

## Introduction

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is the nation's largest urban regional park district - spanning 125,000 acres across 73 parks throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

The Regional Parks host a wide variety of fish and wildlife that rely on the water and surrounding landscapes for food and shelter. The parks serve as sanctuaries for many plant and animal species - ecological treasures amid highly urbanized areas. They are among the few remaining places where sensitive and endangered wildlife can take refuge. From a conservation standpoint, the Bay Area is an ecological treasure, with many precious habitats that need protection, restoration, and management to continue to thrive.

The EBRPD manages several shoreline habitats and is in a key position to aid federal, state, and private agencies in their efforts to revitalize wetlands. One of these habitats is at the Martin Luther King Jr Shoreline in Oakland, where wildlife biologist David Riensche, fondly known as Doc Quack to many, is restoring nesting habitat for resident and migratory shorebirds. Birds such as the Western Snowy Plovers, American Avocets, and Black-Necked Stilts that prefer open flats or the sparsely vegetated edges of shallow marshes

The goal of the multiyear project is to restore some of California's precious remaining wetlands, create a shorebird sanctuary, and support the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Recovery Plan for the Western Snowy Plover by enhancing and creating new nesting habitat within the SF Bay region. At the beginning of 2020, the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission awarded the Regional Parks Foundation \$5,000 to support the restoration efforts at this shoreline park. However, Doc Quack had to defer work at the project site to 2021 because of the COVID19 pandemic.

## Project Highlights

- ✓ **Vegetation Removal** – From December to the end of February, during the first year of the project, workers and volunteers removed overgrown vegetation from the island and developed maintenance protocols to ensure that invasive plants do not return. Every year since then, volunteers and staff maintain this area before the spring breeding season to discourage regrowth.
- ✓ **Monitoring Spring Breeding Season** – From March to the end of July project staff monitor the island for nesting shorebirds. In 2019, during this monitoring period, Doc Quack found shorebirds nesting at the site for the first time in over 10 years! Also, in 2020, a Snowy Plover was seen on the island – another first!
- ✓ **Purchase and move bulk materials** – Funds from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission were used to purchase bulk materials.
- ✓ **Spread bulk materials** – Working with project staff, a CiviCorps crew worked 200 hours to move materials and spread across the island.



The sanctuary at MLK Jr provides new nesting habitat for birds like this Western Snowy Plover



One of the new nesting residents at the MLK Jr Regional Shoreline – American Avocet on new sand/shell matrix

- ✓ Site has ideal breeding conditions for Western Snowy Plovers, American Avocets, Black Necked Stilts, and other shorebird species. Birds that prefer open flats or the sparsely vegetated edges of shallow marshes.

To support this effort, Doc Quack used funds from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission to purchase bulk materials to hold several volunteer events to complete the work throughout the year.

However, the Park District did not resume volunteer events in 2021, so the remaining funds were used to cover the cost of working with CiviCorps to spread the sand and shells over the island. The group was very enthusiastic, and in Doc Quack's words, "did an amazing job preparing, leveling, and clearing the island of debris, moving supplies from the levee, in a small boat during an extremely high tide event."

DATE	SUPPLIER	ITEMS	TOTAL	GRANT FUNDS	MATCHING FUNDS
11/3/2020	Clarks Home & Garden	receipt #1:6 cubic yards of mixed sand	\$724.35	\$724.35	
11/3/20	Pete's Hardware	receipt #2: tarps, rope and bungees to cover supplies	\$111.44	\$111.44	
12/9/20	Livermore Feed	receipt #3: 2 bags (50lbs) of oyster shells	\$56.97	\$56.97	
12/9/20	Mike's Feed	receipt #4: 5 bags (5lbs) of oyster shells	\$48.24	\$48.24	
1/4/21	Mike's Feed	receipt #5: 6 bags (5lbs) of oyster shells	\$57.88	\$57.88	
1/25/21	Mike's Feed	receipt #6: 3 bags (5lbs) of oyster shells	\$28.94	\$28.94	
1/28/21	Mike's Feed	receipt #7: 6 bags (5lbs) of oyster shells	\$71.05	\$71.05	
2/11/21	Pete's Hardware	receipt #8: four 50lb bags of sand	\$30.55	\$30.55	
2/11/21	Mike's Feed	receipt #9: 6 bags (5lbs) of oyster shells	\$71.05	\$71.05	
2/19/21	Pete's Hardware	receipt #10: (12) 50lb bags of sand	\$91.64	\$91.64	
2/19/21	Livermore Feed	receipt #11: 8 bags (5lbs) of oyster shells	\$39.92	\$39.92	
2/24/21	Pete's Hardware	receipt #12: (4) 50lb bags of sand	\$30.55	\$30.55	
11/30/21	CiviCorps	208 hours - work crew	\$7,758.00	\$3,637.42	\$4,120.58
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,120.58</b>		

## Next Steps

Project activities will continue cyclically to reach the ideal nesting ground matrix. Doc Quack's team removed invasive plants the first year, and regular maintenance will help prevent the return of the invasive plants.

Cyclical activities include:

- Controlling the spread of invasive plants
- Monitoring spring breeding season
- Purchasing additional bulk materials and stage for spreading
- Spreading materials
- Engaging volunteers.