From Ohlone Land to Parkland

HISTORY Brushy Peak is a 1,702-foot landmark at the juncture of the San Francisco Bay Area, the California Delta, and the Central Valley. The peak and its environs have been recognized as sacred by generations of native Californians. Due to its geographical position, the area lies at the center of a network of ancient trade routes that linked Bay Area Ohlones, Bay Miwoks, and Northern Valley Yokuts, who were drawn to the area for economic, social, and ceremonial events. The Ssaoam tribelet of the Ohlone peoples was probably the most closely linked to the Brushy Peak area, living in the surrounding dry hills and tiny valleys around the peak and nearby Altamont Pass. Ssaoam populations, in the dry summer months, may have dispersed and reconverged at various camps throughout the year. The tribelet hosted trade feasts near Brushy Peak, acting as brokers in a regional trade network with the Yovlons, a tribelet of the Bay Miwok, and the Tamcans of the Northern Valley Yokuts. The Ssaoam’s ability to prosper may have had as much to do with their occupation of this strategic trading location as with their ability to use the area’s food and limited water resources.

By the early nineteenth century, life had changed for these tribes. In 1772, Pedro Fages made the first European expedition into west-central California, passing through the Livermore Valley on his return to Monterey. From 1806 to 1836 the Ssaoam lived at Mission San Jose, founded in today’s Fremont in 1797. By the mid-1800s, as mission lands were divided into Mexican ranchos, some of the former Mission San Jose Indian people became laborers on the new ranchos. By 1848, at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, the rancho lands of central California had become part of the United States. During California’s Gold Rush period, the rocky outcrops of Brushy Peak became retreats for bandits. During the 1870s, homesteads were settled on and around Brushy Peak. Between the 1890s and World War I, local ranch families held picnics and dances around the rock outcrops, and in 1900 and 1901 San Francisco’s Bohemian Club held outings on the peak for prominent local citizens. During the 1920s and 1930s Joseph Laughlin built farm buildings on the property, which are probably the remains of the buildings seen in the parkland today.

Brushy Peak was identified as a potential park by the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) in 1972, and 507 acres were acquired in 1994. In 1997 an agreement between LARPD and the East Bay Regional Park District pledged cooperation in the further acquisition, planning, and protection of Brushy Peak Regional Preserve.

WELCOME!
Please enjoy our Regional Parks safely, and help us protect and preserve your parklands by complying with park rules and regulations.

SAFETY and ETIQUETTE
• Stay on trails. Taking shortcuts can be dangerous and causes erosion.
• Wading and/or swimming in undesignated areas may be dangerous and may harm the watershed.
• Carry and drink plenty of water. Dehydration is a leading cause of injuries on the trail.
• Be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions.
• Trails can be slippery, rocky and steep. Proceed carefully at your own risk.
• Wildlife may be present on the trails at any time. Feeding or approaching wildlife is dangerous and illegal.
• Bicycles are permitted on designated trails only. Horses have the right-of-way on trails.
• Keep the parks beautiful. Pack out what you pack in.

RULES
Dogs must be kept on leash at all times while in the preserve, including in parking lots, picnic areas, developed areas such as lawns, and on trails. They must be under voice control at all times. Visitors are responsible for knowing and complying with park rules (Ordinance 3B), available online at www.ebparks.org/Ord3B. Visitors are responsible for knowing and complying with park rules (Ordinance 3B), available online at www.ebparks.org/Ord3B.