

El Cerrito Trail List

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This is a list of trails, pedestrian paths, stairways and the like that have been confirmed as city-owned rights of way or – in the case of trails in Camp Herms – are owned by the Boy Scouts of America but are open for public passage thanks to permission from the Boy Scouts.

El Cerrito Trail Trekkers continues to research other potential publicly-owned rights of way, including those that may be owned by Stage Sanitary District, EBMUD, and East Bay Regional Park District, among other entities.

Trail Trekkers is also interested in working with the city, East Bay Park District, PG&E or other entities to establish trails through purchase or easement on certain privately owned parcels that have long been used by walkers. These trails are listed in a separate section.

Trails are listed roughly from north to south. Underlined Trails are impassable or mostly so. Italicized trails need further research.

Note: No attempt has yet been made to map all the trails in Hillside Nature Area or other parks or Camp Herms.

Recognition awarded to those who find or confirm other trails!

Trails owned by city or east Bay Regional Park District:

Alta Vista Drive to Claremont Avenue Trail. A grassy right of way leads between homes to Claremont in East Richmond Heights. Trailhead in EC is between 6417 and 6511 Alta Vista, where La Honda hits Alta Vista. Trail emerges onto a shared driveway or short street in Richmond between 6584 and 6609 Claremont.

Francisco Way to Tulare Path. Two sections lead downhill between 2637 and 2641 Francisco, near Carquinez, as broad concrete steps, emerging between 2621 and 2625 2621 Mira Vista; crossing Mira Vista the path becomes an easy asphalt grade, ending between 2626 and 2628 Tulare.

Tassajara Park Trail, runs one block from Alva Avenue, between 2529 and 2531, downhill to Barrett along southside of Tassajara Park. Low, easygoing concrete steps, could use better landscaping. The path continues as a short trail through the park on its Westside, paralleling Alva and emerging onto Tassajara Avenue. **NOTE: Carol made some hand-written notes about this trail that I found cryptic. I will have her look at them and clarify.**

Barrett to Tassajara Park Trail. Broad concrete-aggregate steps descend easily from Barrett (between numbers 6434 and 6500) ending a block away at Tassajara (between numbers 2548 and 2550) right across from Tassajara Park. Walkway levels off as it nears Tassajara.

Lagunitas to Edwards Path section one. Both sections of the trail are shown on road maps. From the end of Lagunitas where it dead-ends at Carquinez, path descends east to Mira Vista. Trailhead is obscure as it appears to belong to the house just to its south, 2367 Carquinez, a majestic pink Tudor. (The house on the other side of the path is

2501 Carquinez.) The path quickly grows more obscure. Beginning as an easy-to-see concrete sidewalk, within a few feet the concrete gets covered with grass and debris. Then it becomes nothing but grass as it hugs 2367's side fence. As it approaches Mira Vista the traveler has two choice: proceed dead ahead and rappel down a rock, or bear left down wooden slat steps that take you to the driveway of 2502 Mira Vista; house on other side is 2444. That is the safer course.

Lagunitas to Edwards section two. If section one was a challenge section two is an impossibility – at least right now. The trail can be spotted directly across from the end of section one. It is between 2445 and 2501 Mira Vista. Each house has a fence that borders the trail, making it easy to spot. Making it difficult to spot and impossible to travel are seven-foot tall shrubs. A crew of volunteers with machetes could clear this easily however. The trail emerges between 2424 and 2500 Tulare, near Edwards.

Scenic Street to Harvard Street Trail. Block-long, wide grassy alley runs parallel to Arlington, between Arlington and Highland. Ends at 2212 Scenic. This is one of the city's few classic alleys – though it is grassy, not paved. (A Trekker writes: That is actually Highland St or Ave. It is a street that never got paved through the years as it is listed in the original city charter so I'm told.)

Canyon Trail Park. Nice woody trails through park.

Canyon Trail Park, entry from Crescent Way. Short pathway of steps enters park from end of Crescent, just off Jordan Avenue. Nicely made concrete stairs, with treads cantilevered over the risers, a nice touch.

Gatto Street to Conlon, at Junction. From between 6637 and 6641 Gatto to 6462 Conlon, near Junction and Canyon Trail Park.

Harper Street Steps lead from Harper near Gatto uphill to Tapscott.

Hagen to Harper Step Trail. One-block dirt trail from just north of 6501 Hagen, where it intersects Knott, uphill to Harper. It emerges at Harper between houses numbered 2035 and 2039. This trail is shown on the “Berkeley Hiking and Walking Map.” It is very obscure from the Hagen end because it is so steep. Steps would be needed to make this trail passable. It would be a very useful shortcut for pedestrians to the Del Norte BART Station.

Tamalpais Avenue to Arlington Path. Easy, paved steps begin their ascent between 2036 and 2040 Tamalpais and emerge just north of 1849 Arlington.

Madera Circle to Julian and Potrero Trail. Starts between 1520 and 1524 Madera Circle, downhill on steps to between 1614 and 1618 Julian, downhill on steps emerge at 7704 Potrero; crosses Potrero to Hillside Nature Area where it continues on as a trail through the northern portion of this wilderness park. Trail is on a route that includes John Carl Warnecke's architecturally distinctive Madera School, circa early 1950s.

