

# Regional in Nature Activity Guide

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2022

East Bay   
Regional Park District  
*Healthy Parks Healthy People*



Thurgood Marshall Regional Park –  
Home of the Port Chicago 50.  
Notable Achievements of 2021, *page 2*

UN Global Citizen Award/Peace Pole  
*See page 3*

## INSIDE

- In-Person Programs Return, *page 3*
- 2022 Park District Budget, *pages 4-5*
- King Tides, *pages 7-8*
- Slithering Slippery Slugs, *page 10*
- Build a Fun Woodrat Home, *page 12*
- Take a Gravel Bike Ride, *page 13*
- Sharpen Your Birding Skills, *page 14*
- Tilden Fungus Fair, *page 15*

# Contents

- Redistricting Parks ..... 2
- Precious Plovers ..... 3
- 2022 Park Budget ..... 4-5
- Ardenwood ..... 6
- Big Break ..... 7
- Black Diamond ..... 8
- Coyote Hills ..... 9
- Crab Cove ..... 10
- Del Valle ..... 11
- Mobile Education ..... 12
- Outdoor Recreation ..... 13
- Sunol ..... 14
- Tilden ..... 15
- Volunteer Program ..... 16



General Information  
1-888-EBPARKS or 1-888-327-2757

Camping and Picnic Reservations...  
.....1-888-EBPARKS

Naturalist and Recreation  
Programs.....1-888-EBPARKS

TRS Relay Service.....7-1-1

EBRPD Board of Directors

- Elizabeth Echols ..... Ward 1
- Dee Rosario ..... Ward 2
- Dennis Waespi ..... Ward 3
- Ellen Corbett ..... Ward 4
- Ayn Wieskamp ..... Ward 5
- Beverly Lane ..... Ward 6
- Colin Coffey (President) ..... Ward 7

Visit [ebparks.org](http://ebparks.org) for map downloads, activity and event information, and much more!



# Notable Achievements of 2021

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER SABRINA B. LANDRETH



Since joining the Park District as General Manager in March 2021, I have been extraordinarily humbled to be part of such a respected organization and by the warm welcome I received from the public, Park District staff, and Board of Directors. I especially want to thank Park District staff for their steadfast work to keep parks open and safe for the public and protect the natural environment.

2021 was a unique year for the Park District as it moved forward with many significant projects and initiatives while navigating the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The District also continued to embrace its diverse and growing community to ensure that everyone feels included and welcome in the Regional Parks.

## Here are several of our notable 2021 activities and accomplishments:



The removal of flammable vegetation to reduce wildfire risks, Districtwide. (Including removal of 866 dead and dying trees.)



Renovating and expanding the Del Valle Visitor Center, Livermore.



Opening Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay, Fremont.



Opening the Lone Tree Point Bay Trail Extension, Rodeo.



Opening the Black Diamond Mines Coal Mine Experience, Antioch.



Naming the new Regional Park at the former Concord Naval Weapons Station "Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50," Concord.

2022 looks to be another successful year for the Park District as we continue our work to manage flammable vegetation to reduce wildfire risks, protect natural habitats for wildlife, improve water quality and health of lakes and urban creeks, and enhance firefighting resources and communication systems to improve wildfire and public safety response.

## PARK DISTRICT BEGINNING REDISTRICTING PROCESS

In September 2021, the Park District Board of Directors began holding meetings regarding the 2020 Census ward redistricting process. Official 2020 Census data was released on August 12, 2021. The District's seven elected board members – each overseeing a geographic ward – will convene a public workshop

in January to discuss communities of interest as they relate to redistricting. In addition, the District will host a public hearing in spring of 2022. Finalized maps are required to be adopted before April 17, 2022. For more information on upcoming Board meetings, visit [ebparks.org/about/meetings](http://ebparks.org/about/meetings).



## UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL CITIZEN AWARD AND PEACE POLE



**On September 18, 2021, the Park District celebrated the UN International Day of Peace and unveiled a 12-foot Peace Pole at Lake Chabot. The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the United Nations to celebrate peace by spreading compassion, kindness, and hope. More than 250,000 Peace Poles are planted worldwide.**

On October 24, 2021, the Park District was awarded the prestigious Global Citizen Award by the United Nations Association USA, East Bay and Silicon Valley Chapters. The award honors the Park District for its contributions to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through proper emergency management and planning, the District was able to keep 99 percent of its parklands, trails, and shorelines open and accessible for the public.

The award also recognizes the Park District's alignment with the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted in 2015 as a roadmap for building a world that is more equitable, inclusive, safe, and sustainable for all peoples. Founded in 1934, the District has steadfastly enhanced the quality of life for all residents in the East Bay and preserved habitat for wildlife.

## PRECIOUS PLOVERS

Run, stop, look, and peck! This sparrow-sized, sand-colored shorebird with dark patches on either side of the neck finds its food along our beaches and other open estuarine areas. Consuming countless protein rich kelp flies, beach hoppers, and insects the western snowy plover helps keep the beach community in balance. Numerous stressors endanger this equilibrium. With fewer than 1,500 breeding pairs remaining in California, these precious plovers are federally listed as threatened and are a state species of special concern, thereby protected from harm or harassment.



The Park District is successfully supporting species recovery efforts. By installing temporary fencing to dissuade public disturbance of overwintering birds at Crown Beach, the plover population increased from six to more than 54 individuals.

Over 6,428 volunteers have collectively given 34,500 hours of service to build and manage western snowy plover nesting habitat at Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline and at the Hayward

Regional Shoreline. State-wide, the Hayward colony has one of the highest concentrations of procreating plovers, ranging from 4.1 to 32 nests per hectare. Thanks to the steadfast efforts of the Regional Parks Foundation, more than \$200,000 have been donated to support these environmental endeavors. If you are passionate about protecting our precious plovers, please consider joining one of our Wildlife Volunteer projects that can be found at [ebparks.org/about/getinvolved/volunteer/quack](http://ebparks.org/about/getinvolved/volunteer/quack).



## IN-PERSON, NATURALIST-LED PROGRAMS RETURNING TO REGIONAL PARKS

In-person interpretive and recreation programs and activities have returned to the Park District, including nature walks, environmental education, class field trips, and recreational activities. These programs were restricted during the pandemic to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, the broad availability of the COVID-19 vaccine and current low infection rates allow the District to offer in-person programs again.



