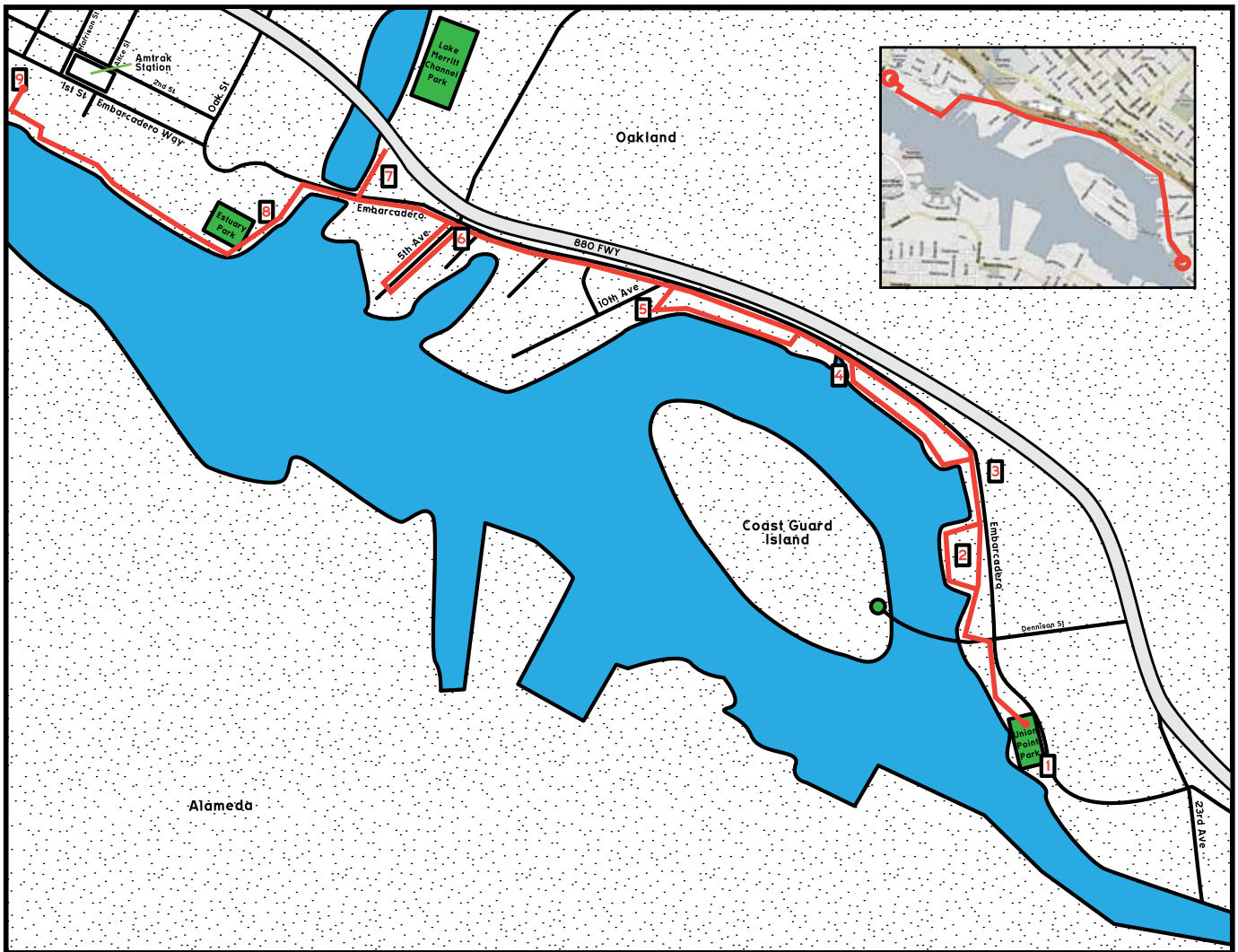




WALKS



TWO: THE EMBARCADERO



*map numbers correspond to points of interest described on following pages

DISTANCE ~2.5miles DIRECTION ~NW TERRAIN Flat paths & sidewalks of varying condition

