

The Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve has a rich cultural and natural history. This land was once shared by three Indian tribes. In the 1850's coal mining



Rolling hills dotted with blue oak

operations created five new mining towns making the area the population center of Contra Costa County. Coal mining gave way to sand mining to support the glass manufacturing industry in outlying areas. The mines closed in the 1920's, and the land was turned over to ranchers many of whom had worked in the mines. Some descendants of these miners-turned-ranchers still graze cattle on the Preserve. The Park District began acquiring land for Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve in the early 1970s. Today, most of the mining district is within the Preserve's nearly 6,286 acres. The area is an ideal location for hiking and picnicking. Naturalists conduct a variety of programs about the Preserve's natural and historic resources.

Project Activities



Blue Oak

The Suncrest Homes will dedicate 134.5 acres of land adjacent to Black Diamond Mines. This irregularly shaped open space will partially surround the development on the west, south and east sides. The west and south boundaries abut Black Diamond Regional Preserve. To the north is a housing development and privately owned land. Contra Loma Regional Recreation Area is to the east. This dedication

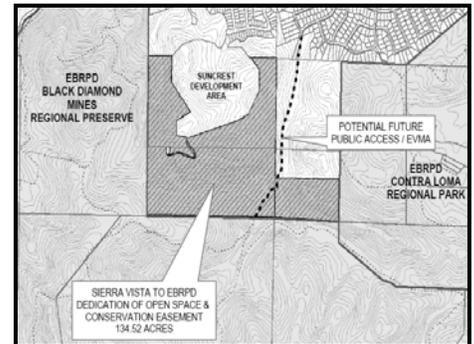
will serve as mitigation for impacts to habitat for Alameda whipsnake, red-legged frog and California tiger salamander. The impacts result from development of the 50-unit Sierra Vista housing project in Antioch.

Property Description

The topography of the property consists of steep hills and drainages with elevations ranging from 280' to 800'. The property is covered primarily by grassland dotted with blue oaks and small patches of sage scrub. It provides habitat for a number of special-status species, including populations of red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, and Alameda whipsnake. There is potential for other

special-status species including badger, California horned lizard, and San Joaquin pocket mouse.

The savannah areas provide suitable nesting habitat for many raptors, such as red tailed hawk, kestrels, owls, and white tailed kites. Other native wildlife species likely to use the site are bobcats, raccoons, opossums, American crows and scrub jays. A 20-acre portion of the open space will be established as a wetland mitigation site. A pond was created within close proximity of a south-north flowing drainage. The property is undeveloped except for the created wetland mitigation within the southeast portion of the site. Seasonal grazing will be allowed once the area is securely fenced.



Quick Facts

Action: Land acquisition

Acres: 134.5

Funding: \$350,000

Provided by: Suncrest Homes

Target habitats: Grassland, riparian, and chaparral

Target species: Red-legged frog, Alameda whipsnake, and tiger salamander

Improvements: Fencing, establish wetland