During the pandemic the Park District expanded its "Parks to People" digital learning programs to help connect people with nature online, including field study videos, virtual reality park experiences, games, and self-guided nature activities. The digital learning programs have become very popular with teachers, students, and the public.

The Park District plans to continue offering online programs going forward. Together, in-person and online programs will help the District reach the most people possible and connect them with the natural world.

To learn more about in-person and virtual programs, visit [ebparks.org/activities/naturalist](http://ebparks.org/activities/naturalist).

## NEW STUDY LOOKS TO MEASURE HABITAT HEALTH

The East Bay Stewardship Network, a collaborative group of land managers in the East Bay which includes the Park District, has begun an ecological health assessment (EHA) to create a framework for measuring the ongoing health of the environment, using indicators such as wildlife species and vegetation communities. The assessment is especially important given the stressors the environment is facing right now with climate change, invasive species, and increasing urbanization.

The Park District currently gathers data for research projects, environmental permits, and environmental compliance. Typically, data is collected and evaluated for specific animal species and sites. The EHA's framework will pull together existing data to create a broader landscape level view of overall ecological health in the East Bay. The Regional Parks Foundation is providing financial support for the assessment. The 2021 EHA is expected to be complete by spring 2022.

The EHA is modeled after a number of efforts around the state and nation, most notably *One Tam's Peak Health Report* on Mt. Tamalpais.



# 2022 Park District Budget

## BALANCED AND FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

**The 2022 Budget** presents a funding plan that represents the mission of the East Bay Regional Park District to preserve natural and cultural resources, and provide open space, parks, trails, recreation and environmental education for the 2.9 million residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The budget continues efforts to increase park access, protect and enhance natural habitat, keep parks safe, and reduce wildfire risks, as well as fulfill commitments to voters.

The 2022 Budget is balanced and fiscally responsible, meets current and long-term service needs, and fulfills commitments to constituents, while also adding the necessary staff to address increased park visitation.

The 2022 Budget totals \$290 million and covers operating, projects and programs. It includes \$1.65 million from Measure WW for land acquisition and public access projects. Measure WW is a \$500 million bond extension that was approved by 72 percent of District voters in November 2008. The budget also includes \$3.2 million from Measure FF for projects park and operations, including fire fuels reduction. Measure FF was approved in November 2018 by voters in Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, Alameda, San Pablo, El Cerrito, Albany, Emeryville, Piedmont, El Sobrante, and Kensington with 85.6 percent support.

During COVID-19, park visitation has increased 30 percent districtwide and up to 400 percent at some parks, trails, and staging areas, equating to

over 30 million visits annually from the Bay Area and beyond. This increase in park use confirms the essential role of parks to public health and that parks provide an important respite for those struggling with the many challenges we face today.

Throughout the pandemic, the Park District has led the way in keeping parks open and safe, while following scientifically backed health and safety protocols and taking positive steps to address other challenges such as climate change and equitable access. A scientific District study showed that 92 percent of the public supported its decision to keep parks open and accessible to the public during the pandemic.

**2022 District Budget**



[ebparks.org/  
about/budget](https://ebparks.org/about/budget)



*Round Valley Regional Preserve,  
Brentwood*

# 2022 Park District Budget

## BALANCED AND FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

### Key Funding Priorities

Specific needs and priorities are identified starting with the 2013 Master Plan, commitments to voters, working with partners and stakeholders, available fiscal resources, ongoing liabilities (including facility replacement needs), and climate change impacts.

A complete list is available in the 2022 District Budget at [ebparks.org/about/budget](http://ebparks.org/about/budget).



#### Reducing Wildfire Risks

In the last three years, California has experienced the worst wildfires in recorded history. Ongoing drought conditions, dry and dying vegetation, and increased tree mortality across the East Bay require additional resources, including fire protection equipment and firefighters.



#### Protecting Natural Habitat for Wildlife

The Park District's parklands comprise mostly of undeveloped, natural, open space that offer a variety of grassland, shrubland, woodland, forest, lake, shoreline, riparian, and wetland environments, which provide essential habitat for a diverse collection of wild plants and animals. These precious lands require protection, preservation, and supervision, i.e., environmental stewardship. The District has many projects and programs that work to preserve and enhance habitat for wildlife and continues to look for opportunities to acquire additional land for preservation and habitat protection.



#### Enhancing Public Access

Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of parks, trails, and open space to physical and mental health. The Park District has approximately 36,000 acres of parklands not yet safe to open to the public. While COVID-19 has been challenging, the Park District continues to move forward with projects and planning efforts to improve park access and visitor use facilities, including restrooms and disabled access. Expanding access to parks and trails is more important than ever.



#### Keeping Parks Safe and Enjoyable

Keeping people and parks safe continues to be a top priority for the Park District, including a full service police department that patrols the District's 73 Regional Parks, a fire department that works to prevent fires and respond to emergencies, and a lifeguard services department that maintains safety in the Park's lakes and pools. Police and firefighter staffing and maintaining up-to-date public safety equipment and communication systems are vital to keeping parks safe and responding to emergencies.



#### Adapting and Protecting Parks from Climate Change

Climate change impacts, including extreme weather, drought, wildfires, and sea level rise, threaten the Park District's parks, visitor facilities, and natural habitat. The District is working on adaptation strategies and projects to protect these resources and advance climate-smart principles, including carbon sequestrations, energy conservation, green transportation, and water conservation.



#### Connecting People with Nature

Each year the Park District helps connect hundreds of thousands to the natural world at park visitor centers and through organized interpretive and recreation programs. These programs often serve school-age children and youth from underserved communities that have historically underutilized parks. Providing these programs and ensuring exhibits are up-to-date are important to providing quality environmental education opportunities for the community.



# Ardenwood

## HISTORIC FARM



### Harvesting the History of New Year's Celebrations

Historians trace New Year's festivities as we know them to Babylonians 4,000 years ago, when mid-March celebrations marked the start of the agricultural year. Earlier still, Ancient Egyptians celebrated the annual flooding of the Nile River to mark the renewed fertility of their farmlands.

In the year 46 B.C., January 1 became the first day of the calendar year. By the time Ardenwood farm was established at the turn of the century, most New Year's celebrations tied to the calendar year, rather than agricultural cycles as they had once been. Spring corn planting is still months away and winter hay crops already grow green on the first day of 2022.

