

walnut creek

M A G A Z I N E

Five Dog-Friendly Hikes in the East Bay

Sep 27, 2024 03:49PM • By Mary Nagle, Save Mount Diablo



(Reprinted with permission from [Save Mount Diablo](#); edited by WCM)

The East Bay Regional Parks system is basically dog heaven — known for being one of the most dog-friendly spots in the country, with plenty of wide-open spaces where your dog can roam free.

Just a heads-up: Mount Diablo State Park isn't as dog-friendly. Its unpaved trails are a no-go for dogs, due to its sensitive ecosystems and some safety concerns. But don't stress — there are loads of other trails to explore. Just keep an eye out for rattlesnakes and coyotes while you're out there!

[Shell Ridge Open Space](#)

Nestled in the foothills of Mount Diablo, Shell Ridge Open Space is a hidden gem filled with seasonal ponds, wildflowers, rolling hills, and shady oak woodlands. And if you know where to look, you might find the fossilized shells that gave this place its name.

[Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve](#)

This large preserve in Antioch offers scenic views, a dose of California history, and tons of dog-friendly hiking trails. Check out the wide, multi-use paths like Lougher Loop and Old Homestead Loop — they're perfect for exploring year-round.



[Contra Costa Canal Regional Trail](#)

Looking for a more urban vibe? This paved path winds along the Contra Costa Canal, connecting Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, and Concord. Whether you're strolling or power-walking with your dog, this trail is perfect for city dwellers who need exercise and a nature fix.

[Briones Regional Park](#)

Briones is a gorgeous place to hike year-round. You'll encounter plenty of wildlife, lush flora, and breathtaking views here. It's a favorite for dogs who love to run in the hills. And with multiple staging areas in Martinez and Pleasant Hill, it's super accessible. Just be aware: some trails might include grazing cows, so keep an eye on your dog!

[Morgan Territory Regional Preserve](#)

On the south side of Mount Diablo near Livermore and Marsh Creek, lies the sprawling 5,323-acre Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. A great spot for dog-friendly adventures, the scenic ridges and lush valleys here burst into color with over 90 species of wildflowers in the spring. Soak up the epic views and explore one of the wildest, most untouched parts of the region.

CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SERVING CASTRO VALLEY SINCE 1989

Historic Photos Unveiled

Sep 25, 2024

The East Bay Regional Park District proudly announces the release of the Park Workers Martin J. Cooney photo collection. This historic digital photo collection was researched and curated by Park District Archives staff and volunteers and has been published to commemorate the District's 90th Anniversary. The new collection is available to view on the Celebrating 90 Years webpage (www.ebparks.org/celebrating-90-years.)

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In 2016, Martin J. Cooney's family donated over 15,000 negatives taken from the 1960s to the 1980s to the Park District. Cooney's commercial studio provided professional photography services to the Park District during that time. While Cooney took some of the photos, most were taken by Nancy McKay, who became his apprentice in 1968 while working in the Park District's Public Affairs Department and served as its primary photographer for more than 37 years. Additional Cooney photo collections were donated in association with the *Oakland Tribune* archives and are housed at the Oakland Museum of California.

Visit the Park District's 90th Anniversary webpage, www.ebparks.org/celebrating-90-years, to explore interactive photo collections, story maps, and online exhibits, and to mark your calendar for special 90th anniversary events, activities, and programs.

EAST BAY TIMES

5 great spots to catch the fall bird migration in the Bay Area

It's a magical time of year, when birds (including many rare species) arrive from around the continent to party in the Bay.



WALNUT CREEK, CALIF. – NOV. 29: A Great Egret searches for food while walking in the waters of the pond at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek, Calif., on Monday, Nov. 29, 2021. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



By [KATE BRADSHAW](mailto:kbradshaw@bayareanewsgroup.com) | kbradshaw@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group, [JASON MASTRODONATO](mailto:jmastrodonato@bayareanewsgroup.com) | jmastrodonato@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group and [JOHN METCALFE](mailto:jmetcalfe@bayareanewsgroup.com) | jmetcalfe@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

UPDATED: September 24, 2024 at 4:16 a.m.

Fall is a magical time to birdwatch in the Bay Area. It's the peak of the songbird migration, the hawk migration and the ongoing shorebird migration. But how do you actually "watch" a bird? Where should you go? What should you look for? How do you use binoculars, anyway? (Hint: Look through the smaller holes.)

Experts from ornithological societies recently shared handy tips and favorite places for birdwatching around the Bay. Here are five excellent birding spots and what you can expect to discover there this fall.

How to get started



A leucistic acorn woodpecker at is observed at Bishop Ranch Open Space in San Ramon. (Courtesy Sharon Anderson)

The easiest way to begin as a birder is to just start paying attention, says Matthew Tarlach, a member of the Mount Diablo Bird Alliance who leads birdwatching field trips around the East Bay. Unless you live in the densest of

concrete jungles, you'll see at least some species of birds in city parks and neighborhood trees.

From there, you can start trying to identify the birds you see. One tool is the [Merlin Bird ID smartphone app](#), an initiative by the Cornell School of Ornithology that walks birders through a set of questions to help identify the bird they've seen. The app also allows users to identify a bird's species based just on its song — and it's pretty accurate. Check out Cornell BirdCast's <https://birdcast.info/> site, too, which uses weather data to make migration forecasts. Enter your address and prepare to be wowed with the number and types of birds flying by you every day.

Typically, people engage with birding from four perspectives, Tarlach says. Citizen science birders log which birds are seen when and where. Over time, this group-sourced data can be used to, for instance, track how [birds are responding to climate change](#). There are people who enjoy birding for the beauty, and others who come for the competition, especially when rare species are in the area. (In August, a slate-throated redstart seemed to have strayed into San Francisco terrain; later this fall, it might be the clay-colored sparrow, a small brownish bird with an impressive call.) And then there are the social birders, people who enjoy connecting with the birding community and learning about a new landscape through its avian inhabitants.

Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek



A western screech owl stares out from a tree nook along the Seaborg trail at Briones Regional Park in Martinez. (Courtesy Isaac Aronow)

This easily accessible birdwatching spot offers plenty to see, possibly because the pond there isn't manmade or new – it's featured in some of the oldest Spanish maps of the area dating to the 1830s, says Tarlach, who leads birdwatching walks there. On a recent walk, his beginning birdwatching group counted more than 30 bird species, including four types of warblers, plus Western tanagers and ring-necked ducks. In a few weeks, he's expecting white- and golden-crowned sparrows to start arriving at the park to settle for winter. The birds spend their summers above the Arctic Circle.

The video player is currently playing an ad. You can skip the ad in 5 sec with a mouse or keyboard

"Their families have been coming here for a long time," he says. "It's fun to see them coming home."

Details: Open 7 a.m.-9 p.m. at 301 N. San Carlos Drive, Walnut Creek; www.walnutcreekartsrec.org/parks-facilities.

Middle Harbor Shoreline Park, Oakland



A flock of long-billed curlews rest on the shoreline at sunset at Middle Harbor Shoreline Park in Oakland on Thursday, May 2, 2024. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

Hidden in a windswept and industrial corner of West Oakland – with nifty views of huuge shipping cranes loading huuuuger ships – is a restored wetland that’s perfect for spotting shorebirds. The park is shaped like a crescent, with an observation tower that overlooks central mudflats dotted throughout the year with all kinds of water lovers: cormorants, snowy egrets, surf scoters, buffleheads, brown pelicans and long-billed curlews, sticking their Slurpee-straw beaks into the grassy muck.

It’s a veritable amphitheater of bird action. “When the tide is out, there’s all that exposed mud rich in food, and you get an incredible diversity of shorebirds that come in to feed. And at higher tides, especially in winter, there’ll be ducks and geese and waterfowl out on the Bay there,” says Bruce Mast, an instructor with the [Golden Gate Bird Alliance](#).

Meander on the flat paths toward the riprap on the southern shore and you might spot something rarer. “I’ve had a wandering tattler out there. They’re rocky shorebirds briefly here during migration, and in the East Bay, you might get only one or two a year,” says Mast. “They look like overgrown sandpipers – a

foot tall, dull gray with yellow legs – and they’ll be probing around on mussels and barnacles when the tide is low enough.”

Details: Open daily at 2777 Middle Harbor Road, Oakland; portfoakland.com/community/waterfront-recreation.

Vasona Lake County Park, Los Gatos



SAN JOSE, CALIF. – OCT. 23: Children learn birdwatching at a Youth Science Institute field trip, Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021, at Alum Rock Park in San Jose, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

This sunny 152-acre park has excellent riparian habitats with a large lake dammed on one side, big log-strewn areas, a scenic rocky-creek ecosystem and cottonwood and sycamore trees that birds love. It’s also good habitat for families, with picnicking and Frisbee spots and a miniature train that kids love to ride.

Vasona is one of the best locations in the South Bay to find warblers – small, colorful songbirds that typically fly in during the fall from eastern and northern America. “You might see a black-and-white warbler, Nashville warbler, hopefully a chestnut-sided warbler, maybe an American redstart,” says Matthew Dodder, executive director of the [Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance](#).

It can be challenging this time of year, because many warblers lose their distinctive colors. Try looking around at a variety of places to find them. “A lot are treetop species, gleaning insects and caterpillars from the upper part of trees. Some like to cling to trunks looking for ants and spiders in the bark, and a few like to be close to ground,” says Dodder. “And a lot are truly beautiful, even though they might lose some of their color.”

Details: Open until sunset daily at 333 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos; parks.sccgov.org

Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland

Glenn Phillips, a Livermore native and the executive director of Golden Gate Bird Alliance, says this is his favorite spot in the Bay Area to catch migrating shorebirds and waterfowl returning each fall.

“You’re in the middle of this crazy urban place, and yet it has this amazing nature,” he says. “And great birds.”

Start at the end of the entrance road off Swan Way and you can do the full 2-mile loop, although Phillips says he always runs out of time, too busy watching the canvasbacks, northern pintails, scaups, goldeneyes, buffleheads, western grebes, godwits, curlews, sandpipers and dowitchers.

His favorite? The long-billed curlew, which you can watch forage with their gigantic curving bills.

The one rare bird Phillips is hoping to see this year?

“A short-eared owl,” he said. “We see them in the fall in grassland and inland. They used to be more abundant. Their habitat in the northern plains has been hurt by new farming techniques and their populations are down. Now they’ve become quite rare.”

Details: Open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily at Doolittle Drive and Swan Way in Oakland; ebparks.org/parks/martin-luther-king.



OAKLAND, CA – DECEMBER 17: A heron bird stands on a rock at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Park in Oakland, Calif., on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

Coyote Hills, Fremont

Most of the same birds that can be found at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline can be found here, but Phillips says Coyote Hills offers a whole different vibe.

“It may be the best birding destination in the whole Bay Area,” he says. “You feel like you’re not in the city anymore, because you’re not. You’re surrounded by this really rich land with so many birds. It feels like you’re stepping back in time.”

Details: Open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily at 8000 Patterson Ranch Road in Fremont; ebparks.org/parks/coyote-hills.