ROUTE START: UNION POINT PARK, 2311 Embarcadero East

- Arrive at Union Point Park via the 50 bus from Fruitvale BART or Alameda. You'll have to walk a few blocks from the nearest stop—bonus walking!
- Follow the waterfront path through the park and up to the sidewalk running along the Embarcadero.
- Follow the Embarcadero past the Coast Guard Island bridge, then pick up the waterfront path again and follow it along and through the Embarcadero Cove Marina area.
- After the marina, return to the sidewalk and follow it to the Motel 6 parking lot, where you can go between the buildings and pick the waterfront path up again. Follow the path til it returns to the sidewalk.
- Follow the sidewalk to the next parking lot/trail reappearance, behind the marine shop. Pick up the trail again, shaking your head at the non-descript architecture (except for the cool restaurant building).
- Eventually you'll end up in the Oyster Reef parking lot facing the 9th Avenue Terminal, where you can pick up the sidewalk again. Follow the sidewalk all the way to 5th Avenue.
- Turn left at 5th Avenue, into the 5th Ave Marina and surrounding area. This loop leads back to the sidewalk, which you pick up and continue to follow west along the Lake Merritt Channel entrance (which is a great place to explore) and into Estuary Park and the Jack London Aquatic Center.
- Pick up the path in Estuary Park and follow it all the way into the Jack London Square area. Here you can pray for the flavorless buildings to just stop already, then take any number of buses or trains to your next stop.

ROUTE END: JACK LONDON SQUARE

points of interest

Check numbers on map for specific location

1. UNION POINT PARK

Created on the site of a former boatyard, this little park has transformed an industrial brownfield into a great place to hang out, see interesting sculptural elements, and look out along the estuary towards the bay and San Francisco. Things to check out include :

- **Spiral Walk.** One of several elements at Union Point that refer to the site's marine history, the spiral walk winds up a small rise and leads to a sweet little vista point made to feel like a ship's look-out. Look all the way around for views of the marina, the estuary, and the hills. You can also check out the compass points embedded in the concrete and see that Oakland really is oriented on a diagonal.



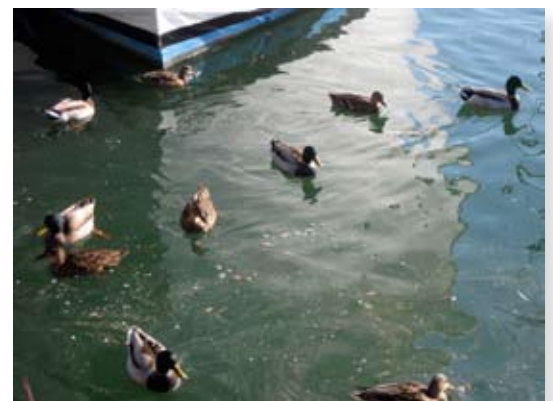
L-R: 'Sígame' sculpture; cleat close-up; 'Sígame' detail

- **Ship cleats.** These round and rusty giant tie-downs arranged in a small plaza just south of the spiral hill also speak to the site's marine history.
- **'Wave Oculus' sculpture.** This circular pier features an arrangement of thousands of little mirrors angled downwards to reflect the estuary. Taken as a whole the mirrors create what looks like a digital version of the water's surface. Artist: Ned Kahn.
- **'Sígame/Follow Me' sculpture.** A 13' statue honoring 20 women who've impacted Oakland from its early history to present times. The sculpture is literally a composite of these 20 women and features a little info on each one. Kids love to play on it too—ideal for delivering a disguised history lesson. Artist: Scott Donahue.

2. EMBARCADERO COVE MARINA*

Historically known as the Brooklyn Basin, this marina and surrounding areas feature beautiful old boats, several kinds of waterfowl, and an extended family of cats that are fed and loved by the locals. You can have a meal or a drink and check out the restored Victorian houses now serving as commercial/office space.

*Between Union Point Park and Embarcadero Cove you can cross the bridge to Coast Guard Island and satisfy your curiosity about this man-made isle with the practical name. Just before you start the actual crossing look left towards Union Point Park and check out the railroad tracks that lead into and under the water nearby. Mysterious...



