

Black Diamond Mines

Nortonville/Black Diamond/Black Diamond Way/Black Diamond/Nortonville Trails

Length: 7-mile loop **Elevation:** 1200 feet

Location: Antioch

GPS: 37.958309, -121.8633560

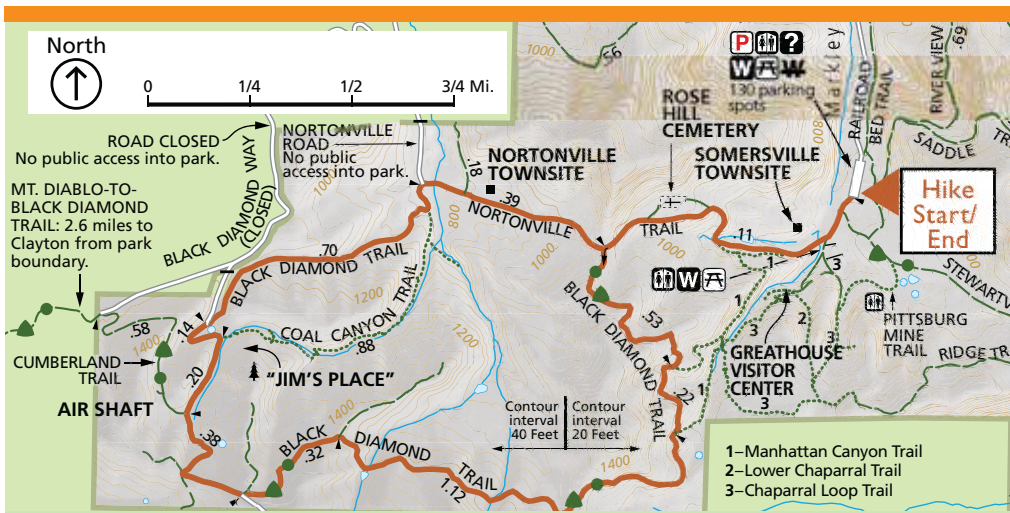
Intensity: Challenging



Park Features: Once a booming coal mining area, the hills are now quiet and peaceful. Yet, they still offer a glimpse into the past mining history. Five coal mining towns once occupied the Black Diamond area from the 1860s until the early 1900s, the most famous being Nortonville and Somersville. Almost four million tons of coal were removed before coal mining stopped and sand mining began by the Hazel-Atlas glass company. Part of these underground mines are still accessible via guided interpretive tours.

Trail Highlights: This route takes you through the heart of the Black Diamond Mines historic area, and offers panoramic views of the surrounding hills and delta. As you initially ascend the ridge, you will pass the Rose Hill Cemetery, which is a grim but fascinating reminder of the town of Nortonville and the challenging lives its citizens lived. Past the graveyard, you will come to a lookout point that offers the first of many panoramic views. Later, descending the Black Diamond Trail, colorful sandstone rock walls tower above the scattered oak woodland. As you make your way down Black Diamond Way keep your eyes open for the giant Coulter Pines, and see if you can find “Jim’s Place”, where the “door” is always open! A little further up Black Diamond Trail is a small side trip to the Air Shaft. Make a right on Cumberland Trail, go about 100 yards and it’s on your left. Turn around and return to Black Diamond Trail to continue uphill on main route. Enjoy other beautiful views and rock formations on the rest of the hike.

Trail Directions: Park at the parking lot .8 miles up the road from the Visitor Center. Walk up the trail, past the restrooms, and continue straight and slightly to the right onto Nortonville Trail. Follow the trail posts, staying on Nortonville Trail as it begins to climb towards Rose Hill Cemetery. You may wish to explore the cemetery or bypass it by staying on the main trail. Once past the cemetery, continue uphill and over the ridge, and drop down into Nortonville. Stay left on the trail straight into Coal Canyon and head up the single track trail, straight ahead at the base of the canyon. At the top past Jim’s Place make a left on the paved Black Diamond Trail. Continue uphill until you reach a closed Park Gate. Take the left just before the Gate on a dirt road which is Black Diamond Trail. Continue on this all the way back to the ridge above the cemetery and make a right at the fork onto Nortonville Trail and retrace your steps down past the cemetery, descending back to the parking lot where you began.



- Featured Trail--Hiker, Horse, Bike
- Hiker, Horse, Bike Trail
- - - Hiker Only Trail
- ▲ Mt. Diablo-to Black Diamond Regional Trail (Hiker, Horse, Bike)
- - -▲ American Discovery Trail/
Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail
- ▲ Mileage Between Points
- P Parking
- W Drinking Water
- ♿ Restrooms
- ☰ Picnic
- ☎ Phone
- ? Information



Driving Directions: From Oakland - Take CA-13 N./Warren Fwy, CA-24 E., I-680 N., CA-242 N. and CA-4 E. to Auto Center Dr./Somersville Rd. in Antioch. Take the Auto Center Dr./Somersville Rd. exit from CA-4 E. Turn right onto Auto Center Dr./Somersville Rd., continue to follow Somersville Rd., destination will be on the right. From Livermore - Follow North Vasco Rd. and CA-4 to Auto Center Dr. in Antioch. Take exit 24-26 from CA-4. Drive 3.7 miles to Somersville Staging Area.

Park Hours: Dawn to dusk. Sidney Flat Visitor Center: 10am to 4:30pm

Fees: \$5 Seasonal, weekends and holidays, \$4 per trailered vehicle, \$2 per dog

Website: ebparks.org/parks/black_diamond