BACKGROUND

One of John Muir Land Trust’s most significant projects, Fernandez Ranch merges two previously-separate parcels into an 1,185-acre preserve of rolling hills, deep canyons, and breathtaking panoramic views of permanently protected open space, fostering the thriving coexistence of people, plants, and animals. Wooded hills grace the property, visible just south of the John Muir Parkway (Highway 4) between Martinez and Hercules, offering a scenic backdrop behind the Franklin Canyon Golf Course.

Fernandez Ranch boasts a key segment of Rodeo Creek, flowing perennially, along with key tributaries that maintain water levels for much of the year. JMLT serves as the permanent owner and steward of over one-fifth of the land within the Rodeo Creek watershed, safeguarding a delicate ecosystem that provides habitat for various special-status species, including Cooper’s hawk, northern harrier, California red-legged frog, western pond turtle and the occasional roaming mountain lion.

The riparian scrub alongside Rodeo Creek features arroyo willow, thickets of California blackberry, and short-spiked hedge nettle. This vegetation forms a crucial movement corridor for both aquatic and terrestrial species, offering secure cover along its length.

PROJECT

V-O-Cal will continue its previous work enhancing the trails at Fernandez Ranch. Our focus will be on rerouting the Canyon Loop Trail to bypass an old ranch road that becomes impassably muddy after rain. The redesigned trail will meander through forests, across grasslands, and into a quaint buckeye grove, featuring a 5% decrease in elevation and several grade reversals. Fernandez Ranch boasts over 10 miles of multi-use trails, offering vital links to the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the San Francisco Bay Trail.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers working on the trail will be divided into crews, each assigned a certified crew leader. These leaders will offer training on tool use and safety, and will supervise the work for the duration of the day. V-O-Cal supplies all necessary tools. While volunteers are encouraged to bring their own work gloves, V-O-Cal also has gloves available. Please wear comfortable work clothing and sturdy closed-toe shoes or boots.

WEATHER

Please come prepared for a variety of weather conditions, including layers for flexibility. Unless a serious storm is predicted, we will work rain or shine.
### Event Schedule

#### Friday
- 5:00 pm – Check in and camping open. **DINNER IS NOT PROVIDED.**

#### Saturday
- 7:30 am – Check in, light breakfast and lunch-packing begin.
- 8:30 am – Morning greeting, announcements, stretching and safety talk.
- 9:00 am – Project begins.
- 12:30 pm – Break for lunch on trail.
- 3:30 pm – Head back to camp. Clean and store tools.
- 4:00 pm – Drinks, appetizers and socializing. Showers are available.
- 6:00 pm – Dinner.

#### Sunday
- 7:30 am – Check in and lunch-packing begin. **Hot breakfast is served.**
- 8:30 am – Morning greeting, announcements, stretching and safety talk.
- 9:00 am – Project begins.
- 11:30 am – Break for lunch on trail.
- 1:30 pm – Head back to camp, clean tools, pack gear and truck.

### Meals
V-O-Cal provides all meals for volunteers from breakfast Saturday through lunch Sunday. Vegetarian options are available for all meals.

- To minimize waste we ask that you bring your own reusable plates, coffee mug, cups and utensils. Hot water and soap are provided.
- A continental breakfast is served Saturday morning.
- Please arrive at camp by 7:45 am at the latest to check in, eat breakfast and prepare your lunch. We provide lunch and lunch bags.
- Appetizers and beverages will be available at 4:00 pm after the work day on Saturday. Dinner will follow at 6:00 pm.
- **Hot breakfast is served Sunday morning.**

### Hazards

#### POISON OAK
There is a risk of exposure to poison oak at the work site. Have your crew leader point some out to you if you don’t know what it looks like. Clean with Tecnu (which we provide) after the work day and be cautious when handling your dirty clothes.

#### TICKS and MOSQUITOS
Mosquitoes could be active this time of year so bug spray and long-sleeved, lightweight shirts are recommended. Ticks are always a hazard; light colored clothing makes them easier to spot when you check during and after the project.

#### SNAKES
Snakes are present on the property. Use caution, especially when picking items up off the ground or moving rocks.