Canada geese walk on a field of mustard plants near the entrance to Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont, Calif., on March 20, 2023. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

EAST BAY TIMES

Photos: 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup – California’s largest annual volunteer event Since 1985, 1.7 million volunteers have picked up more than 26 million pounds of litter



Thomas Andersen and his daughter Sophie, of San Jose, volunteer in the 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup day, Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, picking up trash at Waddell State Beach north of Davenport, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



By [KARL MONDON](#) | kmondon@bayareanewsgroup.com | Mercury News, [RAY CHAVEZ](#) | rchavez@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group and [NHAT MEYER](#) | nmeyer@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

UPDATED: September 23, 2024 at 5:44 a.m.

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, which took place Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon, was the 40th anniversary of the event. The organization planned 761 cleanup sites around Bay Area and the state.

To participate next year, or for more information about the event, go to coastalcleanupday.org

See full story [here](#).



Volunteers Phucharin Chansiri, left, Tegen Pukdeed, and Yilin Toto, all 12, of Kensington, pick up trash during the 40th annual Coastal Cleanup event at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in Albany on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024. About 114 volunteers registered in the first couple of hours, but in the past, 200 people have participated, says Jessica Sloan, volunteer program supervisor for East Bay Regional Park District. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Russell Kiskamp of Santa Clara volunteers in the 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup day, Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, picking up trash in the sand dunes at Scott Beach County Park near Davenport. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



Volunteers Amornrit Pukdeed, left, and Phucharin Chansiri, 12, of Kensington, pick up trash during the 40th annual Coastal Cleanup event at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in Albany on Saturday. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Sue Laughlin of Santa Cruz carries trash collected at Scott Beach County Park in Davenport during the 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup, Saturday. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



Volunteers Shane Pake, left, Erika Schwilk, Kaden, 11, Stefan, 9, and their dog Pancho, from El Cerrito, pick up trash during the 40th annual Coastal Cleanup event at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in Albany on Saturday. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



A discarded statue is among the items collected at Waddell State Beach north of Davenport during the 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup day (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



Volunteers pick up trash during the 40th annual Coastal Cleanup event at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in Albany. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Scott Councilman (center), Coastal Cleanup site captain at Scott Beach County Park in Davenport, helps Sue and Dave Laughlin of Santa Cruz weigh the trash they collected Saturday. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



Volunteer Daniel Rudd of Berkeley, walks with a bag of trash he picked up during the 40th annual Coastal Cleanup event at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in Albany on Saturday. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Sue Laughlin of Santa Cruz keeps track of the trash she collects at Scott Beach County Park in Davenport during the 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup day on Saturday. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



A dog gets in the water as volunteers Erika Schwilk, left, Stefan, 9, Kaden, 11, and Shane Pake, all from El Cerrito, pick up trash during the 40th annual Coastal Cleanup event at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in Albany on Saturday. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Matt Freeman, president of the Santa Cruz Longboard Union, volunteers in the 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup day, Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, picking up discarded items at Waddell State Beach north of Davenport, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



Sue Laughlin of Santa Cruz picks up a discarded corn husk at Scott Beach County Park in Davenport during the 40th Annual Coastal Cleanup, Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



Volunteer Daniel Rudd of Berkeley shows a piece of styrofoam, among other trash objects, he picked up during the 40th annual Coastal Cleanup event at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in Albany on Saturday. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

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HISTORIC PHOTO COLLECTION OF EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT STAFF UNVEILED

written by [CC News](#) September 21, 2024



Images by [EBRPD](#)

The [East Bay Regional Park District](#) proudly announces the release of the Park Workers Martin J. Cooney photo collection.

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this collection, which features the small but nimble staff of the 1960s, broadening to a larger and more diverse workforce starting in the late 60s and early 70s, and expanding to an employee roster that tripled in size by the 1980s.

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*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.*

Los Angeles Times

Opinion: A 20-year struggle for environmental justice — and a public park — in one California city



Point Molate, with the Winehaven area in the distance, is the “most beautiful part of the Bay Area no one’s ever heard of.”

(Jane Tyska/East Bay Times via Getty Images)

By David Helvarg

Sept. 20, 2024 3 AM PT

Just up the road from Oakland and Berkeley, the city of Richmond is a minority and low-income community of 115,500 people — mainly Latino, Black and Asian American — with a major Chevron refinery whose pollution has been an ongoing source of conflict (the city just reached a \$550-million settlement with Chevron to

mitigate health and lifestyle effects of the refinery). It's also home to an active port and soon — finally — a world-class park.

Point Molate exemplifies the struggle for environmental justice in under-parked and over-polluted minority communities. Political support in Sacramento and Washington helps, but the battle to guarantee the future of 413 acres of city-owned headlands relied on bottom-up organizing and determined citizen engagement that encompassed protests, local candidacies, ballot initiatives, neighborhood meetings, bilingual mailings, public testimony, photo and art exhibits, billboards, site tours and, of course, lawsuits. Democracy, in other words.

July 3, 2024

The headlands site, Point Molate, a former World War II Navy fuel depot largely reclaimed by nature since its closure in 1995, lies just north of the Richmond Bridge. It deserves its tagline: “The most beautiful part of the Bay Area no one’s ever heard of.” Yet it was almost lost to various development schemes until this summer, when the Richmond City Council voted to approve a \$40-million deal to establish it as a fully protected park. The state will provide \$36 million (in part through Gov. Gavin Newsom’s 30x30 initiative, which like national and global efforts aims to protect 30% of the state’s lands and waters by 2030), with the balance coming from the East Bay Regional Park District.

Richmond got possession of Point Molate from the Navy in 2003 for \$1, and the city quickly began bargaining over development rights to the site. A sliver of beach opened to the public in 2014, and at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a magnet for local families. For more than two decades, Richmonders fought for the other 97% of the fenced-off site to become a public park.

