



LARPD calls for review of EBRPD spending in Livermore Valley area

Directors publicly accuse East Bay Parks of misdirecting \$110M; Sanwong calls 'shocking' allegations false

Jude Strzemp | September 18, 2024



The Robert Livermore Community Center is the main hub for LARPD's offices and program facilities. (Photo courtesy LARPD)

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District has requested an investigation of East Bay Regional Park District's tax revenue spending in the Livermore Valley, an area representing shared responsibilities and funding for the park districts.

Amid accusations from LARPD directors that EBRPD is taking over \$110 million of Livermore's money, the local park district's administration maintains that its call for a study is a standard part of reviewing a revenue-sharing agreement.

In addition to financial claims, LARPD directors have also called for annexation of Murray Township, land that Alameda Local Agency Formation Commission considers the Livermore Valley area and LARPD considers the far northeastern part of Alameda County.

LAFCO, an overseeing agency whose duties include studying and making recommendations for local governmental agencies, release a municipal service review (MSR) that includes a response to LARPD's call.

"If you were to walk on first street in downtown Livermore and talk to someone, I'd hope someone would have favorable things about both LARPD and East Bay Regional Park District," said EBRPD Director Olivia Sanwong, whose Ward 5 includes Livermore. "I think we should keep the community in mind and try to work together."

On Aug. 14, LARPD director tensions rose over the question of EBRPD spending.

"Our issue with East Bay: that they're getting money and they're not providing services," LARPD Chair David Furst said. "East Bay is taking our money."

At the LARPD's meeting on Aug. 28, Furst corrected the board's original claim of over \$200 million in unaccounted funds to over \$110 million since 1992. He argued that interest makes up the difference in these figures.

In a follow-up interview, LARPD General Manager Mathew Fuzie explained that claims by the board are their opinions intermixed with data and they do not express the district's position on the issue.

Instead, Fuzie framed LARPD's request to study EBRPD spending as a normal part of the MSR process.

LARPD has been asking where EBRPD funds are being used within the Murray Township for years, according to Fuzie.

Now that LARPD is struggling to pay for deferred maintenance of their facilities including water systems, equipment and painting, it's time to take stock of the districts' tax-sharing agreement, he said.

"We don't want to go out to voters and ask for more money if the money is there," Fuzie said. "So we want to account for where the money is, how it's being used."

But the board's accusations of unaccounted and owed funds didn't land well with Sanwong.

The claims are inaccurate, she said. And this is the first time EBRPD has heard them.

"It was shocking," she said of the LARPD directors' claims. "I was very surprised. I think that this type of thing probably should have been discussed between our two organizations."

"EBRPD's financial reports are publicly available, and our consistent receipt of the Distinguished Budget Award underscores our commitment to financial responsibility," Sanwong told Livermore Vine,

citing recognition from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

But the reports, including EBRPD's "2024 Adopted Operating Budget Book", don't satisfy LARPD's inquiry into EBRPD's spending in the Livermore Valley area, according to Fuzie.

The disputed funds are those from a 1992 tax-sharing agreement between the two park districts. When EBRPD annexed the eastern portion of Alameda County near Livermore through negotiations with LARPD, the districts agreed to split the responsibility and property tax funding for Murray Township, according to EBRPD's budget book.

EBRPD was to focus on acquiring and developing regional parks, open space areas and trails in the area as well as related maintenance and operations, according to its budget book. LARPD would continue to take primary care of "existing LARPD facilities and programs as well as for all future Murray Township community and local parks and recreation facilities, and related maintenance and operations."

EBRPD received about \$7.6 million in property tax revenues for the 2023-24 fiscal year and LARPD received about \$12.9 million once about \$12.6 million was deducted for educational revenue augmentation fund (ERAF), according to the LARPD's 2024-25 budget.

EBRPD isn't required to pay into ERAF because it is a multi-county organization, according to Sanwong.

Unadjusted for time, EBRPD has received about \$111 million since fiscal year 1992-93 from property tax revenues and LARPD has received about \$207 million.

The 276-square mile annexation meant EBRPD could expand regional parks and trail services to all of Alameda County.

EBRPD operates parks within the township and in direct service of its population. These locations include Del Valle, Camp Arroyo at Del Valle, Shadow Cliffs and Brushy Peak, according to its budget book. The operating budgets for these locations is over \$4 million per year.

The funds go towards “trail grading and paving, maintenance and repairs, mowing, sanitation, police and fire services, lifeguards, utilities, signage, brochures, and similar park expenses,” according to the budget book.

Sanwong also noted that EBRPD voluntarily gives \$200,000 to LARPD every year.

An additional investment in the area was EBRPD’s decision to base its helicopter unit near the Livermore airport earlier this year, according to Sanwong.

