

HAMLIN NATURE PARK SELF GUIDED AUDIO TOUR

INTRODUCTION/MARKER A

Welcome to this self-guided tour of the Hamlin Nature Park - familiarly known as the “Batwing” thanks to the property’s unique shape.

I’m Lauren McCabe Herpich, volunteer on the City of Lafayette’s Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission and the Hamlin Nature Park Subcommittee. I’ll be your guide as we discover *together* the beauty ... and potential ... of these nearly 20 acres near the heart of Lafayette.

Our goal for the time while you’re here is to introduce you to this space, point you in the right direction and highlight many of the amazing sights and sounds you can enjoy.

By the end of our tour, we hope that you will share with the city your thoughts on what you’d like this space to be as we create its Master Plan. It’s up to you and our community. I’ll tell you later on – after our tour - how you can provide your feedback and participate in the planning process. So stick with me.

But before we begin, I need to need to go over some rules for while you’re here:

- First and foremost, we hope that you are here only during our posted dates and times found on the city’s website. You can see the URL on the yellow placard posted right as you entered along Hamlin Road and Sweet Drive. You can also use your smartphone to scan the QR code at the top right of the sign. Just open your camera as if you were to take a picture. Your phone should automatically recognize the code and show you a pop-up linking you directly to the Hamlin Nature Park webpage.
- Second, if you’re listening to this and at here at marker A, we trust that you signed the online waiver prior to downloading this tour. If you haven’t, please pause me now – don’t worry I won’t be offended – and go to the city’s website. You can also use that QR code again – to do so. This protects us AND you.
- Importantly, we do ask that you wear a mask and keep a distance of six feet apart, especially as you may meet other neighbors outside your household who are also here exploring Hamlin.
- Next, please be mindful that this is an undeveloped park site where access is limited and trails have not yet been created. Paths may be difficult. That being said, please always stay on the marked trail. You’ll see green signs as we walk along our main tour path. There will also be two off-shoot trails marked in BLUE and YELLOW if you want to discover a little more. But always, for your safety, please do stay along the marked trails and be mindful about adjacent private property. In addition, there is poison oak on these grounds and we do encourage you to check for ticks after you leave.
- If you do bring anything with you, please make sure that whatever comes in also goes out. Let’s keep this place beautiful and free of trash.

- In addition, we know it may be tempting to bring your dog here. But at this time, we ask that pooches and other pets stay home. Perhaps they'll be welcome in the future. Again, it's up to you and what is decided based on community feedback.

Lastly, feel free to do this walk at your own pace. You can pause me at any time and when you're ready to continue, just hit play.

That being said, let's start your journey into this beautiful space. Follow the green signs and when you get to Marker B, hit play. I'll tell you more about the history of Hamlin, some of the natural flora and fauna found throughout and what the large construction-like area you'll see on your right is.

See you there.

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MARKER B – TRT: 4:01

Welcome to Marker B.

You may have noticed that as you entered the park, there seemed to be somewhat of a driveway. The path that we're taking was actually a planned road that would cut from Hamlin to St. Mary's Road back in the 1930s. But that never came to be.

Fortunately for us, thanks to financial support by the John Muir Land Trust, Hamlin and this path is now a lovely walk along some of Lafayette's beautiful natural grasses and shrubs. Did you enjoy it?

Hamlin is the home to wild plants like Miner's Lettuce – those beautiful little lily pad-like plants that you walked through. You can also see Wild Cucumber and Artemesia. The Artemesia plant looks like sage and the leaves smell soooo good! It's a relative to the culinary spice Tarragon. No wonder bees love it!

Also on your walk, you encountered on your right, the site of a ground slide from 2015. The heavy El Nino rains of that year caused the dirt and mud to slide. But don't worry the site is secure. The city completed a phase one remediation upon purchasing this property in 2019 and is doing additional geotechnical studies. Phase Two engineering will take place soon.

