



East Bay Regional Park District – Kid's Healthy Outdoors Challenge  
Alameda County Fish and Game Commission Final Report

\*art courtesy a KHOC participant

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For 82 years the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has been connecting parks to people by preserving open space and cultural resources, and offering enjoyable and healthful recreational activities. It is the largest urban regional network of park lands in the entire nation, and annually receives approximately 22 million visits per year. The Regional Parks Foundation (RPF) was established in 1969 to encourage private contributions in support of the EBRPD. The purpose of the RPF is to provide broader public access to the EBRPD's 65 Regional Parks, 1,250 miles of trails, and 40 miles of shoreline that make up the 120,536 acres throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. It is the goal of the Foundation to ensure that all East Bay residents have equal opportunity to enjoy the treasured parklands.

To reach this goal, the RPF raises funds to help underwrite EBRPD programs that specifically target underserved populations. In 2016 funding from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission supported the Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge (KHOC), which is a program that combines classroom and field environmental education, for low-income 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in Alameda County. The curriculum is aligned with California's common core curriculum standards for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, it is also closely aligned with the activities in the California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, and qualified for funding from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission under "a" in Section 13103 of the CA Fish and Game Code.

KHOC is taught in a series of 10 classroom lessons from one of the following categories: Connecting with the Past (eg. Exploring Ohlone culture) Planting a Seed, Exploring Nature, and Following a Trail. There are also activities that students can do with their families outside of school time. At the end, each class has the opportunity to take a free field trip to a EBRPD park, and a chance to have a park naturalist as a guide. The greatest program expense is the cost chartering buses for the park field trip. Funds from the Game Commission were used to cover the cost of bus transportation to-and-from a park. The 2016 grant for KHOC made it possible for 21 third grade classes to visit a Regional Park (expending \$4,970 of the \$5,000). A total of 458 students from schools in Alameda, San Leandro, Oakland, and Hayward visited the following parks: Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont, the Tilden Nature Area in Berkeley, Del Valle Regional Park in Livermore, and Cull Canyon Recreation Area in Castro Valley.

KHOC's main goals include:

- Increase students' general interest in nature, which can lead to careers in wildlife or park management, environmental science or related fields, as well as a lifetime of citizen stewardship of wildlife & habitat resources.
- Support health & well-being in youth and their families by stimulating interest in getting outdoors more often.
- Increase engagement among young people and their families with the great public resource represented by the East Bay Regional Parks, the largest regional park district in the nation.

The program has grown by 272% (increase in the number of teachers EBRPD is able to invite) since it was first started in 2011, which is the direct result of funding from organizations such as the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission. In the 2015-2016 school year the number of schools that were able to participate increased by 95%, and as funding continues to grow for this program, the EBRPD will be able to invite more teachers to participate. In the current school year 135 teachers are participating in the program (and increase of 10% over last year). In tables below the statistics for each year are listed, as well as the demographic data from the 15-16 school year.

Invitations and Participants 2012-present					
	Year 1: 12-13	Year 2: 13-14	Year 3: 14-15	Year 3: 15-16	Year 4: 2016-17
# Classrooms	33	32	63	123	135
# of Participants		967 # Students Alameda Co = 502 (52%)	2,100 # Students Alameda Co = 1,459 (69%)	Total # 15-16 = 3,741 # Students Alameda Co = 2,544 (68%)	

KHOC Classroom & Participant Demographics		
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
Latino	38%	
Caucasian (non-Latino)	20%	
Asian	24%	
African American	13%	
Pacific Islander	1.5%	
Other or > 1 Race	3.5%	
<u>Other Demographics</u>		
Class Size (average size)	24	Range of 15 to 28
% students eligible for Free & Reduced Price Meals	68%	2,100
% English as a 2 <sup>nd</sup> language students	34%	English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tagalog most commonly spoken

#### Highlights from the 2015-2016 School Year

- 85% of the teachers surveyed felt more comfortable teaching in the outdoors after participating in KHOC
- 73% of the teachers surveyed felt that KHOC helped them meet their Common Core curriculum standards
- 93% of the teachers surveyed said KHOC made their students want to be more active in nature
- 95% of the teachers surveyed said they will continue to teach KHOC lessons to keep kids active, even if they are not able to officially participate in KHOC

#### Selected Feedback from Participating Teachers

- I liked the fact that you offered the program with bus transportation. This collaboration makes it more affordable for schools to participate in such programs.
- The KHOC activities were hands-on and engaging. At Del Valle the students loved the tule birds, the hoops game, the other Native American games, and the hike we took.
- My kiddos learned so much about the Native people that lived here before the Spaniards came. We learned about flora and fauna of our area. We learned about animal species native to our region.
- KHOC is an extremely valuable program for our students, who many rarely leave their community. I hope to be able to continue participating, so that the fun of the outdoors can be experienced by more students and families. It really helped expose our families to places and activities that they may otherwise never know about.
- The hands on activities were the best part of the field trip.
- Fantastic experience. It was well-organized and very hands-on. My students are still talking about it.
- There was a lot of higher level thinking and problem solving involved with the KHOC lessons.
- Many of my kids have never been to the beach and never in a tidepool. They are still talking about the field trip to Crab Cove and seek out books in class that relate to our experience. And some even got their families to go there on the weekend.