

Volunteering and nature-related events with others, April-May 2025. *Purple text indicates links.*

Scroll down for:

*Hands-on volunteering
Outdoor fun and learning, including festivals and gardens to visit
Talks, classes, conferences, exhibits, contests
- mostly indoor or online
Garden- and waste-reduction events and resources
Electrification and other climate-change events and resources
More calendars*



This list is now being updated mid-month. Check back!

Emeryville's Earth Day cleanup is 9 AM - noon Sun., Apr. 27 at its Shorebird Park. Please bring re-usable water bottle or cup, and gloves and bucket or bags if you can. [Info here.](#)

Other hands-on volunteering

- **Baxter Creek volunteers in El Cerrito** (under 18 with guardian) enhance Baxter Creek in Gateway Park, on the Ohlone Greenway at El Cerrito's north border, 10 AM noon most first Sundays, meeting at 10 AM at Conlon and the Ohlone Greenway. [Info, and RSVP appreciated, here.](#)
- **Berkeley Adopt-a-Spot:** By caring for your local storm drain or traffic circle, you can reduce pollution and street flooding, or encourage pollinators, increase neighborhood beauty, and boost traffic safety. The City of Berkeley provides materials. [Info on signing up to adopt a storm drain here,](#) including a map of drains [. Info on adopting a traffic circle here.](#)
- **Berkeley Path Wanderers** holds weekend and weekday (usually Fri.) work parties weeding, pruning, and sweeping paths ([email here](#)) and path builders ([email here](#)) [Calendar here.](#)
- **Berkeley shoreline cleanups** are held on most third Saturdays starting 9 AM at Shorebird Park. [Info here \(scroll down\).](#)
- **Berkeley Parks tree events:** Plant trees and large shrubs at [Willard Park Sat., May 3, Info and registration here.](#) Tend trees at Aquatic Park Sat., May 31. [Info and registration here.](#) All events 9:15 - 12:30 PM.
- **Blake Garden** welcomes volunteers to help tend the Kensington garden with spectacular views, run by UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. For info, [scroll down here to Volunteering Opportunities to find email contact.](#)
- **The California Coastal Commission seeks volunteer Dockwalkers to distribute kits on safe and environmentally sound boating** at marinas, boat launch ramps, or wherever boaters are. Training is available online or in person March - June. [Info here.](#)
- **Chavez Park Conservancy** on Berkeley's Bay edge works to rescue native shrubs and trees in the 3-acre DAWN project, one of the Bay Area's pioneer native plant installations. For info contact huttarbob@gmail.com.
- **The East Bay Regional Park District** sponsors varied volunteer programs in parks from hills to Bay. [Info here.](#)
- **El Cerrito's Adopt-a-Place Program** invites individuals and groups to look out for and help maintain areas up to entire parks, with possible signage. [Info here.](#)
- **El Cerrito Trail Trekkers and Friends of the Hillside Natural Area** hold frequent events in the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area. [Info here.](#)
- **Emeryville's Earth Day cleanup** is 9 AM - noon Sun., Apr. 27 at its Shorebird Park. Please bring re-usable water bottle or cup, and gloves and bucket or bags if you can. [Info here.](#)
- **Friends of Five Creeks** welcomes all ages. [Details on our home page.](#) Weekly 10 AM - noon Tues. "Weed Warriors" sessions at varied locations hills to Bay. Email f5creeks@gmail.com to get weekly email notices of locations.
- **Friends of the Hillside Natural Area (El Cerrito)** remove fire-prone French broom and other invasives, first Tuesdays 10 AM (with F5C weed warriors), most Wednesdays 3:30 - 5:00 PM, and Saturdays 10:30 AM - 12:30. Usual meeting place is the north end of Regency Court, but please check details with friendshillsidenaturalarea@gmail.co - [see also joint events with El Cerrito Trail Trekkers, above.](#)



