

# Wildcat Scramble

3 hours

30 Checkpoints

Can your team find them all?

Sunday, July 22nd 2012

A navigation adventure race hosted  
by the Bay Area Orienteering Club  
[www.BAOC.org](http://www.BAOC.org)



PRERACE MEET PACKET

# Wildcat Scramble 2: Event Guide

Sunday, July 22, 2012

## Welcome From the Meet Director:

After three years we return to Wildcat Canyon for another Scramble. We have selected some interesting checkpoints, which hopefully will make some challenging racing for everyone. The park is somewhat of a wilderness. It is unknown to many and has surprisingly few visitors. A network of major hiking trails covers the park, but few humans ever venture off them. There are many beautiful and interesting vistas I hope you will have time to enjoy during the race, and this time there will be ample opportunities to explore many “secret” passages that are scattered throughout the park.

- Jonas Kjall

## Event Schedule

9:00 AM: Registration/Check In

9:30 AM: Map distribution and pre-race instructions

10:00 AM: **Mass start**

1:00 PM: Course closes. Enjoy refreshments.

1:30 PM: Award ceremony

## The Course

30 challenging and/or beautiful checkpoints will be scattered throughout the park. You have 3 hours. The distance you travel depends on which checkpoints you decide to find. Teams can find fun loops of checkpoints that are as short as 5 km. Some elite competitors may try to “clear the course” by finding every checkpoint. To do that, teams will have to cover a distance equivalent to an 18 km orienteering course, with 1000 m of climb. I do not expect the course to be cleared.

Virtually all courses will involve off-trail travel. Most of this is through open grassland, some may be through forest. How much is up to you!

## The Terrain

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park lies on the northern slope of Wildcat Canyon, at the edge of Richmond and Berkeley. It consists mostly of open meadows that lie on the south facing slopes, with some dense vegetation (thick forest and chaparral) filling in smaller drainages.

## “Safety Bearings”

There is an abandoned highway running down the center of the canyon, and an access road running along the northern ridge. In an emergency, these roads will guide a competitor west, back to the event center.

If a team member becomes injured or ill, we recommend staying with them. Blow your emergency whistle in bursts of three to attract help from other competitors or park users. Cell phone service is available within most of the park.

**Notify the event directors of problems by calling Jonas at 510-229-7103. For serious emergencies, call 911.**

## The Map

Checkpoints locations will be marked on a custom made topographic map. This map was produced in 2009, primarily from USGS contours and satellite photos. It is a surprisingly good map, better than any commercially available map, but not as detailed as a field-checked orienteering map. The scale is 1:15000 (1 cm = 150 m) with 5 m contour interval and is aligned to magnetic north. The map will accurately display major hiking trails, power lines, and fences, and even a few distinct animal trails. The contours are accurate, but very generalized. There map only shows two types of vegetation: yellow for open meadows, and dark green for vegetated areas (forest and chaparral). The major vegetation boundaries are well mapped, but smaller features like individual bushes are not included.

## The Rules:

- 1) Teams consist of 2-5 members.
- 2) At 9:30 (30 minutes prior to the start), each team will receive their race map. Teams will have 20 minutes to plan their route and submit a tentative “intention sheet”.
- 3) Race will start at 10:00 AM sharp.
- 4) There will be 30 checkpoints in terrain, each marked with orange and white flags and E-Punch. Each checkpoint is worth 10 points. The team that finds the most checkpoints within 3 hours wins.
- 5) In a tie, the first team back wins. Teams must check into the finish within 3 hours (1:00 PM). 5 points are subtracted for every minute late. Teams more than 15 minutes late will be disqualified.
- 6) Team members must stay together during the competition (within aural and visual contact).
- 7) Teams must carry a whistle for emergency signaling purposes. Compass, water, first aid kit, and cell phone are encouraged, but not required. (Water will not be provided on the course)
- 8) Safety first – teams are expected to stop their race and offer help in emergency situations.

## “Secret” Passages

Most of the vegetation is dense chaparral or thickets, nearly impossible to get through without a fight. These create major route choice obstacles. Fortunately, cattle like gratuitous climb even less than scramblers, and they have beaten some tracks through the canyons. These little passages aren't on the map, but I wanted to give scramblers some hints about where they might find them. Each team will get one special map, with “crossing points” marked on it. (The rest of the team members will get a regular map). Not all marked crossing points are cow tracks, some just indicate less dense vegetation where I could get through without a fight. The crossing point list is not complete, and it won't always be in your best interest to use these passages. It's still up to your team to plan the route you think is best, and adapt it based on what you see in terrain.

## Special Hazards

There are many cows scattered throughout the park. They are used to humans, but a 1000 lb animal can always be dangerous. Keep a fair distance. The cows do help keep grass short, and make for much nicer running. Rattlesnakes are another concern, so watch your step.

