ALVARADO PARK is at the north end of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. This area began as a private park in 1909 and was taken over by the City of Richmond in 1923. It remained a city park until 1985, when it was transferred to the East Bay Regional Park District to become part of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. The original facilities at Alvarado Park included an open-air pavilion and dance platform, later converted to a roller rink. These are now gone, but masonry work, retaining walls, a stone bridge, and stone light standards remain. Alvarado Park is considered a unique variation on the National Park Service-style of “rustic park architecture.” Its stone masonry was constructed during the City of Richmond’s ownership through various Depression-era work programs. Because of these unique features, Alvarado is included in the National Registry of Historic Places.

GEOLOGY AND WILDLIFE The hills and valleys in Wildcat Canyon are marked by squatters’ struggles and water wars. Old and fresh landslides and slumps are numerous. Springs and ponds are common. Small earthquake faults have left their traces. Large coast live oaks, bay laurels, and a scattering of bigleaf maples and madrones grow on east-facing slopes. North-facing hillsides support nearly pure stands of bay laurel fringed with coast live oak. Moist chaparral of coyote brush, poison oak, elderberry, snowberry, bracken fern, and blackberry grow high on north-facing slopes. A riparian forest of alder, willow, creek dogwood, and bay laurel grows in the gorge of bedrock-cutting Wildcat Creek. The west- and south-facing canyon slopes are covered with introduced annual grasses, hawkweed, mustard, radish, and cardoon thistle. A variety of songbirds. Remember: please do not take animal or plant life, as all such resources are protected for the enjoyment of everyone.

POLICE, FIRE, MEDICAL EMERGENCY.. 9-1-1  EBPD HEADQUARTERS 1-888-327-2757 PICNIC RESERVATIONS 1-888-327-2757, option 2  PARK OFFICE 1-888-327-2757, option 3, ext. 4567

HISTORY Today’s Wildcat Canyon Regional Park is likely located entirely within the homeland of the Huchiun, an Ohlone tribe whose members spoke the Karkin language. The Huchiun thrived for generations in a region that extended from today’s Temescal Creek, north to at least the lower San Pablo and Wildcat Creek drainages. They used land management techniques that caused the plant materials and the shellfish they harvested, and the other animals they netted, trapped, snared, and variously hunted, to occur in larger and healthier populations than if they never used them. The 1772 and 1776 arrival of Spanish expeditions signaled a time of severe disruption, dislocation, and upheaval. Despite these changes, today’s Ohlones are bringing ancestral cultural traditions forward into the future. By 1840 most East Bay land had been parceled out in land grants, and Juan Jose and Victor Castro were awarded all vacant lands between the already established ranchos. The Castros kept a small portion, and speculators shared the rest with a water company and the township of Orinda. At this time the streams and springs of Wildcat Canyon became the focus of a struggle over water rights. In the mid 1920s, when the East Bay Municipal Utility District brought Mokelumne River water to the East Bay, the “water wars” came to an end.

In 1936 the East Bay Regional Park District acquired 1,910 acres to create Wildcat Canyon as one of its three original parklands. Additional acquisitions since then have brought the parkland to its current 2,789 acres.