

From the Forest to the Ridge

Length: 7.6 miles

Time: Two and a half hours

Difficulty: 4+

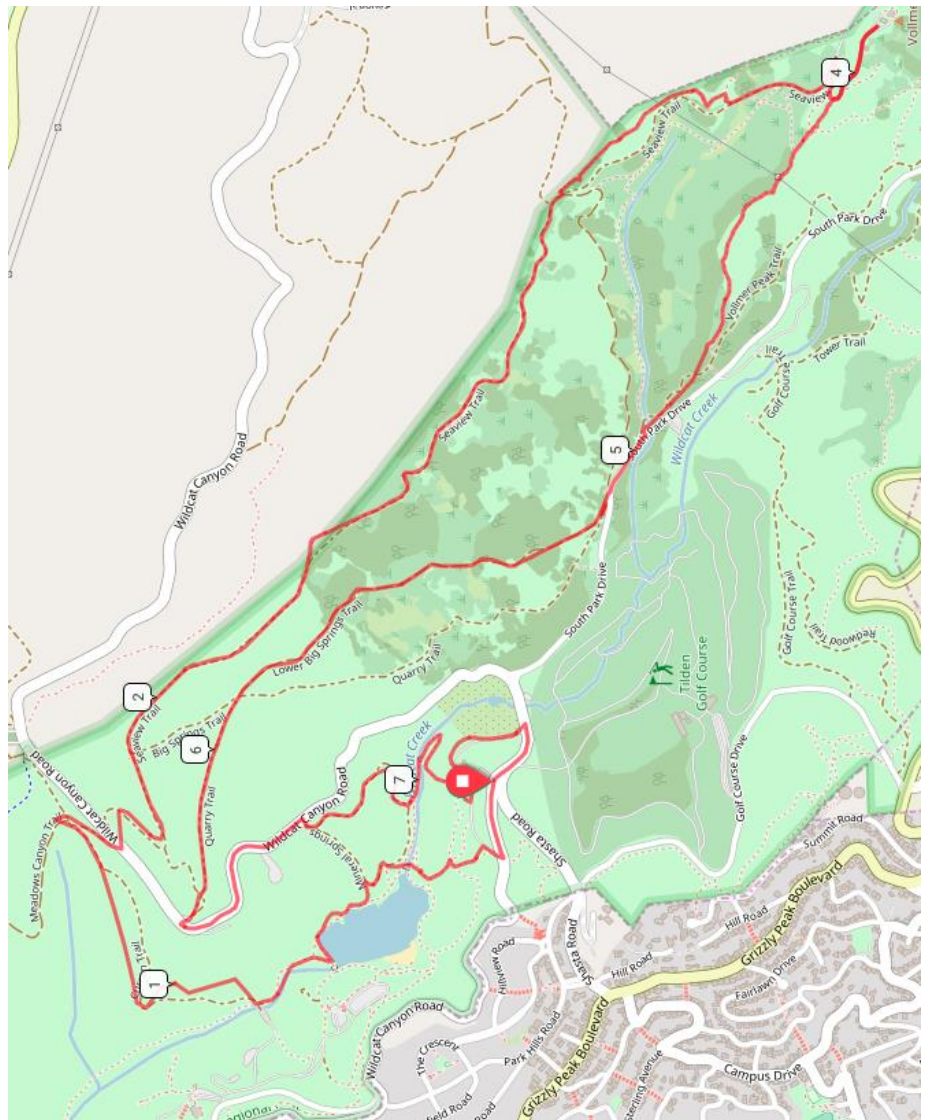
Elevation Gain: 1,623

Starting Point: The Brazil Building, at the intersection of Shasta Rd. and Wildcat Canyon Rd.

Transportation:

AC Transit 67 on weekends and holidays. To access the start by bus on weekdays, take the AC Transit 65 to Shasta and Grizzly Peak, then walk the half mile east on Shasta. Parking is available by the start on the eastern side of Wildcat Canyon Rd.

Overview: Of any walk in this book, this walk packs possibly the greatest variation of scenery into the fewest miles. It explores virtually every region of Tilden: riparian forest, canyon, meadow, open ridgeline, and peak. From the start, you'll descend past Lake Anza, then climb out of Tilden's canyon, leaving the forest behind as you ascend steeply to Vollmer Peak, the highest point in the East Bay. A steep descent with more great views brings you down to South Park Dr, and from there it's all rolling hills to return to the start.



