

Healthy Parks Healthy People

COMPASS

SUMMER 2023



A CALL TO ACTION

THE PARK DISTRICT IS HELPING LEAD A BOLD INITIATIVE
TO PROTECT CALIFORNIA'S LANDS AND WATERS



IN THIS ISSUE: TRAILS CHALLENGE TALES P. 3 | SUPPORTING KIDS IN NATURE P. 12 | WINTER STORM CLEANUPS P. 16



CONSERVING FOR THE FUTURE



California became the first state in the country to commit to conserving 30 percent of its land and waters by 2030 with the governor's recent signing of the Nature-Based Solutions executive order. The initiative "seeks to protect and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change." The Park District

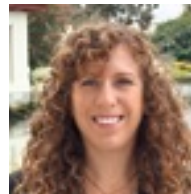
is helping advance that conservation goal with a full commitment from General Manager Sabrina Landreth and expertise from Deputy General Manager Dr. Ana M. Alvarez, who serves as a key member of the 30x30 Partnership Coordinating Committee. Read more about these crucial conservation efforts on page 6.

As the Regional Parks Foundation builds support for the Park District's many programs and its focus on protecting our environment, I am pleased to share exciting news. After a nationwide search, the Foundation welcomes a new executive director, Lauren Bernstein. Lauren is an accomplished nonprofit professional with diversified experience in management, strategy and fundraising. She has served in management roles and raised millions of dollars across an array of public sector areas. Previously, Lauren also served as director of development at Glide Foundation in San Francisco where she successfully led a team and raised critical funds to support programs for unhoused individuals and families. An East Bay resident, she can be found exploring the regional parks in her spare time. We look forward to her leadership in this pivotal role to oversee the Regional Parks Foundation's mission and purpose.

We hope you will continue to explore your parks and support us! Visit us at www.RegionalParksFoundation.org.

Susan Shi

Assistant General Manager, Public Affairs
East Bay Regional Park District



Lauren Bernstein

Executive Director
Regional Parks Foundation

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**REGIONAL PARKS
Foundation**

Supporting East Bay Regional Parks

DID YOU KNOW

Fun facts about the East
Bay Regional Park District



13

The number of swim facilities
(6 open-water lakefront beaches,
3 lagoons, 2 pools and 2 bay
beaches)



194,684

The number of attendees
at swim facilities in 2022
(expect an increase
in 2023!)



9,473

The number of life jackets
loaned to swimmers in 2022



Bjorn Schelander enjoys seeing a variety of wildlife during the Trails Challenge.



TRAILS TALES

Members reflect on their Trails Challenge experiences in honor of the program's 30-year anniversary

When it comes to the annual Trails Challenge—a self-guided hiking/biking program sponsored by the Regional Parks Foundation, the Park District and Kaiser Permanente—the numbers tell an impressive story:

- 10,000+** participants every year
- 20 trails** highlighted annually, from easy to challenging
- 26.2 miles**, or five of the trails listed in the guide for that year, needed to complete the challenge
- \$0** to participate
- 30 years** since the Trails Challenge was first introduced

In celebration of this anniversary, two enthusiastic Trails Challenge participants share their history with the popular program.

Peace of Mind

Bjorn Schelander of Pleasanton has been taking the Trails Challenge since 2013, logging as many as 260 miles one year.



Carolyn Mar has participated in every Trails Challenge since it began 30 years ago.

He counts a two-day hike from Mission Peak Regional Preserve to Del Valle Regional Park as one of his most memorable treks.

"I love the feeling of calmness that comes from being immersed in nature. I also really appreciate the variety of landscapes that are available in the East Bay Regional Park system," he says. "The Trails Challenge is also a great motivator to explore parks that we may not have been to before."

Dog Days

Fremont's Carolyn Mar signed up for the very first Trails Challenge with her dog Barney and has been doing it ever since (most recently with her dogs Toby and Benny). The Park District even dedicated the 2007 Trails Challenge to Barney in memory of his passing that year—recognizing him as one of the first official canine Challenge participants. "I was so touched and honored," Mar says.

She loves spotting ladybugs and eagles, as well as discovering new parks during the Challenge.

"The best part is to be with friends, family, and, of course, having your canine companion loping along beside you," she says. "Dogs are wonderful hiking companions. They have pointed out a lot of things we would have normally missed!"

► For more information or to take the Trails Challenge, visit ebparks.org/tc.



BAY WATCH

A Foundation grant helps Crab Cove visitors get their hands dirty while exploring the mudflats

Birds soar high overhead and waves crash on the rocky shores at Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach's Crab Cove in Alameda, but even more natural treasures can be found beneath your feet. The mudflats at California's first estuarine marine reserve are home to ghost shrimp, little neck clams and scale worms, among other creatures.

"Crab Cove is a marine protected area that has a special benefit to the ecosystem," says Felicia Walker, supervising naturalist at the Doug Siden Visitor Center at Crab Cove. "The mudflats provide rich nutrients to a variety of wildlife and are a great place for nurseries. This is a living system that people can learn about and help open up their world."

Exploring the mudflats, however, is, well, muddy business—one that is ideally done with proper gear. Now, school and community groups can participate in naturalist-led programming utilizing boots, waders, buckets and other equipment on loan from the visitor center thanks to a grant from the Regional Parks Foundation. Additionally, the funding will go toward a storage shed to house the equipment, a boot-washing station and even school transportation fees for field trips to Crab Cove. The Park

District's Mobile Education Unit will also be able to use the gear for its youth programs in the bay.

Along with taking part in a wealth of interpretive offerings at the Doug Siden Visitor Center—such as low-tide walks and a seine netting program where older kids help identify and catalog species in the San Francisco Bay—visitors can do walk-in beach cleanups or join organized restoration and stewardship projects.

"We are offering these amazing opportunities and want to make sure that everyone can participate. This grant helps us give access to everyone without asking them to provide their own materials or personal protective gear," says Walker.

Increasing understanding of the environmental importance of the bay, as well as the interdependence of marine and shore life, is an integral component of interpretive programming at Crab Cove and one that Walker hopes that visitors take to heart.

"We want people to know about these delicate systems and their place within them," says Walker. "We want to help empower people to make decisions that can be really helpful to wildlands and wildlife in their area."

➤ **For more information on the Doug Siden Visitor Center, check out ebparks.org/parks/visitor-centers/crab-cove.**



Crab Cove and the Doug Siden Visitor Center at Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach offer many opportunities to learn about the San Francisco Bay.



OF BEES AND BUTTERFLIES

Two new programs help young people learn about the power of pollinators



Building interpretive programming that focuses on the relationship between humans and nature is part of the Park District's overarching vision. That connection is explored with a variety of projects and programs geared toward learners of all ages.

Two new Foundation-supported efforts highlight small but mighty contributors to our ecosystem: pollinators.

The **Pollinator Ally** program at Ardenwood Historic Park in Fremont officially launched this past spring after a successful pilot the previous year. A small cohort of neighboring high school students worked with Ardenwood naturalists to grow a kitchen garden plot (using compost along with other climate-friendly methods) and explored the role of pollinators in the food system and how people can support them. The students surveyed the pollinators in the garden, identifying the various families and using the data to help inform management at the farm. At the conclusion of the 10-week program, participants designed and delivered educational presentations about the importance of pollinators.

"We look at the interconnected cycle of people helping pollinators, which then pollinate the food that goes back to the people," says Sonja Gomez, supervising naturalist at Ardenwood.

The program was funded by an \$82,124 Cargill Salt grant, providing a stipend for participants and a new greenhouse at Ardenwood where the young people can start their crops.

"People have become so far removed from the sources of their food. One of the big objectives for me was looking at healthy communities, healthy people and healthy food," says Gomez. "We help the students see where food comes from and empower them to grow food themselves."

Another new project will take place this fall at nearby Coyote Hills Regional Park—a monarch habitat restoration in partnership

with youth development nonprofit Civicorps. **Monarch Occupation Restoration Education (MORE)** provides an introduction to stewardship, ecological knowledge and land management, as well as shares prospective career pathways with Civicorps members.

"We have worked with Civicorps in the past and they are a fantastic partner," says Chris Sulots, supervising naturalist at Coyote Hills. "We wanted to give back and provide some materials that would help their corps members function a little better and, at the same time, hopefully learn from us. There isn't always a lot of time for education because they are digging or watering or putting in plants."

Coyote Hills is home to an overwintering spot for monarch butterflies, and the hope is that improving the habitat during this one-day event will help their declining numbers.

"We want to showcase this project but also emphasize the importance of taking care of the land," says Sulots. "I am so grateful that these types of opportunities are available thanks to the Regional Parks Foundation."



From top: A Pollinator Ally garden provides fresh ingredients for edible treats; participants explore the rich soil.

FINDING CLIMATE- SMART SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

Coyote Hills Regional Park

**The Park District is helping lead the charge on
California's audacious initiative to conserve
30 percent of the state's lands and waters by 2030**





From left: A native plant habit at Ardenwood Historic Farm provides nectar sources for overwintering monarch butterflies; sandpipers take flight at Hayward Regional Shoreline.

THE STATE'S 30X30 CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

is an unprecedented call to action to protect what remains of California's natural world, including its rich biodiversity, critical life-supporting ecological systems and iconic landscapes. The effort will also ensure our resiliency amid a changing climate, remove barriers to public access, and help resolve issues of climate equity and environmental justice. Part of a movement to conserve natural areas across the globe, the initiative pledges to protect 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030.

This move to build resilience to the climate crisis through climate-smart land management is no small task, but the Park District has been a leader in this arena since its establishment in 1934. "The Park District has spent the last 90 years preserving and protecting land and habitat," says General Manager Sabrina Landreth. "Bold action under the 30x30 framework is critical for effective nature-based solutions to take hold right now."

Deputy General Manager Dr. Ana M. Alvarez is on the California 30x30 Partnership Coordinating Committee and echoes Landreth's sense of urgency. "This is a pivotal moment for the Park District, our region and communities across the state of California," says Dr. Alvarez. "Accelerating the pace and scale of climate-smart conservation will amplify impact at the regional level, which is key to achieving the ambitious 30x30 goals." Dr. Alvarez is a longtime champion for climate-smart policy

and community engagement, having focused on climate change adaptation strategies in San Francisco's parks and open spaces for her doctoral dissertation.

CONSERVE AND RESTORE

Even before a presidential executive order was signed to tackle the climate crisis in 2021, California's own initiative was underway. In 2020, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order detailing the state's climate change goals and advancing nature-based solutions to build climate resiliency and mitigate carbon emissions. The subsequent *Pathways to 30x30 California* report, a road map for the initiative put together by the California Natural Resources Agency, identified significant public resources in state funding to conserve and restore biodiversity and improve equitable access to nature.

“Everything we do here at the Park District speaks to 30x30,” says Dr. Alvarez. “That’s why the East Bay Regional Park District was recognized last year by Secretary Wade Crowfoot of the California Natural Resources Agency as a model to follow in reaching the 30x30 goals.”

The *Pathways to 30x30 Annual Progress Report* was released in May of this year, stating that 24.4 percent of the state’s lands and 16.2 percent of its coastal waters are already considered conserved as defined by the initiative (namely, areas that are permanently protected and managed to sustain functional ecosystems); 42 percent of Park District parklands, shorelines and preserves are similarly described. Still, there’s much work to be done. California aims to protect a further 6 million acres of land and half a million acres of coastal waters in just seven years.

“The Park District is asking policymakers to step up to the challenges we face and transform landmark climate laws into bold climate action through nature-based solutions,” says Landreth.

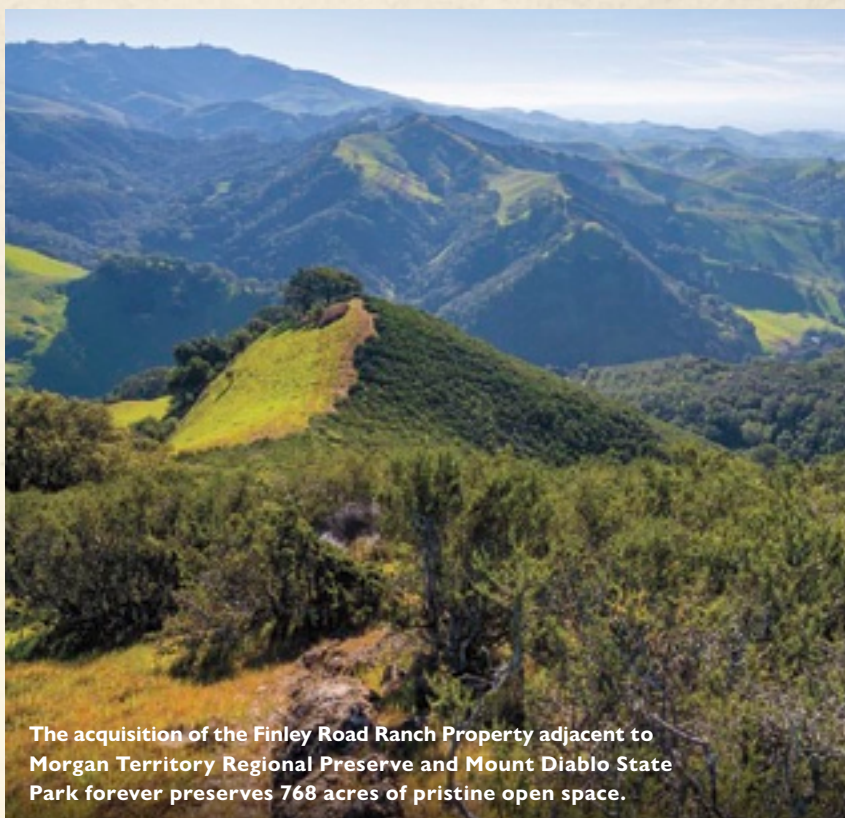
One recent land acquisition that nudges the Park District closer to the 30x30 target is the Finley Road Ranch property. The 768-acre parcel of land in Contra Costa County was officially purchased for \$7 million on April 24, 2023, with the California State Coastal Conservancy as a funding partner. It is one of the biggest remaining intact but unprotected open spaces neighboring Mount Diablo, and it bridges the gap between the Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and Mount Diablo State Park.

