

THE MAGAZINE OF OAKLAND, BERKELEY AND THE WORLD THAT REVOLVES AROUND US

East Bay

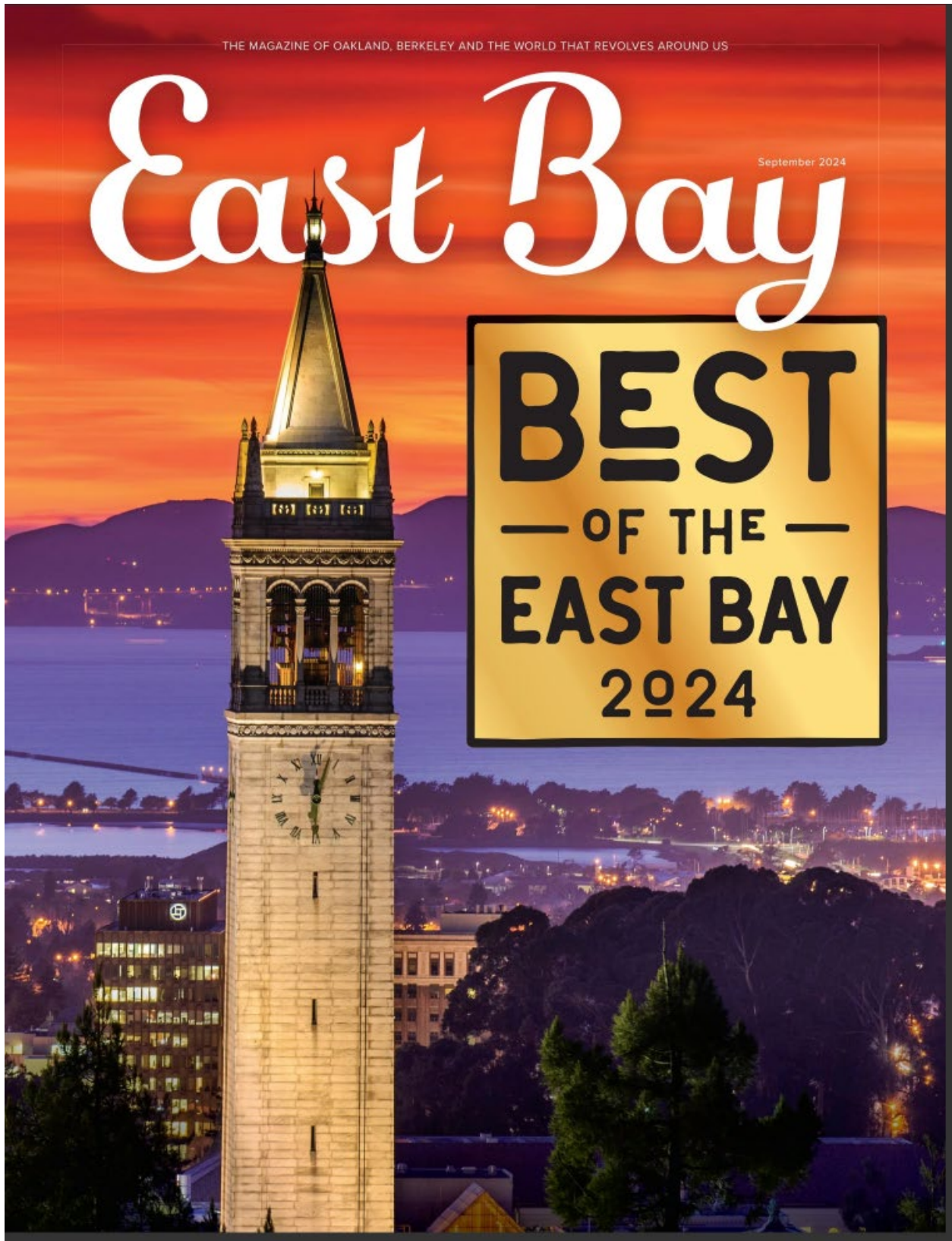
September 2024

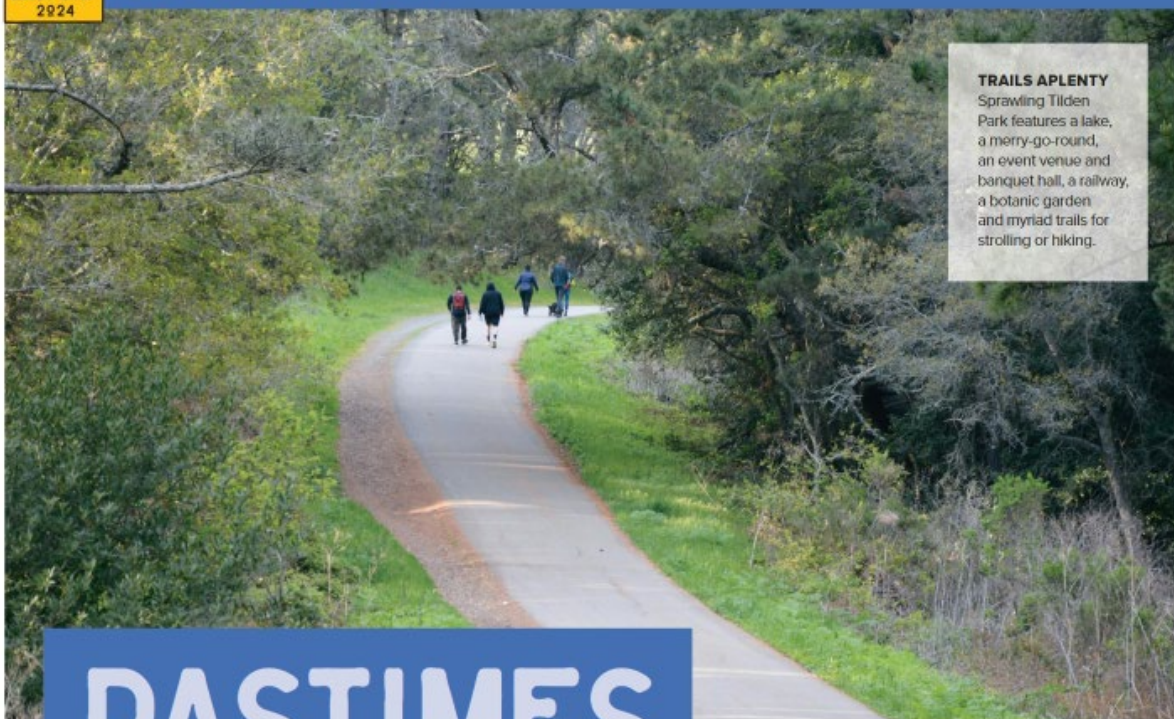
BEST

— OF THE —

EAST BAY

2024





TRAILS APLENTY

Sprawling Tilden Park features a lake, a merry-go-round, an event venue and banquet hall, a railway, a botanic garden and myriad trails for strolling or hiking.

PASTIMES PRESENT

HIKE A MOUNTAIN,
SAIL THE SEAS...OR RELAX

BY **Janis Hashe**

East Bay residents are incredibly lucky in the kinds of and proximity to recreational opportunities. Want to hike a challenging trail? No problem. Rather stroll one while birdwatching? Also easy to find. Go sailing, swimming, picnicking? All within access to almost everyone. And many are finding, as recovery from the pandemic continues, that getting out in nature is an essential part of that recovery.

For example, the East Bay Regional Park District, with its 73 parks, 1,330 miles of trails and 55 miles of shoreline, is

the result of decades of work by dedicated residents and conservationists, with the help of supportive government officials. It is the envy of many park systems nationwide. There's literally a park for everyone, from butterfly counters, to historic site fans, to hardcore runners.

There's also East Bay recreation for the mind and spirit, better known as kicking back.

Sometimes, recreation can mean checking into a local hotel for a staycation and enjoying the many amenities modern hostels provide, which might include anything from

playing a carefree game of tennis, soaking up a few rays by the pool or indulging in spa treatments.

Then there's having the right gear for the right activities. Again, the East Bay offers a range of outstanding clothing and equipment merchants, with knowledgeable staff who can help find the right fit and/or the right item. Their suggestions could well make the difference between a fun outing and an amazing one.

This year's Best Of Recreation winners, chosen by readers, all excel in helping to create those experiences.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT



PHOTO BY SAMANTHA CAMPOS

DOCK K We enjoy the tranquil views at Berkeley Marina by either walking the waterfront trail or having a nosh at Marina Seafood Dockside Patio.

BEST BOUTIQUE HOTEL

- **MOXY OAKLAND DOWNTOWN**
- GRADUATE BERKELEY
- AIDEN BY BEST WESTERN BERKELEY

BEST HIKING TRAILS

- **CHARLES LEE TILDEN REGIONAL PARK**
- JOAQUIN MILLER PARK
- DR. AURELIA REINHARDT REDWOOD REGIONAL PARK

BEST MARINA

- **BERKELEY MARINA, DOCK K**
- POINT SAN PABLO HARBOR
- EMERYVILLE MARINA

BEST OUTDOOR GEAR

- **REI**
- SPORTS BASEMENT
- YOUNG'S BACKPACKING & MOUNTAINEERING

BEST PARK

- **CODORNICES PARK**
- LAKE CHABOT REGIONAL PARK
- MILLER/KNOX REGIONAL SHORELINE

BEST STAYCATION

- **CLAREMONT CLUB & SPA**
