanks to Kaiser. We want the Latino community, and all diverse communities in the East Bay, to feel welcome in the parks.”

The Park District also has drop-in hosted hikes along Trails Challenge routes at various parks throughout the year. Check the event calendar at ebparks.org for upcoming happenings.



Pop-ups at various parks provide information about the Trails Challenge during the year.

New Discoveries

Diane Petersen has been participating in Trails Challenges for close to 20 years and hikes in the parks every day. The Trails Challenge guide still helps her make special discoveries, she says, such as the eight-mile hike at Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area.

“What a treasure that is: the water, the views of Mission Peak, the shade pavilions, a native plant garden and the rare fruit tree orchard,” says Petersen. “If it weren’t for the Trails Challenge, I wouldn’t have discovered Quarry Lakes this year, which was such a gift.”

Petersen has been a Regional Parks Ambassador since 2018 and loves collecting Trails Challenge T-shirts and pins, as well as encouraging others to take part in the program. “The T-shirts are real conversation starters,” she says. Petersen is also thrilled with the 2025 additions, including pop-up events where ambassadors set up tables at locations such as Temescal Regional Recreation Area to share information about the Trails Challenge and the parks.

“It was really nice talking to people and getting them excited about trying new parks,” recalls Petersen. “I love just talking about the trails and asking, ‘What do you want to do?’—because there’s something for everyone.”



► Download the Trails Challenge guidebook and fill out the Trails Challenge log form at ebparks.org/trails-challenge.

(1) The Regional Parks Foundation participated in the May TOGETHER Bay Area Conference in San Francisco. This regional coalition of organizations works together on addressing climate issues, social equity, healthy lands and communities. The Foundation is proud to support and help bring these goals to life through community investment, strategic partnerships and funding for future park projects.



Natural Connections

Community events bring park lovers and local leaders together in support of regional green spaces



(2) The East Bay Regional Park District took part in this year's City Nature Challenge by hosting events to promote the use of community science tools like iNaturalist. City Nature Challenge has grown into a global event that takes place each April, encouraging community members to collaborate and share nature observations. Between April 25 and 28, 13,346 nature observations were collected in the Regional Parks by 859 observers who recorded 2,727 species. **(3)** On August 1, the Park District joined with elected officials and community leaders to break ground on the Point Molate Bay Trail Extension Project in Richmond. **(4)** The Foundation supports community events throughout the year, including National Night Out on August 5 at Lake Chabot. The family-friendly event promotes unity, safety and a sense of belonging and gives guests the opportunity to meet the Park District's public safety officers, firefighters, lifeguards and park rangers. **(5)** On June 23, the Park District celebrated the expansion of the trail network at Sycamore Valley Open Space Regional Preserve in Danville, including 3.5 miles of new trails. The trails are part of the 381-acre Magee Preserve property, which was protected permanently by Danville voters in March 2020 through the passage of Measure Y. Save Mount Diablo was a longtime advocate for preserving the land and a major proponent of the ballot measure.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Volunteer events by local corporations benefit the parks and build relationships

At their best, corporate volunteer efforts are opportunities for team building while also supporting initiatives that align with the company's ethos. That is the case with Lucid Motors, a maker of award-winning advanced electric vehicles who partnered with the East Bay Regional Park District and Regional Parks Foundation for an Earth Day cleanup at Coyote Hills Regional Park in April.

"Coyote Hills is right in our backyard, just a few miles from our headquarters in Newark, so it was great to make a difference within our community," says Kip Molchan, manager, fleet health management and remote diagnostics at Lucid Motors. "The Foundation was also very flexible and made the entire effort very easy. We will continue to partner with them on future volunteer events."

This is the second year that a team from Lucid volunteered in the parks, with a group of more than 15 coworkers and some family members spending hours removing invasive species at a busy trailhead under the guidance of Park District staff.

"We could see the improvement we made in the past year. When you can see that tangible change in front of you, it makes it easy to want to get out there and volunteer," says Molchan. "It was also a chance to network and meet coworkers. We built a lot of connections and saw a lot of passion from the like-minded people

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation participants perform invasive species removal at a volunteer event.



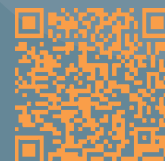
who were there. At Lucid, sustainability is not just about the product at the end of the day; it is something we incorporate in every aspect of our lives."