Yet, even with the many changes between the first celebrations in Babylon, New Year's in Victorian times, and today's festivities, some traditions hold the same. The resolve to do better, with some form of resolution, has been a part of New Year's for thousands of years.

As we usher in 2022, we hope you'll make Ardenwood part of your celebrations. Resolve to get out and moving more and join us for a walk. Come to one of our play-based programs to celebrate with games. Or come learn about pollinators and how you can help them to commit to a healthier planet.

**Happy New Year!**

◀ **Children celebrate the Lunar New Year at Ardenwood's Chinese farmworker housing around the turn of the century. Lunar New Year celebrations predate January 1<sup>st</sup> festivities by around 1,000 years and will coincide with the February 1<sup>st</sup> new moon in 2022.**



### Ardenwood Interpretive Programs

For a complete list of Ardenwood programs, please visit us online . . . . . ▶

#### **New Year's Day Farm Walk**

Start the year off right with a saunter around the farm. Enjoy the winter weather, visit the animals, and perhaps discover something new.

Sat, Jan 1  
1:30pm

#### **Farm Walkabout**

Explore the farm with a naturalist on an easy 2-mile walk. Search for interesting plants and wildlife. Hear stories of the people who lived and worked on this land.

Sun, Jan 2, 16, 30; Feb 13  
10:30-noon

#### **Top Shop**

Learn the history of this ancient toy that is played around the world. Make your own wood spinner and compete in a skittles tournament for fabulous prizes.

Sun, Jan 2, 30; Feb 13  
1:30-2:30pm

#### **Victorian Fun and Games**

Try out some stilts, play the game of graces and delve into other delightful past times from days gone by.

Sun, Jan 9, 23; Feb 27  
1-2:30pm

#### **Homes for Bumblebees**

These furry "flying teddy bears" need your help! Learn more about these cute bees and learn how to make a bumblebee hotel.

Sun, Jan 16; Feb 6, 20  
1:30-2:30pm

#### **Pollinator Power!**

Explore the mighty power of creatures who help our plants to grow and bring us food. Learn how you can help support these tiny heroes.

Sat, Jan 8, 22  
11am-noon

# Big Break

## REGIONAL SHORELINE



**Big Break Visitor Center** is open and offers many opportunities to learn and play at the **Delta**. Check out **EBRPD – Big Break (ebparks.org)** to view current operating hours and program offerings.



King tide at Big Break, 2017

### 2017 King Tides at Big Break

**C**heck out this view of the **2017 king tides** here at the Big Break Regional Shoreline! Water levels rose almost 3 feet higher than average. That's enough to cover the entire Fishing and Observation Pier in a few inches of water. You can observe the king tides at Big Break, along the Antioch Oakley Shoreline, or at any other waterfront near you.

### What is a King Tide?

The king tide is the highest predicted high tide of the year at a coastal location. This occurs when the Sun, Moon, and Earth align. When combined, these gravitational forces create a noticeable difference in tidal areas like Big Break! This natural occurrence is closely monitored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

### Word Jumble

Search for the **bold blue** letters throughout this page and write them in the spaces below. Then unscramble them to reveal the two hidden words!

\_\_\_\_\_

Answer: KING TIDES

### Sea Level Rise

Scientists with the California Coastal Commission are studying rising sea levels through the California King Tides Project, and you can help! Sea level rise threatens California's natural environments like wetlands, as well as artificial environments such as bridges and buildings, which can be destroyed by flooding. You can take part in the King Tides Project by documenting local water levels during king tides, which aids scientists in researching which coastal communities are at risk in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Area. Please visit the California Coastal Commission website for more information.



