



FIRST CLASS MAIL

KNAPSACK CONTRA COSTA HILLS CLUB AUGUST 2026 NEWS

Greetings CCHC members! Here are the August *Knapsack* and an updated summer hike schedule.

We recommend you consult the club website at <https://contracostahills.org/index.html> for updates and additional information. Also visit our safe section in groups.io for announcements, late updates, as well as pictures and write-ups from past hikes.

Thank you for your support of the club, and see you on the trails.



July 23 – Hamilton Wetlands, Novato. Vista Point, Connie, Kathryn, Noël

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE As we enter August and say goodbye to July, we have hikes this month that will take us to a variety

of locations in the Bay Area including San Francisco, Sausalito, Berkeley, Point Pinole, Union City, Hayward. However, there

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are a few open dates on August 16 and 20. A reminder that on September 17 we will be celebrating our dear Jo Anne Schultz's 90th Birthday with a potluck at Quarry Lakes. Please save the date for it will be a most enjoyable event. I hope that everyone is enjoying the summer and their travels both here at home and abroad. As usual, I want to extend my appreciation to those of you who have been hike leaders and co-leaders along with our officers who continue to keep the Club alive and well. Let's hope that August affords us with comfortable weather, especially as we venture on our hikes. Stay well and enjoy...

See you on the trails, Stew Perlman

NEWS AND EVENTS

HEAT! We are in the middle of the hot season. So, remember hikers, for the next several months prepare for the heat! Bring plenty of water and drink it! Drink electrolytes as well. Wear a hat in the sun, and layer your clothes so you can end up with loose, comfortable clothing when the temperature rises and the sun beats down.

TICKS! Though spring is the most intense part of tick season, they are still around! KQED has an excellent piece on ticks, how to avoid them, and how to deal with them here: kqed.org/news/12085282. A few tips from the KQED post: Stay on trail — in the middle is best — and out of tall grasses. Wear light-colored long pants and sleeves. Also, tuck in your clothes. Watch your head — ticks will crawl upwards until they find a good hiding spot. Protect your pet. Do a proper tick check when you get home — KQED has good tips on how to do this. And if you find a tick, safely remove the tick as soon as you can. Use tweezers to get as close to the skin as possible to remove the entire tick — but do it slowly and steadily.

HELP NEEDED We are looking for a fourth person to handle updating of the website for part of the year. Specific technical experience is not needed, the program we use is user-friendly and Liz, Fred, and Lewis can get you up to speed and help you out. Contact Liz Howell: liz_howell@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING OUTINGS

MINDEN/GARDNERVILLE, NV, October 4-8.

Discover the hidden secrets where the Nevada high desert meets the California High Sierras. For more info, see the [website](#) or [groups.io](#).

PALM SPRINGS AND JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

February 21–25, 2027 – save the date! Sign-ups October 2026. Escape the Bay Area winter cold and enjoy hiking in the desert. For more info, see the [website](#) or [groups.io](#).

KNOW SOMEONE WHO COULD USE A LITTLE TLC? Contact

Helen Wong Johe, our new corresponding secretary, at 510-367-4148 or HJohe@yahoo.com

WELCOME to our new members

Ron Haydel and Dori Sanchez

OPEN HIKEs: Thursday 8/20, 9/3, and Sunday 8/16, 9/13, and 9/27 are open. We need Sunday leaders!! Also, please think about leading a hike in the fall. We will be looking for sign-ups for October, November, and December in the coming weeks. If you have an idea, please contact Marilyn Vihman 510-708-3853 m.vihman@berkeley.edu or Jim Baranowski 925-577-1022 brnw_th@yahoo.com.

IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS: Here are some of our hikes over the past month. A full set of write-ups and pictures can be found under CCHChikers on [groups.io](#). Contact Rosemary Johnson with questions.

LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR RIM TRAIL via MORAGA ROAD, June 28.

Leader Harry Fong. After several cool, cloudy days, the skies cleared for a bright, sunny hike. Harry was joined by eight hikers, including two first-time guests, Carrie and Keith, who learned about our club from another member. We hope they enjoyed the outing and will consider joining CCHC.

