

Published March 3rd, 2021

## Discovering dog-friendly trails during pandemic

By Jenn Freedman



View of Mt. Diablo from Lafayette Ridge trail with Jenn and Tchoupper Photo Lisah Kmet

Exploring the great outdoors has been one of this past year's silver linings. Another bright side for many families has been the addition of a "COVID dog" because ... why not now? Together, a new (or old) furry friend and the glorious Lamorinda hills make a winning combination for endless expeditions right in our backyard.

While popular paved trails like the Lafayette Reservoir and the Lafayette-Moraga Trail are convenient options, they are heavily-trafficked and can be a bit distracting, especially for puppies. Plus, exploring a road less traveled often brings the reward of breathtaking views.

After nine months of exploring miles per day, my COVID dog, Tchoupper, and I have discovered some pretty epic dog-friendly Lamorinda trails.

All of these trails can be accessed on the All Trails app as well, which provides directions, trail details, a GPS tracking map, and more helpful tools. Happy hiking!

### Mulholland Ridge:

Distance: 2+ mile out and back, depending on where you turn around

Dog rules: allowed off leash on the paved part of the Moraga side (south of the water tower)

Level: fairly easy with one decent hill on the Moraga side

Access: trail can be accessed on both sides via Donald Drive

More info: managed by the town of Moraga; <https://www.moraga.ca.us/439/Mulholland-Ridge-Open-Space-Preserve>

### Lafayette Ridge Trail:

Distance: up to 6.6 miles out and back, depending on where you turn around

Dog rules: allowed off leash as long as 200+ feet from entrance

Level: generally moderate, with a few more difficult hills on the far end of the ridge

Access: Lafayette Ridge Staging Area on Pleasant Hill Road

More info: managed by East Bay Regional Park District; <https://www.ebparks.org/parks/briones/>

### Springhill to Buckeye Ranch Loop:

Distance: 2.2 loop

Dog rules: allowed off leash as long as 200+ feet from entrance

Level: moderate to difficult with a steep incline and some loose dirt on parts

Access: Springhill Staging Area

More info: managed by East Bay Regional Park District; <https://www.ebparks.org/parks/briones/>

### Reservoir Rim Trail:

Distance: approx. 5 mile loop

Dog rules: on leash only

Level: moderate to difficult with one especially steep hill in Moraga

Access: main entrance at Lafayette Reservoir parking lot; various other neighborhood entrances

More info: managed by East Bay Municipal Utility District; <https://www.ebmud.com/recreation/east-bay/lafayette-reservoir/>

### King Canyon Loop:

Distance: 6.4 mile loop from staging area

Dog rules: on leash only

Level: moderate (with one killer hill about mile 5)

Access: Valle Vista Staging Area on Canyon Road via Rocky Ridge Trail

More info: managed by East Bay Municipal Utility District; <https://www.ebmud.com/recreation/east-bay/east-bay-trails/>

### Blue Oak Trail:

Distance: 3.3 mile loop

Dog rules: allowed off leash as long as 200+ feet from entrance

Level: moderate with a few steep hills

Access: Reliez Valley Staging Area

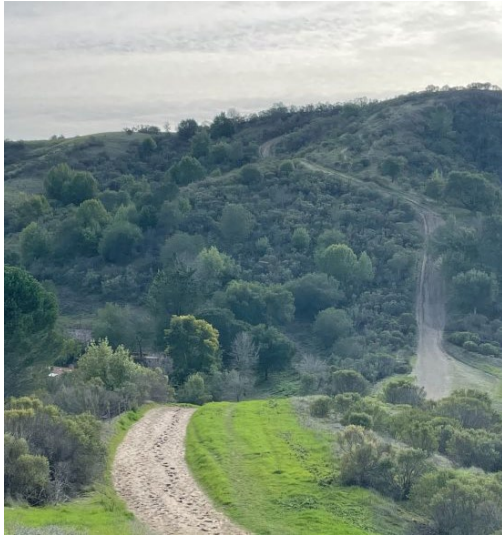
More info: managed by East Bay Regional Park District; <https://www.ebparks.org/parks/briones/>



View of Moraga hills on Mulholland Ridge Mulholland Ridge: This wide, mostly paved ridgeline trail from Moraga to Orinda offers unobstructed views of the Moraga hills as well as Mt. Diablo. Photo Jenn Freedman



Recent view from the Lafayette Ridge trail Lafayette Ridge Trail: Part of Briones Regional Park, this scenic trail begins above Acalanes High School and follows the ridgeline for about 3 miles up and down, intersecting with dozens of other trails along the way. Enjoy sweeping views at every angle with vibrant rolling green hills this time of year (without much shade). Photo Jenn Freedman



Lafayette Reservoir Rim Trail: A moderate to difficult trail with expansive views. Photo Colleen Brown



View of the many hills on Lafayette Ridge from the Springhill to Buckeye Ranch Loop Springhill to Buckeye Ranch Loop: Also part of Briones Regional Park, the steep incline of this trail (if you start on the left side at trailhead) pays off with breathtaking views at the top where the loop meets Lafayette Ridge. Photo Jenn Freedman



View from King Canyon Loop King Canyon Loop: A hike around this tranquil Moraga trail boasts picturesque views of the San Leandro Reservoir, aquatic birds, and other wildlife. Photo Jenn Freedman



View from Blue Oak Trail  
Blue Oak Trail: Also part of Briones Regional Park, this Lafayette loop features vast rolling hills. Watch out for grazing cows and mountain bikers!  
Photo Jenn Freedman

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA