



San Ramon

## EXPLORE REGIONAL PARKS ON GREEN FRIDAY

written by CC News November 24, 2023



Oakland, CA – Celebrate Green Friday, November 24, with an East Bay Regional Parks FREE Park Day. Green Friday provides healthy and fun ways to enjoy the day after Thanksgiving with family and friends.

On Green Friday, all entrance activity fees are waived in Regional Parks, including parking, dogs, horses, boat launching, and fishing, as well as entrance to Ardenwood Historic Farm. The fee waiver does not include state fees for fishing licenses and watercraft inspections or concessions, such as the Tilden Merry-Go-Round and Redwood Valley Railway steam train.

For the past nine years, the East Bay Regional Park District has celebrated the day after Thanksgiving to encourage the public to spend time in nature.

Activities in Regional Parks include:

- **Hike It Off**  
9:00 a.m. – Reinhardt Redwood, Oakland
- **Fall Scavenger Hunt**  
9:00 a.m. – Sunol, Sunol
- **Green Friday Hike**  
10:00 a.m. – Del Valle, Livermore

- **History Hike ABOVE the Mines!**  
10:00 a.m. – Black Diamond Mines, Antioch
- **Farm Chores for Kids**  
10:30 a.m. – Ardenwood, Fremont
- **Meet The Bunnies**  
11:30 a.m. – Ardenwood, Fremont
- **Stilts**  
1:30 p.m. – Ardenwood, Fremont
- **Woodland Wonderland**  
3:30 p.m. – Del Valle, Livermore
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For more information, visit [www.ebparks.org/green-friday](http://www.ebparks.org/green-friday).

*The **East Bay Regional Park District** is the largest regional park system in the nation, comprising 73 parks, 55 miles of shoreline, and over 1,300 miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and environmental education. The Park District receives more than 25 million visits annually throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

# San Francisco Chronicle

## Is the 12-year legal fight over Bay Trail extension finally over?

By [Bob Egelko](#) Updated Nov 23, 2023 4:38 p.m.



Bikers use an extension of the San Francisco Bay Trail in Albany in 2020. The bay trail includes a 2,300-foot stretch that has been carved into a bluff below Golden Gate Fields. Liz Hafalia/The Chronicle

A state appeals court may have ended a 12-year legal battle over the cost of the newest stretch of the Bay Trail, rejecting challenges by owners of the Golden Gate

Fields racetrack to a trial that required the East Bay Regional Park District to pay \$2.125 million for the East Bay waterfront land, rather than the \$12.85 million the track owners were seeking. The 1-mile path and 180-foot bridge, which opened to the public in May 2020, and surrounding land cover 2.88 acres in the bluff below Golden Gate Fields, which owns 137 acres on the border of Albany and Berkeley. It is [part of a trail](#) around San Francisco Bay that began construction in 1989 and is planned to cover 500 miles of pathways for hikers, joggers and cyclists.

The park district took over the sand-covered land in 2011 through eminent domain, the government's authority to acquire private property for public use. A judge upheld the district's action and, in January 2013, ordered a trial within five years to determine the amount of compensation.

The two sides had drastically different appraisals of the property's worth. Golden Gate Fields' appraiser said it could be rezoned and used for a residential community for senior citizens, with a land value of \$12.85 million. The park district's appraiser said it should be kept for waterfront and recreational use and assessed the value at \$374,000.

As the January 2018 trial deadline approached, however, Alameda County Superior Court Judge Jo-Lynne Lee said some issues needed to be resolved before the case went to the jury. After further proceedings, she ruled that when the government acquires undeveloped property through eminent domain, it must compensate the owner only for the value of the land without development, rather than additional amounts if development had already been approved. A jury heard the competing appraisals in 2019 and awarded Golden Gate Fields \$2.125 million in compensation. The racetrack owners appealed, contending, among other things, that the trial had been improper because the five-year deadline had elapsed.

But the 1st District Court of Appeal said Lee's actions, which began before the deadline, were the opening phase of the trial.

