

EAST BAY TIMES

Park It: Kids can now enjoy ‘Woodland Wonderland’ near Livermore

At Del Valle Regional every Friday in November and December, new program meant for families with children



Doug Duran — staff archives

The naturalists at Del Valle Regional Park, above, south of Livermore are offering a new children's program called "Woodland Wonderland" every Friday in November and December.

By [NED MACKAY](#) | East Bay Regional Park District

PUBLISHED: October 30, 2022 at 5:00 a.m. | UPDATED: November 1, 2022 at 1:46 p.m.

The naturalist staff at Del Valle Regional Park south of Livermore is offering a new program every Friday in November and December, intended to appeal especially to families with children.

It's called "Woodland Wonderland." Drop in after school at the park's visitor center any time between 3:30 and 5 p.m. to learn about plants and animals of the oak woodland environment. Bobcats are the topic on Friday; acorn woodpeckers star on Nov. 18; and coyotes will take the stage Nov. 25.

The East Bay Regional Park District naturalists have also scheduled nature craft drop-in programs for ages 2 and older from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. every Saturday through December, with a different craft each week. These programs are free, and registration is not required. Parents must participate, though.

Del Valle Regional Park is at the end of Del Valle Road, off Mines Road, about 9 miles south of Livermore. There's a parking fee of \$6 per vehicle. For information, call 510-544-3146.

Fremont: Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont is the temporary home each year to a variety of migratory birds. Naturalist Chris Garcia will lead a walk through Ardenwood's gardens and fields from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Saturday in search of these birds. The program is free, registration is not necessary and there's no admission fee. Ardenwood is at 34600 Ardenwood Blvd., just north of Highway 84. For information, call 510-544-2797.

Sunol: Speaking of birds, wild turkeys seem to show up almost everywhere nowadays, except perhaps as Thanksgiving approaches. You can learn more about this ubiquitous bird in a program from 1 to 2 p.m. Saturday at Sunol Regional Wilderness with naturalist Kristina Parkison. It's for ages * and older. Kristina will impart some turkey lore, then lead the group in a search for turkey signs or actual birds in the park. The program is free, though there's a parking fee of \$6 per vehicle. Sunol Regional Wilderness is at the end of Geary Road, off Calaveras Road, about 5 miles south of Highway 680 and the town of Sunol. For information, call 510-544-3249.

Back in Fremont: "Neat Stuff with a Naturalist" is the theme of a program series at Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont. There's a session from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday.

Every week a naturalist will lead hands-on activities, tours or crafts. The program is designed for ages five and older with parent participation required. It's drop-in, free, and no registration is required. Meet at the visitor center. Coyote Hills is at the end of Patterson Ranch Road, off Paseo Padre Parkway in Fremont. There's a parking fee of \$6 per vehicle. For information, call 510-544-3220.

San Ramon: People looking for easy to moderate naturalist-led hikes will enjoy the "Let's Get Outside Club" series, meeting the first Sunday of each month. There's a hike from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Nov. 6 at Las Trampas Regional Wilderness in San Ramon, led by naturalist Ashley Houts. It's a 2¾-mile walk with 670 feet of elevation gain.

The hikes are for ages 8 and older, and children's parents or guardians must participate. Meet at the parking lot at the end of Bollinger Canyon Road off Crow Canyon Road in San Ramon. Bring water and a snack or lunch. For information, call 510-544-3245.

Oakley: Winter snow in the Sierra Nevada is a crucial part of our water supply. During a program from 11 a.m. to noon on Sunday, Nov. 6 at Big Break Regional Shoreline in Oakley, naturalist Wyatt Moore will describe the journey of a single snowflake from its origin at 12,000 feet elevation to its end in San Francisco Bay.

Big Break is at 69 Big Break Road off Oakley's Main Street. For information, call 510-544-3050.

Antioch: "Mini Miners" is the title of a recurring program at Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve in Antioch that's designed for kids younger than 6 and accompanied by parents.

Each session is a morning of learning, playing and enjoying the great outdoors, with a different theme every month. The program is best for ages 2 through 5; siblings are welcome. Dress for the weather, as the program will occur outdoors rain or shine.

The first session is from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Nov. 8 with naturalist Jessica Kauzer. It's free, and no registration is required. The program will be offered once per month — every second Tuesday. Black Diamond Mines is at the end of Somersville Road, 3½ miles south of Highway 4. Meet at the uppermost parking lot. Call 510-544-2750.

Online: This is just a sample of upcoming park district activities. For the full story, visit ebparks.org/things-to-do online.



Halloween comes to East Bay Regional Parks

By Ned MacKay 6 days ago



Find some fun spooky and family friendly Halloween fun in our East Bay parks from Ardenwood Historic Farm to Crab Cove. (Pete Cruz photos)

SF EAST BAY AREA, CA (Oct. 28, 2022) — Halloween is almost here, and several East Bay Regional Parks will anticipate the costumed cavalcade with a variety of spooky-themed but non-frightening programs.

For starters, there will be a Spooky Sunol Open House from 6 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 29.

