

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARK

The area that is now Round Valley Regional Preserve was once home to California Indians. It was probably a boundary between several different tribal groups, an area where members of East Bay and San Joaquin Valley groups met periodically to trade and socialize. Evidence of Native American use has been uncovered at several archaeological sites within the valley.

The land was purchased in 1873 by Thomas Murphy, an Irish immigrant who established a ranching and farming operation. Murphy's grandson, Jim Murphy, sold the core 700 acres of Round Valley to the East Bay Regional Park District in 1988. It was his wish that the land be preserved in open space for public enjoyment, rather than used for residential development, or, as was once proposed, a refuse disposal site. A few old pieces of farm equipment in the preserve date to the late nineteenth century or early twentieth. Remember that all archaeological and historic objects in the preserve are protected by law; *please leave them undisturbed for others to see.*

The preserve is open for hiking, horseback riding and bicycling (with some restrictions). The climate at the preserve is arid and temperatures commonly exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer months. *Be prepared for the summer heat:* use sunscreen, wear a hat and loose-fitting clothing, wear good hiking shoes, and bring plenty of water.

NATURAL RESOURCES

VEGETATION The 2,024-acre preserve contains non-native grassland, oak woodland/savannah, shrubland and riparian woodland plant communities. The grassland occurs interspersed with extensive stands of blue oak woodland/savannah. Round Valley itself is primarily annual grassland with valley oak lining the intermittent drainages. Non-native grasses, inadvertently introduced to California by early settlers, comprise the annual grassland flora. The dominant grasses are annual ryegrass, wild oats, soft chess, and fidget brome, with wild barley, foxtail chess, red brome, silver hairgrass, and annual bluegrass occurring in lesser amounts. Native and non-native wildflowers occur in spring. The steep, northeastern-facing slopes in the southwestern portion of the preserve support mixed oak woodland and chamise/black sage/manzanita chaparral. Riparian and wetland vegetation consisting of moisture-dependent grasses, rushes, herbs, shrubs, and/or trees occur along Round Valley Creek, which is a tributary of Marsh Creek originating in the uplands surrounding Round Valley.

The southwest corner of the preserve supports mixed oak woodland containing blue, valley, coast live, interior live, and black oak; California buckeye; and California bay laurel. Riparian vegetation occurs primarily along Round Valley Creek, which the Miwok Trail parallels beginning about one-half mile from the staging area. The creek flows until

late spring or early summer, after which the water pools at intervals along the streamcourse. Tree cover along the banks is sparse; vegetation includes spikertush, sedge, rabbitfoot grass, watercress, curly dock, monkey flower, and willow.

WILDLIFE Round Valley Regional Preserve is habitat for a wide variety of wildlife typical of that found in the East Bay Area and also some species more common to the Central Valley. As with all California valley and foothill environments, several species in this area have evolved to survive with only seasonal supplies of water and green vegetation.

Mammals in Round Valley include the California ground squirrel, San Joaquin pocket mouse, Audubon's or desert cottontails, and the endangered San Joaquin kit fox. Round Valley is one of the northern extremes of the kit fox range in California. This shy fox, which is on the Federal and State endangered species lists, lives in the sheltered valley but is subject to isolation and resulting local extinction due to elimination of viable corridors and lack of genetic diversity among the small local population. The kit fox is prey to coyotes and red foxes, and dogs can be a disease vector to the kit fox. Like other scavengers, it is susceptible to secondary poisoning. The challenges faced by the kit fox and its future in the East Bay is one of the primary subjects of the ongoing Alameda-Contra Costa Biodiversity Study, and the Park District is playing a major role in protecting the fox by protecting its habitat in Round Valley.

The preserve is also home to nesting golden eagles, which are protected by State and Federal law. The golden eagles feed on ground squirrels, and with the local burrowing owls, are a state "Species of Special Concern." Burrowing owls nest in ground squirrel burrows and feed on mice and insects.

Ponds and streams in Round Valley support the federally threatened California red-legged frog, western toads, western pond turtles and Pacific tree frogs. These species breed with the onset of winter rains, and burrow into the mud or use rodent holes for hibernation during the dry summer months.