But the location may be reconsidered in the wake of Furst’s additional call for annexation of Murray Township, she said. However, EBRPD would likely never agree that LARPD could annex the area.

LAFCO, which has been in contact with both park districts, will provide a finalized report including an overview of how the property tax exchange agreement came about and the disjointedness of that agreement early next month, said Rachel Jones, executive officer of Alameda LAFCO.

Following LAFCO's report, LARPD plans to send a letter to the agency requesting a study of the EBRPD's spending in Murray Township and the annexation of the area.

At the commission's meeting in October, they will also discuss possible options for how to move forward, according to Jones.

"These (disagreements) are what these studies are for and MSRs can highlight issues that have been overseen," Jones told Livermore Vine. "I'm glad that we're reviewing this and I think eventually, with the help of this report, we can come to a resolution."

Following the cancellation of LAFCO's meeting on Sept. 12, the next Alameda LAFCO session will be a special meeting on Oct. 11 at noon in the Dublin City Council Chambers.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR PARK DISTRICT'S CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP EVENT

EBRPD

CC News | September 18, 2024



Join the East Bay Regional Park District in its effort to clean and preserve East Bay shorelines and waterways during the 40th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, from 9 a.m. to noon.

The Park District has selected seven parks for cleanup, including bayside beaches, shoreline trails, and inland lakes. Staff and volunteers will work together to collect and dispose of litter and recyclables, beautify the shorelines, and help maintain delicate ecosystems. At last year's event, an estimated 8,253 pounds of trash was collected by Park District volunteers.

Each year, volunteers often discover strange and wonderful oddities while cleaning the shores. As a special way to celebrate the 40 years of Coastal Cleanup milestone, volunteers who find an odd or interesting item will earn an East Bay Regional Park District beach towel (while supplies last). Some

of the most unusual finds include: a 2006 couples skating trophy, hand-carved wooden ship decorations, and even a wedding dress!

Participants are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle, hats, gloves, and sunscreen. Volunteers are welcome to bring their own trash-hunting gear, but garbage bags and gloves will be supplied by the Park District for those who need them. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes, keeping safety along the shoreline in mind. Layered clothing is recommended. The Park District will also provide snacks and water throughout the event. Children under 16 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

All locations welcome drop-ins, although registration is appreciated. Visit www.ebparks.org/get-involved/volunteer/coastal-cleanup or call (510) 544-2229 for more information.

Park District Coastal Cleanup Day Sites:

- Crown Memorial State Beach, Alameda – Near Intersection of Otis St. and 8th St., [More Info](#)
- Del Valle Regional Park, Livermore – Fiesta Grande Picnic Site, [More Info](#) & Visitor Center, [More Info](#)
- Hayward Regional Shoreline, Hayward – West Winton Avenue Staging Area, [More Info](#)
- Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline, Martinez – Main Parking Area, [More Info](#)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland – Arrowhead Marsh Staging Area, [More Info](#) & Oakport Fields [More Info](#)
- Point Isabel Regional Shoreline, Richmond – Rydin Road Staging Area, [More Info](#)
- Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, Richmond – Giant Staging Area, [More Info](#)

*The **East Bay Regional Park District** is the largest regional park system in the nation, comprising 73 parks, 55 miles of shoreline, and over 1,330 miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and environmental education. The Park District receives an estimated 30 million visits annually throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

EAST BAY TIMES

The 10 most common types of litter found on California's beaches

The annual Coastal Cleanup Day is Saturday, with 50,000 volunteers expected — here's how to participate



HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA – SEPTEMBER 17: Joy Molina, left, Peyton Alaniz, 11, Laurel Manfredi and Stephanie Alaniz, right, all of Hayward, along with dozens of volunteers take part in the 38th annual Coastal Cleanup Day at the Hayward Regional Shoreline in Hayward, Calif., on Saturday, Sept. 17, 2022 (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

PAUL ROGERS, September 17, 2024

Every September, evening temperatures begin to chill, high school football games kick off, pumpkins sprout in farm fields and tens of thousands of people flock to California's beaches, lakes, rivers and streams to pick up litter as part of the state's largest annual volunteer event, California Coastal Cleanup Day.

The goal is to beautify the environment and reduce trash, which can harm fish, birds, sea lions, dolphins and other wildlife. This year's cleanup day, the 40th

anniversary, will take place from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday. Volunteers are still needed at most of the 761 cleanup sites around Bay Area and the state.

