

Afoot & Afield

San Francisco Bay Area

A comprehensive hiking guide

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Preface

This book is the result of field work that began in 1996, when I started preparing my first book for Wilderness Press. Since then, I have logged countless miles, enjoying the beautiful Bay Area in every season, and traipsing from the Sonoma coast to Silicon Valley and beyond. The results of my wanderings appeared in two Wilderness Press trail guides, *East Bay Trails* and *North Bay Trails*, and also in *Peninsula Tales and Trails*, a history and guide commissioned by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. Wilderness Press offers two other trail guides covering regions in the Bay Area, *Peninsula Trails* and *South Bay Trails*. So this book is a compendium of trips in the East Bay, North Bay, South Bay, and on the Peninsula.

My goal has always been to be a good guide, to share my love of the outdoors, and to show the importance of protecting Bay Area parklands. After all, a good guidebook should do more than get you from A to B. Through these pages, some of my personal

predilections will no doubt come through: climbing high, enjoying native plants, looking at birds, and learning about Bay Area history.

I hiked all the trips described in this book, many more than once. I recorded all my observations on tape, and I have tried to be as accurate and as thorough as possible in both my observations and my writing. Keep in mind, though, that nature—not to mention various federal, state, and local agencies—equals change. So your experience on the trail, affected by season, weather, time of day, etc., will very likely be different from mine. I have tried to indicate this by liberally using the word “may,” as in “Stow Lake is a favorite birding destination—from its shore you may spot great blue herons....” I hope you get to see the herons, but their appearance, like so many other things, is beyond my control.

If you have comments, corrections, and/or suggestions, please send them to mail@wildernesspress.com.

Ring Mountain: view northward from near the summit of Ring Mountain (chapter 1, trip 7).



Introducing the San Francisco Bay Area

Whatever your favorite outdoor activity, you're sure to find a place to pursue it in the Bay Area. There are about 1 million acres of public parklands within the nine counties that circle San Francisco Bay, featuring rugged coastlines, tree-filled canyons, cascading streams, grasslands sparkling with spring wildflowers, chaparral-cloaked ridges, and windy summits. No matter where you go, from Santa Rosa to San Jose, you are never far from a trailhead.

The Bay Area is usually divided into four regions—North Bay, East Bay, South Bay, and Peninsula. The North Bay includes Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and Solano counties; the East Bay consists of Alameda and Contra Costa counties; the South Bay takes in most of

Santa Clara County; and the Peninsula covers San Francisco, San Mateo, and the northwestern part of Santa Clara County. Within these regions are bustling urban areas such as San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, and Silicon Valley, along with tranquil forests, mountains, beaches, marshes, and farmlands.

Bay Area parklands are administered by various federal, state, and local agencies, listed in Appendix 3.

Climate

The Bay Area's climate is perfect for outdoor activities, with a dry season that lasts from May through October and a generally mild, if damp, winter. In summer, expect fog and cool temperatures near the coast, thanks to Pacific Ocean. Inland, temperatures can soar. The generally clear days of autumn are fine for hiking just about anywhere. The first rains turn hillsides green and fill seasonal creeks.

Winter storms from the Gulf of Alaska can drench the Bay Area and even bring snow to the highest peaks. Cold, clear weather usually follows—a great time to bundle up and visit high-elevation vantage points. Spring can be sunny, rainy, tranquil, or blustery—or a combination, sometimes on the same day! This is when the Bay Area's grasslands come alive with colorful displays of wildflowers.

The Pacific's moderating influence diminishes as you go inland. Temperature differences—the spread between the average highs and lows for any given location—widen as you leave the coast. Here's an example: The highest average high temperature for San Francisco is 68.5°F, whereas the same figure for St. Helena in Napa County—only about 65 miles away—is 89.2°F. But San Francisco's lowest average minimum, 45.7°F



Clockwise from top left: Joseph D. Grant County Park (chapter 7, trip 3). Sonoma Valley Regional Park (chapter 2, trip 5).

Mt. Wittenberg (chapter 1, trip 17). Russian Ridge OSP (chapter 10, trip 3). Mt. Burdell OSP (chapter 1, trip 14). Diablo Foothills Regional Park (chapter 4, trip 6).



Hikers take a break just off Pine Mountain road, with Mt. Tamalpais in the background.

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(January), is about 10°F warmer than St. Helena's.

Yearly rainfall totals, too, change as you travel around the Bay Area. Each successive range of coastal hills blocks more and more Pacific moisture, creating a rain-shadow effect. Kentfield, in Marin County, receives about 48 inches (that's 4 feet!) of rain per year, whereas the town of Livermore, in eastern Alameda County, gets only about 15 inches. Yet the distance between these two towns is only about 55 miles.

Climate is one thing, but daily weather is another, so it's a good idea to check with a local source for current conditions and forecasts before heading out. You can use a weather radio, available at Radio Shack, outdoor stores, and other outlets, to receive broadcasts from the National Weather Service. You can also find up-to-the-minute weather information on the Weather Channel or on the Internet at www.weather.com.

Geology

The Bay Area lies within a geological province called the Coast Ranges, a complex system of ridges and valleys that stretches from Arcata to near Santa Barbara, and inland to the edge of the Central Valley. The Coast Ranges were formed millions of years ago, as the floor of the Pacific Ocean was dragged under the western edge of North American continent. This process scraped material from the ocean floor and piled it

higher and higher on the continent's edge, in what is now California.

Within the Bay Area are sub-ranges such as the Sonoma, Mayacmas, and Vaca mountains in the North Bay; the Diablo Range in the East Bay and South Bay; and the Santa



Olcott Lake, a seasonal pool, hosts a variety of plants and animals, some quite rare.

Cruz Mountains on the Peninsula and in the South Bay. The tallest peak in the North Bay is Mt. St. Helena (4343'), at the corner of Sonoma, Napa, and Lake counties. Other prominent Bay Area summits include Mt. Hamilton (4213'), Mt. Diablo (3849'),

Loma Prieta (3806'), Mt. Tamalpais (2571'), and Sonoma Mountain (2295').

Most of the surface rock in the Bay Area is sedimentary, but volcanic activity has occurred here in the past. Young volcanic rock caps the Mayacmas and Vaca mountains bordering the Napa Valley, and there are four extinct volcanoes in the East Bay, including Round Top (1763'). California's state rock is serpentine (more properly, serpentinite), gray-green in color and often seen as outcrops beside the trail. Serpentine forms a soil that is toxic to many plant species, but some have adapted to it. Among these are Sargent cypress, leather oak, and a variety of uncommon wildflowers.

The San Andreas fault—which splits the Santa Cruz mountains and slices through Marin County—and a host of lesser faults crisscross the Bay Area. As the Pacific plate slides past the North American plate,



Little Yosemite is a rocky gorge on Alameda Creek, perfect for picnicking and nature study.

Introducing the San Francisco Bay Area 3

tremendous bursts of energy are sometimes released in the form of earthquakes. Most of the time, however, the northward movement, which, over the last 25 million years has carried granite from southern California to Point Reyes, is imperceptible. Visit Point Reyes National Seashore in the North Bay, Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve and Mt. Diablo State Park in the East Bay, and Los Trancos Open Space Preserve on the Peninsula to learn more about Bay Area geology.

Plants

California has a rich diversity of plant life. Some species, like coast redwoods, date back to the dinosaurs, whereas others have evolved within the past several thousand years. Roughly 30 percent of the state's native plants grow nowhere else. These endemics, as they are called, include many types of manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*) and monkeyflower (*Mimulus*). Botanists divide the plant kingdom into several major groups: flowering plants, conifers, ferns and their allies, mosses, and algae. A plant community consists of species growing together in a distinct habitat. Here are the principal plant communities you will encounter along the trail.

OAK WOODLAND

Inland from San Francisco Bay, the fog-free inland hills between 300 and 3500 feet host a generally open woodland, sometimes called a savanna. Species here include various oaks, California buckeye, gray pine, California bay, buckbrush, toyon, coffeeberry, snowberry, and poison oak. Examples of this community can be found on Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, and Henry W. Coe State Park.

RIPARIAN WOODLAND

Found beside creeks and rivers, these trees and shrubs provide the Bay Area's best hope for an autumn display of color.

Common riparian species include bigleaf maple, white alder, red alder, California bay, various willows, California rose, poison oak, California wild grape, elk clover, and giant chain fern. Point Reyes National Seashore and Monte Bello Open Space Preserve give you opportunities to enjoy this community.

REDWOOD FOREST

At one time coast redwoods blanketed the Pacific coast from central California to southern Oregon. These giants are the world's tallest trees and are among the fastest-growing. Commercially valuable, they were heavily logged, especially in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The remaining old-growth coast redwoods in the Bay Area are confined a few areas, most notably Muir Woods National Monument in Marin County and Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve in Sonoma County.

Associated with redwoods are a number of plant species, including tanbark oak, California bay, hazelnut, evergreen huckleberry, wood rose, redwood sorrel, western sword fern, and evergreen violet. You can visit second-growth redwood forests and see a few old-growth giants at Muir Woods National Monument, Redwood Regional Park, and Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

DOUGLAS-FIR FOREST

These majestic trees often occupy similar habitats as coast redwoods, but thrive where soil conditions do not favor red-



Young redwoods often sprout from the base of a parent tree, forming so-called family circles.

wood growth. In many parts of the Bay Area, Douglas-fir is the "default" evergreen, easily told by its distinctive cones, which have protruding, three-pointed bracts, sometimes called rats' tails. Like redwood, Douglas-fir is prized for its lumber. Some of the common plants associated with Douglas-fir are the same as those associated with coast redwood, namely California bay, tanbark oak, and western sword fern. Others include blue blossom, coffeeberry, and poison oak. Point Reyes National Seashore, Mt. Tamalpais State Park, and El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve have beautiful Douglas-fir forests.

MIXED EVERGREEN FOREST

A mixture of evergreen trees, including California bay, canyon oak, coast live oak, and madrone, comprises this community. The understory often contains shrubs such as toyon, blue elderberry, hazelnut, buckbrush, snowberry, thimbleberry, oceanspray, and poison oak. Carpeting the forest floor may be an assortment of wildflowers, including milk maids, fairy bells, mission bells, hound's tongue, and western heart's-ease. Take a stroll through a mixed evergreen forest at China Camp State Park, Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Park, Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, and Edgewood Park and Preserve.

CHAPARRAL

This community is made up of hearty plants that thrive in poor soils under hot, dry conditions. Chaparral is very susceptible to fire, but some of its members, such as various species of manzanita, survive devastating blazes by sprouting new growth from ground-level burls. Although chaparral foliage is mostly drab, the flowers of many species are beautiful, with some blooming as early as December. The word chaparral comes from a Spanish term for dwarf or scrub oak, but in the Bay Area it is chamise, various manzanitas, and various species of ceanothus that dominate the community. Other chaparral plants include mountain mahogany, yerba santa, toyon, chaparral pea, and poison oak. You can study this fascinating assembly of plants on Pine Mountain, Mt. Diablo, and at Sierra Azul and Rancho San Antonio open space preserves.

GRASSLANDS

Few if any grasslands in the Bay Area have retained their native character. Human intervention, in the form of fire suppression, farming, and livestock grazing, along with the invasion of nonnative plants, has significantly altered the landscape. Gone from most areas are the native bunchgrasses, perennial species that once dominated our area. Remaining, thankfully, are native

wildflowers, which decorate the grasslands in spring and summer. Among the most common are blue dicks, California poppy, owl's-clover, checkerbloom, lupine, and blue-eyed grass. Look for these at Skyline Wilderness Park, Sunol Wilderness, Joseph D. Grant County Park, and Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve.

COASTAL SCRUB

Also called soft chaparral, this community consists mostly of shrubs and grasses growing near the coast. Among the most common members are California sagebrush, coyote brush, toyon, bush monkeyflower, and various brooms. Point Reyes National Seashore, Tilden Regional Park, and San Bruno Mountain are all excellent places to find coastal scrub.