GEOLOGY The bedrock geology of the preserve is Cretaceous Panocho shale and sandstone with deposits of recent alluvium on the surface in valleys and creek drainages. The preserve has small amounts of high-quality soils, located mainly in the level areas along Marsh Creek and in the valley proper. Most of the soil, however, is of a lower quality suitable only for range, wildlife and watershed uses. The Marsh Creek (Mount Diablo) Fault is located about two miles southwest of the preserve. This fault has produced small earthquakes; two recent significant earthquakes (magnitude 5.5 and 5.6) occurred in 1980.

POLICE, FIRE, MEDICAL EMERGENCY9-1-1

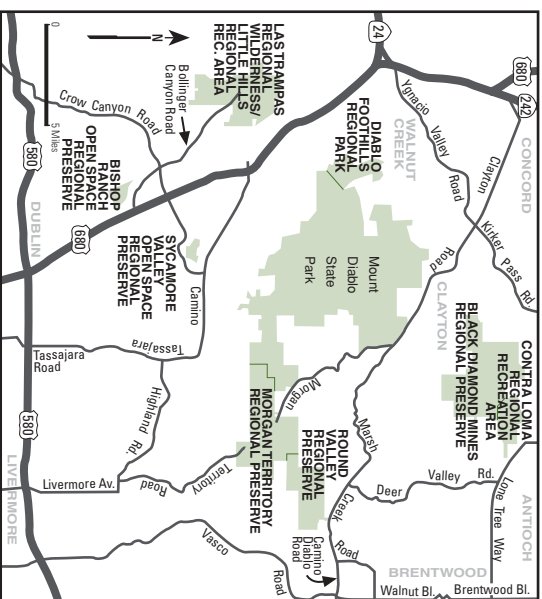
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PARKLAND RULES

PARK GATES ARE OPEN to the public during hours posted at the park entrance. Unless otherwise posted, CURFEW is between the hours of 10 pm. and 5 a.m., except for persons possessing a permit to remain on parklands. BICYCLES may be ridden on designated bicycle trails, and on fire or service roads, unless otherwise posted. Bicycles are not permitted, either ridden, walked or carried, in areas posted "No Bicycles", or on narrow hiking or narrow equestrian trails. State law requires that all bicyclists under age 18 wear an approved helmet while riding on trails and roadways. Riders should call out or sound a warning when overtaking other trail users.

Due to the presence of sensitive wildlife habitat, DOGS are not allowed at Round Valley Regional Preserve. DOGS ARE NOT ALLOWED in Round Valley Regional Preserve. SWIMMING, WADING and other water contact activities are not permitted. PLANTS, ANIMALS, GEOLOGIC, ARCHAEOLOGIC OR HISTORIC OBJECTS are protected by law. Please do not disturb or remove any of these features.

HELP PROTECT PARK WILDLIFE by not releasing or feeding ducks, cats or other animals. Do not feed wild park animals; enjoy them from a distance. FIRES, FIREWORKS, BARBECUES and CAMPSTOVES are not permitted. FIREARMS or BOWS AND ARROWS are not permitted on regional parklands except at established ranges. Crossbows, spears, slingshots, air pistols or rifles, and other dangerous weapons are prohibited anywhere on regional parklands.



TO REACH ROUND VALLEY REGIONAL PRESERVE:

From Walnut Creek: From I-680, exit at Ygnacio Valley Road. Proceed on Ygnacio Valley Road to Clayton Road in Concord and turn right (east). Clayton Road becomes Marsh Creek Road in Clayton. Proceed east on Marsh Creek Road, past Deer Valley Road, until you reach the preserve staging area on your right.

From Brentwood: Take Walnut Blvd. south to Marsh Creek Road and turn right. When Marsh Creek Road intersects with Camino Diablo Road, bear right and stay on Marsh Creek Road. You will reach the preserve staging area on the left.

East Bay Regional Park District
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ROUND VALLEY REGIONAL PRESERVE