Staff will show the visitor center's live reptile, amphibian and arachnid ambassadors, including Lumpy the gopher snake. Visitors who wish may join in an optional bat fly-out viewing. Wear warm clothes; bring drinking water, and a mug for hot chocolate or apple cider.

Sunol also plans a self-guided scavenger hunt from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 30. Stop by the visitor center, pick up a scavenger hunt guide, and search for creepy critters and eerie landscapes. Return to the center, tell what you found, and get a treat.

Or you can drop in at the center any time between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. the same day for a variety of Halloween activities and a mug of apple cider.

Costumes are encouraged at these programs. All ages are welcome; children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Sunol Regional Wilderness is located at the end of Geary Road off Calaveras Road about five miles south of I-680 and the town of Sunol. There's a parking fee of \$6 per vehicle; the programs are free. For information, call 510-544-3234.

Scavenger hunt

There's also a spooky scavenger hunt planned on Sunday, Oct. 30 at Del Valle Regional Park south of Livermore.

Stop by the visitor center between 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., obtain a scavenger hunt guide, and venture out in search of Halloween in nature. Return to the center for a treat. Costumes are encouraged; adult participation is required.

Del Valle Regional Park is at the end of Del Valle Road off Mines Road about nine miles south of Livermore. There's a parking fee of \$6 per vehicle; the program is free. For information, call 510-544-3146.

Haunted Farm

Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont will host "Halloween Hijinks" from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 30 with naturalist Mindy Castle.

There will be three ten-minute puppet shows starting at 11 a.m. Apple cider pressing is at 11:30 a.m. Making costumed clothespin dolls is at 1 p.m., and Halloween games start at 2 p.m.

Ardenwood is located at 34600 Ardenwood Boulevard, just north of Highway 84. The programs are all free; admission fees apply. Parking is free. For information, call 510-544-2797.

Creature Feature

"The Creatures of Crab Cove and the Ocean Trash Monsters" is the theme of a Halloween celebration from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 29 and 30, at Crab Cove Visitor Center in Alameda.

Learn why Halloween is the spookiest night of the year for the animals inhabiting the Bay, craft some Halloween decorations, and join the search for Ocean Trash Monsters.

And Family Nature Fun Hour activities at Crab Cove from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 30 include helping bay critters and adding to the center's trash monster. Wear your costume for a special treat.

Crab Cove is at 1253 McKay Ave. off Alameda's Central Avenue. For information, call 510-544-3187.

Tilden Nature Area

No specific Halloween-themed programs are planned at the Environmental Education Center in Tilden Nature Area near Berkeley. But you can still stop by to see the live and spooky creatures on display.

The center is at the north end of Tilden's Central Park Drive, accessible via Wildcat Canyon Road or Canon Road in Berkeley. For information, call 510-544-2233.

Whether it's Halloween or any other day, there's always something interesting going on in the East Bay Regional Parks. For the full story, visit www.ebparks.org/things-to-do online.

Enjoy, Don't Destroy Our Public Parks

India Currents - Friday

Memorial Park in Cupertino is a Popular Recreation Spot

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, was celebrated this year all across the [East Bay](#). Celebrations were organized in a variety of venues – community centers, high schools, Alameda County Fairgrounds, as well as at Memorial Park in Cupertino.

While the festivities – sparklers, arts and crafts and fireworks – are a great way to engage people in the spirit of the occasion in some locations, conservationists worry that similar large scale events in public parks could put native wildlife and habitat at risk.

Memorial Park is a popular spot in the heart of Cupertino. It hosts numerous community and civic events on its 22 acre site. Local residents often gathers for summer concerts, Independence Day celebrations, family picnics and softball games.

During the pandemic, popular parks in the East Bay Area saw a 400% increase in visitors. While overall a positive development, these numbers have created challenges in terms of human and wildlife interaction.

Native Wildlife and Habitats at Risk

The [East Bay Regional Park District \(EBRPD\)](#) and EMS hosted an Oct 18 [briefing](#) focusing on “Enjoy, Don’t Destroy Our Public Parks: More Visitors Put Native Wildlife and Habitat at Risk.”

The title says it all.

The Mission of the EBRPD is to acquire, preserve, protect, and operate regional parklands in perpetuity for public use. At the briefing, they explained that increased public use has caused unprecedented friction between the animals that call the parks home, and visitors to the park. Now, the EBRPD is seeking the public's help to protect parks so they can be enjoyed far into the future.

Finding a Balance

The trick, according to EBRPD Environmental Services Manager [Becky Tuden](#), is finding the balance between preservation and recreation. Lands need to be meaningful to the public, but at the same time they are not something that is to be 'consumed.'

EBRPD Board Member, [Dee Rosario](#) highlighted that some individuals view the role of public parks differently dependent upon their cultural perspective. For instance, some see parks as opportunities for a solitary escape from urban life, while others view parks as venues for family gatherings, and group recreation and entertainment.

"People bring with them their culture heritage and biases. Their own interpretation of what it is to 'enjoy nature'," said Rosario. However, he noted, "we need to understand the history and how sensitive it [nature] is to human intrusion."