- BEST WESTERN PLUS BAYSIDE HOTEL
- WATERFRONT HOTEL

BEST SWIMMING POOL

- **RICHMOND PLUNGE**
- EL CERRITO SWIM CENTER
- NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY OAKLAND

KRON

Oakland Hills vehicle fire that spread to vegetation contained

Alex Baker

Tue, September 3, 2024



([KRON](#)) — Firefighters in Oakland contained a vehicle fire that spread to nearby vegetation Tuesday afternoon, according to the Oakland Fire Department. The blaze broke out in the Oakland Hills near Redwood Road and Skyline Boulevard.

Two engines, Engine 21 and Engine 25, were initially dispatched to the fire. The East Bay Regional Parks District, which also responded to the fire, is sent an additional engine and water tender, OFD said.

The fire, which was spreading at a slow rate of speed, was contained at 20 feet by 20 feet. OFD and EBRPD units remained on the scene late Tuesday afternoon checking for hot spots.

No homes were threatened according to fire officials. There were no reports of any injuries.

He tried to clean up Grizzly Peak. Then came the messy part: East Bay politics

How John Kirkham and his volunteer cleanup group, the East Bay Trash Pandas, made sure their work didn't go to waste.

[Callie Rhoades](#), Sept. 3, 2024



John Kirkham started the East Bay Trash Pandas after he was "disgusted" by the trash on Grizzly Peak. Credit: Amaya Edwards

On Grizzly Peak Boulevard high atop the Berkeley hills, a group of ragtag volunteers clad in climbing harnesses and high-visibility gear were bent over the side of a hill, pulling hard on the ropes below them.

They had enlisted some help from bystanders, a couple of people who'd been tossing back beers at the lookout. After much heaving, the crew managed to haul a large couch up the steep hillside, adding it to their

mountainous pile of garbage. Another win in the bag for the East Bay Trash Pandas.

If the scene from a few months ago looked a little like a rescue mission, in a sense that's what it was: The Trash Pandas are here to save Grizzly Peak from garbage.

Anyone who grew up in the East Bay has most likely spent time on Grizzly Peak, driving up the winding road into the Berkeley and Oakland hills, parking along the pullouts to watch the sunset or gaze at the glittering lights of San Francisco in the distance. Couples enjoying a quiet moment, hikers stopping to take in the scenery, groups of teenagers giggling, drifting clouds of marijuana smoke and the clinking of bottles: It all comes together to create something unique and magical here. But over the years, the shine on this iconic spot has dulled slightly. Its expansive views of the Bay have come to include, in the foreground, all the cigarette butts, Modelo boxes, bottles, cans, tires, and even furniture that people have seen fit to chuck over the side of the hills.



