



Botanical Treasures of the East Bay Regional Park District

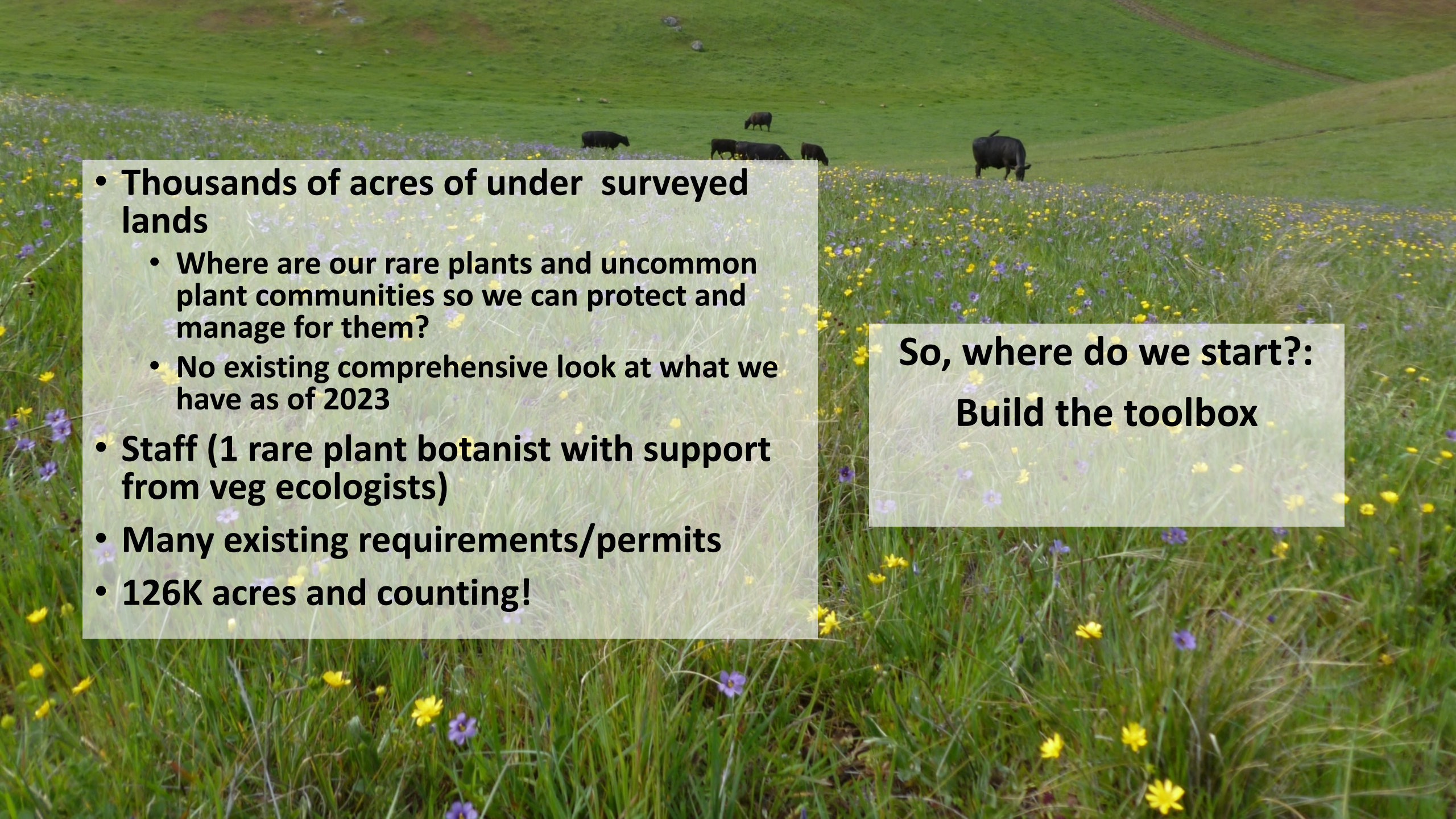
**Natural and Cultural Resources
Meeting**

**February 25, 2025
Dina Robertson, Wildland Vegetation
Program Manager**

Stewardship Department



Incredible plant biodiversity!

- 
- **Thousands of acres of under surveyed lands**
 - Where are our rare plants and uncommon plant communities so we can protect and manage for them?
 - No existing comprehensive look at what we have as of 2023
 - **Staff (1 rare plant botanist with support from veg ecologists)**
 - **Many existing requirements/permits**
 - **126K acres and counting!**

**So, where do we start?:
Build the toolbox**

Rare Plant Inventory and Assessment

Park wide assessment of rare plants

Special status plants

Many more locally rare

Assessment

What do we have and where?

What data gaps?

Prioritization Plan

Methodical approach

Park District funded

East Bay Regional Park District Rare Plant Inventory and Condition Assessment



January 2025

Prepared for

East Bay
Regional Park District

East Bay
Regional Park District
Healthy Parks Healthy People

Highly Native, Uncommon Grasslands

Not all grasslands are “non-native”
Many of them rare and not even yet described



Highly Native Grassland Mapping

- Need inventory to know where to protect and monitor
- 11K acres of grasslands mapped (of 54K acres of grasslands)
- Grant funded (\$800K)

