

A Place for Nature ...

Tilden Nature Area is a 740-acre preserve located at the north end of Tilden Regional Park. With over 10 miles of hiking trails, these parklands are a blend of native and introduced plant communities, including oak/bay woodlands, grasslands, and eucalyptus forests. A 750-foot boardwalk through the woods leads to Jewel Lake, a historic reservoir and a peaceful place to watch wildlife.

HISTORY Tilden Regional Park is one of the three original parks of the East Bay Regional Park District. Opened to the public in 1936, it was named in honor of Major Charles Lee Tilden, first president of the District's Board of Directors.

People have long been drawn to this canyon for its rich natural resources. Huchuin Ohlone Indians once lived along the banks of lower Wildcat Creek. For centuries they found abundant food, including shellfish, game, and plants. Spanish explorers and Mexican ranchos eventually displaced the Native American communities.

For years the lands were used for ranching and dairying. By 1890, the promise of water lured new interests to the canyon. Water companies built wells, pipelines, diversion dams, and even a water tunnel over the next several decades. But Sierra water ultimately proved to be a more dependable water source, and local watershed lands were declared surplus and opened to development. East Bay residents organized to protect the open space as parkland, and in 1934, Alameda County voters created the country's first regional park district.

From 1935 to 1941 a Civilian Conservation Corps camp called "Camp Wildcat Canyon" was established in what is now Tilden Nature Area. Workers built roads, culverts, shelters, and picnic sites. Some of their skilled stonework remains. During World War II, the Army set up barracks in abandoned CCC buildings.

Following the war, local schools began to use the area for nature study. In 1949, the northern portion of Tilden was formally designated as "Tilden Nature Area." A small nature center was established in the old army barracks, and the District hired a fulltime naturalist staff. The old center was replaced by the Environmental Education Center in 1974, built on the site of the old CCC camp. Environmental education programs continue to this day.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER








At the Environmental Education Center (EEC) you can explore exhibits that tell the story of the Wildcat Creek Watershed, find information on park activities and wildlife, and purchase nature-related books and items at the nature center store. A self-guiding trail booklet is available for loan or purchase. The EEC is open from 10am – 5pm, Tuesday through Sunday.

TILDEN LITTLE FARM The historic Tilden Little Farm is adjacent to the EEC. The red barn was constructed in 1955 by Berkeley High School carpentry students, with materials donated by the Berkeley Kiwanis Club. The Little Farm features a variety of farm animals including cows, sheep, goats, rabbits, chickens, and pigs. Several heritage breeds of livestock are preserved, including Milking Shorthorn Cattle. Visitors are welcome to bring lettuce or celery (but nothing else) to feed the animals. The Little Farm is open daily from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

NATURALIST PROGRAMS Park naturalists offer a variety of interpretive programs for schools, organized groups, and the public. Programs provide exciting opportunities to learn about the area's natural and cultural history. Program information can be found inside the EEC, online at www.ebparks.org, or in the District's activity guide, *Regional in Nature*. To make school or group program reservations, please call the EEC at (510) 544-2233, or visit the District's website.

TILDEN NATURE AREA TRAILS The nature area is still a land of wild places. Help keep it natural and beautiful for generations to come. Please leave all plant, wildlife, and geological features undisturbed. Be careful with litter; if you carry it in, carry it out. To avoid poison oak, stay on the trails.

Hikes range from the leisurely, self-guided Jewel Lake Nature Trail, to a vigorous climb of Wildcat Peak for panoramic Bay views. The trails vary in length and difficulty, and are designated by symbols on trailside directional posts.

-  Jewel Lake Trail—.90 miles, gentle loop.
-  Pack Rat Trail—.86 miles, moderate.
-  Sylvan Trail—.68 miles, gentle.
-  Wildcat Peak Trail—1.5 miles, steep.
-  Pine Tree Trail—.93 miles, moderate.
-  Laurel Canyon Trail—1.11 miles, moderately steep.
-  Memory Trail—.51 miles, moderate.

POLICE, FIRE, MEDICAL EMERGENCY 9-1-1
TILDEN NATURE AREA OFFICE (510) 544-2233
PICNIC, GROUP CAMP RESERVATIONS.....
 1-888-327-2757, Option 2, 1
EBRPD HEADQUARTERS 1-888-EBPARKS
TDD (510) 633-0460



To Reach Tilden Nature Area:

From Hwy 80, take the University Avenue exit in Berkeley. Follow University east towards the hills. Turn left on Oxford Street, right on Rose Street and left on Spruce Street. Follow Spruce to the stop sign at the top of the hill at Wildcat Canyon Drive. Go through intersection and make immediate left on Canon Dr. At the bottom, turn left on Central Park Drive and follow to parking area.

From Hwy 24, exit at Fish Ranch Road. Take Fish Ranch Road to Grizzly Peak Blvd. and turn right. Continue on Grizzly Peak Blvd. through the Berkeley hills until you reach the intersection of Spruce St., Wildcat Canyon Drive and Canon Drive. Turn right on Wildcat Canyon Road, then immediately make a sharp left on Canon Drive. At the bottom, turn left on Central Park Drive and follow to parking area.

Public Transit: AC Transit—On weekends, take #67 from Downtown Berkeley BART directly to the Environmental Education Center. On weekdays, the closest stop of the #67 is at Spruce and Grizzly Peak, about one-half mile from the EEC. Call to confirm bus schedule—AC Transit: 817-1717; 800-448-9790 (TDD/TTY). See also www.transitandtrails.org/.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact the EBRPD Public Affairs Department at (510) 544-2200, fax (510) 635-3478, TDD (510) 633-0460, or info@ebparks.org.

PLEASE LET US KNOW how this map may be improved to help you use this park. Write, email, or call with your suggestions: 2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, CA 94605; info@ebparks.org; (510) 544-2210.



East Bay Regional Park District
 2950 Peralta Oaks Court
 P.O. Box 5381
 Oakland, CA 94605-0381
 1-888-EBPARKS www.ebparks.org
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Tilden Nature Area



East Bay 
 Regional Park District