Now as you stand here at Marker B, I want you to take in the views. Isn't this gorgeous!

Turn to your left and look North. You have amazing views of downtown Lafayette and the hills across Highway 24. Can you see the rounded roof of Stanley Middle School with its Wildcats emblem?

As you look around, listen to the sounds of native birds like the Red Shouldered Hawk - <PLAY SOUNDS>.

You can also hear the Scrub Jay <PLAY SOUNDS>.

Take your time and enjoy this spot. Before you hit pause and walk to Marker C, please know that you may meet the neighborhood dog. This is a good reminder to please be mindful of our neighbors adjacent to Hamlin AND their property.

In addition, as you walk, please do not go through any breaks in the barbed wire on your right. These are fire breaks done by the city. Again. Please stay on the path.

Go ahead and hit pause and I'll see you at Marker C.

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MARKER C – TRT: 6:34

Welcome to Marker C.

This is what my five-year-old son lovingly calls the Tree Tunnel thanks to the Buckeye trees that canopy the trail. As you walk down the path, you'll find many of our native Lafayette trees. You'll see plenty of Buckeyes, California Bays, a selection of Oaks such as Black, Valley and Live Oak, as well as Black Walnut trees. You'll also see on the ground, plants like Dutchman's Pipe Vine, Sanicle and a really distinct species with long wavy edged leaves. This is called Soaproot. It gets its name from its roots that look like bristle brushes – just like you'd find near your kitchen sink. Soaproot – get it?

Now, continue along the path and press play again when you get to Marker D. It will be posted with a Blue Sign. This will be the first of our two optional offshoot paths.

See you there.

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MARKER D – TRT: 7:40

Welcome to Marker D – also known as the PG&E steps.

These steps were installed by PG&E to access the electrical tower you see to your right. Fortunately for us, these 113 steps also take us to another section of Hamlin that you are welcome to explore.

If you choose to go up the steps - don't worry. We're only going to take you to step number 45 where there is a break in the climb. But please note that the steps may be slippery, especially when wet. If you go up, you must be able to get back down.

So, your mission, if you choose to except it - is to take your time and look for loose debris. As you can see there are no handrails. When you get to the top, fast forward to TRT 13:00 and I'll take you along the Blue off-shoot path.

If you want to continue along the main trail or even come back here later, please follow the main green markers, pause me now and hit play again at Marker E.

Either way, choose your own adventure and I'll see you at your next stop.

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MARKER E – TRT: 8:59

Welcome to Marker E.

Aren't these views amazing! Look to your left and toward the north side of Lafayette. See the electrical tower in the distance? If you look to the left of it, all the way at the tippy top you can see part of the Lafayette Ridge Trail. Can you see it?

The Lafayette Ridge Trail is just over 4 miles long and takes hikers and even horseback riders along Lafayette's northern border.

With East Bay Regional Park Trails such as the Lafayette Moraga Trail, the highlight of two main trails at the Lafayette Reservoir, and Lafayette's 16 miles of city managed accessible trails - we are certainly lucky to live here.

You can find more information about our Lafayette Trails on lovelafayette.org. Just click Parks & Recreation on the homepage.

Now, take a moment to enjoy the views, listen for the Acorn Woodpecker <PLAY SOUNDS> or even the Cooper's Hawk <PLAY SOUNDS>.

Press pause and when you're ready and continue on our path. Meet me at Marker F where we'll find ourselves at our second off-shoot trail marked with a Yellow sign.

MARKER F – TRT: 10:20

Welcome to Marker F.

This marker and gate are the entrance for our second off-shoot trail. Just as we did at the foot of the PG&E steps, you have the opportunity to explore this path now, do it later on your way back or skip it entirely.

FYI – It's NOT a strenuous walk if you are concerned.

If you choose to go through the gate now, fast forward to TRT 15:26 where I'll take you along the yellow path. Make sure you listen before going forward.

If you want to continue along the main trail now or even come back here later, please follow the main green markers to Marker G.