The East Bay Trash Pandas heave up trash from the hills below. Credit: Courtesy of John Kirkham

In 2020, crews hauled giant logs up the roads to block the turnouts and stop people from setting off fireworks atop the dry hillsides, but these efforts haven't stopped the crowds from finding a way to access their favorite view of the Bay. Cars now park along the opposite edge, and every day more and more trash is strewn in and around the area.

And as the trash piles grew high and the hills became overrun with litter, John Kirkham said enough is enough. He remembers driving through Grizzly about six months ago, feeling “disgusted by the trash.”

“It’s really bad up there,” he said.

Kirkham is a Berkeley resident who had no previous experience with organizing cleanups — or with political action of any kind. But he was inspired by other prominent local trash cleanup groups, most notably the ones led by a local Reddit user who posts under the name “[pengweather](#).” Following this redditor’s lead, Kirkham organized the first meetup of the [East Bay Trash Pandas](#).

He wound up bringing together a volunteer group of diverse individuals, people who could offer their spare time to hike along the winding road of the peak and pick up as much trash as possible in a couple of hours. They often went out with little to no plan. “Like real raccoons,” Kirkham said. “It’s pretty chaotic.”

The Trash Pandas slowly gained members and notoriety, with donations such as trash grabbers and high-visibility vests coming in soon after the group’s inception. Since Kirkham and his volunteers have been organizing cleanups, the group has bagged and removed over 18 tons of illegal dumping and litter.

“And that’s just along the three-mile stretch of road within six months, which tells you that something is seriously wrong out there,” Kirkham said.

But as the months rolled along and the Trash Pandas picked up more and more litter, Kirkham started to wonder: What if the work they were doing was *too helpful*?

‘Trash drags people down’

The group has met around a dozen times, and each meetup has brought a unique adventure. The hills are steep, but luckily a few of Kirkham’s volunteers are rock climbers. On more than one occasion some of these members have rappelled down the mountain and hauled large items off the hillside. The ability to tackle the vertical hillsides is what makes the group particularly adept at handling this pickup work.

There are smaller perils, too. “I only got poison oak once,” said Judith Theodori, one of the volunteers. “Everyone else seems to have gotten it multiple times.”

The work isn’t easy, but it’s fun. And for the volunteers, it has been worth the trouble. Cleaning up an area means preserving a space that’s beloved by the community. And for Kirkham it also means showing his neighbors that our shared space must be cared for.



One of the large piles of trash collected by the East Bay Trash Pandas.
Photo: Courtesy of John Kirkham.

“I really do think trash drags people down,” Kirkham said. “It sends a message that we don’t care about our common area. It sends a message that we don’t care about each other.”

Part of the mission, as Kirkham saw it, was to get those in power in the East Bay to step up and help keep this area clean. The Pandas may have signed up for physical work. But Kirkham was determined to do the political work, too. And it would turn out that's where the real heavy lifting was needed.

Based on advice from other cleanup leaders, Kirkham instituted a system whereby the group bagged the trash, left it in piles, and called [OAK311](#) to come pick it up. For Kirkham, not only was this logistically helpful, but it was also symbolic.

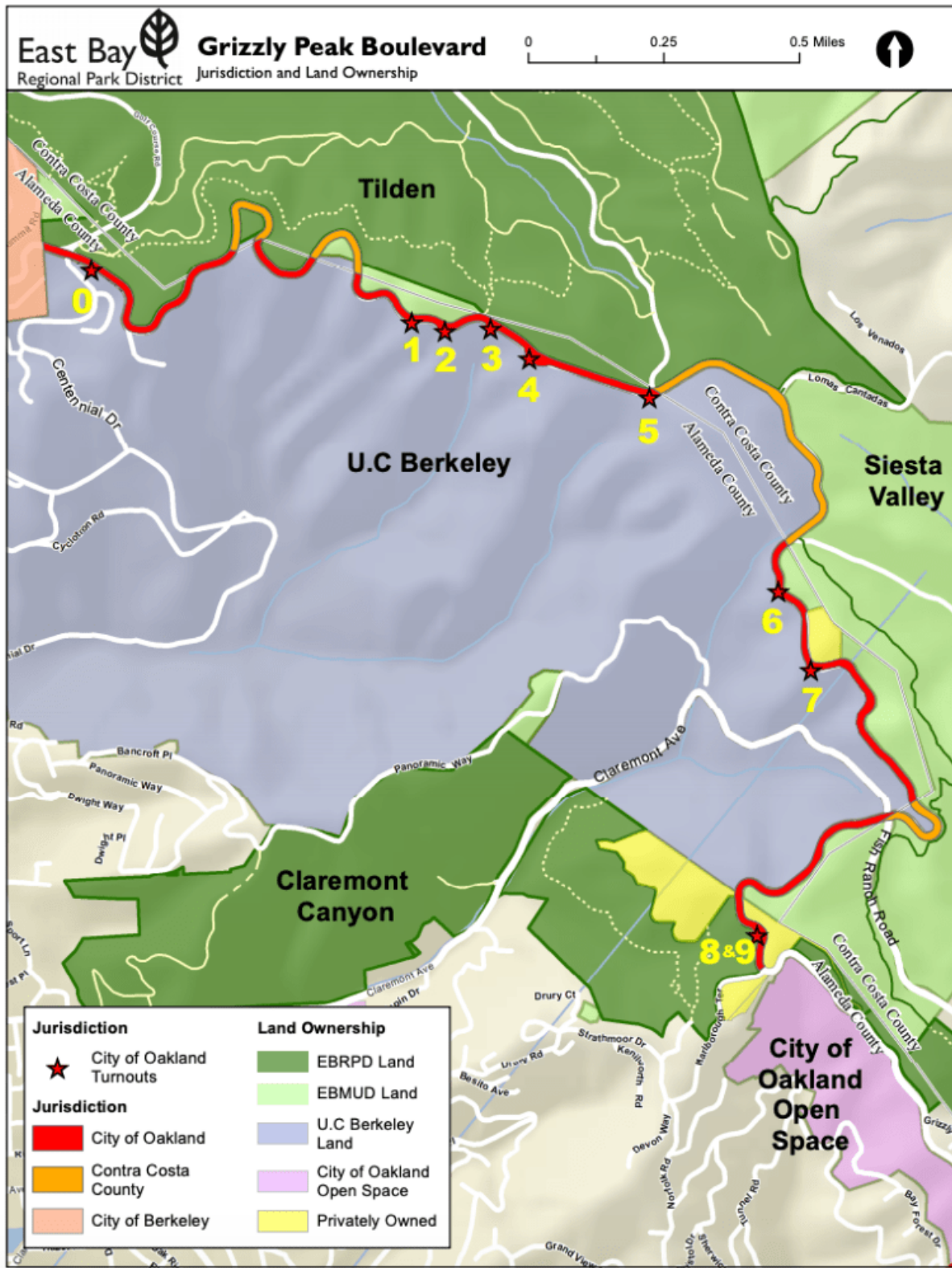
"Oakland is a city, and it has an obligation to pick up litter and illegal dumping," he said. He saw this as a partnership between the volunteers and the city. However, in his mind, it started to feel as if the Trash Pandas were doing the city's work for it, and for free at that.