How to Be Good Park Stewards

There are three key actions that the public can take to protect their public parks said [Doug Bell](#), EBRPD's Wildlife Program Manager.

Don't Disturb Wildlife

First of all, but don't disturb wildlife. Parks are home to unique environments that host many threatened or endangered species. For example, the federally threatened western snowy plover, winters on the beaches of some parks. To protect these animals, he urges visitors to obey closed areas signs and stay on officially marked trails.

Another important rule is to keep dogs on leashes. Someone may take their dog off leash “and they just see one dog and they think, ‘what’s the problem?’,” said Tuden. “What they don’t realize is that there are 25 million visitors, half of whom have dogs, and maybe a quarter of the who do the same thing with their animal.” The cumulative impact of this seemingly minor transgressions can have major consequences for the ecosystems impacted.

Bell gives another example of a park user crashing a drone into a bald eagle’s nest. Drones are not allowed in the parks. As a result , said Bell, “the bald eagles abandoned it [the nest] and this either caused the eggs to die or get eaten by a raven. If there were young chicks, they succumbed because the eagles were so afraid.”

Don’t Feed Wildlife

The second rule is to never feed wild animals. Feeding animals has several negative consequences. First, it draws additional animals into the area and the crowding can spread disease and lead to behavioral problems. Another consequence is that it trains animals to associate humans with food. When animals expect food may attack the humans who don’t meet their expectations. In other words, people can be injured, and the animal will have to be exterminated.

Don’t Release Animals

Last, never release an animal into a park. Domestic animals are not equipped to live in the wild and many will not survive. [Joe Sullivan](#), Fisheries Program Manager for the EBRPD, said that “the number one threat to aquatic life is people releasing aquarium species into the lakes and streams. There is the threat of passing a disease or parasite that could wipe out entire populations.”

Solutions can be found, said Sullivan, when noting that “There are a number of religious communities that do release fish as part of their faith.” For example, the park is happy to work with groups to provide responsible alternative to store-bought fish, such as sourcing fish that are certified as native and healthy.

People also release pets, such as their cats. According to Bell, this is the most destructive thing individuals can do because cats can devastate local populations of birds, rodents, and other vulnerable animals, particularly endangered shoreline species. Should someone no longer be able to care for their cat, the animal should be re-homed or taken to a shelter.

Lands Belong to Everyone

“These are our lands, they belong to everyone,” Rosario concluded. We all share these public lands and we all should share in taking care of that land as well. This comes with an etiquette. Not only how we treat each other, but how we treat the land, it’s animals, and the environment.”

The post [Enjoy, Don't Destroy Our Public Parks](#) appeared first on [India Currents](#).



TOP STORY

Park District Plans Halloween Activities

Oct 27, 2022



The East Bay Regional Park District will host several Halloween activities this coming weekend, including a Spooky Sunol open house at Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 29.

The Halloween-themed program at the Visitor Center, 1895 Geary Road, will introduce visitors to many of the park's nocturnal reptiles, amphibians, bats, and arachnids. Visitors should also bring a mug for hot chocolate or apple cider. The Sunol Wilderness will also host a self-guided scavenger hunt for all ages from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 30. Scavenger guides for creepy critters and eerie landscapes will be available in the Visitor Center. There will also be Halloween activities and apple cider inside the Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Del Valle Regional Park south of Livermore will also host a spooky scavenger hunt in search of Halloween in nature from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 30. Treats and scavenger hunt guides will be available in the Visitor Center.

The programs are free, although there is a \$6 per vehicle parking fee at both parks. Halloween costumes are encouraged, and children must be accompanied by an adult.

Mayor says Roddy Ranch to be a regional park

Chris Campos, Staff Writer

Oct 27, 2022 Updated Oct 27, 2022



Photo courtesy of East Bay Regional Park District

The former Roddy Ranch property will be protected in a pending agreement to preserve the 230-acre Antioch site as a regional park.

Mayor Joel Bryant offered a major surprise at the City Council meeting Tuesday night: a pending agreement to transform Roddy Ranch into a regional park.

"I've got some exciting news," Bryant said. "We are going to be able to teach our kids and our grandchildren the value of preserving our wildlands."

Edward Willis, planner at East Bay Regional Parks (EBRPD), said Wednesday a tentative agreement will be presented to the agency's board of directors Tuesday, Nov. 1, for their approval. The item was not on Tuesday night's meeting agenda.

Bryant added Wednesday, "It will be an opportunity for people to see what this area looked like before development hit."

Willis explained that the 230-acre Roddy Ranch Golf Course closed in 2016 and was purchased by EBRPD from ranchers Jack and Donna Roddy in 2018, with funding from the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy.

Since early 2020, the park agency and the Conservancy have been developing a Habitat Restoration and Public Access Plan to transform the former golf course into a new regional park with restored grassland and wetland habitat with public access features such as a staging area, 4 miles of multi-use trails, and picnic sites.

