

## Havey Canyon and Surrounding Trails

**Length:** 9.6 miles

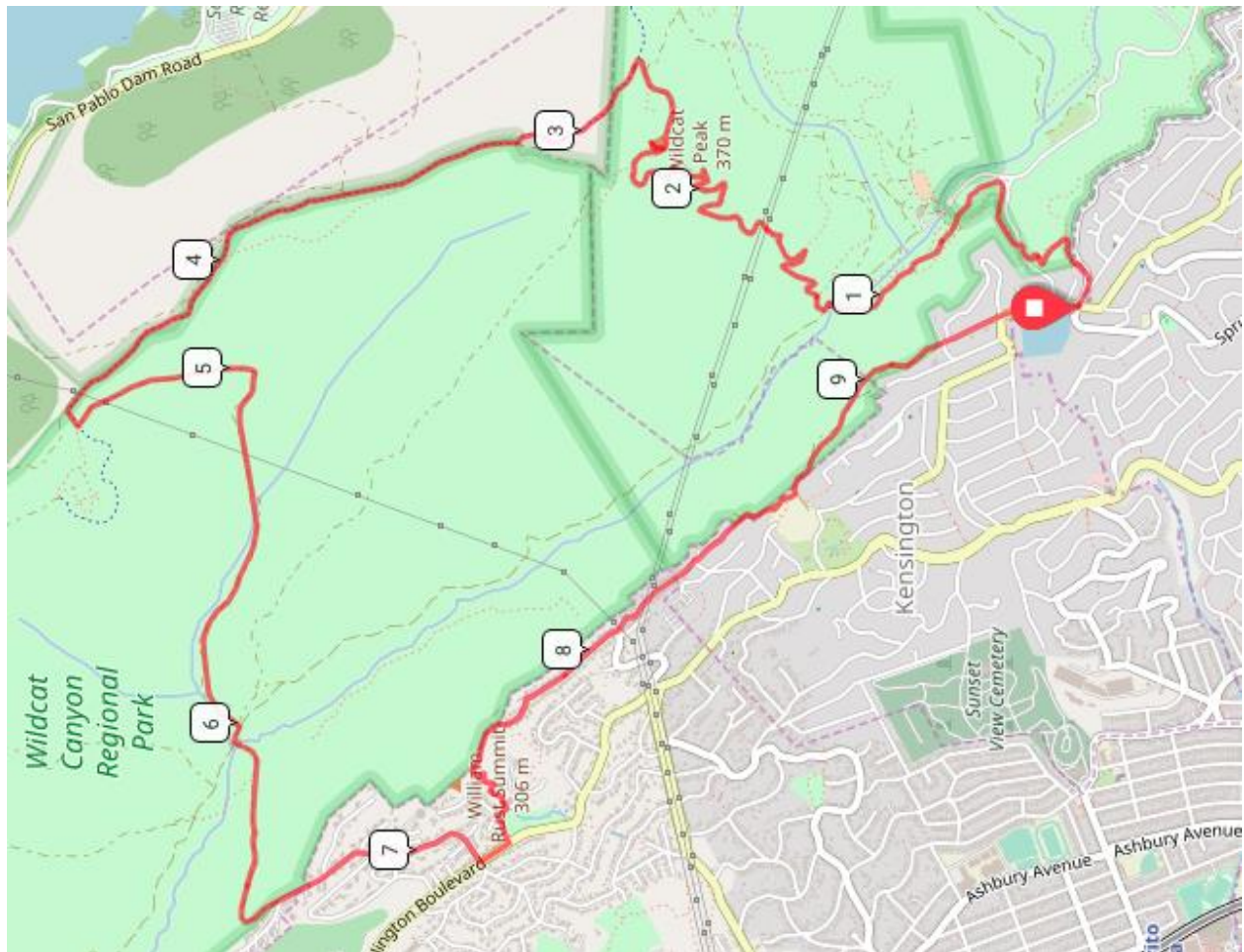
**Time:** About four hours

**Difficulty:** 4

**Elevation Gain:** 1,500 feet

**Starting Point:** The intersection of Spruce St. and Grizzly Peak Blvd.

**Transportation:** AC Transit Bus 67. Limited parking is available on Spruce.



### **Overview:**

This walk offers a great mix of forest and ridgetop views. Traversing the ridges on both sides of Wildcat Canyon, this walk takes you on diverse terrain from Wildcat Peak to the woods of the Sylvan Trail to the dense riparian forest of Havey Canyon. From the start, you'll descend into Tilden, then climb steeply to Wildcat Peak and the ridge of Nimitz Way, which overlooks El Sobrante. From there, you'll head down the shaded Havey Canyon, then climb once again out of the park to return via the scenic Ye Olde School Trail to the start.