Animals

MAMMALS

It's always a thrill to see a coyote or a bobcat from the trail, but these sightings are uncommon. Glimpses of mountain lions are more rare still, but these large predators are present in the Bay Area, mostly in the more remote parks. Other, more common mammals in our area include squirrels, rabbits, deer, gray fox, raccoon, skunk, opossum, and chipmunk. Wild pigs have invaded some Bay Area parks and their rooting does extensive damage. Stay away from these dangerous animals.

BIRDS

Located on the western edge of the Pacific Flyway, the Bay Area is a great place to go birding. The large variety of species results from the wide range of habitats—seashore to mountain—present here. Birders at Point Reyes National Seashore, the area with perhaps the greatest variety of birds, have logged an impressive 440 different species, or just under half of all bird species found in North America north of Mexico. Large numbers of individual birds reside in the Bay Area year-round, pass



Early spring is a good time to spot birds at Sonoma Valley Regional Park.

through on migration, or winter here. For the common names of birds of the continental US and Canada, the American Ornithologists' Union's (AOU) checklist for is the authoritative resource. It can be found at www.aou.org/aou/birdlist.html.

Common birds seen from the trail include acorn woodpeckers, western scrub-jays, Steller's jays, spotted towhees, dark-eyed juncos, sparrows, and California quail, the state bird. Hawks, falcons, vultures, golden eagles, and kites soar above many Bay Area parks. If you learn to "bird by ear," identifying species by their distinctive notes, calls, and songs, you will quickly expand your list, because many birds are frustratingly hard to spot, especially in dense foliage. Birding with a group also improves your odds of seeing and identifying a large number of species, including rarities.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

A variety of snakes are present in the Bay Area, including California kingsnake, rub-

ber boa, California whipsnake, yellow-bellied racer, garter snake, gopher snake, and western rattlesnake. Gopher snakes are often mistaken for rattlers, but a gopher snake has a slim head and a fat body, whereas a rattlesnake has a relatively thin body compared with its large, triangular head. Gopher snakes are common, but rattlers are seldom seen.

The ubiquitous western fence lizard is probably the Bay Area's most commonly seen reptile. Also here are the California whiptail, a lizard with a tail as long as its body, the alligator lizard, and the western skink. An animal resembling a lizard but actually an amphibian is the California newt, which spends the summer buried under the forest floor, then emerges with the first rains and migrates to breed in ponds and streams. Briones Regional Park and Monte Bello Open Space Preserve are among good places to witness these migrations. Other amphibians you might see or hear include western toad and Pacific tree frog.

Comfort, Safety, and Etiquette

Most of the routes in this book can be traveled with a minimum of preparation and equipment, calling for nothing more than sturdy footwear and a bottle of water. Probably the biggest safety concern is driving around the Bay Area. And trail etiquette means simply being considerate of others and picking up after yourself (and your pet). However, the more detailed information that follows may enhance your outdoor experience.

Preparation and Equipment

A little common sense goes a long way when preparing for the outdoors. Be realistic about your level of physical conditioning—there are trips in this book to suit all abilities. None of the routes require anything more complicated than putting one

ing year by year. Many of today's light hiking boots combine running-shoe comfort with support, traction, and durability. Some are lined with Gore-Tex, making them waterproof yet breathable, helpful for rainy days and creek crossings. A good pair of hiking boots will protect your feet and ankles, and provide essential traction on steep slopes. Combine the boots with socks that wick moisture (avoid cotton) and cushion your feet, and you have a recipe for happy hiking.

Comfortable clothing will provide protection from sun, wind, cold, rain, poison oak, and ticks. Synthetic fabrics have the advantage over cotton because they wick moisture away from the skin and dry quickly when wet. Adjust easily to changing conditions by adding or removing an insulating

layer. Hats, gloves, and insulating headbands are useful accessories. Carry a lightweight, waterproof/breathable jacket, and you'll be able to brave both rain and wind.

Other items to take along include plenty of water, snacks, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent, map and compass, flashlight, knife, and basic first-aid supplies. Many hikers use a walking stick, or trekking pole, for stability and comfort. Binoculars, a hand-lens for plant study, and a pad and pencil are also useful. Try leaving your heavy field guides at home and instead



A pocket chart of native species can help to identify plants and animals you may encounter.

make notes and sketches of a birds or flowers you wish to identify. Please do not collect plant or flower specimens.

foot in front of the other. Some, however, require you to do this for several hours or more, uphill and down. In addition to terrain, weather conditions such as heat, cold, and wind can affect individual performance.

Good hiking boots are worth their weight in gold, and that weight is decreas-

make notes and sketches of a birds or flowers you wish to identify. Please do not collect plant or flower specimens.

Special Hazards

Outdoor travel in the Bay Area is relatively safe. Most of the trails covered by this

book are well signed and easy to follow. Still, getting lost is possible, either by taking a wrong turn, venturing off the trail, or becoming disoriented. If you do lose your way, don't panic. Retrace your steps to a known point, use landmarks to get oriented, and refer to a map and compass if you have them. Altimeters are very useful if you have a map with elevation lines. A GPS (Global Positioning System) device may also be useful, but only if you have programmed the route in advance. Also, GPS devices vary in their ability to record an accurate position if the view skyward is obstructed.

Poison oak is a common Bay Area plant that comes in three forms—herb, shrub, and vine. Contact with any part of the plant produces an itchy rash in allergic individuals. “Leaflets three, let it be,” is the rule. In fall the shrub's leaves turn yellow and red, adding color to the woods. In winter, upward-reaching clusters of bare branches identify the plant. Avoid contact with poison oak by staying on the trail and wearing protective clothing. Wash anything that touches poison oak—clothing, pets—in soap and water.

Western black-legged ticks carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, which, if left untreated, can cause serious health problems. These tiny insects are almost invisible, and often the victim doesn't know he or she has been bitten. The best protection against ticks is to wear long pants tucked into your socks and a long-sleeved shirt, use an insect repellent containing DEET on your clothes, stay on the trail, and shower and launder your clothes after your hike. If you find a tick attached, grasp it with a tweezers as close to your skin as possible and gently pull it straight out. Squeezing a tick that is attached may cause it to inject the bacteria. Wash the area, apply antiseptic, and call your doctor.

Western rattlesnakes are present in the Bay Area but seldom seen. Most of the time, the snake moves away when it senses humans. However, if a foot or hand lands in the snake's immediate vicinity, it may strike,

sometimes without warning. If you do hear a rattling sound, stand still until you have located the snake, and then back slowly away. Protective clothing and boot material may absorb venom if the snake succeeds in biting. To avoid being bitten, stay on the trail, don't put your hands or feet beyond your range of vision, and don't handle snakes. If you are bitten, seek medical attention as quickly and effortlessly as possible, to avoid spreading the venom.

Mountain lions, though here, are rarely seen. These nocturnal hunters feed mostly on deer. If you do encounter a mountain lion, experts advise standing your ground, making loud noises, waving your arms to appear larger, and fighting back if attacked. Above all, never run. Report all mountain lion sightings to park personnel.

Trail Etiquette

Public lands belong to everybody. Treat them as precious, and they will remain unspoiled for all to enjoy. Small, thoughtless acts can have unintended consequences, because everything in nature is interconnected. Effects of carelessness may be sudden and dramatic, such as fires, or they may not show up for years. The rules of trail etiquette are simple and based on common sense. Obey all posted restrictions. Stay on marked trails and do not cut switchbacks. Pack out all trash, and do not disturb the park's plants and animals. In short, tread lightly on the land.

The “trails” in the Bay Area are a combination of dirt roads, single tracks, and even paved paths. As you travel the routes described in this book, you will encounter other outdoor enthusiasts—hikers, runners, bicyclists, and equestrians. Most trails are open to hiking and equestrian use. In only a few cases are trails designated “hiking only,” which means no bicycles or horses are allowed. Some parks and preserves allow bicycling, but generally only on dirt roads (Annadel and China Camp state parks in the North Bay are notable exceptions).

If you see or hear equestrians approaching, step off the trail to give them the right of way and remain motionless until they pass. Bicyclists should slow down and call out when approaching hikers, and dismount when near horses. Whenever possible, if a route described in this guide has a segment closed to bicycles, alternate trails are suggested. Some agencies close their trails to bicycles and horses during wet weather, often with special gates that allow hikers to pass through. Call ahead, and have an alternate route selected. (Agency phone numbers and their website addresses are listed in Appendix 3.)







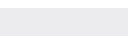

Dogs (and other pets) are not allowed on the trails in any Bay Area state park, and there are restrictions at other parks and open spaces as well. In areas where dogs are allowed, they generally must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet long. Some agencies allow dogs off-leash, but the dogs must be under *immediate* voice command of the person they are with, and must never be allowed to threaten or harm people or

wildlife. People with dogs must clean up after their pets and obey all posted rules and regulations. Routes open to dogs are noted in this book.



Hikers and bikers enjoy the multi-use path that wanders through this regional park.

Using this Book

Map Legend			
Featured Trail	-----	Major Stream	
Other Trail	- - - - -	Seasonal Stream	
Road	====	Body of Water	
Freeway	====	Marsh/Swamp	
Parking	P	Featured Park or Preserve	
Trailhead	T	Adjacent Park or Preserve	
Picnic	⌘	Private Land	
Camping	▲	North Arrow	
Peak	▲		
Gate	●—●		
Building	■		
Railroad	—+—+—+—+—		
Bridge/Tunnel	≡(≡)≡		

The trips in this book are organized in 10 chapters, with each chapter centered on a major population area. Chapter 1 is San Francisco/Marin, and from there the chapters (and trips) proceed roughly clockwise around the Bay Area, ending with the Peninsula. Thus the book reflects geography, and parklands that are neighbors will be found on neighboring pages. (Appendix 1 is a selection of highly recommended trips.)

In addition to the route description, each trip has highlights of the route, directions to the trailhead from the nearest major roadway, and what facilities, if any, are available at or near the trailhead. Each route has a map, along with symbols and capsulized summaries, which are explained below.

Capsulized Summaries

DISTANCE AND TRAIL TYPE

DISTANCE An estimate of the total mileage of the trip, exactly as described. Mileage for each out-and-back trip is the sum of its outbound and return legs.

POINT-TO-POINT TRIP, OUT-AND-BACK TRIP, LOOP/SEMI-LOOP TRIP These designations identify the type of trip. Loop routes, the most common in this book, have been designed to minimize steep downhill sections whenever possible.

HIKING TIME

An estimate of the time it takes an average hiker to complete the trip, including stops along the way.

TOTAL ELEVATION GAIN/LOSS

Approximate sum of all the uphill and downhill segments of the trip (includes outbound and return legs for out-and-back trips).

DIFFICULTY

A subjective rating based on distance, total elevation gain/loss, and terrain. Here is an explanation of the four categories:

EASY Short trips with little or no elevation gain.

MODERATE Trips of several hours or more, with some ups and downs but no significant elevation changes.

DIFFICULT Extended trips with significant elevation changes.

VERY DIFFICULT The longest, most rigorous trips in this book.

TRAIL USE

SUITABLE FOR BACKPACKING A few Bay Area parklands have campsites along or near the trip as described. Most of these require advance registration, as noted in the text.

SUITABLE FOR MOUNTAIN BIKING Bicycling is allowed on the trip as described. Always check for seasonal closures and obey all posted restrictions. If a trip segment is closed to bicycles, and an alternate route is possible, this is noted in a footnote.

LEASHED DOGS ALLOWED In areas where dogs are allowed, they generally must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet.

GOOD FOR KIDS These are easy, short trips with not much total elevation gain, or longer trips that can be modified.

BEST TIMES

Most Bay Area parks can be visited all year, but there are a few caveats to keep in mind. Summer brings fog and often wind to areas near the coast and along the crest of the Peninsula, but inland the heat can be extreme. Many trails may be muddy in wet weather, and there may be snow/ice on the highest peaks in winter. On the bright side, spring brings wildflower displays to Bay Area grasslands, and fall is usually perfect for enjoying the outdoors just about anywhere.