During the planning process, project staff held two online public meetings in 2021 and two on-site public tours in late 2021 and early 2022, and have been receiving input from public officials, residents, and regulatory agencies to ensure that proposed public access is compatible with habitat restoration and protection. Roddy Ranch will be part of the larger future Deer Valley Regional Park, which covers 3,700 acres of land roughly between Round Valley and Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserves in East Contra Costa County.

Willis added that the parks board of directors has to approve the plan during their public meeting on Nov. 1, and, afterwards, the Conservancy's Board must also approve the plan. After final approvals, EBRPD can begin further design and construction work to ready the land for public access; it is expected to take 2-5 years after plan adoption to open the regional park to the public.

The park agency's website outlines the history of the property: "When rodeo legend Jack Roddy bought 2,300 acres of land in the late 1960s, he built what would become known as Roddy Ranch, stretching from Black Diamond Mines in the northwest to Deer Valley Road in the southeast. As the popularity of golf rose and the communities of Antioch and Brentwood grew in the late 20th century, the Roddy Ranch Golf Course opened in 2000 and operated for the next 16 years, serving thousands of visitors and golf enthusiasts."

In other actions, the council voted to extend a moratorium for 45 days on business applications for tobacco shops.

Also, Vice Mayor Johnny Rodriguez, spoke out publicly on colleague Jovita Mendoza's proposal to censure him. Mendoza has yet to reveal the details of her

accusations though she has asked staff to study and report on the current censure process.

Rodriguez said Tuesday night, "I have had my integrity questioned ... But there is nothing on record that the vice mayor has violated any laws." He noted that there are no police reports regarding the alleged incident. "I have been very patient." However, Rodriguez did not make any motion for a future agenda item.

EAST BAY TIMES

6 spooky, haunted hikes in the Bay Area for Halloween 2022

From bloodthirsty San Jose cannibals to a pale-white Sasquatch, here's where to get scared while burning calories.



Re-enactors dressed in 1920s period clothing walk the ruins of the Sutro Baths in San Francisco. Nearby are shipwrecks, buried tombstones and a reputedly haunted sea cave.

By [JOHN METCALFE](#) | jmetcalfe@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: October 27, 2022 at 6:45 a.m. | UPDATED: October 27, 2022 at 7:31 a.m.

People in horror movies get so much exercise. All that jumping around and running from psychotic killers plodding right behind – somebody should make that into a workout routine. Around here, we tend to opt for bike rides and hiking through the gorgeous outdoors. But for those who want to combine horror with their hikes, several destinations in the Bay Area are downright spooky, creepy-crawly or stalked by grumpy cryptids. Here are a few good ones:

1 [Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Felton area](#)

Did you know the Bay Area has its own special flavor of Sasquatch? Michael Rugg, who runs the [Bigfoot Discovery Museum](#) in Felton, recounts an itinerant cyclist's [2002 sighting](#) near Highway 1 and Santa Cruz: "As he wheeled past and looked down into the gully he saw what he first thought was a person dressed in white rags, cutting a swath through the brush with his arms swinging scythe-like in front of him to clear a path. Then as he watched incredulously, he saw the figure appear to just step over a fence without breaking stride, and at that point, he decided he was looking at a heavily built being that seemed to be about 8-feet tall and covered in white or gray hair (rather than rags as he first thought). At this point he decided to pedal on out of there as fast as possible...."



Fog covers Highway 9 on a rainy morning at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park near Santa Cruz.

Where would such a Bigfoot be hiding around them parts? Well, a good guess would be among trees just as towering as he is at the Henry Cowell Redwoods. A great (and easy) way to experience this natural wonder is the Redwood Grove Loop Trail that snakes among living giants more than 1,500 years old. Look carefully and you might spot the “Phantom of the Forest,” one of the few albino redwoods that grow in the park and are ghostly white due to chlorophyll deficiency.

2 Ocean Beach to Lands End, San Francisco

One of the most majestic vistas in San Francisco is littered with reminders of the dead. During stormy weather, strong waves [uncover tombstones on Ocean Beach](#), transported here in the early 1900s as the city cleared cemeteries for urban growth. Start somewhere lower on the beach trail and make your way north. Eventually, you'll reach the atmospheric remains of the Sutro Baths, a saltwater swimming complex that burned down in the 1960s. It's filled with murky pools you'd expect to harbor Swamp Things. During low tide, it's possible to see forlorn shipwrecks embedded a little ways off the coast. Head to the sea cave up from the shore for another dark treat: This narrow tunnel into the rock, echoing with pounding surf, is rumored to have been used by Satanists and is supposedly haunted. Carry a candle in, the legend goes, and something will snatch it from your hand and throw it into the water.



Ladybugs cluster on the back of a sign at Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, near the junction of the Stream and Prince trail. During their annual migration, ladybugs cluster by the thousands on logs, fence posts and shrubs at Redwood and other Bay Area venues.

