

LAKE MERRITT ESTUARY

Priority Conservation Area APPLICATION

Lake Merritt and the surrounding parkland and watershed--connecting to the Bay--create the proposed Lake Merritt Estuary PCA. This crucial zone contains elements that would bring it under designations of Natural Landscapes and Regional Recreation. In addition, the lake falls within a larger Urban Greening PCA "Downtown & Jack London Square."

As a Natural Landscape, it benefits **Terrestrial Ecosystems, Water Supply & Water Quality** and **Aquatic Ecosystems**. Co-benefits include Climate & Resilience and Compact Growth.

The boundaries of the PCA are shaped by the Bay Area Open Space Council, which designated the lake and estuary Bay Area Protected Areas. The lake is a Wildlife Refuge, the first in the nation, as declared by the 1870 California Wildlife Act. The channel is a Resource Conservation Area, an open space zone designated by the City of Oakland. These features benefit Terrestrial Ecosystems by protecting unique habitat and botanical areas of high priority, and co-benefit Compact Growth and Climate & Resilience.

The Lake Merritt Estuary also contains Open Creeks designated by the City of Oakland as necessary to protect. The open creeks network was generated by the City of Oakland's Watershed and Stormwater Program, and mapped by Planning and Public Works staff. These creeks benefit Aquatic Ecosystems by protecting targeted streams, they benefit Terrestrial Ecosystems by protecting critical riparian corridors and the diversity of animals using them, and they benefit Water Supply & Water Quality by supporting watershed health and protecting downstream water uses.

Lake Merritt Estuary benefits **Recreation** and is therefore also designated Regional Recreation.

It benefits Recreation as a Region-Serving Park, a special zone designation within the City of Oakland zoning maps. Such parks provide recreation opportunities for Oakland and the surrounding area, and Lake Merritt is a prime example. The PCA also includes regional trails that encircle and cross through its boundaries, including the Bay Trail and existing and proposed Class 1 Bikeways, which benefit Recreation. Co-benefits include Wildlife Habitat, Water Supply & Water Quality, and Climate & Resilience.