- **Friends of Rotary Nature Center** lead third Saturday work days most months at the center on Lake Merritt and nearby marsh. [Info, registration here.](#)
- **Friends of Sausal Creek** have opportunities every week at their native-plant nursery and several Oakland restoration sites. [Info here.](#)
- **Garber Park Stewards** has restoration work days on 1st and 3rd Saturdays of most months in the forested 13-acre park off Claremont Avenue on the BerkeleyOakland border. For info on first Saturdays work parties, email gpstewards@gmail.com.
- **Gateway Emergency Preparedness Garden, 2299 Tunnel Road, Oakland**, welcomes volunteers 9-11 AM on second and fourth Saturdays to revitalize and update the educational garden memorializing the 1991 Oakland fire and the nearby Hayward Fault. For info email fred@geomorph.com or nancy@berkhills.com.
- **Golden Gate Bird Alliance (formerly Golden Gate Audubon)** offers monthly volunteer restoration events including at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline. [Info and links to event list and registration here.](#)
- **Love the Bulb** hosts gardening days at its native-plant garden at 2 PM on first and third Saturdays on the Albany Bulb. [Info here.](#)
- **Ohlone Greenway, Berkeley**: Help maintain native plantings along Berkeley's Ohlone Greenway from the Peralta Community Gardens to Gilman, 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM. [Info here.](#)
- **Mount Diablo Interpretive Assn.** has opportunities with its trail crew and back- country patrol. [Info here.](#) **Save Mount Diablo** restoration and trail building opportunities with the Diablo Restoration Team (DiRT) and Trail Dogs. [Info here](#) or contact hsutton@savemountdiablo.org.
- **Mount Tamalpais area** opportunities, from being a wildlife docent to pulling out French broom, are generally described on the [One Tam volunteer page, here](#). Calendar of all events including habitat restoration is [here](#).
- **Oakland's historic Peralta Hacienda Park** welcomes volunteers gardening, art making, and beautifying adjoining Peralta Creek 10 AM - noon Sat., Apr. 24th Saturday at the park at 2465 35th Ave., Oakland. Organized by youth group [Frontline Catalysts](#) and the [Peralta Hacienda Park](#). For info email fellows@frontlinecatalysts.org or Miguel@peraltahacienda.org.
- **Shark Stewards hosts an Aquatic Park Cleanup** 10 AM - noon Sat., May 11, meeting at the south end of the main lagoon at the traffic circle gate (by car, you must drive to the south end, but great walk or bicycle ride from other entrances).
- **SPAWNERS (San Pablo Creek)** leads volunteer days monthly, usually on third Saturdays, at their Wilkie Creek Outdoor Classroom. 4805 Santa Rita Rd., Richmond. [Email here](#) or [here](#).
- **Skyline Gardens Alliance**, restoring beautiful and varied native vegetation along an EBMUD-owned segment of the Skyline Trail, seeks committed volunteers for sessions Thursday afternoons or Sunday mornings. [Contact info here.](#)
- **The annual SODblitz citizen-science survey** tracking Sudden Oak Death is scheduled June 2 on East Bay Park District lands; June 5 at other locations in the East Bay including Orinda and the UC Botanical Garden and UC campus, and June 7 at Native Here Nursery in Tilden. [Info including required online training and contacts here.](#)
- **Take to the Hills** weeds and plants in Derby Canyon in the hills above the UC Berkeley Clark Kerr Campus, usually Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Email Jim@thisintothat.com.
- **On Albany Hill, Tending the Ancient Shoreline Hill (TASH)** leads volunteers weeding and planting on last Saturdays. [Email here for info.](#)
- **Transition Berkeley** and the Berkeley Parks Department welcome volunteers at bird and butterfly-friendly native-plant gardens throughout the city. [Fill out form with your interests here.](#)
- **The Watershed Project** hosts volunteer events mostly in Richmond and North Richmond, including **Love your bioswale work days at Booker T. Anderson and Unity Parks in Richmond.** [Info and signup here.](#)
- **Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation** has varied weekend and weekday opportunities in its 2700-acre open space adjoining Mt. Diablo and at its native plant nursery. [Info here.](#)
- **Wildlife Rescue**: Volunteers caring for animals generally must be over 18. Sign up [here](#) for orientation to volunteer with **International Bird Rescue** in Fairfield. **Lindsay Wildlife Museum** in Walnut Creek and accepts volunteers 16+ for caring for some injured animals, with opportunities age 18+ for educators and caring for non-releasable injured wildlife. The **Marine Mammal Center** in Sausalito accepts high-school applicants in fall for a program running Jan. - August. Volunteers over 18 can get on a list to be notified of future trainings. [Info here.](#) **Wildcare**, in San Rafael, [lists volunteer opportunities here.](#)