3 [Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park, Oakland](#)

Got a friend who suffers from severe entomophobia? Now's a fantastic time to take them to the Reinhardt Redwoods and wax lyrical on the gruesome beauty of ladybugs. During the cold season, these colorful insects [cluster around the Creek Trail](#) in giant gobs that weigh down vines and coat surfaces like crimson truck bed-liner paint. Did you know a group of ladybugs is technically known as a "loveliness"? Or that they emit foul liquid from leg joints when threatened? Or they can play dead only to suddenly rise like zombies? Now you do, and so does your former friend.



Eureka Slope, an inclined shaft that was once the entrance to the Eureka Coal Mine in the 1800s, is located at Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve in Antioch.

4 [Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, Antioch area](#)

Shadowy nooks and crannies, remnants of 1800s and 1900s mining activity in the East Bay, are all over this wild park. Yawning shafts descend at steep angles seemingly into the center of the earth. (You can enter some of the mine tunnels, if you schedule a guided tour.) Caves dot the sides of trails – a few are home to bats, which flit in and out in the summertime. The morbidly inclined can visit Rose Hill Cemetery, the resting place to “children who died in epidemics, women who died in childbirth, and men who died in mining disasters and of other things,” according to the East Bay Regional Park District.

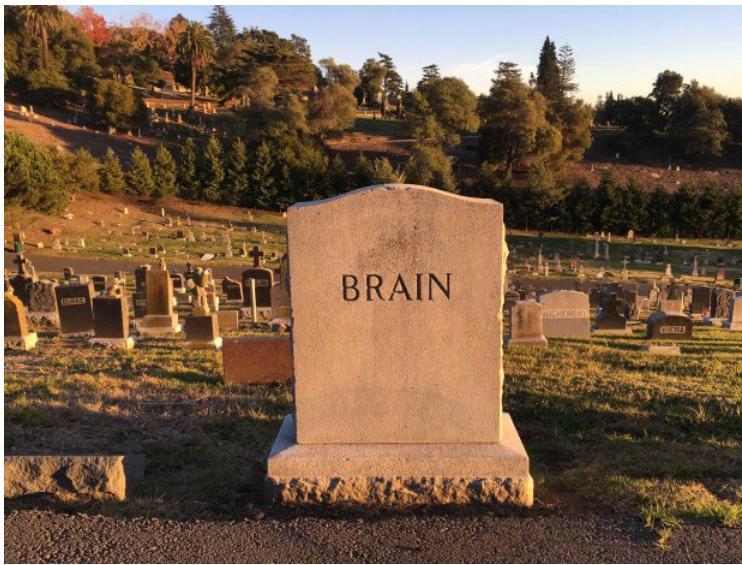


People enter a tunnel at the San Cristobal mine at Almaden Quicksilver County Park in San Jose.

5 [Almaden Quicksilver County Park, San Jose area](#)

For decades, folks have whispered about a tribe of pale-white cannibals that chase cars and people around the South Bay, particularly in Alum Rock and on Hicks Road.

The [San Jose blood albinos](#), as they're rather unfortunately known – someday we'll quash those harmful albinism tropes – are said to be armed, vicious and supremely hungry, sometimes dragging roadkill off the pavement when they can't find human flesh. Some say they're descendents of a local Swedish community, others that they're the offspring of mercury miners who never saw daylight. If there's indeed an "albino fortress" harboring these guys, as rumored, it might be in Almaden Quicksilver, a pleasant recreational area dotted with old mercury-mining infrastructure. Take some time to enjoy the sights and 37 miles of hiking trails, almost half of it biking-accessible. Just don't stop on any cattle grates, [cautions one believer](#), as that's when "they'll come out and grab you."



Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland is a lovely place to contemplate life and nature. And, brain.

6 [Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland](#)

What should be one of the East Bay's spookiest places, in reality is a sanctuary for quiet contemplation of life and nature. Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted of Central Park fame, Mountain View rises above the surrounding neighborhoods and is threaded with walking paths through diverse, post-life neighborhoods. You can cool down in shadows cast by huge, bookshelf-like columbariums, then pass by a small Jewish cemetery and Asian plots situated to improve feng shui, all the while enjoying the background rustling of squirrels and Canadian geese. Near the top are hulking tombs of the rich and famous – the so-called "Millionaire's Row" – giving folks like Oakland mayor Samuel Merritt and chocolate-maker Domingo Ghirardelli eternal views of the shimmering Bay. (Public visiting hours change, but as of now it's 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.)

EAST BAY TIMES



Photos: Why ladybugs gather annually en masse on Oakland's Stream Trail

Pheromones, scent markers left by previous generations, are likely drawing new ladybugs to old stomping grounds

By [DYLAN BOUSCHER](#) and [JOSE CARLOS FAJARDO](#) | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: October 27, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. | UPDATED: October 27, 2022 at 11:47 a.m.

OAKLAND — The annual spectacle involving tens of thousands of ladybugs, or a loveliness, converging near two specific trails in Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park is underway now through mid-February.

These ladybugs from the Bay Area lowlands fly away with the prevailing winds to the east when fall arrives before they settle down in numerous places in the East Bay hills to hibernate, including the junction of the Stream and Prince trails, according to [East Bay Regional Parks District](#).