To participate, go to coastalcleanupday.org

Since 1985, 1.7 million volunteers have picked up more than 26 million pounds of litter. Here are the top 10 most commonly found items from 1988 to 2023, by number and percent of overall items collected:

1. Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters — 8,403,338 (35.34%)
2. Food Wrappers/Containers — 2,592,161 (10.90%)
3. Caps/Lids — 2,207,929 (9.28%)
4. Bags (paper and plastic) — 1,723,026 (7.25%)
5. Cups/Plates/Forks, Knives, Spoons — 1,268,781 (5.34%)
6. Straws/Stirrers — 961,822 (4.04%)
7. Beverage Bottles (Glass) — 749,812 (3.15%)
8. Beverage Bottles (Plastic) — 659,505 (2.77%)
9. Beverage Cans — 573,772 (2.41%)
10. Construction Material — 407,651 (1.71%)

Top 10 total: 19,547,797 (82.20%)

There will be cleanup events Saturday in 57 of California's 58 counties, with only Trinity County, near the Oregon border, so far not participating. Major agencies, like the [East Bay Regional Park District](#) and the [Santa Clara Valley Water District](#) are cleaning up multiple sites.

Volunteers can show up at nearly all the sites, including popular beaches on the coast, San Francisco Bay, and inland lakes and streams. In many cases, they need only bring gloves.

"This is a three-hour event that happens once a year, but it has ripples through society," said Eben Schwartz, marine debris program manager at the California Coastal Commission, which oversees the event.

"Everything in California flows downhill to the coast," he said. "If we can try to stop trash where it starts before the rains come, we have a chance to protect a whole lot of wildlife that could otherwise be harmed by all that trash washing out to the coast."

In general, California's beaches and waterways have gotten cleaner over the past 40 years.

Twenty years ago, in 2004, volunteers picked up an average of 18 pounds of litter per person. Last year it was 8.2 pounds.

Recent changes in California laws have affected the type of litter found on beaches.

Five years ago, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a law banning smoking on state beaches and state parks, with a fine of up to \$25 per violation. Cigarette butts, nearly always the top item found each year by volume, declined to 21% of the total litter last year, down from an average of about 35% to 40% in the years before that.

Plastic bags have shown a similar drop since former Gov. Jerry Brown in 2014 signed a law banning plastic grocery bags in an attempt to reduce litter and ocean pollution. Voters upheld the law in a state ballot measure, rejecting a challenge from the plastic bag industry.

In 2009, plastic grocery bags made up 8.7% of the pieces of litter found in California during coastal cleanup days. Last year, they totaled just 1.3%.

The event is still bouncing back from the COVID pandemic. In 2019, the year before COVID hit, 74,410 people volunteered. During COVID in 2020, only 19,730 people did, without organized group events. That number jumped to 36,289 in 2021, then grew again to 39,318 in 2022, and again to 45,762 last year.

Schwartz said he expects 50,000 or more will join this Saturday. Smaller, local cleanups sponsored by other groups throughout the year also are helping reduce litter at beaches, lakes, rivers and streams, he said.

Funny items turn up every year.

"There's always somebody finding a wedding dress, or other weird things," he said. "Last year in San Diego somebody found one of those strips of photos you get from a photo booth and the guy's face had been blacked out by a sharpie. In Yolo County, volunteers found a 5.25-inch floppy disk. None of the young people knew what it was."

THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN

Berkeley City Council adopts emergency road plan for Panoramic Hill

Kira Rao-Poolla
Sep 12, 2024



Alex Hernandez Avila | The narrow streets of Panoramic Hill pose a risk in emergency situations that require efficient evacuation and transportation of fire equipment.

On Tuesday, the Berkeley City Council adopted the development of a plan to construct an emergency secondary egress road to facilitate evacuations on Panoramic Hill.

Panoramic Hill is particularly vulnerable to fire and earthquake hazards due to its “substandard vehicular access, steep slopes, inadequate water pressure, and proximity to the Hayward Fault and vegetated wildlands,” according to the city council agenda packet for Tuesday’s meeting.

Additionally, the zoning of Panoramic Hill recognizes the area as having residential development with “only one way in and one way out.”

“There are many reasons that the Panoramic Hill is at risk for fires,” said Berkeley Fire Department Deputy Fire Chief Keith May in an email. “It sits at the top of a canyon that has a lot of vegetation that, if ignited, would burn very hot and quickly ... Another risk are the narrow streets that have been in place since the area was developed. This creates an area where it will be difficult to get a large volume of cars out during an evacuation and it will be difficult to get fire apparatus into the area.”

According to May, a secondary egress road would create an alternate route for residents to exit the area, potentially decreasing the amount of time needed for evacuation.

Weldon Bradstreet, chairperson of the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission, noted that the difficulties in providing emergency services to Panoramic Hill, as well as evacuating residents from the area, have been “well-known” for more than 70 years.

For example, in 1959, a secondary access road was constructed to allow for emergency vehicle access to the area, but the road could not be used to evacuate residents. Street parking restrictions have also been enacted in the area to facilitate evacuation. According to Bradstreet, enforcement has been difficult.