AGENCY

This is almost always a government agency, either federal, state, or local. (Skyline Park Citizens Association, a volunteer group, runs Skyline Wilderness Park in Napa.) A listing of agencies, along with the abbreviations used in this book, is in Appendix 3.

RECOMMENDED MAP(S)

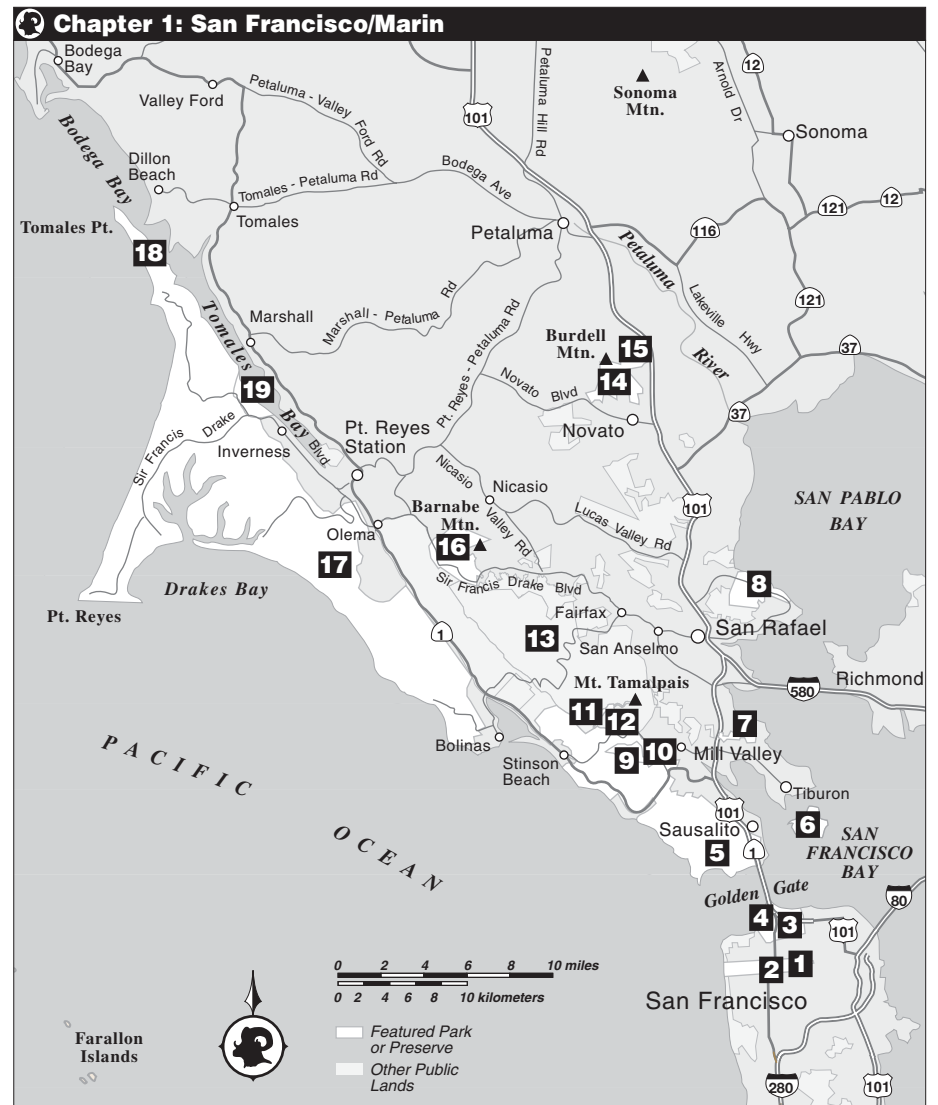
Most agencies administering Bay Area parklands produce maps that cover the trips in this book. In many cases, these maps are available at the trailhead. Sometimes, however, maps are available only at entrance kiosks or visitor centers, and these may be closed when you visit. Some agencies have maps available by mail, by phone, or on the Web (agencies are listed in Appendix 3). There are also excellent, commercially available maps that cover some of the trips in this book.

Overleaf: A couple enjoys a quiet stroll on the Shoreline Trail in China Camp State Park.



Chapter 1

San Francisco/Marin



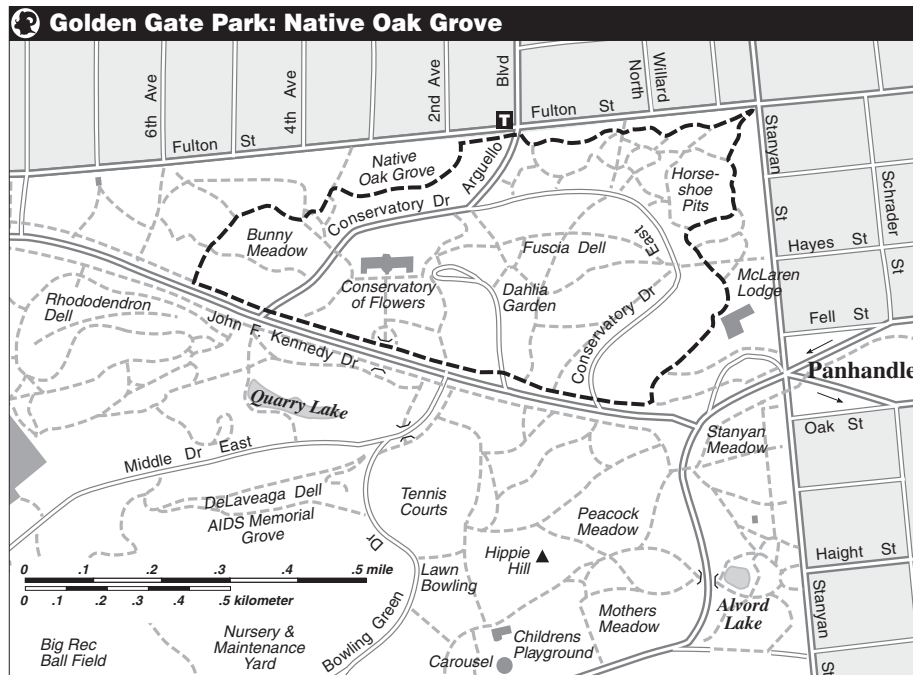
TRIP 1 Golden Gate Park: Native Oak Grove

Distance	1.5 miles, Loop
Hiking Time	1 hour or less
Difficulty	Easy
Trail Use	Leashed dogs, Good for kids
Best Times	All year
Agency	SFR&PD
Recommended Map	<i>Map & Guide to Golden Gate Park</i> (Friends of Recreation and Parks)

HIGHLIGHTS Tucked in the northeast corner of the park, this loop wanders through secluded groves of coast live oaks, but also joins joggers, skaters, and strollers beside busy John F. Kennedy Dr., as they zoom past the photogenic Conservatory of Flowers, reopened not long ago after years of repairs. It is hoped this brief introduction to Golden Gate Park will entice you to explore on your own, because there is much to see and do here.

DIRECTIONS Parking around Golden Gate Park is often hard to find, especially on weekends. Also, there are road closures within the park on weekends and most holidays. If possible, use public transportation. San Francisco Muni bus lines 5, 21, and 33 serve the trailhead at Fulton and Arguello streets. For more information, call SF Muni: (415) 673-6864.

FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD Restrooms, phones, and snack/food vendors are scattered throughout the park. There are no facilities at the trailhead, which is at Clark Gate, on the southeast corner of Arguello Blvd. and Fulton St.



Opposite: Conservatory of Flowers is one of the park's best-loved and most-photographed buildings.



From the trailhead, you go through a gap in the stone wall, just left of the two pillars flanking the Arguello entrance to the park. Steps help you negotiate a steep uphill pitch that leads southeast, into a forest of ivy-draped coast live oaks. Passing a rest bench, you follow a single-track trail to a fork, where you bear left (the right-hand branch soon rejoins). Joining the native oaks in this part of the park are planted species such as eucalyptus, cypress, Monterey pine, acacia, and olive.

At the next fork, bear left and descend to a paved path, which you cross. The trail continues on the far side of the paved path, climbs moderately and then descends. At the next paved path, you turn left. After about 150 feet, just before you reach the corner of Fulton and Stanyan streets, turn right on a paved path that changes to dirt just beyond a rest bench.

Climbing gently on a single track, you soon merge with a wide dirt path by veering slightly left. Pass through a large clearing and then follow the path as it curves right and descends. At a T-junction, turn left on a wide dirt path, and then come to a paved path, where there is a water fountain. To your right is Conservatory Dr. East, a paved road.

Bear left on the paved path, then angle right at a fork. Rhododendrons line the path, ecologically at home beneath a large coast redwood. About 100 feet ahead, a paved path merges on your left. You continue straight, skirting a parking area, left, and then veer right to pass around McLaren Lodge.

Passing a couple of rest benches, right, your path bends left and meets a paved path that parallels Kennedy Dr. Here you turn right and soon cross Conservatory Dr. East. The paved path continues on the other side of Conservatory Dr., and you follow it past two well-known park attractions — the tennis courts, left, and the dahlia garden, right. The park's oldest building, the Conservatory of Flowers, is ahead and right.

McLaren Lodge

This picturesque stone building, which houses the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department headquarters, was built in 1896 and is named for the park's second, and most influential, manager, John McLaren.

The Conservatory was damaged in 1995 by a windstorm and was closed many years for repairs; it reopened in September 2003. It houses an extensive collection of tropical plants, including palms, orchids, bromeliads, and carnivorous species.

Just past the Conservatory, you cross Conservatory Dr. West, then resume your ramble along the north side of Kennedy Dr. To your right is the George Washington elm, planted here in 1952 by the San Francisco Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution. According to a plaque here, the parent of this tree spread its limbs over George Washington as he took command of the American Army on July 3, 1775.

Once common shade trees east of the Rockies, elms in the United States have been decimated by Dutch elm disease. This fungal disease, spread by beetles, was introduced by accident around 1930. It's good to see a healthy elm flourishing, especially one with so distinguished a past.

At about 1 mile, you come to a paved path on the right, the first since you crossed Conservatory Dr. West. Turning right, you climb moderately past several rest benches and dirt paths, all on your left. When you reach a chess-themed area — pedestals in the shape of knights and rooks supporting a covering that provides shade for tables and benches — bear left and follow a paved path through it.

With the chess area on your left, you merge with a paved path that joins from the right. Go about 75 feet to a junction, where you turn right onto a dirt path and stay left where it forks. Now you descend gently

through a beautiful grove of coast live oak, traversing a hillside that drops left. At the next fork stay left again, and follow the path

to a park entrance on Fulton St. across from 2nd Ave. Turn right and follow the sidewalk back to the trailhead.