'Enabling institutional incompetence'

Kirkham, who had spent the past dozen years working as a lawyer, was used to being pushy, he said. But he was between jobs now. In this stage of his life he wanted to use those skills for something new. After spending much of his free time outdoors, he felt that this line of work was a natural calling for him.

During the six months he was organizing cleanups, he began reaching out to several different public entities to try and get them involved in creating better infrastructure that would mitigate and discourage littering and dumping on the road. But the task proved difficult, and jurisdictional challenges made the work even harder.

While most of the areas surrounding Grizzly Peak are owned by both the University of California, Berkeley, and the East Bay Regional Park District, the majority of the road itself falls under Oakland's jurisdiction. So someone may drive up the Oakland-owned road, park and walk to a UC Berkeley-owned turnout and then throw their empties onto East Bay Regional Park District land. The overlapping jurisdictions can make management difficult, especially when trying to crack down on illegal activity.



A map showing the jurisdictional breakdown of Grizzly Peak. Credit: East Bay Regional Park District

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Grizzly Peak became a popular destination for people to gather outside. While the area had always had its share of frequent visitors, the sharp uptick in people led to a surprising uptick in manmade wildfires.

Fireworks, cigarette butts and bonfires were sparking fires on the hills' dry slopes. Local entities and community groups began brainstorming a way to mitigate this sudden influx of people. [Their solution? Logs.](#)

In an effort led by Oakland's deputy city administrator, Joe DeVries, the city of Oakland and UC Berkeley banded together to move logs from already-felled trees to the turnouts people were frequenting, blocking them from gathering en masse. At this time UC Berkeley also removed the trash cans that had sat on the turnouts for many years, as a further sign to people that this was not a place to congregate.

The idea turned out to be a success. Fires declined; people couldn't gather in such high numbers; and the area saw a decrease in overall activity — criminal and otherwise, according to officials. However, the measures didn't stop people from finding new places to park and walking to the turnouts, enjoying the city views as they always had. And now with no trash cans, the bottles, food containers and other disposable items they brought with them were sent rolling down the hillside.



Trash strewn in between the logs that block off the turnouts at Grizzly Peak. Credit: Amaya Edwards

Small items such as bottles and cans are one thing, but the area faces another problem that's even harder to tackle: dumping. Dumping differs from your garden-variety littering in a couple ways. First, the type of trash that gets dumped is usually larger-scale items, things that people wouldn't be carting around with them. On Grizzly Peak, this could mean anything from construction debris to furniture. Second is the sheer volume of items that get released at one time. Usually dumpers will haul huge quantities of trash and debris, and release everything down the hillside.

This makes the cleanups harder not only due to the volume, but also because it's exceedingly difficult to remove large items resting precariously on steep hillsides—a reality Kirkham knows all too well.

While the steep cliffs didn't stop the cleanup efforts, one obstacle nearly did: the lack of investment from local agencies.



The hills are steep. Luckily, Kirkham has a few rock climbers on his side.
Photo: Courtesy of John Kirkham

Knowing the jurisdictional breakdown of the area, Kirkham sought meetings in between cleanup days with the city of Oakland, UC Berkeley and East Bay Regional Park District. The meetings were a slow process,

and while Kirkham and his group enjoyed the cleanup work, he started to feel as though he were “enabling institutional incompetence.” Kirkham didn’t want to see trash on Grizzly Peak, but he also didn’t want to do the work he felt ultimately belonged to the institutions with far more resources than his ragtag outfit.

In early August, he [reached out to his community to see if they should call it quits](#). “Does it make sense for us to continue doing our Grizzly Peak cleanups?” he said. And after consideration and feedback, he landed on no, it doesn’t.

“I do enjoy these cleanups. They’re great community-building events. It’s surprisingly fun work,” said Kirkham at the time. “I just think, from a good-faith, self-respect perspective, it makes better sense for us to just pause.”

‘A great solution’

And then, on Aug. 22, just after Kirkham had decided to pack up his litter grabbers and trash bags, the Pandas scored a win.

After months of trying to get people’s attention, Kirkham got the news that UC Berkeley and the city of Oakland had agreed to make a concerted effort to better address litter and dumping on Grizzly Peak.

The plan will go as follows: UC Berkeley will reinstall trash cans at the turnouts and collect their bags twice weekly starting in mid to late September. In turn, Oakland will work to improve monitoring and collecting of illegally dumped materials.

