In Closing…

As you close the loop trail back to the begin-
ning of your walk, consider nature’s cycles and
your part in them. From your household and
daily routines to the natural world, everything
is tied together in this cycle of life. Consider
ways in which you can live more lightly on this
earth by reducing, reusing, recycling, and rotting
away your waste materials. Come visit Oyster
Bay and the other East Bay Regional Parks
often and observe how nature is constantly
renewing itself and changing with the seasons.

• To learn more about the Davis Street envi-
ronmental education program call 510-563-
4282 or visit www.stopwaste.org.

• For information about picnic reservations
and volunteer service projects at Oyster Bay,
please call 888-327-2757 or visit

• Naturalist-led programs are available through
the Crab Cove Visitor Center, 510-544-3187 or
ccove@ebparks.org.

• For information about programs at an
Ohlone village site dating back more than
2,000 years, contact Coyote Hills Regional
Park, 510-544-3220 or chvisit@ebparks.org.

6. Wildlife

Look and listen quietly for a moment,
then scout the trail and look for evidence
of the animals that live here. Tracks, “scat”
(animal dropings), feathers and fur, shed
skin of snakes, and burrows or holes in the
ground can tell you about the animals that
live in the park. Scat, for example, gives
you a clue to what the animal ate: plants,
insects, or possibly fur from other animals.
Its shape might also identify which animal
left it: round like a grape is probably a
jackrabbit; torpedo-shaped is likely a
squirrel. Each animal’s scat is different.
Gopher snakes and garter snakes also
make their homes in the park. Feeding on
small rodents or frogs and reptiles, snakes
in turn are sometimes eaten by raptors
such as red-tailed hawks. Snakes in this
park are protected and must be left here
to play their part in nature’s cycle.

7. Birds of Prey

Watch overhead for large, soaring birds.
Red-tailed hawks, osprey, and Northern
harriers feed on other birds, fish, and
animals found here. The hunting grounds of
the park are also the nursery area where these
raptors hatch and raise their young.

Birds of prey help keep nature in balance by
controlling the number of rabbits, squirrels,
and other rodents. Use binoculars to help you
identify the species.

8. Community Recycling

Slowly but relentlessly, nature decompos-
es and restores nutrients to the earth. Stand-
ning here on this small hill, you are looking
out onto the Davis Street Station for Material
Recycling and Transfer, where one of the
nation’s largest and most innovative transfer
and recycling operations is hard at work.
Garbage is moved to storage sites and recy-
clable materials are sorted and transferred
to processing plants.

The large machine below you draws landfill
gas from 120+ wells found throughout the
park. The gas produced by decomposing
garbage is burned off in the tower.

Plant materials from curbside green and
food waste programs in Alameda and Contra
Costa counties are transferred here. This is
where your green waste bin materials are
transformed into an energy source or useful
soil product!

NOTE: Keep dogs on a leash in all devel-
oped areas within the park. Dogs often
disturb or harass wildlife, especially during
nesting season when many animals nest
on the ground (burrowing owls, northern
harriers, jackrabbits, etc.)
Discover the Nature of Your Parkland

Welcome to Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline, a former landfill now fully accessible Regional Park. You are about to walk into “recycling in action.” You’ll hear plant material breaking down, small plants turning to soil, and walk on land that’s healing and returning to a more natural state. Look for the marked signposts along the trail for each stop in this guide. Remember this is a multi-use trail. Please be considerate of other Park users including people hiking, biking, walking dogs, and running. As in all Regional Parklands, please remember to take only pictures and leave only footprints.

1. Salt Marsh

Extensive marshlands once existed from here to east of Doolittle Drive. Marshes were considered wastelands in the past. Over 80% of them were filled and developed or used for grazing, farming, or for the city dump. Now we know that salt marshes like these are vital to Bay ecosystems. They provide feeding grounds for migratory birds and act as natural filters for treated runoff before it enters the Bay. They provide a special place for animals. The Park District has designated this area as natural uplands habitat, so no dogs are allowed. Prey, such as raccoons, foxes, and coyotes use this area. Other animals, including the endangered clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mouse, might also find shelter at high tide among the plants.

2. Monitoring Wells

This small bay became a community landfill and was filled with garbage over a period of 37 years. Once the site reached its holding capacity in 1977, it was covered with clay to seal it. Soil has been added so plants will grow and help this new landscape recycle itself once again. As you climb the hill, you’ll virtually ascend a mound of garbage!

The structures on the ground throughout the park are monitoring wells. Two by-products of decomposing refuse in a covered landfill are liquid leachate and landfill gas. Leachate, water generated from decomposing refuse, is collected and piped to a wastewater treatment facility. The gas is also collected and sent to a facility where it's burned, which you’ll see at the end of the trail.

3. Oyster Bay History

Shellfish, including oysters, flourished in the mudflats here years ago. They were fed by incoming tides, preyed upon by bat rays and shorebirds, and gathered by the local Jalquin (“hal-ion”) and Yrgin (“yen-gen”) tribes. In 1890, oyster farming in California was a one million dollar industry with most of the farming operations here in the East Bay and on the west Bay’s San Mateo Coast. By 1939, the 60-year old Bay oyster industry had collapsed. Its demise was brought about by overfishing and the practice of filling in marshland and wetland areas for grazing and development, led to dramatic reductions in water-oxygen levels. Oysters died or were unsafe to eat.

4. Native Plants

Most of the plants in this area are “native,” originating in California, and are adapted to our Mediterranean climate. Some of them conserve water through different mechanisms. Small, hairy or waxy leaves prevent water loss during dry summers. Some plants lose their leaves altogether and may appear dead in the summer, only to sprout anew with the fall and winter rains. Can you find these different kinds of leaves on the plants at this stop? Also, look for evidence of insect activity. Many species of butterflies can be found in the park and have an interdependent relationship with plants. Butterfly larvae (caterpillars) depend on the plant leaves and stems as a food source. Adult butterflies feed on plant nectar. In turn, plants depend on butterflies and other insects for pollination.

As you leave for the next station watch how the “Rising Wave” sculpture, created by Roger Doolittle Dr. and San Francisco Bay Trail

5. Local Indians and Conservation

From this vantage point you can see the former homelands of several tribes, including the Jalquin and Yrgin, now the cities of San Leandro and Hayward. Native American villages occurred every three to five miles along the Bay shore and inland waterways. Most of the natural materials they used in their day-to-day lives here decayed or were burned, forming nutrient-rich mounds at their village sites. Thanks to a group of citizens, we can enjoy this great view today. In 1960 this group was alarmed that the Bay marshes and mudflats had been filled an average of four-square miles per year since 1850. They established Save the Bay and initiated the Bay Conservation and Development Commission to control development and loss of shoreline habitats. Finding a place for our trash continues to be a challenge for residents and visitors in the Bay Area. How can we reduce our garbage? Practice the “4 R’s”—reduce our packaging, reuse or recycle what we can, and rot (compost) our food and yard waste. What are you doing to practice the “4 R’s” and what more can you do both here and at home?

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