Mallards at Embarcadero Cove



L-R: Tracks to nowhere near Coast Guard Island bridge; inadvertent landscape on a dry-docked hull; Pipe City resident, 1932 (photo: ML Cohen, courtesy the Oakland Museum)

3. SITE OF DEPRESSION-ERA ‘PIPE CITY’

Way back, when the medical marijuana dispensary that sits here now wasn’t even a glimmer in Oakland’s eye, this site at the intersection of 19th Avenue and the Embarcadero belonged to the American Concrete & Steel Pipe Company. During the Depression the company allowed homeless men to live in surplus sewer pipes for the winter, which earned the land the dual names of ‘Pipe City’ and ‘Miseryville’. The informational signs across the street, just north of the Embarcadero Cove marina, provide details on Pipe City and other local history along with maps of the estuary then and now (and the benches there are a great place to watch the sunset).

4. MINI COVE WEST OF MOTEL ROW

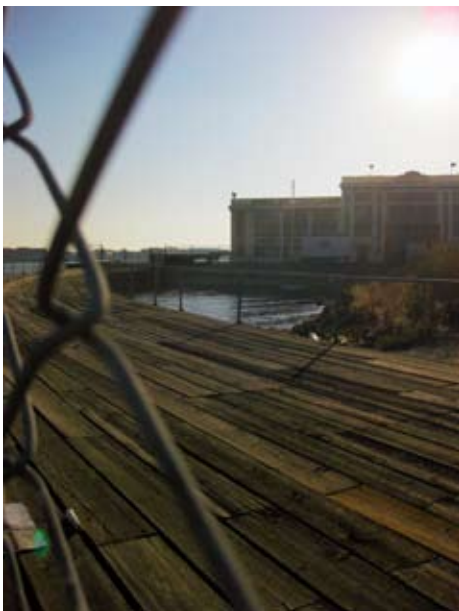
A great spot to stop and look at the water birds and classic sailboat or two that always seem to be here.

5. NINTH AVENUE SHIPPING TERMINAL

This Port of Oakland terminal seems to be the berth that time forgot. View the classic terminal building and old railroad-tie road/pier through the fence from the west side of the Oyster Reef parking lot. If you’re lucky you’ll meet the cats that lounge on the ties and talk to the currently homeless man who takes care of them. Bonus: the walk between here and the 5th Avenue Marina is a great stretch for checking out cool shipping container colors.



Great white heron & coots at mini cove



Ninth Avenue Terminal, Port of Oakland

6. FIFTH AVENUE MARINA

A scruffy collection of old buildings, metal, plants and people, the 5th Avenue Marina is an original Oakland gem to be visited with respect. Residents generally don’t appreciate random people traipsing through what amounts to their front yards, so be low-key when you come through to check out the amazing metal sculptures and other art and greenery found here.



