

Healthy Parks Healthy People

COMPASS

SUMMER 2022



REGIONAL PARKS
Foundation

Supporting East Bay Regional Parks

Wild Report Card

EAST BAY NATURECHECK EXAMINES
THE HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT'S
ANIMAL POPULATION

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DEEP-ROOTED HISTORY

➤ New life can be seen throughout the Park District, but there is a deep history here as well—with indigenous people calling these lands home for thousands of years.

The indigenous tribes that lived on the 125,000 acres that now comprise the Park District celebrated and honored their environment, both in daily life and in sacred rituals. Those celebrations continue today, with new generations recognizing old traditions and creating new ones. Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont and Vasco Caves Regional Preserve in eastern Contra Costa County are just two of the parks within the District that highlight the rich history of indigenous people in California, although there are archaeological sites, sacred places and plant-gathering sites throughout Contra Costa and Alameda counties. Protecting and preserving these cultural resources is part of the mission of the Park District—as is helping to amplify the contemporary voices and stories of indigenous people today (see page 6 for more details).

Change is ever-present, of course, including at the Regional Parks Foundation. We bid a very fond farewell to Chief Administrative Officer Juliana Schirmer, who is off to new adventures in Arizona; she will be greatly missed. Additionally, after a long tenure as Park District assistant general manager and executive director of the Foundation, I am retiring this summer. These past 20 years have been unforgettable and I look forward to being a part of these amazing regional parks—albeit in a different way—for many years to come.



Juliana Schirmer

Carol Johnson

Carol Johnson
Executive Director
Regional Parks Foundation

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Supporting East Bay Regional Parks

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DID YOU KNOW

Fun facts about the East Bay Regional Park District



Countless

The number of indigenous peoples who have lived in the East Bay since time immemorial.



23

The number of independent ancestral tribes that scholars think lived in what is now Alameda and Contra Costa counties.



One message

"We are here!"
Ohlone people are vital and thriving members of today's local communities.



LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

Carol Johnson, retiring executive director of the Regional Parks Foundation, shares some parting thoughts

As the Regional Parks Foundation's executive director and assistant general manager of the East Bay Regional Park District, Carol Johnson knows a thing or two about partnerships.

"The Foundation was created exclusively to serve the interests of the Park District, and the District has a mission to serve the growing public," Johnson says. "We work together exceptionally well." As she prepares to retire after 20 years with EBRPD, Johnson reflects on her decades of public service, her hopes for the Foundation's future, and taking a much-needed break to rediscover her own interests.

How did you get your start at the Park District?

My first public service job was with the city of Oakland in 1982; public service is in my blood. After an intermission when I went into the private sector and had my two children, the opportunity came up to work for one of my mentors, Rosemary Cameron. Now, 20 years later, I look back with astonishment at how much we've done to serve the public—and it's been fun every single day.

I took on the executive director role of the Foundation in 2011 and have seen it grow tremendously—in revenue, membership and the types of projects that we fund. The Foundation is significant to East Bay residents in large part because of our efforts to make the parks more accessible and help fund youth programs, especially in communities of color. We've had amazing support from our members, individual and corporate donors, and our tremendous board of directors.

What do you consider the biggest accomplishments during your tenure?

The increasing number of young people that the Foundation has helped connect with Park District programs, upward of 10,000 a year. They can experience nature, fall in love with the environment, and hopefully become people who will continue to appreciate the outdoors and support it as adults. That's really significant for me.

In tandem with the Park District and Children's Hospital Oakland, the Foundation also funded the first-ever study regarding the impact of nature on the health of chronically ill children. That resulted in the SHINE program—Stay Healthy in Nature Every Day. It was a triangular partnership in which the Foundation helped finance monthly outings from the hospital to a park, including transportation, lunch and interpretive programming for the children, their families and their doctors. It's a fun



Next up for retiring Regional Parks Foundation Executive Director Carol Johnson? More time with her dog, Rudy.

outdoor experience and opportunity to improve their health that the kids will never forget. It's something special that has won awards and been replicated in other parts of the country.

Where do you see the Foundation heading in the future?

The board is excited to kick off the capital campaign to build a new visitor center at Tilden Regional Park. That is the type of project that the Foundation will want to do more of in the future. The programs and one-time projects are great and leave a lasting impact on the individuals they serve, but a place is a legacy that will serve generations to come.

What's next for you?

There are so many new opportunities I want to look into, like taking an art class. And I'll volunteer, likely here in the Park District and with the Foundation, giving back to these fantastic organizations that have given me so much.



