

## Missing hiker found in East Bay wilderness after major search

By [Gregory Thomas](#) May 20, 2024

A hiker who had gone missing in a large wilderness area among the rolling hills east of Fremont was found at a nearby reservoir Monday afternoon following a massive search involving seven state and county agencies.

Hiker Alex Stecher, identified only as an adult man, set out with his dog on Friday morning into the Sunol Regional Wilderness Preserve outside Fremont east towards the Ohlone Wilderness, according to the East Bay Regional Park District. The pair “did not arrive at Del Valle Regional Park for his designated pickup time” Saturday afternoon. It was not immediately clear whether someone was supposed to meet Stecher at the end of his hike.

That triggered a search of the wilderness area between Fremont and Livermore, an undulating corridor of grassy, oak-studded hills and river canyons accessible only via the 28-mile-long Ohlone Trail. Officials from Alameda County, Calfire, California Highway Patrol and the park district were involved in the search.

Stecher and his dog, Apollo, were found alive and in good health on Monday by public utilities workers at San Antonio Reservoir, according to East Bay Regional Park District Lt. Patrick Brookens.

The lake abuts Sunol Regional Wilderness Area’s northern edge but is well off of the Ohlone Trail and off-limits to the public. While the hiker was still being evaluated by investigators, the working assumption is that he and his dog lost the Ohlone Trail, Brookens said.

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## A “Little Yosemite” awaits just miles from Pleasanton

Sunol Regional Wilderness visitors enjoy the “pools and drops” in the gorge on Alameda Creek dubbed “Little Yosemite.”



DENNIS WYATT

209 Living

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**SUNOL**—Cascading waterfalls, natural swimming pools, and thick tree cover in the middle of nowhere.

It’s no wonder that they call the gorge that’s a sliver of the Sunol Regional Wilderness “Little Yosemite.”

On a recent Saturday the “pools and drops” that form near the headwaters of the Alameda Creek were liberally sprinkled with families, teens, and couples frolicking in the cool shallow waters, playing under waterfalls and relaxing on granite rocks beneath a thick canopy of coastal oaks.

“Little Yosemite”—which may start to run dry as July nears —is just one of the reasons that make a day trip or even overnight backpacking to the Sunol Regional Wilderness so appealing.

The others are easy to access areas along Indian Joe Creek suitable for picnics, enjoying nature, or just kicking back; numerous hiking trails; and access to arguably one of the best but least known attractions of the Bay Area —the Ohlone Regional Wilderness.

The most surprising thing is how “wild” it is given it’s off Interstate 680 —the commuter artery that ties San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley with Pleasanton and the Amador Valley.

It doesn’t take a drive too far down Calaveras Road heading east from the freeway to realize this is not your typical Bay Area outdoor destination.

Trees crowd the road and provide a cooling canopy. Hawks and vultures outnumber the vehicles. And while you’ll pass a commercial endeavor or two including a wholesale nursery specializing in large box trees you won’t spy a single house as you travel 4.3 miles east on Calaveras Road. You can’t miss the left turn to Geary Road that terminates after 1.7 miles into the Sunol Regional Wilderness parking lot.

There is a \$5 parking fee to access the Sunol Regional Wilderness. The park opens at 8 a.m. year-round and closes at 9 p.m. from now through Sept. 8. Closing hours are earlier in the fall and winter. The gates are locked when the park is closed.

There is a \$2 fee per dog.

Campers must sign in before dusk.

To access the much larger Ohlone Wilderness Area that abuts the Sunol Wilderness area you need to buy the \$2 permit that is good for a year at the Sunol entrance station. You can also access the Ohlone Wilderness from Del Valle Regional Park south of Livermore or the Coyote Hills Visitors Center in Fremont where you access the Mission Peak Regional Preserve. The Ohlone permit comes with a map.

Between the four areas there are 16,500 acres you can wander. That almost 26 square miles of bliss away from the Bay Area hustle and bustle. There are 6,958 acres in the Sunol component.

If your goal is just to visit Little Yosemite, there is a relatively flat path that is a dirt road with restricted vehicle use to cover the two-mile distance. There is also a more interesting trail that goes up along the edge of hills and drops down.

Depending upon how much more rain we get, the window to enjoy the falls and pools of water is rapidly closing. Normally they're history by late May or early June. Regular visitors to "Little Yosemite" indicated the heavy rains have probably extended the flow to the end of this month.

Of course, I went to Sunol to hike.

Typically, the best time to hike Sunol is from September to May. But the heavy rains as well as mild spring means June will be a good bet as well.

There are six small trails that interconnect as well as dead end trails that take you to viewing points.

I opted for a 7.6 mile loop consisting primarily of the Indian Joe Creek and Cerro Este Trails with a couple of side trips that involved doubling back to the loop route I picked to rack up nine miles.

The loop's high point was 2,038 feet with a net elevation gain of 1,500 feet. It's rated moderate to strenuous. With the side trips tossed in it took just about four hours.

While parts of the loop have tree cover, a significant part is exposed to the sun. It's best to start early. I didn't start hiking until 11:30 a.m. on a day when the high in Sunol would reach 80 degrees. It was warm.