#### SHARP TOOLS
Please listen to your crew leader’s tool safety talk and observe proper tool use throughout the day.

#### SUN EXPOSURE | HYDRATION | HYPOTHERMIA
Some of the work areas are fully shaded. However, please plan for sun protection, including sun hats, sun block and light long sleeve shirts. Please bring water bottles or a water bladder large enough to hold at least 2 liters of water. Drink plenty of water throughout the work day. If you feel tired or weak, let your crew leader know, and take a break.

### What To Bring
- Sturdy shoes or boots with good tread. Ankle support is important on much of the trail. Sandals and open-toed shoes will not be permitted.
- Water bottles or a water bladder that can hold at least 2 liters of water. (You will not be allowed on the trail without water.)
- Work gloves. (If you don't have your own gloves, V-O-Cal will provide them. Please return them at the end of the project.)
- Day pack to carry your water and lunch.
- Sunglasses, hat, and sunscreen.
- Insect repellent and allergy medicine (if you normally need these things when working outdoors).
- Reusable plate/bowl, eating utensils, and mug/cup.
- A change of clothes for each work day, especially if you are sensitive to poison oak.
- Layers of clothing for a range of temperatures.
- If you will be camping . . .
  - A tent *(if you have the option to bring a smaller tent, please do!)*
  - A sleeping bag and pillow
  - A flashlight or headlamp
  - A camp chair (if you don't want to sit on the ground)
  - Other camping gear that makes you comfortable
Driving Directions
Fernandez Ranch - 1081 Christie Road, Martinez, CA 94553

The camp and staging areas for Fernandez Ranch are located at the picnic and staging area. Access is available via Christie Road, a small road that is accessible only from eastbound Highway 4.

From I-80:
• Head east on Highway 4.
• Take the first exit after the Franklin Canyon Golf Course onto Christie Road.
• Use caution both exiting and, particularly entering, Highway 4. Christie is a rural exit from busy Highway 4.
• Fernandez Ranch is 0.7 miles down Christie Road on your right.

From Martinez:
• Head west on Highway 4.
• Take the Franklin Canyon Exit.
• Turn left under the freeway, then left again to merge onto Highway 4 eastbound.
• Take the first exit after the Franklin Canyon Golf Course onto Christie Road.
• Use caution both exiting and, particularly entering, Highway 4. Christie is a rural exit from busy Highway 4.
• Fernandez Ranch is 0.7 miles down Christie Road on your right.

Arriving Late - No Worries
If you find the gate to the parking area is locked, the combination is 5460

Please detach and display on dash

ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST USE THE DESIGNATED V-O-Cal PARKING LOT

Volunteer Parking Pass
Fernandez Ranch
May 17, 2024
May 18, 2024
May 19, 2024
Children 14 and over are welcome on V-O-Cal projects. Volunteers under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. To register, visit our website at www.v-o-cal.org or https://www.signupgenius.com/go/FernandezRanch#/.

For photos of our recent projects, please visit

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/volunteersforoutdoorcalifornia
Instagram: https://instagram.com/volunteersforoutdoorcalifornia

Volunteer Project Team

- **V-O-Cal Executive Director**: Cathy Moyer
- **Project Team 1st Lead**: Joseph Cavaness
- **Project Team 2nd Lead**: Eliot Hudson
- **Technical Advisor**: Elissa Goldner
- **Crew Leader Manager**: Tomomi Yuasa
- **Kitchen Lead**: Kim Applequist
- **Camp Manager**: Pete Duringer
- **Tool Manager**: Cavine Johnson (Saturday) | TBD (Sunday)
- **Outreach**: Lily Brady | Melinda Green | Morris Older
- **Shopping**: Cathy Moyer | Chris Fishel
- **Truck | Warehouse Load Lead**: Duane Sheets | Curt Hutchins
- **Registration**: Melanie Lee | Augusta Murphy

Agency Partner

**John Muir Land Trust**

Project Sponsor

Special thanks to Bay Area Barns and Trails (BABT) for their generous grants supporting V-O-Cal these past few years. BABT assists landowners and land managers with preservation and maintenance of publicly accessible Bay Area barns, stables, pastures, staging areas, horse camps, and trails.

In-Kind Project Sponsors

Connoisseur Coffee | Tecnu | REI | Sidley Austin | Metro Mobile Communications | Adventure Medical Kits | Clif Bar