

# A Marshland Reborn

**Year opened:** 2002      **Acres:** 198  
**Highlights:** Hiking, birdwatching.  
**Did you know?** The marsh was renamed Al McNabney Marsh in 1998 to recognize Al McNabney, a representative of Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, who was a tireless advocate of restoration and preservation of the marsh following an oil spill in 1988.

**HISTORY** The area now known as McNabney Marsh was first visited by the Bay Miwok's Chupcan people, a tribelet thought to have consisted of about 200 people. With the plentiful resources of the bay, marshlands, and uplands, these Native Americans were able to sustain their existence here for centuries, until the influx of explorers and missionaries in the 1800s.

The construction of a major rail line through the area in the 1880s helped define the marsh as we see it today. The shipping and rail services of Martinez encouraged the location of the Peyton Chemical Company and the Mountain Copper Company at the mouth of Peyton Slough.

The uplands area of the Preserve with pepperwoods and eucalyptus was most likely the site of early nineteenth-century chemical company worker housing. The pepperwoods line an old road made of "clinker" stones, produced through smelting operations.

The focal point of the Preserve today is the rich and diverse Al McNabney Marsh, of which the East Bay Regional Park District owns 46 acres in the southern end and Mountain View Sanitary District owns 69 acres in the northern and deeper end.

McNabney Marsh is part of a larger 200-acre wetland complex connected by Peyton Slough, which drains into Suisun Bay. In 1988 an oil spill inundated marshlands in this area, including McNabney Marsh. Following that spill, a \$10 million Natural Resource Fund was established to restore, rehabilitate and acquire the equivalent of the natural resources damaged by the oil spill. The East Bay Regional Park District acquired 198 acres in the south end of the marsh in 1992 using funding provided by the Trustee Commit-

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tee overseeing the Natural Resource Fund. This land included the uplands to the east of the marsh, which provide recreational trail opportunities today.

**RECREATION** McNabney Marsh lies on the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds and is home to many species of waterfowl and shorebirds. The fall and spring migrations bring an abundance of waterfowl as they stop to rest and feed on their flights north or south.

The Preserve also provides hiking opportunities in the several miles of trails in the uplands area. Take the trail out of the parking area to reach the Meadowlark Ridge Loop for good views of the marsh. Walk to the northern end of the park towards the pepperwood trees to see signs of the old housing site dating from the early 1900s.

In the future, the trail system in Waterbird Regional Preserve is expected to connect to the proposed Point Edith-to-Martinez Shoreline Regional Trail, which will connect the Preserve to trails in the nearby Peyton Hills Marsh operated by the State Lands Commission.

**BIRDS** McNabney Marsh and the uplands area of Waterbird Regional Preserve provide habitat for a variety of birdlife. Waterfowl and shorebirds use the marsh for foraging and nesting, and the uplands areas are home to small mammals such as ground squirrels and pocket gophers. The patient birdwatcher may see birds ranging from the American avocet, killdeer, and great blue heron to the American kestrel, western meadowlark, cedar waxwing, and great horned owl. Familiar waterbirds observed in the marsh area include the American coot, mallard, green-winged teal, black-necked stilt, bufflehead, Canada goose, cinnamon teal, and white pelican. Other common birds seen at the Preserve include the barn swallow, black phoebe, Brewer's blackbird, cliff swallow, European starling, Say's phoebe, house finch and house sparrow. The lucky birder may also see the white-tailed kite, northern harrier, golden eagle, osprey, and peregrine falcon.

**DOGS** Please note that due to the fragile nature of the marsh ecosystem and the presence of feeding and breeding waterbirds, **DOGS ARE NOT PERMITTED** anywhere in Waterbird Regional Preserve.

**FISHING / WATER CONTACT** Fishing is not permitted in Waterbird Regional Preserve. McNabney Marsh contains treated, reclaimed water. Water contact of any kind is prohibited.



## To Reach Waterbird Regional Preserve:

**FROM SACRAMENTO:** Take Interstate 80 west to the Cordelia junction, then drive south on I-680 to Benicia. About two miles after crossing the Benicia-Martinez Bridge, take the Marina Vista/Waterfront Road exit from I-680. At the end of the off-ramp, turn right onto Waterfront Road, go under the freeway, and watch for the right turn into the Preserve.

**FROM SAN JOSE:** Take Interstate 680 north past Concord and Highway 4. About two miles before the Benicia-Martinez Bridge, take the Marina Vista/Waterfront Road exit. At the end of the off-ramp turn right onto Waterfront Road, drive about 1/4 mile, turn right onto Waterbird Way, and watch for the right turn into the Preserve.