Crown Jewel

Summer is the right time to enjoy family fun at the Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach in Alameda

Warm, shallow water; a clean, sandy, beach; a bike path; a bird sanctuary; a marine reserve; and more. It's easy to see why Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach in Alameda is indeed a crown jewel in the Park District. Families have been flocking here since the 1880s when it was known as Neptune Beach, with pools, fountains and even a carnival midway.

On any given day, you'll find swimmers, kayakers and kiteboarders on the bay at Crown Beach. In warm weather, sunbathers sprawl along the sand while children dart in and out of the gently lapping waves. The park has 2.5 miles of beach and sand dunes just perfect for the Summer Sand Castle and Sand Sculpture Contest, held in June. There's also a bathhouse and changing room for swimmers and splashers.

Two popular kid-friendly features are the Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary and the Crab Cove Visitor Center and Aquarium, which was recently renamed in honor of longtime Park District board member Doug Siden (see sidebar). The bird sanctuary, on the east end of Crown Beach, features aquatic birds and other salt marsh creatures. In recent years, Crown Beach has become a sanctuary for the plump, buff-colored snowy plover, which nests in the sand in winter.

The visitor center has been a destination for families since 1968, when it opened in the Old Wharf Classroom. The newer visitor center opened in 1980 and houses an 800-gallon aquarium system for bay creatures. Kids also flock to the many interactive stations where they can do squirmy, squeal-provoking things like see the inside of a mudflat from the vantage point of a lugworm. Outside the center is the Crab Cove Marine Protected Area, California's first estuarine marine reserve.

Fishing is allowed from shore and dogs are allowed only on the lawn and the path, not on the beach. Enjoy the park's free summer concert series along with other fun events for the whole family. Visit www.ebparcs.org for a full list of happenings.



HONORING DOUG SIDEN

This past June, the Crab Cove Visitor Center was renamed for former Park District board member Doug Siden. The longtime Alameda environmentalist retired from the board in 2017, following nearly 25 years of service.

An ordained minister who marched with Martin Luther King Jr., Siden also advocated for farmworkers with Cesar Chavez and worked to protect and restore Crown Beach and San Leandro's Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline.

"He is symbolic of our era of growth," says Brenda Montano, EBRPD archives program supervisor. "He has great connections with the local community."

Water Powered

Take advantage of the Park District's many swimming opportunities

Nothing says summer quite like a refreshing swim—and the regional parks offer plenty of ways to cool off during the hottest months.

The Park District lays claim to two bay shoreline beaches, half a dozen open-water lakefront beaches, three chlorinated lagoons and a pair of pools. Though the different spots can experience closures due to factors such as water quality and level, as well as the number of staff on hand, a family trip to Alameda's Crown Memorial State Beach (see opposite page), or Hayward's Don Castro Regional Recreation Area and Castro Valley's Cull Canyon Regional Recreation Area swim lagoons, is perfect for making memories. The Park District prizes safe fun for all, so some facilities host lessons for young swimmers, as well as beach wheelchairs and other accessibility aids. Check www.ebparks.org for updates about closures and information on specific swimming resources.

A membership with the Regional Parks Foundation also grants visitors free swimming at all locations during the summer, as well as unrestricted day-use parking. Show your valid membership card, and the two adults listed on the account, as well as their kids under the age of 17, will be able to swim at no cost. (The Park District does ask that at least one adult be present for every five children in the water.)

“The new pool facility has been designed to blend into the beautiful surroundings of the Roberts Regional Recreation Area.”