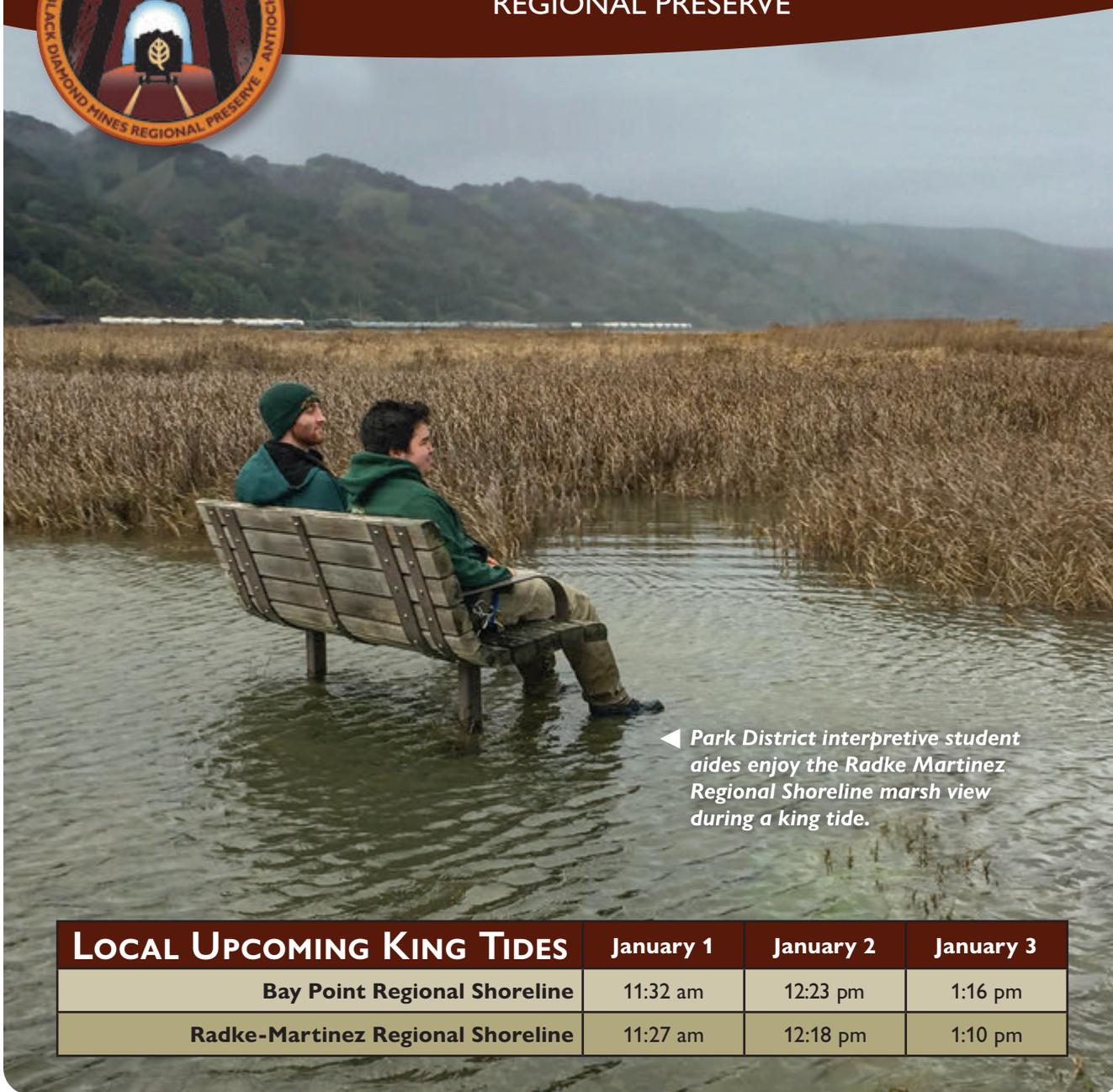
### Safety First

Although king tides are fun, remember to always put safety first. **N**ever turn your back to the water and *always consider the current weather conditions*. Be extra careful when walking on slippery surfaces and be aware of your surroundings. Please pay attention to changing weather conditions and dress accordingly. *Thank you!*



# Black Diamond Mines

## REGIONAL PRESERVE



◀ Park District interpretive student aides enjoy the Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline marsh view during a king tide.

### LOCAL UPCOMING KING TIDES

	January 1	January 2	January 3
Bay Point Regional Shoreline	11:32 am	12:23 pm	1:16 pm
Radke-Martinez Regional Shoreline	11:27 am	12:18 pm	1:10 pm



### A Vision of the Future

**K**ing tides, the common name for the highest high tides of the year, offer us a way of seeing what the future may hold due to climate change. In the coming years many of our shorelines and communities will need to adapt to these rising sea levels.

Across the East Bay Regional Parks we are encouraging people to take part in the community science efforts to showcase these changes through the California King Tides project. To learn how to get involved check out the website: [coastal.ca.gov/kingtides](http://coastal.ca.gov/kingtides).

Many of our parks are also being redesigned with rising sea level in mind. The recently upgraded Bay Point Regional Shoreline includes restored wetlands, which act as a sponge as the sea rises, and increased upland habitat allowing species to migrate upslope as the lower shoreline is lost.



#### To Register:

Scan this QR code or visit [apm.activecommunities.com/ebparks/Activity\\_Search](http://apm.activecommunities.com/ebparks/Activity_Search)

## Looking for something to do? Do Interpretive Programs! . . . . . ▶

### Shrubapalooza at Morgan Territory Regional Preserve

On a late winter morning, windswept cliffs are the perfect place to park our behinds among multitudinous green shoots, watching winged wonders cruise by with Mount Diablo as backdrop. 7+ years. *Registration required.*

Sunday, Feb 6; 9am-11am

### Mini Miners at Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve

Bring your little gems out to Black Diamond Mines for a morning of learning, playing, and enjoying the great outdoors. Each month will be a different theme where children ages 2-5 will discover the joys of nature. Siblings welcome! *Registration required.*

Tuesday, Feb 8; 10-10:45am

# Coyote Hills

## REGIONAL PARK



## Where Water Goes When It Rains

**W**hen water flows and gathers into a common body of water, it is called a watershed. Imagine walking, driving, or riding a bike over the urban streets of Union City or Fremont. You are within the Crandall Creek watershed! When it rains over this watershed, the water flows into the 500-acre marsh at Coyote Hills. After the water filters through the Coyote Hills marsh, it passes through a valve under a levee and joins Alameda Creek. Then it will eventually flow out into the bay.

Wetlands and marshes can store large amounts of water and excess rain (63 million gallons at Coyote Hills!) by absorbing and dispersing water over a larger area of land. Similarly, a marsh can stay moist during a drought, storing water deep in the mud below. Wetlands play a vital role in slowing down the flow of water, delaying a possible flood. As the water slowly moves through this land, sediments are filtered and settle to the bottom.

Wetlands and marshes can also act as “carbon sinks.” When plants make food from sunlight and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), it is called photosynthesis. There are many plants in a marsh, all performing photosynthesis at the same time. Because of this, the marsh becomes a place where carbon from the air deposits in the ground. This “carbon sink” can help mitigate climate change by removing extra carbon from our atmosphere. Wetlands and marshes are essential for flood control, settling sediment, storing carbon, and providing abundant food and clean water to life of all sizes.

### How to Make Your Own Watershed



1. Grab a pen, piece of paper, and water bottle.



2. Crumple your piece of paper into a ball.
3. Uncrumple it a little, with areas of the paper raised off the table. Can you see peaks and valleys on your paper? Use your imagination to see mountain ranges. Take a marker and draw in the folds of the paper where you think water would flow and gather.



4. Now spray your paper with water and see where your marker's ink runs. Good job! You created a watershed.

## Water Conservation Tips

December, January, and February are usually the wettest months of the year for the East Bay. Even during the wet season, it's never too early to start thinking about water conservation. Here are some ideas – old and new – of ways we can all do our part and change our habits to help keep California out of a drought.

- Use low-flow showerheads and take shorter showers
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth. Do the same when washing the dishes.
- Fix leaks as soon as they start! Even in one single day, gallons of water can flow down the drain even if it is a little leak.



# Crab Cove

## VISITOR CENTER AND AQUARIUM

# SLITHERING SLIPPERY SLUGS



*A slender banana slug*

Wet weather dampens the forest floor, bringing out a slippery creature which oozes along leaving a slime trail. These fascinating creatures, called banana slugs are actually mollusks, soft bodied creatures without backbones and related to the snails and sea slugs we encounter at Crab Cove along the shoreline. However, living on land they possess a pneumostome, a breathing hole on the side of their body connecting to a single lung.

