

Creek walks in the Berkeley/Albany/El Cerrito/Kensington area

While we try to slow the spread of COVID-19, going outdoors for health and exercise is allowed -- and important for mental as well as physical well-being. There's something special about walking along a stream — and for kids, a creek can be a wonderland and an outdoor schoolroom. Here are some creekside walks of a couple of blocks (or equivalent) or longer:

If you go, please keep safe physical distances -- six feet unless you live with the person. In addition, please respect plants and animals. While water in our local creeks is generally clean, a sewer line could break at any time. For now, avoid water contact and wash hands if you do make contact. A [flyer on safety in urban creeks \(written for Strawberry\) is here.](#)

Strawberry Creek on the UC Berkeley campus: Strawberry Creek is the reason UC Berkeley is where it is, and one of the main reasons we have a City of Berkeley. A map of the two forks that cradled the original campus is [here](#). A handout from a past F5C walk, focusing on history, is [here](#).

Codornices Creek: Explore headwater forks in the hills in Codornices Park, east of Euclid Avenue south of Eunice, Berkeley. (The Berkeley Rose Garden, well worth a stroll, is on the west side.) Walk down into Codornices Park; follow the creek from the first picnic table up into shady woods past more picnic areas, with several bridges and trails on both sides. It's possible to visit several waterfalls on a longer hike involving Berkeley paths; see the Berkeley Path Wanderers Association's wonderful path map and descriptions of past walks.

Downstream at Live Oak Park, you can follow the creek from Oxford at Berryman Path to Shattuck at Berryman, with trails on both sides of the creeks most of the way. Live Oak was Berkeley's first "nature park." The beautiful stonework from Walnut to Shattuck was built before World War I. A [handout on upper Codornices Creek is here.](#)

You can follow Codornices for a little under a half mile from San Pablo west to the railroad tracks, mostly on the north, Albany side. From the paved, level walk west from San Pablo (opposite Dartmouth St.), brush hides the water. From 10th to 8th Streets, a rough dirt trail brings you close to the creek. From 8th to below 5th, the trail is paved or gravel, with lovely creek views. *Please stay out of the water to protect the small, struggling population of threatened steelhead!* F5C is working hard to tend and improve this part of the creek. Handouts on the lower creek are [here](#) and [here](#).

Cerrito Creek: In segments, you can follow this creek more than 2/3 of a mile, on the Alameda/Contra Costa border. Downstream from the Ohlone Greenway north of Brighton and south of apartments at the southeast corner of El Cerrito Plaza, the creek was recently "daylighted" from its buried culvert, down to Evelyn Avenue. A block farther west, at Talbot, a reach restored in 2003-4 continues to Kains -- a lovely oasis with occasional seating. You can then jog north, cross busy San Pablo at the light, follow the south side of Carlson past the business buildings, and then go left on the unsigned stub of Adams Street. From the stub end, follow the easy, level trail a third of a mile to Pierce Street. Along the way, at El Cerrito's Creekside Park, at low water you can ford here to Albany's Creekside Park, with meadows and wooded trails on Albany Hill. You also can reach Albany Hill by continuing directly west to Pierce Street, where you can cross and walk back east on the Albany side. F5C has done major restoration and maintenance along much of this distance for many years. Handouts on the creek's fascinating history are [here](#) and [here](#).

Baxter Creek: This many-branched creek has been restored in El Cerrito's Gateway Park (11970 San Pablo Ave., across from Home Depot). Citizen effort kept this from becoming a parking lot! You can follow the creek upstream along the Ohlone Greenway to Key Boulevard at Conlon, and then take Conlon east to El Cerrito's Canyon Trails Park. Here, an easy trail continues upstream past a beautiful frog pond created by citizen volunteers, through a shady canyon, to playing fields. The total distance is just under a half mile. For a longer outing, you can follow attractive residential streets to other lovely bits of Baxter's forks in El Cerrito's Poinsett Park and Richmond's Mira Vista Park. West of San Pablo, the recently completed Richmond Greenway offers a long walk or bike ride. Lisa Owens-Viani's wonderful history of Baxter Creek is [here](#).