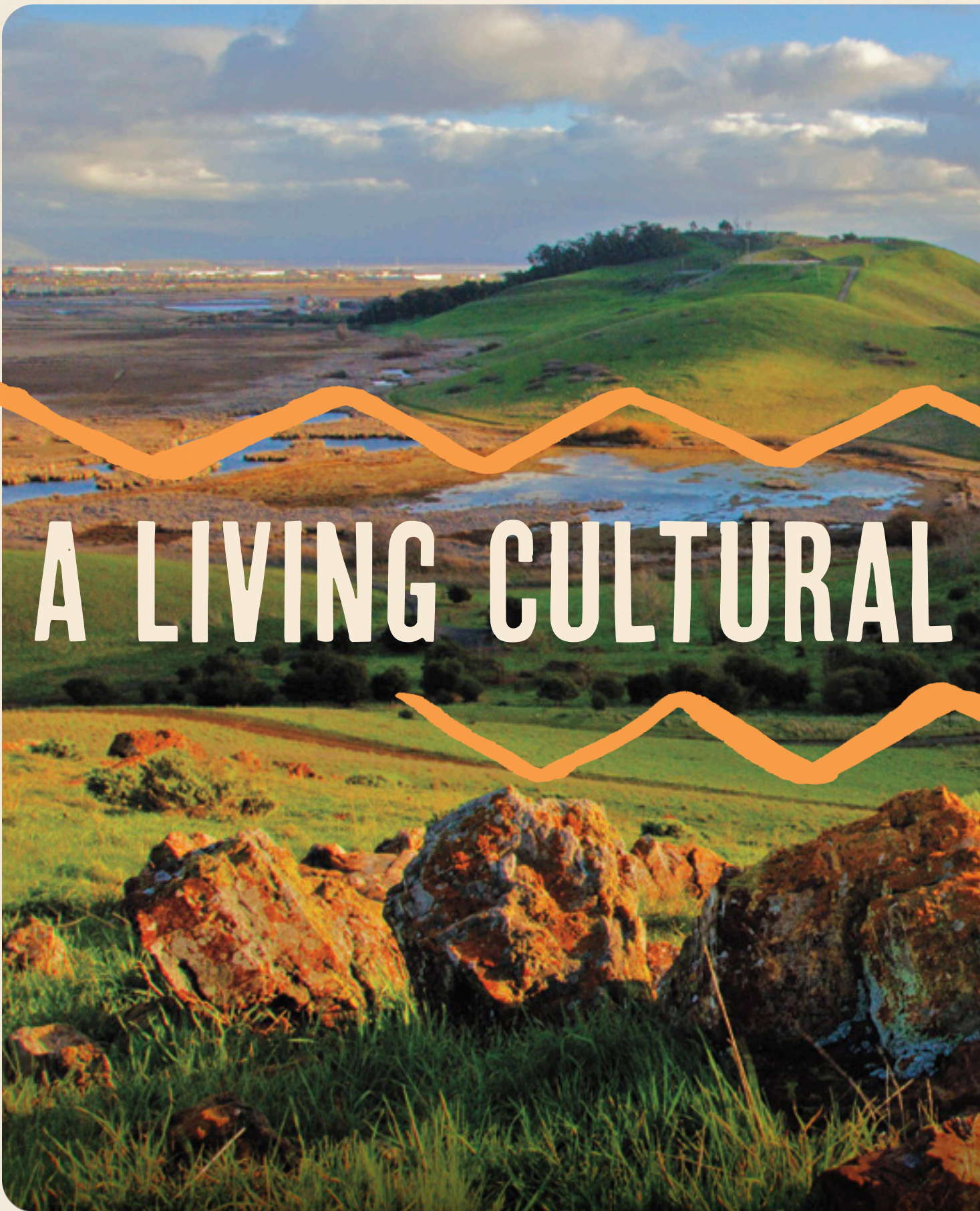
—TOBY PERRY, PROJECT MANAGER

Fans of the pool at the Roberts Regional Recreation Area in Oakland can also look forward to the completion of the facility's multimillion-dollar facelift, which is currently underway. The renovation of the pool—which has been a local fave for more than seven decades—will expand its space, boost safety and improve access for people with disabilities. The reopening date is set for spring 2023.