Directions and pictures:

Begin the walk at the corner of Shasta Rd. and Wildcat Canyon Rd. Start by heading northwest (toward Berkeley) on Wildcat Canyon, then make a right on the paved, one-lane Anza View Rd. Various “trail-lets” of the Selby Trail intersect the road here, so you can take any of them to you left. Stay left to join the main Selby Trail, which is rugged and steep, descending through the trees to reach Lake Anza.

Turn right on to the rocky trail along the lakeshore. The trail winds around the lake, with various brief climbs and descents, then turns inland to cross Wildcat Creek. There’s a beautiful



waterfall just to the right, up the gorge. Turn left to continue walking along the lakeshore. This area is popular with day hikers and it’s fun to listen to the multitude of languages and conversations here. Stay left again along the lakeshore until just before the bridge crossing the Lake Anza spillway. Here, turn right onto the Wildcat Gorge Trail, plunging down into a redwood grove toward Wildcat Canyon.

Left: Ducks enjoying the calm waters Lake Anza

To the left, along a small trail, a beautiful waterfall roars after rainstorms (though within a few weeks it dries up completely). The trail continues its steep descent along rapid Wildcat Creek. Soon, you’ll reach an intersection with the Curran Trail, where you’ll turn right to climb through dense forest. Just as you start heading up the trail, make sure to notice Berkeley’s smallest post office, on the bay tree to the left. Though there are no workers here, but there are countless letters.

Right: Lake Anza, as seen from the north

The Curran Trail switchbacks up and out of the canyon before leaving the cover of the trees to offer great views back down. Though impressive, the view is a mere



sampler of what’s to come. To the north, the Meadows Canyon Trail is visible, and inaccessible caves on the other side of Wildcat Canyon peek out at you from the trees.

After returning to the forest, the Curran Trail gradually climbs to the top of Meadows Canyon, where you'll turn sharply right to head steeply up on the narrow, singletrack Seaview Trail through the trees again. Cross Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue on Seaview, now a much wider trail, climbing steeply up the rolling hills of San Pablo Ridge. Numerous side trails lead to expansive views of the area, with some of the best ones to your left just across from the Lower Big Springs Trail or to the right near the top of the steep middle hill.

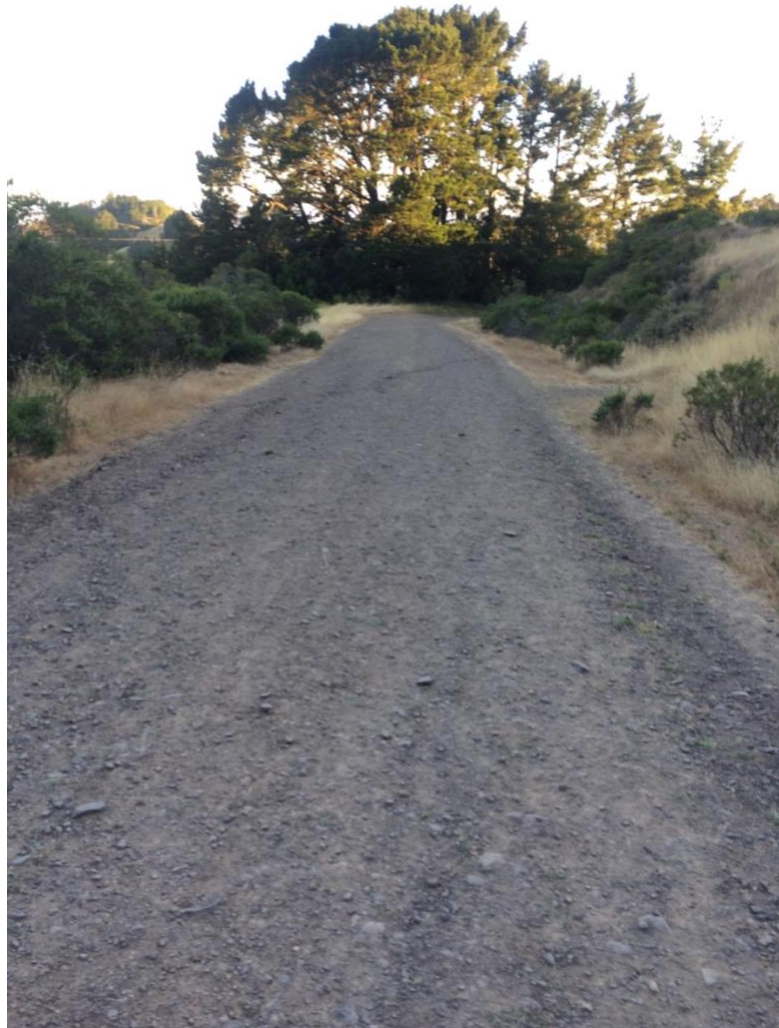
The Seaview Trail goes downhill for a bit, then ascends steeply to the labyrinth, which is just to the right off the main trail and well worth the detour. Follow a rocky side trail up a small rise to a collection of picnic tables, a bench, a labyrinth made of pebbles, and an expansive view of San Francisco Bay, the Coastal Range, and the Pacific Ocean. Continue downhill on Seaview from here, and, just beyond the intersection with the Upper Big Springs Trail, turn up a steep, singletrack side trail to the left.

