

Volunteering and nature-related events with others, March 2024

Purple text indicates links

Scroll down for:

Hands-on volunteering

Outdoor fun and learning, including festivals and gardens to visit

Talks, classes, conferences, exhibits, contests - mostly indoor or online

Garden- and waste-reduction events and resources

Electrification and other climate-change events and resources

More calendars

This list is now being updated through the month. Check back!

Hands-on volunteering

- **Albany Parks Cleanup**: Friends of Albany Parks sponsors a cleanup of the Ohlone Greenway 9 AM - noon Sat., Mar. 23. Meet on the Greenway at Masonic and Portland Ave.
- **Baxter Creek volunteers in El Cerrito** (under 18 with guardian) enhance Baxter Creek in Gateway Park, on the Ohlone Greenway at El Cerrito's north border, 10 AM - noon most first Sundays, meeting at 10 AM at Conlon and the Ohlone Greenway. [Info, and RSVP appreciated, here.](#)
- **Baxter Creek at Booker T. Anderson Park in Richmond** will rehabilitate a bioswale, remove invasives, plant natives, and more 9 AM - 1 PM Sat., Apr. 13. Tools, gloves, and snacks provided. Meet at the Community Center parking lot, 960 S. 47th Street, Richmond. Sponsored by the Watershed Stewards Program and Watershed Project.
- **Berkeley Adopt-a-Spot**: By caring for your local storm drain or traffic circle, you can reduce pollution and street flooding, or encourage pollinators, increase neighborhood beauty, and boost traffic safety. The City of Berkeley provides materials. [Info on signing up to adopt a storm drain here](#), including a map of drains, here. [General info here.](#)
- **Berkeley shoreline cleanups** are held on most third Saturdays starting 9 AM at Shorebird Park. [Info here](#) (you have to scroll down among many events). **Cleanup Meetup** cleanups start same time and place. [Info here.](#) **Aquatic Park cleanup scheduled 9 AM - noon Sat., Apr. 6**, working with UC Berkeley volunteers on Berkeley Project Day, [email Berkeley Adopt-a-Spot for info.](#)
- **Blake Garden** welcomes volunteers to help tend the Kensington garden with spectacular views, run by UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. For info contact the garden manager, meghanray@berkeley.edu.
- **Chavez Park Conservancy** on Berkeley's Bay edge works to rescue native shrubs and trees in the 3-acre DAWN project, one of the Bay Area's pioneer native plant installations. For info contact huttarbob@gmail.com.
- **The East Bay Regional Park District** sponsors [varied volunteer programs](#), including [habitat restoration --](#) and [invasives removal](#). [List of upcoming events here](#) includes events at Reinhardt Redwoods, Huckleberry, Sibley, Martin Luther King Jr., and more parks. Coming up: **Help remove invasive milk thistle in Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve 9 AM - noon Wed., Mar. 27, Apr. 3, 10, and 17.** [Info here.](#)
- **El Cerrito Green Teams** hosts monthly work parties in different areas. Tools, gloves, and bags supplied. [Info here.](#) RSVP helpful to 510-215-4350 or green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us. **El Cerrito Trail Trekkers and Green Teams** welcomes all ages removing fire-prone, invasive French broom in the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area, Sat. Apr. 6. [Check here for exact location](#) and hours. Wear long pants, long sleeves, and closed-toed shoes with good traction. [Info here.](#)
- **Garber Park Stewards** has restoration work days on 1st and 3rd Saturdays of most months in the forested 13-acre park off Claremont Avenue on the Berkeley-Oakland border. New web site under construction; contact them at gpstewards@gmail.com. Sat., Feb. 3, cancelled due to slippery conditions.
- **Golden Gate Bird Alliance (formerly Golden Gate Audubon)** offers monthly volunteer restoration events including at **Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline April 20** and a **cleanup of Richmond's Stege Marsh-Meeker Slough area Mar. 2**. [Information and links to event list and registration here.](#)
- **Love the Bulb** hosts gardening days at its native-plant garden at 2 PM on first and third Saturdays on the Albany Bulb. [Info here.](#)
- **Ohlone Greenway, Berkeley**: Help maintain native plantings along Berkeley's Ohlone Greenway from the Peralta Community Gardens to Gilman, 2nd and 4th Saturdays,

10:30 AM - 12:30 PM. [Info here](#).