“Construction of a secondary emergency egress road that saves lives by providing an escape route combined with the existing secondary access road for emergency vehicles benefits not only residents of Panoramic Way, but also all residents of the city by slowing the expansion of potentially catastrophic events and saving lives,” Bradstreet wrote in the agenda packet. “For the sake of public safety, we must take action now.”

The fire department is currently working on finding a vendor to perform a feasibility study on the alternate access route to the area, May said. He also noted that the project is in its preliminary stages, making its timeline and funding sources currently unclear.

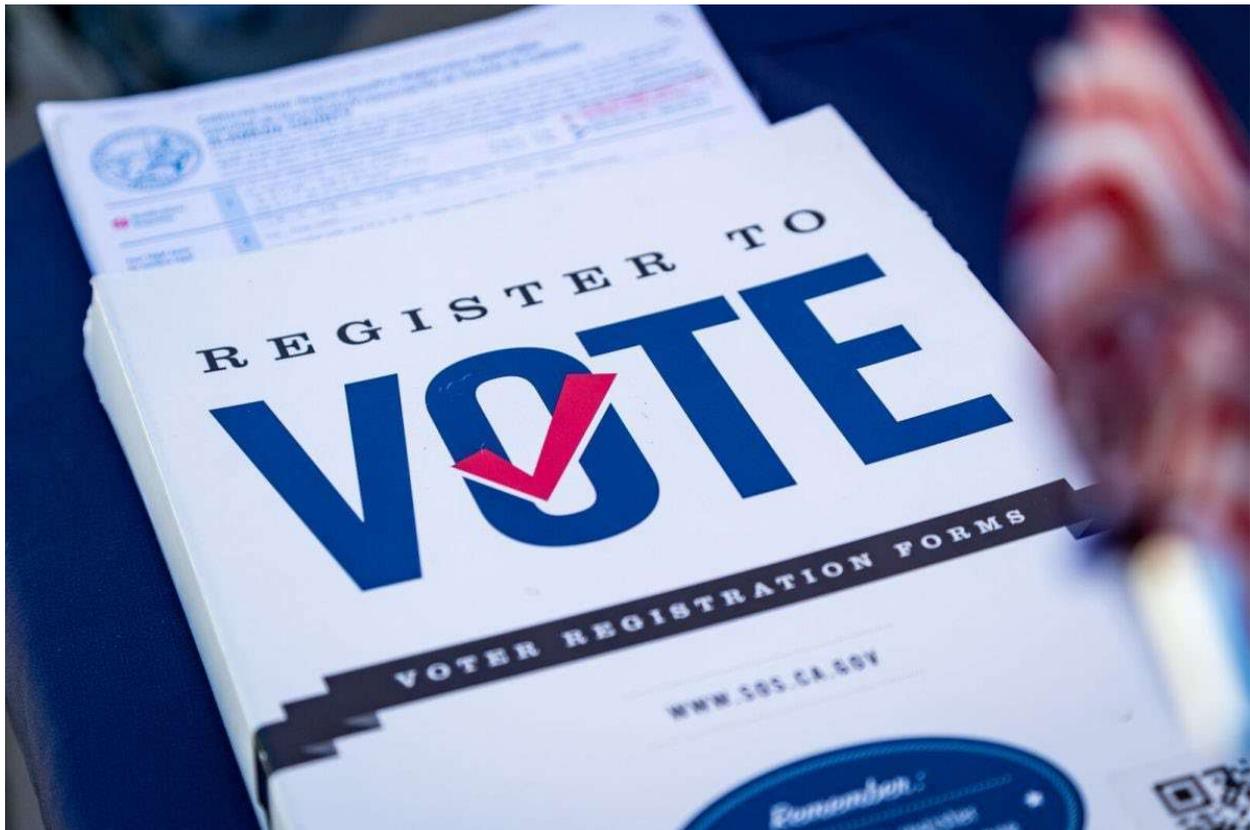
Bradstreet added that the plan could include discussions between the City of Berkeley, the City of Oakland, UC Berkeley, the East Bay Regional Parks District and Alameda County, as well as other related Berkeley commissions.

“I have had a conversation with the former chancellor, and now the new chancellor, of UC Berkeley about this very issue, and they are very eager in engaging this conversation with the city and with the neighbors and with other stakeholders about looking at secondary access, including potentially on university property,” said Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguín during the meeting. “I’m hopeful that through this process, we can find a solution.”

How to watch Oakland 2024 election candidate forums

A running list of town halls and debates to learn about who's running for City Council, city attorney, the Oakland school board, and more.