In and around the Fifth Avenue Marina

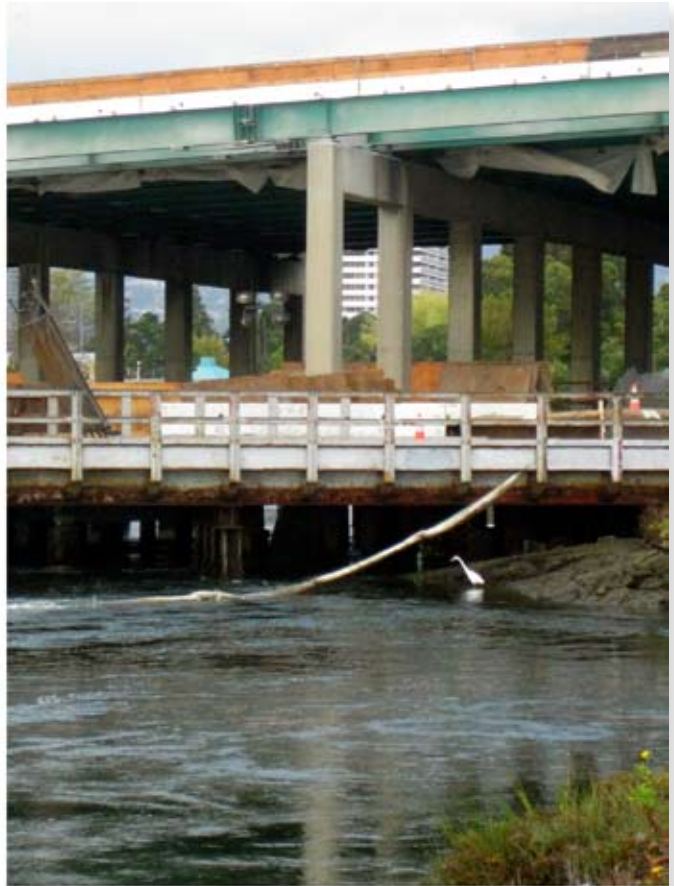
7. ENTRANCE TO LAKE MERRITT CHANNEL

The Lake Merritt Channel connects Lake Merritt to the Oakland Estuary and the bay. This humble strip of tightly managed water, running through a maze of flood control pipes and construction sites in the shadows of 880, is actually a fantastic place to see birds. In a 10 minute stretch we saw not only the usual suspects—egrets, herons, coots and ducks—but also the more elusive Belted Kingfisher and a surprise hummingbird. Check the links at the end of this guide for one guy’s list and photos of birds spotted at the channel--he’s up to 48 species!



7th Street Flood Control Station pumpworks

You can also venture inland from the entrance area, to Lake Merritt Channel Park, the Laney College fields, Peralta Park and the lake itself. Measure DD is funding projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian access, restore wetlands and channel flow and create passage for small boats. For now the area is a patchwork of 'official' trails and very unofficial paths through fences into construction and municipal maintenance sites. If you make it to the Laney fields look for the little rabbits that might still be around, the remaining descendants of a few bunnies abandoned here. Most of them have been adopted via the Oakland Zoo and rabbit adoption shelters but there's no guarantee they found them all so you could get lucky enough to spot one.



In and around the Lake Merritt Channel, clockwise from top left: white geese (most likely Embden, Chinese White, or Snow Geese) cruising the Embarcadero; Great Egret hunting under 880; fancy geese swimming at the channel mouth; Belted Kingfisher viewing the fire department training grounds.

8. ESTUARY PARK

Just past the channel entrance lies the Jack London Aquatic Center and this little piece of green along the water. The Aquatic Center is ground zero for estuary boating opportunities including rowing, kayaking and dragon boating. Estuary Park is a great place to interact with the waterfront—sit on the steps that go right into the water and see who swims up or flies by, you might even spot a sea lion. Lots of weird creatures hang out in the seawall rocks too, like the prehistoric-looking chiton and the creepy creature we call the sea roach. The water is surprisingly clear for an urban estuary with heavy boat traffic.

9. JACK LONDON'S ALASKA CABIN

...or parts of it anyway. What's interesting here is not the cabin itself—it's the diversity of people who stop to look at it and their reactions. Jack London is a famous Oaklander who led a unique life characterized by both progressive socialist-leaning politics and throw-back perspectives on race. His books are full of inspiring views on the natural world yet are littered with negative perspectives about Native and African Americans, Asians and Latinos. Consider this as you watch people from a spectrum of cultures step up to the shed-size relic and look inside. Folks wonder at the rough accommodations, and a few stick around to read the info plaque or check out the grassy roof; mostly, though, nobody's all that interested. There's a rich story in there somewhere, and we're guessing Jack London wouldn't have been the one telling it. 🌿



Jack London's Alaska cabin

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Waterfront Action** is all about promoting public access to the waterfront. Here are 3 of their many great links:
Oakland waterfront access map <http://www.waterfrontaction.org/map/index.htm>
Supercool interactive Waterfront history map <http://www.waterfrontaction.org/history/index.htm>
Waterfront events calendar <http://www.waterfrontaction.org/events/calendar.htm>
- **Birds of Lake Merritt Channel** as sighted and photographed by Nick. He's got some great photos and an interesting post about his interactions with the channel. <http://nickshere.com/channel.html>
- **The Jack London Aquatic Center** is a great resource for waterfront boating fun times. <http://www.jlac.org/>

