

Tuesday March 30: Franklin Ridge Section of Bay Area Ridge Trail, Martinez.

This is an out and back hike which takes in Mount Wanda, Almond Ranch. We plan approximately 6.0 miles, with approximately 900 feet accumulated elevation gain. Since this is an out and back there is the opportunity for anyone who feels fresher to extend the hike by walking further out into Sky Ranch and Dutra Ranch along the ridge or for others to turn around earlier and shorten the hike. Given we “lost” the easier hike at the beginning of March this may be a chance for more people to join us on Tuesday.

The major elevation gain is at the beginning from the trail head on a shaded wide fire road with good footing. After approximately 500 feet elevation gain and 0.75 miles walking we reach the Mount Helen Nature Trail which is a single track but with good footing. As part of the Covid-19 restrictions this Nature Walk is one way (we have to use it on the outward leg) reducing the need for stepping off the trail to pass others. If it is a good day there are wonderful 360 degrees views of the Bay Area first seen at the 2-mile marker after a further 250 feet elevation gain which may be a place for people to consider turning back. The Almond Ranch section was opened in May 2020 to make the Franklin Ridge contiguous, so the next section of the trail is still very newly cut and narrow. After reaching the ridge we will be out in the open so please apply sunscreen.

We will meet at the small parking lot on the corner of Franklin Canyon Road and Alhambra Ave, Martinez. Departure is 10:00 am

Bring: Face masks. Plenty of water. Trekking poles are recommended although the footing is good. There are no restrooms on this trail.

Car Pooling is not permitted, parking is limited to 16 regular and 2 handicapped spaces at the trail head but there is additional parking along the south side of Franklin Canyon Road just along from the trail head. There are no post-hike lunch plans.

Directions to Trail Head: Take 680 north, CA4 west to exit 9, Alhambra Avenue. Left onto Alhambra Avenue, under the highway and then right into parking lot at the trail head on the corner of Alhambra Ave and Franklin Canyon Road. Alternative route is Pleasant Hill Road north from CA24, Taylor Boulevard, left at the light with Pleasant Hill Road (Note this is the light after Grayson), Pleasant Hill Road changes into Alhambra Avenue and after 3 miles the Trail Head parking is on the left just before the overpass of the CA-4.

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