What sets this hike apart from Pleasant Ridge, Del Valle, Joseph Grant (near the Hamilton Observatory), Mission Peak, Mt. Diablo, and even the Ohlone Wilderness was the relatively few people who opted to use the trails to make a loop instead of enjoying the area around the visitors center, heading to Little Yosemite or destination for backpacking overnight in the Ohlone Wilderness.

Once I left the heavily traveled hillside trail to Little Yosemite and got back into the trail near the Visitors Center I passed three people in six miles.

Then there are the views. There were spots on the backside where you could scan the horizon for 360 degrees and not see a structure, telephone pole, cell tower or any sign of civilization save the trail. Instead it was a golden panorama with dashes of green as well as clusters of oaks and bushes just like Spanish Explorers saw in 1776 when they trudged through the range.

There is also a view of Calaveras Reservoir in the distance.

It gets high points for solitude.

It's clear that Sunol would be an absolute joy on a dry winter day or early spring.

Bicycles are allowed on some trails as are horses. There are sources of drinking water and restrooms scattered about. Even so, carry your own water. Never assume there will be water when you hike.

There is a wilderness museum at the visitors' center. You will also find picnic tables scattered about. There are also benches placed periodically along trails. There were two on the loop I took, each placed so that if you opted to rest you'd have an incredible view to soak in.

Dogs must be leashed 200 feet from any trail, picnic areas, developed areas such as playing fields, and on some trails. They must be within sight and under voice control at all times. And remember, there is a \$2 fee for dogs.

Again, the \$5 entrance fee is worth it just to hang around the creek and area near the visitors' center which is what several families with young children were doing on Saturday.

For more information go to [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org)



Why hike Sunol Regional Wilderness? One reason is for uncluttered views like this shown in a photo taken in late July.

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# EAST BAY TIMES

## 6 great Bay Area camping adventures — including pup-friendly backpacking and yurt glamping too

From Napa to the Santa Cruz Mountains, these spots offer abundant outdoor overnight fun.



Kate Bradshaw and Gennady Sheyner set up their campsite, Saturday, April 13, 2024, at The Ranch at Cross Road, a private campsite in Livermore, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



By [KATE BRADSHAW](#) | [kbradshaw@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:kbradshaw@bayareanewsgroup.com) | Bay Area News Group

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Trying to find a place to camp in the Bay Area on a sunny weekend can be exasperating enough to make you almost resent California's outdoorsy nature — or at least, its outdoorsy residents who all want the same thing you do.

Trawl the National Parks Service's camping reservation system, [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov), or the State Parks' [reservecalifornia.com](https://www.reservecalifornia.com) for campsites of any kind — tent, trailer, RV or cabin — in Point Reyes, Big Sur and other popular spots, and it's not uncommon to see every weekend sold out months ahead. It's reached such a point that in December, California State Parks [announced](#) it was dropping traditional reservations for Mount Tamalpais' popular Steep Ravine cabins and piloting a lottery system instead.

But don't give up on planning a great summer outing yet. The truth is, there are a ton of other amazing overnight opportunities around the Bay Area, from glamping in a Calistoga yurt in Wine Country to escapist backpacking on Angel Island. We also scouted out what may be the only dog-friendly backpacking opportunity in the region without having to schlep to a national forest (psst, it's in Antioch).

Here are six fantastic Bay Area camping options to explore that include state, county, city and regional parks and some private campground options, too. Some boast wilderness access, while others enjoy proximity to more urbane regional draws, like wine tasting — and they're all within an hour or two of home. Consider it a sampling for adventures of all kinds, now and in the future.

### *Backpacking on Angel Island*



Panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay are among the perks of camping at Angel Island State Park. (Kate Bradshaw/Bay Area News Group)

Angel Island offers one of the best overnight escapes right in the middle of the Bay. Campsites, which must be reserved through the [California State Parks system](#), are in high demand, so patience is required — weeknights tend to

have greater availability — but the wait is worth it.

Load up your backpacking gear, then board the Angel Island ferry in Tiburon. Once you arrive at the island, snag a snack at the Ayala Cove Cafe before embarking on the 1.5 to 2-mile hike from the ferry station to the campsites.

This is a perfect backpacking outing for taking friends or family members who might be new to the activity — or, in my case, a friend who is very scared of bears. There's plenty of wildlife, but there are no bears on Angel Island!

Learn about the island's history as an immigration station, quarantine location and army fort as you explore the island, where eerie, abandoned buildings offer a glimpse of the past. The Angel Island Immigration Museum at China Cove is particularly informative, as it describes the period from 1910 to 1940 when the island became known as the Ellis Island of the West and was used to enforce laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Traipse the island's perimeter trail or hike to the top of Mount Livermore for panoramic views of the entire Bay. After the last ferry departs for the mainland, it will feel like you've got the island to yourself.

**Details:** There are reservation-only tent camping sites (\$30 per night, no dogs) in four locations on the island, with water and pit toilets nearby. Find details at [parks.ca.gov](https://parks.ca.gov). Board the Angel Island Ferry (\$6-\$18) at 21 Main St. in Tiburon; <https://angelislandferry.com>.