**Banana slugs** are native to North America and can be found from Alaska to San Diego County. They are in the class Gastropoda meaning “stomach-foot”. The genus *Ariolimax* was thought to possess four to five species of slugs but new genetic studies done in the early 2000’s prove there may be up to nine species and subspecies inhabiting California! To name a few, the **slender banana slug**, *Ariolimax dolichophallus*, is famous as UC Santa Cruz’s mascot. The **Pacific banana slug**, *Ariolimax columbianus*, found from Alaska to northern Humboldt County is the second largest slug in the world reaching up to 9.8 inches long. Our local species is known as **Button’s banana slug** or *Ariolimax buttoni*, ranges from Humboldt to the North and East Bay.

Banana slugs are decomposers – munching on fungi, dead leaves, lichen, worms, animal droppings and



*Pacific banana slug*



*Button's banana slug*

more. They move on a bed of slime produced to help them glide along rough terrain. Slime also protects them from predators. Properties within their slime are like an antiseptic – designed to taste bad and make tongues and mouths tingle. Back in the day, sometimes outdoor educators would encourage children to kiss a slug, becoming an “official” member of the Banana Slug Fan Club. Because of parasitic worms, mites and other critters carried in the slime this is now not recommended. In fact, slugs should not be handled because hand sanitizer, lotions and oils on human hands can cause harm to slugs.

Banana slugs have two sets of tentacles. The bottom ones are sensory for feeling and smelling. The top set has dots on end of tentacles which are light sensitive eyes. Their mating behavior is interesting, to say the least, but will leave that for you to research further ... We encourage you to explore our East Bay Regional Parks and hope you will see one along the trail!

### WHERE TO LOOK FOR BANANA SLUGS

After rains or when the air is damp is the best time to look for slugs. Places you might encounter them are along the Stream Trail at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park or along the main trail at Leona Canyon Regional Open Space, both located in the Oakland Hills.

### CLEAR SLIME RECIPE

- Mix ¼ tsp of Borax in ½ cup of warm water (You may not need this much)
- Pour ¼ cup of clear glue into a separate container
- Slowly pour the water mixture into the glue stirring constantly until glue thickens into Slime!

**10** See [ebparks.org/irin](http://ebparks.org/irin) for upcoming programs.

### RECOMMENDED READING

- *The Banana Slug* by Alice Bryan Harper
- *Western Society of Malacologists Field Guide to the Slug* by David George Gordon
- *Article from Bay Nature Magazine “Not Just a Pretty Face—the Banana Slug is One of the Weirdest Animals on Earth”* by Eric Simons, Oct 2018.

### For Children:

- *Some Smug Slug* by Pamela Duncan Edwards
- *Rainy Day Slug* by Mary Palenick Colborn

### Music:

*Banana Slug Song* by Banana Slug String Band



Photo: Jen Joynt



# WHOSE TRACKS ARE THOSE?



As the lake levels drop and the muddy bottom of the lake is exposed, you may see some cool tracks out there from mammals adventuring! Tracks need specific conditions to be really great. Use these pictures and hints to help you figure out what animal may have made that track. When you go exploring be sure the mud is dry enough so you don't end up stuck! **Please stay as close to the shore as possible. Walking in the middle of the lake is prohibited.**

- If front and hind prints are different, they are labeled "H" for hind/back foot, or "F" for front foot.
- Try and look in front of and behind the track and see if there are more examples of the print to compare.
- Pay attention to claw presence/absence and lobes in the foot pad near the toes and near the heel.

## Cats

• Cats retract their claws, so there are typically no claws visible in their prints.



• When comparing prints, notice the lobes on the pad. Bobcat and mountain lion both have two lobes at the top of the pad and three at the bottom, but different shapes and pad shapes.



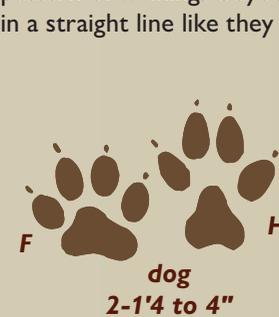
## Canines

• Since the canine family can't retract their claws, they are almost always visible in the print.

• Notice that the cat family has three lobes on the bottom of the pad while the dog family has two.

• Foxes and coyotes are part of the canine family and their prints can look very similar at first glance.

• Dogs tend to have spread out toes compared to coyotes and a much more random pattern of walking. Coyotes tend to walk in a straight line like they have a plan!



## Pop Quiz!

Can you figure out which animal made this print?



Photo: Aaron Anderer

**Answer:** If you said it was a raccoon's front foot you are correct! Bonus points if you spotted the faint hind foot on the right side of the photo.

Stop by and say "Hi" at the Visitor Center on the west side of the lake! We are now open on weekends year-round, check [ebparks.org](http://ebparks.org) for hours and updates.





# Mobile Education

## Urban Wildlife: Rats

**W**hether in burrows, basements, attics, or yards, rats are found throughout the East Bay. While sometimes scorned for their presence in our homes, these intelligent, resourceful rodents are an important part of the local ecosystem. Often misunderstood, rats have survived alongside humans for hundreds of years.

In the greater East Bay we can experience the mystery of one of our parks' most interesting creatures, the dusky-footed woodrat. In colder months, when deciduous trees and shrubs lose their leaves, it's easy to spot dusky-footed woodrat homes along creeks and in forested communities. Made of meticulously created piles of sticks 3-5 feet tall, these homes serve as respite for woodrat families, and other commensal animals, such as salamanders, mice, insects and reptiles. Often inherited from family or friends, these stick houses can last decades. They are found on the ground, in the cracks of rock outcroppings, attached to logs, and even at the base of trees with smaller penthouses up in the canopies.

Take a winter walk and explore these curious dwellings; some good locations to visit are:

- Jewel Lake Trail and upper and lower Packrat Trails at the Tilden Nature Area
- Bear Creek Trail in Briones Regional Park
- Bay Area Ridge Trail between Tilden Regional Park and Sibley Regional Preserve



Photo: James Maughlin

## How to Build a Fun, Edible Woodrat Home

### Ingredients:

- 1 bag of pretzel sticks.
- ½ cup of chocolate chips.

**Step 1:** Place pretzel sticks in a bowl. And in a separate bowl, heat chocolate chips until melted.

**Step 2:** Start placing pretzel sticks in a crisscross fashion and use a separate pretzel stick dipped into the melted chocolate to "glue" sticks together.

**Step 3:** Keep placing pretzels until you have a little pile. Unlike most bird nests, woodrat nests need a roof and little ways of entering all over.