“[The Finley Road Ranch property] protects a wildlife corridor by expanding contiguous open spaces that allow for the movement or flow of wildlife, plants and expansion of protected habitat that helps wildlife survive weather whiplash of extreme droughts and storms systems, while at the same time maintaining a carbon sink and continuing to capture carbon. Its acquisition also creates a covenant for future public access for a fast-growing population in our region,” says Dr. Alvarez.

Similarly noteworthy is conservation of the 2,500-acre Thurgood Marshall Regional Park—Home of the Port Chicago 50 in the Los Medanos Hills between Concord and Pittsburg. In partnership with the National Park Service, the Park District is transforming the former Concord Naval Weapons Station into a new park with a staging area south of Bailey Road that will include a visitor center and historical interpretive center.

A NEW MODEL OF CONSERVATION

But 30x30 is about more than protecting land and shorelines. Hailed as a new model of conservation, it uses nature-based solutions to fight climate change while also prioritizing equity, access to the outdoors and the protection of California’s



The acquisition of the Finley Road Ranch Property adjacent to Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and Mount Diablo State Park forever preserves 768 acres of pristine open space.



A fish ladder in Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park helps trout migrate up Redwood Creek from Upper San Leandro Reservoir.



Clockwise from top left: The rock formations of Mount Diablo's Castle Rock, accessed from Diablo Foothills Regional Park, are closed half the year to protect nesting peregrine falcons; Hayward Regional Shoreline's Tern Island is a habitat for the endangered California least tern; the Delta's white sturgeon is the largest freshwater fish in North America; Alameda Creek Overlook at Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve.

biodiversity. This model moves past the binary approach of protected versus developed land. It prioritizes the enhancement of life-supporting ecological systems, as well as meaningful engagement of communities that are currently and/or were disproportionately burdened by or less able to recover from adverse environmental impacts in the past. These may include communities and populations considered to be historically marginalized, including indigenous tribal groups that were displaced and continue to be culturally affiliated with these lands.

"The new model really speaks to the intersectionality of people and nature, environmental sciences and social sciences, nature-based solutions and life-supporting systems, climate equity, and environmental justice that are all equally critical," says Dr. Alvarez. "It's an environmental movement that puts forward transformative pathways to amplify and accelerate conservation impacts while creating equity. The Park District is protecting nature in the East Bay while prioritizing projects that meaningfully advance climate equity at the front end of a changing climate that's coming faster and more forcefully at us. It's all interconnected."

The restoration project at Brushy Peak Regional Preserve in Livermore exemplifies a partnership pathway, which is what 30x30 is all about. A collaboration with Point Blue Conservation Science's Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed Program (STRAW), this four-year pilot program trains local students in natural resources conservation while restoring native plant species, habitat function and resilience to climate change at two sites, a drainage and wetland area. The Brushy Peak undertaking is just a first step in a long journey to reconcile the natural systems and our relationship with the Ohlone peoples at this sacred site. The effort includes restoration of the riparian vegetation to sequester carbon and create a habitat refuge for wildlife.