Right: The top of the mighty Seaview Trail

The singletrack seems to head straight for the sky (if you'd like an easier trail, you can continue on the Seaview Trail and turn right once you hit the paved road to rejoin the route). Once the trail reaches the ridge, you'll gain expansive

views of the hills rolling eastward to culminate at Mount Diablo. At the northeast corner of the view, you can see the white windmills of Sherman Island, at the Sacramento-San Joaquin River. On clear winter days it's possible to see the Sierra Nevada, one hundred fifty miles to the east. Behind you, the hills roll on toward the Bay.

The singletrack emerges at the paved Vollmer Peak Rd. where you'll turn right and slightly downhill. If you'd like, you can follow the Lupine Trail downhill from here, or you can follow the main route to detour to the highest point in Tilden. For the spur to the top, continue left up the road past the various trails leading down. The road becomes very steep as it nears the top, then flattens out at a gravel lot around a large antenna-like structure. Congratulations



on reaching the highest point in East Bay! The views from this 1,920 foot summit are, needless to say, superb. They're best on the eastern side of the lot, near a large pine tree, where you can look east as far as massive Mount Diablo, and, on a clear day, to the Sierra Nevada. To the south, the grassy park hills roll on toward Sunol.

Double back down the road to the cut off for the Lupine Trail, a slight left turn from where the road curves right. You'll head briefly through the woods to emerge in the open grasslands. From here, the views down the open hillside toward the Bay are phenomenal. The trail switchbacks very steeply down the hillside and plunges into the woods again. Take a right turn onto the Vollmer Peak Trail where Lupine ends after a half mile, to arrive after another quarter of a mile at the Arroyo Picnic Area. Continue slightly left to reach South Park Dr, turn right down the road to the Lower Big Springs Trail, which runs from the lower end of the small parking lot. The Lower Big Springs and the Quarry Trails fork just after the road. Both will take you to the same place, but our route takes the Lower Big Springs Trail, since it is further from the road, hillier, and a bit more scenic.

The trail climbs and descends over beautiful rolling hills, and provides gorgeous views out toward the green (or golden, depending on time of year) hills of Tilden and the turquoise Bay. Three-quarters of a mile after the initial fork, it descends to another intersection with the Quarry Trail. Continue straight on Quarry to amble through the wide open hillsides, the pine trees of the higher hills standing sentinel behind you. The Quarry Trail ends at the Quarry Picnic Area, where you should turn left onto Wildcat Canyon Rd. Follow the road 0.3 miles, passing the sign for the Mineral Springs Picnic Area to reach the Mineral Springs Trail shortly after. This wide trail leads downhill from the road toward Lake Anza, near burbling Wildcat Creek. Turn right off the road to follow the trail, staying left at the fork at its beginning. Make your first left off the wide, dusty Mineral Springs Trail down to the narrower Wildcat Gorge Trail, and stay left again to follow it over a bridge and around a switchback, then make another left to reach Anza View Rd. Make a final left to follow the road to its southern intersection with Wildcat Canyon, and turn right to return to your starting point.