

Discover Black Diamond

Year opened: 1976 Acres: 8,349
Highlights: Hiking, biking, horseback riding; mining museum and mine tours; birdwatching; wildflowers.
Did you know? From 1855 until 1949, nearly 4 million tons of coal and 1.8 million tons of sand were extracted from the mines.

NATIVE AMERICANS Three Bay Miwok-speaking tribes inhabited parts of today's Black Diamond Mines: Ompin (southern), Volvon (northwest) and Julpun (northeast). With the arrival of Spanish, Mexican, and American settlers after 1722, the Bay Miwok way of life was rapidly transformed. However, in spite of pressure to the contrary, many of them continue to work for the preservation of the cultural landscapes and sites.

COAL MINING From the 1850s to the early 1900s, the coal mining towns of Nortonville, Somersville, Stewartville, West Hartley, and Judsonville thrived in the Black Diamond area. Nearly 4 million tons of coal ("black diamonds") were mined by over 900 miners, some as young as 8 years old. At the peak of operations the coalfield was reported to have been the population center of Contra Costa County. By the time operations ceased due to rising production costs and new energy sources, much of California's economy had been transformed from a rural to an industrial base.

SAND MINING In the 1920s underground sand mining began near the deserted Nortonville and Somersville townsites. The Somersville mine supplied sand used by the Hazel-Atlas Glass Company in Oakland, while the Nortonville mine supplied the Columbia Steel Works in Pittsburg with foundry sand. Competition from Belgian glass sand and the closing of the steel foundry ended the sand mining by the late 1940s.

RANCHING Until the discovery of coal, cattle ranching was the major industry in this area. After the mines closed, some miners turned to ranching. Abandoned buildings became barns, railroad ties were used as fence posts, and boilers were converted into water troughs. Descendants of original mining families still graze cattle in the Preserve.

POLICE, FIRE, MEDICAL EMERGENCY9-1-1
EBRPD HEADQUARTERS..... 1-888-327-2757
PARK OFFICE..... 1-888-327-2757, option 3, ext. 4506
VISITOR CENTER(510) 544-2750
CAMPING 1-888-327-2757, option 2

A REGIONAL PRESERVE The Park District began acquiring land for this Preserve in 1973. Today, most of the former mining district lies within the Preserve. The area is an ideal location for hiking, picnicking, and observing nature. Naturalists conduct a variety of programs related to the Preserve's natural and historic resources. The Sidney Flat and Greathouse visitor centers will provide more information, and house photographs, videos, displays, and artifacts from the parkland's nineteenth- and twentieth-century past.

VEGETATION The Preserve's 60+ miles of trails traverse areas of grassland, foothill woodland, mixed evergreen forest, chaparral, stream vegetation, and exotic plantings. Notable among the latter are several tree species introduced by the coal miners, including black locust, pepper tree, almond, eucalyptus, and tree of heaven.

Black Diamond is noted as the northernmost location of Coulter pine, black sage, desert olive, and dudleya. In addition, several species that are restricted to the Mount Diablo area occur here, including the Mount Diablo globe lily, Mount Diablo helianthella, and Mount Diablo manzanita. The hills are covered with stunning springtime wildflower displays.

WILDLIFE Observant hikers may see the tracks of raccoons, skunks, opossums, rabbits, and deer. Mountain lions, bobcats, foxes, and coyotes are occasionally spotted, while birds of prey soar overhead. Over 100 species of birds have been observed, from the meadowlark to the rare golden eagle. Several rare animal species have been found here, including the white-tailed kite, the Alameda striped racer, the red-legged frog, and the California tiger salamander.

ROSE HILL CEMETERY A historic cemetery serves as a monument to the lives of the former residents. Although more than 10 nationalities resided in the mining area, Rose Hill was a Protestant cemetery that served as the burial ground for many of the Welsh residents. Buried here are children who died in epidemics, women who died in childbirth, and men who died in mining disasters.

WON'T YOU HELP US? Over the years, vandalism has taken its toll on the cemetery, which the Park District is attempting to restore. If you have information concerning people buried here, or the locations of missing gravestones, please call the Black Diamond office at 1-888-EBPARKS, option 3, ext. 4506.