Point Molate, originally Ohlone land, is home to sea hares, bat rays, leopard sharks and river otters in its offshore eelgrass beds, one of the last healthy nurseries for herring and Dungeness crab in the San Francisco Bay estuary. Its native grasses and forested hillsides host nesting ospreys and more than 200 other bird species, along with mule deer, wild turkeys, coyotes and the rare pipevine swallowtail butterfly. Before the Navy arrived, Point Molate was famed for Winehaven, a red-brick winery, worker housing and a shipping port constructed to keep California wine flowing after the 1906 earthquake destroyed much of San Francisco. Winehaven’s buildings are now on the National Register of Historic Places.

April 29, 2023

Developers, in collaboration with a band of Pomo Indians from Mendocino County, first proposed a mega-casino for the site, with 4,000 slot machines and Las Vegas-style amenities, including a convention center, a high-rise parking structure and a ferry. Despite the promise of thousands of jobs and significant annual revenues, Richmond residents feared that the project would generate crime, encourage problem gambling and create constant traffic jams. In 2010, the city's voters rejected the casino proposal 58% to 42%.

With the casino defeated, another development plan emerged: a luxury housing estate — as many as 1,450 homes and condos with price tags in the \$1.2-million range, for buyers with incomes around \$250,000. The [median income for Richmond's residents](#) is just under \$80,000. The city would be required to build and staff a fire and police substation and float a \$300-million bond to fund the development's water, power and sewage infrastructure.

Sept. 17, 2024

Once again, the community rallied. Housing advocates objected to the city's making a hefty, ongoing investment at Point Molate; they wanted affordable, mixed-use units built downtown, where infrastructure is already in place and housing is desperately needed. Richmonders, environmental groups and others — including commercial fishermen — joined together in the Point Molate Alliance (full disclosure: I'm a member), which took the lead in the effort.

The coalition held community meetings, testified at City Council meetings and, with pro-bono legal help, filed a California Environmental Quality Act lawsuit arguing that the developer's environmental impact report failed to account for the consequences of building on a sensitive site, with no provision for protecting Ohlone sacred sites and no evacuation plan for an area the state classified as a "High Fire Hazard Severity Zone."

In June 2024, the California Court of Appeals unanimously sided with the community activists' CEQA suit, ruling that the luxury housing EIR was fatally flawed and had to be rescinded, effectively canceling the city's obligation to the developers.

Sept. 15, 2024

Except for the claim of the Guidiville Rancheria Pomo, who had been part of the original casino plan. In July, the tribe and its developer partner agreed to the \$40-million settlement offer from the city, state and park district.

“Point Molate Park Now!” T-shirts have gone from protest gear to collectibles. The last approval needed, from the California State Coastal Conservancy, is expected by November, when the East Bay Regional Park District can begin to take down miles of fencing and open the park to the public. Community members plan to work with the district to see soccer fields, hiking trails and a home for the annual Richmond Powwow established there in the near future.

When the people lead, the leaders follow. Stubborn, vigilant community activism won a tangible victory at Point Molate that can be repeated in other under-parked communities. Remember: River otters and herring can’t sign petitions. Butterflies can’t vote and mule deer can’t testify at City Council meetings. It’s up to us humans.

David Helvarg is a Richmond resident; executive director of Blue Frontier, an ocean policy group; and co-host of “Rising Tide: The Ocean Podcast.”



EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT CELEBRATES 90 YEARS WITH HISTORIC PHOTO COLLECTION FEATURING STAFF FROM 1965-1981

By [Eileen Vargas](#)

Published on September 19, 2024



The East Bay Regional Park District is tipping its hat to its own history with the recent unveiling of a digital photo collection that spotlights its staff throughout the years.

The collection, featuring the work of photographer Martin J. Cooney and his apprentice Nancy McKay, spans from 1965 to 1981 and is part of a series celebrating the District's 90th Anniversary, according to the [East Bay Regional Park District's website](#).

The Park Workers compilation showcases various individuals contributing to the park's day-to-day running.

This includes images of staff members, board directors, and even volunteers, knitting a narrative of a workforce that began as a lean operation in the 1960s, burgeoned into a more diverse crowd by the 1970s, and saw a roster triple in size by the 1980s.

In a testament to the personal stories behind the Park District's evolution, Cooney's family handed over a treasure trove of more than 15,000 negatives to the Park District in 2016. Not only do these photographs by Cooney, and mainly his protégé McKay, capture the variegated scenery of the parks, but they also immortalize the faces and fashion of an era that saw profound change, both within the Park District and society at large.



Suspect Arrested After Armed Robbery And Pursuit In Castro Valley

A helicopter and license plate reader technology were used to help catch the suspect.

Bea Karnes, Patch Staff

Posted Wed, Sep 18, 2024 at 9:59 am PT | Updated Fri, Sep 20, 2024 at 3:48 pm PT



The suspect was arrested after a pursuit. (Alameda County Sheriff's Office)

This gun was recovered in connection with the case. (Alameda County Sheriff's Office)

FLOCK Automated License Plate Reader cameras helped track the suspect's vehicle. (Alameda County Sheriff's Office)



CASTRO VALLEY, CA — Alameda County Sheriff's deputies arrested a suspect involved in an armed robbery in Castro Valley on Tuesday. The victim was not injured.

The crime happened at approximately 10:50 a.m. when a suspect stole a victim's wallet containing cash and credit cards in the 20000 block of Redwood Road.

The suspect fled the scene in a silver Jeep with Oregon license plates, according to the sheriff's office.

Using FLOCK Automated License Plate Reader cameras, detectives from the Street Crimes Unit located a vehicle matching the description in Oakland.

With assistance from the East Bay Regional Park District Police's Eagle 6 helicopter, deputies attempted a traffic stop. When the suspect failed to yield, a pursuit ensued. The suspect was later located with the help of good Samaritans and arrested.

A loaded gun was also recovered near the vehicle.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office credited the teamwork between various units, the EBRPD helicopter, and community members for the swift apprehension of the suspect.

