



HEALTHY PARKS HEALTHY PEOPLE – FACT SHEET

PARKS AS A PATHWAY TO HEALTH

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curriculum will be piloted (and evaluated) in 33 classrooms in Alameda and Contra Costa counties in the 2012-2013 school year. Our partners from Alameda County Office of Education Project E.A.T. helped to develop the curricula.

- Trails Challenge, a program created through partnership with Kaiser Permanente started in 1994. EBRPD has created an online guide, maps and materials for the public to engage in a self-guided, self-paced hiking program, encouraging them to get fit outdoors. Last year nearly 10,000 individuals registered for the challenge to complete five hikes or 26 miles. Trails Challenge was recognized as a model initiative by First Lady Michelle Obama during her remarks at the 2010 National Recreation and Park Association Congress.

- EBRPD's Green Transportation Initiative is a key policy and infrastructure success, involving over 30 partnerships with a wide variety of public and private entities. In 2010 EBRPD received a \$10.2 million TIGER II grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation for its Green Transportation Corridors Projects. With these funds, EBRPD is working with municipal and transportation planning agencies to close walking and biking gaps in its 200 miles of paved trails, creating transportation alternatives in our communities, and improving opportunities for physical activity. Community projects in Contra Costa County benefitting from these resources include extending the S.F. Bay Trail through Hercules; building

a Highway 4 overpass in Antioch; and linking the Bay Trail between Martinez and Crockett. Other community projects include building an underpass beneath Interstate 580 in Dublin/Pleasanton for the Iron Horse Regional Trail, and connecting the Bay Trail gap between Gilman and Buchanan Streets in Berkeley and Albany.

Regional Parks Foundation

Being part of the Healthy Parks Healthy People movement means we recognize that our community members have varied needs. Not everyone has the means to go to a local park, so we're here to help through our partnership with the Regional Parks Foundation.

The Regional Parks Foundation is an affiliate non-profit organization that raises money through memberships, donations, and grants, with the mission of providing broader public access to the Regional Parks. The Foundation raises about \$1.1 million annually in support of Park District projects that include environmental restoration, camperships for low-income youth, Parks Express contract bus service, and special capital projects. Camperships are scholarships for children to attend day and overnight camps outdoors. The Foundation also has funded swim lessons for hundreds of children in several communities, in partnership with schools and non-profit organizations. Also, nearly 60,000 students each year participate in naturalist-led interpretive programs during the school day.

Background

Healthy Parks Healthy People was founded by Parks Victoria in Australia. It has been embraced by 35 countries, which share a mission to get people to use parks and benefit from our connection to the natural environment through parks – even as the world becomes more urbanized. The East Bay Regional Park District is a leader in the U.S. and the San Francisco Bay Area in this movement that advocates for parks as a pathway to health.

Call to Action

We invite you to join us in this important movement. If you live in Alameda County or Contra Costa County, find your nearest Regional Park – it's likely just minutes away – and go explore.

- Visit our website at www.ebparks.org to download a trail map, or find a program or activity.
- Join the annual Trails Challenge online at <http://www.regionalparksfoundation.org>.

If you are from outside the area, find your local or regional park district and encourage them to be part of Healthy Parks Healthy People.

About the Park District

The East Bay Regional Park District is a system of beautiful public parks and trails in Alameda and Contra Costa counties east of San Francisco. The system comprises 112,000+ acres in 65 parks including over 1,200 miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding and nature study.

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Overview

Healthy Parks Healthy People is an international initiative to promote public awareness about the connection between individual and community health, and accessible, well-managed parks.

The East Bay Regional Park District is working with local, regional, and national agencies to promote the use of parks as a pathway to health. The initiative responds to alarming health trends toward childhood obesity, diabetes, depression, and other maladies.

With more than half the world's population now living in urban, developed areas, and younger generations spending more time connected to technology than the outdoors, understanding this linkage between parks and health is more important than ever.

The East Bay Regional Park District is taking the messages of Healthy Parks Healthy People to the 2.5 million residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties to encourage people to use the parks for physical and mental well-being, especially reaching out to children, seniors, urban residents, and ethnic groups that may have additional barriers to using the parks.

We want to get more people out to the parks, and we want to ensure that the coming generation gets out to the parks – it's a matter of public health!

EBRPD Involvement

As the largest network of urban regional parks in the nation and an internationally recognized

leader in park development and management, the Park District has a special leadership place in the effort to educate the public about the vital role parks play in nurturing individual well-being and community health.

EBRPD has been a leader in the Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPHP) U.S. initiative, working to reintegrate human, environmental and ecological health into the mission of public parks. In 2011, EBRPD launched the Healthy Parks Regional Collaborative with the National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreational Area and the Institute at the Golden Gate. Together, the agencies developed a founding advisory council that is steering the HPHHP effort in the San Francisco Bay Area.

