

# 9th Annual El Cerrito Hillside Fest 2023

Saturday May 6

Sunday May 7

Various Times

Locations throughout the  
Hillside Natural Area.

FREE



Presented by El Cerrito Trail Trekkers and  
El Cerrito's Environmental Quality Committee



Explore El Cerrito's Hillside Natural Area.  
Hike, play, learn. Activities for young and old.  
Questions? [davidsweinstein@yahoo.com](mailto:davidsweinstein@yahoo.com)

**Trail Trekkers** is a 13-year old nonprofit dedicated to preserving and expanding El Cerrito's wildland and urban paths and trails and advocating for open space. We present hikes throughout the year. The **Environmental Quality Committee** advises the City Council and city officials, educates the public, and puts on cleanups, habitat restorations, and more. The **Hillside Natural Area** is a 100-plus acre park that will be preserved forever as open space. **Be aware:** *Even short hikes will have steep sections. Wear sturdy shoes with grip heels. Bring water, wear a hat. Watch for poison oak and check yourself for ticks.*

## Saturday, May 6

**8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. Early Morning Bird Walk** led by Golden Gate Audubon Society member Tara McIntire. Explore the Hillside Natural Area with its magnificent views and grasslands and BIRDS! **No dogs please, other than service dogs!** Location Five, Schmidt Lane Trailhead.

**10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Insect Hike.** Eddie Dunbar, founder and president of the **Insect Sciences Museum of California**, will lead a family-friendly yet erudite hike revealing secrets of the Hillside's tiniest animals. Location Four, King Court Gateway.

**Anytime between noon and 4 p.m. Nature Scavenger Hunt.** Learn about plants, birds, animals, rocks, and creeks. Parents help their children in this fun drop-in event. Find things on your illustrated list (no actual collecting please), take photos, return to talk about your finds and win prizes. Location Five, Schmidt Lane Trailhead.

**11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Family-friendly Rockhound Gathering.** Learn about the geology of the East Bay Hills by seeing and handling rocks and visiting nearby rock outcrops. Members of the **Northern California Geological Society** will share their knowledge and enthusiasm as we walk to and gather at the Hillside's labyrinth. Location Five, Schmidt Lane Trailhead.

**1 to 3:30 p.m. Geology Walk.** Co-sponsored by the **Northern California Geological Society**. Leaders are geologist Gary Prost, Mark Petrofsky, a former teacher and Bill Motzer, a geologist/geochemist. Learn about the geological setting of El Cerrito, rocks, faults and landslides. This moderate to strenuous walk has steep sections. Location Five, Schmidt Lane Trailhead.

**1:30 to 3 p.m. Fun and Amazing Facts About Oaks.** Audrey Liese, who is passionate about the Hillside's oak trees, presents an interactive program at her favorite secret spot surrounded by oaks. Question, observe, imagine. Kids and adults welcome. Location Three, Regency Gateway.

**3:30 to 5 p.m. Edible and Medicinal Plant Walk.** Learn about ethnobotany — how native plants have been used for food, medicine,

and crafts with Alan Siegel, a docent at Tilden Botanic Garden. Family-friendly uphill walk. You may download the free iNaturalist app to help identify and document what you learn. Location Five, Schmidt Lane Trailhead.

**5:30 to 7 p.m. Early evening history walk.** Learn about the motorcycle hill climbs that in the 1920s attracted thousands of spectators to town, about the origins of the Hillside Natural Area, and about El Cerrito's raucous past as a gambling mecca. Dave Weinstein leads on behalf of the **El Cerrito Historical Society**. Location one, Motorcycle Hill.

**7:30 pm. to 8:30. An evening tree hike.** Enjoy the Hillside in the run-up to sunset with Stephen Prée, the city's arborist who staffs the **Urban Forest Committee**. Learn about native and exotic trees, and about how the city cares for this diverse urban forest, the challenges, the potential futures, and how you can help our arboreal canopy. Location Three, Regency Gateway.

## Sunday, May 7

**10-11 a.m. Hillside Senior Stroll.** Buddy Akacic, a member of the Environmental Quality Committee who runs regular senior strolls, will lead this relatively easy walk along the Ridge Trail, with spectacular views, friendly conversation, and a gathering. Location Three, Regency Gateway.