Very small deer ticks may be present on the course. These ticks can transmit lyme disease. In order to reduce the chance of infection, cover your legs with long pants and check for ticks after the race.

**Poison Oak:** There is no poison oak on the open hill sides, but there is lots of poison oak in the vegetated areas. Runners can avoid poison oak completely by simply picking routes that stay in the meadows. In the woods, you can easily spot poison oak by its “leaves of three”, which have started to turn red at this time of year.

Of course, the standard hazards presented by steep terrain and hot sun must be taken into consideration. Come prepared, pick safe routes, and watch out for your teammates.

## Getting There:

Please carpool to the event, parking is limited! The assembly area will be at the Alvarado Staging Area in Wildcat Canyon (near 5755 McBryde Ave, Richmond, CA). This is easily accessible from I-80.

**Coming on I-80 from the north, take the McBryde Ave exit 17.** At the bottom of the ramp, turn left onto McBryde Ave., and follow to the second stop sign. Stone pillars on your left mark the entrance to Alvarado Park. Proceed straight through the stop sign onto Park Ave for approximately 1/4 mile to reach the staging area.

**Coming on I-80 from the south, take the Solano Ave exit 17.** At the bottom of the ramp, turn left onto Amador. Continue on Amador to the second stop sign, which will be at McBryde Ave. Then turn right onto McBryde and drive about one quarter mile until you reach the park. After you reach the park office, continue about 200 meters on Park Ave to the Alvarado staging area.



## Equipment *Come prepared for success*

### Mandatory:

Teams must carry a signaling whistle.

(Available at registration)

Sport-Ident “E-Stick” (can be rented for \$3)

### Recommended:

- Bring a watch, so you know when to return.
- Compass, to keep your bearings.
- Long pants or gaiters to protect against thorns and ticks.
- Shoes with good traction.
- Small first aid kit.
- Water bottles. There is only one water fountain on the course, and it may not be included along your route!
- Other navigational aids (GPS and altimeter) are allowed, but are not necessary.

## Stay for the post-race celebrations!

Stick around till 1:30 PM for a brief award ceremony, where we will distribute the prestigious “Wild Scrambler Trophy” to the best team, and also recognize top teams of men (all male), women (all female), masters (all members over 45), and families (at least one team member under 18) divisions.

A special award will be given to the team that displays the best *Team Spirit*<sup>\*</sup>, so find your wild side!

We will have a modest assortment of snacks and drinks for after the race. Bring your own lunch to enjoy a picnic.

<sup>\*</sup>As determined in a totally arbitrary fashion by the meet organizer :-)

# History of Wildcat Wildcat Park

Wildcat Canyon is beautiful place with a strange history, where you may encounter old nuclear missile bases, abandoned oil wells, the ruins of a sanitarium, and a mysterious ghost road to nowhere. A true wilderness at the edge of the city.

## The Belgum Sanitarium

From <http://www.friscovista.com> and <http://www.chaddickerson.com>

Grande Vista Sanitarium was founded by Dr. Hendrik Belgum in 1914. Only ruins now remain of this once extravagant mansion. Neighbors called it "the crazy house." Mental patients, drug addicts, and alcoholics were among the residents. The well-to-do families of Piedmont and San Francisco would send their relatives to the remote setting to keep them out of sight. The few visitors who were brave enough to sneak onto the grounds and look around reported that beautiful music could often be heard. It was said that the doctor and his ethereal sisters enjoyed dancing with the patients as the setting sun would cast its golden glow across the bay below them.

Dr. Belgum died November 8, 1948 while fighting a grass fire in the hills behind his home, and the home was inherited by his brothers and sisters. The once magnificent house, with working farm, tiffany chandeliers, arcing staircases, and dark mahogany furniture slowly deteriorated over time. When the last of the Belgum family died in 1963, the house was abandoned. It was burnt to the ground by vandals in 1977.

## Alvarado Park

In years past, the hills at the northern end of wildcat Canyon echoed with the sounds of singing and dancing, coming from an open air pavilion dance hall. This was the centerpiece of Alvarado park, which was beautifully decorated with stonework lampposts and served by its own streetcar from the Eastshore and Suburban Railway. This park is now operated by the East Bay Regional Parks district, and while the stone lampposts are no longer lit, the park still echoes with the sounds of children playing.

## Oil Exploration

A careful eye may spot the remnants of exploratory oil wells, dug by Standard Oil during the mid 1960's. These wells turned out to be unfruitful.

