



DISCOVER

FRANKLIN RIDGE

Almond Ranch

JMLT raised the \$4 million needed to acquire Almond Ranch in 2019. This stunning 281-acre property was the proverbial “missing piece” that now connects all of the properties along Franklin Ridge. A top priority of land conservationists for decades, the ranch expands a large preserve of vital natural resources and is the nexus for major trails. Its acquisition added a vital missing segment to the visionary Bay Area Ridge Trail, a 550-mile loop that circumnavigates the entire San Francisco Bay.

Stonehurst

John Muir Land Trust was founded by neighbors around a kitchen table to protect this 150-acre open space from development. Vaca Creek Trail provides public access through the development where it connects with the Hal Olson Founders Trail, named for a founder of JMLT. Follow his namesake trail into the hills to enjoy endless family recreation and an important refuge for wildlife.

Parking

The trailhead and parking are located along Vaca Creek Road, just north of Alhambra Valley Road. Across Alhambra Valley Road to the south is the Pine Tree Trail and access to the seemingly endless acres of Briones Regional Park.

Flora & Fauna

The landscape hosts blue oak, coast live oak, valley oak, and California black oak. Native wildflowers include poppies, lupines, yarrow, monkeyflower and Mt. Diablo sunflowers. The creeks harbor reptiles and amphibians, including the federally threatened California red-legged frog and Alameda whipsnake. Songbirds and raptors thrive, including the Cooper’s hawk with its uncommonly long tail and warm reddish bars of color on its belly.



Franklin Ridge

The hills to the west and southwest of downtown Martinez are known locally as Franklin Ridge, named for Gold Rush pioneer Edward Franklin who came to California from England in 1849. He purchased a two-story adobe ranch house from Vicente J. Martinez in 1853 that can be seen at the John Muir National Historic Site. A climb into these hills is a delightful way to experience this landscape much as it was years ago.

Sky Dutra Gustin

John Muir Land Trust acquired Sky Ranch in 1998 and then Gustin Ranch in 2002, saving both from impending development. Historic 158-acre Dutra Ranch, the critical link between the two, was acquired from the Dutra Family in 2004. The properties form a corridor for native wildlife roaming their natural habitats. The 3-mile Tina Batt Trail is named for a founder of JMLT. As you walk along her namesake trail, delight in the surrounding live oak and bay laurel woodlands, rolling grasslands, and coastal scrub.

Parking

These three properties are reached via Feeder Trail #1 and the Dutra Road trailhead. From the intersection of Alhambra Road, take Franklin Canyon Road west for one mile and turn south on Dutra Road. The trailhead, marked “Contra Costa County Feeder Trail #1” is on the left about one-tenth mile up the road. Park on the left side before the trailhead and stables. Walk up Feeder Trail #1 for one mile to the gate that marks the entrance of Sky Ranch.

Alhambra Creek

The upper tributaries of Alhambra Creek nourish indigenous wildlife such as the belted kingfisher, river otters, and the green heron. Alhambra is also home to the famous Martinez beavers, who have been sighted in downtown Martinez, sparking the annual Beaver Festival.



John Muir National Historic Site

4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez, CA 94553

For decades, JMLT and the National Park Service have been partners in the expansion of the John Muir National Historic Site (JMNHS), the home of the Victorian mansion where famed naturalist John Muir lived. JMLT enlarged the site itself by acquiring Mount Wanda in 1992 and donating West Hills Farm in 2018. Ongoing efforts to expand Franklin Ridge are adding to an adjoining landscape that makes the entire protected area—lands owned by the two partners—a seamlessly connected natural wonderland of trails and stunning views that provide hours of delightful outdoor exploration.

Parking

The main JMNHS parking lot is located at the intersection of Highway 4 and Alhambra Avenue.

The Mount Wanda staging area and parking lot are located nearby, on the south side of Highway 4 at the intersection of Alhambra Avenue and Franklin Canyon Road. The trailhead leads to the entire Franklin Ridge trail system.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Franklin Ridge

These glorious properties were acquired by John Muir Land Trust (JMLT) over three decades: Stonehurst (1991), Mount Wanda (1992), Sky Ranch (1998), Gustin Ranch (2002), Dutra Ranch (2004), West Hills Farm (2015) and Almond Ranch (2019). They offer stunning panoramas from elevated ridgetops, miles of multi-use trails, vital wildlife habitat, and the opportunity to reflect on the area’s rich history as you walk in the footsteps of John Muir himself. Visitors marvel at sweeping views of the Bay and Mount Tamalpais to the north and west, gorgeous rolling hillsides in vibrant seasonal colors to the south, and Mount Diablo to the east. This protected open space is a beloved treasure for all, with the prospect of future expansion.



Getting There

The Franklin Ridge properties are located south of Martinez, CA, most easily accessed from Highway 4 via the Alhambra Avenue exit. There are four main trailheads and parking areas.