DEALING WITH ONGOING FIRE DANGERS

A veritable jigsaw puzzle of microclimates and topographies, the East Bay is facing a double-edged sword when it comes to climate change—both fire and flood. With scorching summer temperatures and acres of drought-sickened trees, fuel vegetation management is at the top of the Park District's priority list. Even with the past winter's excessive rains, a year-round fire season is the "new normal" in California. In response, the Park District has developed a multipronged strategy to prevent catastrophic firestorms in the parklands.

Some of the major efforts include reducing the fuel load with cattle, goat and sheep grazing; thinning excessive growth and removing hazardous trees; monitoring fire weather conditions; and partnering with communities and local and state agencies.

"Public parklands face enormous challenges ahead, but with the environmental ethic and commitment of our staff, nature in the East Bay will remain sustainable for future generations," says Landreth.

"WE ARE ACCELERATING THE PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE WHILE CENTERING EQUITY AT THE FRONT END OF A CHANGING CLIMATE THAT'S COMING FASTER AND MORE FORCEFULLY AT US. IT'S ALL INTERCONNECTED."

—Dr. Ana M. Alvarez, Park District deputy general manager

REBUILDING HABITATS

The Park District manages 55 miles of shoreline that extend into the Carquinez Strait and the Delta. During king tides, surging water has already rushed into a parking lot at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland, and all areas along the San Francisco and San Pablo bays have a high propensity for flooding—threatening ecosystems, communities and local economies.

The Park District's first priority is to rebuild the marshes that once dominated the East Bay's natural shorelines. "Marshes are able to withstand the burden of the king tides," says Dr. Alvarez. "They slow down the rise of bay waters and prevent flooding while building better habitats for wildlife, cleaning the water and storing carbon."



The hills and grasslands of the regional parks provide an ideal habitat for burrowing owls, like these at Contra Loma Regional Park.

The marsh restoration has an added benefit of providing public access to the bay, with trails to walk and bike, water views, and the opportunity to watch shoreline birds as they return to a renewed habitat. Additionally, the East Bay's shorelines are ground zero for environmental justice.

The re-naturalization of the Roddy Ranch golf course in Antioch will also incorporate public access. Purchased by the Park District in 2018 with funding from the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, the 230-acre parcel of land will be incorporated into the future Deer Valley Regional Park (spanning 3,700 acres between Round Valley and Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserves). With restored grassland and wetland habitats, it will include a staging area, 4 miles of multiuse trails and picnic sites.

Conservation pressures have never been so great, but Dr. Alvarez believes that now is the time to redefine our relationship with nature and take significant action.

"If we want a fighting chance to have a livable planet for all, we have to make peace with nature," she says. "That means we must lean into the science, ensure access for all, and resolve climate equity and environmental justice issues. If nothing else—do no more harm. Today, we have a fundamental opportunity as our legislators have come to recognize this. They are passing bold legislation to reach 30x30 goals. We have never faced a crisis this big, but we have also never had a better opportunity to solve it. It will take all of us to meet the moment."



The stunning landscape at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park.



A junior lifeguard at Cull Canyon Regional Recreation Area in Castro Valley surveys the water.

CELEBRATING OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

Foundation-supported programs promote youth development and environmental education

“LET NATURE BE
YOUR TEACHER.”

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, POET

The call for “less screen time, more green time” is nothing new, but getting young people off their devices and into the great outdoors has never been more important. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that American children spend seven hours a day in front of electronic media. During the pandemic, screen time rose by more than 50 percent among children and adolescents worldwide. Spending time outside and building strong connections to nature have numerous benefits for children and teens, including improved cognition, increased happiness and positive social interactions, as well as a greater sense of purpose in life.

Youth development has long been a priority for the Regional Parks Foundation—providing access to summer camps, parks and environmental education programs through camperships for more than 10,000 young people every year.

These programs introduce kids to wildlife, promote conservation and public service, and promise fun and recreation opportunities in nature. Some surveyed campership recipients expressed their interest in bringing friends and family members to the parks, and they hope to do community service projects there as well.

Read on for a brief look at some of the Foundation-supported youth programs in the Park District.



Adventure Crew members enjoy a trek from Wildcat Canyon Regional Park to Tilden Nature Area in summer 2022.



ADVENTURE CREW

A nature-based outdoor recreation program that takes place over the course of a school year, Adventure Crew provides engaging environmental education opportunities to historically underserved communities in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. It consists of the Richmond Rangers and the Oakland Naturalists.

