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EBRPD Launches Annual Trails Challenge Program

[BLOG](#)

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Written By [Press Release](#)

For the past 31 years, the East Bay Regional Park District has encouraged the public to explore their Regional Parks through its annual Trails Challenge program. The free program connects people with nature and healthy recreation by providing 20 designated trails for each year's challenge.

The 2024 Guidebook includes 20 trails available for all levels of fitness, ranging from easy and moderate to challenging. There are trails open to hikers, bicyclists, dogs, and equestrians. Trails Challenge 2024 also offers increased accessibility with trails that have been evaluated and identified as usable by persons with mobility limitations.

To complete the challenge, hike five of the 20 trails, or 26.2 miles (the distance of a marathon) of trails within East Bay Regional Park District. You can submit your log, online or by mail, by December 1, 2024, and receive a commemorative pin, while supplies last.

Trails Challenge is made possible in partnership with the Regional Parks Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, who have both sponsored Trails Challenge since 2005.

Download the 2024 Trails Challenge and learn more at ebparks.org/TC.

Tips for the Trails

East Bay Regional Parks are popular with hikers, bikers, equestrians, and nature viewers, among others. Help keep trails enjoyable for all by following these tips for the trails:

- Hikers: Stay to the right and stay alert
- Bikers: Slow down around others and call out or ring your bell when passing
- Equestrians: Keep to the right around other trail users and let them know how to pass your horse safely

More tips for trail safety can be found on our Trails are for Everyone webpage: www.ebparks.org/about-us/whats-new/news/trails-are-everyone.



BAY NATURE

Make Way for Eelgrass: Dilapidated, Unsafe, Toxic Old Pier to Be Removed at Last

East Bay Regional Park District is primed to remove the old toxic wood of Richmond's Ferry Point Pier this year after two years of delays.

by [Anushuya Thapa](#)

January 25, 2024

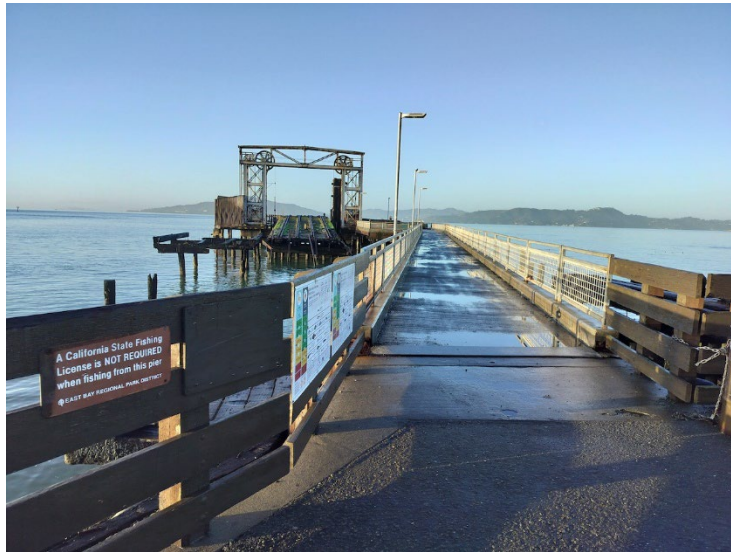
On the southwestern end of Richmond's Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, around the corner from throngs of yachts, is a very large problem pier.

"The Ferry Point Pier is in imminent danger of collapse," wrote Edward Willis, a planner for the East Bay Regional Parks, which has owned the 125-year-old pier since 1991, in 2022. "Any significant weather event could cause a significant collapse and failure of the pier." Large chunks could fall off, or the structure may collapse entirely, leaving free floating wood pieces in the Bay to clog up routes for commercial shippers and recreational kayakers alike.

Now, thanks to \$1.2 million in federal funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, officials at East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) hope to get the old Ferry Point pier out of the water before something terrible happens. Beyond the safety hazard, these old logs were long ago treated with creosote, a preservative that is toxic to aquatic life. So, beginning later this summer or fall, over a thousand 12- to 14-inch timber piles will be removed. In doing so, EBRPD will restore approximately 800 square feet of underwater habitat—a prime location for eelgrass beds and spawning Pacific herring. (A concrete section of the pier, where recreational anglers can fish without a license, will remain.)

