

## Coexistence

Previous residents of this park planted non-native ornamentals, fruit trees, and grapes. In many cases, like the olive trees, these plants still remain without appearing to crowd out native plants. For example, when you reach the 5th informational sign across from the bench, you will notice a mixture of native and non-native plants sharing the same habitat. They include natives such as *tan oaks*, madrone, and bay laurel. The cypress, which is a non-native in this location, is living peacefully alongside the native trees and shrubs.

The **black oak** is one of the native deciduous trees in the park. Its leaves can grow up to 10 inches long, having 5-7 lobes with bristle tips on the ends. During winter it is bare, but the rest of the year it is full of leaves and acorns. The acorns are low in tannins, making them a favorite of deer, squirrels, and jays.



The aromatic leaves of the **bay laurel tree** are similar to the bay leaves found in grocery stores. Native Americans used them for insect repellent and medicinal purposes. We use bay leaves as a seasoning in spaghetti sauce, which is how it got the nickname *spaghetti tree*.

Nearby you will notice the invasive **broom** growing here. It was originally planted for its pretty yellow flowers. Certain animals, like deer, forage for food in the forest, but broom is toxic for them. It is also harmful to native plants because it grows so fast that native plant seedlings do not have enough sun to sprout and survive; however, broom seedlings will grow easily in the shade. Before you know it, native plants will be competing with broom for space, sunlight, and water. Who would you like to win the competition?



## Competition

At trail junction 16, take a sharp right turn onto Loop Trail. In the late 1800's, eucalyptus trees were planted here to replace the redwood trees for building materials and windbreak. Later it was discovered that eucalyptus is not a good building material. Over time, the redwoods, oaks, bay laurels, and other native plants had to compete with the non-native newcomers for water, space and nutrients. The result of this competition is that the eucalyptus grows so fast and tall that redwoods and other native plants became crowded out and their resources are diminished.



Not only do **eucalyptus trees** disrupt the natural ecology, their bark is highly flammable. The resin in their bark increases the intensity and spread of wildfires. These trees shed their bark, which hangs off their branches, creating a fire ladder. This allows fires to spread quickly throughout the forest. County Parks are working hard to remove these eucalyptus trees.

In 2019, up to 16 acres of non-native trees will be removed and acorns of native oak trees will be planted in an effort to restore the natural habitat. Many volunteers will be needed to reach this goal.



In 1872 Simon Jones hired Chinese workers to build the limestone retaining wall seen as you reach the end of the hike. It was built without mortar. In the wet season, moss covers the wall, collecting water that creates a perfect habitat for ferns and other plants to grow. This illustrates how history has changed the habitat of Wunderlich Park.

## HABITAT HISTORY HIKE

*A self-guided nature walk exploring how logging, tree replacement, and restoration created habitat change at Wunderlich Park*



**Alambique to Loop to Bear Gulch Trail**  
1.75 Miles



- \* BE A NATURE DETECTIVE and notice the changing plant communities
- \* LOOK FOR CLUES of changes to the environment made by past inhabitants of the park
- \* WONDER which animals live here
- \* NOTICE that redwoods and eucalyptus are competing for space
- \* BE CURIOUS AND CONNECT WITH NATURE

**Wunderlich Park**  
San Mateo County

## Trail Route



Map artwork by Rebecca Fenn

### Trail Junction 6

Start here. Go straight on Alambique Trail.

### Trail Junction 16

Take a sharp right onto Loop Trail.

### Trail Junction 8

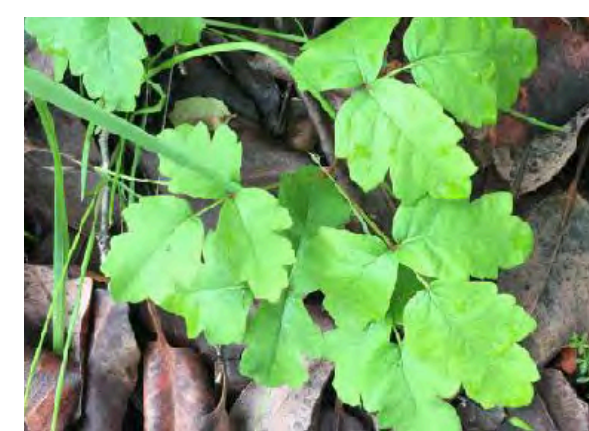
Turn right on to Bear Gulch Trail downhill. Continue to the parking lot.

Horses have the right of way. Whether you are in a large or small group, move to the edge of the trail to let the horses pass.



### LEAVES OF THREE, LET IT BE

**Poison oak** can produce an itchy rash if touched. Birds feed on their berries and spread the plant throughout the forest.



## Inhabitants Past & Present

Previously this property was home to Native Americans (Ohlones), ranchers, farmers, and businessmen until it became Wunderlich Park for public recreation. Each inhabitant made changes to the environment, and their changes are part of the history, beauty, and challenges of Wunderlich Park.

**LET'S START:** Alambique Nature Trail has 5 informational signs providing history of the area and descriptions of some of the plants and animals in Wunderlich Park.