Step It Up: An Adventurer's Guide to Forty Walks on the Paths, Trails, and Streets of Berkeley and Beyond© 2020 by Jacob Lehmann Duke and Zeke Gerwein. All rights reserved.

## Directions and pictures:

Begin at the 67 bus stop at Summit Reservoir, where Spruce meets Grizzly Peak. From here, walk east onto Wildcat Canyon Rd. After an eighth of a mile, turn left onto the Selby Trail, which runs from a grassy turnout off the road, then make your first left down the Memory Trail. The Memory Trail is short but scenic, descending into Wildcat Canyon through a leafy forest. Cross Cañon Dr. and continue on the trail to its end, then turn slightly left onto the Upper Packrat Trail, which continues to descend gently through the forest. Stay left on the Lower Packrat Trail once you reach the bottom, walking along the northwestern shore of Jewel Lake, where turtles are often visible sunning themselves on logs. After crossing Wildcat Creek on a bridge, make a left on the Wildcat Creek Trail and the first right up the Jewel Lake Trail. Stay left shortly after to continue up the Sylvan Trail, which, true to its name, climbs through dense forest of ferns, pine trees, and oaks. After a rain, the wet vegetation gives the trail an almost mystical feel. Continue up the Sylvan Trail about a quarter mile, then turn sharply left up the Wildcat Peak Trail.

You'll climb through a dense forest along this narrow single track trail and then, quite abruptly, be thrust out into the open grasslands. Stay right where the trail forks, and you'll continue to climb steeply until you reach the turnoff for Wildcat Peak. Continue straight here to detour to the 1,213 foot summit. To the north you are able to see beyond San Pablo Bay to the hills of Sonoma and Napa Counties; to the west San Francisco gleams, the Pacific Ocean not far beyond it; in the east and south you can look over all of Contra Costa County, past the refineries of Martinez to the Central Valley.

When you've fully enjoyed the view, descend back to the turnoff for the peak, then turn left to continue gently down to Nimitz Way, popular with cyclists, day hikers, and joggers. Turn left, and follow this paved trail as it winds its way along San Pablo Ridge, sometimes meandering through woodland, sometimes emerging onto the top ridge to allow you a view west into Wildcat Canyon or east to the San Pablo Reservoir.



*Left: The San Pablo Reservoir and dry hills beyond, as seen looking east from Nimitz Way*

Pretty soon you'll leave Tilden Park behind and enter Wildcat Canyon

Regional Park, the northernmost in a chain of parks that extends the length of the East Bay Hills, from Castro Valley to Richmond. After 1.7 miles on Nimitz Way, turn sharply left down the narrow, dirt Havey Canyon Trail (near the 3.5 mile mark on Nimitz).

*Havey Canyon descends gradually through a sunny meadow and cows are often visible, sometimes blocking the trail.*



After about two thirds of a mile through a meadow, the trail abruptly enters a dense forest, becoming shadier, steeper, and “paved” with scattered leaves. It is a moderately popular route for mountain bikers so stay alert for fast downhillers. The trail descends steadily, crossing Havey Creek part way down on a bridge installed in 2017. Before that, the creek required fording, but now you’ll have to be content with looking down at it as it rushes (or trickles) below. The Havey Canyon Trail continues down another  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a mile to end at the Wildcat Creek Trail.

Turn right on the Creek Trail, then make your first left very soon after up the Rifle Range Trail to climb steeply out of Wildcat Canyon to its western ridgeline near the Richmond-El Cerrito border. At the end of the Rifle Range Trail, continue south on paved Rifle Range Rd. to summit the hill and then gradually descend to Arlington Avenue, 0.6 miles after the end of the trail. Turn left, then immediately left again on Thors Bay Rd, climbing briefly back toward the ridge. Turn right onto James Place and stay left to follow the dirt trail, which climbs further, up to William Rust Summit. From here, you’ll have expansive views east to Wildcat Canyon and the San Pablo Ridge, where you were earlier in the walk. Continue slightly downhill, then make a

left onto a narrower trail which climbs briefly, then ends between two houses on Ivy Court. Continue along this road and slightly right onto Leneve Pl. where it ends. Stay left at Terrace and continue along Kensington Rd. After one long block, continue straight onto Kensington Ct, then down a driveway at the end of the street and slightly left onto Ye Olde School Trail, which follows the rim of Wildcat Canyon. You'll pass Kensington Hilltop School and begin to climb gradually. Stay left on the main trail at all trail intersections and in about a mile you will reach the end of the trail at Grizzly Peak Blvd. and Kenyon Rd. Head south on Grizzly Peak for 0.3 miles to return to your starting point.

*Right: The trail up to William Rust Summit through the Boy Scout area*