"We're pivoting this from a navigation hazard to an environmental restoration project," says Becky Tuden, environmental services manager at EBRPD. The project is expected to take a month or two. It's been funded as a restoration project by the

Environmental Protection Agency's San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund. "It's pretty exciting to be able to do something for the Bay," Tuden adds.



The concrete section of the pier will be temporarily closed during construction, but remain accessible before and after. (Anushuya Thapa)

The project, first announced in 2022, has been much delayed. And the pier breaking apart is a real danger—it's already happened twice recently. In January 2021, a worn-down portion of the pier collapsed,

requiring the parks district to remove a hundred feet or so under an emergency contract. Six months later, the same thing happened again, with an even larger piece of the pier.

Willis, the EBRPD planner, says the breakages made them see the pier as "an immediate hazard" for nearby channels. "We certainly don't want to see a shipping accident because of pieces of this pier coming off."

A history of neglect

The pier was originally built in 1900. Back then, a transcontinental railway operated by Santa Fe Railroad brought passengers and cargo to Richmond, its southwestern terminal at the time. From this pier they would load onto vessels heading to San Francisco and other parts of the Bay.

But bridges were built, and ships were forgotten. Passenger rail ceased in 1933. All freight and barge traffic stopped by 1975. After that, the pier was neglected. The East Bay Regional Park District acquired it in 1991. Today, wild grass has reclaimed wooden tracks that lead to nowhere, and one segment of rail hangs perilously from the gantry, dipping its rusty toes into the water. People walking in the nearby Miller/Knox Shoreline park described it as a popular hangout spot for local residents, along with the public fishing pier. "Not everyone has a backyard or a deck to barbecue," says Barbara Arkin, a longtime resident. "I think it should have been preserved," says resident Annie Meyer of the historic old pier. "But it's too late now. We've reached a point of no return."

That isn't practical, park officials say. After a half-century of neglect, about 70 percent of the creosote-treated wood is too degraded to repair. For the parts that could be fixed, officials say doing so would cause a \$1.2 million project balloon to \$5.5 million, and the repaired segments would still only last 20 years anyway. (The historic gantry—a metal framing that was once above a platform for railroad tracks—will be preserved.)

“While it is removing a historic structure, it’s really to improve public and commercial safety,” says Willis. “As well as improve habitat for a variety of species that call San Francisco Bay their home.”

Let there be light (for the eelgrass)

The first thing that will return to the water once the pier is removed is possibly the most important—light itself. About 16,000 square feet of overhead dock will be pulled out of the water, revealing what park officials hope is prime real estate for eelgrass to move in from nearby.



(Courtesy East Bay Regional Park District)

“It’s a foundational habitat,” says Brook Vinnedge, ecological services coordinator at East Bay Regional Parks District. “It sustains life for so many other species.” Eelgrass beds are nurseries and refuges for all sorts of fish and invertebrates. Pacific herring, in particular, use them as spawning beds—and in turn feed many other fish and birds.

Protecting existing eelgrass will be a priority during the demolition, which will be carried out entirely by barge. EBRPD officials plan on using turbidity curtains—long underwater stretches of polyester—to keep debris and dust away from sensitive eelgrass beds.

Funding for the project also covers eelgrass monitoring, which park officials say will go on for at least a year after demolition barges have left the waters.



The historic gantry—a metal framing that was once above a platform for railroad tracks—will be preserved. (Anushuya Thapa)

A long time coming

The removal project has already suffered two major delays. In 2022, while EBRPD was wrestling with the preservation requirements for historic sites, the agency missed the “salmon window”—the golden period between June and November when projects like this

can occur without encroaching on the movement of anadromous fish. In 2023, when things seemed lined up and ready for the fall, their contractors discovered a black, resin-like stain on the pier’s surface—asbestos, mixed in with tar.

“It was probably there as a fire retardant,” Willis says. “It’s a big wooden pier and asbestos was used for many, many decades for fire suppression.”

