

Paths of Oakland and Trails of Huckleberry

Length: 7.5 miles

Time: About three hours

Difficulty: 4+

Elevation Gain: 1400 feet

Starting Point: Colton Blvd. and Mountain Blvd, Oakland



Transportation:

Various AC transit bus lines in the 600s stop here, but they run very infrequently, so this is probably a walk to bike or drive to the start of. Parking is available on Mountain Blvd. or further into the hills.

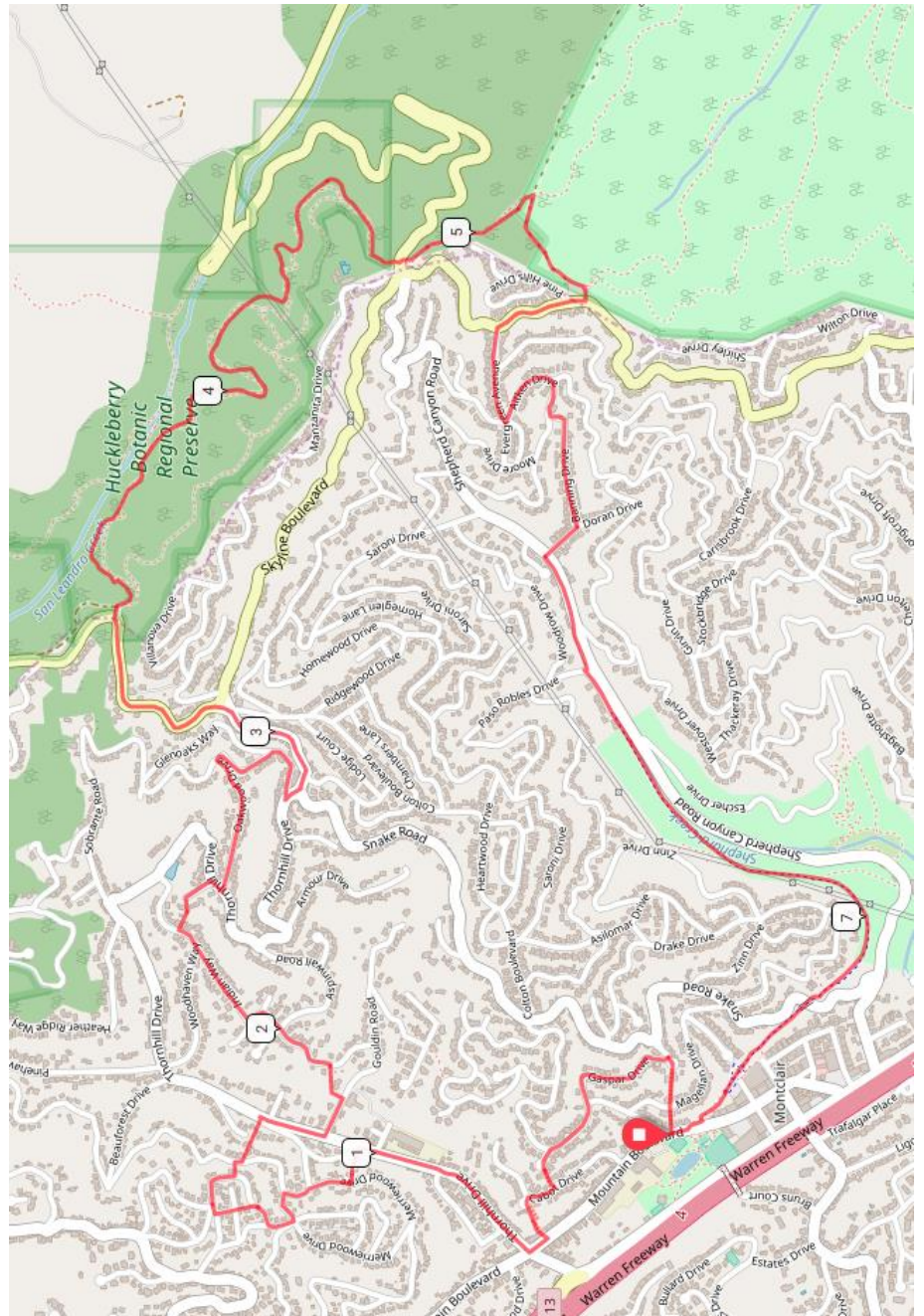
Overview:

Want to discover some great paths outside of Berkeley and explore one of most amazing and least known regional parks nearby? This walk climbs steep, step-filled paths from near Highway 13 to Skyline Blvd, through the easternmost section of Oakland. From here, you'll descend into the incredible Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve,

and walk part way around its fern-covered canyon. After Huckleberry, you'll walk through a small section of Redwood Regional Park, then descend a lovely bike-and-pedestrian-only paved path to return to the starting point.