ARMED ROBBERY IN CASTRO VALLEY LEADS TO HIGH-SPEED CHASE AND ARREST IN OAKLAND

By [Eileen Vargas](#)

Published on September 18, 2024



An armed robbery took place yesterday morning in Castro Valley. The Alameda County Sheriff's Office reported that deputies responded to a call at about 10:49 a.m. in the 20000 block of Redwood Road. According to the [Alameda County Sheriff's Office](#), the suspect brandished a firearm to steal a victim's wallet, which contained an undisclosed amount of cash and credit cards, before fleeing into a silver Jeep sporting Oregon plates.

The investigation escalated quickly when Street Crimes Unit detectives traced a similarly described vehicle utilizing the FLOCK Automated License Plate Reader cameras. These sophisticated tools proved instrumental, allowing the law enforcement's Real Time Information Center to flag and track the elusive Jeep as it maneuvered through Oakland.

Various detective units responded to the last known location of the vehicle and found it on San Leandro Boulevard near 66th Avenue in Oakland. Detectives, along with East Bay Regional Park District Police (EBRPD), attempted to intercept the Jeep. Despite their efforts, the driver resisted, failing to yield and sparking a vehicle chase. Through the collective effort between technology, EBRPD's Eagle 6 helicopter, and sharp-eyed citizens, the suspect was eventually apprehended.

What happens next with Point Molate

Saving an East Bay jewel in Richmond

By Janis Hashe

Sep 17, 2024



WHAT'S THE POINT? Advocates are elated at the chance of advancing the mission to protect equitable access to parks and recreation. (Photo by Jack Scheinman)

News broke in July that the East Bay Regional Park District's board had agreed unanimously to sign on to a letter of intent agreement between the City of Richmond, the Guidiville Rancheria of California and EBRPD, to acquire 80-plus acres of Point Molate. This was a major step in closing the decades-long battle between environmentalists and developers over the future of the 422-acre, Bay-facing greenspace.

Yet some questions remained unanswered. What's the plan for the rest of the acreage? How long will it take to resolve the last remaining lawsuit over the property? What are EBRPD's timeline expectations for the new park?

Elizabeth Echols is EBRPD's Ward 1 board member. The mood in the boardroom when the vote was taken was "elated, for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," she said, particularly for the chance of

advancing the mission to protect equitable access to parks and recreation.

As significant as the step was, it was still a step.

“The next step is finalizing the acquisition,” she said. The rest of Point Molate’s acreage was turned over to the City of Richmond by the Navy in a series of transfers, including a 1996 agreement specifying 70% of it be left as open space. “The 81 acres we are acquiring is the section that was contemplated for development,” Echols said.

EBRPD plans to continue its long history of working with the city, as it is currently doing on a Bay Trail section through Point Molate, on developing a clean-up, maintenance and park facilities design, including community input, to encompass the remainder of the acreage.

Richmond city representatives declined to comment on developer SunCal’s lawsuit, which is projected to

settle in October. Attorney Robert Cheasty, executive director for Citizens for East Bay Parks, said, “SunCal [did not comply] with the requirements to complete the deal [it made with the city].” SunCal will not be a factor going forward, he said, “although there are steps that need to be completed.”

As for a timeline for park development, Echols said it’s too early to project one, since some of the remaining procedures can take considerable time. But, she added, EBRPD’s new equity officer, José G. González, will be involved in “robust conversations” with the city and county.

The coalition

None of this could have happened, agreed those interviewed, without a large and engaged coalition of people and organizations willing to continue their efforts for years.

Pam Stello first saw Point Molate in 2006 on a bike ride. “I knew nothing about Point Molate at the time and was confused about how an SF Bay shoreline property, one this beautiful, could be vacant,” she wrote in an email response. Other cyclists told her about the proposed plan for a mega-casino on the site. Naively, she thought it would never be approved.

But her eyes were opened when, after attending city council and county supervisor meetings, she realized those entities supported the casino. A small group of Richmond residents—Carol Fall, Charles Smith, Lech Naumovich, Judith Piper, Joan Garrett and Stello—formed Sustainable Point Molate, later called the Point Molate Alliance, in 2009.

“Point Molate would not have been saved without mostly invisible acts, from the hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours, letters, speeches and generous donations given by predominantly working

people juggling work, families and their own personal struggles,” PMA co-chair Stello said. She also named then-Mayor Gayle McLaughlin and Contra Costa Supervisor John Gioia, alongside Citizens for East Shore Parks; the Rose Foundation; the California Native Plant Society/East Bay; the Sierra Club; the Sustainability, Parks, Recycling, and Wildlife Legal Defense Fund (SPRAWLDEF); the Richmond Progressive Alliance; and Blue Frontier.

Blue Frontier’s executive director, David Helvarg, is co-chair of the Point Molate Alliance. After moving to the area in 2007, he became aware of Point Molate when a self-described “wild grasses geek” took him there. He was shocked to discover five of the seven then-Richmond city councilmembers had voted to allow a casino to be built there.

He was beginning to work on his book, *The Golden Shore – California’s Love Affair with the Sea*. “I was taken with the Richmond waterfront. I started

researching it as part of the story I wanted to tell,” Helvarg said. He discovered Point Molate’s long history—involving the Ohlone, the last whaling station, the Chinese shrimping camp, Winehaven and the Navy—and knew it needed protection. “If [Richmond] was a wealthy community, it would have been protected a generation ago,” he said.

He began to engage in community organizing and coalition building, citing, in addition to the organizations Stello called out, San Francisco Baykeeper, the Golden Gate Fishermen’s Association and affordable housing advocates. He also reached out to State Sen. Nancy Skinner. “She became a key player,” Helvarg said.