Outdoor fun and learning

Walks, field trips, tours, festivals



- **Berkeley Bay Festival:** Free family outdoor fun 11 AM - 4 PM Sat., Apr. 27, at Berkeley's Shorebird Park/Adventure Playground area, with music, food, free boat rides, environmental info and activities for kids, and more. [Info here](#).
- **El Cerrito Hillside Festival,** Sat. & Sun., May 3-4, a kaleidoscope of offers free walks on birds, bugs, rocks, plants, Haiku, history, a kids' scavenger hunt -- even a walk to enjoy the rain, just in case. [Info here](#)
- **City Nature Challenge:** Join a friendly inter-city competition to photograph the most living species using the free [iNaturalist](#) app. On your own, with family or friends, or with local organizations, take photos Apr. 25-28, help ID species Apr. 29-May 4. Check events with local organizations.
- **Berkeley Parks hosts a BioBlitz** using cell phones to identify plants and animals Sat., May 10, 10 AM - noon at Shorebird Park, 160 University Ave., for ages 5 and up accompanied by an adult. [Info here](#).
- Bay Nature and Civicorps offer a free hike on Mt. Diablo, 9- 11:30 AM Sat., May 17, featuring a chance to learn about how the nonprofit helps young people work in conservation. Hike is will be steep and warm, with at least 850 feet of climb. [Info and registration here](#).
- **The California Native Plant Society's East Bay chapter** Meetup group offers weekday wildflower walks, with registration and group membership required. [Info here](#).
- **The East Bay Regional Park District has a host of nature-related events for all ages.** Search the [Park District's Calendar](#).
 - Wildflower season is here. Special hikes and programs in Sunol Regional Wilderness are [here](#). Local wildflowers promise to be good this year, with Sunol, Ohlone, and Black Diamond parks known for displays. For wildflower walks and activities, search for "wildflowers" in the [Park District's Calendar](#).
 - The Park District's annual Trails Challenge runs all year, asking visitors to walk, run, ride, or roll five trails or 26.2 miles by Dec. 31. All participants get a month's free membership in All Trails, and there are chances at other prizes. Guidebooks are available free at visitors' centers while they last, and [online, with other info, here](#).
- **El Cerrito Trail Trekkers and Friends of Hillside Natural Area** host a "bioblitz" using the [iNaturalist](#) free app to identify plants and animals in the Hillside Natural Area, as part of [City Nature Challenge](#), 10 AM - 1 PM Sat., Apr. 26. Meet at the north end of Regency Court (1590 Regency Court on Internet maps. [Info here](#).
- **El Cerrito's Recycling Center**, 7501 Schmidt Lane, offers a free public tour 3-4 PM most first Wednesdays. [Info here](#).
- **Golden Gate Bird Alliance (formerly Golden Gate Audubon)** leads frequent free birding field trips, including Blake Garden, Lake Merritt, Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline, Tilden, and more, including farther afield. Required reservations open at 1 PM on third Tuesdays of the prior month. [Outings list here](#). [Info on registration here](#).
- **Greenbelt Alliance** leads walks exploring wildflowers in Las Trampas Apr. 17, the Rock City area of Mt. Diablo Apr. 27, Coyote Hills May 3, Mitchell Canyon May 4, Fernandez Ranch (Mothers Day hike) May 11, 8. [Info and signup here](#).
- **Love the Bulb** Nature Journal Club ongoing through July . [Info here](#).
- **Mount Diablo Interpretive Association** offers walks that often fill quickly, including Bioblitz hikes (recording observations of plants and animals) and April wildflower walks. Recordings of many past talks on nature also available. [Info and links to signup here](#).
- **Save Mount Diablo** offers varied hikes. Annual schedule expected [here](#). Registration opens one month before events. [Calendar and signup here](#).
- **The Watershed Project** hosts a free bilingual storytelling and nature walk on Wildcat Creek at Alvarado Park, 9:30 AM - noon Sat., May 31, part of planned monthly events on the creek. [Info here](#).
- **Wholly H2O** Watershed tours are designed to be useful for California students and teachers available on your cell phone through [Pocketsights](#). Varied information on how to enjoy and learn about nature with friends and family or on your own [here](#).