Last year, the program, with the support of community partners YES Nature to Neighborhoods and Peralta Hacienda, hosted 22 daytime outings and four overnight excursions at different parks throughout the District. Participants enjoyed exploring the parks, playing games and learning about the local ecosystem. Adventure Crew members also took part in periodic family nights where they got to share photos and stories of their outings with their loved ones.

One popular excursion was an overnight backpacking trip from Wildcat Canyon to Tilden Regional Park. Shares Claudia Muñoz, supervising naturalist with the Mobile Education Unit: “The kids were really excited to spend time with each other and the staff and play and explore in the outdoors. They were proud of having overcome the challenge and they came away with fun memories of camping outdoors.”



Students from Carl B. Munck Elementary School in Oakland engage with a Fish Friends presentation.

FISH FRIENDS

Part of the Mobile Education Unit, Fish Friends is aimed at younger children—teaching elementary school students about local watersheds and the impact of pollution on ecosystems. The interpretive team hosts multiple outdoor assemblies that include a 1,500-gallon freshwater fish tank at participating schools as well as field trips to Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach in Alameda.

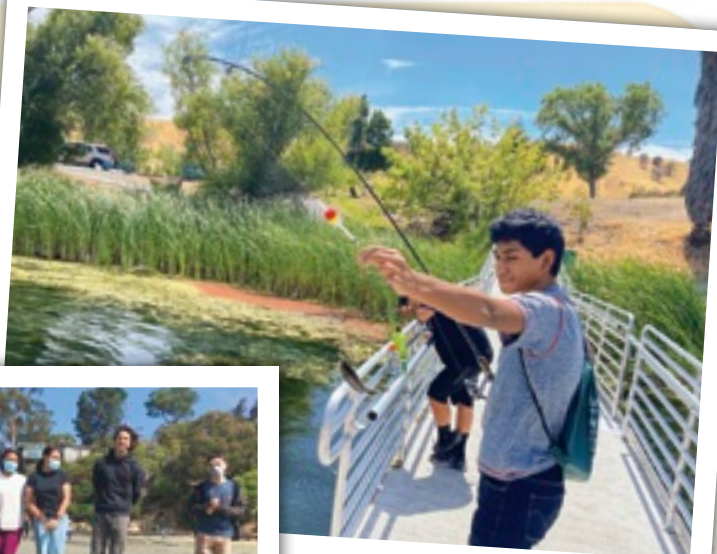
Students and teachers love the hands-on activities, songs, videos, live animal presentations and real-world application of information, including everyday steps that the children can take to reduce littering.

TEEN ECO ACTION WEEK

Older kids and the environment take center stage during Teen Eco Action Week. Along with community partners Ambrose Teen Center, Brothers on the Rise, Hayward Area Recreation Department and the city of Richmond's Community Services Department, Park District staff hold an intensive program for teens in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

The weeklong event consists of recreation activities including hiking, canoeing, swimming and fishing. The teens also take part in service projects such as shoreline cleanups, dune restoration, invasive plant removal and tree planting, along with environmental education and career development skills training.

Among the stated goals for participants are improved leadership, self-esteem, communication and job skills; increased knowledge of the parks and how to access them via public transit; and a greater sense of safety and belonging in the regional parks.



From left: Teen Eco Action Week participants at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline and Contra Loma Regional Park.

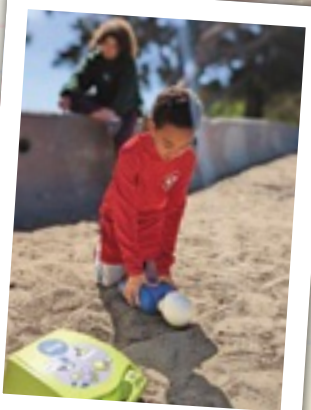
JUNIOR LIFEGUARD PROGRAM

The Foundation also supports safety-related initiatives like the Junior Lifeguard Program, where participants between 8 and 12 years old learn water safety, first aid, CPR and rescue techniques during weeklong sessions offered between June and August.

The enjoyable yet instructional program takes place at beaches and swim facilities around the Park District and is well loved by participants and their parents. "The program was fun and our son learned a tremendous amount. He was provided with exceptional instruction on lifesaving techniques such as CPR and water safety," says one parent in a survey about the 2022 season. "I am so thankful that our son is learning to assess risk at this critical stage of development. This is so much more than a summer camp; the kids learn concrete leadership skills on top of lifesaving techniques. This is a phenomenal program that is undoubtedly adding to the greater societal good."