DeVries, who is leading this effort on the city’s end, said that this was a natural extension of the effort that began with the logs.

“We’re committed to working on it,” DeVries said, emphasizing the importance of the partnerships struck among the city, UC Berkeley and other regional entities.

The agreements between the city and the university are informal, but both entities have committed to doing the work together.

According to Felix Deleon, director of campus operations for UC Berkeley, litter has always been a problem. Trash cans or no trash cans, people litter. However, the logs have been a huge help, and Deleon hopes that their presence, in combination with the new trash cans that will be placed at the turnouts, will help address the issue.

The East Bay Regional Park District has also expressed interest in participating in similar efforts, hoping to use the logs felled in existing programs to address dumping issues in the southern area of the road.

No one was more surprised by the news than Kirkham was — he hadn't expected to get a commitment to such concrete action. The whole task had begun to feel impossible. He calls the development "a great solution" and a great start.

Kirkham now says he's open to restarting his cleanup work and getting his crews up there to help with the more precarious illegal dumping sites. He's learned not just that direct action can work but that it is most effective, in his view, when done with clear communication and kindness. Kirkham doesn't see this as the end of the conversation but the beginning of what he hopes will be a longstanding, respectful partnership between engaged citizens and thoughtful institutions.

"I think it's going to be a continuing conversation," he said. "Ultimately I want a working partnership. I want change that requires people's good faith and respect and kindness and care and reciprocity."

It's calving season. Here's how to avoid getting chased by cows

Believe me: They will charge you.

[Callie Rhoades](#), Aug. 28, 2024



The East Bay hills are a great place to hike this time of year, but East Bay Regional Park District wants you to be mindful of new calves that may be out on the trails. Credit: Katie Rodriguez

I remember it clearly: the hills, the sun in my eyes, and then, from high above, the sound of oncoming hooves.

In the early 2010s, I and a family member were walking the trails near our East Bay home. It was a regular activity for us, and spotting a few cows wandering the hillsides was not uncommon. East Bay cattle [ranchers have long used the hills for grazing](#).

We'd usually give the herds a wide berth and think nothing of it. Signs on the gates around the hills reminded us to keep our distance from the cows, especially ones with young calves, as they've been known to charge, but we didn't give the warnings much thought, either. Who really gets chased by a cow anyway? Turns out, us.

We heard the commotion before we saw it: The sounds of hooves gaining speed on the slick grassy slopes. We looked up to find two large black cows heading straight for us.

We booked it toward a ditch where two small trees gave promise of some type of cover. The cows chased us until we were in a standoff; us, crouched behind the trees, and the huffing cows, glaring at us through big, brown eyes. We stayed like this for what must have been 30 to 45 seconds but felt like hours, until the cows decided we weren't a threat and slowly trotted off toward the neighboring hillside. *Phew.*

Let this story affirm the warning of all those signs: Cows in the East Bay will charge you. The East Bay Regional Park District backs me up on this: On Aug. 15, EBRPD put out an advisory warning parkgoers that it was [calving season](#), encouraging people to "admire from a distance."

The park district has been using grazing as an ecofriendly land-management tool for over 60 years. According to the district, "over 86,800 acres of parkland are grazed annually by cattle, sheep, or goats." This grazing helps keep grasses manageable, boost native flora and fauna, and mitigate excessive fuels for wildfires.

While these animals are fairly docile, cows can be territorial and protective of their young. It is not uncommon to hear of them charging hikers and mountain bikers in the California hills, sometimes with pretty severe consequences..

In 2004, a Sunol hiker [landed in the hospital](#) after a cow charged and flung her into a nearby fence. Four years ago, an elderly couple [were airlifted out of a Solano County](#) park after they both fell while being chased by a cow that had her young calf in tow.

Calving season lasts from around August to October, so if you're headed to a [park that will likely have cattle](#), there are a [few tips to remember](#) to keep yourself and the cows safe.

If you've encountered a herd of cows directly on a trail, the park district advises you to keep your distance. Give the cows room and allow them to move away. If they stay put, you should walk around them, going off the trail momentarily, if necessary, to give them adequate space.

The gates that are placed around cattle grazing areas are there for your and the cows' safety. Close pedestrian gates behind you as you encounter them. If you see a vehicle gate open or closed, leave it as you found it.

While the calves are cute, you should not pet, approach or get close to them. Never get in between a mother and calf. This not only is dangerous for you but can also stress out the mother of the calf. If you see a calf by itself, leave it be—the mother is most likely nearby. If you do see a calf that is sick or injured, call park staff, noting the animal's location, color and ear tag number, if you can see it.

It's always good practice to keep dogs on leash, especially in areas where cattle graze. Cattle can become alarmed by the dogs' presence and can cause danger for you, your pet and the cows.

[BERKELEY FIRE](#)

Update: Berkeley Hills grass fire now contained

[Emilie Raguso](#)

AUG 27, 2024

Hikers on the Nimitz trail called 911 to report the fire. "We heard a loud, startling explosion around 1:30," one of them told us.



A helicopter drops water on a fire in Tilden park on Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2024. [Alert California](#)

Firefighters are working to contain a 3-acre grass fire in Berkeley near Inspiration Point in Tilden park on Tuesday afternoon, authorities report.

"At this time there is no threat to people or structures," the [Berkeley Fire Department](#) said at 2:25 p.m.

Hikers on the Nimitz trail at Tilden park called 911 to report a grass fire at 1:35 p.m., BFD said.

"The road is closed just past the Tilden Botanical Garden," a reader told us. "Lots of fire trucks. Lots of sirens."

Footage via [Alert California](#)

The East Bay Regional Parks Fire Department is in command of the incident with BFD and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) supporting them.

BFD urged people seeking official emergency alerts to [sign up for AC Alert](#), "the text, email, and phone system used by Berkeley and Alameda County to push emergency messages. You can also [download the Genasys Protect App](#) to be alerted about any status changes or emergencies in areas you care about."

The Scanner will update this report as more information becomes available.