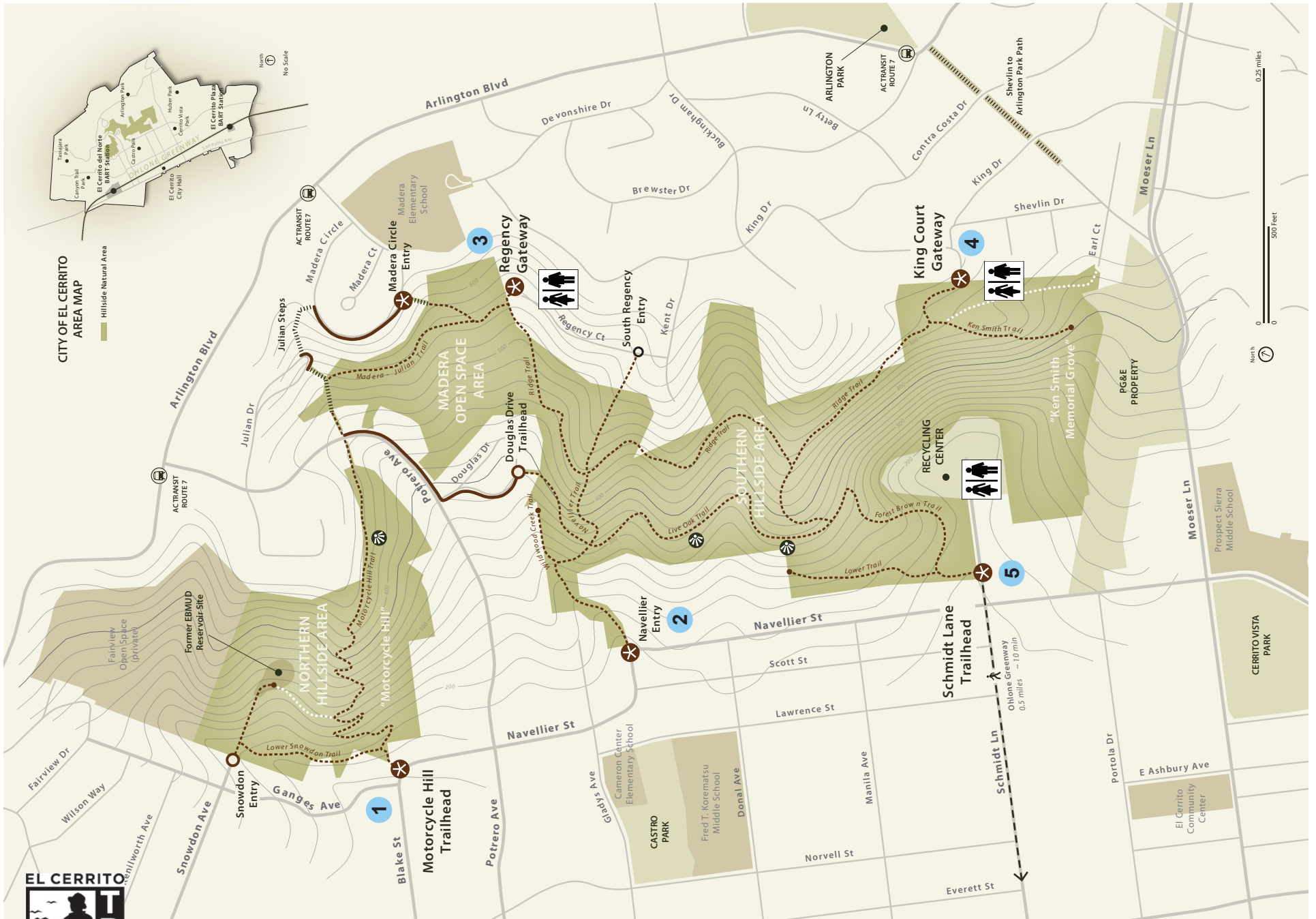
**11 a.m. to noon. Family Friendly Art in the Trees.** Let's look closely at the trees around us. Using paint sticks and watercolors, Lucy Ames, El Cerrito artist and Art Camp educator, will guide young artists to create art focusing on shapes of tree trunks and branches in a glade. The project is most suitable for artists 5 and up, but even very young artists can enjoy using non-toxic paint sticks. Adults are welcome to create too! Location Two, Navellier Entry.

**12:30 to 2 p.m. Haiku hike.** Celebrate the winners of our festival haiku contest with a walk in the Hillside area. Winners will be awarded prizes at the trailhead and then read their haiku at designated points along the first half mile of walking. Then, there are options for a 1-mile round trip hike or a 2-1/2 mile round trip hike. El Cerrito poet laureate, Evelyn Mitchell, will also read an original poem written for the festival. Location Three, Regency Gateway.

**2:30 to 4 p.m. Magical apps make it easy to ID flora and fauna.** Join Susan Schwartz, head of **Friends of Five Creeks**, and Bob Zucker as we try out free apps that help identify plants and animals. Ideal for families and seasoned naturalists. Set up accounts on iNaturalist, Seek, Merlin, or BirdNet. Location Four, King Court Gateway.

**5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Everyone is Welcome Gathering.** Join an informal gathering with Trekkers, our hike leaders, newcomers, old-timers and volunteers for snacks and beverages. This open-to-all event takes place where the view is great, a few hundred yards from Location Four, King Court Gateway. Follow the signs.

*Porta-potties are available at the Regency Gateway and at King Court. There is a restroom open until 5 p.m. Saturday only at the Recycling Center office near the Schmidt Lane Trailhead.*



LEGEND



RESTROOMS



TRAILS

**Locations:** One, Motorcycle Hill, where Navellier and Blake streets meet. Two, Navellier Entry, near 1432 Navellier Street. Three, Regency Gateway, at northern end of Regency Court. Four, King Court Gateway, at end of King Court. Five, Schmidt Lane Trailhead, on Schmidt Lane near the Recycling Center. Please enjoy our haiku signs, displayed throughout the Hillsides, written by Haiku Contest winners.