Connection—with colleagues and the natural world—is also a priority for park volunteers at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. The foundation was established 25 years ago to support the environment, scientific discovery and the future of the Bay Area. In recognition of its founders' January birthdays, the nonprofit engages in service events during the first quarter of the year, including invasive species removal in the parks.

"You're out in nature and can see the impact of your efforts while also getting to work side by side with colleagues," says Nav Arora, director of HR and head of people at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. "It's energizing for us, knowing that we are making a difference. It's one of the events people look forward to, connecting to our founders while also trying to do good."

Adds Holly Potter, Regional Parks Foundation board president and chief communications officer at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, "Ultimately, our mission has us advancing the special character of the Bay Area. Supporting the local parks is about honoring Gordon and Betty's legacy, so this was a good time to come together and celebrate that legacy in the region."

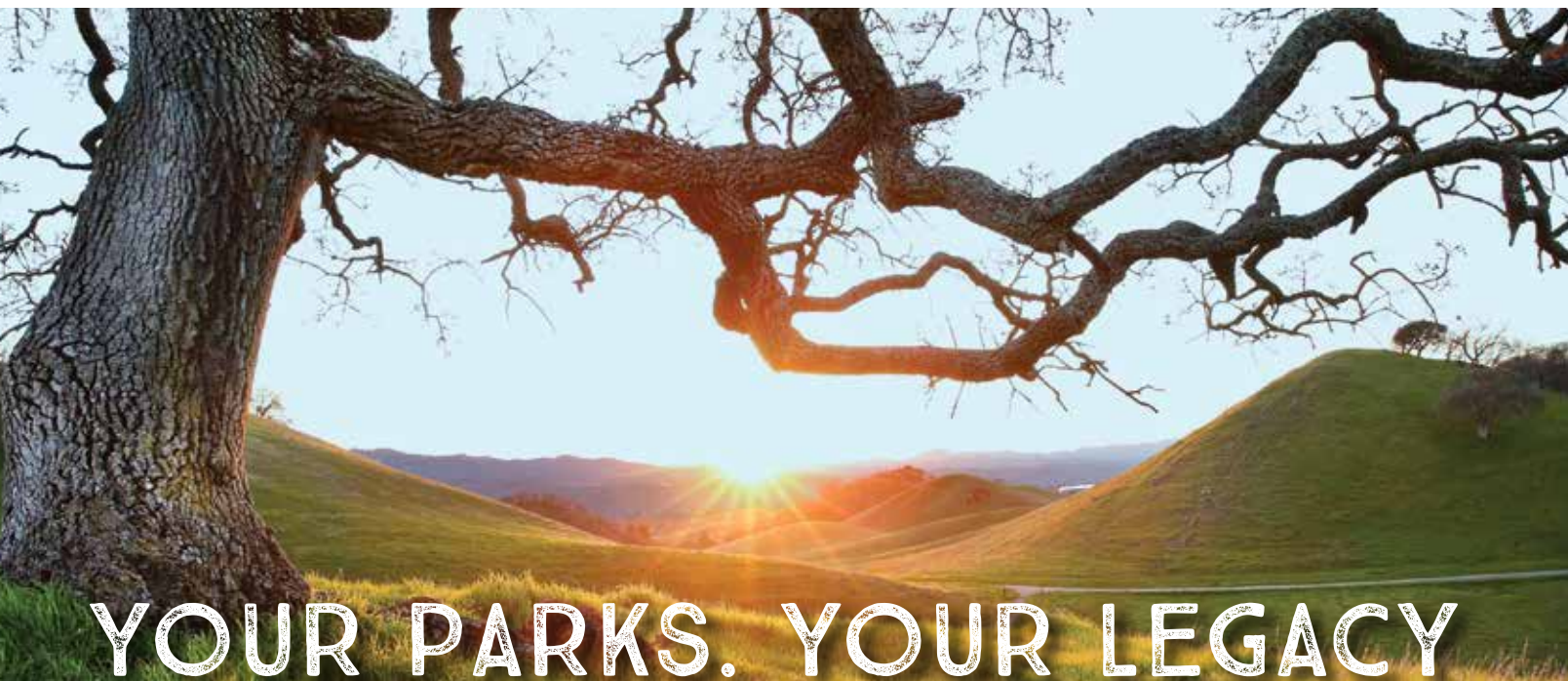
A Lucid Motors team takes part in a cleanup at Coyote Hills Regional Park.



➤ Visit regionalparksfoundation.org/support/corporate-giving to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

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