Update, 3:10 p.m. Via BFD: "The fire at Inspiration Point has been contained. East Bay Regional Parks remains in command of the incident. Berkeley Fire crews and other partners will remain on scene to ensure the fire is completely out."

According to reporting on the [Watch Duty app](#), firefighters stopped forward progress shortly before 2:40 p.m. at less than 4 acres: "Resources at scene can handle, canceling the remainder of the response - per Incident Command. Air Attack and all tankers have since been released."

Update, 3:30 p.m. One of the hikers who reported the fire, Daniel Sargent, has just contacted TBS to describe how events unfolded: "We heard a loud, startling explosion around 1:30 PM. We noticed smoke and fire around the base of an electricity pylon a few minutes later and called 911. Readers can draw their own conclusions, but we figured that the explosion was likely a blown transformer and the cause of the fire."

Update, 5 p.m. BFD said Cal Fire will be in charge of the incident going forward. The Scanner will share additional updates as they become available.

Pop up exhibit celebrating the 90th anniversary of East Bay Regional Parks

John Keenan

AUG 31, 2024



Event Details

Sat, Aug 31, 2024 at 9:00 AM

MuseumSRV, 205 Railroad Ave, Danville, CA, 94526

MuseumSRV is proud to host a pop up exhibit celebrating the 90th anniversary of East Bay Regional Parks. EBRP began in 1934 and today manages 73 parks in Alameda and Contra Costa county. Also included is a history of the Iron Horse trail a jewel in the crown of EBRP. This exhibit closes on September 15.

MuseumSRV is at 205 Railroad Avenue, Danville, CA 94526. The hours are Tuesday-Friday from 1:00 to 4:00 Saturday 10-2, Sunday 12-3. For more information visit our website museumsr.org.

Section Of Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail Closed Saturday

The East Bay Regional Park District is scheduled to work on an ongoing restoration project.

Maggie Fusek

Posted Fri, Aug 23, 2024



The 7.65-mile Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail begins at the EBMUD Valle Vista Staging Area in Moraga and parallels St. Mary's Road through Lafayette and Moraga. (Google Maps)

MORAGA, CA — Saturday work is scheduled this weekend in Moraga on an ongoing East Bay Regional Park District restoration project along the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.

The project involves reconstructing a 450-foot by 12-foot-wide section of concrete paving that will reconnect Westchester Drive to

Canyon Road and will also include the installation of new chain link fencing.

On Saturday, work is scheduled to take place 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from south of Westchester Street to Canyon Drive. Affected residents should have received notifications of the work from the Park District, the city said.

The Park District expects to complete the project by the end of October.

In the meantime, the Valle Vista-to-Westchester section of the Lafayette Moraga Trail remains closed for the last half-mile on the Moraga end. The remaining 7 miles from Lafayette into Moraga is open for normal trail activity from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily unless otherwise posted.

See the [Park District website](#) for further information on the project.



California Department of
Fish and Wildlife

Wildlife Conservation Board Awards \$44 Million in Grants to 23 Habitat Conservation and Restoration Projects

August 23, 2024



Awards Include Funding to Accelerate Recovery from the CZU Fire and Promote Long Term Climate and Fire Resiliency in Santa Cruz Mountains

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved 23 habitat conservation and restoration projects spanning 22 counties across nearly 7,891 acres at its Aug. 22 quarterly meeting.

One of the grants will fund fuels reduction efforts and preparation for prescribed fire in an area badly damaged by the CZU Fire in 2020. Jointly owned by the Peninsula Open Space Trust and Sempervirens Fund, the 8,532-acre San Vicente Redwoods property connects 27,500 acres of protected woodland and supports one of California's most iconic species. The CZU Fire—one of the most severe fires in California's history—impacted more than 86,000 acres in this area.

The WCB's \$1.05 million grant to Save the Redwoods League will support work that will protect the delicate balance of the redwood ecosystem and make it less likely to be ravaged by intense forest fires in the future.

"Four years after the devastating CZU Wildfire, Save the Redwoods remains committed to restoring the burned redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains," said Anthony Castaños, land stewardship manager of Save the Redwoods League. "This collaborative project serves to support the rejuvenation of California's iconic redwoods and accelerate the old growth characteristics and wildlife habitat that thrived here years ago. Save the Redwoods is grateful to the Wildlife Conservation Board for consideration of the project for funding."

Notably, most of WCB's grants advance Gov. Gavin Newsom's goal of conserving 30 percent of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030, an initiative known as 30x30. The initiative seeks to protect biodiversity, expand access to nature for all Californians and address climate change.

Other funded projects include:

- A \$2.65 million grant to the East Bay Regional Park District—in a cooperative project with the National Park Service, State Coastal Conservancy, and Alameda County—to convert an empty industrial lot to eight acres of bayfront parkland, incorporating into the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline in the City of Oakland. This project, known as the Tidewater Day Use Area, serves surrounding severely disadvantaged communities of East Oakland by creating accessible green space to promote mental and physical well-being. It also serves as a gateway to the San Francisco Bay Trail and boating in the San Leandro Bay and Oakland Estuary.

"East Bay Regional Park District is grateful for the Wildlife Conservation Board's staff recommendation and Board consideration of this critical investment in environmental justice," said Katy Hornbeck, grants manager with East Bay Regional Parks District. "The project's location in a formerly redlined community has resulted in decades of systemic inequities that have left these neighborhoods with restricted access to green spaces and exacerbated environmental challenges. The creation of accessible green spaces, like Tidewater, not only promotes the physical and psychological well-being of East Oakland residents but also contributes to the overall quality of life for Californians."

- A \$520,000 grant to the American Indian Council of Mariposa County for the acquisition of 96 acres of ancestral land. This project, known as Big Rock, protects ancestral lands and biodiversity, promotes cultural preservation, and ecological stewardship, and offers a unique opportunity

for the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation to re-connect with their traditional lifeways.