**Step 4:** Admire your creation, and then dig in!



Photo: Brett Jordan

### Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

- AKA the brown rat
- Most prevalent rodent worldwide
- Coarse brownish fur with a grayish underside
- Large body; small ears and short tail
- Nests in below-ground or sometimes ground-level burrows
- Lifespan: ~2 years



Photo: Alex O'Neal

### Roof Rat (*Rattus rattus*)

- AKA the black rat
- Found everywhere, but thrives in tropical regions
- Grey to black fur with lighter underbelly
- Slender body; large ears and long tail
- Nests in high places, and can also burrow
- Lifespan: ~1 year



Photo: James Maughlin

### Dusky-Footed Woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*)

- AKA the packrat
- Favors Pacific coastal areas of the U.S.
- Cinnamon to grey fur with long whiskers
- Small body with larger, rounded ears
- Highly arboreal; known for their dome-shaped stick houses
- Lifespan: ~2 years

# Outdoor Recreation



## Take a **Gravel Bike Ride**

**G**ravel bikes provide a unique blend of city street bikes and mountain bikes. Gravel bikes open up new opportunities for your outdoor excursion to allow you to explore more than one surface, or even combine several parks into one amazing ride.

A featured gravel bike ride to consider is an early morning trek up the *Alameda Creek Regional Trail to Niles Staging area*. Start on the paved side, then cross over the creek at *Niles Canyon* to head westward to *Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area* for some fun gravel riding on the other side of the creek. Then make a loop around all the lakes with a stop at *Pellarin's Grove* for some wildlife viewing along the *Western Pacific Trail*. *Gardeners Corner* gives a chance to look at native plants for landscape ideas before heading down to *Coyote Hills Regional Park* to see the wildlife refuge. In one breathtaking ride, see pelicans feeding on Alameda Creek, deer crossing the creek, coyotes pouncing in the grass, jackrabbits bounding through the brush, hawks soaring, terns diving, and herons frozen in their patient hunt for a meal. The best times for wildlife viewing are early morning sunrise to dusk lit sunsets.

**“Reconnection to the natural world is fundamental to human health, well-being, spirit, and survival”**

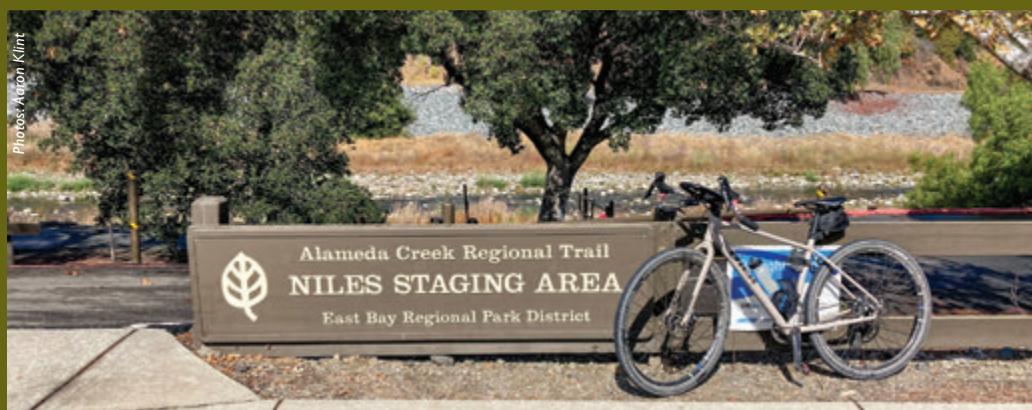
– Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*

This multi-terrain excursion is made possible with the unique blend of features of the gravel bike. Gravel bikes have lower gearing, drop handlebars that provide stable handling on all-terrain, and wider tires that let you ride over different surfaces. It is this unique combination that allows riders to have on and off-pavement excursions.

Safety and preparedness are key to making your longer multi-terrain ride a success. Always wear a helmet, have a pair of gloves, lights/reflectors of some kind, and basic repair tools (extra tube, pump, multi-tool).

Your Regional Parks offer every rider a fun experience, from a fun family ride to an amazing hill climb with views of the whole Bay Area, then downhill for some wind-in-your-face fun. Make sure you follow the rules on which trails allow bikes in each park.

For a great list of trail rides and bike safety please go to the Park District's website: [ebparks.org](http://ebparks.org)



Photos: Aaron Klint



# Sunol Wilderness

REGIONAL PRESERVE

## SHARPEN YOUR BIRDING SKILLS THIS WINTER!

With the approach of autumn comes hundreds of migratory bird species that utilize our East Bay Park lands. Many of them come from Alaska and Canada, and use the Bay Area as an essential resting ground along their journey.

Winter can be a great time to practice birding by ear! Visit Sunol Regional Wilderness and listen for various songbirds that may be migrating through. You may also hear regulars like the acorn woodpeckers, quails, and red-tailed hawks. Once you enter the park, you do not have to venture far from the car to have a rewarding birding experience.