### *Yurt camping at Bothe-Napa Valley State Park*



Yurts at Bothe-Napa Valley State Park offer more rustic than rugged overnight accommodations in Calistoga. (Kate Bradshaw/Bay Area News Group)

Did you know you can stay somewhere amazing in Napa Valley for under \$100 a night? Napa may get flak for its spendy resorts and hotels, but a yurt stay at Calistoga's Bothe-Napa Valley State Park makes for an economical – and beautiful – way to enjoy a wine country weekend without

breaking the bank. At \$80 a night, the yurts at the state park provide warmth, shelter and a bed, with shared, but pristine showers and toilets, but it's BYO light and linens.

The park also offers traditional campsites (\$43, no hook-ups) and cabins (\$125 and up) and a pool that will be open on weekend afternoons during the summer.

"It's a great place in wine country where you can camp, go get a bottle of wine and not have to pay an arm and a leg," says Jay Jessen, park steward assistant.

The park's location midway between St. Helena and Calistoga puts it temptingly near wine country landmarks such as [Castello di Amorosa](#) and [Sterling Vineyards](#). There are beautiful hiking trails on-site, and the [Petrified Forest](#) is a short drive away, where you can venture out on a self-guided tour to see 3.4-million-year-old petrified redwoods. Jessen also recommends visiting the nearby [Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park](#), which is home to a water-powered grist mill used to grind corn and wheat into meal and flour.

Need more itinerary inspiration? Napa's [Croccante Pizza](#) makes a great stop for Detroit-style pizza on your way to Calistoga. In the morning, pick up coffee and an apple turnover at Calistoga's [Bella Bakery](#) before heading to the trailhead to tackle [Mount St. Helena](#). Then refuel with a post-hike sandwich from Napa's [Contimo Provisions](#).

**Details:** Find Bothe-Napa Valley State Park at 3801 St. Helena Highway in Calistoga. Yurts are \$80 per night. Dogs are allowed in some areas of the park but not on trails. Find more details at [parks.ca.gov](https://parks.ca.gov).



## Camping at The Ranch at Cross Road



note.

Curious goats eye a camper staying at the Ranch at Cross Road, a private campground in Livermore. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

This privately-owned campground is located in the heart of Livermore's wine country and available for reservations via [Hipcamp](#). It's also an organic farm with pens of ducks and goats – so farm animal fans (and parents) take

Each of the 10 campsites (\$55) provides everything you'll need for a tent or RV-based outing with shared showers and flush-toilets housed in a stylish shed near a communal barbecue area.

Nearby amenities include the [Purple Orchid](#), a wine country resort and spa across the street, and plenty of eating and drinking options downtown. Pick up a coffee and hot waffles at [Story Coffee](#) or a beer from [First Street Alehouse](#).

Looking for a more nature-heavy weekend? Head to [Del Valle Regional Park](#), where you can rent a boat, go fishing or explore the park's abundant – albeit steep – hiking trails, like the 4.4-mile [East Shore Loop](#). (Del Valle also offers camping options; go to [reserveamerica.com](#) for more information.)



A fire pit overlooks the farm buildings at Livermore's Ranch at Cross Road, a private campground that can be reserved through Hipcamp, in Livermore, Calif., Saturday, April 13, 2024. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

**Details:** The Livermore ranch is located at 4779 Cross Road; note that you'll need to get a key code from the host to enter the property. Each campsite is \$55 per night, and they're dog-friendly, as long as Fido is comfortable around farm animals; [hipcamp.com](#).



## *Backpacking at Black Diamond Mines Regional Park*



Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve offers dog-friendly backpacking in Antioch, which earned it two thumbs up from the author. (Courtesy Gennady Sheyner)

Getting a reservation at this East Bay Regional Preserve in Antioch may be the hardest part, but not for the reason you think. The park can host 20 people at a time in the backcountry, but you'll have to call an actual phone number to place a reservation. That's a tall order for those of us who are telephonically awkward or trying to coordinate an outing with multiple parties.

Still, it's well worth it, because this is one of the only dog-friendly backpacking spots in the Bay.

During the summer, the hills can be sweltering as you hike the 3 miles to your campsite, but a gentle breeze from the Delta helps. Cell signal is iffy out here so make sure you pre-download any digital maps ahead of time.

Even on a summer Saturday night, it was easy to find solitude here. And as a bonus, the outhouse was surprisingly well-maintained and looked like its interior had recently received a fresh coat of paint. Note: Make sure to bring lots of water and be aware of snake activity, particularly in the spring and summer.

The park offers guided tours of its Coal Mine Experience and the Hazel Atlas Mine on weekends beginning May 18, so if you time your trip just right — and make reservations — you can learn more about the region's mining history.

**Details:** Find the Black Diamond Mine Regional Preserve at 5175 Somersville Road in Antioch. Fees are \$5 per person per night, with extra fees for parking and tours; [ebparks.org/parks/black-diamond](http://ebparks.org/parks/black-diamond).