From the trailhead on Moraga Road, near the Moraga-Lafayette border, the group climbed about a mile to the Lafayette Reservoir rim trail. We followed the rim clockwise, traversing several rolling hills before reaching "Cardiac Hill," a steep, slippery climb topping out just over 1,000 feet. After conquering it, we continued along more hills to a lunch stop beside the reservoir. After lunch, we continued to climb a few more hills before descending back down to the original trailhead. It was a beautiful, clear, and sunny day. Along the way, we saw wild turkeys, hawks, ravens, and vivid blue dragonflies. The views of the surrounding area and Mt. Diablo were spectacular. In total, the hike covered 6.5 miles with about 1,500 feet of elevation gain. Afterward, most of the group drove a short distance to enjoy frozen yogurt, a well-deserved reward for the day's hiking accomplishments. - Harry Fong



July 19 – San Pedro Valley Park, Pacifica - ceanothus (California lilac) along Hazelnut Trail

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July 2 – Sunnyside Conservatory and SF City College Murals

SUNNYSIDE CONSERVATORY and SF CITY COLLEGE MURALS, July 2. Leader: Kathryn Rato. Kathryn led a very nice hike, with the help of Rita and Patty who backed her up. The hikers first stopped at Sunnyside Conservatory, surrounded by palm trees and rare plants. It felt like entering another world. The Victorian-style octagonal observatory had windows on all sides and on the roof. It was built circa 1898 by William Augustus Merralls, an inventor and stargazer. The observatory and gardens are now open to the public.

The hikers then headed to San Francisco City College. On the way they passed an elementary school with kids outside at recess. As the kids crowded up to the cyclone fence, a little girl asked, "Why are there so many grandmas and grandpas walking by?" A hiker told her, "We are a hiking group with some older people." The little girl then asked, "Who is the boss?" Someone pointed to Kathryn and said, "She is. We are following her because she knows where we are going." Arriving at the San Francisco City College campus at Frida Kahlo Way, the group stopped for a break. Throughout the campus were statues, wood carvings, tiled and painted murals -- both indoors and out.

Kathryn then took the hikers to the farther end of Mission Street where there were two choices of Asian bakery eateries. They were very close to each other so some people went to both. Many hikers hadn't been to this area before. It was indeed San Francisco, but the tall landmarks in the distance were viewed from a different perspective. The weather was sunnier than near the coast. Some of the street names were unfamiliar. Almost every other house was from a different era of San Francisco architecture. The restaurants were from a variety of ethnicities. It was a very special, refreshing experience. — Linda Malm



July 9 – Hayward Regional Shoreline

HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORLINE, July 9. Leaders: Rita Poppenk and Dexter Barker. 20 hikers circled up at Bay Fair BART station under gray skies. After a 10-minute bus ride we got off at Via Nueva and Grant Avenue and walked to the San Francisco Bay Trail. By then the sun had come out and we had shed our jackets. A lovely cool breeze accompanied us as we hiked west to the bay and then north along the San Lorenzo shoreline, crossing San Lorenzo Creek. On our hike we saw half a dozen black-necked stilts in a pond in a marshy area and dozens of willets congregating on a sandy beach. We also saw a number of large metal "birds" on their descent into Oakland Airport to our north. Not counting one dead one, we saw 11 whales on this hike—four on Rita's earrings, one on her T-shirt, four on murals by Darren Greenwood on the water treatment plant on the Hayward shoreline to the south, and two more on another building further north.

After lunch at picnic tables at San Leandro's well-used Marina Park, we walked north to Marina Boulevard for a bus that took us back to Bay Fair BART. In total the hike was about five miles. Thank you, Rita and Dexter for the snacks and for a great hike. — Noël Siver



July 12 – Rocky Ridge, close to the top

ROCKY RIDGE, LAS TRAMPAS REGIONAL WILDERNESS, July 12.

Leader: Jim Baranowski. Ten hardy and reasonably hardy hikers met at the parking lot at the end of Bollinger Canyon Road on a Sunday morning in July, ready to tackle Rocky Ridge in the somewhat wild land west of San Ramon and Danville. Irene came all the way from Montana for this hike, so it better be good!

We headed up the climb up to the antenna installation on top of the ridge, originally a radar for the Nike missile installation in the valley below, back in the late 50's – early 60's. It was good hiking up the long, paved, hill, aided by the cloud cover. The group reformed at the top and hiked along the ridge for 3-1/2 miles, admiring the long views and enjoying the breeze. We came across a lizard very proud of his hole, a lot of late poppies, and sandstones full of fossilized shells in the Briones Formation, which holds up the ridge. The calcite from the shells is a little harder than the surrounding sandstone and mudstone, leaving the ridge. The sun came out as we ate a pleasant lunch on top of some rock ledges. The smarter hikers mentioned that we should get moving before it heats up. Good advice. The breeze on the ridge was nice, but didn't chill us enough for the rise in temperature as we headed down on the Elderberry Trail. Luckily there is a good amount of shade on the trail, but by the time the s-l-o-w hike leader made it down it was HOT at the end. We did 5 miles

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with 1158' of gain. It was a convivial group, with pleasant conversation along the way. Thank you all for your company, and putting up with a s-l-o-w leader! – Jim Baranowski



July 16 – Eastern Pacific Heights, 2000 and 2004 Gough St.