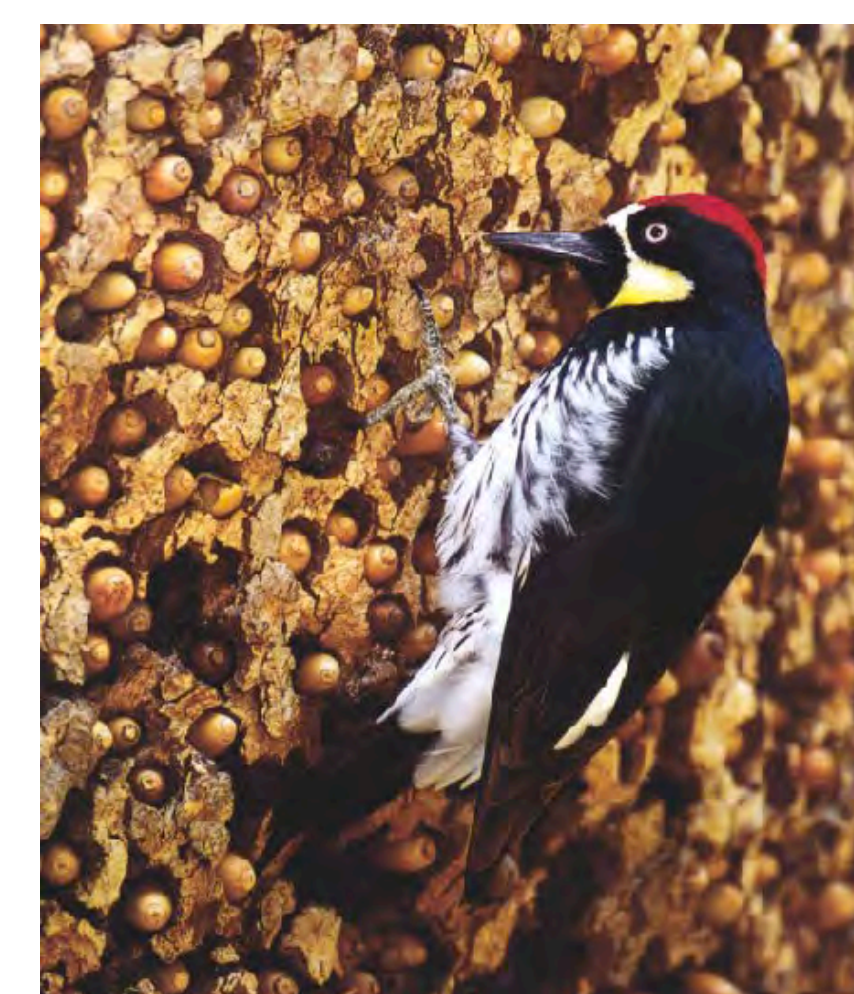
You will start your hike walking through a mixture of coast live oaks and California buckeye trees. The non-native olive trees were planted when the land was used as a farm. This California oak woodland habitat provides food and shelter for animals like woodpeckers, gray squirrels, western fence lizards, deer, and butterflies.

The **California buckeye** tree produces the largest seed of any California native plant. All parts of this tree are extremely toxic, but not to squirrels or native bees. The Native Americans made a pulp out of the seed to stun fish, making them easy to catch. Do you think they used buckeyes to fish in nearby Alambique Creek?



The **coast live oak** is a common tree in the oak woodland. It produces acorns in the fall, which feed many forest animals, such as squirrels, deer, and scrub jays. Acorns were highly valued by the Native Americans as a food source.

**Acorn woodpeckers** are very social and live in family groups. They collect acorns in the fall and store them in holes that they have drilled with their beaks in old or dead trees. These are called granaries, which may contain up to 50,000 acorns.



## Redwood Habitat

Soon you will be entering a cool, dark habitat of tall trees. These are California coast redwoods, our state tree. A redwood can live up to 2000 years and reach heights of 350 feet. What is their secret? Thick bark and tannins protect them against fires, mold, and insects. During the Gold Rush many people moved to San Francisco, creating a need for homes. Old growth redwoods (more than 1,000 years old) were logged and used for building material. Most of the remaining trees seen here today are second and third generation redwoods. Many sprouted from the roots of the logged mother tree.

Further up the trail on your right will be a stump of an old growth **redwood**. Notice the circle of redwoods growing around the stump; they are clones of the mother tree. Imagine what a forest of the giant trees looked like to the loggers. They saw these giant trees as a way to make a living. Pretty soon more than 95 percent of the old giants were cut down.



Follow a trail of slime to discover one of the forest's clean up crew. **Banana slugs** feed on anything they find on the forest floor, living or decaying. In the process, their deposits create nutrient rich soil. Their slime helps them move, protects them, and keeps them from drying out. They thrive in foggy, damp forests.

Do you wonder why there are very few plants growing under the redwoods? Their redwood duff is very acidic and only a few plants, like **redwood sorrel** can grow in their dark and acidic habitat.



*Friends of Huddart & Wunderlich Parks*  
<https://www.huddartwunderlichfriends.org>  
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