Please make a donation
jmlt.org



P.O. Box 31, Martinez, CA 94553 | (925) 228-5460 | jmlt.org



FRANKLIN RIDGE



ALMOND RANCH



DUTRA RANCH



GUSTIN RANCH



MOUNT WANDA



SKY RANCH

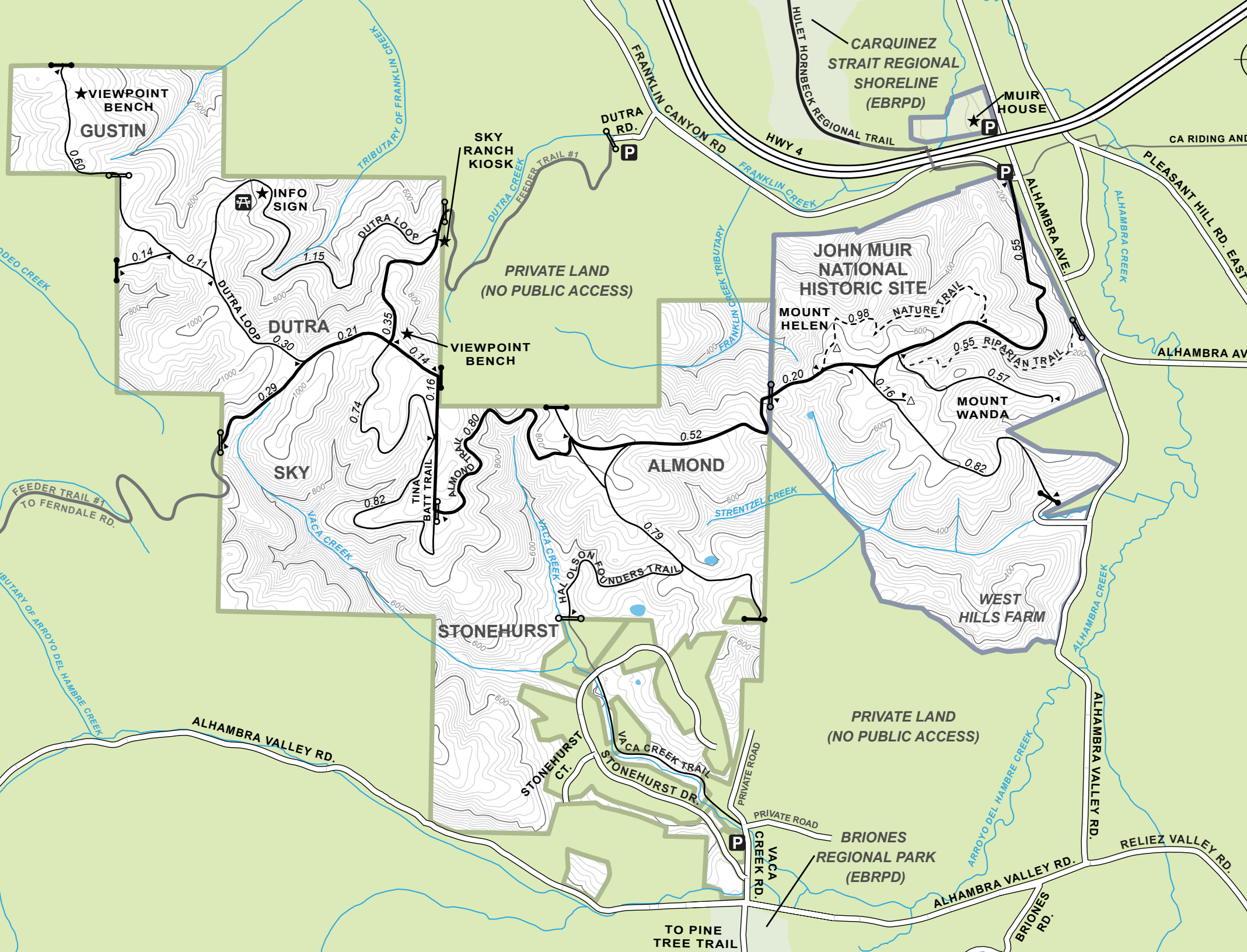


STONEHURST



WEST HILLS FARM





LEGEND

- MULTI-USE TRAIL
- HIKING ONLY
- BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL (MULTI-USE)
- BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL, PRIVATE LAND (MULTI-USE)
- MULTI-USE PRIVATE LAND
- CREEK
- PAVED ROAD
- MILEAGE BETWEEN POINTS
- LOCKED GATE
- UNLOCKED GATE
- PARKING
- PICNIC AREA
- SITE FEATURE
- NPS PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- JMLT PROPERTY BOUNDARY

20-FT CONTOUR INTERVAL

0 500 1,000 2000 FT

PREPARED BY RESTORATION DESIGN GROUP, INC. 2020

- Rules**
- Open from dawn to dusk.
 - Areas of John Muir National Historic Site have restricted hours and separate rules. Visit nps.gov/jomu.
 - Trails are multi-use. Bicyclists yield to hikers. All yield to equestrians.
 - Dogs on-leash near picnic area. Dogs off-leash on trails if under control at all times.
 - High fire risk. Smoking, campfires, barbecues and fireworks are not permitted.
 - Camping, fishing and hunting are prohibited.
 - Motorized vehicles are prohibited.
 - Drones are prohibited.
 - Cattle-grazing area. Do not attempt to touch. Keep distance and avoid getting between cows and their calves. Dogs must be under control or on-leash.
 - Close any gate found closed.
- Information**
- No bathrooms.
 - No potable water available.
 - Garbage service is limited. Please pack out all trash.
 - Contact JMLT at 925-228-5460 or info@jmlt.org.