## *Camping at Foothills Nature Preserve*



Towle campground at Foothills Nature Preserve in Los Altos Hills offers a surprisingly remote overnight escape not far from Palo Alto. (Kate Bradshaw/Bay Area News Group)

A 1,400-acre park that until December 2020 was for Palo Alto residents and their guests only, this nature preserve is a newer-to-many-of-us gem nestled in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains in Los

Altos Hills. The park has eight tent-only campsites at Towle Campground and at \$43 per night, it might be one of the most affordable accommodations for many miles around. (The best bargain — at \$2 per person — is likely still [Black Mountain Backpack Camp](#) at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, which is operated by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. It's a lovely 1.5-mile hike in to the campsites.)

Looking for a gorgeous, but challenging hike? Check out the [Los Trancos Trail](#), a 7-mile, mostly shaded loop through some of the Peninsula's most scenic open space.

**Details:** Find the park, which is dog-friendly on weekdays at 11799 Page Mill Road in Los Altos Hills. Tent-only campsites are \$43 per night; <https://is.gd/towle>.

### *Camping at Mount Madonna County Park*

Want to camp in the redwoods and also bring the pup? Most of the state parks in the area have a no-pets-on-trails policy, even if you're allowed to camp with them, but that's not a problem at this county park in Watsonville. Leashes are required, though.

Camp in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains in Santa Clara County's Mt. Madonna County Park, which has 116 drive-in and walk-in campsites and five yurts of different sizes. There's plenty of hiking on-site, including [four routes](#) with different difficulty levels inspired by local wildlife. Download the Agents of Discovery app, and you'll be able to play augmented reality mobile games as you hike the 1.5-mile Newt Trail. You can also pair the trip with an excursion to the Santa Cruz coast or visit nearby wineries in Gilroy, such as [Fortino](#) and [Sarah's Vineyard](#).

**Details:** This dog-friendly park at 7850 Pole Line Road in Watsonville offers walk-in campsites (\$18 per night) and drive-in sites (\$34), with RV hookups for water and electricity available; [parks.sccgov.org/santa-clara-county-parks/](https://parks.sccgov.org/santa-clara-county-parks/).

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## East Bay Regional Park District Gets Congressional Recognition For Its 90th Birthday

May 16, 2024 - 4:00 PM 2 comments

Six members of Congress introduced a resolution Thursday recognizing the East Bay Regional Park District on its 90th birthday.

U.S. Reps. Mark DeSaulnier, D-Walnut Creek; John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove; Josh Harder, D-Tracy; Ro Khanna, D-Fremont; Barbara Lee, D-Oakland; and Eric Swalwell, D-Castro Valley, recognized the 90th anniversary of the district and its service to the entire East Bay.

"I'm grateful for EBRPD's leadership in working to improve quality of life and community well-being through a steadfast commitment to environmental conservation and maintenance of our local public parks," DeSaulnier said in a statement. "I'm proud to celebrate 90 years of the East Bay Regional Park District and look forward to continuing to partner with them for years to come."

The district's general manager Sabrina Landreth said in a statement that the district feels honored by the congressional recognition.

"This is a year of celebration for our community, dedicated staff, and many partners. Thank you, Rep. DeSaulnier, for celebrating with us the Park District's 90 years of milestones, environmental conservation, and positive experiences in nature as we continue vital work that will impact generations to come," Landreth said.

The district's board president Elizabeth Echols said DeSaulnier has been a steadfast district supporter throughout his career.

"He was the recipient of our Radke Championing Advocacy Award in 2023 for his commitment to conservation and public access to open space," Echols said, "He values the tremendous physical and mental health benefits that our district's regional parks and trails have provided for the East Bay community and so many park visitors. We thank him and the entire East Bay delegation for their long standing support and for leading the House resolution recognizing our 90 years of service to Bay Area community."

EBRPD is the largest regional park district in the nation, spanning 126,000 acres of parklands, 55 miles of shoreline, and more than 1,300 miles of trails in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The district was established through a 1934 ballot measure, which was passed with 71 percent of the vote. Since its creation, EBRPD has worked to protect the East Bay's open spaces and promote recreational opportunities for Bay Area residents.





## Congress Recognizes Park District's 90th Anniversary

The East Bay Regional Park District, the largest of its kind in the nation, was established by a 1934 ballot measure.



**Maggie Fusek**, Patch Staff

Posted Thu, May 16, 2024 at 2:24 pm PT



EBRPD's first three parks— Upper Wildcat Canyon (Tilden), Temescal, and Roundtop (Sibley)— were created on land purchased June 4, 1936, from the East Bay Municipal Utility District. (Photo courtesy East Bay Regional Park District)

EAST BAY, CA — U.S. Reps. Mark DeSaulnier, John Garamendi, Josh Harder, Ro Khanna, Barbara Lee and Eric Swalwell on Thursday recognized the 90th anniversary of the East Bay Regional Park District by introducing a Congressional resolution celebrating the milestone and the District's service to the entire East Bay.

EBRPD is the largest regional park district in the nation, spanning 73 parks, 126,000 acres of parklands, 55 miles of shoreline and over 1,300 miles of trails in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The District was established through a 1934 ballot measure which was passed with 71 percent of the vote.

"Since its creation, EBRPD has worked tirelessly to protect the East Bay's open spaces and promote recreational opportunities for Bay Area residents," DeSaulnier said. "I'm grateful for EBRPD's leadership in working to improve quality of life and community well-being through a steadfast commitment to environmental conservation and maintenance of our local public parks. I'm proud to celebrate 90 years of the East Bay Regional Park District and look forward to continuing to partner with them for years to come."

