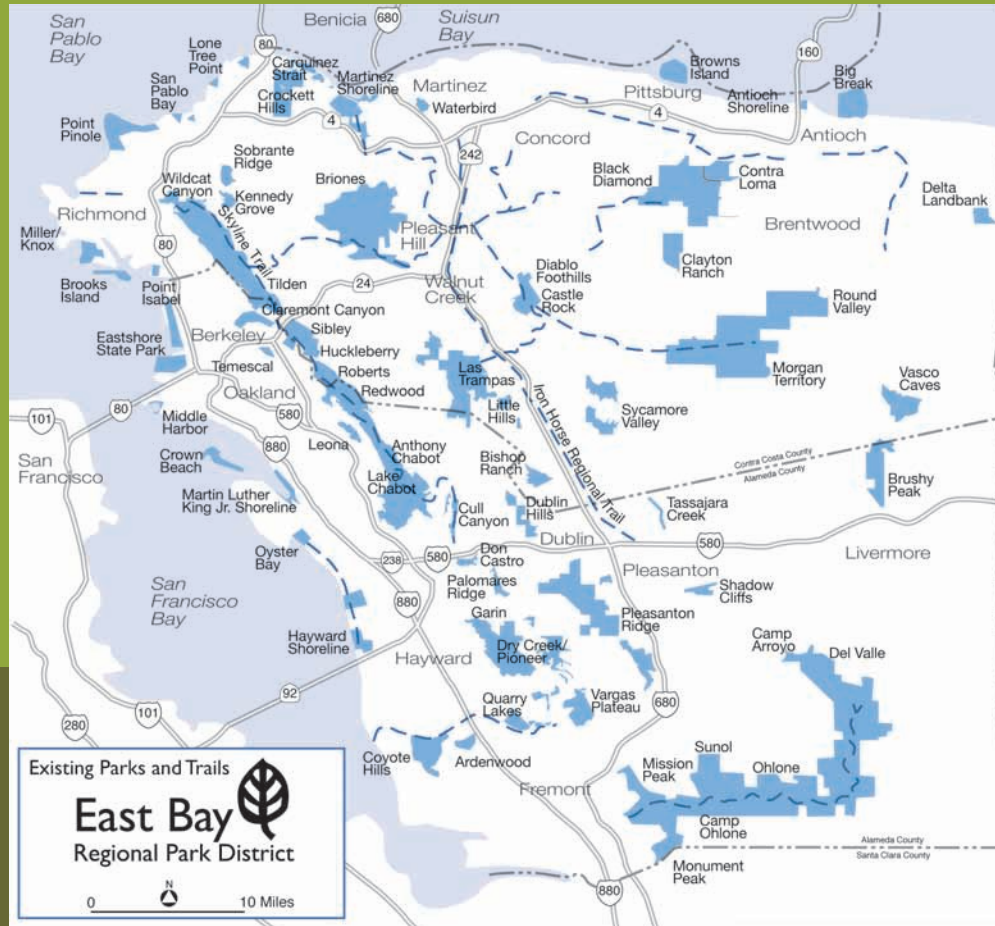


## Coming of Age (1988-2008)

In November 1988, Park District voters approved the passage of Measure AA, a \$225 million bond to provide funding for both regional and local park projects. Weeks later, Pat O'Brien became general manager. During this 20-year period, the District added 15 new regional parks and an additional

34,000 acres of open space. O'Brien led the way for increased volunteer opportunities, a newly formed Recreation Department, and expanded communication tools such as the District's Web site. District staff built and opened Camp Arroyo, a state-of-the-art environmental education and youth camp in Livermore. Some of the other parks opened during this time were Brushy Peak, Round Valley, Sycamore Valley, Bay Point, Crockett Hills, Quarry Lakes, and Middle Harbor.



Grateful credit for research and writing goes to Jerry Kent, Assistant General Manager (retired).

## The Next 75 Years (2009-2084)

The Park District will always remain a work in progress as it struggles to acquire and operate regional parks and trails to serve the Bay Area population. The District will rely heavily on funds from Measure WW, a \$500 million bond measure extension approved

by voters at the end of 2008, to purchase future open space. Regardless of future challenges and opportunities, the East Bay Regional Park District is committed to providing East Bay residents with recreation opportunities and open space preserves close to home.