The park district had presented "factual and legal issues that had to be decided by the court before a jury could determine the value of the property," Presiding Justice Therese Stewart wrote [in a 3-0 ruling](#) Tuesday. She said the judge's decisions "completed a part of the trial."

The racetrack owners also said Lee should not have allowed the park district's appraiser to testify that the 2.88 acres of waterfront land, with sweeping views of the bay, should be assessed at the same value per acre as the rest of Golden Gate Fields. The appraiser, Dean Chapman, said the land was not "buildable," and should be used as a park, because it was potentially vulnerable to sea-level rise and flooding.

That was "a question for the jury to resolve," Stewart said in rejecting the racetrack's appeal.

“We’re glad that this long episode is done,” Todd Amspoker, a lawyer for the park district, said Wednesday. Before the trail section opened, he said, the land was “just a rarely used parking lot filled with sand,” and now the public has “not only a beautiful park, for parking to get to the beach, but also an incredible trail with incredible views.”

Michael Betz, a lawyer for Golden Gate Fields, said the ruling did not address the merits of the case or the jury verdict and mainly concerned the issue of whether the trial took place within the five-year deadline. He declined to say whether the racetrack owners would seek review in the state Supreme Court.



# Retail or green trails?

- Nov 22, 2023 Updated Nov 22, 2023



Celebrate Green Friday, Nov. 24, with an East Bay Regional Parks free Park Day. Green Friday provides healthy and fun ways to enjoy the day after Thanksgiving with family and friends.

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The fee waiver does not include state fees for fishing licenses and watercraft inspections or concessions, such as the Tilden Merry-Go-Round and Redwood Valley Railway steam train.

For the past nine years, the East Bay Regional Park District has celebrated Green Friday to encourage the public to spend time in nature instead of, or in addition to, holiday shopping..

The closest Green Friday activities in Regional Parks are in Antioch with a History Hike above the Mines at 10 a.m. at Black Diamond Mines.

For more information about Green Friday, visit [www.ebparks.org/green-friday](http://www.ebparks.org/green-friday).



## Toxic algae blooms becoming more common at Lake Temescal and other East Bay swim sites

[Julian Wray](#) on November 21, 2023

As global temperatures rise, the frequency and size of dangerous blue-green algae blooms are [increasing](#) worldwide. For East Bay residents, that means more warnings not to touch the water at local lakes and reservoirs.

Warnings and closures have been seen across the East Bay in recent years, from Lake Anza in Berkeley to Lake Merritt in Oakland, where an [algal bloom](#) deprived the water of oxygen and killed thousands of fish in 2022. Coming into contact with the toxic algae — a type of cyanobacteria — can cause minor effects like skin irritation but can be more dangerous when ingested, especially by children or pets, causing flu-like symptoms.

North Oakland's Lake Temescal was closed to swimmers for a total of 670 days due to [cyanobacteria blooms](#) between 2014 and 2022, according to records of water testing from the East Bay Regional Parks District. A caution sign was posted for swimmers for 955 days in that period. That sign remains, with a ["danger advisory"](#) currently posted at the lake.

Oakland resident Naazgol Koushafar, 24, grew up near Temescal Park and swam in the lake as a kid, but she hasn't seen anyone in the water in years. She walks her dog, Meeku, at the park, but is careful not to let her near the water.

"I'm scared for her to drink it," Koushafar said. "In the last five or six years, there's always caution tape."

Becky Tuden, an ecological services manager for the East Bay Regional Parks District, said Lake Temescal was treated in 2019 with alum, a compound that reduces some of the bacteria's available nutrients. Tuden said that while the treatment was temporarily effective a toxic bloom was detected the following summer.

Not all cyanobacteria are harmful, and it's not fully understood why toxin-producing cyanobacteria are blooming more frequently.

That's what Andreja Kust, a researcher at UC Berkeley's Advanced Genomics Institute, is trying to figure out. She studies the role of microbes in ecosystems by sequencing their genome, and cyanobacteria is her specialty. Kust said these blooms coincide with the seasons and typically die off when the weather gets cooler. But the problem is getting worse each year.

"They are becoming more intense and they are lasting longer," Kust said.