The legacy

All parties agreed that without the \$36 million in state funding to purchase the 81 acres secured by Skinner, the park plan could not move forward.

Skinner had visited Point Molate in the '90s, and, as the area's representative, became aware of the contention between pro-development and open-space advocates, she said in a phone interview.

Several political stars aligned to make the money available, Skinner said: Gov. Newsom's 2020 executive order declaring the goal of conserving at least 30% of California's land and coastal waters by 2030; the EPRPD's regional master plan to connect Point Molate to other parcels as publicly available space; and the 2022 budget surplus. "I looked at what in my district needed [these funds]," she said. "The answer was affordable housing projects—and the acquisition of Point Molate."

Asked if she considers this open-space victory a significant part of her legacy as she prepares to leave office, Skinner answered, "Yes! This is a gift for generations of iconic, historic, breathtaking bayfront land." She also acknowledged that her contribution

is part of efforts by other former legislators:

Assemblymember Tom Bates, State Sen. Bill Lockyer and State Sen. Loni Hancock.

“Our constituents are dedicated to preservation and the climate-change fight,” she said.

The future

What will East Bay residents see at Point Molate in 10 years?

Citizens for East Bay Parks Executive Director Robert Cheasty cited Citizens for East Shore Parks’ goal of linking parks “from Crockett to San Jose,” with Point Molate forming one of the links.

“The Point Molate Alliance is applying for funding to train the next generation of Point Molate park advocates, trail guides, docents, park planners and leaders,” Stello said. Plans include an apprenticeship program for a cohort of 12-20 Richmond youth each

summer, with the initial program covering Point Molate's history—including Ohlone, Chinese, Spanish, naval, natural and geologic—rare upland and marine habitats, wildlife, conservation and restoration projects, climate change and sea-level rise impacts, and park planning.

The program would also include editorial writing and public speaking “to amplify their voices as park leaders,” Stello added.

“In 10 years,” she said, “I hope the youth leadership program is thriving and its graduates have leadership positions in park and urban planning, engineering, government, nonprofit and STEAM fields, and the park has met the goals of the community plan.”

She continued, “Per the community plan, I hope there are Pow Wow grounds, an American Indian Cultural Center, areas for sports, boating, hiking,

biking, camping, and outstanding environmental education and outdoor recreation programs, thriving upland and marine habitats, and development of the Winehaven District to meet the needs of park visitors. The human and environmental health benefits of the park will be immeasurable and it will be an economic asset for Richmond.”

Editor's note: This article has been updated to clarify an agreement specifying that 70% of Point Molate be left as open space.

East Bay

Visiting 'Little Yosemite'

An enjoyable hike in Sunol Regional Wilderness Preserve

By **Madeline Salocks** | September 12, 2024



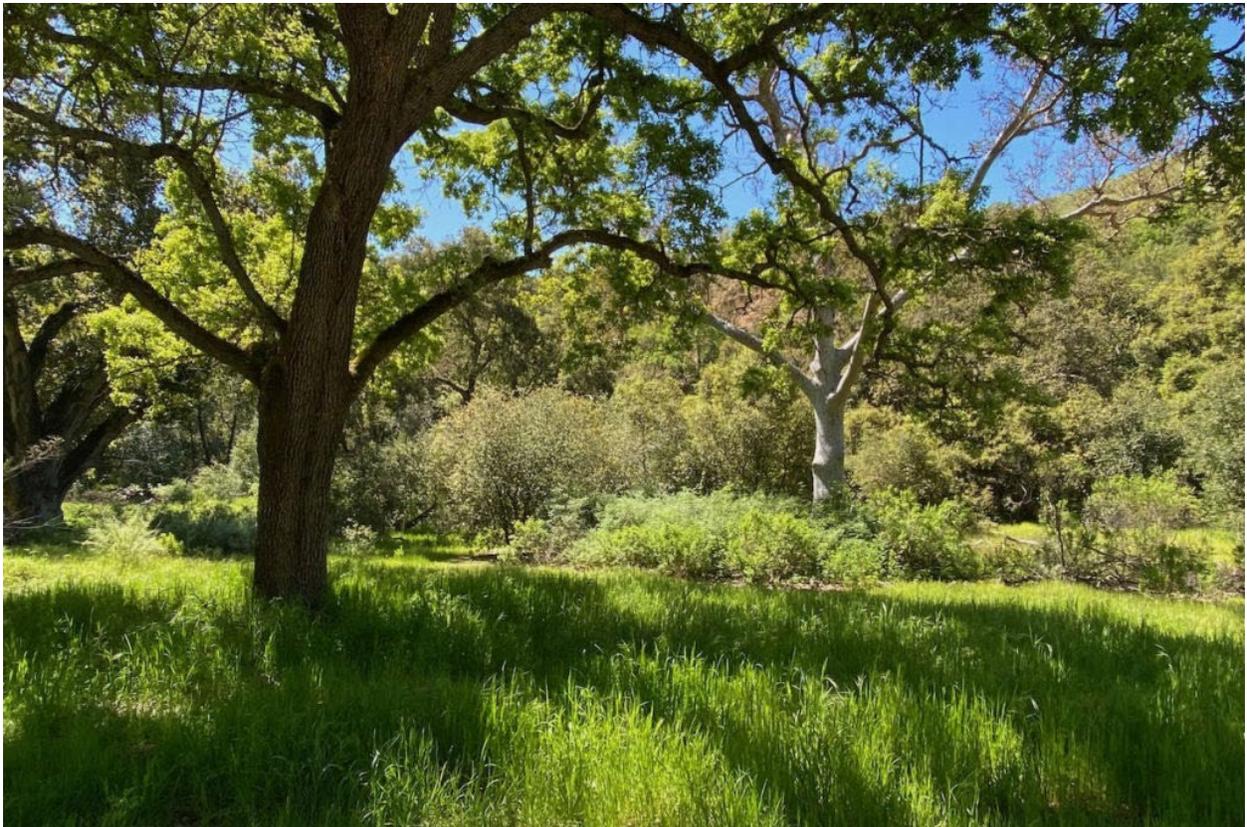
The trail to 'Little Yosemite' in Sunol Regional Preserve. (Photo by Madeline Salocks)