- [Mount Diablo Interpretive Assn.](#) has opportunities with its trail crew and back-country patrol. [Info here](#). [Save Mount Diablo](#) has varied hands-on volunteer events. There also are restoration and trail building opportunities with the Diablo Restoration Team (DiRT) and Trail Dogs. [Info here](#) or contact hsutton@savemountdiablo.org.
- [Mount Tamalpais area](#) opportunities, from being a wildlife docent to pulling out French broom, are generally described on the [One Tam volunteer page, here](#). Calendar of all events including habitat restoration is [here](#). Training to become a docent for foothill yellow-legged frogs is scheduled Sat., Mar. 9. [Info and signup here](#).
- [Rotary Nature Center Friends](#) on Oakland's Lake Merritt has third-Saturday work days at the center and a nearby marsh. [Info and registration here](#).
- [Friends of Sausal Creek](#) has opportunities every week at their native-plant nursery and several Oakland restoration sites. [Info here](#).
- [The San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club](#) usually hosts a cleanup monthly, with an Earth Day Oakland cleanup scheduled for April 20. [Info here](#).
- [SPAWNERS \(San Pablo Creek\)](#) has volunteer days monthly, usually on third Saturdays, at their Wilkie Creek Outdoor Classroom. [Email here](#) or [here](#).
- [Skyline Gardens Alliance](#), restoring beautiful and varied native vegetation along an EBMUD-owned segment of the Skyline Trail, seeks committed volunteers for sessions Thursday afternoons or Sunday mornings. [Contact info here](#).
- [Take to the Hills](#) weeds and plants in Derby Canyon in the hills above the UC Berkeley Clark Kerr Campus, usually Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Email Jim@thisintothat.com.
- [On Albany Hill, Tending the Ancient Shoreline Hill \(TASH\)](#) leads volunteers weeding and planting on last Saturdays. [Email here for info](#).
- [Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation](#) has varied weekend and weekday opportunities in its 2700-acre open space adjoining Mt. Diablo and at its native-plant nursery. [Info here](#).

Outdoor Fun and Learning

Walks, field trips, tours, festivals

- [The East Bay Regional Park District's 2024 Trails Challenge](#), to hike or bike five of 20 designated trails of all levels of difficulty, continues through Dec. 31. [Info and guide to trails here](#).
- [Bird walks: Golden Gate Bird Alliance \(formerly Golden Gate Audubon\)](#) leads frequent free field trips including Lake Merritt and Hilltop Lake, Blake Garden Reinhardt Redwoods, and others farther afield. Required reservations open at 1 PM on third Tuesdays of the prior month (Tues., Mar. 19 for April outings). [Info here on registration](#). [Outings list here](#). [Info here on registering for spring birding classes, including beginning and intermediate birding in April](#).
- [El Cerrito's Recycling Center](#), 7501 Schmidt Lane, offers a free public tour 3-4 PM most first Wednesdays. [Info here](#).
- [Greenbelt Alliance](#) leads varied walks including exploring Tilden wildflowers Mar. 24, Deer Island Mar. 31, Marin Headlands wildflowers Apr. 7, Midpeninsula trails and faults Apr. 14, and Briones wildflowers Apr. 21. [Info and signup here](#).
- [Mount Diablo Interpretive Association](#) offers walks that often fill quickly, including new monthly Wednesday Bioblitz hikes (recording observations of plants and animals). Recordings of many past talks on nature also available. [Info and links to signup here](#).
- [Save Mount Diablo](#) offers varied hikes. [Annual schedule can be downloaded here](#). Registration opens one month before events. [Calendar and signup here](#).
- [Wholly H2O](#) watershed tours, designed to be useful for California students and teachers, are available on your cell phone through [Pocketsights](#).