TRIP 2 Golden Gate Park: Stow Lake

Distance	2.4 miles, Loop
Hiking Time	1 to 2 hours
Difficulty	Easy
Trail Use	Leashed dogs, Good for kids
Best Times	All year
Agency	SFR&PD
Recommended Map	Map: <i>Map & Guide to Golden Gate Park</i> (Friends of Recreation and Parks)

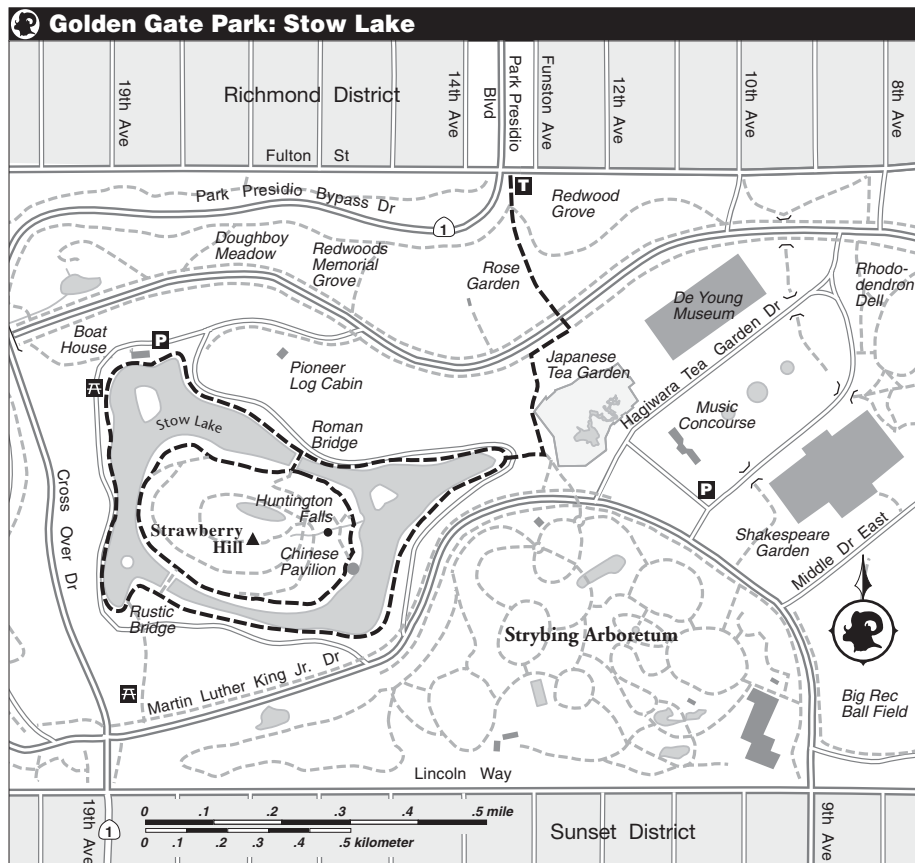
HIGHLIGHTS Walking this charming semi-loop — which visits Stow Lake and also introduces you to the Rose Garden, the Japanese Tea Garden, and the Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens — it's hard to imagine San Francisco's premier park as a bleak area of sand dunes, far removed from the city's population center, but that's what civil engineer William H. Hall had to work with when the park was created in the 1870s.

DIRECTIONS Parking around Golden Gate Park is often hard to find, especially on week ends. Also, there are road closures within the park on weekends and most holidays. If possible, use public transportation. San Francisco Muni bus lines 5 and 28 serve the trailhead at Presidio Blvd. and Fulton St. For more information, call SF Muni: (415) 673-6864.

FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD Restrooms, phones, and snack/food vendors are scattered throughout the park. There are no facilities at the trailhead, which is on the southeast corner of Presidio Blvd. and Fulton St. (The nearest restroom is just west of the Rose Garden.)



Chinese Pavilion, on the east side of Stow lake, was a gift from the city of Taipei.



You follow a paved path beside noisy Presidio Blvd. into the park. After about 100 feet you reach a four-way junction, where you go straight through the park's lovely Rose Garden. Crossing John F. Kennedy Dr., you turn right on a paved path, and after about 150 feet veer left and climb past some tall eucalyptus trees. The path soon levels and curves left beside the Japanese Tea Garden, well worth a visit. Its entrance is ahead and then left about 100 yards on Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr.; there is a fee for admission.

Opposite the Tea Garden exit is a paved path going right and uphill to Stow Lake. Ahead, across Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., is Friend Gate and the entrance to the Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens (free admission).

To visit Stow Lake, go uphill on the paved path and then climb a set of steps.

The Arboretum
 The 70-acre Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens contains plants from around the world, including Asia, South America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and, of course, California. You can explore the John Muir Nature Trail, walk through a garden with plants mentioned in the Bible, and experience the Garden of Fragrance. There is a small pond here, and the water, combined with the variety of flowering plants, attracts many species of birds. An information board near the entrance lists guided walks and classes that are available.

When you reach the lake, turn left and follow the paved path that circles the lake, which is actually a narrow body of water surrounding an island. Paddleboats ply the lake's placid waters, which are fringed by Monterey pine, eucalyptus, and Monterey cypress. On the southwest side is Rustic Bridge, an 1893 stone span that leads to the island. Continuing clockwise around the lake, you come to the Boathouse, where you can buy snacks and drinks and rent boats and bicycles. Restrooms are downhill and across a parking area, left.

Stow Lake is a favorite birding destination—from its shore you may spot great blue herons, black-crowned night herons, egrets, gulls, ducks, geese, and songbirds. Sometimes a rare bird shows up and creates a stir among local birders.

Passing the Boathouse and ambling beside the lake, you come to Roman Bridge. To visit the island, turn right and cross the

bridge. At a four-way junction, you turn right again and now begin to circle the island counter clockwise on a dirt path. A hillside rises steeply left, and after about 100 yards you come to a fork; the branches soon rejoin, so you can take either. Passing Rustic Bridge, you soon come to the colorful and elaborate Chinese Pavilion, a gift from San Francisco's sister city, Taipei.

On the east side of the island is Huntington Falls, fed by the outflow from a reservoir atop the island. A series of stone steps allows you to cross the rushing water, which flows unimpeded into the lake. Just past the falls are steps leading to the reservoir. Now back at Roman Bridge, turn right to cross it, then right again when you reach the paved path to continue around the lake. At the northeast corner of the lake you close the loop. From here, retrace your route to the trailhead, or spend more time exploring the park and its many attractions.

TRIP 3 Presidio of San Francisco: Ecology Trail

Distance	2.2 miles, Loop
Hiking Time	1 to 2 hours
Elevation Gain/Loss	±400 feet
Difficulty	Easy
Trail Use	Leashed dogs, Good for kids
Best Times	All year
Agency	GGNRA
Recommended Map	Golden Gate National Recreation Area Presidio of San Francisco (GGNRA)

HIGHLIGHTS The Presidio was established in 1776 as a Spanish colonial outpost on a windy sand dune near San Francisco Bay. It later served as a Mexican fort and a U.S. military base before being turned over in 1994 to the National Park Service. The Americans built forts, housing, and coastal gun batteries, and planted trees that transformed the landscape. The Ecology Trail loops through the southeastern corner of the Presidio, providing a look at what human intervention has wrought, and also what conservation efforts have managed to preserve and restore, including native wildflowers and grasses, some of them rare, threatened, or endangered.

DIRECTIONS From the Presidio's Arguello Gate entrance just north of Arguello Blvd. and Jackson St., go 0.1 mile northeast to the large paved parking area at Inspiration Point, on the right.

FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD There are no facilities at the trailhead, which is on the east side of the parking area.



Walk southeast down a set of wooden steps and after several hundred feet join the Ecology Trail, a wide, dirt path, by turning left. An outcrop of serpentine rock in the midst of a grassy, wildflower-filled meadow is right, behind a fence, in an area that is being restored.

The trail skirts Inspiration Point and descends on a gentle grade. At a junction with a trail heading right, you continue straight, now in forest. Several unofficial trails branch right and left; ignore them. Soon the red brick buildings of the

Presidio Flora

Grasslands are a threatened ecosystem, and this serpentine grassland is unique in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Serpentine soil, high in magnesium and low in calcium, is toxic to many plants, but some have adapted to it, including ones that are rare, threatened, or endangered.

Among the wildflowers that grow beside the trail are goldfields, coastal tidytips, California buttercups, blue-eyed grass, and California poppies.

Presidio's Main Post are visible ahead. Now on a paved path, you descend to a gate, and pass it on the left. With Pershing Hall on your left, you follow a sidewalk to Moraga Ave., which you cross. A sidewalk along Funston Ave. takes you past part of Officers Row, built in 1862 to house commissioned officers and their families.



Inspiration Point is the trailhead for the Ecology Trail, a loop through the Presidio.

At the corner of Funston Ave. and Presidio Blvd., get on the left side of Presidio and follow the sidewalk gently downhill to a crosswalk just past Barnard Ave. Turn right, cross Presidio, and then follow a paved path through a corridor of eucalyptus trees and berry vines. A footbridge, built around 1865, takes you over a watercourse. When you reach MacArthur Ave., cross it and continue on Lovers' Lane, a paved path that is part of the Ecology Trail.

You walk moderately uphill, past stands of Monterey cypress and eucalyptus. At the intersection of Liggett Ave. and Clarke St., you continue straight, now on a sidewalk. Passing a row of brick houses, you turn right onto a dirt path, which almost immediately merges with another coming sharply from the left. Now you pass a fenced area that has been planted with trees, and soon reach a four-way junction, not shown on the park map.

Here you turn right and descend over loose sand to a fork, where you bear right. With Paul Goode Field on your right, you come to a large dirt parking area and a junction with a trail going left. Turn right, cross the parking area, and then follow a trail past some white buildings with red roofs. The trail bends left and descends steeply into forest.

Rare, threatened, or endangered plants are found in the Presidio, and, at the time of research, there was a controversial plan in

the works to remove some of the Presidio's planted trees, such as eucalyptus, Monterey pine, and Monterey cypress, and to restore the original dune habitat.

When you reach a loop of paved road with a grassy area in its middle, go straight across, passing El Polin Spring. Your trail continues from the northwest side of the loop and climbs moderately to a four-way junction at the base of Inspiration Point. Turn left, pass an unsigned trail, left, and climb to the next junction, also four-way. Here you turn right and follow a mostly level path to close the loop. Here, turn left and retrace your route to the parking area.

Lovers' Lane

According to a sign, Lovers' Lane

...has witnessed the passing of Spanish soldiers, Franciscan missionaries, and American soldiers of two centuries. It is perhaps the oldest travel corridor in San Francisco. In 1776 this path connected the Spanish Presidio with the Mission 3 miles to the southeast. During the 1860s it became the main route used by off-duty soldiers to walk into San Francisco. Many of those men made the trip into town to meet their sweethearts, and the trail became known as Lovers' Lane.

TRIP 4 Presidio of San Francisco: Fort Winfield Scott Loop

Distance	2.6 miles, Loop
Hiking Time	1 to 2 hours
Elevation Gain/Loss	±300 feet
Difficulty	Easy
Trail Use	Leashed dogs, Good for kids
Best Times	All year
Agency	GGNRA
Recommended Map	Golden Gate National Recreation Area Presidio of San Francisco (GGNPC)

HIGHLIGHTS This loop through the northwest corner of the Presidio is both an enjoyable walk back in time—the Spanish built a fort here shortly after the Declaration of Independence was signed—and a hopeful look forward at the effort to reclaim and restore developed lands for public enjoyment. After more than 200 years of military use, the Presidio was turned over to the National Park Service in 1994. Along the way you pass military buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries; vantage points with views of the Golden Gate, San Francisco Bay, and beyond; and a warming hut where food, drinks, books, maps, and other information are available.

DIRECTIONS From the Presidio's Marina Gate entrance at the west end of Marina Blvd., go west on Mason St. 1 mile to a paved parking area, left.

FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD A visitor center with food, restrooms, phone, and water is on the southwest corner of Mason and Halleck streets, about 0.6 mile east of the parking area. The center is open Wednesday through Sunday, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. There are no facilities at the trailhead, which is on the west end of the parking area. Some of this route follows streets used by cars: if there is no sidewalk, walk on the left side of the street, facing traffic.

From the west end of the parking area, go west several hundred feet on Mason Ave. to its junction with Crissy Field Ave. Turn sharply left and follow Crissy Field Ave. uphill, passing under Doyle Dr., to a junction with McDowell Ave. Here you angle right and climb moderately past the Presidio stables and the park's archives and records center. You can visit the Presidio San Francisco Pet Cemetery, an unusual landmark, under Doyle Dr., on the southwest side of Crissy Field Ave.