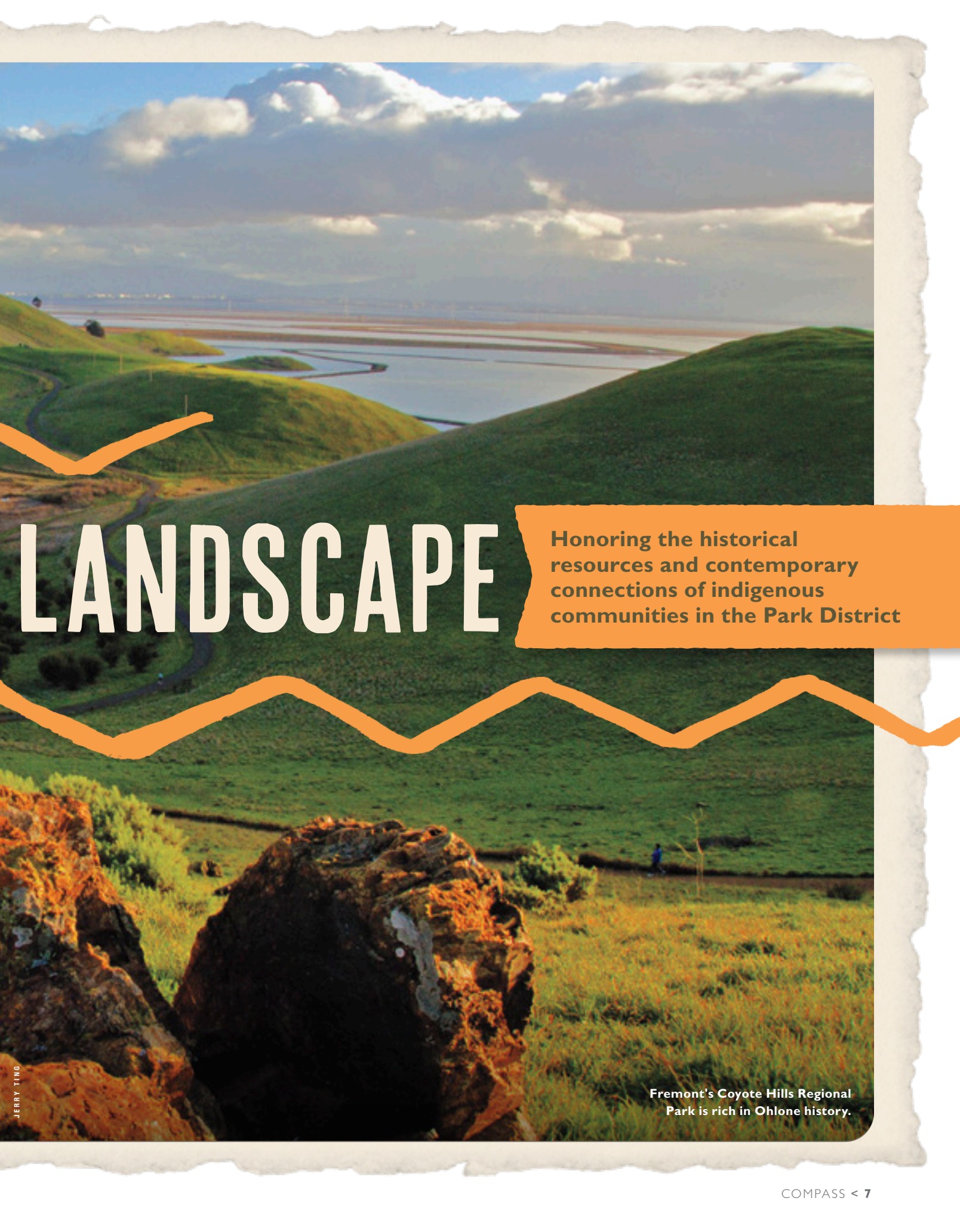
“The new pool facility has been designed to blend into the beautiful surroundings of the Roberts Regional Recreation Area,” says project manager Toby Perry. “In doubling the size of the pool, we are excited that we will be able to accommodate twice as many swimmers, especially on those warm summer days.”



Clockwise from top left: A rendering of the pool renovation at Roberts Regional Recreation Area; a wealth of swim opportunities can be found at parks throughout the District.



A LIVING CULTURAL



LANDSCAPE

Honoring the historical resources and contemporary connections of indigenous communities in the Park District

Fremont's Coyote Hills Regional Park is rich in Ohlone history.

JERRY TING



From top: Around 23 indigenous tribes once lived on the lands that make up contemporary Alameda and Contra Costa counties; tule boats, crafted from reeds, are part of Ohlone culture.



“I am proud to be an Ohlone woman. I’m able to talk to my children about who they are as Ohlone people. I talk to my children about their ancestors and how strong their ancestors were. I love going into the classrooms of the cities of Oakland and Alameda and sharing the history of my people with schoolchildren. I like to talk to them about how good our future as Ohlone people will be. I enjoy coming to gatherings and letting people know that our culture is still continuing. We are the voices of our ancestors.” —Corrina Gould, Ohlone, shared as part of the Park District’s “Ohlone Curriculum with Bay Miwok Content and Introduction to Delta Yokuts”

The lands that make up California, including the 125,000 acres that comprise the East Bay Regional Park District, have been home to indigenous people for thousands of years.

Before European settlement, the areas now known as Alameda and Contra Costa counties were inhabited by around 23 independent tribes who spoke multiple languages and had their own individual cultures. The vast natural resources offered bountiful opportunities

for hunting and gathering, while permanent village sites and seasonal camps dotted the region. Signs of that rich history can still be seen across the Park District today, including village sites, rock art and traditional ceremonial sites.

“We are very concerned about the protection of our cultural sites. This includes our sacred, prayer and burial sites. It includes the places where we gathered for religious reasons, and the places where we gathered our herbs for our medicines and our materials for our baskets. It includes our water sources. We want to keep them clean and pollution free.” —Katherine Erolina Perez, Delta Yokut Tribe, shared as part of the Park District’s “Ohlone Curriculum with Bay Miwok Content and Introduction to Delta Yokuts”

PROTECTING CULTURAL RESOURCES

One element of the Park District’s mission is to preserve cultural resources in place. Removal or disruption of artifacts is illegal, and the locations of sacred or special sites are kept confidential. This policy is in line with state and government laws that restrict information about archaeological resources.