Park District leaders were honored by the recognition, which took place during a session of the U.S. House of Representatives at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

"We are honored that Representative Mark DeSaulnier recognized the 90th Anniversary of the East Bay Regional Park District on the floor of the House today," said Sabrina Landreth, general manager of the largest regional park system of its kind in the nation. "This is a year of celebration for our community, dedicated staff, and many partners. Thank you, Rep. DeSaulnier, for celebrating with us the Park District's 90 years of milestones, environmental conservation, and positive experiences in nature as we continue vital work that will impact generations to come."

DeSaulnier has been a steadfast supporter of the East Bay Regional Park District throughout his career. He was the recipient of our Radke Championing Advocacy Award in 2023 for his commitment to conservation and public access to open space.

"He values the tremendous physical and mental health benefits that our District's regional parks and trails have provided for the East Bay community and so many park visitors," said Elizabeth Echols, the Park District's board president. "We thank him and the entire East Bay delegation for their long-standing support and for leading the House resolution recognizing our 90 years of service to the Bay Area community."

## **The Story Begins**

The East Bay Regional Park District's story began in the late 1920s when thousands of acres of watershed land in the East Bay Hills suddenly became available for development. Civic leaders came together with a vision: preserve the land forever, and balance environmental conservation with public enjoyment.

To aid the cause, they enlisted renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and National Park Service's Chief Naturalist Ansel Hall to survey

the watershed lands for potential park use. The resulting 1930 Olmsted-Hall report titled "Report on Proposed Park Reservations for East Bay Cities" brought national credibility to the effort and is largely considered the founding document of the East Bay Regional Park District.

Four years later, in the heart of the Great Depression, civic leaders placed a measure on the ballot to establish the Park District and tax themselves for land preservation. The measure passed on Nov. 6, 1934, by a resounding 71 percent — even during trying times and economic instability. On June 4, 1936, the District purchased land from the East Bay Municipal Utility District to create its first three parks: Upper Wildcat Canyon (Tilden), Temescal and Roundtop (Sibley).

For 90 years, the East Bay Regional Park District has preserved and protected open space and provided safe and welcoming parks for recreation and nature viewing.

[See upcoming 90th-anniversary events here.](#)

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## REPRESENTATIVES DESAULNIER, GARAMENDI, HARDER, KHANNA, LEE, AND SWALWELL RECOGNIZE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT WITH CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION

May 16, 2024 [Press Release](#)

**Walnut Creek, CA** – Today, Representatives Mark DeSaulnier (CA-10), John Garamendi (CA-08), Josh Harder (CA-09), Ro Khanna (CA-17), Barbara Lee (CA-12), and Eric Swalwell (CA-14) recognized the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) by introducing a Congressional resolution celebrating this milestone and recognizing the District's service to the entire East Bay.

"I'm grateful for EBRPD's leadership in working to improve quality of life and community well-being through a steadfast commitment to environmental conservation and maintenance of our local public parks," **said Congressman DeSaulnier**. "I'm proud to celebrate 90 years of the East Bay Regional Park District and look forward to continuing to partner with them for years to come."

"We are honored that Representative Mark DeSaulnier recognized the 90th Anniversary of the East Bay Regional Park District on the floor of the House today," **said Sabrina Landreth, General Manager of the largest regional park system of its kind in the nation**. "This is a year of celebration for our community, dedicated staff, and many partners. Thank you, Rep. DeSaulnier, for celebrating with us the Park District's 90 years of milestones, environmental conservation, and positive experiences in nature as we continue vital work that will impact generations to come."

"Representative DeSaulnier has been a steadfast supporter of the East Bay Regional Park District throughout his career. He was the recipient of our Radke Championing Advocacy Award in 2023 for his commitment to conservation and public access to open space," **said the Park District's Board President, Elizabeth Echols**. "He values the tremendous physical and mental health benefits that our District's regional parks and trails have provided for the East Bay community and so many park visitors. We thank him and the entire East Bay delegation for their long standing support and for leading the House resolution recognizing our 90 years of service to Bay Area community."

EBRPD is the largest regional park district in the nation, spanning 126,000 acres of parklands, 55 miles of shoreline, and over 1,300 miles of trails in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The District was established through a 1934 ballot measure which was passed with 71 percent of the vote. Since its creation, EBRPD has worked tirelessly to protect the East Bay's open spaces and promote recreational opportunities for Bay Area residents.

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## Press Releases

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Posted on: May 14, 2024

# Construction Activities to Begin Near Future Borel Agricultural Park



East Bay Regional Park District will begin planning for an agricultural park in Danville as construction activities begin for private development at the site. The majority of the site, located along Camino Ramon at Fostoria Way, will be preserved for a regional park. East Bay Regional Parks District finalized the sale and transfer of 7 acres of the property in Danville to Trumark Homes in March, in support of development of a future park on the 10 acres remaining.