Eli Wolfe | Sept. 10, 2024



Credit: Amir Aziz

The Oaklandside is going to write a lot about each of the candidates running for City Council, school board, and city attorney, and what's at stake this election ([in fact, we've already started](#)). But if you want to hear directly from the candidates and maybe even ask a question or two, the many forums hosted by local civic groups, neighborhood councils, and other organizations are a great resource.

We've compiled a list of candidate town halls and forums, both in-person and virtual, that are scheduled in the near future. We also included meetings where local political clubs will consider and endorse candidates. And we'll be linking to the recordings of past meetings when groups make those available. Many candidates are also hosting their own meetings where you can ask them questions but we're not including these.

If we missed an event, please let us know and we'll update our story.

Upcoming events

- Sept. 17: The [Metropolitan Greater Oakland Democratic Club](#) is hosting an endorsement meeting for the Oakland school board candidates and the three measures that will be on the ballot. This meeting will also start at 7:30 p.m. and you can [register for it here](#). And the club is also holding a meeting for candidates running for the BART board, Oakland City, and some other local seats on September 24. You can [register here](#).
- Sept. 12: [Families in Action](#) is hosting a school board candidates forum this Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. You can register for the event [here](#).
- Sept. 12 and 18: Also on Thursday, the East Bay Young Democrats and Latine Young Democrats of the East Bay are hosting an online forum to endorse candidates running for school boards in Oakland and other East Bay cities. The event starts at 6:30 p.m. [and you can register here](#). On Sept. 18, the club will vote on endorsements for candidates in a bunch of East Bay political races, including the Oakland City Council and City Attorney. The online event starts at 6 p.m. and [you can register here](#).
- Sept. 21 and Oct. 5: The League of Women Voters of Oakland is holding an in-person candidate forum on Sept. 21. This all-day event will include candidates running for City Council districts 1, 3, and 7, city attorney, OUSD school districts 1, 3, and 5, and the East Bay Regional Park District Ward 4. The event starts at 10 a.m. and is being held at 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza in Oakland. You can [RSVP for the event here](#). The League is hosting a second forum on Oct. 5 for candidates running for City Council districts 5 and at-large, Peralta Trustee Area 2, OUSD school board District 7, and East Bay Municipal Utility District Ward 6. The in-person event starts at 10 a.m. at the same location and [you can RSVP here](#).
- Sept. 28: The NAACP Oakland branch and is co-hosting a debate for candidates running for the Oakland City Council at-large seat and city attorney. The event, which has not yet been posted on the NAACP's website, will be held on Sept. 28 at 12 p.m. at Scott's Seafood Grill & Bar. We will update this event once we receive more information.
- Oct.7: the Dimond Improvement Association is hosting a forum for candidates running for California State Senate, District 7 and for the Alameda County Board of

Supervisors seat representing District 5. The in-person event starts at 7pm at the Dimond branch of the Oakland Public Library. You can find more information [here](#).

Previous forums

- The Alameda County Democratic Party [hosted a 3-hour forum](#) for every Democratic candidate running for City Council, which is pretty much all of them. Each candidate only had a few minutes to answer a handful of questions, but you'll get a snapshot of where people stand on big issues in their district.
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VIDEO: HEROIC JOINT RESCUE MISSION SAVES STRICKEN HIKERS IN SUNOL WILDERNESS

Eileen Vargas | September 09, 2024



Source: CHP Golden Gate Division Air Operations

Earlier yesterday morning, a joint rescue mission unfolded in the rugged terrains of the Sunol Wilderness. Authorities from Cal Fire, Alameda County Fire, East Bay Regional Parks, and the CHP's Golden Gate Division Air Operations, alongside a San Ramon Valley Fire Hazardous Response Team (HRT) member, responded to distress calls concerning two hikers besieged by medical emergencies amidst the natural expanse of the East Bay Parks. The aerial unit, CHP H-30, played a crucial role in the operation.

Lowering the HRT member to the scene, the team executed what's known

in the rescue lingo as a "two-up", a precise maneuver designed to evacuate individuals in distress efficiently. The details of the mission, captured and shared by the [CHP - Golden Gate Division Air Operations Facebook page](#), showcased the seamless coordination between the different agencies involved,

The hiker was transported to a local hospital for treatment,



****Trail Rescue-East Bay Parks****

This morning, Cal Fire, Alameda County Fire, East Bay Regional Parks, CHP H-30 with a San Ramon Valley Fire HRT member on board to a report of two hikers suffering a medical emergency in the Sunol Wilderness.

H-30 lowered the HRT member to the scene, conducted a "two up" rescue and delivered the hiker to a waiting ground ambulance.