Gardens to visit, with their events

- The annual [Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tours](#) of native-plant gardens in Alameda and Contra Costa continue to offer [online access to tours and talks](#), with in-person tours May 3 and 4. [Flyer here](#). [Registration info here](#).
- [Blake Garden](#), 70 Rincon Rd. in Kensington, run by the UC Berkeley Department of Landscape Architecture, is open free weekdays 8 am - 4:30 pm. [Info here](#). Check the calendar for monthly bird walk and tours. [Info here](#).
- The [East Bay Regional Park District's Botanic Garden](#) in Tilden Regional Park at Wildcat Canyon Rd. and South Park Dr., lets you enjoy California native plants daily and free. Weekly Wednesday sales of native plants at the potting shed, 10 AM-noon, have resumed. Saturday sales will resume in June. [Docents lead free, no-reservation tours](#) on non-rainy Saturdays (11 AM) and Sundays (11 AM and 2 PM). [Info here](#).
- [The UC Berkeley Botanical Garden](#), Centennial Drive: Events include a sick-plant clinic on first Saturdays; native-plant sales Apr. 25-28; a workshop in natural perfumery Apr. 26; Berkeley Morris Dancers Sun., May 4; Mothers Day Tea with botanical crafting Sat., May 10; a butterfly walk Wed., May 14, and more. [Events calendar and links to registration here](#).
- [Ruth Bancroft Garden](#) and nursery in Walnut Creek is home to a stunning collection of dry-adapted plants. Talks, webinars, and tours available. [Info here](#).



Talks, Classes, Meetings, Exhibits, Contests - mostly indoors or online

Also see Gardening and Waste Reduction below

Classes, talks, events

- [The annual Alameda Creek Watershed Conference](#) presents the latest on the East Bay's largest watershed, from turtles to steelhead and storms, 9 AM - 3 PM May 1 at Shannon Community Center, 11600 Shannon Avenue Dublin. [Info and registration here](#).
- [Wholly H2O's second panel on the East Bay Creeks Movement](#): "East Bay Creek Restoration: How It's Going Now," is set for 7-9 PM Tues., May 6, with representatives of creek and watershed groups including Juliana Gonzales of the Watershed Project and Dr. Elizabeth Dogherty of Wholly H2O). Rm. 100, Genetics and Plant Biology Bldg., UC Berkeley campus. [Info and tickets here](#).
- [Bay Nature](#) online talks have a busy schedule ahead: learning from the sounds of sperm whales and other marine predators, noon - 1 PM Wed., Apr. 30. [Info and registration here](#). How researchers are partnering with dogs, with their acute sense of smell, noon-1PM Wed., May 7. [Info and registration here](#). Efforts to save endangered wildflowers, noon-1 PM Wed., May 14. [Info and registration here](#). The inner lives of grebes, noon-1 PM Tues., May 20. [Info and registration here](#). [Links to many past talks here](#).
- [The California Native Plant Society's East Bay chapter](#) presents Nick Jensen, CNPS statewide conservation director, speaking on the organization's conservation successes in recent years, current federal regulatory and executive-order challenges, and what individuals can do for California's native-plant diversity. In person only, 7:30 PM Wed., Apr. 27, at Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library and Community Center, Mt. Diablo Blvd. & First St., Lafayette.
- [Golden Gate Bird Alliance monthly speaker series](#) presents talks live or online, usually on third Thursday evenings. [Info and registration here](#). General info, announcements of speakers, and recordings of some past talks [here](#).
- [Rotary Nature Center Friends](#) present free monthly online talks, usually 7 PM on first Fridays, including May 3 with Naturalist Jim Covell speaking on 50 years of naturalist programs at Lake Merritt. [Info, link to registration, and recordings of some past talks here](#).
- [South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration lunch-and-learn webinars](#), 11 AM - noon May 14 (most second Tuesdays) present Jessie Olson, Save the Bay Habitat Restoration Director, speaking on cost-saving techniques for large-scale habitat restoration developed at the Ravenswood \Ponds project in Menlo Park. [Info and calendar here](#).