The convergent beetles (*Hippodamia convergens*) huddle together on objects like bushes, logs, fence posts and underneath leaves. This annual crimson and black polka-dotted pageant is likely the result of previous generations of ladybugs and their aggregation pheromones — scent markers left behind on the ground — attracting the beetles that are converging this year, according to [the National Park Service](#).

The lady beetles overwinter at higher elevations in a state of diapause, or suspended development in their life cycle, and don't typically live longer than a few months to a year.

You can hike directly to the ladybugs from the Stream Trail entrances at the Canyon Meadow staging area off Redwood Road and the Skyline Gate staging area near the intersection of Pine Hills Drive and Skyline Boulevard.

Ladybug fun facts • There are about 175 species of ladybugs in California, 5,000 in the world, and they come in many colors. • Ladybugs can beat their wings about 85 times per second. • When disturbed, they can emit a toxic, yellow liquid out of their leg joints.

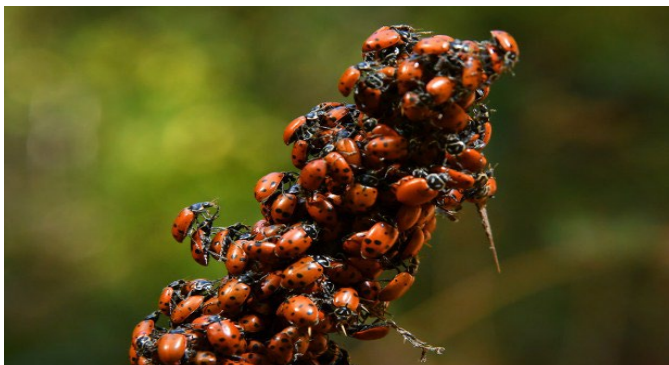
Fun Facts compiled by East Bay Regional Parks District.



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – OCTOBER 17: A ladybug takes flight along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – OCTOBER 17: Ladybugs have converged along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – OCTOBER 17: A ladybug takes flight along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – OCTOBER 17:
Ladybugs climb to the top of plant along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – OCTOBER 17:
Ladybugs climb to the top of plant along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



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Ladybugs have converged along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – OCTOBER 17:
Ladybugs wander along the forest floor along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – OCTOBER 17:
Hikers tread lightly being careful not to hurt any ladybugs along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Calif., on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)



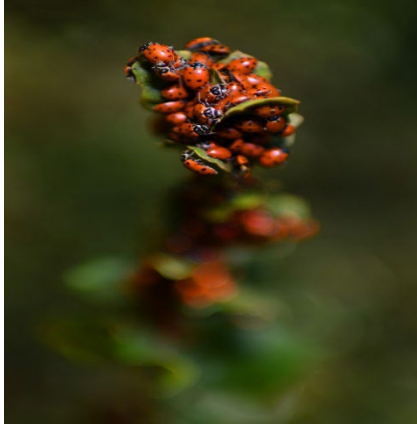
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Protecting the parks

Having awareness keeps people and wildlife safe

by **Caleb Pugh**
October 26, 2022



When the pandemic started, California leaders closed state parks and trails to limit people's interactions and ultimately limit the spread of the virus. Once the pandemic was over, all state parks and trails opened up and were surprised to see a meteoric rise in visitors.

Although that may be a good thing for society — especially people who use these public spaces to aid in their mental, emotional, and physical health — wildlife and the natural ecosystems are harmed by the frequent and massive visitations of humans and their animals.

"When you release pets, turtles, or even insects into the wild, if it's not their natural habitat, they can cause an ecosystem disturbance, which could be lethal to everybody." Becky Tuden, ecological services manager at the East Bay Regional Park District said during a recent Ethnic Media Services zoom meeting. She noted that when humans try to control or manipulate natural habitats, they are causing more harm than good.

Tuden's stewardship department's mission is to acquire, preserve, protect and operate regional parklands in perpetuity for public use. Tuden also highlighted the environmental challenges forcing wildlife into more populated areas.

"We need to better protect parks, working together and watching the usage of parks and making sure we make paths that do not affect the ecosystem or disturb wildlife habits," she said.

Doug Bell, the Wildlife Program Manager with the East Bay Regional Park District suggests different things people and park managers can do to reduce wildlife threats. "The first thing is to enjoy and not disturb wildlife, the second is to not feed the animals in the park, and the third thing is never to release your animals into the park because that is not their natural habitat."

Bell said that when business, housing, or anything to do with acquiring land for construction build on these greenlands, it causes natural disturbance and human activity. This also causes disturbance to animal habitat problems as some wildlife don't have the proper environment to breed, causing their species to become endangered. He also noted that feeding wildlife can cause trouble for the park workers.

"Animals can contract diseases from contaminated food, cause animals to become unstable, and have them fighting amongst each other over the food if the food originated from the trash can," he said.

Bell wants people to stop releasing their pets into the wild because they won't be able to survive.

"When the pandemic started, many people left their pet cats in the wild because they couldn't afford them and assumed they would be fine. Cats can raise a sense of hostility in wildlife parks and become dangerous if they group with other cats."