The hiker was transported to a local hospital for treatment,



CALIFORNIA DISTRIBUTES OVER \$48 MILLION TO IMPROVE COASTS AND WATERSHEDS

CC News | September 9, 2024



SACRAMENTO – California, through the Board of the California State Coastal Conservancy, has approved more than \$48 million for 22 projects that will protect, restore, and improve public access along the state’s coast and coastal watersheds.

“We’re continuing to invest in our coastline and expand access for Californians, making sure that more folks have better access for decades to come. That includes protecting these areas from the impacts of the climate crisis.” Governor Gavin Newsom

Funded by the Governor’s multi-billion-dollar California Climate Commitment, the projects include:

- **\$1,238,120 to Tamien Nation to equip a Native fire crew** to steward tribal territory, and implement prescribed fire and fuel reduction work at Henry W. Coe State Park in Santa Clara County.
- **\$6,600,000 to the San Diego Unified Port District for the construction of Harbor Park**, a 25-acre park with a beach, boat launch, and other recreational amenities to expand, improve the resilience of, and replace amenities of Bayside Park on the Chula Vista Bayfront.
- **A total of \$994,197 to 13 nonprofit organizations and 1 tribe for projects to enhance the public’s opportunities to explore the California coast** through the Conservancy’s Explore the Coast program. The programs will engage an estimated 6,100 people from across California, including 5,500 low-income Californians, 5,700 people of color, 1,000 youth who are homeless or in foster care, approximately 650 people for whom English is not their first language, and at least 1,900 people with physical, cognitive, and/or emotional disabilities.

“Coastal Conservancy funding is being put to work to protect and restore the California coast, and to make it more accessible and climate resilient. The projects funded at this meeting, from wildfire resilience to wetland restoration to lower cost coastal accommodation, will help to address the many challenges that face our iconic coastline. We are proud of our nonprofit, tribal, and public agency partners and excited to see these projects being implemented.” – **Amy Hutzel, Executive Officer of the State Coastal Conservancy**

[Click here](#) for the full list of projects throughout the state and more information about the grant programs.

Editors Note – Contra Costa County Related Projects

Contra Costa County

- East Bay Regional Park District was awarded \$700,000 to the to undertake the [Keller Beach Access Improvements Project](#), consisting of constructing public access improvements and amenities at the Keller Beach portion of Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline.
 - [East Bay Regional Park District](#) was awarded \$2,075,000 to conduct vegetation treatments to reduce fuels across an estimated 130 acres in Tilden Regional Park, Anthony Chabot Regional Park and Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline, develop an approximately 34-acre shaded fuel break along the southern border of Lake Chabot Regional Park, and purchase vegetation management equipment.
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CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS HOST CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

CC News |September 6, 2024



Volunteers in Newport Bay in Orange County pose for a quick photo after collecting many bags of trash at a past Coastal Cleanup Day. Photo from Newport Sea Base.

SACRAMENTO, *Calif.* – California State Parks announced that more than 40 state parks, as well as the department’s Division of Boating and Waterways, will participate in the 40th annual [California Coastal Cleanup Day](#) on Saturday, Sept. 21. Every year on Coastal Cleanup Day, tens of thousands of people remove trash at sites throughout California as part of the state’s largest annual volunteer event.

- **WHAT:** 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup Day
- **WHEN:** 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Sept. 21
- **WHERE:** More than 1,000 sites throughout California.
View this [interactive map of cleanup locations](#)

East Bay Regional Park District

Register online: [Coastal Cleanup Registration](#)

Registration is requested, but walkups will be allowed.

If you would like to bring a group of 10 or more people, please register yourself and then call us at (510)544-2229 or email Volunteers@ebparks.org.

Coastal Cleanup Day Locations

- **Robert W Crown Regional Shoreline**
 - [Bathhouse near Otis and 8th](#)
- **Del Valle Regional Park**
 - [Fiesta Grande Picnic Area](#)
 - [Visitor Center](#)
- **Hayward Regional Shoreline**
 - [End of West Winton Rd](#)
- **Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline**
 - [Main Parking Area](#)
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline**
 - [Arrowhead Marsh](#)
 - [Oakport Fields](#)
- **Pt Isabel Regional Shoreline**
 - [End of Rydin Road](#)
- **Point Pinole Regional Shoreline**
 - [Giant Staging Area](#)

ADDITIONAL DETAILS: This year, more than 45,000 volunteers are expected to join in the effort to remove trash from beaches and inland shorelines – from the coast to the Sierra region and from San Diego up to Modoc County. Forty-five California state parks units – including Heart’s Desire and Millerton Point (Alan Sieroty Beach) at Tomales Bay State Park, Crystal Cove State Park, San Buenaventura, and San Clemente state beaches – will be participating in this year’s Coastal Cleanup Day. To join this statewide effort, visit the [California Coastal Cleanup Day 2024 webpage](#).