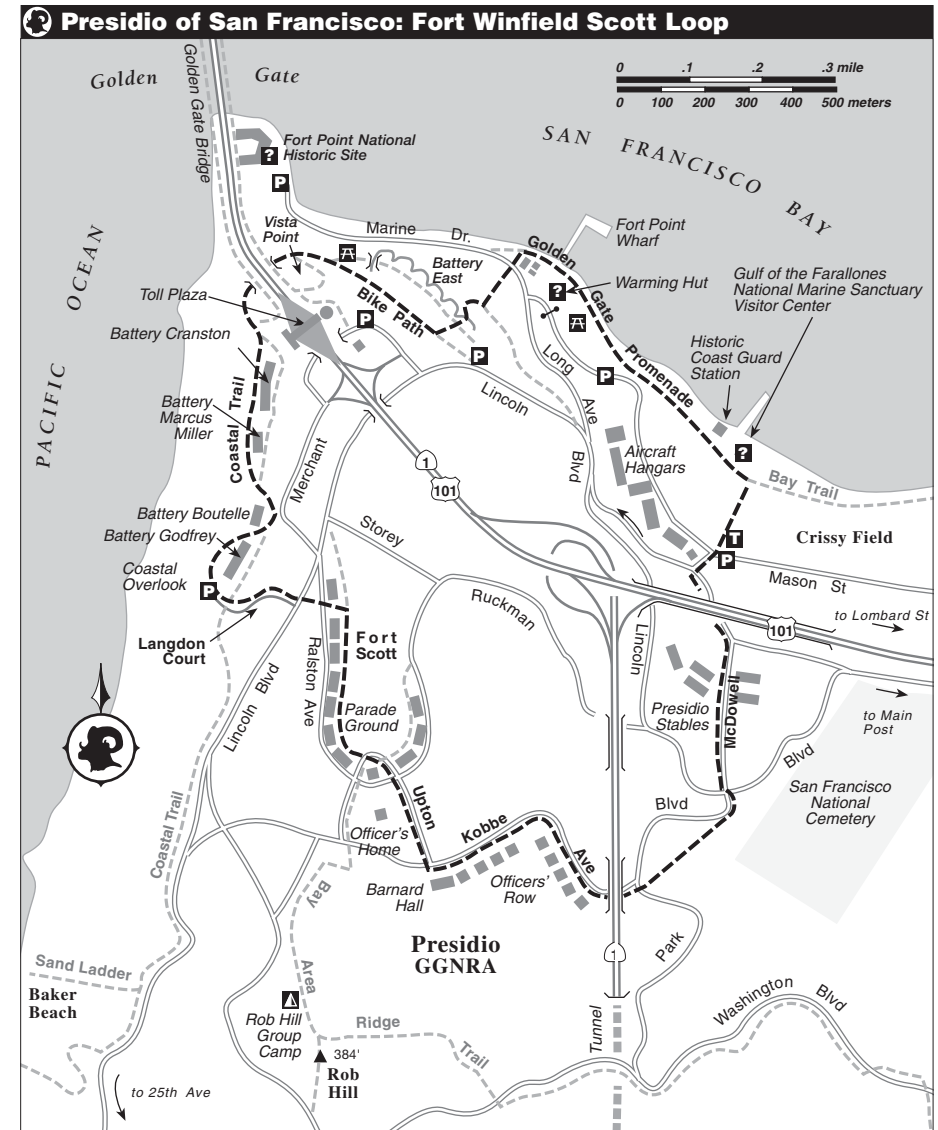
Carefully crossing Lincoln Blvd., you take Park Blvd. gently uphill to a junction. Here you angle left on a dirt path, which rises steadily through a forest of Monterey cypress and eucalyptus, both planted here. Meeting Park again and crossing it, you follow Kobbe Ave. past Officers Row, a set of

beautiful homes built in 1912. Climbing gently, you pass Barnard Hall, an imposing brick building named for an Army chief engineer.

At a four-way junction, you turn right on Upton Ave., following a sidewalk on its left side. Some of the officer's homes in the Presidio are quite lavish, with spacious

Fort Scott

The fort is named for Winfield Scott, who served in the army from before the War of 1812 until the Civil War. He is best known for his command of U.S. troops during the Mexican-American War. Completed in 1915, the fort was the headquarters for the artillery designed to protect the Bay Area.



lawns and exotic landscaping. Where Upton veers right, you continue straight across Ralston Ave., and then enter Fort Winfield Scott. Turn left and keep the parade ground on your right.

You walk along the left side of the parade ground, where views stretch to the Golden Gate Bridge, Angel Island, and Mt. Diablo. With a sports field on your right, you turn left on the Juan Bautista de Anza National

Historic Trail, part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. You walk on pavement between two buildings (numbers 1207 and 1208), cross Ralston, and then come to Lincoln. Cross carefully, and then follow Langdon Court about 50 feet to a trail post. You jog left, then veer right through a parking area, heading toward the Pacific Ocean.

At the west end of the parking area, follow a paved road that soon changes to dirt

and gravel. Turning right at a trail post, you get on the Coastal Trail, a wide dirt-and-gravel path that is part of the Anza/Bay Area Ridge Trail. Near the bunkers the trail forks: hikers stay left, bicyclists stay right. You follow the rocky and eroded hiking trail to another fork, where the left branch is signed for the Anza/Bay Area Ridge Trail. The low concrete bunkers beside the trail were built from 1891 to 1900 for coastal defense. At the end of World War II, the guns in these bunkers were removed.

Staying left here, and right at the next fork, where a trail goes left to a viewpoint, you skirt the coastal cliffs and descend via wooden steps. Now on level ground, you merge with the trail for bicyclists, which joins sharply from the right.

Ahead is a paved path which goes under the Golden Gate Bridge. You get on it and angle left, watching out for bicyclists and joggers.

Beyond the bridge the trail forks, and you stay left. You pass a trail, left to Battery East, which dates from 1876, and a picnic area. A brick path goes right and uphill to the Golden Gate Bridge gift shop. You descend to a junction with a trail, left, signed for Fort Point. Here you turn left and come to a four-way junction. Continue straight and descend steeply over rough ground, passing a trail, right. Aided by steps, you soon reach Marine Dr., a paved road.

Cross the road, and when you reach a seawall, turn right on a paved path, part of the Golden Gate Promenade and the San Francisco Bay Trail. Nearby are restrooms, water, and a warming hut with food, drinks,



The Presidio of San Francisco is noted for its distinctive architecture and military history.

books, maps, and other information. The hut is open daily, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Beyond the warming hut, the path changes to dirt and gravel. A path cuts sharply right, going back to the warming hut. You pass a picnic area, right, and then reach a five-way junction beside Long Ave.

Here you continue straight on the dirt-and-gravel path. A historic Coast Guard station and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary visitor center are left. You are passing through an area that has been extensively restored and landscaped with native plants. Several hundred feet past the visitor center, you turn right, climb a few steps, and then cross Crissy Field, formerly a landing strip for planes. After about 100 yards you reach Mason St., which you cross to return to the parking area.

TRIP 5 Marin Headlands

Distance	5.4 miles, Loop
Hiking Time	3 to 4 hours
Elevation Gain/Loss	±1100 feet
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail Use	Backpacking option, Mountain biking allowed ¹
Best Times	All year
Agency	GGNRA
Recommended Maps	<i>Marin Headlands Trail Map</i> (GGNPC), <i>Trails of Mt. Tamalpais and the Marin Headlands</i> (Olmsted)
Notes	¹ Bicycles are not allowed on the northern half of the Miwok Trail, and must instead use the Old Springs and Marincello trails to complete the trip

HIGHLIGHTS This scenic loop uses the Miwok and Bobcat trails to circle Gerbode Valley, an area slated in the 1960s for urban development but later protected as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The hills surrounding Gerbode Valley, part of the Marin Headlands, are vibrant in the spring with wildflowers, and alive with birdsong and avian acrobatics most of the year, but especially during the fall raptor migration. Views of San Francisco, Marin, and the Pacific coast from the high points along this loop are superb.

DIRECTIONS From Highway 101 northbound, just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, take the Alexander Ave. exit, go north 0.2 mile, and turn left on Bunker Road. After 0.1 mile you reach a one-direction-only tunnel where traffic is controlled by a stoplight. At 2.5 miles from Alexander Ave. there is roadside parking on the right. Additional parking is available at the Marin Headlands visitor center (see below).

From Highway 101 southbound, just south of the Waldo Tunnel, take the Sausalito Exit, which is also signed for the GGNRA. Bear right (despite the left-pointing GGNRA sign) and go 0.25 mile to Bunker Road Turn left, and follow the directions above.

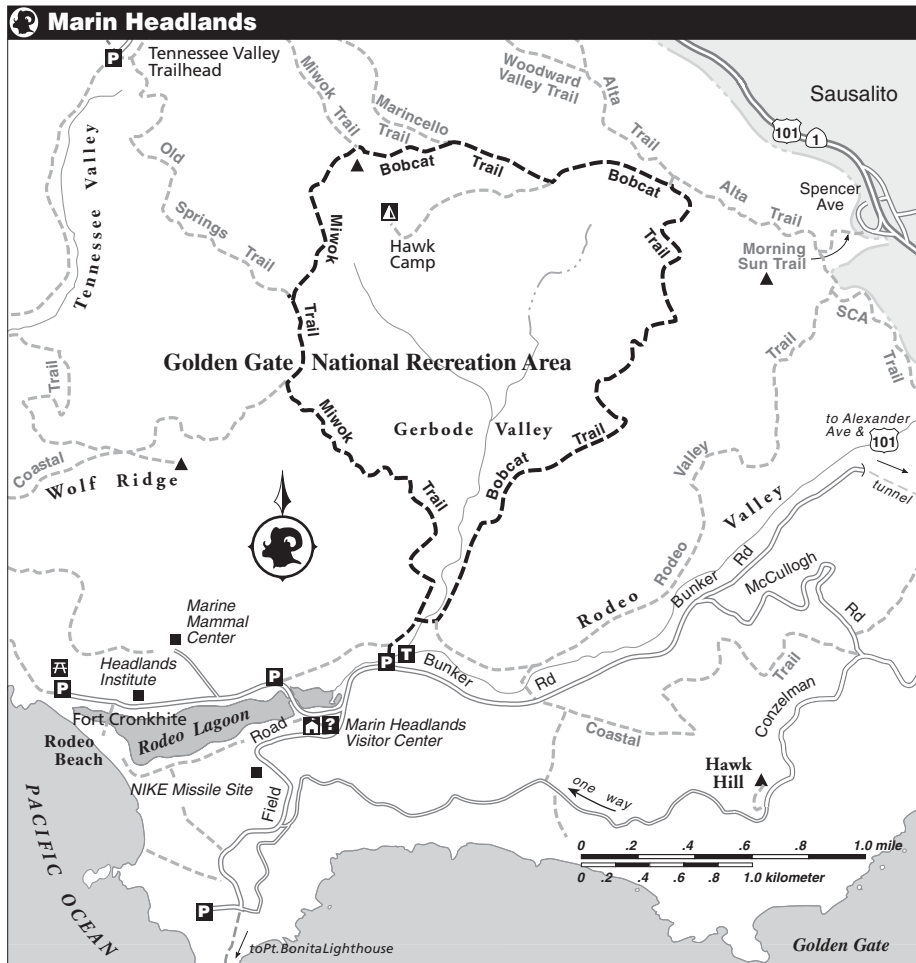
FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD The Marin Headlands visitor center — which has interpretive displays, books and maps for sale, helpful rangers, restrooms, and water — is on Field Road, which is 0.2 mile past the roadside parking area. Turn left onto Field Road and go 0.1 to the visitor center. There are no facilities at the trailhead, which is on the north side of the parking area near its midpoint.

Walk north on a dirt-and-gravel path, cross a bridged creek, and reach a T-junction with the Miwok Trail, a dirt road. An information board here describes the fight to save Gerbode Valley from development. On your right is a low-lying marsh, formed by the creek that drains the valley and empties into Rodeo Lagoon. At the next junction, where the Bobcat Trail goes right, you continue straight.

In fall, the Marin Headlands is one of the best places on the West Coast to observe

hawks and falcons in migration. These southward-bound raptors take advantage of rising air currents, called thermals, to gain elevation for their crossing of the Golden Gate.

Soon the trail begins a moderate but relentless and unshaded climb toward the east end of Wolf Ridge. Finally, just past 1 mile, you reach a notch with views northwest to Mt. Tamalpais, and west, over a declivity in a neighboring ridge, to the Pacific Ocean. A few paces ahead is a junction with the Wolf Ridge Trail, left. This



View northwest of Mt. Tamalpais from a high point on the Miwok Trail in the Marin Headlands.

trail is for hiking only, and dogs must be leashed. Your route, which from here on is closed to dogs, continues straight.

At a four-way junction, you meet the Old Springs Trail, left, open to hikers, horses, and bicycles. Your route, from here on closed to bicycles, continues straight and begins to climb over severely eroded ground that alternates between moderate and steep.

In addition to the ever-present turkey vultures, you may see another large black bird, the common raven. These relatives of jays, crows, and magpies are able to make an astounding variety of sounds. And while

Poe’s “Nevermore” may not truly be part of their vocabulary, other weirdly human sounds certainly are. Ravens are also great

Wild for Flowers
 In spring, especially after a wet winter, the hills are decorated with a dazzling display of California poppy, mule ears, paintbrush, lthuriel’s spear, yarrow, blow wives, and blue-eyed grass. Nearly 50 species are listed in the pamphlet *Frequently Seen Wildflowers of the Marin Headlands*, available at the visitor center.

aerial acrobats, and seem to enjoy chasing each other in frenzied pursuit.

A single-track trail, right, climbs to a vantage point beside a fenced-in communication facility, used by the FAA to direct commercial aircraft. Just left of this junction are a few large rocks, a convenient place to sit and rest. After enjoying the scenery, continue uphill on a gentle grade, and then begin a moderate descent. The 1041-foot high point on the ridge dividing Tennessee and Gerbode valleys, home of the FAA facility, is uphill and right.

Where a dirt road goes right to the FAA facility, you bear left and descend to a junction. Here the Miwok Trail turns left, but you go straight, now on the Bobcat Trail. Soon the Marincello Trail, part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, joins from the left. This trail is open to hikers, horses, and bicycles. Continuing straight and passing several unsigned dirt roads, you come to a junction with the road to Hawk Camp, right.

Passing the road to Hawk Camp at about 3 miles, your route continues downhill on a gentle and then moderate grade, then follows a rolling course to a junction. Here, a short connector goes left to the Alta Trail, closed to bicycles, but you continue straight on the multi-use Bobcat Trail. Soon your

route makes a sweeping right-hand bend and passes the Rodeo Valley Cutoff, a hiking-only trail veering left.

The Bobcat Trail now zigzags gently down into Gerbode Valley. After passing through a eucalyptus grove, you enjoy a level walk parallel to the creek, which remains hidden from view behind a screen of willow thickets. You pass the Rodeo Valley Trail, left, then cross the creek, which passes under the road through a culvert. In about 50 feet, you close the loop at the Miwok Trail. Here you turn left and retrace your route to the parking area.

Hawk Camp
 Hawk Camp is the most primitive of the three walk-in campgrounds in the Marin Headlands. It has three sites that can each hold up to four people. There are picnic tables and a toilet, but no water. No fires are allowed, so if you want to cook, you need a camp stove. For reservations, call (415) 331-1540 between 9:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. You must pick up your permit at the visitor center during the above hours. Reservations may be made up to 90 days in advance.

TRIP 6 Angel Island State Park

Distance	4.5 miles, Loop
Hiking Time	2 to 3 hours
Elevation Gain/Loss	±800 feet
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail Use	Good for kids
Best Times	All year
Agency	CSP
Recommended Map	Angel Island State Park (CSP)
Notes	Bicycles are not allowed on the trails described below, but can be used on the island-circling system of main roads, and can be brought to the island on ferries

HIGHLIGHTS Angel Island is a sentinel, guarding the entrance to San Francisco Bay. This route uses the Northridge and Sunset trails to circle the island, and also visits its highest point, Mt. Caroline Livermore (781'), a superb vantage point from which all the familiar landmarks in the Bay Area are revealed. There is much historic interest to the island as well, and an outing here can easily include a tour by bicycle or tram.

DIRECTIONS The most frequent ferry service to Angel Island leaves from Tiburon, (415) 435-2131, www.angelislandferry.com. There is also ferry service from San Francisco, (415) 773-1188, www.blueandgoldfleet.com; and from Oakland/Alameda, (510) 522-3300, www.eastbayferry.com. There is no weekday ferry service to Angel Island during the winter; be sure to check for the most current schedule before departing. There are fees for ferry service and park entrance (the CSP annual day-use pass is not accepted here.)

FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD Near the ferry landing are a visitor center, café, picnic tables, restrooms, water, phone, lockers, bike rentals, and tour trams. State park volunteers provide interpretive programs at the island's historic sites on weekends and holidays from May through October. For tram tours, call (415) 897-0715. For camping and group picnicking reservations, call (800) 444-7275. The trailhead is on the northeast side of the ferry landing, to the left of the restrooms and phone.

Angel Island, the largest island in San Francisco Bay, has played a role in the area's history for thousands of years. Coast Miwok Indians used the island as a fishing and hunting site. In August 1775, the first European to enter the bay, Juan Manuel de Ayala, anchored his ship San Carlos in a cove on the island's northwest side that now bears his name.

During both world wars, Angel Island served the U.S. military as an embarkation/debarkation point and also as a prison for enemy aliens and prisoners of war. Following World War II, the island was

declared surplus property, and a campaign was started to make it a state park. Mt. Caroline Livermore, the island's 781-foot high point, honors a leading Marin County conservationist who spearheaded the campaign.

A little-known aspect of the island is its history as a detention center for immigrants, 97 percent of them Chinese, from 1910 to 1940. The detainees, who were held from two weeks to six months, faced tough questioning about their family and village background. Thanks to the efforts of the late Paul Chow, head of the foundation to restore



Angel Island, the Immigration Station on the island's northeast side is now a museum.

Climb steeply on the Northridge Trail (northeast) past several picnic areas to Perimeter Road, the island's main paved thoroughfare. Cross the road, turn right, and in about 50 feet find the continuation of the Northridge Trail. A dramatic view extends west from here to Tiburon, the Marin Headlands, and Mt. Tamalpais. Now the grade eases to a gentle uphill as you alternate between forest and clearings full of wildflowers.

As the trail curves around the north side of the island, you encounter a densely overgrown area where California bays rise above a shrubby understory. Carpets of forget-me-nots, abundant in the island's shady

enclaves, put on a fabulous spring and summer display of light blue flowers. Suddenly the terrain opens, and you cross a sandy, rocky area dominated by manzanita.

As the trail curves right, you enjoy a ridgetop walk and then reenter dense forest. Just shy of 1 mile, you reach a dirt fire road which, like Perimeter Road, circles the

Alien Trees

The state park has cleared many eucalyptuses and a lesser number of Monterey pines, both nonnative, from the island in an effort to prevent their spread and encourage native plants. Stumps beside the trail are evidence of this project.

island. Here you turn left, and about 75 feet ahead find the continuation of the Northridge Trail on your right. Now circling the island's east side, the route switchbacks right and climbs into a large wildflower meadow, and soon offers views of Mt. Livermore, the island's summit.



Angel Island State Park: hikers nearing Mt. Livermore enjoy view across Raccoon Strait.

At a Y-junction you leave the Northridge Trail and turn sharply right to contour across a grassy slope dotted with coyote brush and other native shrubs. The single-track trail switchbacks twice, then ascends west along a ridge-line. Nearing the summit, you pass two sets of picnic tables set on concrete platforms (the platforms are remnants of a Nike missile radar site). The very top of Mt. Livermore has been restored and revegetated, based on historical photographs.

Atop the summit are more picnic tables, from which you can enjoy fine views of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Pacific Ocean, and some of the Bay Area's tallest peaks—Mt. St. Helena, Mt. Hamilton, Mt. Diablo, and Mt. Tamalpais. From here the trail descends to a vantage point on the west side of the peak and dead-ends. When you have finished enjoying Mt. Livermore, retrace your route to the junction with the Northridge Trail at the previously mentioned Y-junction.

From here, angle right and soon reach a paved road. (The old paved route to the summit, right, has been regraded and replanted, and soon it will disappear.) You turn left and, after about 50 feet, swing sharply right on the Sunset Trail.

The Sunset Trail, which traverses the south flank of Mt. Livermore, one of the

best places on the island for spring wildflowers. After crossing a closed trail, your route curves right and, at about 3 miles, enters forest. When you reach the dirt fire road, bear right and find the continuation of the Sunset Trail about 75 feet ahead and on your left.

Raccoon Strait

Depending on the tide, Raccoon Strait, named for a 19th century British warship that was repaired in Ayala Cove, may be blue-green with water from the Pacific, or muddy brown with runoff from the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers.

The trail turns left and begins a series of switchbacks (please stay on the trail). You descend through a wooded area to Perimeter Road, where you also meet a paved road rising from Ayala Cove. Cross Perimeter Road and descend the paved road to Ayala Cove, past a bike trail, right, and another paved road, left. Continuing straight, you follow the paved road as it passes the visitor center and lawn, soon arriving at the ferry loading dock. (There are different waiting areas for each ferry, so be sure to get in the right one.)

TRIP 7 Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve

Distance	3.3 miles, Semi-loop
Hiking Time	2 to 3 hours
Elevation Gain/Loss	±650 feet
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail Use	Leashed dogs
Best Times	All year
Agency	MCOSD
Recommended Map	<i>Southern Preserves</i> (MCOSD)

HIGHLIGHTS Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve, surrounded by residential development near busy Corte Madera, perfectly demonstrates the value of land conservation and protection. Its slopes are home to a wonderful array of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers, some quite rare, and one, the Tiburon Mariposa lily, found nowhere else in the world. As a vantage point with great views, Ring Mountain's summit rivals better-known Bay Area peaks. This route uses the Loop and Phyllis Ellman trails, along with the Taylor Ridge Fire Road, to explore the mountain's slopes and summit.

Boldface numbers in the route description below refer to numbered markers along the trail, which are keyed to an MCOSD brochure that is no longer available. Some text from the brochure is summarized below and appears as part of the trail description.

DIRECTIONS From Highway 101 in Corte Madera, take the Paradise Dr./Tamalpais Dr. exit and go east on Tamalpais Dr., staying in the right lane, which becomes San Clemente Dr. After 0.1 mile, San Clemente Dr. bends right; follow it and go another 0.5 mile to a stoplight at Paradise Dr. Turn left onto Paradise Dr., go 0.9 mile, and park in a turnout on the right, near a gated dirt road.

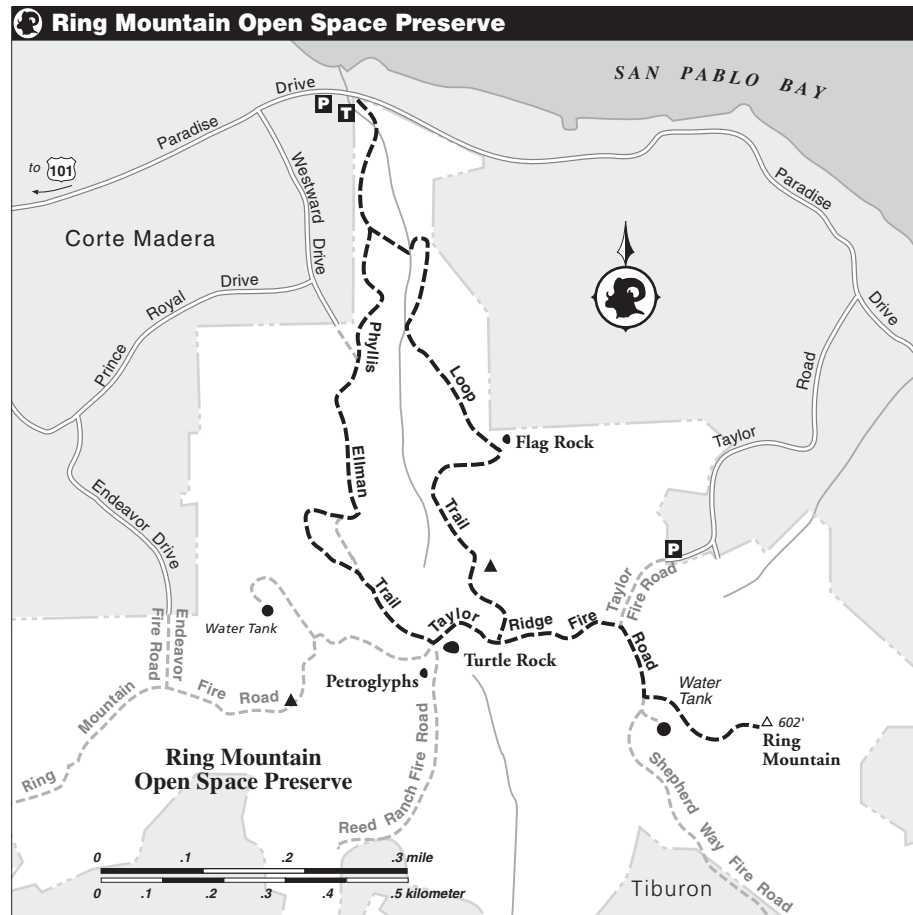
FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD There are no facilities at the trailhead, which is on the south side of Paradise Dr., at a gated dirt road.