Gardens to visit, with their events

- The [East Bay Regional Park District's Botanic Garden](#), in Tilden Regional Park at Wildcat Canyon Rd. and South Park Dr., lets you enjoy California native plants daily and free. Native plants are on sale 10AM - noon Wednesdays and 10 AM - 2 PM first Saturdays. [Docents lead free, no-reservation tours](#) at on non-rainy Saturdays (11 AM) and Sundays (11 AM and 2 PM).
- The [UC Berkeley Botanical Garden](#), Centennial Drive, offers a sick-plant clinic first Saturday mornings and varied programs including a basketry workshop Mar. 20, morning and afternoon egg-dying workshops Mar. 23, and a three-part poetry workshop

Apr. 2, 15, and 22. Summer camp registration is open. [Events calendar and links to registration here.](#)

- [Blake Garden](#), 70 Rincon Rd. in Kensington, run by the UC Berkeley Department of Landscape Architecture, is open free weekdays 8 am - 4:30 pm. [Info here.](#) Check the calendar monthly bird walk and tours. [Info here.](#)
- [Ruth Bancroft Garden](#) and nursery in Walnut Creek is home to a stunning collection of dry-adapted plants. Informal talks with landscape designers, professional advice on water-wise gardening, plant sales, guided walks, and webinars on types of succulents in the collection, and story times for also offered. [Info here.](#)

Indoors: Talks, Classes, Meetings, Exhibits, Contests

Also see [Gardening and Waste Reduction](#) below

Classes, talks

- [The annual Bioneers Conference](#), supporting visionary and progressive climate, environmental, and other policies scheduled Mar. 28-30 at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall and venues in downtown Berkeley. [Info, schedule, and registration here.](#)
- [The annual Water Conservation Showcase](#) is scheduled 9 AM - 4:30 Thurs., Apr. 4, in person at the San Ramon Conference Center, 3301 Crow Canyon Road, with talks also streamed online. Topics include innovative stormwater management, products that save water and energy, tending the urban forest, and many more. [Info and free registration here.](#)
- [UC Berkeley presents a free conference on the intersection of science, climate futures, ecopoetry, and the arts](#), 1-5:30 PM Tues., Apr. 16, in the Banatao Auditorium, with light refreshments. The program will celebrate recent US and international climate assessments and *Dear Human at the Edge of Time: Poems on Climate Change in the United States* (Paloma Press 2023). [Required registration here.](#)
- [Earth Day Wild and Scenic Film Festival](#): From 7-9 PM Sat., Apr. 20, at Berkeley's Brower Center, 2150 Allston, enjoy audience favorites from the 2024 [Wild and Scenic Film Festival](#), with films exploring nature, community activism, adventure, conservation, water, energy and climate change, wildlife, environmental justice, agriculture, and more. Info and tickets at www.tinyurl.com/wsff24. [\\$5 discount on tickets with code CCLALA.](#)
- [Bay Nature](#) offers frequent online talks including "A Last Best Hope for Coho in the Russian River," focused on restoration efforts made possible by federal funding, noon-1 PM Wed., Mar. 20; [Info and past talks on line here.](#)
- [Rotary Nature Center Friends](#) offers monthly free Lakeside Chats on First Fridays, with a free virtual bird walk at the Lake Merritt bird refuge (the nation's oldest) 7-8 PM Fri., Apr. 5. [Info and free tickets here.](#)
- [Golden Gate Bird Alliance \(formerly Golden Gate Audubon\)](#) online talks are scheduled on third Thursdays in many months, with "Flight: Wild Stories from the History of Bird Migration Research," 7 PM Thurs., Apr. 18. [Info and registration here.](#) [Recordings of some past talks are available here.](#)
- [EBMUD's Water Wednesdays online talks](#) cover a wide range of information on our water and sewage systems, 6 PM Wednesdays most months. [Info and registration here.](#)
- [Coastside Land Trust](#) offers [info and recordings of past webinars here.](#)
- [The Jepson Herbarium](#) has space in spring workshops using drones and processing remote images, Mar. 23. [Info and registration here.](#)
- [The California Native Plant Society's 2024 workshops](#), beginning Mar. - Aug. and mainly for specialists and professionals, are open for registration [here.](#)
- [The Brower Center's annual Youth Art/Act Exhibit, "Burning Questions,"](#) shows work by students at local high schools through May 16, in the Center's Hazel Wolf Gallery, 2150 Allston.
- [The Coastal Conservancy's Climate Video Challenge for high-school and middle-school students](#) runs through May 30. The contest seeks answers to the question, "How is your community responding to the climate challenge." [Info here.](#)
- [UC Berkeley Summer River Restoration Short Course](#): Registration is open for the 29th annual five day course, Geological and Ecological Fundamentals for River and Stream Restoration, Aug. 19-23, at UC Berkeley Sagehen Creek Field Station in the Sierra Nevada. [Info and registration here.](#)