EASTERN PACIFIC HEIGHTS, July 16. Leaders: Noël Siver and Jan Proudfoot. Noël sent out photos and information before the hike. Jan gave out her famous Amish peanut butter balls. Meeting in front of the Civic Center Library, the hikers spotted a wedding photo-session taking place on the steps of City Hall. They crossed over and got a close-up look at the happy event. Then, they headed up Van Ness Avenue, once known as “Millionaires Row.” It used to have many more elegant mansions (known as “free-standing palaces”) than it has now. During the 1906 earthquake and fire, the U.S. Army had to dynamite the eastern side to create a firebreak that saved parts of the city. It was rebuilt as “Auto Row.” The hikers saw luxurious auto showrooms, some of which had held Packards and Cadillacs. They also saw several churches. They continued on toward Eastern Pacific Heights with many ornate mansions built by wealthy citizens in the early days of San Francisco. The styles ranged from Victorian, Queen Anne, Italianate, Tudor Revival, Beaux Arts, Brutalist, Edwardian, and more.

The Spreckels Mansion, built for the sugar magnate, is now owned by author Danielle Steele. The Phelan mansion was built for the banking magnate. There was a 10-story salmon-colored apartment house, where each level is an entirely separate unit -- each with the square footage of a large house. On Gough Street was the Belden-Buck Queen Anne mansion where the current owner (who has lived there for decades) came out to talk to the hikers. In front of the house was a statue dedicated to “The Freeway Revolt” -- in 1959 citizens turned back a proposed vast network of freeways in San Francisco. The Haas-Lilienthal House Museum, was lived in by a series of family members until 1973 when it was donated to a foundation, and is open for public tours. One of the two Flood mansions, built for a mining heir, is now “The Hamlin School.” A mansion built for a lumber baron, the Hammond Mansion, is now the “Stuart Hall for Boys.”

Lunch was at Lafayette Park on a grassy hill surrounded by trees. As they continued the hike, several hikers played a game. One would point to a mansion along the way and say, “I bought that house -- now it's mine.” Another would say, “Oh, will you invite us all in?” The answer was always “Of course.” But the entrance into these historic palaces was only in their dreams. At the end of the day, the group was given a post-hike tour on the #22 Muni bus, from the posh end

of Fillmore Street, across town to the 16th Street BART in the Mission –Linda Malm

HAMILTON WETLANDS, NOVATO, July 23. Leaders: Mike Branning and Laurie Lau. In the San Francisco Bay Area, we're fortunate that former military bases have been turned into parks. Today's hike was at the former Hamilton Air Force Base in Novato. Built on reclaimed marshland between 1932 and 1935, the site officially opened in 1934. It was named after 1st Lt. Lloyd Andrews Hamilton, a pilot who served in World War I. During World War II the base was the departure point for about 3,000 bombers heading to the Pacific. During the peak of the war the base's hospital treated as many as 3,500 wounded soldiers a month.

Between 1974 and 1976 the base was phased down and decommissioned by the Air Force. In 1983 the former base was transferred to the US Army for use as an airfield. It was also used briefly for filming movies. Most of the base has been transferred to civilian control. Since 1995 it has been transformed into a residential and commercial community. Hangars have been converted to mixed use. The historic district of the base consists of Spanish eclectic style architecture, similar to that of the California missions. Some of these 1934 buildings have been renovated while others are awaiting renovation or demolition. The US Coast Guard has housing in some of the renovated buildings.

Operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers, the California Coastal Conservancy, and the SF Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Hamilton/Bel Marin Keys Wetlands Restoration Project is restoring the Whiteside Marsh section of the former air base. According to the website of the California State Coastal Conservancy, “With 6.1 million cubic yards of dredged material raising the land back to just under marsh plain elevation, the levee was breached in 2014 to restore tidal action. Since then, the site has rapidly evolved into a diverse mix of tidal and seasonal wetlands, a transitional ecotone, and upland habitats that support both migratory and resident species.”

Today 13 hikers joined leaders Mike Branning and Laurie Lau. We took the SMART train to Novato Hamilton station and hiked from there up Reservoir Hill, down the other side, and along a sandy trail that took us past houses and hangars to a Bay Trail Scenic Overlook. The Hamilton Wetlands Trail is a segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail. From the trail and the overlook area we could see Mount Diablo in the distance. July is not prime time for migrating shorebirds but we did see egrets, gulls, avocets, willets, and red-tailed hawks. From South Hamilton Park (aka Palmisano Community Play Park), we took an out and back walk into the marsh along a levee, where we could see the trestles for the lights of the approach Landing System of the old air base. This route also gave us access to some large blackberry bushes, ripe for the picking. It was a warm day but a breeze kept us comfortable. Before returning to the SMART train station, we had lunch in the shade at picnic tables under a pergola at Palmisano Community Play Park. Thank you, Mike for introducing us to a site most of us hadn't visited before and to Laurie for the delicious treats. – Noël Siver

Please contact James Baranowski at brnw_th@yahoo.com if you have a comment or contribution. Thank you for your support.