As the District’s cultural services coordinator, Annamarie Guerrero helps protect and manage cultural resources—including archaeological sites, sacred places or plant gathering sites—particularly when it comes to projects within the regional parks. To that end, she works within local, state and federal laws and coordinates with tribes that have traditional, cultural and historic ties to the land to avoid or mitigate impacts.

“We want to make sure that we are good stewards and help protect these places,” Guerrero says. “This is a living landscape for many tribes; it’s their home that they are still tending and have a deep connection with.”

One such protected site is Vasco Caves Regional Preserve. The eastern Contra Costa County park is unique because it is open to the public only through limited guided tours. The limited access is partially to care for the area’s endangered species and habitat, but also because Vasco is an active sacred site for many indigenous groups.



Vasco Caves Regional Preserve is a sacred site for a number of indigenous groups.

“There is this interesting dynamic between stewardship and protecting culture,” says Kevin Damstra, supervising naturalist, Northeast Interpretive Sector. Among the unusual aspects of the site are wind caves, vernal pools on sandstone and the nearby largest golden eagle nesting population in the country. To protect and respect the resources at Vasco, the Park District asks visitors not to take photos in case they unknowingly showcase the location of sacred sites. This is also in accordance with the tribes’ wishes regarding the protection of their sacred resources.

“Most people are very respectful, but they can cause damage,” says Damstra. “We have found people who have gone out to hold their own ceremonies. Once I even found a Yoda figurine there. Since it is such a protected area, we restrict access.”

Adds Guerrero, “Engaging in such activities and going onto Vasco without permission is akin to cultural appropriation and is disrespectful to the tribes.”

To that end, the tours—which tend to fill up fast and are typically held only in the spring and fall—require advance registration, and visitors are taken to Vasco by bus from



Coyote Hills showcases indigenous traditions, in addition to lovely landscapes.

Round Valley Regional Preserve or Brushy Peak Regional Preserve. There is a new Foundation-supported effort to provide buses for underserved communities who have historically been unable to get to Vasco.

Interdepartmentally, Park District staff (including rangers, naturalists, and natural and cultural resources staff) closely coordinate management of Vasco through regular site monitoring and reevaluating stewardship practices to mitigate damage to the resources. For example, sheep grazing is employed at Vasco instead of cattle because sheep kick up less dust and make less of an impact.

"This is a special place that highlights [indigenous] connections to the world ... and we need to protect it," says Damstra.

"I became Museum Director of Old Mission Dolores, San Francisco, on February 1, 2004, the first Mission Indian descendant to oversee a California mission. ... The challenge at hand is to present an interpretation of the historical records that is comprehensive, objective and critical. In this constant search for truth, and this continual quest for fuller knowledge, it is inevitable that what one generation learns as fact, and may even come to revere as absolute truth, subsequently

may be reevaluated as incomplete, sometimes inaccurate and on occasion, downright false." —Andrew A. Galavan, Chochenyo Ohlone, shared as part of the Park District's "Ohlone Curriculum with Bay Miwok Content and Introduction to Delta Yokuts"

AMPLIFYING VOICES

Celebrating cultural resources in the Park District isn't just about history-rich physical sites, however. Interpretive programming centers on the living, breathing culture of contemporary indigenous people.

"All of the Park District is on indigenous homeland and we want to make sure the whole story is heard," says Sonja Gomez,





supervising naturalist at Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont. “We are revisiting how we tell these stories and recruiting first-person narratives where indigenous folks are telling their own stories. As naturalists, we have this huge privilege of connecting visitors to the stories of the East Bay. We’ve been trying to use our voices to amplify theirs.”

Prior to her stint at Ardenwood, Gomez worked at Coyote Hills Regional Park, also in Fremont. The park is home to an Ohlone village site that is more than 2,000 years old and a visitor center featuring artifacts and videos of modern Ohlone tribe members showcasing traditional skills and culture. An exhibit of 16 baskets, some of which are more than 100 years old, is currently being restored with the help of a gift from the Foundation.

Coyote Hills began a contractor program in 2016 to bring in indigenous people who want to share their stories or provide feedback on programming (an “Ohlone Intern” position, established in 1995, had previously provided similar insights).

“It’s about [tribal individuals] being able to bring their own stories, bring their own voices. They’re bringing their stories into the present tense,” says Gomez. “The longevity of the relationships between the Park District and indigenous people is unique. We have Ohlone folks who have been contributing their voices to the District for around 30 years. The fact that these stories are prioritized is so special.”

Among the happenings at Coyote Hills: Weavers from the Yokut tribe were invited to a tactile experience with the basket collection at the visitor center, and the District purchased a contemporary basket to deepen the exhibit. The park also hosted an Ohlone Youth Summit in which young people gathered tule (a giant species of bulrush native to freshwater marshes) and constructed a boat of the bundled reeds, which was then launched on the marsh.