Gardening, waste reduction

- [Native Gardening talks](#): The [California Native Plant Society](#) offers free first

Thursday "Naturehood" online native-gardening chats, usually at 5:30 PM, with ["Introducing the new Calscape"](#) Apr. 4. [Info, registration, and recordings of past talks here.](#)

- [Alameda StopWaste's garden events calendar](#) lists events and resources for Bay- and climate-friendly gardening. [Alameda StopWaste's](#) comprehensive guide to [replacing your lawn with drought- tolerant plantings is here](#). A [list of tool and seed libraries is here](#). Information is available for [homes](#), [schools](#), and [businesses](#) on reducing food and other waste, dealing with hazardous waste, and other topics, including a [searchable guide on how to reduce, re-use, or recycle specific products](#).
- [Contra Costa Water District water-efficiency webinars](#) including rebates and getting rid of lawn are online [here](#).
 - [EBMUD](#) offers online office hours on landscape rebates, alternating with "talkin' dirt" online chats, Tuesdays noon-1 PM and 5-6PM. [Schedule and info here](#). EB MUD also offers rebates and [extensive information on water saving and low-water gardening here](#), including lists of low-water-use plants, information on mulching and firescaping, lists of plants for specific needs, and information on grey-water systems.
- [Neighbors for a Sustainable Berkeley](#) seeks to connect neighbors to share knowledge on sustainable gardening, eating, transportation, energy, water use, and more . [Info and signup here](#).
- [ReScape's courses](#), mainly for professionals at all levels, environmentally friendly, nature-based landscaping, mostly for professionals, including integrated pest management, firescaping, choosing and caring for plants in green stormwater infrastructure, and advanced mulching and composting. [Rescape's directory of professionals trained in environmental practices is here](#).
- [StopFoodWaste.org](#) has [dozens of tips](#) from keeping food fresh to using leftovers, a [blog](#) with waste-reducing tips from chefs from nonprofit cooking school 18 Reasons, and [resources](#) from deciphering dates on labels to how schools or businesses can donate food. Check out tips for [re-growing vegetables from scraps](#).
- [Berkeley's Ecology Center](#) offers [a list of places to drop off things not eligible for curbside pickup here](#). [Albany's guides are here](#) and [El Cerrito's guide is here](#). These include pickup of bulky items and where to drop off batteries or other hazardous materials.