Head south on a dirt trail, with a seasonal creek in a gully on your right. After about 100 feet, where a faint trail continues straight, you turn right and cross a bridge over the creek. Climb on the Phyllis Ellman Trail past an information board detailing the history of the fight to save Ring Mountain. Shortly after a leftward bend, the trail reaches a junction. Here your route, the Loop Trail, goes straight, and the Phyllis Ellman Trail, which you rejoin later, veers right.

About 75 feet past the junction is marker 2, right, which calls attention to soil differences between the mountain's upper and lower reaches. Sandstone soil, lower down, is perfect for a wide variety of plants, including wildflowers such as Ithuriel's spear, blue-

eyed grass, false lupine, suncup, wild iris, and miniature lupine. Serpentine soil, higher up, is toxic to most plant species, but tolerated by a few, including the preserve's rarities.

A line of California bay and coast live oak, left, borders a seasonal creek that flows through a ravine and into the marsh, saturating it with water during the rainy season. Just before you reach the ravine, you pass a trail, right. Your trail dips down to cross the ravine, and once across, turns sharply left to marker 3, right. The large boulders seen from here are schists, composed of 12 to 15 different types of minerals—a relatively large number. (In comparison, Sierra granite contains only three to five different minerals.) The colored blotches on the boulders



are lichens, composite plants containing both a fungus and an alga.

Out in the open, you reach marker 4. Just beyond it, at an unsigned junction, the trail forks. Here you stay right and climb over rocky ground. Nearing the seasonal creek, you come to marker 5.

At a T-junction just ahead, you turn left and climb to a junction, where the trail that forked left just beyond marker 4 rejoins your route. Ahead on the right is marker 6, which refers to birds found in the preserve, including raptors and songbirds, and also to the large rock formation, described as “a gigantic Indian warrior” standing guard on the hill to your left.

Now you climb gently across an open hillside, heading for an obvious watercourse

and marker 7. Growing here are moisture-loving plants such as giant chain fern, rushes, and wax myrtle.

The source of Ring Mountain’s creeks and wet areas is rainwater that cannot penetrate deeply into the rocky soil on the mountain’s upper reaches, and instead emerges as seeps and springs.

Turning left, you cross a wet area via two plank bridges, and then climb a set of wooden steps that take you out of the watercourse. At an unsigned T-junction you turn right, soon reaching a fork, where you bear left and continue climbing. About 100 feet past the fork is marker 8, for an oak grove on the right.

Continuing straight on the main trail, you pass a four-way junction and then

Oaks — How Mighty?

Oaks may seem invincible, but practices such as land clearing, firewood cutting, and over-grazing are threatening California’s oak woodlands. Restoration projects, combined with public awareness, may help reverse this trend.

reach a junction marked by a blank trail post. Here a trail continues straight, but you turn right, into a grotto of bay trees strewn with rock boulders, where marker 9 awaits. This grotto is called a tree island, and like a real island it stands in marked contrast to its surroundings — a shady shelter for birds, small mammals, and insects in the midst of wind-swept, sun-baked fields. Within the grotto, the trail becomes indistinct, but keeping marker 9 on your left, you go about 30 feet past it, turn left, and continue uphill.

Leaving the grotto behind, you merge with the trail that went straight at the blank trail post. About 75 feet ahead, you pass a trail on the right, and your route bends left. At a fork marked by a trail post, you bear left, pass marker 10, left, and continue winding your way uphill toward a grove of bay and coast live oak. When you reach the grove, turn right.

As you emerge from the grove, a fabulous scene greets you — the San Francisco skyline, the Marin Headlands, Sausalito, Richardson Bay, and the towers of the Golden Gate Bridge. Before the glaciers melted at the end of the last Ice Age, San Francisco Bay and San Pablo bays, also visible from the mountain, were a river valley, and the coastline was 20 to 30 miles farther west. As you walk downhill, passing marker 11, right, the view improves, as Alcatraz and the Bay Bridge come into view.

About 75 feet past marker 11, you reach a four-way junction at the Taylor Ridge Fire Road, around the 1-mile point. Ahead is a short path leading to a boulder sometimes used by rock climbers for practice. Turning

left onto the fire road, you begin to gain elevation as you near the mountain’s summit, a high point to the southeast.

At a T-junction with a paved road, you turn right, following this road for about 150 yards and then bearing left onto a dirt-and-gravel road interrupted by stretches of broken pavement. The summit of Ring Mountain (602’) is in a grove of trees just left of the road, which dead-ends in a broad, gravelly area. From this dead end, a path heads south to a viewpoint. When you are ready, retrace your route to the junction of the Loop Trail and the Taylor Ridge Fire Road.

Continuing west on the fire road, you drop steeply over rough ground and then reach a junction where a road branches left. Here you continue straight, and in about 75 feet come to a four-way junction marked by a trail post missing its number — it should be marker 12. From this junction, the Phyllis Ellman Trail, your return route, goes right, and a trail to a rock inscribed with

Survivor Tactics

Plants, being fixed in one place, use a variety of strategies to disperse their seeds. For example, birds eat berries and then deposit the seeds after digestion. Other animals that depend on seeds for food often drop some during transport. The wind also spreads the seeds of many plants. To survive, plants must develop defenses against being eaten by insects, birds, and other animals. These defenses can involve toxic chemical agents, like tannins, and physical barriers, like spines. Oaks are well defended, but their seeds, acorns, are eagerly consumed by mammals and birds.

Plants use chemical inhibitors to prevent premature sprouting: only when enough rain falls will the inhibitors leach out, thereby allowing the seed to sprout at the right time.



Ring Mountain: view south across Richardson Bay to the Marin Headlands.

Preservation Island

Development around the Bay Area has taken its toll on the environment, including habitat loss, the introduction of invasive nonnative plants, and the extinction of species. Ring Mountain is an important island of preservation, especially for native grasslands, one of the area's most threatened ecosystems.

petroglyphs heads left. Turtle Rock, just east of the junction, looks like it has a turtle crawling up it. The exact age of the ancient petroglyphs is uncertain, but they resemble ones in the Sierra that are two to three thousand years old.

From the four-way junction, descend the Phyllis Ellman Trail, a single track heading northwest. In about 100 yards, you come to marker 13, right, indicating the tree island ahead and right. Trees can grow on this site because the rock is fractured, allowing roots to penetrate until they find water.

About 100 feet ahead, at a trail post, you turn left. The trail gains a little elevation

and then levels, taking you across a rocky hillside in the heart of the serpentine belt. Now descending, you pick your way over rocky ground to marker 14. This is the area to look for rare plants, such as Marin dwarf flax, Tiburon paintbrush, serpentine reed-grass, and the Tiburon Mariposa lily, a late-May bloomer that grows nowhere else in the world.

Level for a while, the trail curves right and then drops on a moderate grade. At a junction where a trail merges from the right, you bear left and continue downhill. In about 100 yards, at the next junction, a sign with an arrow prompts you to turn right.

Marker 15, right, refers to soap plant, identified by its long, wavy leaves. The bulb of soap plant had several uses for Native Americans: it yields a cleansing substance when crushed; it contains toxins that stun fish; and, when detoxified by cooking, it can be eaten. Soap plant, which blooms from May through July, carries its flowers aloft on tall stalks, but these don't open until shade falls in the late afternoon.

Before you reach the next line of vegetation, turn sharply left at a junction, where a path goes straight to the creek bed. After a leftward bend, the trail reaches a four-way junction just shy of a tree-lined ravine. Here you make a hard right and then work your way downhill on a moderate grade,

aided in places by steps, to marker 16, right.

Nearing the seasonal creek again, your route bends left, winding downhill over rocky ground and passing a trail, right. Close the loop where the Loop Trail heads right, then retrace your route to the parking area.

TRIP 8 China Camp State Park

Distance	4.9 miles, Semi-loop
Hiking Time	2 to 3 hours
Elevation Gain/Loss	±400 feet
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail Use	Mountain biking allowed
Best Times	All year
Agency	CSP
Recommended Map	<i>China Camp State Park (CSP)</i>

HIGHLIGHTS This semi-loop starts at China Camp Point and uses the Village, Shoreline, Oak Ridge, and Peacock Gap trails, and the Miwok Fire Trail, to explore the western part of this fine park. Except for a short but rigorous climb up the Miwok Fire Trail, most of the route is in the shade, making it pleasant on a warm day. Most of the park's signed and maintained trails are open to hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. Be sure not to miss the visitor center, open daily 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., in the village just downhill from China Camp Point.

DIRECTIONS From Highway 101 northbound in San Rafael, take the N. San Pedro Road exit, which is also signed for the Marin County Civic Center and China Camp State Park. After exiting, bear right, following the lane marked EAST. After 0.3 mile you join N. San Pedro Road. Go another 5.1 miles to the China Camp Village entrance, left, and a large paved parking area. If this parking area is full, continue downhill 0.1 mile into the village, which has a large dirt parking area and a self-registration station.

From Highway 101 southbound in San Rafael, take the N. San Pedro Road exit, which is also signed for the Marin County Civic Center and China Camp State Park. After 0.2 mile, you come to a stop sign. Turn left, go 0.1 mile to a stoplight, and turn left again, onto N. San Pedro Road. At 0.3 mile, the exit ramp from Highway 101 northbound joins on your right. From here, follow the directions above.

FACILITIES/TRAILHEAD A visitor center with displays on the Chinese shrimp industry is in the village, along with picnic tables, restrooms, phone, and water. The snack bar and fishing pier here are open weekends only. Maps are for sale from a coin-operated machine at the visitor center. There are restrooms near the trailhead, which is on the northwest corner of the upper parking area.

China Camp State Park takes its name from a Chinese fishing village that flourished here during the late 1800s, one of 26 on San Francisco Bay. The early 1900s saw the passage of a series of restrictive

laws, including bans on bag nets, peak-season fishing, and even possessing dried shrimp. These laws effectively shut down the Chinese shrimping industry, and the village soon suffered a precipitous decline.