5175 Somersville Road,
Antioch, CA 94509

To Reach Black Diamond:

Take Highway 4 to the Somersville Road exit in Antioch. Drive south on Somersville Road to the Preserve entrance. Public Transit: Tri Delta Transit operates routes that serve Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve and adjacent Contra Loma Regional Recreation Area. See www.trideltatransit.com, call (925) 754-4040 or call 5-1-1 for route information.

Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve

Antioch, Pittsburg, Brentwood

East Bay Regional Park District



East Bay Regional Park District

2950 Peralta Oaks Court,
Oakland, CA 94605-0381
1-888-EBPARKS (1-888-327-2757) (TRS 711)
www.ebparks.org Reprint 12/2020

BLACK DIAMOND MINES

- Hiker, Horse, Bike Trail
- Hiker Only Trail
- Mt. Diablo-to-Black Diamond Regional Trail (Hiker, Horse, Bike)
- American Discovery Trail/ Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail
- Paved Trail
- Mileage Between Points
- Paved Road
- Creek, Canal
- Parking
- Visitor Center
- Equestrian Parking
- Phone, 9-1-1 Only
- Restroom
- Drinking Water
- Horse Water
- Information Panel
- Picnic Tables
- Group/Backpack Camping
- Coulter Pines
- Pond or Reservoir
- Locked Gate



Reprint 12/2020

0 1/4 1/2 3/4 Mi.

Contour interval 40 Feet
Contour interval 20 Feet

ROAD CLOSED
No public access into park.
NORTONVILLE ROAD
No public access into park.

MT. DIABLO-TO-BLACK DIAMOND TRAIL: 2.6 miles to Clayton from park boundary.

AIR SHAFT

"JIM'S PLACE"

GREATHOUSE VISITOR CENTER

1-Manhattan Canyon Trail
2-Lower Chaparral Trail
3-Chaparral Loop Trail

MINING FEATURES as numbered on map:

- 1** AIR SHAFT: This air shaft (once 150 feet deep and reached here by a short tunnel) was used to keep a coal mine ventilated and free from dangerous gases. The marks left by miners' picks are still evident on the excavation sides.
- 2** "JIM'S PLACE": This little underground dwelling is of unknown origin. Notice the square skylight, round stovepipe hole, and shelf opening.
- 3** GREATHOUSE VISITOR CENTER: This portal was the original opening into the sand mine.
- 4** EUREKA SLOPE: This inclined shaft was the entrance to the Eureka Coal Mine. Between 1860 and 1895, more than 150,000 tons of coal were hoisted to the surface. The slope is 290 feet long and descends at a pitch of 32 degrees.
- 5** HAZEL ATLAS PORTAL: This mine supplied sand used for glass making in the 1920s through the 1940s.
- 6** STOPE: This huge chamber was blasted out of sandstone by miners extracting rock for glass making.
- 7** POWDER MAGAZINE: This small excavation was used to store explosives during the sand mining era.
- 8** PROSPECT TUNNEL: This tunnel was driven in the 1860s by miners in search of commercial-quality coal. Two hundred feet of the 400-foot tunnel are open for exploration. Bring a light.
- 9** STAR MINE: This barred tunnel once served as the entrance to the Star Mine, one of the last active coal mines in the area.

ANTIOCH

CONTRA LOMA REGIONAL PARK

Separate map available

WELCOME!

Please enjoy the Regional Parks safely, and help protect and preserve the parklands by complying with park rules and regulations.

SAFETY and ETIQUETTE

- Stay on trails. Taking shortcuts can be dangerous and causes erosion.
- Wading and/or swimming in undesignated areas may be dangerous and may harm the watershed.
- Carry and drink plenty of water.
- Be prepared for changes in weather conditions.
- Trails can be slippery, rocky and steep. Proceed carefully at your own risk.
- Feeding or approaching wildlife is dangerous and illegal.
- Keep the parks beautiful. Pack out what you pack in.

RULES

- Dogs must be leashed 200 feet from any trail or park entrance. Dogs must be leashed in parking lots, picnic areas, developed areas such as lawns and play fields, and on some trails. They must be under voice control at all times.
- Drones are prohibited.
- Smoking is prohibited.
- Bicycles are permitted on designated trails only. Horses have the right-of-way on trails.
- State law requires that all bicyclists under age 18 wear an approved helmet while riding on trails and roadways. All bicyclists and equestrians are strongly encouraged to wear helmets at all times. Visitors are responsible for knowing and complying with park rules (Ordinance 38). See www.ebparks.org/rules.