FINE-SCALE GRASSLAND MAPPING IN SELECT EAST BAY REGIONAL PARKS IN ALAMEDA AND CONTRA COSTA COUNTIES

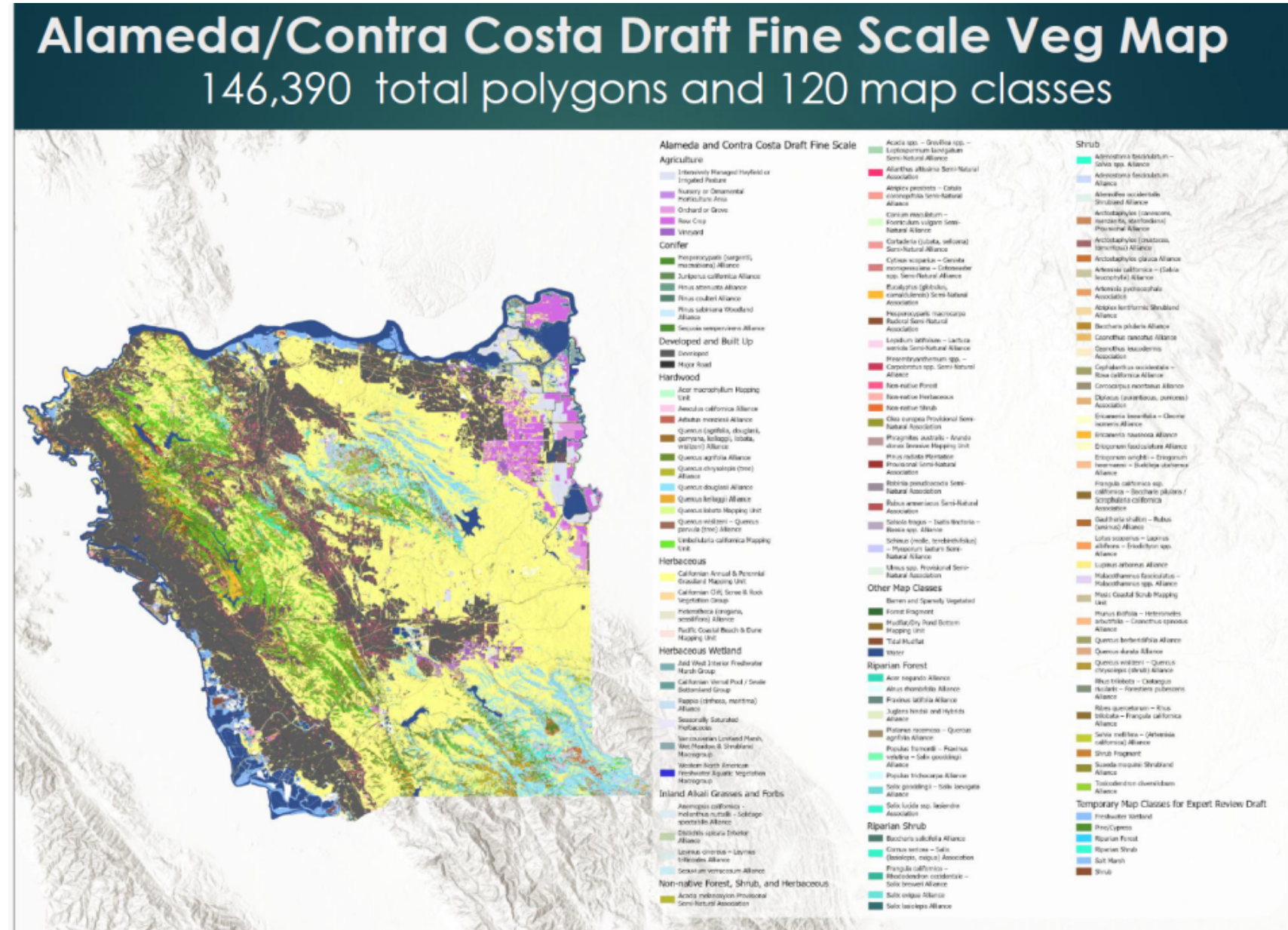


Prepared for:

East Bay 
Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605

Fine Scale Grassland Vegetation Mapping

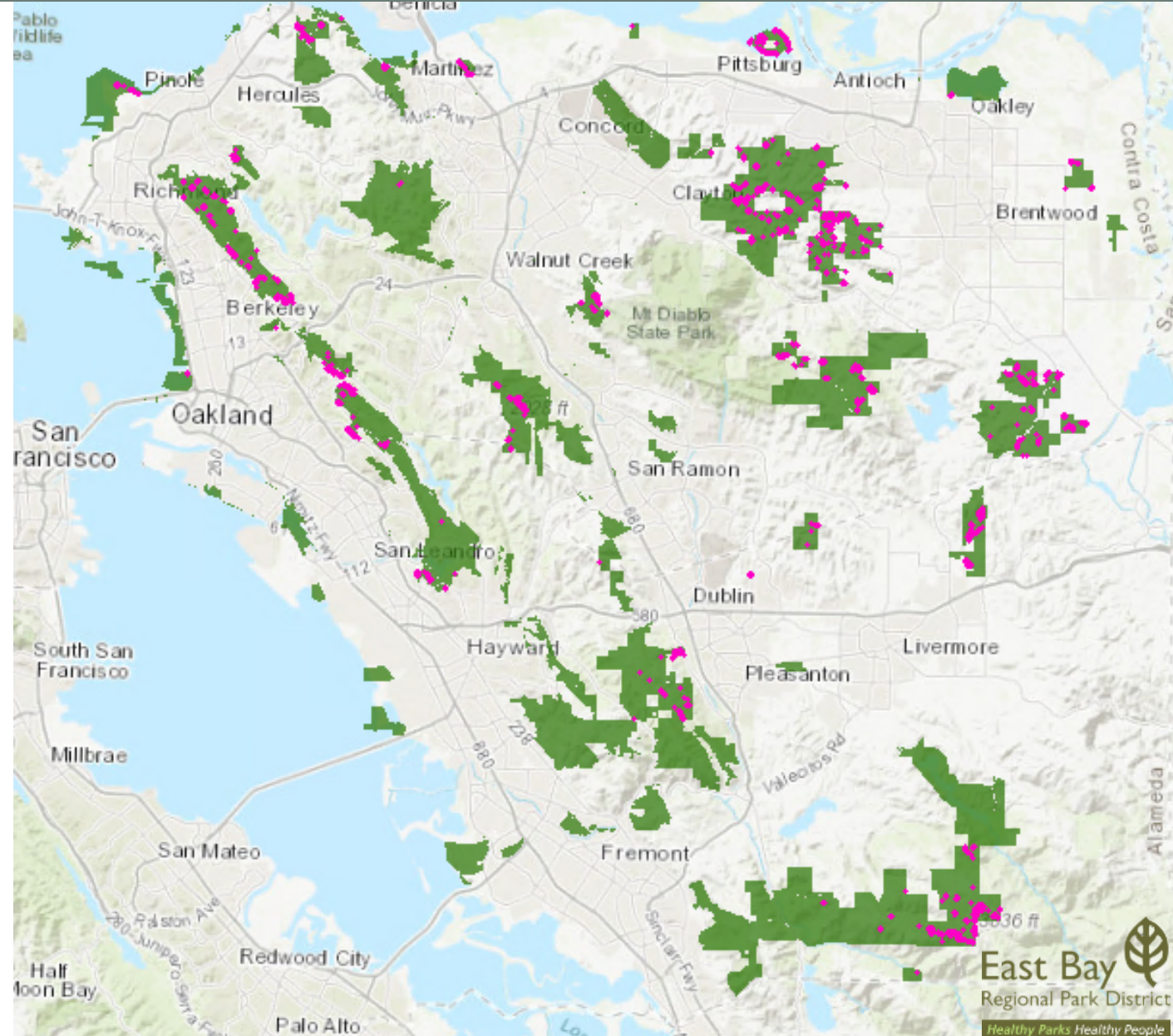
- Final piece of the 9 county Bay Area vegetation maps
- Highly detailed, essential for management of vegetation
- Grant funded (\$2.7 M)
- Final map in May 2025



Findings: Rare Plant Inventory and Assessment

62 rare plant taxa (so far)

- Half of listed rare plants in the two counties on EBRPD lands
- Half of the parks support rare plants
- 74% of the rare plant taxa occur within grasslands
- **Early days: 143 of the 323 populations documented/confirmed in the last 10 years**
- Recommendations informing 2025 field season



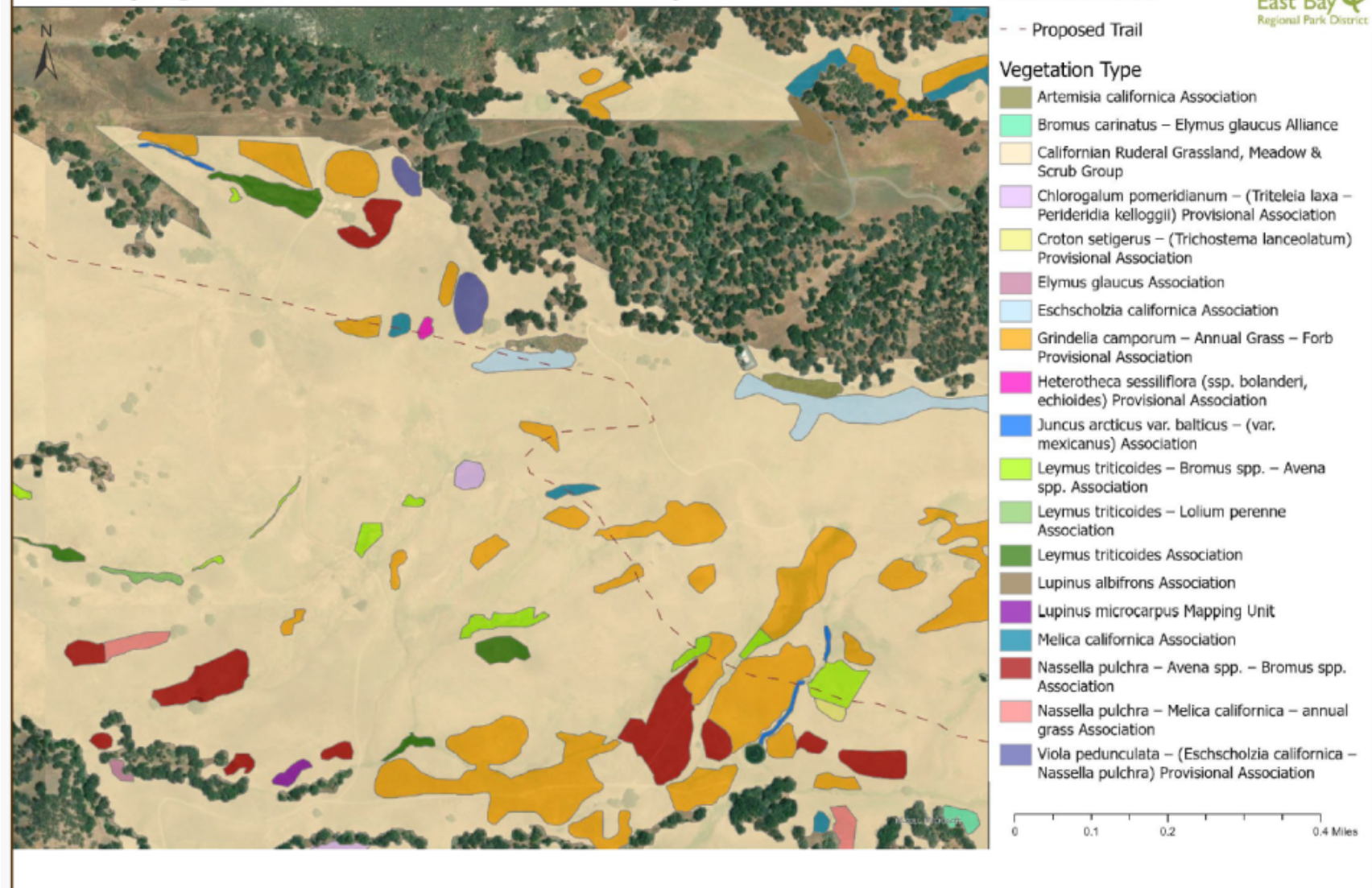
Fine Scale Grassland Mapping

**So much biodiversity
and rarity!**

- 16 Parks
- 11,000 Acres
- 59 Native Herb Types
- 32 Sensitive Nat. Comm.
- 9 New Associations

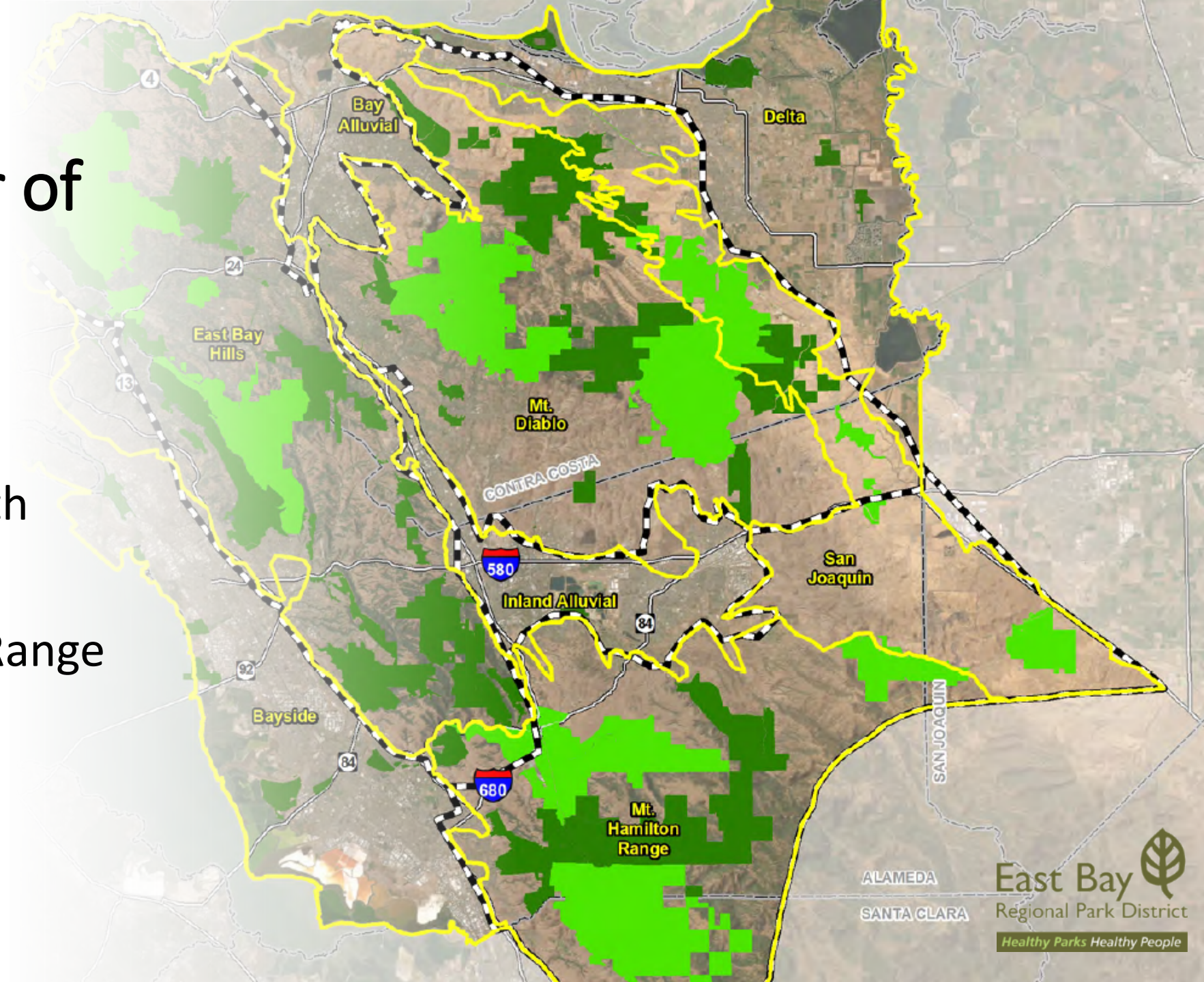
Management Tool

East Bay Regional Park District Fine-Scale Grassland Map



Let's Take a Botanical Tour of the Parks!

