

Greathouse Visitor Center

Greathouse Visitor Center is located in an underground room excavated by the silica-sand miners in the mid-1920s. Displays interpret the area's mining, cultural, and geologic history. General park information, maps, brochures, and souvenirs are also available. The visitor center is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends and some holidays from March through November. Admission is free and all ages are welcome.



The mine crew identified in this photograph at the Hazel-Atlas upper workings include Earl Bell, powder man, first row, left; Art Latham, mine foreman, first row, right; George Dossey, miner, second row, left; and Oscar Peterson, sand mill foreman, second row, right. The others are unidentified, circa 1930s.

What Else Will Interest Me?

Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve is over 6,000 acres of land and contains three historic townsites: Nortonville, Somersville, and Stewartville. In addition to Hazel-Atlas Mine, the park contains historic Rose Hill Cemetery, several mine openings to explore, and 65 miles of trails. Park Naturalists conduct a variety of programs relating to the park's natural and historic resources.

Stands of Coulter pine and black sage are at the northernmost limit of their distribution and several rare and/or endangered plant species have been found among the valley grassland, oak woodland, and chaparral plant communities.

Dogs

Dogs are welcome in Greathouse Visitor Center but must be on a leash. Dogs are not allowed on mine tours.

Directions

Take HWY 4 to the Somersville Road exit in Antioch. Drive south on Somersville Road (into the hills) to the parking lot at the end of the road.

Brochure text: Traci Parent

Park Questions?

Call or email a Park District naturalist at one of the Visitor Centers below.



BDM webpage

East Bay Regional Park District Visitor Centers

Ardenwood Historic Farm Fremont
510-544-2797, awvisit@ebparks.org

Big Break Visitor Center at the Delta Big Break Regional Shoreline Oakley
510-544-3050, bigbreakvisit@ebparks.org

Greathouse and Sidney Flat Visitor Centers Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve .Antioch
510-544-2750, bdvisit@ebparks.org

Coyote Hills Visitor Center Coyote Hills Regional Park..... Fremont
510-544-3220, chvisit@ebparks.org

Crab Cove Visitor Center Crab Cove Alameda
510-544-3187, ccove@ebparks.org

Rocky Ridge Visitor Center Del Valle Regional Park..... Livermore
510-544-3249, www.ebparks.org/parks/del_valle

Garin Barn Visitor Center/Dry Creek Garden Garin Regional Park..... Hayward
510-544-3220, www.nativeplants.org

Old Green Barn Visitor Center Sunol-Ohlone Regional Wilderness..... Sunol
510-544-3249, svisit@ebparks.org

Tilden Regional Park-Botanic Garden Berkeley..... 510-544-3169, www.nativeplants.org

Environmental Education Center/Little Farm Tilden Nature Area..... Berkeley
510-544-2233, tnairea@ebparks.org

East Bay Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
P.O. Box 5381
Oakland, CA 94605-0381
1-888-EBPARKS; Dial 711 for
Telecommunications Relay Service
www.ebparks.org