Either way, choose your own adventure, hit pause and I'll see you at your next stop.

MARKER G – TRT: 11:18

Welcome to Marker G.

This is the last marker on our main path. If you look to the left, you'll see St. Mary's Road and what may possibly be another entrance to Hamlin.

Again, the key word here is possibility. Now that you've been through to explore, we want to hear what you think should make up the Hamlin Nature Park Master Plan.

Our Subcommittee will be holding a public meeting in early April to gather your comments and discuss the specific features that might be included in the park.

Please go to the Hamlin Nature Park page posted on all of our path signs for the exact date of the meeting. That's at www.lovelafayette.org/HamlinNaturePark. You can also sign up for city notifications for all public meetings on the main lovelafayette.org website.

In addition, you can submit a written comment to Parks, Trails and Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi at ace@lovelafayette.org anytime between now and that meeting date. Please include "Hamlin Nature Park" or "Batwing" in your email subject if possible.

Thank you so much for joining me on this walk and being interested in what is truly a special gem for our city. Thanks!

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MARKER I – TRT: 13:00

<Horn Plays/ ROCKY Theme Hums>

That wasn't so bad, right? Rocky definitely had it worse with those steps in Philadelphia, huh? Now that you are here at Marker I, you can get a more of a birds-eye view of Hamlin and explore another section of the park. As you follow the blue markers to your right, think about what you may envision here.

But please note, trails have not yet been made. So, please stick to the path and steer clear of the drainage ditch. Pause now and meet me at Marker J.

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MARKER J – TRT: 13:51

Welcome to Marker J.

If you look to your left and up the hill, you can see where the park space connects with the public right of way on Carlyle Terrace. Perhaps there's another entrance to the park from here?

If you look to your right and into the more wooded area slightly to the northwest, there is the possible potential to cross the small ravine and head back to our main route near the 2015 ground slide site. Could you hike or bike there on a trail?

This is also a good time to point out that there is a potential connection with the eastern-most section of the park - designated by Yellow Marker H. If you came straight up the stairs after starting your tour, you haven't reached Marker H, yet. But when you get there, you'll see the potential for a more intermediate hike that could lead you to here.

The possibilities are endless.

Take some time to enjoy the views and think about what you might want to see here. When you're ready, head back down the stairs. Please take your time and resume the main path.

If you want to continue exploring Hamlin, make a right at the bottom and meet me at Marker E. That's at TRT 8:59 on this recording.

If you are ready to leave and head back to the entrance. make a left.

Either way, please follow the green signs and stay on the path.

YELLOW PATH/PROCEED THRU GATE – TRT: 15:26

So, you're choosing to go through the gates. Great choice!

Before we continue on, please make sure to close the gate behind you.

As you walk, you'll see a stone wall along your right. This wall was made by the previous property owner to build an access road up to his barn at the top of the hill. The barn still exists.

You'll also see a break in the barbed wire along the right. Please do not be tempted to go through. Remember, stick to the path.

Feel free to hit pause and enjoy walking through more of that beautiful Miner's lettuce again. Come back when you have reached Marker H.

MARKER H – TRT: 16:14

Welcome to Marker H.

This is your turnaround for this short off-shoot path. But before you go back, keep looking.

If you look straight ahead, you'll see a natural deer trail that goes up and to the left. As an FYI, there is no out here. It leads to private property and the border of the park. Again, please be mindful of our neighbors and their property.

But to the right, you'll see another break in the barbed wire. Please, don't go through. But, if you made it to the top of the PG&E steps, this may be the starting point for that more intermediate hike I mentioned before.

What can you envision?

Take your time to enjoy this spot. As you leave, please make sure to close the gate behind you by latching the chain to the gate.

If you want to continue exploring Hamlin, make a right at the bottom and meet me at Marker G. That's at 11:18 on this recording.

If you are ready to leave and head back to the entrance, make a left.

Either way, please follow the green signs and stay on the path.