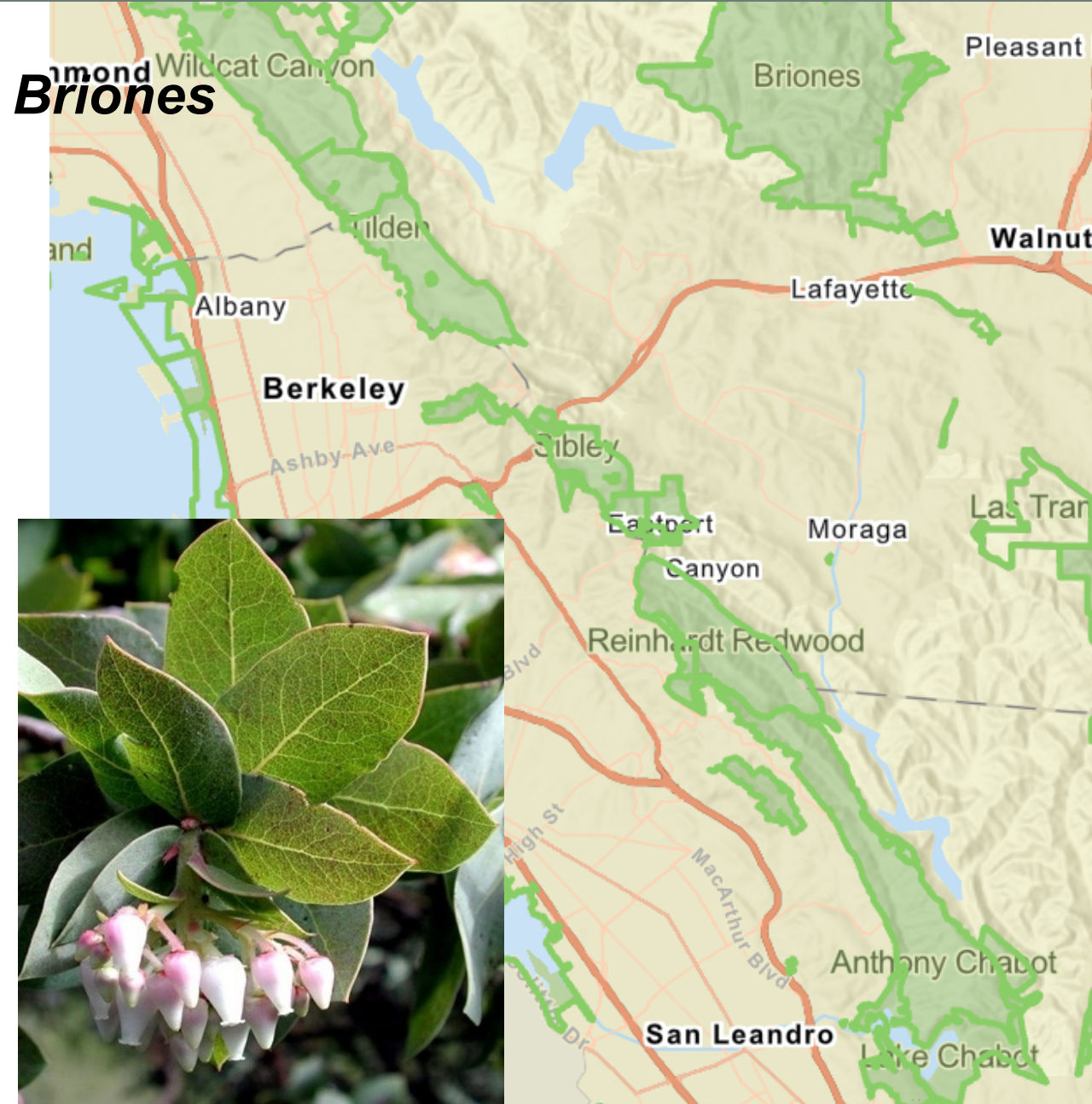
- East Bay Hills
 - North and south
- Bayside
- Mount Hamilton Range
- Mount Diablo



East Bay Hills- North

Parks: Wildcat, Tilden, Sibley, Redwood, Briones

- ***What's botanically special?***
 - Coastal prairie and inland native grasslands
 - Redwood forests (native)
 - Extensive oak woodlands
- ***Rare plants and communities:***
 - Wetlands
 - Pallid manzanita, western leatherwood, Santa Cruz tarplant, seep wetlands



Spotlight: Santa Cruz Tarplant

- Federally endangered
- EBRPD population only one in East Bay, and only one thriving in world
- Cattle grazing maintains population
- Introduced from now extirpated population at Hilltop mall. All other introductions (21) failed
- Annual monitoring



Spotlight: Serpentine Clarkia

- Federally endangered
- EBRPD population only one in East Bay
- Sheep grazing and line trimming maintains population; previous tree and shrub removal, Rx fire
- Thriving
- Management plan