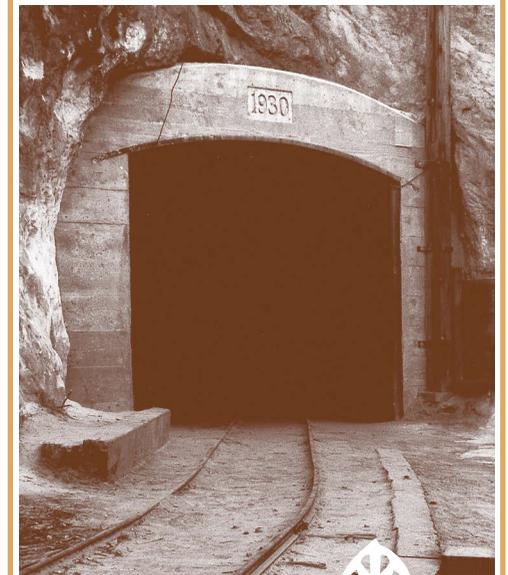


Black Diamond Mines
Regional Preserve

Mine Tours



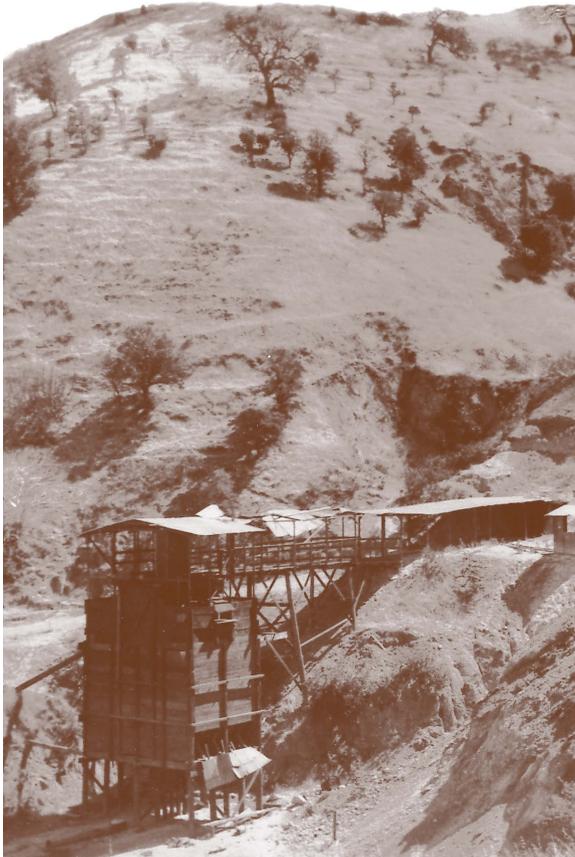
Hazel Atlas Mine



East Bay
Regional Park District
www.ebparks.org

Welcome to Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve

Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve was the site of California's most productive coal field and was a major source of glass-making and foundry sands. The Hazel-Atlas silica sand mine has been restored as a mining museum and visitor center.



Rick Yarborough Collection, EBRPD

Greathouse Portal sand bunker, circa 1948

Mining History

From the mid 1850s to the early 1900s, a dozen mines supplied nearly four million tons of coal to the rapidly expanding urban and industrial centers of the San Francisco Bay Area. Rising production costs and the advent of oil as an energy source eventually ended production and turned five mining communities into ghost towns. Later, from the 1920s through the late 1940s, silica-rich sand was mined by the Hazel-Atlas Glass Company for the production of glass products and by the Roberts Sand Company for use in the Columbia Steel foundry. The museum and visitor center in Hazel-Atlas Mine help preserve the history of these important mining operations.

Hazel-Atlas Mine

A 950-foot section of Hazel-Atlas Mine has been restored to appear as it did when the mine was active. On a guided walk, visitors see mining methods, equipment, and tools typical of the 1940s. Plant and animal fossils in the tunnel walls provide evidence of the area's climate and appearance 50 million years ago when the sand and coal deposits were formed.

When Can I Visit?

Weekend tours are available for the general public from March through November. Reservations are highly recommended. Weekday programs are available for organizations and school groups (*minimum 10 participants*). Reservations are required. Tickets for the noon and 3 p.m. first-come/first-served mine tours can be purchased on Saturdays and Sundays from March–November at Greathouse Visitor Center.



Dorothy Greathouse Collection, EBRPD

Hazel-Atlas Mine employees, circa 1933.
Left to right are Jack Swearengen, chemist;
R. Marvin Greathouse, original mine owner;
Bob Bennett, plant manager for Hazel-Atlas
in Oakland; and Earl Ramsey, miner.



Dorothy Greathouse Collection, EBRPD

Sand bunker, Hazel-Atlas Mine, circa 1933

How Do I Make Reservations?

Weekend programs can be arranged with VISA or MasterCard by calling: 1-888-EBPARKS or by visiting www.ebparksonline.org. Weekday programs can be arranged by calling 510-544-2750.

Are There Age Restrictions?

For safety reasons, children under 7 years old are not permitted on the mine tour.

How Much Does It Cost?

Tours cost \$5 per person and last approximately 90 minutes. A parking fee may be charged. Fees subject to change.

What Should I Wear?

Wear clothing suitable for underground temperatures of 56°F. Hard hats and flashlights will be provided.