Park leaders want everybody to be self and aware of their surroundings when going on hikes and want people to follow the rules so not only are they safe but the wildlife is safe.

EAST BAY TIMES

Park It: Enjoy fun Halloween activities in the East Bay parks

Spooky Sunol Open House, 'Hijinks' at Fremont's Ardenwood among plans for weekend before holiday



James Sakane — BANG archives
Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont, seen above during a previous Halloween season, will host “Halloween Hijinks” on Oct. 30 with an East Bay Regional Park District naturalist.

By [NED MACKAY](#) | East Bay Regional Park District

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Halloween is almost here, and staff at several East Bay regional parks will welcome the costumed cavalcade with a variety of spooky-themed but nonfrightening programs.

For starters, there will be a Spooky Sunol Open House from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday. Staff will show the visitor center’s live reptile, amphibian and arachnid ambassadors, including Lumpy the gopher snake. Visitors who wish may join in an optional bat fly-out viewing. Wear warm clothes, and bring drinking water and a mug for hot chocolate or apple cider.

Sunol also plans a self-guided scavenger hunt from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 30. Stop by the visitor center, pick up a scavenger hunt guide, and search for creepy critters and eerie landscapes. Return to the center, tell the staff what you found and get a treat. Or you can drop in at the center any time between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. the same day for a variety of Halloween activities and a mug of apple cider.

Costumes are encouraged at these programs. All ages are welcome; children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Sunol Regional Wilderness is at the end of

Geary Road off Calaveras Road, about 5 miles south of Interstate 680 and the town of Sunol. There's a parking fee of \$6 per vehicle; the programs are free. For information, call 510-544-3234.

Livermore: There's also a spooky scavenger hunt planned on Oct. 30 at Del Valle Regional Park south of Livermore. Stop by the visitor center between 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., obtain a scavenger hunt guide and venture out in search of Halloween in nature. Return to the center for a treat. Costumes are encouraged, and adult participation is required.

Del Valle Regional Park is at the end of Del Valle Road, off Mines Road, about 9 miles south of Livermore. There's a parking fee of \$6 per vehicle, but the program is free. For information, call 510-544-3146.

Fremont: Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont will host "Halloween Hijinks" from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 30 with naturalist Mindy Castle. There will be three 10-minute puppet shows starting at 11 a.m. Apple cider pressing will be at 11:30 a.m. Making costumed clothespin dolls is at 1 p.m., and Halloween games start at 2 p.m. Ardenwood is at 34600 Ardenwood Blvd., just north of Highway 84. The programs are all free, but admission fees apply. Parking is free. For information, call 510-544-2797.

Alameda: "The Creatures of Crab Cove and the Ocean Trash Monsters" is the theme of a Halloween celebration from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Oct. 30 at Crab Cove Visitor Center in Alameda.

Learn why Halloween is the spookiest night of the year for the animals inhabiting San Francisco Bay, craft some Halloween decorations and join the search for Ocean Trash Monsters.

Also, Family Nature Fun Hour activities at Crab Cove from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 30 include helping bay critters and adding to the center's "trash monster." Wear your costume for a special treat. Crab Cove is at 1253 McKay Ave. off Alameda's Central Avenue. For information, call 510-544-3187.

Berkeley: No specific Halloween-themed programs are planned at the Environmental Education Center in Tilden Nature Area near Berkeley. However, you can still stop by to see the live and spooky creatures on display. The center is at the north end of Tilden's Central Park Drive, accessible via Wildcat Canyon Road or Canon Road in Berkeley. For information, call 510-544-2233.

Online: Whether it's Halloween or any other day, there's always something interesting going on in the East Bay Regional Parks. For the full story, visit ebparks.org/things-to-do online.

Ned MacKay writes about East Bay Regional Park District sites and activities. Email him at nedmackay@comcast.net.



BY DENNIS WAESPI, EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dozens of people from many community organizations gathered on Saturday, September 17 at Lake Chabot Regional Park in Castro Valley to celebrate the United Nations International Day of Peace. I was privileged to participate.

Activities included music, peace messages, arts and crafts, a walk along the lakeshore, and a gathering at the park's Peace Pole to reaffirm the goal of world peace. The 12-foot pole has inscriptions in 31 languages symbolizing the hopes and dreams of the global family for peace on earth. At the event, there was a presentation from the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe, and singing by students from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center.

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. The General Assembly unanimously voted to designate the day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire.

During the summer swim season, the park district provides lifeguard services at 11 swim areas: six lakefront beaches, two swimming pools, and three swim lagoons. Lifeguards undergo rigorous training; some have worked during the swim season for many years.

I'm happy to report that thanks to the lifeguards, the park district has just concluded its 13th annual swim season without a drowning fatality. Besides the lifeguards' vigilance, this record is partly attributable to swim area rules requiring children to be carefully supervised by parents or other responsible parties. Congratulations to the lifeguard corps for their professionalism and hard work.

