

Protect Wildcat Canyon Fact Sheet

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park is located in the Bay Area, neighboring Richmond, El Cerrito, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, and Kensington.

It is a public park available to anyone, with an estimated 400,000 visitors annually.¹ The Park has multiple trails that accommodate hikers, horses, mountain bikers, birders, and nature lovers.

It is a biologically diverse area with hundreds of species of wildlife and native plants, as well as several endangered species.²

The Park District's 1985 Land Use Plan designated Wildcat Canyon as a "Natural Area," meaning it shall be free from intensive recreational activities.³

The proposed trail and associated infrastructure could permanently divide Wildcat Canyon, leading to habitat fragmentation.

WILDCAT CANYON AT RISK!

THE EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT IS PROPOSING TO DEVELOP A 1.4 MILE - HIGH-INTENSITY MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL THROUGH WILDCAT CANYON PARK'S DESIGNATED NATURAL AREA.



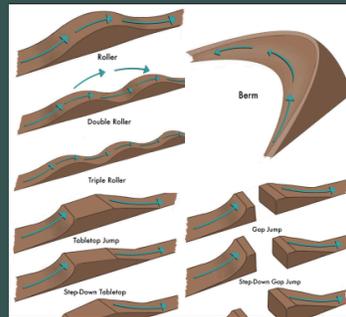
**SIGN THE PETITION
PROTECT ENDANGERED
WILDLIFE**

Willow
Flycatcher



Public Records Request Reveals Proposed \$1 Million Privately Offered Donation Tied to Flow Trail Approval⁴

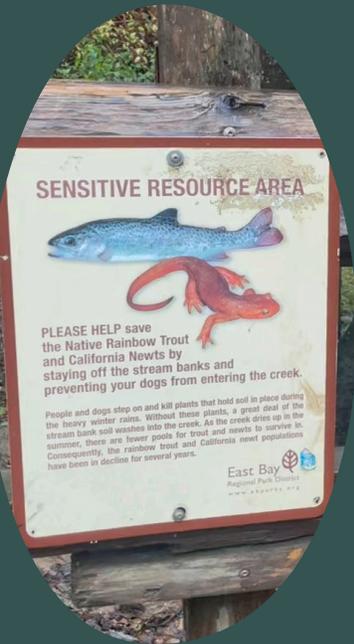
A recent public records request revealed that two private individuals proposed a \$1 million donation to build a 1.4-mile mountain bike flow trail within Wildcat Canyon's designated Natural Area. According to the records, the proposed donation was contingent on the Park District approving the trail project. The proposed trail is designed for mountain bike use and would introduce high-intensity features into an area designated for natural resource protection, raising public concern on the potential harm to wildlife and habitat.



Public information on the Project⁵

- The project's construction within a sensitive watershed will use heavy equipment, e.g., bulldozers and earthmovers, and is estimated at \$ 390,000.
- The proposed trail will follow the general route of the Mezue hiking trail, curving back and forth along the ridge spine.
- Proposed trail elements include sweeping banked turns, rollers, and jumps, creating a course suitable for advanced mountain bikers.
- Park users' experience along the Mezue trail will be changed forever.

Local Wildlife that needs habitat protection



- In California, the red-legged frog is federally listed as threatened and considered a species of special concern.⁶
 - The Alameda Whipsnake is recognized both federally and in California as a threatened species.⁷
 - The California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife has designated the Grasshopper Sparrow and the Purple Martin as Species of Special Concern.⁸
 - The East Bay Regional Park District has made efforts to restore the native rainbow trout fish populations in Wildcat Creek, which are already struggling from drought, climate change, and human-made barriers.⁹
 - The Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) is listed as Endangered in California since 1990-1992 due to severe population declines caused by the loss of riparian habitat.¹⁰
 - Construction and use of the trail will increase silt runoff into Wildcat Creek. Studies show the watershed's soils are very unstable. This silt will smother aquatic species and increase mud, contradicting EBRPD's concurrent efforts to clean up Wildcat Creek and restore steelhead and salmon runs.
 - The SF Estuary Institute study of Wildcat Canyon Park found that much of the canyon is prone to landslides and earthflow erosion that will require regular and expensive maintenance costs.¹¹
- The mountain bike "flow trail" will attract a significant increase in new users and cause parking and traffic congestion at multiple access points.
 - Limited parking will not be able to accommodate increased trail use, and residents have not been notified about the parking impacts along Rifle Range Road.
 - Bike traffic would use multiple park trails to access the top of the downhill run, increasing the likelihood of conflicts between mountain bikers and other trail users and wildlife.
 - The natural Havey Canyon trail and the heavily used Mezue trail have not been addressed by the District.
 - Illegal trail use on bootleg trails is currently not being enforced.

Sources

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3. Dillingham Associates. (1985). Wildcat Canyon Regional Park Final Land Use-Development Plan & Environmental Impact Report (East Bay Regional Park District). Contra Costa County, CA.
4. [Public Records Request Email communications]. (n.d.). Unpublished internal communications obtained via public records request.
5. <https://www.ebparks.org/projects/wildcat-canyon-regional-park-wildcat-bike-trail>
6. <https://www.openspace.org/where-to-go/nature/california-red-legged-frog#:~:text=Sadly%2C%20the%20California%20red%2Dlegged,California%20species%20of%20special%20concern.>
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9. <https://www.ebparks.org/about-us/whats-new/news/steelhead-and-rainbow-trout-two-same>
10. https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Empidonax_traillii/
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