Trumark Homes will begin site activities, including tree removal, on their property (located at the north end of the site) starting May 16. Construction work hours

will be Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Members of the public with questions about the private development project may contact Tony Vignolo, Trumark Director of Land Development, at 925-367-4534. Questions about the future park development can be directed to Jen Vanya, East Bay Regional Parks District Acting Public Information Supervisor, at [jvanya@ebparks.org](mailto:jvanya@ebparks.org) or 925-544-2207.

## The following information was provided by East Bay Regional Parks District regarding their plans for the site:

A unique stretch of land on the east side of Interstate 680 is poised to take the next step towards development as an agricultural park open to the community, as the property's namesake desired. Armand Borel, a walnut farmer, left the property to East Bay Regional Park District in hopes to showcase his heritage walnut orchard and accompanying historic equipment. On Wednesday, March 27, 2024, the sale and property transfer of 7.28 acres of the property in Danville to Trumark for \$32 million was finalized, with the proceeds covering previously incurred debts and supporting development of a future park on the portion of the property retained by the Park District.

“We are excited that staff can now begin visioning and planning for what the park can look like for visitors and how it can best serve the public,” said Park District General Manager Sabrina Landreth. “The proceeds from the sale of the property will cover debts and provide funds toward making the park accessible and open for the community. We accepted the Borel Property with the understanding that a sale of a portion of the property would be needed to pay off preexisting debts and support development of the agricultural park.”

Borel bequeathed his 17-acre Danville homestead and walnut orchard to the Park District to be preserved as an agricultural park where the public could learn about the agricultural history of the San Ramon Valley. Mr. Borel passed away in 2009.

The Borel Trust, which held the Borel Property before the Park District, faced considerable financial challenges. When the District received the property, it was saddled with several existing debts. To keep the trust solvent and prevent foreclosure, the District loaned the trust significant funds. At the time of sale to Trumark, the total amount of loans, plus interest that the District loaned to the Trust was approximately \$9.5 million dollars.

The Park District’s land acquisition goals include developing trails and facilities to make parklands safe and welcoming, and protecting natural and cultural resources.

“The sale of the property is a major step that lets us move forward in providing public access to the future park, which we expect will be both a local and regional asset,” said Park District Board Director John Mercurio. “Obtaining the Borel Property and opening it up for public access and agricultural interpretation and education has been a longtime goal of the Park District and my predecessor on the Park District Board of Directors, Beverly Lane.”

Former Director Beverly Lane served 28 years on the Park District’s Board of Directors before retiring in 2022. Lane was a steadfast leader and advocate for turning the Borel Property into a Regional Park.

The Park District will begin the next phase, which includes the park planning process and assessing how existing facilities and structures can be used.

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# EAST BAY TIMES

## Contra Loma swim lagoon closed indefinitely for repairs

Chlorinated lagoon remains shuttered for the third year as East Bay Park District's officials evaluate plans for repairs



Lifeguard Evan Almgren keeps an eye on swimmers as they stay cool at the Contra Loma Reservoir in Antioch, Calif., on Sunday, Sept. 6, 2015. The pool is now only open weekends and will close for the summer on Sept. 20.



By [JUDITH PRIEVE](#) | [jprieve@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:jprieve@bayareanewsgroup.com) | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: May 9, 2024 at 12:58 p.m. | UPDATED: May 10, 2024 at 7:10 a.m.

ANTIOCH – Contra Loma Swim Lagoon will be closed for the swim season – the third time in three years – because of required maintenance and safety repairs, officials said.

The chlorinated lagoon, run by the East Bay Regional Park District and part of the 780-acre Contra Loma Regional Park, is one of the most popular swim areas in the region attracting some 60,000 visitors annually. It usually opens Memorial Day weekend and continues operations through Labor Day.

In March of 2023, the parks district board approved a \$273,448 contract for architectural and engineering design services that would reconfigure the swim lagoon to eliminate the sand and under-pool lagoon piping, complete repairs to the gutters and drain covers and add new mechanical systems. But no work has begun as the park district continues to evaluate “ongoing maintenance and code compliance” issues, according to a spokesman.

“Contra Loma Swim Lagoon’s current design, which includes a sandy bottom, creates two challenges – operating the facility and maintaining public safety,” Jen Vanya, acting public information supervisor, said.

In addition, Vanya said the sandy bottom creates wear on both the lagoon’s shell waterproofing and mechanical filtration system.

“The sandy bottom also creates significant safety issues by reducing visibility in the water for lifeguards as it is churned up on busy swim days,” she added.



Sylvia Garcia and daughter Elisabeth, 8, both of Pittsburg, keep cool in the swim lagoon at the Contra Loma Regional Park in Antioch, Calif., on Saturday, June 23, 2018. The lagoon will be closed for the third year in summer 2024 as officials evaluate needed repairs, which could include removing the sand. (Anda Chu/Bay Area News Group)

The closure follows waterproofing repairs completed in

2020, according to park officials. That same year East Bay Regional Park District assessed the lagoon because of ongoing maintenance concerns, after which the waterproofing project was undertaken. But by the end of the 2021 swim season, which was limited due to COVID-19 concerns, the repairs were failing and no one knew exactly why, according to park officials.

The Contra Loma lagoon is one of three swim lagoons that the EBRPD operates. The others are Cull Canyon Regional Recreation Area Lagoon in Castro Valley and Don Castro Swim Lagoon in Hayward.