**FROM OAKLAND:** Take Highway 24 east through the Caldecott Tunnel and drive to Walnut Creek. In Walnut Creek, drive north on Interstate 680, past Concord and Highway 4. About two miles before the Benicia-Martinez Bridge, take the Marina Vista/Waterfront Road exit. At the end of the off-ramp turn right onto Waterfront Road, drive about 1/4 mile, turn right onto Waterbird Way, and watch for the right turn into the Preserve.



**East Bay Regional Park District**  
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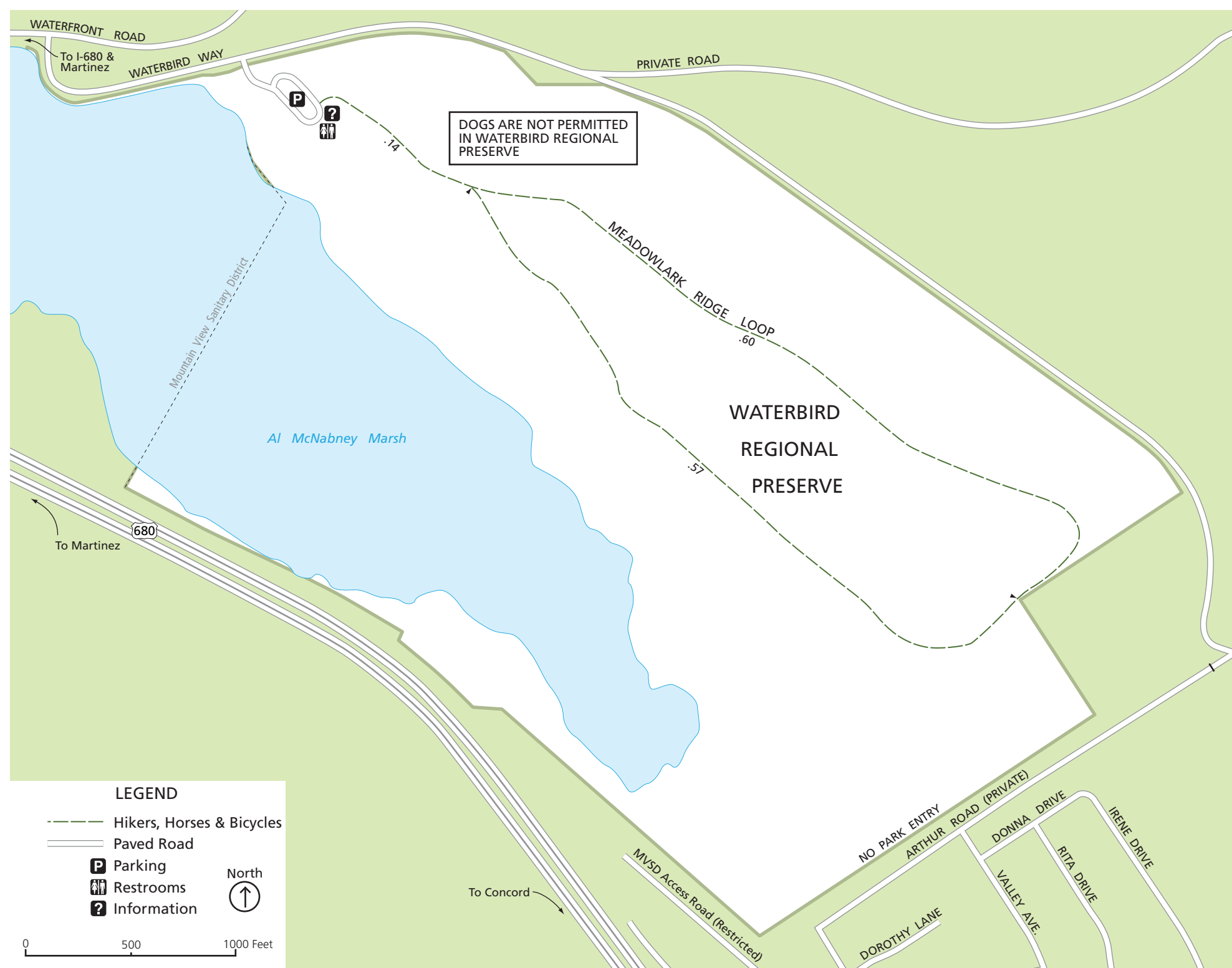
# Waterbird Regional Preserve

Martinez, Concord, Pleasant Hill

**East Bay**   
Regional Park District



Townsend's warbler. Photo by Jerry Ting.



**LEGEND**

- - - Hikers, Horses & Bicycles
- Paved Road
- P** Parking
- Restrooms
- ?** Information



0 500 1000 Feet

**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**

Dogs are not permitted at Waterbird Regional Preserves. At Regional Parks where dogs are permitted, dogs must be leashed 200 feet from any trail or park entrance. Dogs 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 [www.ebparks.org/ord38](http://www.ebparks.org/ord38).