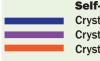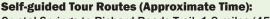# Huddart Park Self-guided Tour

The forested slopes and steep, cool canyons of Huddart Park are located within easy reach of the population centers of the San Francisco Peninsula. The park is only 3.5 miles west of Highway 84. With barbecue pits, a playground, grassy meadows, and hiking and riding trails, Huddart Park makes a great place to have a picnic or explore a redwood forest. **Start your tour at the Zweirlein Picnic Area.**

Self-guided Tour Routes (Approximate Time):
- Crystal Springs to Richard Roads Trail: 1.3 miles (45 minutes)
- Crystal Springs to Spur, then Chaparral to Canyon Trail: 2.8 miles (1.5 hours)
- Crystal Spring to Dean Trail: 4.6 miles (2.5 hours)
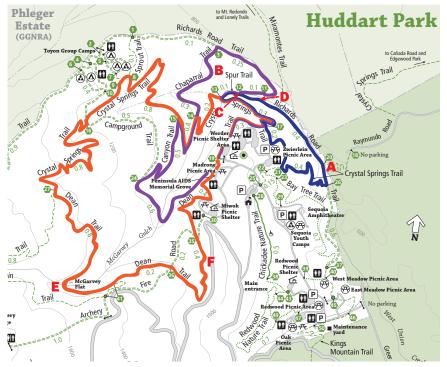
A. Riparian Habitat

West Union Creek that you see running through Huddart Park creates a special ecosystem on the banks of the river called a riparian habitat. Since the land is so close to water, soil and vegetation in riparian habitats are often very rich and productive. The creek in Huddart Park is a water source for many larger animals, such as black tailed deer and coyote, and is the home to salamanders, macroinvertebrates, and a wide variety of plants and fungi.

B. Chaparral

Chaparral is a coastal biome with hot, dry summers and mild, rainy winters. This area receives a lower amount of rainfall than other ecosystems, making it most vulnerable to fire in the late summer and fall. The chaparral biome is characterized by plants that have adapted to hot dry areas. Shrubs, such as manzanita, chamise, chaparral pea, and yerba santa form a thick, almost impenetrable mass of brush. Here you can see jackrabbits, brush rabbits, chipmunks, and lizards scurrying through the underbrush. Birds that are often seen and heard are quail, scrub-jays, and wrentits. The name, chaparral, comes from the Spanish word chaparro, for evergreen oak shrub land.

C. Redwood Forest

This part of the forest is dominated by redwood trees. Redwoods can grow up to 375 feet tall, making them the tallest trees in the world. Most of the redwoods in Huddart Park are "second growth" meaning that they are younger trees that have grown up after the extensive logging that occurred here. If you observe the redwoods, you might notice the "fairy rings" or redwood circles. A fairy ring refers to a group of redwoods growing in a circle, usually around the stump of an old growth tree that was cut down. The new generation of trees sprouts from the roots of the old redwood creating an almost perfect circle.

D. Erosion

Erosion is the process of natural forces, such as wind and water, wearing away earth's rocks and soil. Trees can play an important role in preventing erosion because their root systems help stabilize the soil around the tree and hold the hillside together. You can see an example of this if you look uphill at the tree stump. Trees also act as windbreaks, which helps reduce wind carrying away valuable topsoil. If you look towards the creek, you can also see another example of erosion happening. Currents of running water can cause very thin layers of surface soil to be removed. The effects of this type of erosion, called sheet erosion, are often not noticed in the short term, but can have large impacts in the long term by changing the landscape or carving out river channels.

F. Logging

In 1850, when the California gold rush was booming, there was a demand for lumber to build San Francisco. This resulted in the beginning of extensive logging operations on John Coppinger's property. Some logging had occurred earlier in that area to supply building materials for the Missions. Between 1853 and 1860, five sawmills operated near the present borders of the park. Richard's Sawmill, which was built in 1853, operated outside of the present park boundary west of Skyline Boulevard. From the mill, Richard's Road led down the mountain. Teams of oxen pulled wagons loaded with lumber down Richard's Road to the Redwood City embarcadero. From there, the lumber was barged to San Francisco. Today, Richard's Road Trail follows the route of this old road.

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Decomposers

Imagine standing in this forest chest deep in dead branches, leaves, and even animal carcasses. That is what the forest would look like if there were no decomposers. Decomposers—organisms like fungus, bacteria and invertebrates—break down dead materials and turn them back into their mineral components, creating nutrient rich soil for new plants to grow. Decomposition takes time, with different decomposers working at different rates. An entire fallen tree trunk might take years or decades to turn back into soil, but the leaves of that same tree might be broken down in less than a year. Look for decomposers in the form of mushrooms, earthworms, and the iconic banana slug as you explore Huddart Park. Don't forget to give them some appreciation as the recycling champions of the natural world!

E. Park History

The Ohlone Indians were the first inhabitants of Huddart park. In 1769, the land was used by the Spanish to establish missions. Many of the Native Americans either died from diseases the Europeans brought, or they became a part of the missions that were established. In 1840, after the Mexican Revolution from Spain, the Governor of Spanish California granted this parcel of land to Mexican citizen John Coppinger. The Mexican era, however, did not last very long. The War of 1848 led to California becoming a US territory, and John Coppinger's property was divided and distributed to many different owners, one of them being James Huddart. James Huddart originally used the redwoods for logging, but after his death, willed his parcel of land to become the public park that it is today.

When you're done with your tour, please return this guide to the kiosk for the next visitor. If you find this guide, please return it to: Huddart Park, 1100 Kings Mountain Road, Woodside CA, 94062.

Huddart Park is a part of **San Mateo County Parks**, which manages parks, preserves, trails, and historic sites throughout the county to preserve public lands and provide opportunities for education and recreation.

For more information, visit **www.SMCoParks.org**.

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