Other survey respondents cite the serene settings, well-taught safety skills, excellent instructors and overall experience.

"Junior guards is a fantastic program that teaches kids valuable life (and lifesaving!) skills in a fun, supportive, energetic environment. We recommend the program to everyone we know," enthuses another family.



From top: A junior lifeguard at Cull Canyon has fun while learning; a student practices infant CPR skills at Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach.



AFTER THE STORMS

Park District staff worked overtime to safely deal with damage from our winter storms

The intense series of storms experienced in California this past winter took a massive toll across the state, leaving behind flooding, downed trees, mudslides and other devastation.

Park District staff spent thousands of hours clearing fallen trees, debris and mud as well as restoring trails, repairing storm-related damage and performing safety inspections. The work and hazardous conditions necessitated some full park closures for the safety of visitors and staff. "It would have been extremely difficult to conduct a medical response or search and rescue during the storms, putting first responders in jeopardy," says Matt McDonell, park supervisor at Oakland's Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park.

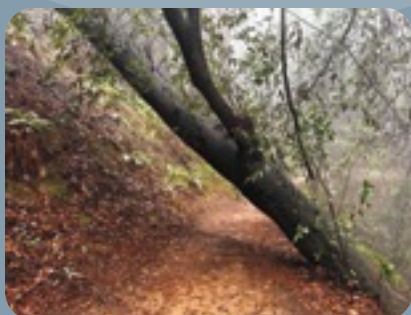
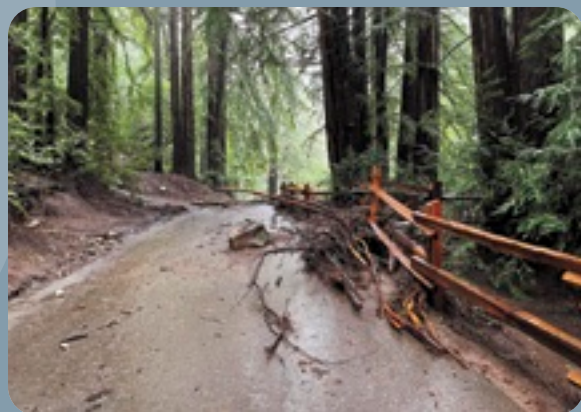
It's paramount for park visitors to exercise caution in the parks after storm events, staying aware of potential hazards and following any posted signage. During times of extreme weather events, make sure to check for alerts and closures at

ebparks.org before your planned outings. Staff work hard to both protect the parklands and safeguard visitors.

Visitors can share their love for the parks any time by signing up for volunteer park improvement projects throughout the year. Participants under 18 must have a signed permission form and those under 13 must be accompanied by an adult. "We encourage volunteers to create an account so they can track their service and get occasional volunteer updates. It also allows them to keep their waivers on file," says Jessica Sloan, volunteer program supervisor.

"Our volunteer projects allow visitors to create meaningful connections to our parks, while at the same time improving habitat and recreation opportunities," says Sloan. "We are so grateful for the outpouring of support we receive from our dedicated volunteer base!"

Visit ebparks.org/park-improvement-projects for more information.



Clockwise from top left: Park District staff work hard on post-winter rainstorm cleanup efforts, including blocked storm flows, trail debris, downed trees and erosion at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland.



Parks for All Seasons

Along with a wealth of community events throughout the year, the Park District saw snowfall and cleanup efforts after historic winter storms.



1 The spring acquisition of the 768-acre Finley Road Ranch property preserves one of the largest remaining open spaces adjacent to Mount Diablo State Park. **2** Massive winter storms brought record-breaking snowfall to some low-elevation hills. **3** Volunteers celebrated Earth Day on April 22 with trash pickups and tree planting projects. **4** Sunol welcomed Bay Area deaf communities to join a guided Earth Day hike with professional American Sign Language interpreters. **5** Visitors at Big Break Regional Shoreline's annual All Abilities Day in May interacted with displays at nature stations and explored the Delta habitat. **6** In April, Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park—the largest remaining redwood grove in the East Bay—joined the national Old-Growth Forest Network. **7** Black Birders Week was celebrated with a week-long series of activities aimed at uplifting Black birders and topics of cultural inclusivity in the outdoors.





The trail expansion at Doolittle Drive provides safe passage for San Francisco Bay Trail users.