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Top to bottom:  
Little Farm in Tilden Regional Park.  
Wildcat Canyon CCC project workers.  
First park naturalist Jack Parker, 1955.  
Lake Chabot boaters, c. 1960.

East Bay Regional Park District



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Crown Memorial State Beach – Neptune Beach  
as it was called from 1917 to 1939 – was  
a resort and amusement area since the 1880s.

Cover: Crown Memorial State Beach today.

# Ours to Keep

Celebrating  
75 Years  
of the  
East Bay Regional Park District



A historical perspective  
on the largest regional  
park agency in the nation



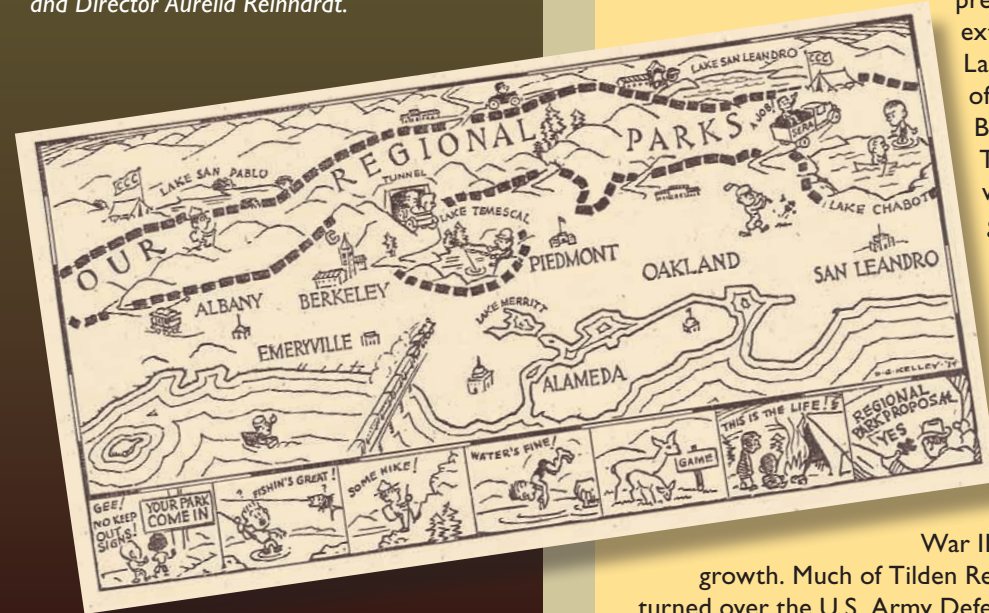


**F**rom sunlit shores to magnificent ridgetops, the East Bay Regional Park District spans nearly 100,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, offering experiences as diverse as the land itself. With 65 parks, over 1,100 miles of trails, campgrounds, visitor centers, historic sites, lakes, and shorelines, our mission is to provide recreational opportunities, ensure the natural beauty and cultural history of the land, and protect wildlife habitat.

Our story is an inspirational one in which citizens, during the toughest of economic times, had a mission. In the late 1920s, thousands of acres of surplus watershed land was available for development. Far-sighted civic leaders sought to preserve this land and retain a balance of recreational and wilderness features, ideas unheard of at the time. In 1934, during the depths of the Great Depression, members of a grass-roots land preservation movement placed a measure on the ballot. It passed by a resounding 71% and the first regional park agency in the nation, the East Bay Regional Park District, was created. On the same ballot, voters elected the first board of directors.



The original East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors, elected in 1934 on the same ballot that established the Park District: Top row (l-r): Director August Vollmer; Works Progress Administration Director Nil Annonson; Director LeRoy R. Goodrich; National Park Service Director Frank A. Kittridge; National Park Service Inspector Roy C. Smith; the Park District's first General Manager Elbert M. Vail. Seated (l-r): Park District Secretary Thomas J. Roberts; Superintendent of Golden Gate Park John McLaren; Board President Charles Lee Tilden; and Director Aurelia Reinhardt.