By working with leaders of open space, schools and higher education, community planning, and health care, this "collective impact" approach is identifying strategies to reduce barriers and foster increased physical activity levels using the outdoors in parks, open spaces and on trails. This collaborative approach is aimed at residents of the entire San Francisco Bay Area.

Healthy Parks Healthy People Programs and Initiatives

- Trails Challenge
 - Healthy Kids Outdoors Challenge
 - Nature Hikes and Environmental Education
 - Outdoor Recreation
 - Volunteers
 - Green Transportation
- Find out more at www.ebparks.org.





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Healthy Parks Healthy People Integration

Many programs and initiatives of the East Bay Regional Park District, current and planned for the future, support the Healthy Parks Healthy People campaign.

Environmental Education

We understand the importance of keeping parklands healthy and teaching others about the many wonders of our natural environment. Naturalists offer public environmental education programs at the Park District's 10 visitor centers, each with programming specific to the area's cultural and natural history.

Interactive and engaging programs are available for all ages. Naturalists offer outdoor adventures such as exploring a mudflat at low tide, meeting farm animals up close, or creating a wildlife-friendly garden. Many of the programs incorporate outdoor activity, as participants walk while identifying wildflowers, or clean up a shoreline, build a birdhouse, or tend native plants. Ecology and environmental responsibility are recurring themes.

Volunteer Programs

The East Bay Regional Park District knows that people want to give back to nature and make the world a better place to live, so we've developed a number of volunteer programs to engage the public in a multitude of ways. Both

parks and people benefitted from 11,699 volunteers contributing 80,000 combined hours in 2012. Our programs include habitat conservation projects and improving and protecting natural resources.

Volunteers help monitor wildlife populations, create nesting habitat, or plant tree seedlings. Ongoing volunteer projects at specific parks draw dedicated individuals who attend regularly to garden, weed, or remove invasive plants. The endowment-funded Ivan Dickson program draws partners from the local community to maintain the Park District's trails. School groups, businesses, community organizations, families, and individuals join in caring for the parks, whether hands-on or by assisting with education, special events, or safety in the parks.

Outdoor Recreation

Programs that teach swimming, cycling, canoeing and kayaking, show the clearest connection between healthy people and parks. Organized hikes and nature walks nearly every day raise awareness and educate people of all ages about the natural world that is preserved in lands protected by the Park District. Many programs, such as family "Learn to Camp" programs, junior lifeguard camps, and junior rangers link people to nature in healthful settings.

Initiatives to Support Public Health

- Pending a Community Transformation Grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), EBRPD

proposes to lead a multi-sector collaborative – the Get Outdoors! (GO!) Network for Kids Health – that will work to increase outdoor and physical activity, particularly physical activity outdoors in the park system, among children and their families in Oakland and Richmond, CA. These communities face similar challenges in public health, as well as social determinants of health, including economic status, educational and environmental challenges, infrastructure, and public safety. The GO! Network aligns with the CDC's long term objective to reduce the rate of obesity through nutrition and physical activity interventions. The GO! Network is innovative in linking three often-disconnected sectors that should work together to improve public health: the healthcare system, the school system, and the park system. Selected partners in this innovative initiative are Children's Hospital & Research Center, Oakland; West Contra Costa County Unified School District; Oakland Unified School District; Eco Village, a project of Earth Institute, Richmond; Alameda County Office of Education; and EBRPD.

- A key infrastructure success was the 2011 opening of EBRPD's Tidewater Boating Center on the Oakland Estuary, with a boathouse, launching dock and extensive on-the-water programming. In response to East Oakland needs for safe, local access to the shoreline for recreational and environmental education activities, this newly created public space in East Oakland provides the community with extensive new opportunities.

Students at nearby public schools can have ongoing access to the center, thanks to EBRPD partnering with community-based organizations like the YMCA, which provides swim lessons, and Oakland Unified School District and the City of Oakland, to develop ongoing joint use agreements.

- EBRPD served on the development committee, and has supported and adopted the California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights (COBOR), a model statewide resolution established by the California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism. COBOR's goal is to increase healthy outdoor activity and awareness, recommending 10 outdoor activities that every child has the "right" to experience before the age of 14, such as learning to swim and to ride a bike, as well as to follow a trail and explore nature. Although COBOR has not yet emerged as a formal state or local policy, EBRPD is working to promote and institutionalize it through our programs. For example, EBRPD is getting COBOR into public schools through a new third grade curriculum, the Healthy Kids Outdoors Challenge, which connects COBOR activities directly with State of California curriculum content standards to infuse outdoors education and physical activity in curricula, and to bring children to our parks to experience activities in the Bill of Rights. This



"The GO! Network aligns with the CDC's long term objective to reduce the rate of obesity through nutrition and physical activity interventions by 5%."



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