Swimmers access the unique Contra Loma swim lagoon via a sand entrance in the pool shell constructed of concrete with an acrylic-modified coating. Located at 1200 Frederickson Lane, the lagoon sits alongside the Contra Loma reservoir.

When the reservoir was first developed in 1968, recreationists swam in the lake and windsurfing was allowed. But by 1999, state regulations called for an end to the combined use of the reservoir, and since it provides water during emergencies, the lake had to be closed to preserve the quality of the water supply.

The lagoon was then built in 2002 as a part of the Contra Loma Water Quality Improvements Project completed by the Contra Costa Water District to replace lake swimming. When the swim lagoon was finished in 2003, the park district assumed responsibility for operation and maintenance of the swim lagoon system.

Vanya said the district's design and construction division intends to present plans and cost estimates for consideration to the EBRPD board of directors this summer.

"The plans will enable the District to determine project funding and next steps for swim lagoon repairs," she said.

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## Briones Pilot Project Focus Of Upcoming Meeting

The East Bay Regional Park District's two-year pilot project on trail use has passed the one-year mark. A meeting will discuss what's next.



**Maggie Fusek, Patch Staff**

Posted Wed, May 8, 2024 at 5:51 pm PT



An informational meeting on the Briones Pilot Project is planned June 15 at the Alhambra Creek Staging Area of Briones Regional Park in Martinez. The project kicked off April 21, 2023, and recently passed its one-year mark. (East Bay Regional Park District)

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA — The East Bay Regional Park District announced it will hold an informational meeting about

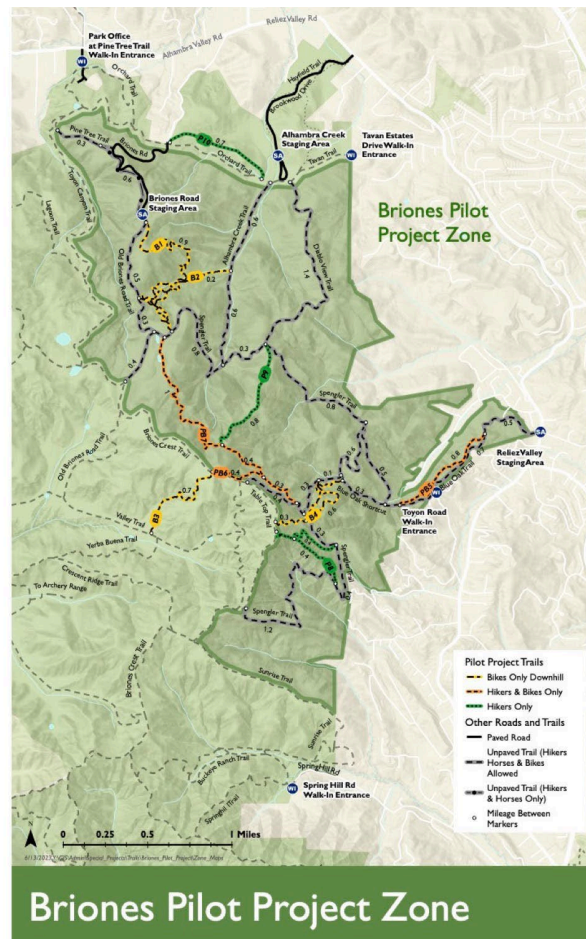
the ongoing Briones Pilot Project.

From 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, June 15, an in-person meeting and open house is planned at the [Alhambra Creek Staging Area](#) of Briones Regional Park. The meeting is to share feedback on the progress made within the past year and to learn what is coming up for the project in the next year.

The two-year pilot project passed its one-year mark in April. It was created to test new ways to safely share trails amongst bikers, hikers and equestrians, and improve the trail experience for all users while protecting habitat, wildlife and watersheds.

Within a specific zone of the northeast corner of Briones Regional Park, the project provided new temporary access to some trails for recreational use, while also restoring illegally constructed "bootleg" trails to protect wildlife and enhance natural habitats.





The Briones Pilot Project zone is shown in the northeast corner of Briones Regional Park. Trails marked green are for hikers only, trails marked yellow are for bicyclists only, and trails marked orange are for hikers and cyclists only. (East Bay Regional Park District)

### Purpose Of The Pilot Project

The Park District in the last decade has seen a significant increase in visitation to its parks, primarily from population increases in its jurisdiction of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, but also across the Bay Area. The COVID-19 pandemic also boosted visitation, especially on trails. Another impact has been a rise in the popularity of mountain biking.

The increased number of trail users and the greater number of mountain bikers have increased the potential for conflict between different trail users. Although the district seeks to open new parks and provide more trails, the trail development process takes time. The pilot project tests new ways to safely share trails and improve the trail experience for all users while protecting habitat, wildlife and watersheds.

Among the strategies tested has been to assign pedestrians, cyclists and horseback riders to certain trails on certain days, such as odd and even days. The image below is an example.