Scientists have already identified the genes in blue-green algae that lead to toxin production, Kust said, but they need to study the whole organism to understand why those toxic variants are on the rise and what measures could curb their growth.

The biggest factor overall, Kust said, is temperature. Rivers and lakes around the world are warming due to climate change, creating an environment in which cyanobacteria thrive.

"They really like the warm temperature," Kust said. "They really proliferate, they grow really fast."

Shallow water with little circulation also promotes cyanobacteria growth. That's a problem in Lake Temescal, where sediment filled with nutrients used by the bacteria is accumulating and making the water shallower. The depth is now around 15 feet, compared to 60 to 80 feet when the reservoir was constructed in the 1860s.

Tuden's department has proposed a plan to dredge the bottom of the lake to correct the issue, with an estimated cost of \$23 million.

Increasing the depth of the lake could be a longer-term solution than water treatment, Kust explained. It would leave nutrient-rich sediment layers in deeper, colder waters where blue-green algae doesn't thrive.

Kust collects water samples from around the Bay Area to take back to the lab in Berkeley for testing. On Oct. 23, she collected a sample from an active cyanobacteria bloom in the Sacramento River near Rio Vista. Around this same time last year, she said, blooms in that area were dying off.

But Kust is confident research will illuminate the causes of these blooms in the near future.

"There are a lot of unknowns," she said. "But what we are getting better at is ... the genomics, so we can see much deeper into what's going on."

*(Top photo: Lake Temescal has been closed for months at a time since harmful algae blooms were first detected there in 2014, by Julian Wray)*

# EAST BAY TIMES

## *Parks' new officer to lead diversity, equity, inclusion work*



The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has hired José González as its first equity officer to lead the agency's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. (photo courtesy of the EBRPD)

After a nationwide search, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has announced the appointment of José González as its first equity officer to lead diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at the public agency. González will start in the role on Dec. 18.

As the largest regional park district in the country, the park system spans Alameda and Contra Costa counties and serves an estimated 30 million visitors a year through park and trail access, visitor centers and programs. Its workforce provides services that encompass 73 parks, 55 miles of shoreline and more than 1,300 miles of trails.

"We are pleased to share news of this pivotal role and welcome José González to help lead the East Bay Regional Park District to further strengthen its mission and impact, and build upon successes as we continue to prioritize a strong, systemic approach to equity both in our workplace and services to the public," said Sabrina Landreth, the EBRPD'S general manager.

The new role will work to improve access to and use of parks services for all community members and support inclusive programs, services and public processes that reflect the East Bay's diversity. The position will also lead on programs and activities to help diversify the EBRPD workforce, eliminate any systemic barriers to employment and promotion and ensure equitable policies and

best practices to make the agency an employer of choice as it continuously seeks to build and retain a top-notch workforce.

“I am excited to join the East Bay Regional Park District as its inaugural equity officer,” González said. “I look forward to bringing my experience from the local to the national level around equity in the conservation field and community in a way that showcases the opportunity and leadership that the park district has been developing in this space for all of our community.”

González is a professional educator with training in the fields of education and conservation. He is the founder of Latino Outdoors as well as a consultant at large. As a Partner at the Avarna Group and through his own consulting, his work focuses on equity and inclusion frameworks and practices in the environmental, outdoor and conservation fields. He is also an illustrator and science communicator.

He received his bachelor of arts at UC Davis with teaching coursework at the Bilingual, Multicultural Education Department at Sacramento State University. González received his master of science degree at the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources & Environment. He serves as a board member at Parks CA and Resource Media and as a member for the California Boating & Waterways Commission, among other leadership volunteer roles.

— EBRPD



# Free Naturalist-Led Hike Friday To Burn Off Thanksgiving Calories

Hike through redwoods, prairies, oak woodland, mixed forest and past streams for an outing that nourishes the soul after your feast.

**Bea Karnes, Patch Staff**

Posted Mon, Nov 20, 2023 at 1:30 pm PT



The hike will include redwoods. (Bea Karnes/Patch)

**EAST BAY** — The East Bay Regional Park District is observing its annual Green Friday, providing free entry into all parks for a healthy and fun way to celebrate with family and friends the day after Thanksgiving.

