

# Sunol-Ohlone Regional Wilderness

Year opened: 1962 Acres: 6,858

**Highlights:** Old Green Barn Visitor Center, wilderness hiking, picnicking, backpack camping, access to Ohlone Wilderness Trail.

**Did you know?** Sunol is the gateway to Camp Ohlone, the Ohlone Wilderness, and the 28-mile Ohlone Wilderness Trail. A world-record blue oak and the tallest waterfall in Alameda County are both found near the trail.

**HISTORY** Chochenyo Ohlone-speaking Taunans lived with this land for countless generations, employing horticultural techniques that increased habitat diversity and plant and animal health and numbers. For the Taunan people, everything had a life and spirit, including waters, breezes, and rocks. For today's Ohlones, this landscape has enduring cultural and historical significance.

The park has been ranched continuously since the 1860s, with Patrick and Mary Ann Geary among the first homesteaders. In 1895 the Geary's son, Maurice, built the home and barn that would become today's Interpretive offices (rebuilt 1954) and Green Barn Visitor Center. When Willis Brinker bought local homesteads in 1939 for his JB Ranch, Geary descendants were among his ranch hands, and Geary relatives still call this area "The Ranch." Indian Joe Creek Trail was named for Joe Binoco, who worked as a ranch hand for the Geary family and for Willis Brinker.

**GEOLOGY** Clues to the area's exciting and varied geologic history include sandstone outcrops with fossil bivalves deposited in what was once ancient seabed, now uplifted and tilted to form prominent ridges. Much older metamorphic boulders of greenstone, blueschist, and metachert indicate a turbulent past in a subduction zone. Also venerable, Cave Rocks is a massive, metamorphic outcrop. Exposures of serpentinite, California's state rock, provide a valuable refuge for native plants.

**VEGETATION** Alameda Creek, Alameda County's longest stream, harbors shady riparian woodland, while soaring hillsides host oak savannah and grassland communities. Hidden canyons, seasonal streams, and vernal pools add to the area's plant diversity. Spring brings colorful hillsides of California poppies and lupine, while serpentine outcrops glow gold, pink, and lavender with stands of native wildflowers. The herbarium in the Visitor Center is helpful for wildflower identification.

**ANIMALS** Wildlife is abundant in this diverse and expansive wilderness. Hikers often see bobcats, rac-

coons, and deer. Campers may observe bats catching insects at night and hear the sounds of coyotes, owls, and foxes. Mountain lions are uncommon, but occasionally sighted, as are reptiles, including western pond turtles and rattlesnakes. Late summer/fall marks the emergence of male tarantulas during the mating season. Newts breed in ponds during winter. Birding is superb along Alameda Creek, with 178 species identified in the park.

**HIKING** A description of park trails is found on the other side of this brochure.

**PICNICKING** Picnic sites and barbecue pits are provided along Alameda Creek on the valley floor. No open fires or barbecues are allowed during high fire danger days.

**FAMILY CAMPING** Family camping is unavailable during the Calaveras Dam replacement project. Upon project completion, tent camping sites may be reserved by calling 1-888-327-2757, option 2.

**GROUP CAMPING** Group camping is unavailable during the Calaveras Dam replacement project. Upon project completion, sites may be reserved by calling 1-888-327-2757, option 2. High Valley Camp is a hike-in camp located a steep, one-mile walk from the Visitor Center. Camp Ohlone (open April through October) is a seven-mile hike from the park entrance.

**HORSE RIDES** Guided trail rides, overnight camps, and lessons are available by reservation with Western Trail Riding Services: (925) 862-9044 or [www.westerntrailriding.com](http://www.westerntrailriding.com).

**SUNOL BACKPACK AREA** The backpack area is open during the Calaveras Dam replacement project. Camping is year-round by advance reservation only (5 business days); phone 1-888-327-2757, option 2. An Ohlone Wilderness Trail Permit is required. Camping fee is \$5/day per person (subject to change). Group site available. Dogs not permitted overnight. No campfires. See trail descriptions section for Ohlone Permit information.

**OHLONE WILDERNESS TRAIL** This trail links Mission Peak Regional Preserve, Sunol-Ohlone Regional Wilderness, and Del Valle Regional Park. Together with Sunol, the area exceeds 16,500 acres. Hikers must carry their Ohlone Wilderness Trail Permit. Permit includes a map of Ohlone Wilderness. See trail description for details.

**LITTLE YOSEMITE** This scenic gorge on Alameda Creek is two miles upstream from the Visitor Center. It is open to the public through a lease agreement with the San Francisco Water Department. Please abide by the boundary signs and do not trespass onto other Water Department lands. Swimming is not allowed in the Little Yosemite area.

**PARK HOURS** 8 a.m. to dusk year-round. Gates are locked at night. Campers must sign in before dusk. The park is subject to closure or restrictions during fire season (June through October).

**CALAVERAS DAM REPLACEMENT PROJECT** The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is improving facilities at the Calaveras Reservoir. Sunol Regional Wilderness will remain open for day use, although construction activities may limit areas of use on weekdays, and family and group camping is unavailable. The Alameda Grove picnic area is available for reservation Saturday and Sunday only; the Leyden Flats picnic area is closed. For information on the dam replacement project, contact the SFPUC at (866) 973-1476.

## WELCOME!

Please enjoy your Regional Parks safely, and help us protect and preserve your parklands by complying with park rules and regulations.

## SAFETY and ETIQUETTE

- Stay on trails. Taking shortcuts causes erosion, can be dangerous, and is destructive to plants and animals.
- Wading and/or swimming in undesignated areas is dangerous and may harm the watershed.
- Bring, carry, and drink plenty of water. Dehydration is a leading cause of injuries on the trail. There is no water at drinking fountains in the valley. Be prepared to treat water at backpack sites.
- Be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions.
- Trails can be slippery, rocky, and steep. Proceed carefully at your own risk.
- Wildlife and cattle may be present on the trails at any time. Feeding or approaching wildlife is prohibited.
- Bicycles are permitted on designated trails only. Horses have the right-of-way on trails.
- All park resources are protected. Take only photographs.
- Keep the parks beautiful. Pack out what you pack in.

## RULES

Visitors are responsible for knowing and complying with park rules (Ordinance 38), available online at [www.ebparks.org/ord38](http://www.ebparks.org/ord38).

- DOGS must be leashed 200 feet from any trail or park entrance, in parking lots, picnic areas, developed areas such as lawns and play fields, and on some trails. They must be under voice control and within sight at all times. Waste must be placed in garbage cans or removed from the park.
- Smoking is prohibited, except in overnight campsites.
- Drones are prohibited.



## To Reach Sunol Regional Wilderness:

**From Fremont**, drive north on I-680 and exit at Calaveras Road (near the town of Sunol.) Turn right at the exit onto Calaveras Road and proceed about four miles to a left turn onto Geary Road, which leads directly into the park. (If you find yourself driving uphill on a narrow winding road you've missed the Geary Road turnoff.) To reach the Old Green Barn take the first left past the park entrance.

**From the Oakland-Berkeley area**, drive east on I-580 to the junction with I-680. Take I-680 south and exit at Calaveras Road/Highway 84 just south of the Sunol exit. At the bottom of the exit turn left onto Calaveras Road and proceed as noted above.

**From the Walnut Creek-Danville area**, drive south on I-680 and exit at Calaveras Road/Highway 84 just south of the Sunol exit. Proceed as noted above.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact the EBRPD Public Affairs Department at (510) 544-2200, fax (510) 635-3478, TDD (510) 633-0460, or [info@ebparks.org](mailto:info@ebparks.org).



## East Bay Regional Park District

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[www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org) Rev. 8/16

# Sunol Regional Wilderness

Sunol, Pleasanton, Livermore

East Bay  
Regional Park District