Coyote Hills visitors also will see the Chochenyo language featured in the park, including on a visitor center welcome banner and a bilingual ethnobotany interpretive panel. The District is in the process of creating Chochenyo markers for all of the park’s trails. In fact, there is interpretive programming throughout the regional parks, including experiences at Tilden Regional Park and Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve.



From left: The Park District’s Beverly Ortiz welcomes visitors to Coyote Hills Regional Park; Ohlone elders examine some of the woven baskets that are typically on display at Coyote Hills during a Foundation-supported restoration and cleaning initiative.

Celebrating this cultural heritage enhances past connections to the land and provides invaluable insights for our future.

“Not only were indigenous cultures the caretakers of the land since time immemorial, but they continue to have that connection,” says Gomez. “We can learn a lot from their knowledge of how people fit into this landscape and care for the world around us. That’s what the parks are all about.”

CELEBRATE INDIGENOUS CULTURE

The annual **Gathering of Ohlone Peoples** highlights the ways today’s Ohlone are bringing their cultures into the future. This year’s gathering, held the first Sunday in October at Coyote Hills Regional Park, will be virtual. The visitor center at Coyote Hills also contains educational displays and exhibits that portray the distinct traditions, unique languages and sophisticated knowledge systems of the native peoples throughout the Bay Area. Check the Coyote Hills calendar at www.ebparks.org for upcoming programs. During **Native American Heritage Month** in November, we honor the history, culture, and contributions of all independent tribal groups in the East Bay. We are grateful to numerous Individuals within the indigenous community for continuing to share insights into their families and culture.



Clockwise from top left: NatureCheck assesses the health of local wildlife population such as mule deer, coyotes, golden eagles, savannah sparrows, western burrowing owls, California tiger salamanders and bobcats.

EBFPD



A REPORT CARD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

**The East Bay NatureCheck examines
the welfare of local wildlife**

Besides offering green spaces for Bay Area residents to relax, hike, explore and picnic, the vast acreage within the Park District is home to abundant animal life. But in the face of climate change, drought, fires and increasing urbanization, just how are those animal populations doing? That's what the East Bay Ecological Health Assessment, called NatureCheck, aims to determine.

The inspiration was a similar project undertaken by One Tam, a partnership among the various public agencies that oversee land on Mount Tamalpais. Modeled after that collaboration, the East Bay Stewardship Network (EBSN) was formed, bringing together five agencies that are among the largest public landholders in the East Bay: California State Parks, the Contra Costa Water District, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the East Bay Regional Park District. This effort was supported by a grant from the Regional Parks Foundation and Marathon Petroleum Corporation.

Pooling the wealth of historical environmental data available to the diverse



SHUTTERSTOCK



Susan Townsend, a consulting mammologist, checks a camera trap (using a *Mandalorian* toy to establish camera height).

agencies allowed the network to come up with a big-picture assessment. “For determining the health of the human body, we have a number of metrics—blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol and so on,” says Becky Tuden, ecological services manager for the EBRPD Stewardship Department. “We wanted to establish the same sort of metrics to measure how well the natural environment is doing.” The resulting NatureCheck provides an in-depth look at key animal species that inhabit the EBSN partners’ land acreage. The Park District is leading a grant-funded effort to map plant communities in Contra Costa and Alameda counties, which will allow a similar assessment to be done for vegetation.

The report covers close to 25% of the lands in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, over 250,000 acres, encompassing the East Bay hills, Mount Diablo Range and Mount Hamilton—diverse regions that have different challenges. Coastal areas are not included for a couple of reasons, explains Josh Phillips, ecological services coordinator. “They are not adjacent to lands that other agencies manage. And the coastal areas and wetlands already have their own assessments underway.”

ESTABLISHING A SPECIES WATCH LIST

In May 2018, representatives from the five agencies sat down together to determine which animal species to assess and what metrics to use. They identified key bird, mammal, fish, amphibian and reptile species that are indicators of the health of the environment, as well as iconic species of interest to the public. One of the keystone species selected was California ground squirrels. Not only do their tunnels provide habitat for native amphibians and western burrowing owls, they’re also an important prey species for coyotes and



The California red-legged frog is a threatened species.

golden eagles, says ecologist Tammy Lim. In all, more than two dozen key species were identified, among them golden eagles and the threatened California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander.

Armed with the list of species, the group then determined the right metrics to focus on. For the red-legged frog, the metrics chosen were the number of ponds occupied, breeding stats and the presence of predatory invasive species. Focusing on specific quantifiable measurements like these enables meaningful assessments year over year.