On Green Friday, all entrance activity fees are waived including parking, dogs, horses, boat launching, and fishing, as well as entrance to Ardenwood Historic Farm. The fee waiver does not include state fees for fishing licenses and watercraft inspections or concessions, such as the Tilden Merry-Go-Round and Redwood Valley Railway steam train.

Special events are being held at a few parks, including a five-mile-hike led by Naturalist Michael Charnofsky at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland. Meet at the Trudeau Training Center and step off at 9 a.m. "This 5 1/4-mile hilly challenge helps burn the calories and feed the soul, as we dip down past small creeks and back up again, with redwoods, prairies, oak woodland, and mixed forest in between."

No registration is necessary. For more information, call 510-544-3187.

# THE RICHMOND STANDARD

Funded by Chevron

## EBRPD to celebrate ‘Green Friday’ by waiving all entrance fees

November 17, 2023



Wildcat Canyon Park (Photo credit: Kathy

Chouteau)

In contrast to the popular shopping date Black Friday, the East Bay Regional Park District will celebrate Green Friday on Nov. 24.

On that day, all entrance fees will be waived at regional parks, including parking, dogs, horses, boat launching and fishing, as well as entrance to Ardenwood Historic Farm.

The fee waiver does not include state fees for fishing licenses and watercraft inspections or concessions, such as the Tilden Merry-Go-Round and Redwood Valley Railway steam train.

This is the ninth year that EBRPD is celebrating Green Friday to encourage the public to spend more time in nature.

For more information on Green Friday activities in East Bay parks, [go here](#).

## East Bay Regional Park District appoints its first equity officer

November 17, 2023



José G. González (Photo courtesy of the East Bay Regional Park District).

José G. González was appointed as the first equity officer for the [East Bay Regional Park District](#), tasked with leading diversity, equity and inclusion. González begins in the role on Saturday, Dec. 18.

The new role aims to improve access to and use of parks and services, to develop public processes that reflect the community's diversity, and to help diversify the district's workforce, in part by eliminating systemic barriers to employment and promotion.

González is described as a professional educator with training in the fields of education and conservation. He founded [Latino Outdoors](#) and is a partner at the Avarna Group, which focuses on equity and inclusion frameworks and practices in the environmental, outdoor, and conservation fields. He is also an illustrator and science communicator.

"Equity and inclusion begin from within, so I am thrilled and ready to support and lead the work that the Park District has prioritized for the agency to represent and reflect the diversity of its community," González.

# 'Green Friday': East Bay Regional Parks offer free entry on day after Thanksgiving

BY TIM FANG

UPDATED ON: NOVEMBER 17, 2023 / 9:58 AM PST /  
CBS SAN FRANCISCO

OAKLAND – Looking to offer an outdoor alternative to crowded shopping malls and stores this Black Friday, the East Bay Regional Park District has announced free entry to all parks on the day after Thanksgiving.

Calling the event "Green Friday", all entrance activity fees are waived in the district's more than six dozen parks, including fees for parking, dogs, horses, boat launching and fishing. Entrance fees to Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont are also waived.

"Green Friday provides healthy and fun ways to enjoy the day after Thanksgiving with family and friends," the district said in a statement.

East Bay Regional Parks has held its "Green Friday" promotion for the past nine years.

The park district has also announced programs at select parks, including Ardenwood, Reinhardt Redwood in Oakland, Sunol Regional Wilderness Regional Preserve, Del Valle Regional Park near Livermore and Black Diamond Mines near Antioch. Additional information about the events and a schedule [can be found on the park district's website](#).

While entrance fees are waived, the park district said state fees for fishing licenses and watercraft inspections would still apply. Fees would also be charged for concessions, including the Tilden Merry-go-Round and the Redwood Valley Railway steam train at Tilden Park near Berkeley.

According to the district, East Bay Regional Parks comprises 73 parks, 55 miles of shoreline and more than 1,300 miles of trails in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.