## Nike Missile Bases

From <http://www.elcerritowire.com/> and <http://www.nps.gov/>

In the 1950s, eleven Nike missile sites (named for the Greek goddess of Victory) were placed about the Bay Area. These were intended as the last line of defense against Soviet bombers. One of these sites in Wildcat Canyon was home to 24 Nike-Ajax guided missiles. Later on, many of the Ajax sites were converted to deliver Hercules missiles, which were actually capable of holding their own nuclear warheads. Amazingly, these were intended to destroy Russian nuclear warheads before they found their targets. The large concrete pads on the top of Potero Ridge in Wildcat Canyon were home to Radar guidance systems. The actual missile bunkers were about 2 km south, and have since been filled in dirt. Perhaps an observant orienteer will notice these slight depressions while passing over.

## A Violent Geology.

Geologic forces can be thanked for protecting Wildcat Canyon's wild state against human domestication. The active fault which runs through its center has created a highly scared and unstable terrain. There were once plans for large development, some 3000 homes just uphill of the "road to nowhere" which runs along the bank of Wildcat creek. But in the early 1980's, public opposition and fear of landslide caused the plans to be canceled, and the land was eventually transferred to the public trust. This proved to be a wise decision, when wet winter storms in 1982 and 1983 triggered massive landslides which buried the road and would have wiped out the development.

## Wildlife

The canyon is rich with wildlife There are many deer (which are preyed upon by the namesake wildcat), and countless rafters of turkeys. Coyotes and hawks have been seen stalking field mice. More obscure animals such as ringneck snakes and rubber boas can be found in the woods. Ringtail miners cats (a relative of the raccon) have been seen in the area. Give these animals respect and space (especially if they rattle). Wildcat canyon is their home, and we are their guests.

# Find your Bay Area Orienteering Club wild side

Orienteering is THE sport of outdoor exploration. The original adventure race. Use a map to find checkpoints in terrain. Build skills. Race your friends.

BAOC is a nonprofit, volunteer driven club that promotes orienteering throughout Northern California. We strive to offer low cost events that are beginner friendly and provide high quality competition.

## Upcoming Events

*Schedule subject to change.  
Visit [BAOC.org](http://BAOC.org) for the most  
current information*



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|----------------|--|
| Jun 23-24      | Mount Pinos, Frazier Park, CA<br>Travel with other BAOB members for 2-days of camping and competition in this beautiful pine forest. Hosted by the Los Angeles Orienteering Club     |
| July 22 (Sun.) | Wildcat Canyon. Richmond, CA<br>The Wildcat Scramble Returns! 30 checkpoints. 3 hours. How many can your team find? Preregistration required.  |
| Aug 4-5        | Lake Tahoe Training Weekend<br>Come join BAOB for a series of fun, casual orienteering races in the high sierra!   |
| Aug 19 (Sun.)  | Wilder Ranch, Santa Cruz, CA (pending approval)<br>Wildcat Scramble wasn't enough for you? We hope to hold an even Wilder Scramble at Wilder Ranch!                                  |
| Sep 16 (Sun.)  | Presidio, San Francisco, CA<br>Everyone is welcome at this National Orienteering Day event!  |
| Oct 6-7        | Boggs Mountain, Cobb, CA<br>BAOB is organizing a full weekend of orienteering in this beautiful pine forest, with nationally sanctioned races! (Everyone is welcome to participate!) |
| Oct 14 (Sun.)  | Scout-O Championship<br>We're expecting hundreds of Boy and Girl Scouts at this annual event. We're using a new venue this year, details to be announced.                            |

# Find your Bay Area Orienteering Club wild side

## BAOB Summer Training!

From San Jose to San Francisco, BAOB- is planning a lot of summer fun. Join BAOB club members for navigation through woods, hills, cities, and streets. It's low key training with fun socializing afterward.

We're using a special website to organize these.  
<http://baocsummer.wordpress.com/>

Get the latest updates on our Bay-O-Net email list  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/baoc/>

## Wilderness Scramble

3 hours  
30 Checkpoints  
Can your team find them all?



The Wilderness Scramble is a new series of events from BAOB. Invite your friends and make a team!

*We are constantly adding new events. Keep up to date.  
Visit [BAOB.ORG](http://BAOB.ORG) and join our Bay-O-Net email list.*

### Special Thanks to the East Bay Regional Parks!

Events like this would not be possible without their support! It's through their fantastic work that such beautiful and unspoiled wilderness areas still exist in the Bay Area. Special thanks to **Allison Rein and her colleagues** for their support in organizing this activity. The BAOB knows what a gift these natural sites are, and how important it is to share them with the public, so new generations will learn to appreciate and protect them.

Please consider joining BAOB on **August 12th**, when we give back to the East Bay Parks District on a workday to control invasive species at Redwood Regional Park! For more information contact [steve.haas@baoc.org](mailto:steve.haas@baoc.org).