Volunteers are encouraged to reuse items they may have at home.

California State Parks supports equal access. If you are interested in participating and need special accommodations, contact the park unit you plan to volunteer at for assistance.

The event is organized by the California Coastal Commission as part of the International Coastal Cleanup organized by the Ocean Conservancy. Participants are encouraged to share their cleanup experience on social media using the hashtag #coastalcleanupday. Follow statewide efforts on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and on [Instagram](#).

About Coastal Cleanup Day

Coastal Cleanup Day not only helps protect water bodies, and the wildlife and communities that thrive in and around them, but it also provides a hands-on educational experience of the damage caused by trash, especially single-use disposable plastics. According to past cleanup data, 75 percent of the debris that was removed was composed of plastic, a material that never completely biodegrades and has numerous harmful consequences for the environment. Plastic debris can kill wildlife, leach toxins into the environment, and introduce them into the food chain. In 2023, more than 45,762 volunteers removed 376,308 pounds of trash and recyclables from California's waterways, beaches, and lakes in one day. In partnership with the Division of Boating and Waterways, 41 boating facilities and groups participated in the event with 1,799 volunteers collecting 17,641 pounds of trash and recyclables on land and from 203 kayaks, canoes, and dinghies.

LARPD

Directors Ask For Scrutiny

Questions Persist About East Bay Parks Spending

David Jen | Sep 5, 2024

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) will ask the county next month to look into where tens of millions of property tax dollars earmarked for recreation and park services have gone.

In 1992, LARPD and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) entered an agreement that placed the responsibility for the maintenance and operation of regional parks, open space and trails in eastern Alameda County (formerly known as Murray Township) upon EBRPD. While the area falls within LARPD's boundaries, the districts agreed that the area's recreation needs aligned better with EBRPD's regional mission. In exchange, EBRPD has since received a portion of LARPD property tax revenues.

But LARPD now questions how those funds have been used. At its Aug. 28 meeting, the LARPD Board of Directors agreed to send a letter to the Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) asking for a special review of the LARPD-EBRPD relationship. The conversation was a continuation of an issue raised in the board's Aug. 14 meeting.



According to LARPD staff, EBRPD has received more than \$110 million over the last 30 years through the agreement but has spent only \$35 million of it.

LARPD Director James Boswell said that \$35 million was even too generous a figure. After multiple reviews of EBRPD budgets, Boswell estimated EBRPD's use of the tax-sharing money as closer to \$6 million.

Regardless of whether EBRPD's investments amounted to \$6 million or \$35 million, said LARPD Director Philip Pierpont, "it's still a ton of money going the wrong direction."

LARPD Board Chair David Furst said, "They're getting a lot of money, and they can't really justify where that money's gone."

Deborah Spaulding, EBRPD assistant general manager of finance and management services, told The Independent that the tax-sharing funds were also intended for existing facilities.

"In 1992, when EBRPD annexed the Murray Township area, EBRPD and LARPD agreed to share a portion of property tax revenues, with LARPD receiving funds for existing LARPD park facilities and EBRPD receiving funds for ongoing park operations and maintenance of existing regional parks and acquisition and development of future regional parks," said Spaulding.

"EBRPD manages key regional parks serving Murray Township, including Del Valle, the Arroyo Staging Area, Ohlone Wilderness, Camp Arroyo, Shadow Cliffs and Brushy Peak," she continued. "The Park District looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with LARPD to determine how best to plan and provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities and services that serve the people of Murray Township."

The special-review request comes as LAFCo prepares to finalize its municipal service review, a report released every five years reviewing special districts and services within the county.

“LARPD takes the position that the share of property tax revenue transferred to EBRPD is not sufficiently reinvested in the Livermore community,” read the report. “Beginning in FY 2003-04, EBRPD has transferred approximately \$200,000 per year back to LARPD for the purpose of supporting ongoing park maintenance projects. The transfer amount has not increased over the past 20 years.”

That amount stemmed from a joint debt the two districts were paying for the Brushy Peak Regional Preserve in Livermore.

The LARPD board felt that their worries needed to be called out in more detail in the LAFCo review.

“If we allow the draft MSR (municipal service review) to go forward with mistakes, it becomes written in law,” said Furst.

But the special review includes risks to LARPD, according to the district’s counsel, Gary Bell, an attorney with Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley PC.

“There could be a recommendation that you all don’t want or don’t agree with,” said Bell.

One side effect, said Furst, could involve LARPD’s dissolution. He referred to a previous municipal service review that suggested that EBRPD was better equipped than LARPD to provide regional services in the Livermore area.

Although Bell conceded that an unfavorable special study could serve as the first step toward terminating LARPD, he qualified that likelihood as “very low.”