Madera Circle to Mystery Land trail. Starts between 1552 and 1556 Madera Circle. Identified from city maps; not visited in person.

Julian Drive to Mystery Land. Starts at 1621 and 1625 Julian.

Blake Street to Manor Circle path. One-block sidewalk, one of the few paths in the city's flatlands. One block east of Elm Street.

Gayle Court to Noble Court Mini-Path. El Cerrito's shortest pedestrian path connects two courts. Maybe the courts were blocked to traffic to prevent a shortcut to Castro School. Eight steps is all it takes to walk this path.

Hillside Natural Area, north portion. Enter via small trail on Potrero near Douglas Drive.

The Great, Lost Brewster Court to Contra Costa Avenue. One-block trail, shown on Berkeley Biking and Hiking map. Starts at end of Brewster Court. This appears to exist in part, starting as eight uphill steps on Contra Costa, across from #1327. Before it reaches Brewster it is blocked by private fences.

Ivy Court to Camp Herms entry. Short stretch of trail accessing Camp Herms Trail from end of Ivy.

Arlington Park Trail. A continuation, you might say, of the Shevlin to Arlington Park Trail, running alongside the same unnamed creek. Flat. A spur starts into a beautiful meadow at Camp Herms but is blocked inexplicably enough by a fence and a no-trespassing sign.

The abandoned but not forgotten “Betty Lane Path.” Shown on several maps, it’s supposed to run from between 1141 and 1145 Contra Costa Avenue across from where Betty Lane dead-ends there, downhill to King Drive between 1140 and 1146 where it hits Shevlin. Impassable. Homeowner has built a small wall and path is overgrown.

Shevlin Drive to Arlington Park Path. Three-tiered path, beginning as broad, easy steps from Shevlin to King, running alongside an open creek as it ascends stairs from King to Contra Costa, and becoming a charming, tree-shaded walk between Contra Costa and Arlington Boulevard, onto which it emerges after mounting steep stairs.

Hillside Nature Area, southern-central portion. Entries. Many trails wind through the park. But for now let’s mention its entry points only: Enter the southern section at several points along Moeser, at the west end of Portola drive, the end of Schmidt Lane, the end of King Court. Two entries along Regency Court are on private land, Carol has found. Hillside Community Church, on Navellier, offers an entry, which is also privately owned, as does a short trail next to 1524 Douglas Drive.

Hillside Nature Area-Moeser Lane Trail. Step fire road with associated smaller paths and huge rock outcrops runs parallel to Moeser Lane from Navellier, across from Portola Junior High, with another entry on Moeser at Seaview.

Elm to Ohlone Greenway Cutoff. Short, ramplike trail from Elm Street to the Ohlone Greenway.

Stockton Avenue to King Drive, with Terrace Cutoff. Where Stockton ends at Shevlin, a one-block well-used path leads steeply uphill to King, with trailhead between 894 and 900 Shevlin. A green wooden box holding something marks the trailhead. Trail emerges on King between numbers 929 and 933.

Stockton to King, creek cutoff. Halfway up the Stockton to King Trail is an area between two fenced yards that appears to be a trail that pushes through steep grass and dips into a creek. Maybe machetes could open up the way past the creek. The trail is publicly owned and maps showing it emerging on Terrace between 8231 and 8239.

The Terrace-near-Shevlin Creek Cutoff. Between 8106 and 8118 Terrace, just above Shevlin, a broad grassy area between two side yard fences proceeds 100 yards into a creek. If it continues on, a machete and bridge would be required. Huge eucalyptus is on the trail as well.

Terrace to Wildcat Regional Park Trail. Trail at very end of Terrace leads into regional park. Not shown on regional park map but passable and maintained if steep.

Contra Costa to Arlington Trail. A three-segment trail with only one segment passable. Steepish path leads from where Contra Costa meets Terrace to where Bay Tree Lane meets Gelston Place. Note that the Bay Tree Trailhead looks like a standard driveway.

The Lost Gelston to Bates Leg of the Contra Costa to Arlington Trail. According to city map, the above trail continues past Gelston to Bates.

The Lost Bates to Arlington segment of the Contra Costa to Arlington Trail. The above trail continues on to Arlington, as a city owned trail, though it is impassable. From between 830 and 840 Bates it emerges between 829 and 845 Arlington.

Bay Tree Lane to Contra Costa Dr. Trail goes along border with Kensington, fromn 731 Bay Tree emerging by 810 Contra Costa Drive. The Bay Tree end is blocked by shrubs.

Huber Park Trails and Terrace Drive and Park Way to Huber. Several wind uphill from the play-picnic area. Two trails enter Huber from above, on Terrace Drive. One starts between 8037 and 8045 Terrace, the other between 7991 and 8001 Terrace, right past the house dubbed by its owner "Crestfallen Manor." Another very short trail enters the park at the end of Park Way.