I'm always looking for new walks or hikes in or near the Bay Area, and, luckily, it's hard to exhaust the options. It's also hard to believe that until now, after so many years of hiking on so many

different trails, I still hadn't been to "Little Yosemite," also known more recently as Alameda Creek Overlook, in the Sunol Regional Wilderness Preserve. So, on a perfect spring day with temperatures in the low '70s and a solid-blue sky, while also figuring the time would be ideal since the creek should be high after an abundant rainy season, I finally visited Little Yosemite. And what a great way to spend around an hour. The gorge and waterfall—as well as the relatively short gentle trail of about one mile leading up to it—couldn't have been a more enjoyable hiking experience.

After exiting highway 680 at the Calaveras Road/Highway 84 turnoff, it was a pleasant country drive of approximately five miles heading south on Calaveras Road and then turning left on Geary Road to reach the **Sunol Regional Wilderness Preserve**. Normally there's a \$5 entrance fee, but they weren't collecting when I arrived (I'll want to pay double next time!). The parking lot at the end of the road, which is closest to the trailhead, was full, but there was plenty of parking in the lot just before it.

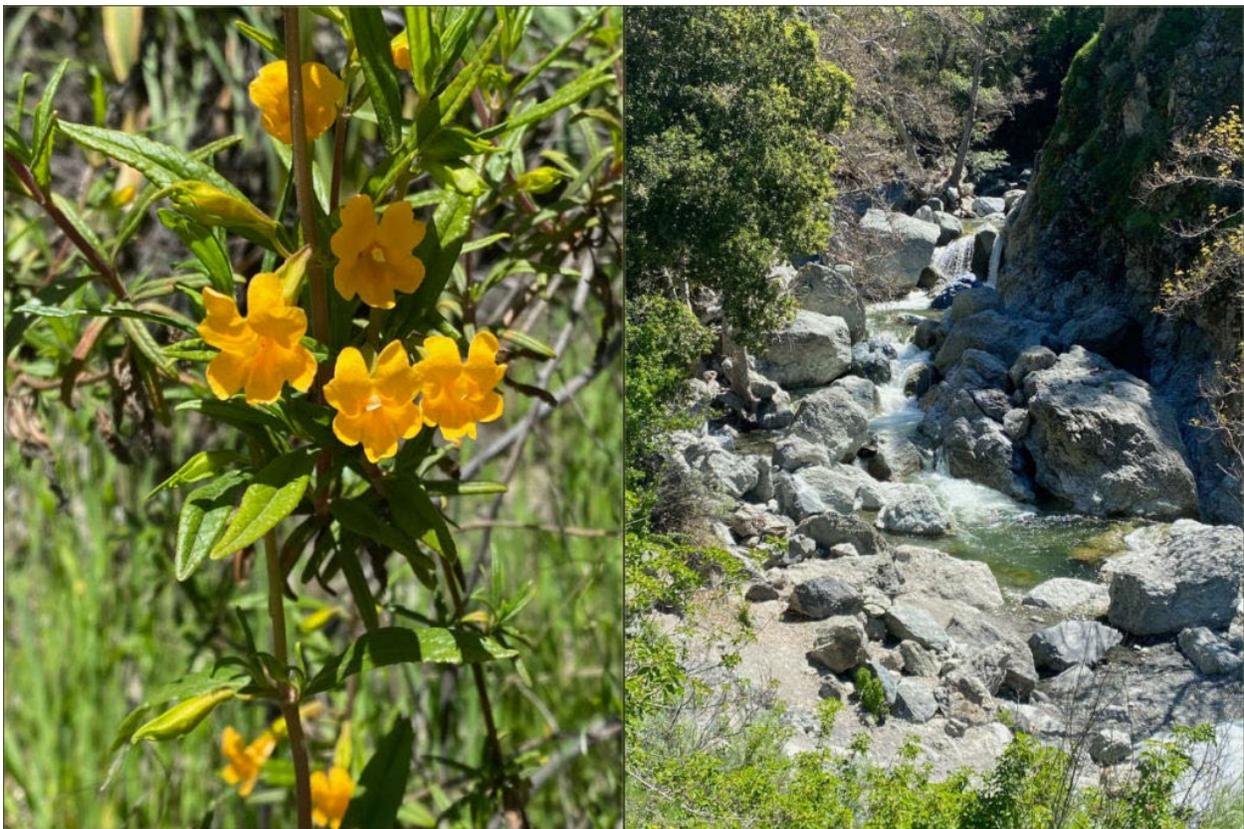
To the right of the posted park map was the entrance to the trail, Camp Ohlone Road, and soon this wide trail crossed a large sturdy footbridge over Alameda Creek. As I looked down from the bridge and saw the volume of water, the creek looked to me more like a river, but at other times of the year I expect its size might be more creek-like. After the bridge, the trail would parallel the river, though not right next to its bank, for the mile up to Little Yosemite.



The trail to 'Little Yosemite' continues... (Photo by Madeline Salocks)

There were no extensive flower displays since I was there too early for peak wildflowers, which were later than usual this particular year. But little patches were coming up here and there.

After approximately three quarters of a mile, I began to hear the roar of rapid waters behind and below the trees on my right, and the anticipation it invoked continued until, soon enough, I arrived at Little Yosemite.



