



FIRST CLASS MAIL

KNAPSACK CONTRA COSTA HILLS CLUB JULY 2026 NEWS

Greetings CCHC members! Here are the July *Knapsack* and the 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.



June 25 – CCHC picnic, Fremont

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Although the President's Message is usually more relevant to the month for which it is written, I am going to focus more on the June 25 event. I want to thank those of you who attended the Quarry Lakes/Fremont picnic. It was a delight to see some 60 of you there as we enjoyed

friendship, food, hellos, hugs and the walk through the park. I want to thank those of you who brought desserts to share along with other edible items. Some of you stayed to help Frank, Jerry and me clean up and that is surely appreciated. And shout-outs to the cooks: Frank, Jon and Steve Landon,

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who is Frank's son-in-law. Also, thank you to Anita Ford for her help coordinating the event along with Suzy Mark for selling a wonderful variety of CCHC clothing. And thank you to Audrey and Sets for the salads. I am always grateful to those of you who appreciate my apricot jam and donate to the club as the money goes to the social and conservation committees. This year, I want to thank Lucy P. and Helen J. for generously contributing to the cost of the picnic.

As for the nitty-gritty that makes CCHC special, I am going to implore you once again as we truly need a member to join the Website Committee. Yes, it's a bit of a commitment, but if we do not have volunteers, we do not have a Club. And as I said, Liz, Lewis, Fred and Sue will be there to assist you in what you will need to know.

As for July, there are a number of interesting hikes this month, so get out there, enjoy the fresh air, the friendship, the location and the physical exercise. Your body and mind will thank you.

Stay well and stay engaged, Stew

NEWS AND EVENTS

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.

RECORDING SECRETARY: Thank you, Noël, for taking the thankless job of recording secretary for our chaotic meetings!

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

Irene Dunn, Jin Kim, and Cathy Russo

HIKE LEADERS: Things (like weather) happen, so if you feel a need to cancel a hike due to a heat wave, try to notify the club at least 48 hours before, if it is possible. And if you can

change the hike to a cooler or drier spot instead of cancelling, that is even better! Thanks.

OPEN HIKEs: Thursday 9/3 and Sunday 7/5, 7/19, 8/2, 8/16, 8/23, 9/13, and 9/27 are open. We need Sunday leaders!! 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.

REDWOOD REGIONAL PARK TO HUCKLEBERRY REGIONAL

PRESERVE, May 24. Leader Sophia Garcia. A cool morning at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park trailhead. Sunrises through redwood forest reaching to Stream Trail. Walking under the sequoia sempervirens grove simply made us humble-beings. Peaceful introduction to uphill on Prince to East Ridge Trail. Wildflowers are almost gone. Trilliums are forming seedpods and forgotten sticky-monkey scattered on the hill. Taking Philip Loop, we could avoid the mostly exposed East Ridge Trail. Crossing East Ridge to the Upper Pinehurst Trailhead which led to Upper Huckleberry Loop Trail. Memorial Day weekend, we encountered family hikers with babies on their backs.



Pallid manzanita, not doing well

Huckleberry Park is known as a preserve of special botanical species because of its moist climate and ideal soil conditions, especially its rare species of manzanita. The endangered pallid manzanita is not doing well and some are dead. One of the signs tells us a sad story about an individual who cut off the limb of a mature pallid manzanita which eventually caused its death. Quite the criminal act! If you follow the numbered trail guide, you'll get to know more about how special this park is. Today our eyes captured a Douglas iris, some ocean spray

flowers, beautiful helleborine, and more. Huckleberry showing tiny berries, soon to be picked. Although it's a tasty fruit, this bush itself is unfortunately non-native and is invasive. On the dense, woody single track, there are some viewpoints to worship great Mt. Diablo.

Lunch at a well-secluded picnic table then trailed back to Skyline Gate. Right before we ended our hike, Linda pointed out a red-shouldered hawk zooming across our path, so close. Good omen to finalize our hike. ~7.5 mile with ~1200' elevation gain. Thank you to all hikers who gathered today, sharing a kind spirit together. – Sophia Garcia

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June 4 – Seaview Trail

SEAVIEW TRAIL, TILDEN PARK, June 4. Leader: Jim Baranowski. Eleven happy hikers gathered at the trailhead above the Tilden steam train. The train and parking lots were closed and quiet on a Thursday, but will be busy on the weekend! The hike was an out and back originally planned for last December but cancelled due to an absolute downpour. Everyone agreed it was a perfect day, sun was out, temperature was just right, and a breeze that wasn't too strong. The first hill was paved past Vollmer Peak, then turned to a rocky fire road 'paved' by irregular stony gravel, weathering from the basalts and rhyolites of the Moraga Formation under your feet. Yes, here be volcanoes. Downhill we went, before going up (no flat spots allowed) past nice views west to the bay, and east over San Pablo Reservoir. Soon we were at our lunch spot, an overlook with a picnic table, bench, and neglected labyrinth, with room for all of us to have a relaxing repast. On the way back (down, up, and down this time), we could appreciate the green with occasional flowers on our way, courtesy of late rains and abundant moisture from the marine layer that is caught in this section of the East Bay Hills. Soon we were back. Thanks everyone for the pleasant company. Only 3.6 miles, but almost 700' of climbing. – Jim Baranowski



June 13 – Mark climbs the rock

DIAS RIDGE TO MUIR BEACH, June 13. Leaders: Diane Cannon and Colette Cussary. After several days of heat wave, hiking on cool Dias Ridge, then 700' drop down to Muir Beach was a quite enticing choice. Dias Ridge is named after a Portuguese dairy rancher, Silvio Dias, who was a landowner in the West Marin hills. This multipurpose single-track was completed in 2010 by removing eroded roadways, then planting ~ 20,000 native plants and grasses. Hiking by the chaparrals with birds' songs in the running fog, we

were swaying purple grass feeling like ancient nomads. Poison oak everywhere among honeysuckle, twinberry, and other familiar regulars. Then, what is this wafting fragrance, with its hint of green citrus like new fir tree leaves, staying with us awhile?