Directions and pictures:

Start at the intersection of Colton Blvd. and Mountain Blvd. near the Moraga Ave. exit off Highway 13. Amazingly, this intersection has both a path and a trail, as well as two busy streets, off of it. Begin the walk by climbing the concrete stairs eastward from the end of the southern crosswalk across Mountain. Cross the first street you come to, and continue up the steps; then, at the second street, continue straight a few feet on the pavement and turn left down Gaspar Dr. After a long block, make a slight right up Colton Blvd. Take the first left onto Diaz Pl. to depart the busy Colton. Where it dead ends, continue straight onto the steps of a path to descend to Cabot Dr. Here, make a right, then your first left down another steppy path to Mountain Blvd. Make a right, then an immediate right up Thornhill Dr. After three blocks you will reach Thornhill Elementary School and Alhambra Ln. Continue a bit past this street, then make a



left up the steep wooden steps of a path marked with a green Public Stairway sign. Two blocks of these stairs will leave you out of breath on Merriewood Dr. Turn right, then make your first left up Taurus Ave. After one block, turn right onto the curvy Merriewood Dr. again, then right at Sherwood to stay on Merriewood. As Merriewood turns left, make a right down a steep flight of stairs marked Public Stairway. At the bottom, jog right and continue down the steep wood steps (if you want some extra exercise, run back up them). At the bottom of this long path, cross Merriewood, which seems to be everywhere, and turn sharply right down Thornhill.



Left: Descending to Thornhill

Make your first left onto Gouldin Rd, then another left up a steep and unsigned path which runs up a hillside from the top of what appears to be a concrete driveway. It's not too far above Thornhill, and if you cannot find it or prefer a gentler ascent, make your first left off Gouldin onto Aspinwall Rd, which brings you to the top of the path. If you did go up the path, turn left at the top.

Continue straight at the first intersection you come to, turning off Aspinwall and onto Westwood Way, then make a slight left onto Westwood Ct. Make a fairly immediate right onto Indian Way, which joins Woodhaven Rd. after an easy fifth of a mile. Continue straight, then turn right up an unsigned

path with wooden steps and concrete treads. The top of the path is at a dead end. Continue along this street until you reach Thornhill, then make a right and an immediate left onto Oakwood Dr. One long, hilly block will bring you to Wild Currant Way; make a right, and turn right again to stay on Wild Currant at Glen Oaks Way. Where Wild Currant hits Thornhill (as everything seems to), turn left, then left again up Snake Rd. one block to Skyline Blvd. Make a left onto Skyline, which, true to its name, is Oakland's uppermost major street. After one long block, turn right into the Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve parking lot to enter the next section of the walk.

Cross the parking lot and go through the break in the fence, then make a right onto your first Huckleberry trail, which is called Huckleberry Path. This name doesn't mean much because practically every trail in Huckleberry is called Huckleberry Path. You will soon come to

a fork where Huckleberry Path branches, seemingly continuing to the left and right. Turn left onto Huckleberry Path. This section of trail descends to the edge of a stunning, fern-covered canyon on soft ground through trees and small plants. Continue down the trail around the canyon until, after about a third of a mile, you reach the intersection with the East Bay National Skyline Trail, this section of which is called, you guessed it, Huckleberry Path. Make a slight right here, and the trail should gradually begin to climb out of the canyon. Stay left at the two forks you come to and after a mile you will suddenly emerge from this small but incredible park at the intersection of Skyline and Pinehurst Rd. Cross Pinehurst and continue straight on the Phillips Loop trail into Redwood Regional Park. A third of a mile on this trail brings you to the wide, well-traveled, dusty East Ridge Trail. Make a right here and another quarter mile will bring you to the Skyline Gate Staging Area and parking lot. Make a right though the parking lot back to the road.

Turn right here onto Skyline Blvd, then make your first left down Evergreen Ave. After three blocks on Evergreen, turn right onto Moore Dr, then make your first left down Shepherd Canyon Rd. After two sidewalk-less blocks, turn right onto Saroni Dr. and immediately left onto a small paved bike path which serves as a sidewalk for the busy road. After two long blocks, jog right and then continue left down Bishop Ct. to leave Shepherd Canyon Rd. behind forever. Where Bishop Ct. dead ends, continue straight, back onto the bike path, now officially the lovely Montclair Railroad Trail, sloping gently down through trees paralleling the road. The trail is easy to follow and very scenic; it gradually turns to the right and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile after Bishop Ct. it takes you over Snake Rd. on a raised walkway. Continue along the trail, staying on the main path and not making any of the possible left turns. After another quarter mile, the path turns left and the paved section ends. Continue straight onto the wood chips, then down some stairs to Mountain Blvd. Here, make a right and it's only 100 feet to the intersection with Colton, your starting point. We hope you've enjoyed this walk through Berkeley's southern neighbor-city and gotten a good taste of nearby paths, streets, and trails!