

An Agricultural Landscape Preserved

Sycamore Valley Regional Open Space Preserve occupies two major ridges located within a region of rolling hills and valleys south of Mt. Diablo. Elevations range from about 600 to 1,000 feet.

The Bay Miwok Tatcan tribe inhabited the Sycamore Valley when, in 1772, Fr. Juan Crespi with an expedition led by Captain Pedro Fages, noted the good quality of the land in the San Ramon Valley and considered it a good location for a Franciscan mission. The mission was ultimately located in present-day Fremont, and the San Ramon valley was utilized as grazing land. By 1850 the first Anglo-Americans had arrived to farm the valley. Since the main road between Mission San Jose and the State Capitol in Benicia ran through the San Ramon Valley, businesses were encouraged to establish in the area. Throughout the last half of the 1800s, Sycamore Valley farmers established the area as a productive agricultural region. The first American settler in the vicinity of today's Preserve is recorded as Leonard Eddy in 1850. But in 1862 the Wood family began a farm and over five generations came to own and farm most of what is the Preserve today. By the end of the twentieth century Sycamore Valley land use had converted to housing. Much of the hilly ridge lands, including the Preserve, was dedicated for open space preserves. The 328-acre southern portion of the Preserve known as the Sherburne Hills unit, located south of Camino Tassajara, was acquired by the Park District in 1989. In 1998 the District acquired 255 acres north of Camino Tassajara from the Town of Danville, and an additional 106 acres from Wood Ranch developers, bringing the Preserve's northern Short Ridge Unit to 361 acres.

The Sherburne Hills Unit is almost entirely grassland, and the Short Ridge Unit is mostly grassland with scattered oak savanna with trees consisting of valley oak, coast live oak, and buckeye. This habitat supports gopher snakes, racers, Northern Pacific rattlesnakes, acorn woodpeckers, scrub jays, black-tailed titmouse, Western bluebirds, Northern orioles, lazuli buntings, and loggerhead shrikes (which also occur in the southern unit). The mature woodlands of the northern unit

support nesting red-tailed hawks and great-horned owls, and provide cover for California quail, wild turkeys, and gray fox.

The Preserve's steep-sided gullies drain into Sycamore Creek. These intermittent drainages, along with several ponds located in the Preserve, provide limited wetland habitat for garter snakes, Pacific tree frogs, and red-legged frogs. The drainages also support raccoons, striped skunks, deer, coyotes, and bird species including ruby-crowned kinglets, chestnut-backed chickadees, vireos, warblers, red-winged blackbirds, and great blue herons. Raptors seen hunting in the Preserve include the northern harrier, Cooper's hawk, and white-tailed kite.

WELCOME!

Please enjoy our 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 can be dangerous and causes erosion.
- Wading and/or swimming in undesignated areas may be dangerous and may harm the watershed.
- Carry and drink plenty of water. Dehydration is a leading cause of injuries on the trail.
- Be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions.
- Trails can be slippery, rocky and steep. Proceed carefully at your own risk.
- Wildlife may be present on the trails at any time. Feeding or approaching wildlife is dangerous and illegal.
- Bicycles are permitted on designated trails only. Horses have the right-of-way on trails.
- Keep the parks beautiful. Pack out what you pack in.

RULES

Pets must be leashed 200 feet from any trail or park entrance. Pets must be leashed in parking lots, picnic areas, developed areas such as lawns and play fields, and on some trails. They must be under voice control at all times.

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

POLICE, FIRE, MEDICAL EMERGENCY9-1-1
EBRPD HEADQUARTERS.....1-888-EBPARKS
PARK OFFICE ..1-888-EBPARKS, option 3, ext. 4560
WEB SITE www.ebparks.org
TDD.....(510) 633-0460



To Reach Sycamore Valley Regional Open Space Preserve:

From I-680 in San Ramon, exit at Sycamore Valley Road and head east. Sycamore Valley Road becomes Camino Tassajara. Continue on Camino Tassajara to Holbrook Drive. Turn left on Holbrook Drive and park in the staging area.

Cover photos:

Top: Snow-covered Mt. Diablo, seen from the Sherburne Hills. Photo by Bob Walker, Collection of the Oakland Museum of California.

Middle: Hikers on the Sand Hill Trail. Photo by Robin Mayoff.

Bottom: Western bluebird. Photo by Lee Greengrass.



East Bay Regional Park District

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