(Left) Orange Bush Monkey Flower; (Right) Little Yosemite from the Camp Ohlone Road trail.
(Photos by Madeline Salocks)

What a gem! But why the namesake after the famous national park? I guessed that with the steep canyon wall and large boulders

at the base of the falls, someone must have imagined this spot as a micro version of Lower Yosemite Falls.

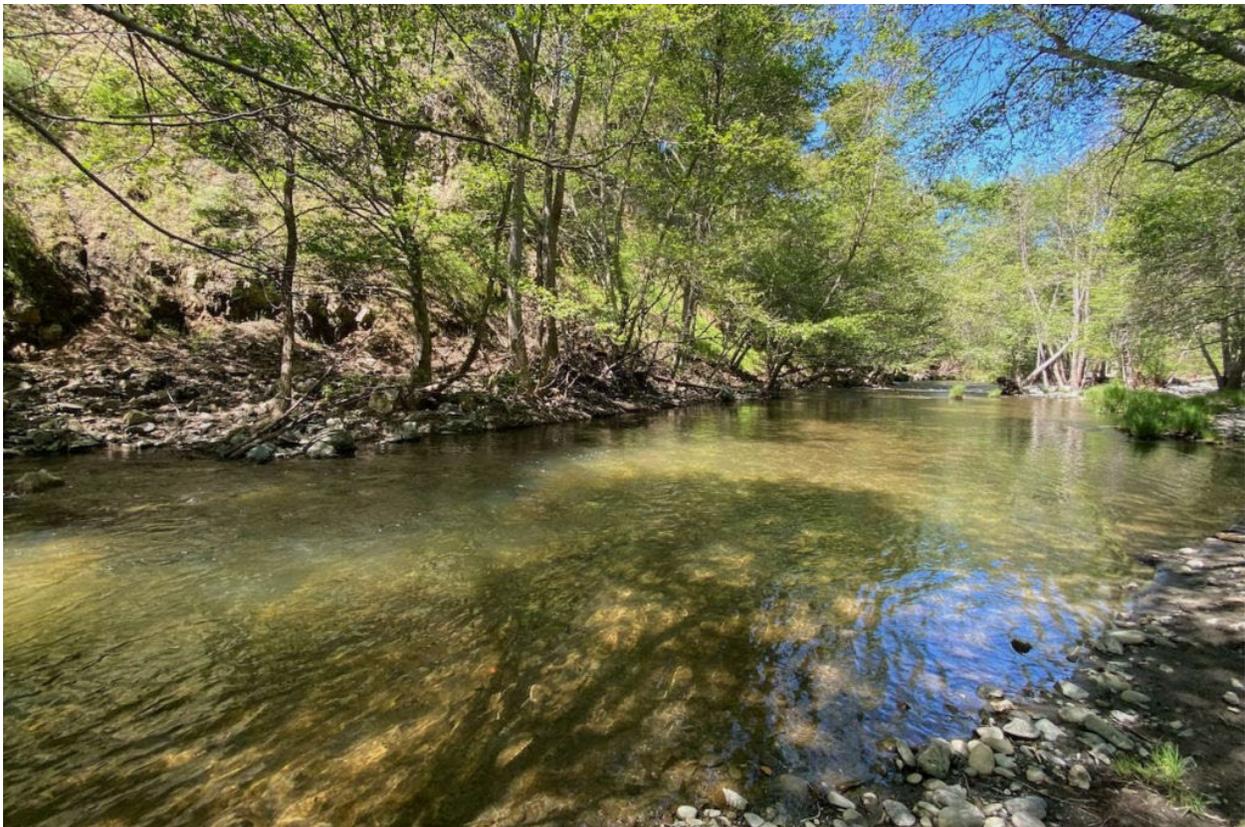
Wanting to get closer, I took the side path leading down to the water. The path was short but steep, with a lot of loose dirt, and in some places, I had to grab an available rock or bush with my hand or even get on all fours to be on the safe side. But it was easy enough to navigate with caution. Once down at the river, there were various rocks to sit on and take in the scene—the cascading falls, the meditative sound of the river rushing through the rocks, and a deep inviting pool (though no wading or swimming is allowed due to endangered species)—all made particularly special because I was the only one there. It's always a pleasure to share nature with others, but to have a beautiful place to oneself can be a special gift.



Little Yosemite up close... (Photos by Madeline Salocks)

Only one small glitch. Just before I started to climb back up to the main trail, I spotted a large plastic bottle wedged in between a couple of rocks, which made me wonder once again, as I've so often wondered before: why would anyone who appreciates nature and scenic places ever litter? If I'd had a day pack to carry the bottle back to the trailhead, I would have, and in fact I later felt slightly guilty that I hadn't grabbed the bottle, carefully made my way up the side path with it, and carried it out. Next time, I might bring a day pack on the unlikely chance that it's still there or some other piece of litter has taken its place.

On my return walk, retracing my steps back to the trailhead, I took another of the several side paths off the main trail and found myself in another lovely spot by the river, quieter and more tranquil in this section with the river wider and flowing more lazily. And again, despite there being quite a few hikers on the Camp Ohlone Road trail, I had the place to myself.



Alameda Creek down-river from Little Yosemite. (Photo by Madeline Salocks)

For a short out-and-back hike of around an hour assuming a leisurely pace with stops, Little Yosemite/Alameda Creek Overlook in the Sunol Regional Wilderness Preserve is an excellent choice, especially in the spring, but at any time of year. And this

wonderful wilderness park, easily reachable in the East Bay, offers many other trails, including an alternate route to Little Yosemite. In fact, next time I visit Little Yosemite, I'll take the slightly longer route via the McCorkle, Canyon View, and Cerro Este Road trails, then return via Camp Ohlone Road, making the hike a loop instead of out-and-back.

Park information: <https://www.ebparks.org/parks/sunol>