A wealth of data already existed, such as the Park District's 20 years' worth of pond studies, along with observations from other conservation organizations and from interested nonscientists. "There's a core group of volunteers that watches known nesting sites for golden eagles and keeps track of how many eggs, how many sub-adults observed," says Tuden.

Working with a biologist from each agency, the team spent months analyzing the copious amounts of data available for every metric. "Looking at the data from many agencies is different from what we currently do," says Tuden. "We already monitor populations, but it tends to be species specific and site specific. We wanted a broader evaluation of the whole landscape."

FAR-REACHING BENEFITS

The COVID pandemic stalled the project for a while, but the report was finalized in April. Each species has a lengthy, highly detailed chapter summarizing all the metrics. Such findings will impact management decisions, revealing where strategies are working well and where they need to be improved. For instance, says Tuden, "Grassland birds, like the western meadowlark, savannah sparrow and grasshopper sparrow, are of significant concern and declining, whereas shrubland birds are doing well."

The project is also beneficial for diagnosing data gaps and pinpointing areas where additional funding is needed. "We have much less data on bats," says Tuden. "So we identified sentinel roost sites and did surveys at night for a population estimate." The group also determined the need for a more comprehensive camera array to better survey particular mammals. In addition, the report will help identify grant opportunities and synchronize efforts among the network's partner agencies. Ecologist Lim says the relationships with other network partners have been invaluable.



Rainbow trout is an identified indicator species.

"WE WANTED A BROADER EVALUATION OF THE WHOLE LANDSCAPE."

—BECKY TUDEN, ECOLOGICAL SERVICES MANAGER, STEWARDSHIP DEPARTMENT

Another important goal of the assessment is to communicate the status of the Park District's lands to the public. To that end, the experts are working to boil down the highly technical report and make the results more accessible so they can be easily understood by nonprofessionals. Each species will have an overall rating of its status (good, fair or of significant concern), a trend assessment (improving, declining or unchanged) and a level of confidence about how robust the data is that went into the assessment. An executive summary of the report is available on the Park District's website.

The report will serve as a baseline, with data analysis repeated about every five years. That will provide a quantifiable, scientific measure for ongoing reassessment of land management strategies.

"The Ecological Health Assessment is an exciting tool," says Tuden. "It will give us a broader understanding of the ecosystem and allow us to collaborate with our partners on land-use decisions and wildlife corridors."

All of which will be key to keeping the vast acreage of the Park District and EBSN partner lands a welcoming home to the variety of life that inhabits it.



Grassland birds like the western meadowlark are declining.



Fun Under the Sun

Enjoy the outdoors safely with these seasonal tips

With school vacations and long daylight hours, summer is a wonderful time to explore the Park District. As seasonal temperatures increase, however, take additional precautions so that you and your loved ones have a safe and fun excursion despite the heat.

One of the most crucial measures is to pack large amounts of water, according to Mike Moran, regional interpretive and recreation services manager for the northwest region. He recommends taking more water than you think you'll need—which can vary based on fitness level and body type—and considering where to refill your bottle. "Hydration starts way before the hike begins. If you're thinking about heading out to a place tomorrow morning, hydrate today," Moran says. "Thirst is telling you that your body is already dehydrated."

For summer hikers, typical year-round safety strategies (think charging your phone and walking with a friend) are more important than ever. Make sure to take solar protection—sunscreen, a hat and a light long-sleeve shirt are all good options—and be aware of the day's temperature and details of the terrain to avoid overheating. Moran also suggests knowing the symptoms of heat exhaustion. "It's a hike," he adds, noting that signs such as unexpectedly heightened thirst, headache and an irritable mood might mean you should return home. "It's not supposed to be an unpleasant experience."

"Hydration starts way before the hike begins. If you're thinking about heading out to a place tomorrow morning, hydrate today."

—MIKE MORAN, REGIONAL INTERPRETIVE AND RECREATION SERVICES, NORTHWEST REGION

You should also be mindful of animals that might be out and about, and have any needed allergy treatments on hand. Those seeking a high-intensity workout on hot days might also need to carry electrolyte-replacing drinks like Gatorade, while swimmers should be aware of safety resources such as life jackets, pool lifeguards and swim boundaries at lakes. Families coming to the parks should bring tons of water and a drinking bowl for dogs—who get warm easily and pant heavily to compensate—as well as food and fluids for young children.

"Just because you're not an expert doesn't mean that we don't want you to try something [active in the Park District]," says Moran. "Take advantage of the opportunities; just do them safely."