East Bay Hills- South

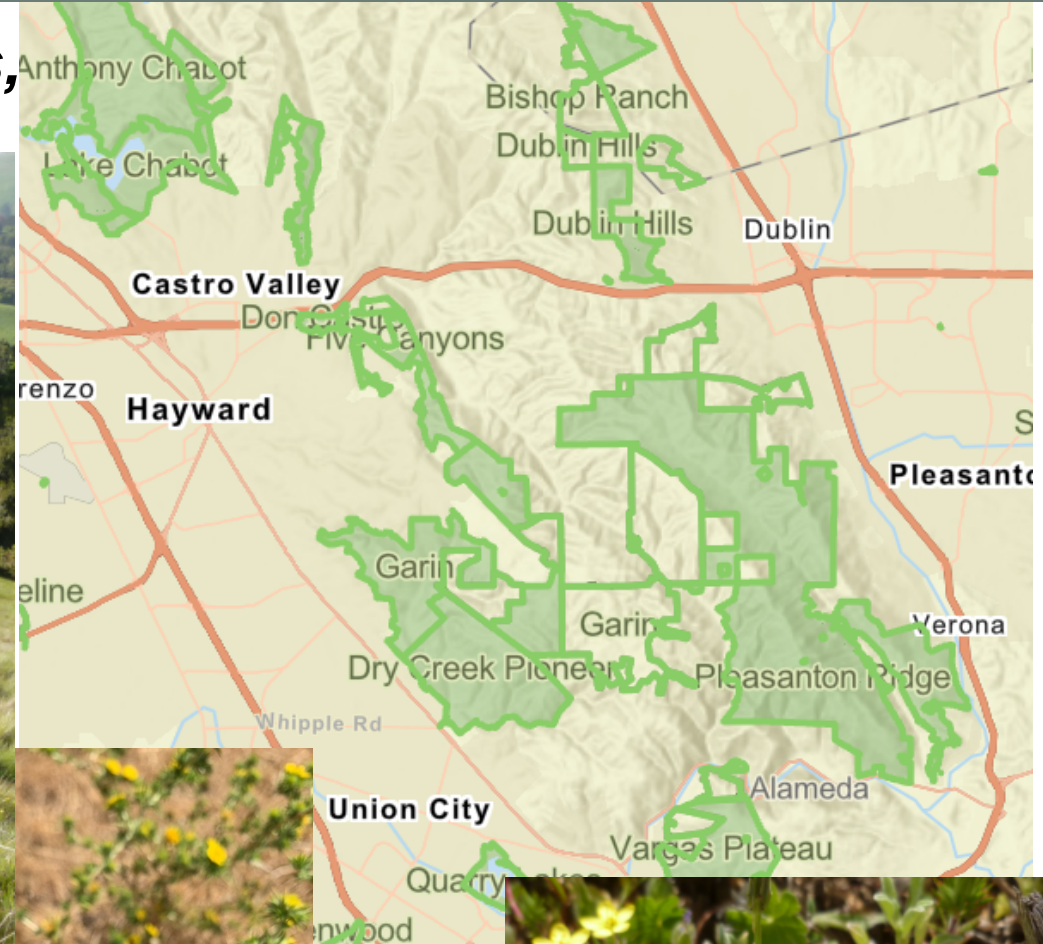
Parks: Pleasanton Ridge, Vargas, Dublin Hills, Las Trampas, Garin

What's botanically special?

- Large swaths of contiguous vegetation
- Extensive woodlands

Rare plants and communities:

- Extensive rare, highly native grasslands, many never described before
- Congdons tarplant, bristly leptosiphon



Spotlight: Highly Native Grasslands

Old growth grasslands

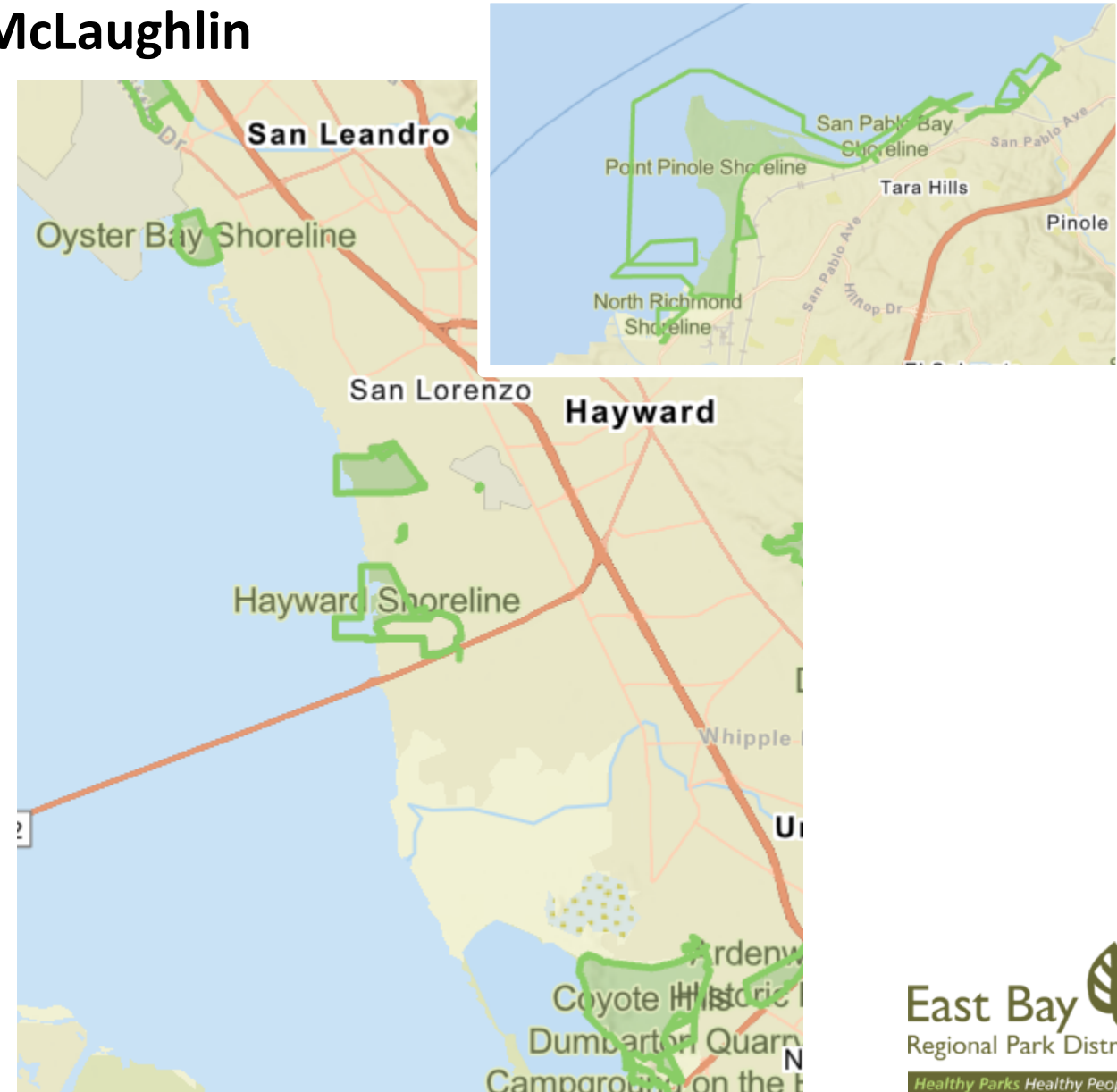


Nassella pulchra Association, Pleasanton Ride Regional Park
Some plants/stands over 100 years old