- **EBMUD's Water Wednesdays online talks** [Online with past talks here](#). Virtual tours, from sewage-treatment plants to wild-area walks, are [here](#).
- **Coastside Land Trust** presents "Healthy Waters, Thriving Coast " on water quality in San Mateo creeks and beaches, 10-11 AM Sat., May 10; [info and recordings of past webinars here](#).
- **Mount Diablo Interpretive Assn.** offers recordings of past webinars [here](#).
- **Merritt Community College's Natural History Studies Program** has a [new, easy to use website](#), with varied classes including a certificate program.

Exhibitions, contests:

- **The Brower Center's annual Youth Art/Act exhibition**, through May 15 in the Center's Hazel Wolf Gallery, 2150 Allston, features works by local high-school students exploring visions for urban green and blue spaces, focused on plants and water. [Info here](#).

Gardening, waste reduction

- **Citywide garage sale registration is open in Albany and El Cerrito**. In Albany, sale is set for Sat., May 3; El Cerrito's is scheduled Sat, May 17; [info here](#).
- The **California Native Plant Society** "Naturehood" online native-gardening chats offered quarterly, with Basics of a Fire Safe Yard June 5. [Info, registration, links to past talks here](#).
- **Alameda StopWaste's Bay Friendly Garden guide can be downloaded here**. A tip for winter weeding - pull weeds when soil is moist but not wet! [Garden events calendar](#) lists events and resources for Bay- and climate-friendly gardening. A comprehensive guide to [replacing your lawn with drought- tolerant plantings is here](#). A [list of tool and seed libraries is here](#). Information is available for [homes, schools](#), and [businesses](#) on reducing food and other waste, dealing with hazardous waste, and other topics, including a [searchable guide on how to reduce, re-use, or recycle products](#).
- **Contra Costa Water District water-efficiency webinars** including rebates and getting rid of lawn are online [here](#).
- **EBMUD** offers online office hours on landscape rebates noon-1 PM on first and third Tuesdays. [Info and registration here](#). EB MUD also offers rebates and [extensive information on water saving and low-water gardening here](#), including lists of low-water-use plants, information on mulching and firescaping, lists of plants for specific needs, and information on grey-water systems.
- **Neighbors for a Sustainable Berkeley** seeks to connect neighbors to share knowledge on sustainable gardening, eating, transportation, energy, and more . [Info and signup here](#).
- **ReScape's courses**, mainly certifying professionals at all levels, offer environmentally friendly, nature-based landscaping. Courses for 2025 include qualification for maintenance, firescaping, heat, and design. [Info here](#). [Rescape's directory of professionals trained in environmental practices is here](#).
- **StopFoodWaste.org** has [dozens of tips](#) from keeping food fresh to using leftovers, a [blog](#) with waste-reducing tips from chefs from nonprofit cooking school 18 Reasons, and [resources](#) from deciphering dates on labels to how schools or businesses can donate food - and even tips for [re-growing veggies from scraps](#).
- **Berkeley's Ecology Center** offers [a list of places to drop off things not eligible for curbside pickup here](#). [Albany's guides are here](#) and [El Cerrito's guide is here](#). These include pickup of bulky items and where to drop off batteries or other hazardous materials.