Appendix 1

Best Trips

Geology

- Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve (Chapter 4, Trip 3)
- Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve (Chapter 5, Trip 3)
- Almaden Quicksilver County Park (Chapter 7, Trip 9)
- Los Trancos Open Space Preserve (Chapter 10, Trip 8)
- El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve: Tafoni Loop (Chapter 10, Trip 15)

History

- Presidio of San Francisco (Chapter 1, Trips 3 & 4)
- Angel Island State Park (Chapter 1, Trip 6)
- China Camp State Park (Chapter 1, Trip 8)
- Olompali State Historic Park (Chapter 1, Trip 15)
- Jack London State Historic Park (Chapter 2, Trip 4)
- Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve (Chapter 4, Trip 3)
- Almaden Quicksilver County Park (Chapter 7, Trip 9)
- Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve (Chapter 8, Trip 2)
- Fremont Older Open Space Preserve (Chapter 8, Trip 3)
- Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Chapter 9, Trip 6; Chapter 10, Trip 16)
- Sweeney Ridge (Chapter 10, Trip 21)

Peaks

- Pine Mountain (Chapter 1, Trip 13)
- Mt. Burdell Open Space Preserve (Chapter 1, Trip 14)
- Samuel P. Taylor State Park: Barnabe Mountain (Chapter 1, Trip 16)
- Pt. Reyes National Seashore: Mt. Wittenberg (Chapter 1, Trip 17)
- Sugarloaf Ridge State Park: Bald Mountain (Chapter 2, Trip 2)
- Mt. St. Helena (Chapter 3, Trip 1)
- Mt. Diablo State Park: Grand Loop (Chapter 4, Trip 7)
- Tolman Peak, Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Park (Chapter 6, Trip 1)
- Mission Peak Regional Preserve (Chapter 6, Trip 4)
- Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve: Borel Hill (Chapter 10, Trip 6)
- Black Mountain, Monte Bello Open Space Preserve (Chapter 10, Trip 7)
- Windy Hill Open Space Preserve: Spring Ridge (Chapter 10, Trip 10)
- Montara Mountain (Chapter 10, Trip 20)
- San Bruno Mountain State and County Park (Chapter 10, Trip 22)

Redwoods

- Muir Woods (Chapter 1, Trips 9 & 10)
- Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve/Austin Creek State Recreation Area (Chapter 2, Trip 7)
- Redwood Regional Park (Chapter 5, Trip 6)
- Butano State Park (Chapter 9, Trip 1)

- Portola Redwoods State Park (Chapter 9, Trip 2)
- Pescadero Creek Park (Chapter 9, Trip 3)
- Sam McDonald Park (Chapter 9, Trip 4)
- Memorial Park (Chapter 9, Trip 5)
- Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Chapter 9, Trip 6; Chapter 10, Trip 16)
- Wunderlich Park (Chapter 10, Trip 11)
- Huddart Park (Chapter 10, Trip 12)
- Phleger Estate (Chapter 10, Trip 13)
- El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve (Chapter 10, Trips 14 & 15)

Waterfalls

- Mt. Tamalpais: High Marsh Loop (Chapter 1, Trip 11)
- Mt. Diablo State Park: Hidden Falls (Chapter 4, Trip 8)
- Uvas Canyon County Park (Chapter 7, Trip 6)

Wildflowers/Nature Study

- Presidio of San Francisco: Ecology Trail (Chapter 1, Trip 3)
- Marin Headlands (Chapter 1, Trip 5)
- Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve (Chapter 1, Trip 7)
- Pine Mountain (Chapter 1, Trip 13)
- Mt. Burdell Open Space Preserve (Chapter 1, Trip 14)
- Napa River Ecological Reserve (Chapter 3, Trip 3)
- Rush Ranch (Chapter 3, Trip 6)
- Jepson Prairie Preserve (Chapter 3, Trip 7)
- Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve (Chapter 5, Trip 4)
- Henry W. Coe State Park: Forest Trail (Chapter 7, Trip 4)
- Santa Teresa County Park (Chapter 7, Trip 8)
- Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve: Woods Trail (Chapter 7, Trip 10)
- Fremont Older Open Space Preserve (Chapter 8, Trip 3)
- South Skyline Region (Chapter 10, Trip 3)
- Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve (Chapter 10, Trip 4)
- Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve (Chapter 10, Trips 5 & 6)
- Monte Bello Open Space Preserve (Chapter 10, Trip 7)
- Edgewood Park and Preserve (Chapter 10, Trip 17)
- San Bruno Mountain State and County Park (Chapter 10, Trip 22)

Appendix 2

Recommended Reading

Bay Area

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Appendix 3

Agencies and Information Sources

Parks and Agencies

California Dept. of Fish & Game (CDF&G)		
Main	(916) 445-0411	www.dfg.ca.gov
California State Parks (CSP)		
Main	(800) 777-0369	
Reservations	(800) 444-7275	http://parks.ca.gov
East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)		
Information	(510) 562-7275	www.ebparks.org
Oakland Reservations	(510) 636-1684	
Hayward Reservations	(510) 538-6470	
Contra Costa County Reservations	(925) 676-0192	
Livermore Reservations	(925) 373-0144	
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA)		
Main	(415) 561-4700	www.nps.gov/goga
Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD)		
Main	(415) 499-6387	www.marinopenspace.org
Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD)		
Sky Oaks Ranger Station	(415) 945-1181	www.marinwater.org/resourcemanagement.html#recreation
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD)		
Main	(650) 691-1200	www.openspace.org
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD)		
Main	(650) 691-1200	www.openspace.org
Palo Alto Dept. of Community Services (PADCS)		
Main	(650) 463-4952	www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/ross
Point Reyes National Seashore (NPS)		
Main	(415) 464-5100	www.nps.gov/pore
San Mateo County Parks & Recreation (SMCP&R)		
Information	(650) 363-4020	www.eparks.net
Reservations	(650) 363-4021	
Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation (SCCP&R)		
Information	(408) 355-2200	www.parkhere.org
Reservations	(408) 355-2201	www.gooutsideandplay.org
Skyline Park Citizens Association (SPCA)		
Main	(707) 252-0481	www.skylinepark.org

Walnut Creek Open Space & Trails Division (WCOSTD)
 Main (925) 943-5860 www.ci.walnut-creek.ca.us/openspace

Internet Resources

Angel Island State Park	
Ferry from Oakland/Alameda	www.eastbayferry.com
Ferry from San Francisco	www.blueandgoldfleet.com
Ferry from Tiburon	www.angelislandferry.com
Bay Area Hiker	www.bahiker.com
Bay Area Open Space Council	www.openspacecouncil.org
Bay Area Ridge Trail Council	www.ridgetrail.org
Bay Nature magazine	www.baynature.com
California Native Plant Society	www.cnps.org
Committee for Green Foothills	www.greenfoothills.org
Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve	www.friendsofedgeswood.org/edgewood.htm
Friends of Recreation & Parks (San Francisco)	www.frp.org
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (GGNPC)	www.parksconservancy.org
Greenbelt Alliance	www.greenbelt.org
Marin Trails	www.marintrails.com
Mount Diablo Interpretive Association	www.mdia.org
Mt. Tamalpais Interpretive Association	www.mttam.net
National Audubon Society	
Golden Gate (San Francisco, East Bay)	www.goldengateaudubon.org
Madrone (Sonoma County)	www.audubon.sonoma.net
Marin County	www.marinaudubon.org
Mt. Diablo area	www.diabloaudubon.com
Napa and Solano counties	www.napasolanoaudubon.org
Santa Clara Valley	www.scvas.org
Sequoia (Peninsula)	www.audubon.org www.sequoia-audubon.org
National Geographic Maps/TOPO!	http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/topo
Natural Resources DataBase	www.nrdb.org
Pease Press	www.peasepress.com
Peninsula Access for Dogs	www.prusik.com/pads
Peninsula Open Space Trust	www.openspacetrust.org
Point Reyes Bird Observatory	www.prbo.org

- Responsible Organized Mountain Pedalers www.romp.org
- Rush Ranch Educational Council www.rushranch.org
- Save Mount Diablo www.savemountdiablo.org
- Sempervirens Fund www.sempervirens.org
- Sierra Club
 Loma Prieta (Silicon Valley) www.lomaprieta.sierraclub.org
 Redwood (North Bay) www.redwood.sierraclub.org
 San Francisco Bay www.sierraclub.org www.sanfranciscobay.sierraclub.org
- Skyline Park Citizens Association (SPCA) www.ncfaa.com/skyline/skyline_park.htm
- Solano Land Trust (SLT) www.solanolandtrust.org
- Sonoma County Trails Council www.sonomatrails.org/sctc
 Coalition for the Outdoor Recreation Plan www.sonomatrails.org
- Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens www.strybing.org
- Tamalpais Conservation Club www.tamalpais.org
- Trail Center www.trailcenter.org
- University of California Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) <http://nrs.ucop.edu/>
- Weather
 National Weather Service www.nws.noaa.gov
 Weather.com www.weather.com
- Whole Access (to increase recreational opportunities for people with disabilities) www.wholeaccess.org
- Wilderness Press www.wildernesspress.com

Maps

It would be nice if high-quality maps existed for each park covered by this guide, but that is not the case. The maps used to navigate the trails varied from topographic ones that were professionally drawn to sketch maps lacking contour lines and other features. In a few cases, no maps were available. When you visit a park that has a staffed entrance kiosk or visitor center, check there for a map. Sometimes maps and trail guides will be found in dispensers near the trailhead. Not surprisingly, bigger, more well-known parks have the best maps. Check the website of the agency administering the park or open space you plan to visit to see if downloadable maps are available.

As an alternative, you can print your own customized maps using TOPO!, a computer program from National Geographic Maps, <http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/topo>. TOPO! uses USGS maps on CD-ROM combined with software that allows you to draw routes, insert text, measure distance, plot elevation gain and loss, and locate landmarks. There is an interface that allows a GPS unit to transfer data to and from your computer. This allows you to load waypoints from a map into your GPS, so you can find them in the field, and also to take waypoints stored in your GPS during a hike and plot them on a map.

Getting to the trailhead requires some navigation too. The California State Automobile Association (CSAA) gives its mem-

bers free road maps. Most useful for the routes in this book are *San Francisco Bay* and *Monterey Bay*, in the California Regional Series. The Thomas Guide's *Metropolitan Bay Area Street Guide and Directory* is helpful for driving around the Bay Area.

NORTH BAY

The best map for Mt. Tamalpais, the Marin Headlands, and Muir Woods is the Olmsted *Trails of Mt. Tamalpais the Marin Headlands*, available at REI stores. *Pt. Reyes National Seashore and Surrounding Area*, a recreation map, is available from Wilderness Press. A Point Reyes National Seashore trail map is available at the visitor center. Maps for California state parks are problematic—sometimes they are available only at entrance kiosks or visitor centers, and these may be closed during the week. Marin County Open Space District has maps available by mail and from its website. Lands of the Marin Municipal Water District are covered by Olmsted's *Mt. Tamalpais* map. The *Skyline Wilderness Park* map is available at the entrance kiosk and from the Skyline Park Citizens Association website. *Trails of Northeast Marin County*, from Pease Press, shows China Camp and Mt. Burdell Open Space Preserve.

EAST BAY

A trail map of Mt. Diablo State Park is available at the park's visitor centers and from the Mt. Diablo Interpretive Associa-

tion. The East Bay Regional Park District has maps available at its trailheads, by mail, and from its website. There are two Olmsted maps for the East Bay, northern and central sections, available at REI stores.

SOUTH BAY

The parks described in this chapter are managed by three government agencies. Henry W. Coe State Park has a map available for sale at the visitor center. Santa Clara County Parks has maps at its trailheads and downloadable maps on its website; these are also available by mail. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District maps are available at its trailheads, by mail, and from its website.

PENINSULA

The parks described in this chapter are managed by three government agencies. Maps for the Presidio of San Francisco are available at the Presidio's visitor centers and from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's website. Trail maps for the central and southern Peninsula, produced by the Trail Center, are available from Wilderness Press and REI. Pease Press publishes *Trails of the Coastside and Northern Peninsula*, showing San Bruno and Montara mountains. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District maps are available at its trailheads, by mail, and from its website. Maps for San Mateo County Parks are available at trailheads and by mail.

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About the Author



Photo: Jed Manwaring

David Weintraub is a writer, editor, and photographer based in South Carolina and Cape Cod. A former long-time San Francisco resident, he has authored a number of books for Wilderness Press, including *East Bay Trails*, *North Bay Trails*, *Monterey Bay Trails*, *Adventure Kayaking: Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard*, and *Top Trails San Francisco Bay Area*, a guide to the best hiking routes in the North Bay, East Bay, South Bay, and Peninsula.