Situated in the majestic Sierra Foothills, the site supports great gray owl, western pond turtle, and multiple rare plants. It includes meadow wetlands, a year-round pond, and a significant archeological site, including dozens of Native American bedrock mortars, and cupules, utilized for processing acorns, medicinal plants, and foods.

"The Southern Sierra Miwuk have survived the trauma of displacement brought on during the Gold Rush, the Mariposa Indian War, and even the Muir Conservation Era," said Tara Fouch Moore, director of landscape stewardship and secretary of Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. "Despite these tragedies, our indigenous families have maintained ties to our natural landscape, waters, and plant and animal relatives through cultural and spiritual traditions that teach us to honor that sacred relationship."

"Sierra Foothill Conservancy is honored to work in partnership with the American Indian Council of Mariposa County and Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation to return first stewards to the land with the Big Rock Project," said Bridget Fithian, executive director of Sierra Foothill Conservancy. "Rematriation of this land is part of our ongoing collaboration which focuses on restoring the ethics and values of indigenous people and indigenous stewardship to the land. The principles of reciprocity are values that we seek to cultivate in our own organization and the conservation community at large. We thank the Wildlife Conservation Board for supporting this work and vision."

- A \$2.87 million grant to the State Coastal Conservancy to allow the public to access 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway. The former 125-acre Orick Mill property in Humboldt County was acquired by the Save the Redwoods League in 2013 for the ecological restoration of Prairie Creek and the creation of a new southern gateway to Redwood National and State Parks and Yurok ancestral lands.

"We are very grateful to the Wildlife Conservation Board for its continued support of the 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway Project," said Sam Hodder, president and CEO of Save the Redwoods League. "Providing this key funding allows the team to complete the project in 2025 and open this new visitor and community gateway to the redwoods in early 2026, to coincide with Save the Redwoods League transfer of property ownership to the Yurok Tribe for co-stewardship with RNSP. Creating this gateway is an ambitious goal that we have worked hard toward for many years and without our partnership with WCB this would not be possible."

- A \$3.7 million grant to the State Coastal Conservancy, for a cooperative project with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Save the Redwoods League, to restore a half mile of instream and backwater habitat and nearly 16 acres of wetland habitat at a former mill site on lower Prairie Creek, in the town of Orick in Humboldt County, conserving and enhancing a key watershed in a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The project, 'O Rew Lower Prairie Creek Floodplain Restoration, creates rearing habitat for three listed salmonids, including Southern Oregon/Northern California coast Coho salmon, Northern California steelhead, and California coastal Chinook salmon and finalizes restoration by extending the creek and reconnecting it to its historical floodplain. When construction is complete, the 125-acre site will be transferred to the Yurok Tribe who will permanently co-manage the site with the National Park Service and California State Parks.

“We can’t thank the Wildlife Conservation Board enough for its long-standing support for our work at ‘O Rew,” said Amy Hutzal, executive officer of the State Coastal Conservancy. “WCB was a key early funder for the ‘O Rew Prairie Creek Floodplain Restoration Project and its support set the stage for the team’s successful fundraising with other state and federal agencies for this project. Having their continued partnership as we enter the home stretch to complete full restoration of a former mill site on lower Prairie Creek into a thriving and vibrant stronghold for salmon is the fitting final chapter to this restoration success story.”

For more information about the WCB, please visit wcb.ca.gov. To learn more about the newly approved habitat conservation and restoration projects, please visit our [StoryMaps](#) pages.

***Photo: Fire-damaged trees in the San Vicente Mountains.
Courtesy of Kyle Cooper/Save the Redwoods League***

###

Fentanyl Seized, 4 Arrests By Park District Police

A newly-formed High Enforcement Apprehension Team (HEAT) has scored a success.

Bea Karnes

Posted Wed, Aug 21, 2024 at 1:37 pm PT | Updated Mon, Aug 26, 2024 at 5:19 pm PT



Drugs, cash and paraphernalia seized in the operation. (East Bay Regional Park Dist. Police Dept.)

EAST BAY, CA — Four suspects were arrested and an undisclosed amount of fentanyl and other illegal drugs were seized, along with a significant amount cash in a multi-agency operation, according to the East Bay Regional Park District Police Department. The department recently formed a High Enforcement Apprehension Team (H.E.A.T.). The new team worked with the Department of Justice and other agencies on the fentanyl investigation.

"Due to our vast jurisdiction, we work together with many local and state level agencies in order to address shared issues within the communities that we serve," the police department said in a social media post. "These professional partnerships significantly enhance public safety."

In emphasizing the vast scope of its jurisdiction, the department pointed out that the 126,000 acres of parkland include 55 miles of shoreline and 1,200 miles of trails spread out through two counties.



EBRPD: SEP-OCT REGIONAL IN NATURE ACTIVITY GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

August 21, 2024



The [East Bay Regional Park District](#) has released its [September-October Regional In Nature Activity Guide](#) with a variety of happenings and other information.

In this issue: Upcoming 90th Anniversary Events in the Regional Parks, Coastal Cleanup Day, Garin Apple Festival, Hispanic Heritage Month, and more

[Black Diamond Mines](#)

To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Black Diamond Mines will be offering bilingual mine tours (in Spanish and English) during select dates in September and October. Please check the Park District's website for more information. Tour fees apply and on-line registration in advance is highly recommended.

Para celebrar el Mes de la Herencia Hispana, ofreceremos visitas guiadas bilingües (en español e inglés) en determinadas fechas de septiembre y octubre. Consulte nuestra página web para obtener más información. Se aplican tarifas de tours y se recomienda registrarse en línea con anticipación.

- Sep 21 (Sat/Sáb) 10am, 1pm, and 3pm
- Sep 28 (Sat/Sáb) 10am, 1pm, and 3pm
- Oct 5 (Sat/Sáb) 10am, 1pm, and 3pm

- Oct 12 (Sat/Sáb) 10am, 1pm, and 3pm

Black Diamond Mines & Round Valley

Let's talk tarantulas! These misunderstood gentle giants get a bad rap because of the way they look. Drop by the table to better understand them and learn to appreciate them! No live tarantula at the table. After stopping by, you can explore the park on your own and might just be lucky enough to spot one.