That was an unusual find. But creosote treatment was standard for piers at the time; it kept wood from rotting in the water. Now it’s considered a “forever chemical” that wouldn’t be used to make any modern pier, and removing it is a high priority for EBRPD and other organizations trying to restore our shorelines. In 2020, the Coastal Conservancy awarded over \$3.2 million in grants aimed at removing dilapidated piers across the state.

“For all these 100-year-old piers throughout the Bay, these pilings, there’s a significant movement to get those out of the water,” Vinnedge says.

EAST BAY TIMES

Woman marooned on pickup truck for 15 hours in East Bay creek

The woman's vehicle got stuck in a creek off of Del Valle Road in Livermore



Rescuers used a California Highway Patrol helicopter on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, to reach a woman who became trapped on top of her pickup truck in a rain-swollen creek in Del Valle Regional Park in Livermore, California. (Photo courtesy Alameda County Fire Department)

By [HARRY HARRIS](#) | hharris@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

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LIVERMORE — A woman spent almost 15 hours trapped on her pickup truck, which became submerged Monday night in a creek in Del Valle Regional Park, before she was rescued Tuesday morning, officials said.

Authorities said rescuers from the East Bay Regional Park District, the Alameda County Fire Department and other agencies were notified just after 10 a.m. Tuesday that a vehicle was stranded on a cement bridge over the creek off of the 7000 block of Del Valle Road in Livermore.

The EBRPD said the woman was found stuck on the chassis of a small pickup truck and could not get to safety due to fast-flowing water. Heavy rains [Sunday night and Monday](#) greatly increased water flow in local creeks and rivers. A camper called authorities to alert them to the mishap.

Ground units prepared for a water rescue but before they got into place, the cloud cover lessened, allowing a California Highway Patrol helicopter to hoist the woman off the car to safety, authorities said.

Officials said the woman was trying to drive across a bridge over the creek around 7:30 p.m. Monday night and became trapped after underestimating how deep the fast-flowing water was. She was initially on top of the truck, but at some point the vehicle was overturned by the force of the water, forcing her to take refuge on the chassis, authorities said.

Authorities frequently remind drivers — using the phrase, “[Turn Around, Don't Drown](#)” — not to drive into flowing streams during flooding events. The woman was taken to a hospital for treatment of minor injuries, authorities said.



Woman hoisted off submerged Livermore car after 15 hours

By [Henry Lee](#), [Crystal Bailey](#) and Aja Seldon

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Updated 1:34PM

[Livermore](#)

[KTVU FOX 2](#)

Woman rescued after 15 hours on car in rushing water

A woman spent 15 hours on top of her overturned car in rushing water in Livermore's Del Valle Regional Park before being rescued. Officials said she drove through a flooded road and her car got carried away.

LIVERMORE, Calif. - A woman spent 15 hours on top of a submerged vehicle in [Livermore](#) before being rescued.

The Alameda County Fire Department received a call around 10:05 a.m. about a car submerged in rushing water in the 7000 block of Del Valle Road, the address of Del Valle Regional Park, the fire department said.

When firefighters arrived, they saw the woman sitting on top of her overturned car.

Firefighters initially planned to use a truck ladder for the rescue, but the California Highway Patrol dispatched a helicopter to assist with the rescue operation. Livermore and Pleasanton Fire Department also responded.



A woman is rescued in Livermore.

Video footage captured a rescue personnel being hoisted above the water from the CHP helicopter and grabbing the woman, pulling her to safety.

"The water was significantly rapid when we arrived, I can only imagine that last night it was flowing a little heavier," said ACFD Battalion Chief Kent Carlin.

Authorities said that the woman attempted to drive to the other side of a flooded road inside Del Valle Regional Park on Monday around 7:30 p.m. and underestimated how deep the water was. The rushing stream overpowered the vehicle and it overturned in the water. She was swam out of the car and climbed on top of the upside-down car, unable to call 911.



A woman is rescued in Livermore.

"During that time that her vehicle overturned in the water, she lost phone and all other important items not to

mention it was a bad coverage area anyway," said Carlin. "You could tell from her condition that she was cold, her hands were discolored, she had been there overnight."

She was taken to a local hospital for a medical evaluation and is expected to be fine.

"She was extremely lucky. Had there been nobody at the campground, she could have been there significantly longer," Carlin said.