Shevlin to Huber Park to Seaview. Another park entry is on Shevlin between 821 and 825. Goes through park, emerges at 804 Sea View Drive.

Fairmount-to-Rockway Path. Pedestrian sidewalk goes one short block from the commercial district on Fairmount, between 7445 and 7519 to residential Rockway, emerging between 7444 and 7454.

Albany Middle School ballfield entry. Mini-walk would lead from Behrens Street between 139 and 203 just south of A Street to the ball field if the gate were opened.

Cerrito Creek Trail. Runs in two segments, one along the section that goes through El Cerrito Plaza, from Talbott Avenue to Kains Avenue; the other through Creekside Park.

Ohlone Greenway runs length of city along former rail tracks, now BART. Trail links to SF Bay Trail and via that, to the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front national Park and to East Shore State Park. Greenway provides access to several natural areas, including the recently restored Baxter Creek.

Privately owned land with trails where public access is graciously permitted by owners:

Camp Herms Trail. Runs in a loop throughout the upper reaches off the park, offering views into Wildcat Canyon. Camp Herms has several other trails as well as important historic structures including a spectacular, WPA-built brick-walled swimming pool and Mayan-inspired bathhouse from the 1930s. Boy Scouts would like to connect their trails with those in adjacent Wildcat Canyon Regional Park.

Possible sanitary district or EBMUD easements or rights of way:

Creek Trail on Barrett. Just uphill from 6532 Barrett, what could be a trail but is more than likely just privately-owned creek access heads slightly downhill beneath oaks and fir trees to a creek. View of it from a boardwalk along Barrett.

Gladys to Hillside Nature Area Trail, trailhead between 7320 and 7318 Gladys. Trail descends to creek and crosses over into Hillside Area, though it requires a leap. Trail runs between two low concrete walls, one per bordering house. Not city-owned, but this could be a sanitary district easement to access the creek.

Clayton Creek Access. There is a short stretch of grassy path between 532 and 526 Clayton that appears to be an easement to a creek.

Privately owned land with trails that have long been used by the public:

Fairview at Tamalpais Court to Arlington and southern section of Hillside Nature Area Trail. (NOTE: This trail is on privately held land, though portions of it are often used by walkers. AND: Two goats often graze its upper reaches so restrain your dogs.) Grassy trail begins as remains of fire road, heads uphill from Fairview to run behind homes on Arlington. Several adjacent and difficult deer trails cross “Fossil Creek,” and lead along the rear of Julian Court to join Potrero-to-Julian trail as it passes through Hillside Nature Area. Most of the property is 15 acres owned by Vitale who has proposed 60 houses there. Pushing this trail through would create a lengthy corridor through the entire Hillside Nature Area.

Murietta Rock to View Avenue mini-trail Short trail to Rock from end of View Avenue. Rock is an important historic and geologic landmark in town, once visible from miles away. It is widely used by people seeking views, and others consuming beer. Privately owned, but it would provide the city with one of its finest bits of open space were it ever made public.

Murietta Rock to Cutting Boulevard mini-trail, from 50 yards uphill from intersection with Arlington, across from 7157 Cutting, trail leads to top of rock.

Shevlin to Seaview, open space. Grassy, eucalyptus-forested open space running mostly parallel to but occasionally perpendicular to Moeser; very hilly and easy to traverse, which people do. Owned by PG&E.

This privately owned trail does not get much public use that I’m aware of:

Vista Road Trail. Where Vista Road form a V, in the modernist Atwell neighborhood, a woodsy trail heads north into Mira Vista Country Club. Portion of trail is owned by Atwell Homeowners Association and part by country club, I am sure. Some large rock outcroppings are present. A member of the homeowners association has said the group might agree to allow public access.

Subjects for further research:

Terrace to Contra Costa. Shown on city map connecting 8400 block of Terrace to 900 block of CoCo, just north of Moeser, but apparently taken over by private owners. A possible entry would go through a small orchard on Terrace. Trail appears to emerge as a broad path between 982 and 970 Contra Costa. But Carol determined it is not city-owned.

1. Hillside Natural Area. Entries. At the foot of Buckingham, to the left, is a zig zag trail along a water course into the park. It is probably on private property for the first 100 feet or so, perhaps the Kerr estate. The trail is clear enough, but not well maintained.

2. Another city-owned entry is at the top of Blake between the last house on Blake and the first house on Navellier.

3. Madera Circle. At the south end, a concrete stairway and short trail disappears into broom and oak. Could it connect to Maiden Lane? Regency Court? Hillside Natural Area? It would be neat to get this re-opened.

4. Kent Court. Stege has a right of way going North West after the corner house, behind its swimming pool.

5. Mira Vista golf course. The old road from Arlington to the Club still exists, approximately across from Madera Drive. The curb is now a barrier, and there is a chain across it, but if no one is chipping onto the green or teeing off from the tee box, it is OK to go across to Pinehurst Court.

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CL says: There's a very interesting pathway on Google Maps that I've looked for but never found on the south side of Terrace between the 900 and 1000 "blocks" of Contra Costa Drive. It's not on David's map.