SHUTTERSTOCK



Natural Connections

Park visitors celebrate and steward the East Bay’s green spaces through cleanup efforts and community events throughout the District



1 Youth Connection Day participants enjoy a naturalist-led hike at Black Diamond Mines in March. **2 3** Guests officially open the new Brickyard Cove site in Berkeley with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in March. **4** A young visitor stops to smell the flowers at An Iris Affaire, held this spring at Dry Creek Garden in Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Park. **5** Naturalists livestreamed programs on the first King Tides of the year at Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in January. **6** Local residents clean up trash as part of January’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. **7 8** Volunteers celebrate Earth Day with invasive plant removal and tree planting projects.



1: CALI GODLEY; 2-3: LINCOLN CHU; 4: MARY DESHAW; 5-8: EBRPD



From left: A 1934 look at the proposed East Bay Regional Park District; Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.

A Family Passion for Parks

How landscape architecture icon Frederick Law Olmsted and his sons left their imprint on the Park District

Frederick Law Olmsted, often described as the father of American landscape architecture, is perhaps best known for co-designing Central Park in New York City in the mid-1800s. Lesser known, however, is his connection to the East Bay Regional Park District.

While visiting California in 1865 to create a proposal for the planned UC Berkeley campus, Olmsted took note of the striking East Bay hills. “He envisioned an open space with scenic lanes where people could walk and enjoy the views,” says Brenda Montano, EBRPD archives program supervisor. “It became a rallying cry for people wanting a park up there for years to come.”

A passion for parklands ran in the Olmsted family, with Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. working as an apprentice with his father on notable projects such as the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the 100,000-acre Biltmore estate in North Carolina. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. became a partner in his father’s landscape architecture firm, eventually taking over the business with his half-brother, John Charles Olmsted.

In 1928, the newly established California State Park Commission hired Olmsted Jr. to conduct a survey that would identify lands for the state park system. Most of the locations in his survey became part of that system.

Shortly after, Olmsted Jr., along with Ansel Hall of the National Park Service, produced a 1930 report called the Proposed Park Reservations for East Bay Cities. “The plan

outlined 10,000 acres of surplus watershed land that had the potential of becoming parklands. They wanted to create a chain of parks in the East Bay hills that would provide recreation for the entire community,” says Montano. “Olmsted Jr. was very prominent during that time, and having his name attached to the project helped get the plan promoted.”

The survey, commonly known as the Olmsted-Hall Report, stated: “The need is a vital one. ... The charm of the region as a place in which to live will depend largely upon natural conditions that are destined to disappear unless properly protected for the public in general.”

Adds Montano, “That report formed the blueprint for the East Bay Regional Park District in 1934 and created a lasting vision for the future. Not only was the original plan largely achieved, but the District expanded far beyond, in ways that would likely make the founders proud.”

Parks across the United States are hosting Olmsted 200 events as part of a yearlong celebration in honor of Frederick Law Olmsted’s 200th birthday, and the family’s legacy of parks for all people. Check the calendar section of www.ebparks.org for information on local happenings.



Cast a line during free fishing days at parks such as Temescal Regional Recreation Area.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Bring family and friends to these highlighted EBRPD programs and activities—perfect for nature- and fun-lovers of all ages. To view complete listings of EBRPD events, visit www.ebparks.org/activities.

▷ SPECIAL EVENTS

Campfire Programs

Enjoy an evening of stories and s'mores at the summer and fall campfire programs scheduled throughout the parks, including new programs at Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay. Details on campfire programs can be found at bit.ly/EBRPDcampfire.

Free Fishing Day

The Park District honors free fishing days offered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Take advantage of the opportunity on **Sept. 3**. Anglers age 16+ don't need to purchase a California Fishing License or an EBRPD Daily Fishing Pass on that day.

Garin Apple Festival

The spirit of Garin's orchards live on in the antique apple varieties cultivated in remnants of the old apple orchards. The late-summer Garin Apple Festival on **Sept. 10** celebrates the farm's apple-growing tradition. Antique apple varieties may be tasted as whole fruits flesh and juice. Folk music, song, and old-fashioned games fill out the day.

Coastal Cleanup Day

Head to a shoreline park on **Sept. 17** for a Coastal Cleanup Day, with in-person volunteer cleanup events scheduled at various locations. The Park District also encourages self-guided neighborhood cleanups in which volunteers assemble their own gear and clean up neighborhood creeks or local parks.

International Day of Peace

Celebrate the fifth anniversary of the International Day of Peace at Lake Chabot on **Sept. 17**, with messages of peace from youth, stories, music, and a peace walk around the lake.

Green Friday

Enjoy a Free Park Day on Green Friday, celebrated on **Nov. 25**, the day after Thanksgiving. Head to the parks for a healthy outdoor alternative to Black Friday holiday shopping.

Regional Parks Foundation
P.O. Box 21074, Crestmont Station
Oakland, CA 94620
www.RegionalParksFoundation.org

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