- Sep 7 (Sat) 9:30-11am, Black Diamond Mines upper parking lot
- Sep 14 (Sat) 9:30-11am, Round Valley parking lot

Upcoming 90th Anniversary Events in the Regional Parks

Connect with people, parks, and nature to celebrate 90 years of land preservation, environmental conservation, and recreation at our special anniversary events.

- **Sept. 28** – Roberts Regional Recreation Area: Join us in celebrating the past 90 years of East Bay Regional Park District at one of the most popular parks. 10am-noon, Redwood Bowl Picnic Area
- Oct 19 – Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve: Celebrate the diverse heritage of the wilderness at this fun festival for all ages from 11am-3pm

For more fun 90th anniversary events, visit ebparks.org/celebrating-90-years.



Photo by EBRPD

[East Bay Parks Issue Calving Season Advisory](#)

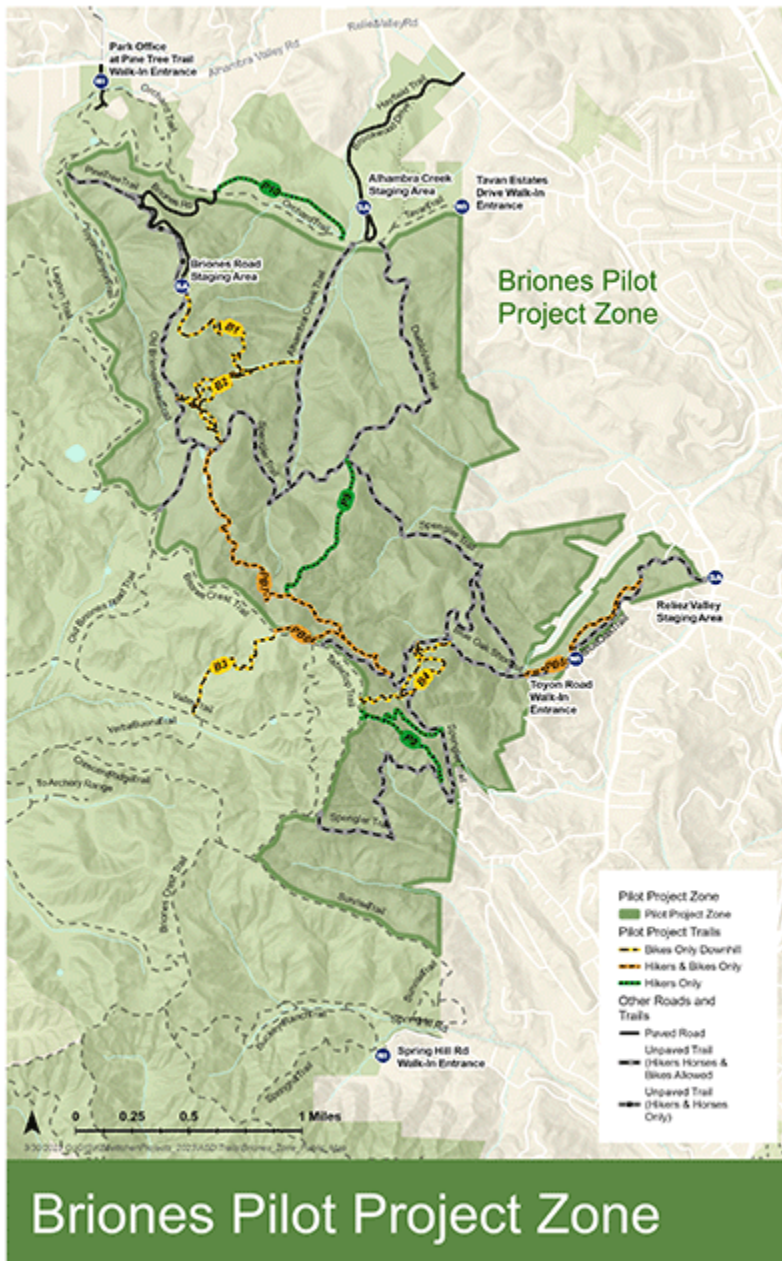
Calving season runs from August to October in East Bay Regional Parks. Interactions with calves can be a danger to both people and grazing animals.

Safety Tips:

- Do not approach or touch calves.
- Do not take selfies with calves.
- Do not get between a mother and her calf.
- Do not worry if a calf is by itself. The mother cow is usually nearby.

- Leash dogs around cattle and keep them away from calves. More information about leashing dogs at www.ebparks.org/safety/dogs.

If a calf appears to be in significant distress, or injured, sick, or dead, please note the location, the color of the animal, the ear tag number, and report it to park staff at (510) 881-1833.



[EBRPD: Share Your Thoughts on the Briones Pilot Project](#)

EBRPD is seeking feedback from trail users who have hiked or ridden on the trails in the **Briones Pilot Project** zone since the project launched in April 2023. Public input will help planners make project decisions and consider future plans, both for this project and districtwide.

To provide feedback, visit the project's webpage at www.ebparks.org/bpp and scroll to "Provide Feedback" to fill out an [online survey](#) or add a comment on the [pilot project's interactive map](#).

The [_Briones](#) Pilot Project was designed to test new ways to safely share trails and improve the trail experience for all users while protecting habitat, wildlife, and watersheds in [_Briones Regional Park](#). Longtime efforts to close bootleg trails, restore habitat, and manage conflicts on the trails had not been effective, and Park District planners wanted to try something new. Before the pilot project was launched, a community meeting was held in the park where ideas were discussed and shared with park planners. Many of the ideas from the community were added to the design of the Briones Pilot Project.

For additional information about the Briones Pilot Project, including weekend schedules, restrictions, and a video of the June community meeting, visit www.ebparks.org/bpp.