

## **Saving Open Space, Creating Wildlife Corridors**

A Message from General Manager Robert E. Doyle

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The Park District constantly works to acquire new parklands. Saving open space in the fast-growing East Bay is critical to maintaining quality of life – not just for people, but for wildlife as well. When acquiring new properties, we always look for land that connects to other open spaces or provides unique habitat for native species.

By linking parklands, we can create “wildlife corridors,” broad belts of open space for wildlife to roam more freely, allowing younger animals to find new territories and mates outside their immediate area. Animals that are locked in set boundaries – either by freeways or urban development – suffer genetically over time and potentially could suffer population sinks.

One of our most successful wildlife corridors is the near-continuous 40-mile stretch of hilltop parklands between Richmond and Fremont. It encompasses 15 parks and thousands of acres of forests, grasslands, streams, lakes and other important habitat. Another stretch we’re especially proud of is the eastern side of Mt. Diablo, where Contra Loma, Black Diamond Mines and Clayton Ranch connect to Mt. Diablo State Park, which in turn connects to Morgan Territory and Round Valley. From there, watershed land links to Brushy Peak and Vasco Hills. Eventually we hope to link this corridor to Ohlone Regional Wilderness to the south, creating a vast system of open spaces for wildlife to move about and thrive.

These open space corridors are also a key part of the District’s celebrated regional trail system. As the wildlife corridors expand, so do the trail opportunities. The Bay Area Ridge Trail, the Calaveras Ridge Trail, the Diablo Trail and the Ohlone Wilderness Trail all traverse these large protected areas, providing opportunities for long hikes and even backpacking in some of our more remote parklands.

Check out [www.ebparks.org/parks](http://www.ebparks.org/parks) for maps showing how our parks connect to watersheds and other parklands, and for information about wildlife in the East Bay. We encourage you to support park and open space ballot initiatives to keep these wildlife corridors expanding in the future!