BRIDGING THE GAP

The completion of the Doolittle Drive Bay Trail brings improved safety and access to the San Francisco Bay Trail

Thousands of people use the San Francisco Bay Trail every year—biking, hiking, walking, rolling and running along its 350-plus miles. The ultimate goal of the Bay Trail developers is “to build a beautiful shoreline path for everyone to enjoy,” providing recreation and commuting opportunities on what will eventually be 500 miles of trails encircling the San Francisco and San Pablo bays.

The recent completion of the Doolittle Drive Bay Trail at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline—the culmination of a nearly decade-long partnership between the East Bay Regional Park District, Caltrans and the Port of Oakland—fills a vital gap in the current trail. The multifaceted project added 2,300 feet of new trail section, as well as the resurfacing, widening and relocation of approximately 1,800 feet of existing trail, according to Park District project manager Toby Perry. Improvements were also made to the staging area parking lot as well as a two-lane boat launch and float for kayaks and paddleboards; other additions include a new wash station for watercraft, a bike rack and benches along the trail.

The new portion of the trail is located near the south end of the park and offers safe passage to cyclists and pedestrians who previously had to use a shoulder along the busy traffic corridor.

“This is a Class I bike path that will increase safety,” says Perry. “There has been a lot of excitement about the

new trail from active users of the park. It’s adjacent to a portion of Oakland that doesn’t have a lot of parkland, and it is well used by the community.”

This shoreline park includes 748 acres of protected marshland, making it a birding hot spot for the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Bird-watchers are drawn to its population of more than 200 avian species, including Ridgway’s rails, marsh wrens, barn swallows, horned grebes, and many other ducks and shorebirds. The Doolittle project also created 1 acre of tidal marsh habitat in the park.

The \$11 million project was funded in part by Measure CC and includes more than \$9 million in grants from the Alameda County Transportation Commission’s Measure BB, the Wildlife Conservancy Board, Caltrans and the California Natural Resources Agency’s Urban Greening program.

The project also upgraded the staging area parking lot, boat launch and kayak/paddleboard float, among other improvements.





Top: Lake Chabot Regional Park is the site of the UN International Day of Peace celebration on Sept. 16. **Inset:** The Sunol Heritage Festival honors the area's many cultures.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Bring family and friends to these highlighted EBRPD programs and activities—perfect for nature lovers and fun seekers of all ages. To view complete listings of events, visit ebparks.org/calendar.

► SPECIAL EVENTS

Black Diamond Mines

Explore Antioch's mining history at Black Diamond Mines. Relive the past of these coal mining communities with a stroll through Rose Hill Cemetery, an underground tour of the Hazel-Atlas silica mine or a tour of the new Coal Mine Experience exhibit—where you will immerse yourself in the history of the Mount Diablo Coal Field. Search for “mine” at ebparks.org/calendar and sign up for a tour.

Campfire Programs

Campfire programs are back District-wide! Gather the family for an evening of stories and s'mores. Visit ebparks.org/calendar and search for “campfire” to find the nearest program.

Garin Apple Festival

The late-summer Garin Apple Festival at Garin Regional Park on **Sept. 9** honors the farm's apple-growing tradition. Taste

antique apple varieties grown in the orchards, and enjoy folk music and old-fashioned games.

UN International Day of Peace

Share messages of peace, stories and music, and join a peace walk around the lake celebrating the UN International Day of Peace at Lake Chabot in Castro Valley on **Sept. 16**.

Coastal Cleanup Day

Head to a shoreline park on **Sept. 23** for a Coastal Cleanup Day, with in-person volunteer cleanup events scheduled at various locations.

Sunol Heritage Festival

Celebrate the diverse heritage of the Sunol wilderness at this fun free festival for all ages! History comes alive on **Oct. 21** with games, activities and music throughout the day.

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INVEST IN OUR YOUTH



Make the Difference in the Life of a Child

The Youth Development Program is a top priority for the Foundation and each year more than 10,000 underserved children and youth are given the opportunity to attend camp, explore parks, and participate in environmental education programs.

The Foundation also funds vital youth employment programs where more than 5,000 young people learn about East Bay Regional Park District employment opportunities through job fairs. These youth participate in mock interviews, review their resumes, and learn how to become eligible for employment - over 400 youth are hired through these programs as seasonal employees each year!

Join Us in Supporting Our Youth!
To donate or learn more visit RegionalParksFoundation.org

Thank you for your support!



RegionalParksFoundation.org