Bayside

Parks: Coyote Hills, Point Pinole, Oyster Bay, McLaughlin Bayshore

- ***What's botanically special?***
 - Tidal and freshwater wetlands
 - Coastal prairie grasslands (rare)
- ***Rare plants and communities:***
 - California seablite, soft bird's beak



Spotlight: Soft Bird's Beak

- Federally endangered
- Only at Point Pinole
- Management through control of invasive plants
- Annual monitoring
- Sea level rise a major threat



Mount Diablo Region

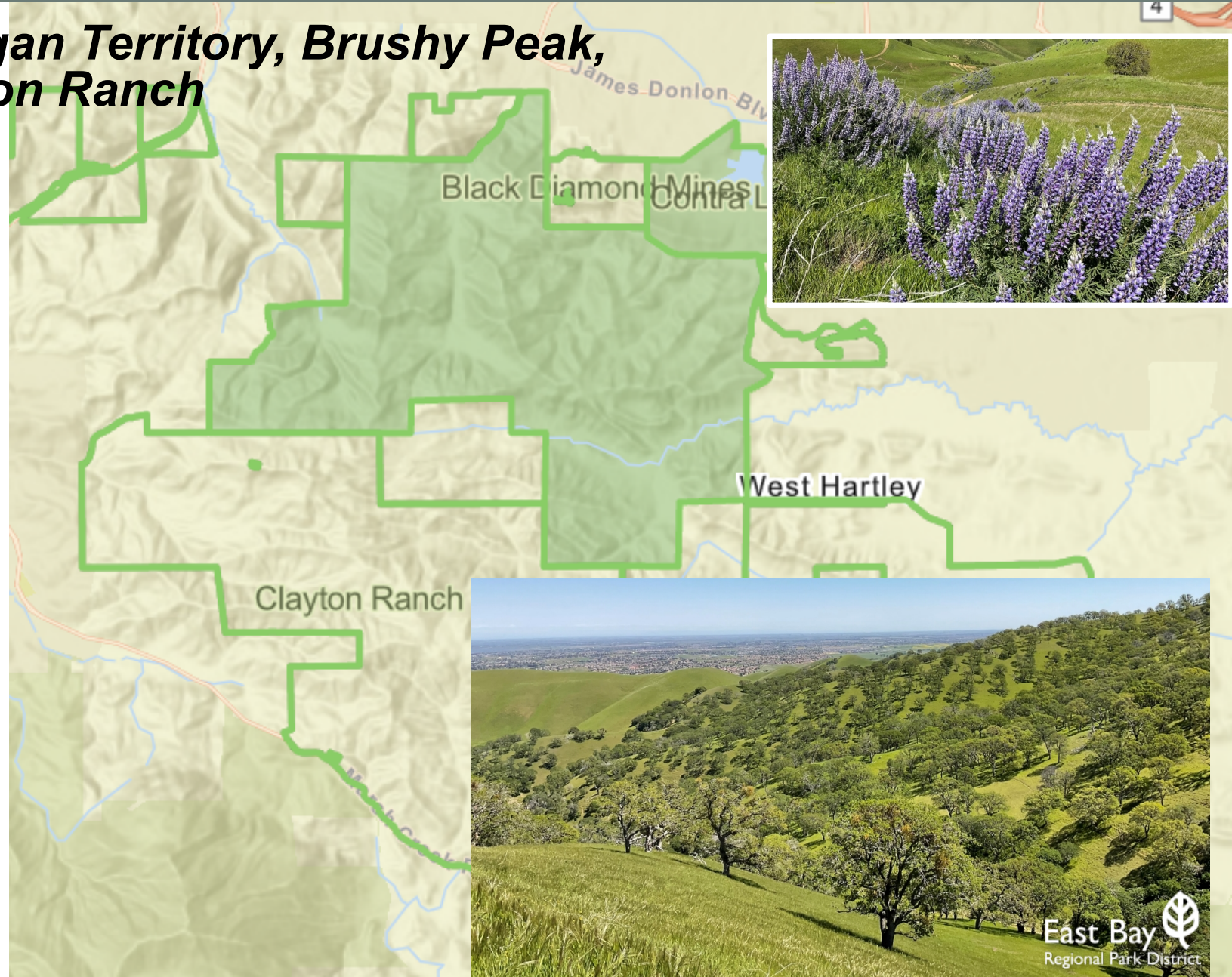
Parks: Diablo Foothills, Morgan Territory, Brushy Peak, Black Diamond Mines, Clayton Ranch

- ***What's botanically special?***

- Highest density of highly native grasslands (along with Ohlone)
- Blue oak woodlands
- Many rare plants

- **Unique botanical treasures:**

- Large flowered fiddleneck, Mount Diablo buckwheat, diamond petaled poppy



Spotlight: Large flowered fiddleneck

- Incidentally found during Stewardship outing
- Only 2 natural populations in the world- 1 on EBRPD lands
- Management plan