1930s Park District Map



Hundreds of citizens attend the official Park District opening ceremonies October 18, 1936.

### Formative Years (1934-1945)

At the outset, the Park District included only seven Alameda County communities and no parks. By 1936, it was able to purchase enough land to create three parks: Upper Wildcat Canyon (renamed Tilden as a surprise for Charles Lee Tilden's 79th birthday), Roundtop (now Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve because 40 years later it was discovered that the

preserve housed an extinct volcano), and Lake Temescal, home of one of the East Bay's first reservoirs. The first three parks were opened with great fanfare on October 18, 1936. They were soon followed by Redwood Regional Park in 1939. In the 1940s, Pearl Harbor and the start of World

War II halted the District's growth. Much of Tilden Regional Park was turned over the U.S. Army Defense Command.

### Seven Cities and Eight Parks (1946-1961)

At the end of the war, under the leadership of General Manager Richard Walpole, the District began an era of prudent growth as people returned to the parks seeking family recreation. Concessions such as Tilden's steam train, carousel, and pony ride were added. This growth continued into the 1950s with Roberts Regional Park's swimming pool, baseball field, and picnic areas. The District opened its sixth park, Grass Valley (Anthony Chabot). The Little Farm was added to Tilden. The post-war era created a population shift as residents moved to the suburbs. Southern Alameda County was annexed in 1956, and Don Castro and Cull Canyon recreation areas opened.

### An Invigorated District (1962-1967)

In the 1960s, William Penn Mott, Jr., became general manager as the East Bay population was expanding at an astounding rate. Mott, Board members, and Park District leaders Richard Trudeau and Hulet Hornbek shared an enthusiastic vision of a grand system of hilltop and shoreline parks.

In 1964, most of Contra Costa County was annexed to the District. Sunol, Lake Chabot, Kennedy Grove, Briones, Garin, Las Trampas, Crown Beach, Coyote Hills, and Wildcat Canyon showed the diversity of the expanding Park District.

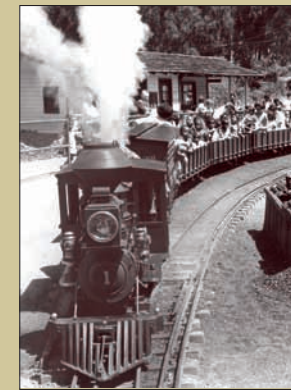


### The Right Time for Action (1968-1987)

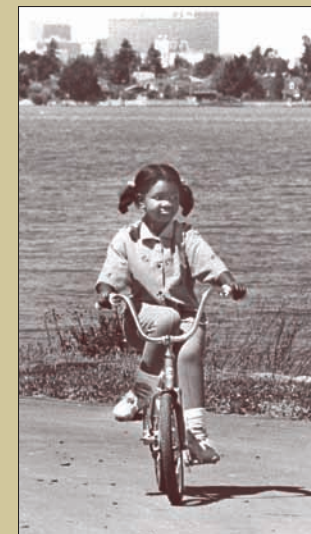
Richard Trudeau became general manager in 1968 and faced many challenges. The first was rising land costs coupled with increasing population growth.

Then Proposition 13 and the California taxpayers' revolt of 1978 restricted funds for agencies dependent on property tax. Future funding for land acquisition and development were limited. Finally, there was a major transformation in public involvement during these two decades by residents, open space advocates, and organized environmentalists who looked to the District to protect the Bay shoreline, preserve historic sites, and

acquire and rehabilitate old industrial and filled lands. Trail use grew rapidly with an increase in walking, hiking, jogging, and mountain biking. During this 19-year period, the District added 32 new regional parks and preserved 43,000 acres of the East Bay's most scenic parklands. Shadow Cliffs, Point Pinole, Black Diamond, Point Isabel, Ardenwood, Carquinez Strait, Pleasanton Ridge, Camp Arroyo, Vasco Caves, and San Leandro Bay are just a few parks that were acquired during this time.



Tilden's Steam Train.



A girl rides her bike along the newly opened San Leandro Bay Regional Shoreline Park, circa 1980. The park was renamed in 1992 in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.