**BIKES**



**HORSES**



**HIKERS**



**WEEKDAYS (M-F)**

**STAY ON BIKE DESIGNATED TRAILS**

**STAY ON HORSE DESIGNATED TRAILS**

**STAY ON BIKE DESIGNATED TRAILS**

**NO HORSES IN ZONE**

**STAY ON HORSE DESIGNATED TRAILS**

**OPEN EVERY DAY**

**FOR YOUR SAFETY NEVER USE BIKE-ONLY TRAILS (B1 - B4) MARKED IN YELLOW ON MAP**

**STAY ON HIKING DESIGNATED TRAILS**

**NO ODD/EVEN DATE RESTRICTIONS**

**ODD NUMBERED WEEKEND DATES**

**NO BIKES IN ZONE**

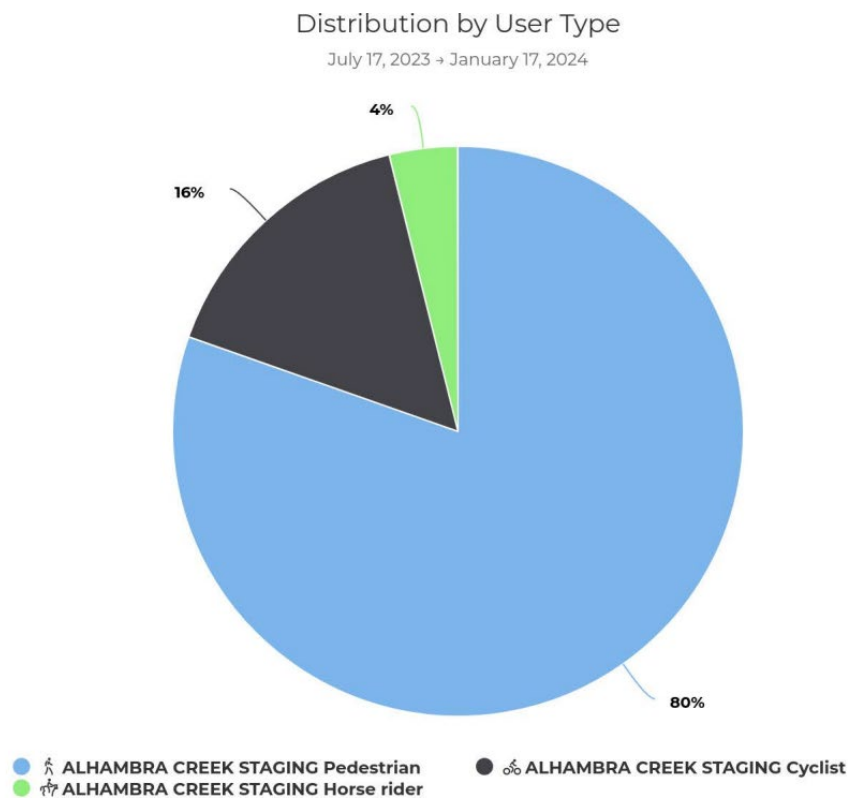
**EVEN NUMBERED WEEKEND DATES**

**NO BIKES IN ZONE**

EXAMPLE:

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

The district has also been counting the number of trail users on trails within the pilot project zone.



See more info at [Ebparks.org/Briones-Pilot-Project](https://ebparks.org/Briones-Pilot-Project).

# EAST BAY TIMES

## Grand opening celebrated for renovated, larger Roberts Pool

By [COMPILED BY EAST BAY TIMES](#)

PUBLISHED: May 8, 2024 at 11:10 a.m. | UPDATED: May 13, 2024 at 7:32 a.m.

### OAKLAND

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) celebrated the grand opening of the new Roberts Pool at Roberts Regional Recreation Area recently with visitors and special guests. The Oakland hills pool is now open to the public for swimming on weekends and holidays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The newly renovated pool provides additional swimming opportunities for the community. Visitors can now enjoy the increased size of the pool, including additional shallow areas for recreational activity, swim lessons and other training along with an upgraded changing room.

The original Roberts Pool was built for the park's opening in 1953 and served as a public recreational facility until its recent closure for this renovation. Programs traditionally offered at the pool include group and private swim lessons, recreational swimming and special times set aside exclusively for swimmers with disabilities.

The Roberts Pool Renovation Project was made possible through funding from California State Parks, Measure WW, Regional Parks Foundation, the EBRPD and a generous bequest from John and Ellen Sutter.



The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) recently celebrated the grand opening of the new Roberts Pool at Roberts Regional Recreation Area in the Oakland hills with visitors and special guests. (photo courtesy of the EBRPD)

### PIEDMONT

The pool capacity has doubled from the original size, with additional shallow areas for recreation, swim lessons and training. It is a significant improvement over the previous pool, as the new configuration accommodates lap swimming and swim lessons or other programming simultaneously in the shallow end of the pool.

Visitors can also now enjoy a new public changing room building and restrooms with gender-neutral facilities and access compliant with the U.S. Americans with Disabilities Act. The pool will also be open weekdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting June 10. Visit [ebparks.org/recreation/swimming/roberts](http://ebparks.org/recreation/swimming/roberts) online for more information.

“What could be more inviting than an outdoor pool in such a beautiful setting as Roberts Regional Recreation Area, surrounded by redwoods?” asked Sabrina Landreth, the EBRPD’s general manager. “We hope the award-winning facility will continue to provide the public with enjoyment for many years to come.”

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