Hamilton Range

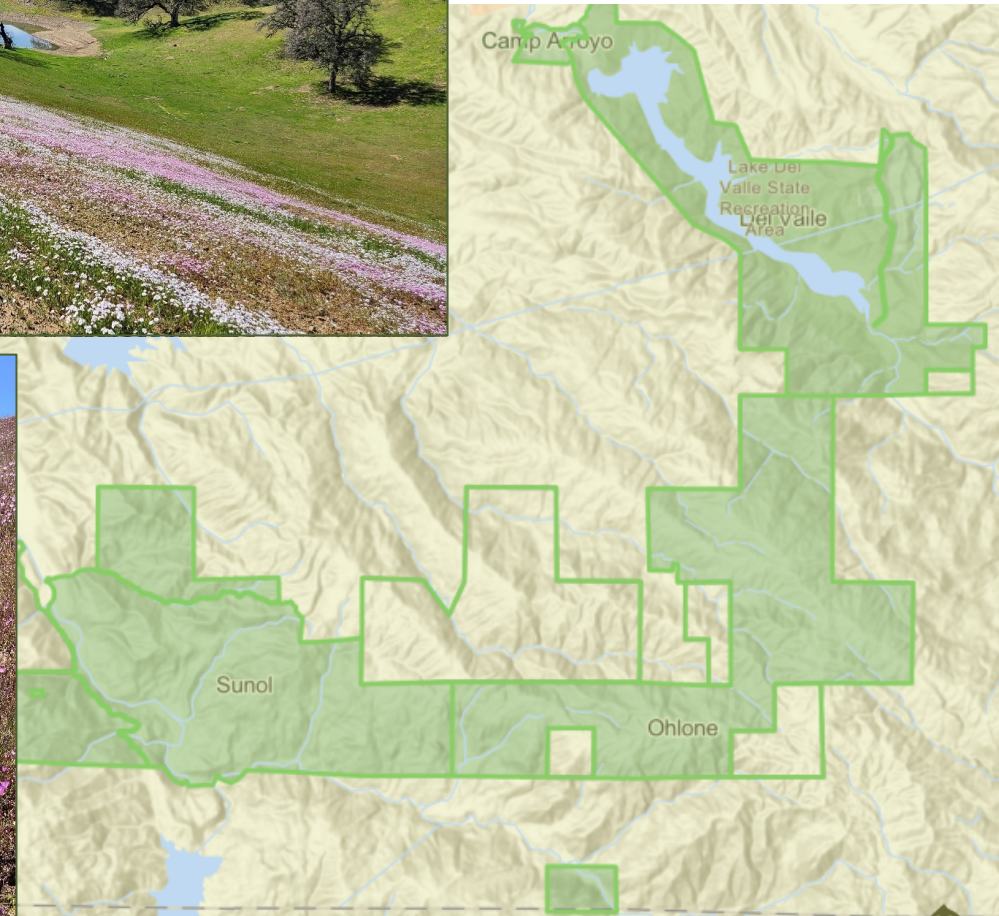
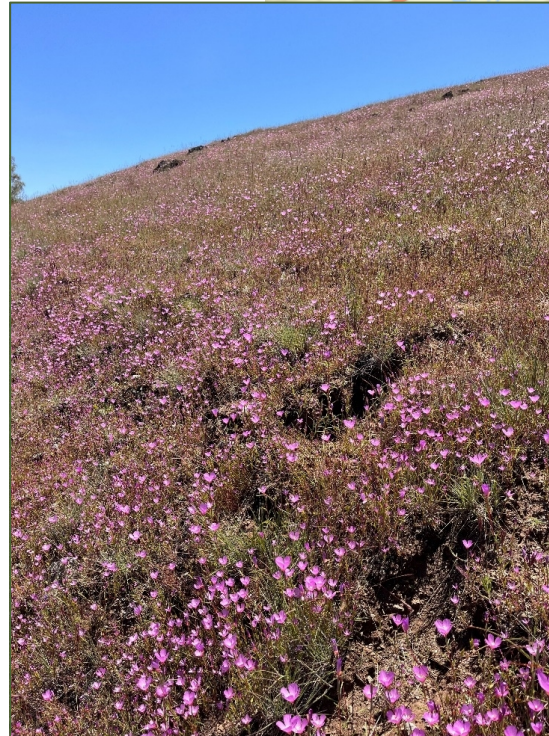
Parks: Ohlone, Sunol, Del Valle

What's botanically special?

- Large swaths of intact habitats
- Negative disturbance is minimal

Unique botanical treasures:

- Extensive rare, highly native grasslands, many never described before
- Serpentine grassland
- Rare plants- rock sanicle, hospital canyon larkspur, many others!



Spotlight: Fields of Wildflowers



Actions to Protect and Enhance Native Plants

- Internal education- District staff, board
- Community engagement- Volunteer focused
- Seed amplification
- Scrub removal



Spotlight: Sibley Wildflower Meadow Restoration

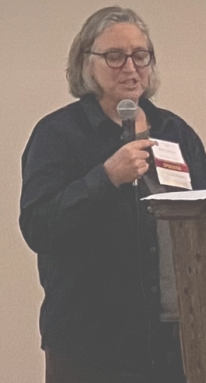
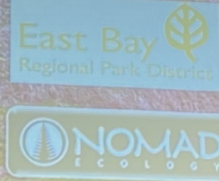


California Native Grassland Association 2025 Conference

Fine Scale Grassland Mapping and Sampling in Select East Bay Regional Parks

Spreading the Word

Erin McDermott, Nomad Ecology
Shelly Benson, Benson Bio Consulting



Management

Disturbance is critical for maintaining vegetation- California landscapes are disturbance dependent

Ongoing livestock grazing

Active removal of brush from highly native grasslands

Treatment of invasive plants- prioritized approach

Supporting opportunities for using Rx fire

Ongoing mapping

Development of long-term monitoring

Assessment of health of forested systems



Questions?