An innovative pilot project is now under way at Anthony Chabot Regional Park in Castro Valley as a method of removing large numbers of trees killed by drought and disease, without creating excess carbon and adding to global warming. The pilot project is on 80 acres in the area of the park's former rifle and shotgun range, now closed.

As described by Khari Helae, park district assistant fire chief, the process involves placing logs and limbs into a carbonator, a device that uses an eco-friendly combustion process to convert biomass into biochar. Biochar helps with water retention, and provides nutrients for drought-stressed plants.

Traditionally, biomass produced from dead trees and limbs is trucked out of the area for disposal. Because biochar can be used locally, it reduces truck traffic and exhaust emissions tenfold. It's estimated that the process could sequester 8,000 tons of carbon that would otherwise contribute to global warming. Assuming the 80-acre pilot project is successful, the

process will be used on another 500 acres of land at the park that have been affected by tree die-off.

Half of the \$2 million pilot project is being funded by the park district, the other half by a Coastal Conservancy grant.

Ayn Wieskamp, my colleague on the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors, has announced that she is retiring from the board at the end of this year. Ayn has served as a board member since 1999, representing Ward 5. The ward includes portions of Dublin, Fremont, Livermore, Newark, Pleasanton, Sunol and Union City.

Besides her work on the park district board, Ayn has an impressive record of public service. She was a Livermore City Council member for about 20 years. She also has served on the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District Board, Alameda County Recycling Board and Alameda County Congestion Management Agency.

In 2022 Ayn received two well-deserved awards: the Distinguished Service Award from Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals, and the Award of Distinction for Outstanding Board Member from California Association of Recreation and Park Districts.

It has been an honor and pleasure to serve with Ayn for part of her long and successful career on the board. She has been a great friend and mentor. A true champion of parks, recreation and open space. I know that I speak for all the park district board members in thanking Ayn for her years of exemplary service. We wish her well in all her future activities.



Park It: Return of the ladybugs

BY NED MACKAY

The ladybugs are back. Ladybugs, more formally known as ladybird beetles, are beginning their annual winter convention at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, though not in great numbers so far.

As part of their life cycle, the little red insects cluster together in trailside shrubs during cold winter weather, then disperse in the warmer springtime. Although you can see them in many regional parks and other open spaces, Redwood is probably the most convenient place for viewing.

Enter the park from Redwood Road, about two miles east of the intersection with Skyline Boulevard in Oakland. Park at the road's end, then walk on the Stream Trail for about a mile and a half to the junction with the Prince Trail. As you approach the Prince Trail, you should start seeing ladybugs on the bushes and fence posts to the left. Look for the ladybug information panel.

Gardeners like ladybugs, because the insects eat mostly aphids, an agricultural pest. But please do not take any ladybugs for your garden. Collecting any animals or plants is illegal in the regional parks. Ladybugs' bright red color is a signal to potential predators that they taste bad. When threatened, ladybugs secrete an oily foul-tasting fluid from joints in their legs. Nevertheless, frogs, wasps, spiders, dragonflies and some kinds of birds will still dine on ladybugs.

Keep in mind a couple of Redwood park rules. Dogs are supposed to be on leash on the Stream Trail. Please also keep them out of Redwood Creek; though there's little water in the creek right now, it will be spawning ground for rainbow trout when the rains arrive. Also, bicycles are allowed on the Stream Trail only as far as Trail's End, which is about a half-mile before you reach the ladybug habitat.

Perhaps they are not as cute, but spiders and scorpions are also beneficial bugs. You can find out more about them during a short walk in search of the arachnids from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 22 at Tilden Nature Area near Berkeley, led by naturalist Trent Pearce. Meet Trent at the Environmental Education Center, which is at the north end of Tilden's Central Park Drive. The program is free and registration is not required. For information, call (510) 544-2233.

From bugs to bats: there's a program all about the night flyers from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Sunday, October 23 at Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont, with naturalist Maeron Yeshiwas.

Learn about the area's native bat species compared to other bats found around the world, then make your own bat craft.

The program is for all ages; parent participation is required. No reservations are necessary. Meet at the visitor center. Coyote Hills is at the end of Patterson Ranch Road off Paseo Padre Parkway. There's a parking fee of \$5 per vehicle; the program is free. For information, call (510) 544-3220.

The plants and animals of Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve in Antioch will be on display during a two-mile, naturalist-led walk through the park's hills and dales, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturday, October 22. Meet in the parking lot at the upper end of Somersville Road, two miles south of Highway 4. The walk is free; there's a parking fee of \$5 per vehicle when the kiosk is attended. For information, call (510) 544-2750.

Turtles are the focus of a program from 12 noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 22 at Big Break Regional Shoreline in Oakley. Learn all about the amphibians, then make a turtle craft. There's a nature-based activity during those hours every weekend at the Big Break Visitor Center. These are free, drop-in programs; no registration is required, though parents must participate.

Big Break is at 69 Big Break Road off Oakley's Main Street. For information, call (510) 544-3050.

This is just a snapshot. For the full picture of available programs in the regional parks, go to www.ebparks.org/things-to-do online