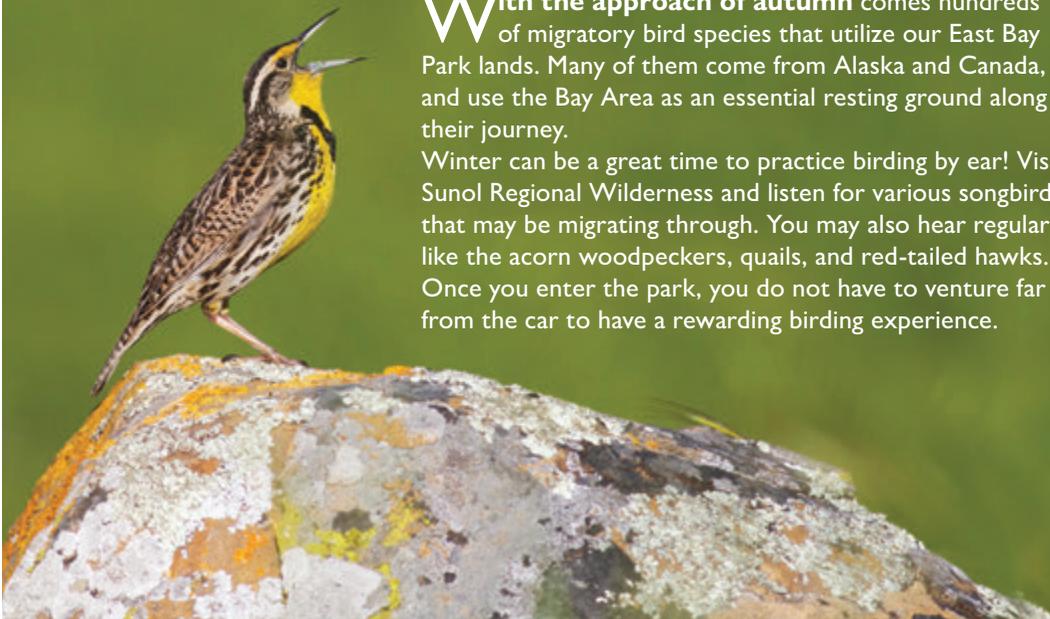
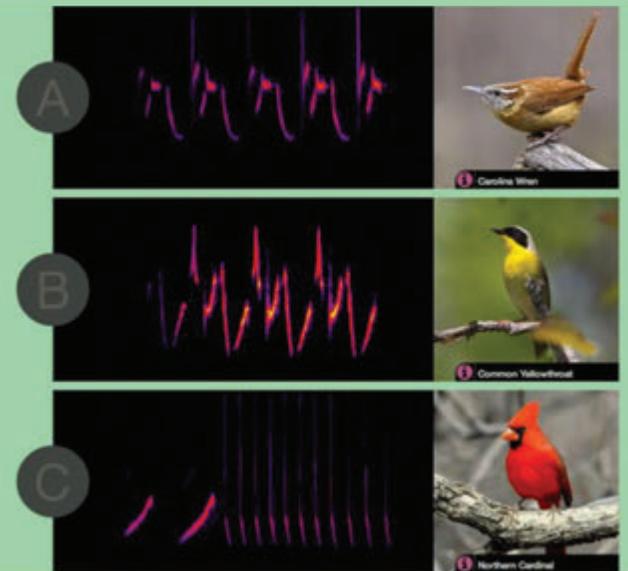


Photo: Davor Desanac

## Bird Song Hero Game

Before you head out to the parks, build your birding by ear skills with the **Bird Song Hero** game! Play this fun online sound matching game to become better at birding by ear and visualizing bird calls. Then, head to the park and make observations to practice.



Visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at [Academy.AllAboutBirds.org/learning-games/](http://Academy.AllAboutBirds.org/learning-games/)

## Nature Journaling Bird Behaviors

Nature journaling can broaden your appreciation for the natural world and improve your observation skills. Birds can be a tricky subject to draw and observe since they're frequently on the move.

Focusing on their unique sounds and behaviors, like flight patterns, can be a fun new skill set to learn and enjoy. Find a place to journal outdoors and write down your thoughts and observations.



## Help Protect Birds

Do your part to protect these feathered friends; after all, this land is their home too!

**Support bird-friendly habitats:**

- Buy bird-friendly coffee.
- Grow native plants around your home.
- Pack out even the tiniest pieces of micro trash.
- Go birding from a distance and give birds plenty of space.
- Make sure your food is not left unattended.

Choose reusable items to reduce your impact on the environment.



# Tilden

## NATURE AREA



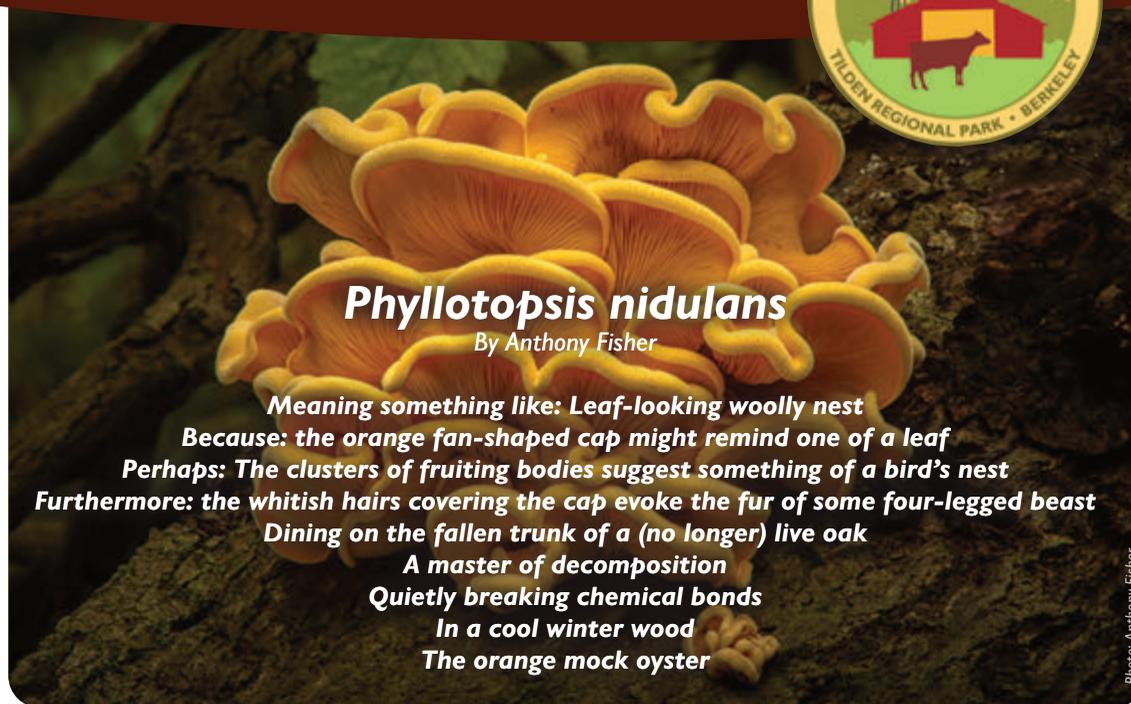
### Tilden Fungus Fair

AT THE TILDEN NATURE AREA

Celebrate the fruits of winter! View hundreds of local mushroom specimens, mingle with the mycological community, and enjoy presentations by guest speakers at this two-day special event. Or watch from home – presentations will be live streamed on YouTube! All ages welcome, no registration required.

Sat, Jan 29 and Sun, Jan 30; 10am-4:30pm.....