A gray day, nice hiking weather with light sweat. Rather polite bicyclers. A cheered young man climbed up to the top of a rock. Soon after, a familiar site, a Green Gulch organic farm patch, then we glanced Muir Beach, Pacific Ocean. When you catch sight of the ocean your breath automatically deepens. If it's a clear day you can see the Farallon Islands. Under the hiding sun, white horses coming and going. Soft southern breeze. A moment of bliss.

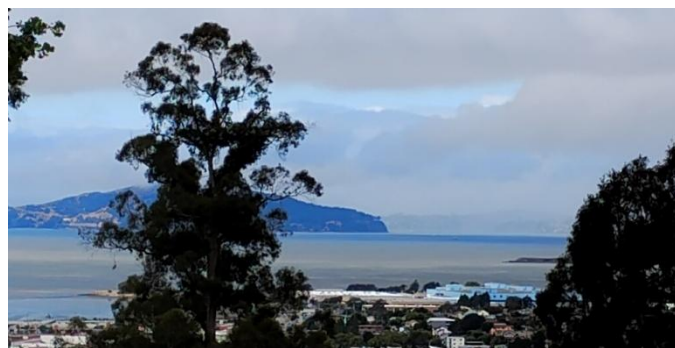
When you hike down to Muir Beach you might pass by that famous



June 13 - Foxglove

joint, then you feel "Well, I deserve a pint"; better not. Strenuous or gentle, depending on which trails you hike back to the trailhead, a 1200' to 1400' elevation gain uphill is waiting for you. We hiked up through Redwood Creek, to Miwok Trail under a woodland canopy of oak, bay and others. Lady glove, dudleya farinosa, coyote mint, and more along the trails. Our bodies told us that we must have covered more than 7 miles. We hiked ~ 9 miles ~ 1300' elevation gain. A wonderland hike!

Thank you, Diane and Colette for leading the hike, and Diane for the treat. Thank you, drivers and hikers for making this hike a special one! – Sophia Garcia



June 18 – SF Bay from the cemetery on the Blake Garden trip

BLAKE GARDEN, KENSINGTON, June 18. Leaders: Lily Ho and Connie Gee. The hikers headed uphill through El Cerrito to Sunset View Mortuary and Cemetery. The bay view from San Francisco to Mt. Tamalpais was celestial. In the cemetery were tall trees, rolling stretches of lawn, and a large waterfall. Once home to the Ohlone people, there are now different residents -- some in the beautiful cemetery, and others in the lovely homes surrounding it. The hikers headed uphill again, toward Blake Garden, a former hillside estate and mansion in Kensington. Originally a 45-acre site, it was eventually left to four beneficiaries. Two of them, Anson and Edwin Blake, built their adjacent homes on their shares of the property. One is now "Blake Garden" – since 1957 the site of a landscape teaching facility for the UC Berkeley College of

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Environmental Design's Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning. Next door is now a Carmelite Monastery. There are many beautiful sights to see at Blake Garden: The now closed but still stunning mansion, the Formal Garden with Reflecting Pool and koi; Redwood Canyon; Australian Hollow; Cut-Flower Garden; Vegetable Garden; Cottage Garden; Mediterranean Garden; and greenhouses.

The hikers didn't have far to walk to the Carmelite Monastery next door. The title "Carmel of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph" is the particular name of this monastery, which is a contemplative order of Carmelite nuns. The term "monastery" is used for the residence of either nuns or monks who are cloistered, or removed from the outside world. This order for nuns was founded in 1452. The original order for men was founded in the 12th century on Mt. Carmel, a coastal mountain range in Northern Israel. The word "Carmel" derives from the Hebrew word for "garden" or "orchard" or, debatably, a color such as "crimson" or "yellow." Carmelites' lives center on silence, to foster prayer and contemplation. The hikers were allowed to enter the chapel quietly and sit in the pews to have a calming, spiritual, peaceful moment.

As the group descended the hill, they couldn't resist going into "FatApples Restaurant and Bakery." The glass shelves were full of delicious temptations. – Linda Malm



June 25 – The cooks – Frank Martin, David Martin, Steve Landon, Jon Marks, and Stew Perlman



June 25 – They Made It Happen – Sets Amann, Helen Wong Johe, and Anita Ford

ANNUAL PICNIC, FREMONT, June 25. Leaders: Jerry Ford, Frank Martin, and Stew Perlman. This year, the CCHC Annual Picnic was held at Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area in Fremont, where 55 hikers congregated in a shaded pavilion. Our hosts: Jerry and Anita Ford, Stew and Audrey Perlman, Frank Martin and Steve Landon, -- and helpers: Jon and Suzy Mark, Sets Amann, Sue Elliott, Lucy

Perdichizzi, and Helen Wong Johe -- provided the usual feast of hot dogs, hamburgers, tilapia, and the "coveted" portobello mushrooms -- along with a variety of desserts provided by members. On the 3-mile hike around the lake, we spotted tree and barn swallows, a Forster's tern, a variety of ducks, black walnut trees, and wild grapevines. The hike culminated with a visit to the Environmentally Sustainable Garden. A big THANK YOU to our hosts for holding this fun event every year!! – Karen Arntzen

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



June 13 – Dias Ridge to Muir Beach – Diane, Mark, Laurie, Ina, Mary, Colette



June 25 – Jerry, Cameron, Suzy, and Frank's beans!