Pierpont and Boswell also discounted that possibility.

“I don’t see that happening at all,” said Boswell.

LAFCo will hold its next meeting on Sept. 12, although that meeting’s agenda — and whether the LARPD-EBRPD agreement will be discussed — has not yet been shared.

Corrections to Story on Park Districts' Revenue

Aug 29, 2024 Updated Sep 3, 2024

A story that appeared on page 1 in The Independent's August 22 edition misidentified the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) director who thought a significant amount of property tax revenue had been distributed to the East Bay Parks and Recreation District (EBPRD) to pay for maintaining and operating LARPD properties. The director, James Boswell, questioned whether EBPRD was inappropriately spending the revenue outside Livermore.



Last week's story omitted a key context in that the amount of spending in question may not be known at this time. The amount of revenue disbursed annually to EBPRD has grown from \$330,000 per year in 1993, when the tax revenue sharing agreement between the two districts was first established, to \$7.6 million in 2023. The amount that each district should have been given was not available.

The story also misstated the mechanism with which LARPD and the EBPRD entered into a tax revenue-sharing agreement. The story mistakenly included the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) of Alameda County, an independent state agency, in that relationship; the districts entered into the tax-sharing agreement themselves. Under the agreement LARPD, which covers eastern Alameda County, would send a portion of revenue to East Bay Parks for the upkeep and operations of regional parks

and trails that are within LARPD's jurisdiction. LAFCo administers boundaries and is not involved in the disbursement of tax revenue.

The story has been corrected online.

Livermore Park Board Possibly Missing \$200M

Board Directors Ask LAFCO To Explain

Ruth Roberts | Aug 22, 2024 | Updated Aug 25, 2024

The board of directors of the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) believes an inter-agency tax-sharing agreement has not provided the district with the money it is owed.

Specifically, over the last 30-plus years of the agreement, LARPD Director James Boswell thinks that it should have received \$200 million more than it did because of decisions made by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Alameda County. That money may have instead gone to the East Bay Regional Park District.

Under the tax-sharing agreement, usage fees, property taxes and a special local tax are collected by the county and distributed to area agencies such as LARPD. LAFCO, an independent state regulatory planning agency, makes boundary and jurisdictional decisions which determine, in the case of parks, which parcels are considered within the sphere of influence (or SOI) of which district. That can affect how funding is allocated by the county.



The dispute came to light in LARPD's Aug. 14 meeting, where directors expressed frustration over LAFCO's seeming refusal to include and address their concerns in a draft report.

LAFCO representatives were not at the meeting, and did not respond to calls from The Independent seeking comment.

LAFCO produces such a report, called a municipal service review (MSR), every five years to understand the availability and performance of governmental services in their jurisdictions.

The LARPD board believes that over the past 30 or more years, the LARPD has potentially lost as much as \$200 million in revenue that has instead gone to the East Bay Parks and Recreation District for properties that are arguably within LARPD's jurisdiction.

The dispute over overlapping jurisdictions, also referred to as the districts' respective spheres of influence, form the basis of the complaint, with the draft report noting that the issue could lead to less public accountability and efficiency.

"There may need to be a new tax agreement that will better serve them or order a detachment to get rid of overlapping boundaries," the report states.

But that doesn't satisfy what the Livermore parks board sees as a significant shortfall.

"I read these documents multiple times and I find this unacceptable," said Boswell.

"We are losing money every year when we could be in a better position to serve our SOI area."

Attorney Gary Bell, who was hired as a special consultant by the LARPD, said during the meeting that the board's best course of action is to have Livermore board members

attend the scheduled Sept. 12 LAFCO meeting, where a final version of the report will be released.

“We have revised and revised the MSR in anticipation of next month’s LAFCO meeting,” said Bell. “The last time we spoke with LAFCO they said they were going through a second round of revisions and were intending to include the changes we suggested or commit to a special report ... those things did not make it into the draft, but they said they will include these provisions before Sept. 12.”

According to Bell, those changes included information on the amount of money coming from taxes to Livermore, which could confuse those who read the report because it makes it look as though more money is coming into the LARPD than actually is.

David Furst, LARPD chair, said in an interview with The Independent that he was optimistic the LAFCO board would agree to the study.

“We’re hoping that LAFCO commissioners will tell their staff to do the special study soon and not in two or three years,” said Furst. “I am hopeful they see the importance of it all.”

Correction: This story was corrected on Aug. 22 to reflect the fact that James Boswell was the LAPRD member who was quoted saying there may be up to \$200 million in funds that the district is owed. The original story misattributed the quote to Board Director Philip Pierpont, who was absent from the meeting. Also, LARPD and EBRPD entered into their agreement themselves. The story erroneously stated the role of LAFCO in that relationship.