Trent Pearce and Interpretive Staff



### Phyllotopsis nidulans

By Anthony Fisher

*Meaning something like: Leaf-looking woolly nest*

*Because: the orange fan-shaped cap might remind one of a leaf*

*Perhaps: The clusters of fruiting bodies suggest something of a bird's nest*

*Furthermore: the whitish hairs covering the cap evoke the fur of some four-legged beast*

*Dining on the fallen trunk of a (no longer) live oak*

*A master of decomposition*

*Quietly breaking chemical bonds*

*In a cool winter wood*

*The orange mock oyster*

Photo: Anthony Fisher

### Candy Cap Shortbread Cookies

A delicious way to celebrate the mushroom season is to bake cookies with them! Candy cap mushrooms have a sweet maple taste and simple shortbread cookies are a great way to showcase their amazing flavor. You can find candy cap mushrooms online or at Far West Fungi here in the Bay Area.

- 4 tablespoons ground dried candy cap mushrooms (approx. ½ oz.)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup unsalted butter, cut into chunks
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

1. Pre-heat your oven to 300°. Line an 8-inch square pan with parchment paper.
2. Cream together butter, sugar, ground candy cap mushrooms, salt, and vanilla. Add flour and mix until just combined.
3. Dump your dough mixture into the lined pan and use your hands to press and smooth out the dough evenly throughout. Chill for 10 minutes.
4. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove pan. Using a knife or pointed kitchen tool, draw lines on the hot dough's top to create 2x2 inch squares. Finish by using a fork to prick holes in each square.
5. Bake for 30 minutes more or until cookies are golden brown along the edges. Remove from oven and let cool in the pan. Enjoy!

### INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

AT THE TILDEN NATURE AREA

[ebparks.org](http://ebparks.org) • [ebparks.org/parks/tna](http://ebparks.org/parks/tna) • [ebparks.org/activities/naturalists](http://ebparks.org/activities/naturalists)  
Information: (510) 544-2233

#### THE NATURALIST'S TRAIL

Tilden Nature Area, Visitor Center  
Sun, Jan 2, 9, 16, 23; 1-3pm

#### MONDAY BIRDING

Various parks  
Mon, Jan 3, 10, 24, 31, Feb 7, 14, 28;  
9am-Noon

#### THE OVER-THE-HILLS GANG

Various parks – Hikers 55+  
Tue, Jan 11, 25, Feb 8, 22;  
10am-12:30pm

#### TILDEN FUNGUS FAIR

Tilden Nature Area Visitor Center  
Sat, Jan 29 and Sun Jan 30;  
10am-4:30pm

#### WOOLLY LAMBS

Tilden Nature Area, Visitor Center  
Sun, Feb 6, 20; 3-4pm

#### FARM CHORES FOR LITTLES

Tilden Little Farm, Chicken Coop  
Sun, Feb 13, 27; Noon-12:30pm

### WHATS HAPPENING AT THE REGIONAL PARKS BOTANIC GARDEN

The Botanic Garden is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., October – May and 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., June – September.

For special events, classes, docent training, and Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden e-newsletter, visit: [nativeplants.org](http://nativeplants.org) or call (510) 544-3169.



#### PLANT SALES

Sales are at the potting shed when volunteers are present. Monday and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon. Cash or checks preferred.

#### FREE WAYNE RODERICK LECTURE SERIES

Saturday mornings in January, February, and March. All online Zoom lectures are free, start at 10:30 a.m., and run for a minimum of one hour. For a full listing of speakers and topics, please visit: [nativeplants.org](http://nativeplants.org)

#### CLASSES THROUGH THE FRIENDS OF THE REGIONAL PARKS BOTANIC GARDEN

Online Zoom Lectures. Seating is limited! For a full listing of speakers and topics, please visit our Friends website: [nativeplants.org](http://nativeplants.org)

See [ebparks.org/calendar](http://ebparks.org/calendar) for upcoming programs.



# Volunteer PROGRAM

## VOLUNTEER WITH US! Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

Across the nation people have turned their “day off” into a “day ON” by **taking action** and serving their communities on this federal holiday. Inspired by Dr. King’s steadfast commitment to service, folks come together to make positive changes.

### WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

Join us to celebrate the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service!

**When:** January 17, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Where:** Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline

**How:** Create a volunteer account and register for a time slot and location online!

Honoring Dr. King through service is an excellent way to begin each year with a commitment to making our communities better, and we hope you will join us at the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline for the East Bay Regional Park District's **2022 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service!**

**Pre-Registration** is required to participate. Find more information at [ebparks.org](http://ebparks.org).



“EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT...BECAUSE ANYBODY CAN SERVE. YOU ONLY NEED A HEART FULL OF GRACE. A SOUL GENERATED BY LOVE.”

– Martin Luther King Jr., 1968

East Bay   
Regional Park District  
*Healthy Parks Healthy People*  
2950 Peralta Oaks Court  
Oakland, CA 94605-0381  
[ebparks.org](http://ebparks.org)

## DOC QUACK VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

**REGISTRATION:** [ebparks.org](http://ebparks.org) or 1-(888)-327-2757, option 2

**INFORMATION:** [ebparks.org/about/getinvolved/volunteer/quack](http://ebparks.org/about/getinvolved/volunteer/quack) or (510) 544-2233

### SHOREBIRD SANCTUARY (#42636) AT MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. REGIONAL SHORELINE, OAKLAND

An exciting adventure over land and water to create nesting habitat for the threatened Western Snowy Plover awaits you. You will help move bulk sand and shells and pull weeds, thereby crafting ideal/idyllic courtship conditions for breeding plovers, avocets and stilts. By participating, you’ll earn your “Shorebird Sanctuary” patch. Physical labor is involved with this project.

All ages welcome and parent participation is required.

**Sign-up deadline:** Jan 21

Sat, Jan 29; 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. .... “Doc Quack”, Wildlife Biologist



### RAIL RESCUE RANGERS (#42638) AT ELSIE ROEMER BIRD SANCTUARY/ CROWN MEMORIAL STATE BEACH

During this hands-on adventure you’ll help create habitat for the federally and state endangered Ridgway’s Rail. We will remove non-native plants, pick-up trash, and plant wildlife friendly vegetation which will restore the upland areas of the Roemer Bird Sanctuary for rails. Physical labor is involved with this project. By participating, you’ll earn your “Rail Rescue Ranger” patch. All ages welcome and parent participation is required.

**Sign-up deadline:** Feb 19

Sat, Feb 26; 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. .... “Doc Quack”, Wildlife Biologist