Materials

- Berkeley residents city-wide can schedule free chipping of woody debris and flammable vegetation - [info and online signup here](#).
- **The City of Albany offers free indoor pails for compostable waste** to residents of multi-family buildings. [Delivery appointments here](#).
- **Free compost and mulch: El Cerrito** offers local residents and businesses up to 5 cu. ft. of free compost while supplies last, on third Saturdays at the upper Cerrito Vista Park parking lot, Avis Drive south of Moeser. Bring your own containers. [Info here](#). **Berkeley's load-it-**



yourself free compost is available while it lasts, starting Fri. AM, Marina Blvd. [Info here](#). **Albany** offers free compost for all at the Gill Tract Farm noon-4 PM Sundays; [instructions and map here](#). Free mulch is available at Ocean View Park; [info here](#). **Richmond residents** can get free compost on first 9AM - 4 PM first Wednesdays at 101 Pittsburg Ave., Richmond. (This is also the **West Contra Costa Hazardous Waste facility**, where El Cerrito, Richmond, and other West County residents can drop off hazardous waste free.)

Reducing greenhouse-gas emissions; climate change



- **Green home tours are part of the [Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tours](#)** of native-plant gardens in Alameda and Contra Costa. *See above under Gardens to Visit.* [Flyer here](#). [Registration info here](#).
- **El Cerrito's Go Green! Mobility Fair, Sat., Apr. 26**, offers info on all sorts of climate-saving travel, including transit, test rides on e-biked, vehicles on display, games, music, smoothies, and more. Also sponsored by the City of Berkeley, BART, Bike East Bay, and El Cerrito Walk and Roll, [Info here](#).
- **The California Air Resources Board** offers a chance for about 1000 income-eligible people to received up to \$2000 toward an e-bike, online 5 PM April 29. [Information here](#).
- **Free webinars and events on EVs and Ebikes** include informative Zoom talks Apr. 22 and a Ross Valley EV and Ebike show May 4. from [Ride and Drive Clean](#): [Info here](#).
- **PG&E offers free webinars on electrification and energy saving** . [The catalog for on-demand recordings and live events is here](#). PG&E offers rebates for "smart" thermostats and replacing electric water heaters with heat-pump heaters
- **BayRen** and **Rising Sun Center for Opportunity** offer free house calls on making your home more energy efficient, with kits that include free LED bulbs. [Info here](#).
- **BayRen's** guide to rebates for heat pumps, induction cookers, electric vehicles and more is [here](#). The organization trains electricians and other professionals and offers a [list of trained professionals here](#).
- **QuitCarbon** offers free plans for electrifying your home, including info on rebates and estimated costs They also make presentations to groups. [Info here](#).
- **Albany's guide to electrifying your home, including rebates, is on line here**. [The city offers rebates](#) of \$500 to \$1500 for installation of heat pumps, with rebates doubled for low-income households. [Info and application here](#).
- **East Bay residents can try an induction cooker** and pot for three weeks free, and [rebates of up to \\$750 for exchanging your gas stove for induction cooking are available](#) through Bay-Ren, a coalition of utilities. This low-energy, safe cooking plate stays cool while it heats your food with magnetized copper coils. [Info and registration here](#) for AVA (formerly East Bay Community Energy), [here](#) for PG&E, and [here](#) for Albany residents. Borrow an induction wok - [Info here](#).
- **Solar Rights Alliance** offers [consumer info for rooftop and other home solar](#), from finding the right installer to getting repairs.
- **Low-income residents of East Bay ZIP codes deemed to have high pollution levels** may qualify for rebates to replace high-emission vehicles with electric ones, through the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. [Info here](#).

More calendars, more to explore

This list focuses on the East Bay, mainly west of the hills. Volunteering and exploring nature are great ways to experience the entire Bay Area!

- For more opportunities, especially farther afield, check out the [Bay Nature Calendar](#).
- The [Green City Calendar](#) has lots on San Francisco.
- For events east of the hills, check out [Sustainable Contra Costa's events list](#).

This list is put together by [Friends of Five Creeks](#). To suggest an event to include, please email f5creeks@gmail.com with basic information before the first of the month.