Materials

- [Berkeley residents city-wide can schedule free chipping of woody debris and flammable vegetation - info and online signup here](#).
- [The City of Albany offers free indoor pails for compostable waste](#) to residents of multi-family buildings. [Delivery appointments can be scheduled here](#).
- [Free compost and mulch: El Cerrito](#) offers local residents and businesses up to 5 cu. ft. of free compost while supplies last, on third Saturdays at the upper Cerrito Vista Park parking lot, Avis Drive south of Moeser. Bring your own containers. [Info here](#). [Berkeley's load-it-yourself free compost](#) is available while it lasts, starting Fri. AM, Marina Blvd. [Info here](#). [Albany residents](#) can pick up free mulch at Ocean View Park; [info here](#). [Richmond residents](#) can get free compost on first 9AM - 4 PM first Wednesdays at 101 Pittsburg Ave., Richmond. This is also the [West Contra Costa Hazardous Waste facility](#), where El Cerrito, Richmond, and other West County residents can drop off hazardous waste free.

Reducing greenhouse-gas emissions; climate change

- [Free Earth Day electrification fair](#): Citizens Climate Lobby sponsors a free Home Electrification Fair 2-5 PM Sat., Apr. 20 at the Brower Center, 2150 Allston, Berkeley (followed by the Wild and Scenic Film Festival at 7 PM; see above. [Info and registration here](#)).
- [Free webinars and events on EVs and Ebikes](#) from [Ride and Drive Clean](#) include online New EV Owner Workshop 5-6 PM Mar. 20 and Save Money on an EV 7 PM Mar. 26 and 5 PM Apr. 3. [Info here](#).
- [PG&E offers free webinars on electrification and energy saving](#). Recorded, on-demand talks are available on induction cooking, heat pumps, and more. [The catalog for on-demand recordings and live events is here](#). PG&E offers rebates for "smart" thermostats and replacing electric water heaters with heat-pump heaters
- [BayRen](#) and [Rising Sun Center for Opportunity](#) offer free house calls on making your home more energy efficient, with kits that include free LED bulbs. [Info here](#).
- [BayRen's](#) guide to rebates for heat pumps, induction cookers, electric vehicles and more is [here](#). The organization trains electricians and other professionals and offers a [list of trained professionals here](#).
- East Bay residents who commute across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge can qualify

for rebates of \$500 - \$1000 (depending on income) for new Ebikes. [Info here](#).

- [QuitCarbon](#) offers free plans for electrifying your home, including info on rebates and estimated costs (they do work with contractors). They also make presentations to groups. [Info here](#).
- [Albany's guide to electrifying your home, including rebates, is on line here](#). [The city offers rebates](#) of \$500 to \$1500 for installation of heat pumps, with rebates doubled for low-income households. [Info and application here](#).
- [East Bay residents can try an induction cooker](#) and pot for three weeks free, and [rebates of up to \\$750 for exchanging your gas stove for induction cooking are available](#) through Bay-Ren, a coalition of utilities. This low-energy, safe cooking plate stays cool while it heats your food with magnetized copper coils. [Info and registration here](#) for AVA (formerly East Bay Community Energy), [here](#) for PG&E, and [here](#) for Albany residents. Borrow an induction wok -- [Info here](#).
- [Solar Rights Alliance](#) offers [consumer info for rooftop and other home solar](#), from finding the right installer to getting repairs.
- [Low-income residents of East Bay ZIP codes deemed to have high pollution levels](#) may qualify for rebates to replace high-emission vehicles with electric ones, through the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. [Info here](#).

More calendars, more to explore

This list focuses on the East Bay, mainly west of the hills. Volunteering and exploring nature are great ways to experience the entire Bay Area!

- For more opportunities check out the [Bay Nature Calendar](#). [Subscribe to the magazine, too](#).
- The [Green City Calendar](#) has lots on San Francisco.
- For events east of the hills, check out [Sustainable Contra Costa's events list](#).

This list is put together by [Friends of Five Creeks](#). To suggest an event to include, please email f5creeks@gmail.com with basic information, preferably by a few days before the first of the month.