



The trail starts at the north end of the HY-4 pedestrian tunnel.

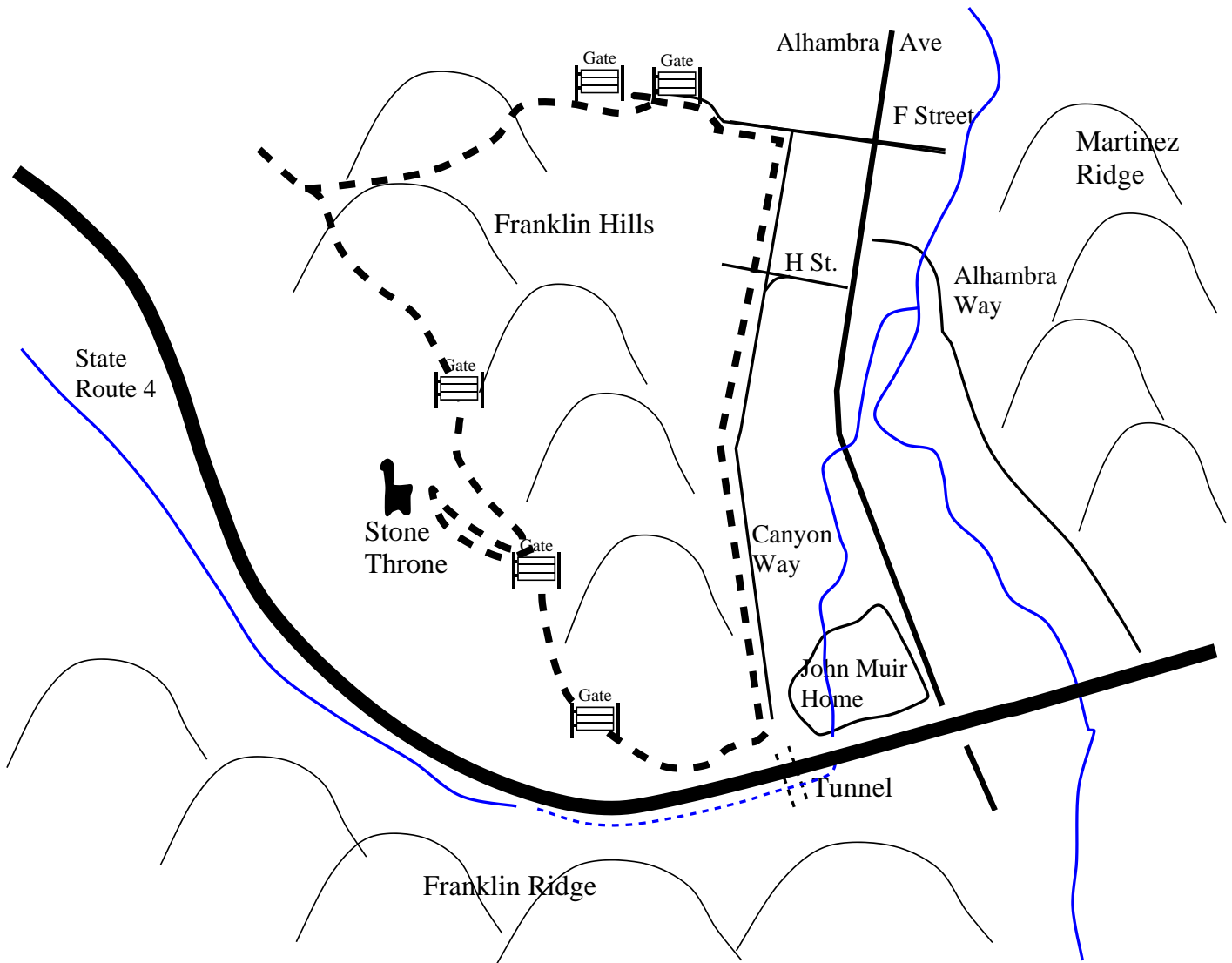
Franklin Hills Throne - April

Round Trip - Two and one half miles
Elevation Change - 500 feet

The name "Franklin" is given to more than one geographic feature in the Alhambra Creek watershed. Franklin Canyon and Franklin Creek are below Franklin Ridge, all of them running East-West, more or less. Perpendicular and to the north of these are the Franklin Hills, running parallel to Alhambra Creek and Alhambra

Avenue. The hills on the opposite side of Alhambra Avenue belong to the Martinez Ridge.

The Franklin Hills are included in the East Bay Regional Parks (EBRP) as part of the Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline. A former landowner of the hills constructed a stone throne on one of the hilltops, under a lone Valley Oak. To reach the Throne, take Alhambra Avenue to "H" Street. Go two blocks and then turn left on Canyon Way. Go to the end of Canyon Way and park next to the back fence of the John Muir National Historic Site. Until the events of 9/11, visitors could enter the John Muir site through the back gate.





passes through a third gate. There is a knoll on the hiker's left. A single windswept Valley Oak is on the top. Past the water trough, there is a road on the left that goes up the knoll. Most of the trails in the Franklin Hills are fire roads, but the luxurious green of spring sometimes obscures the way.

The Stone Throne comes into sight as the hiker reaches the top. It is under the low branches of the Oak and is made from rounded river rocks held together with concrete. It is fun, but not comfortable. Local people will easily recognize the intersection of Alhambra Avenue and Alhambra Way, Walgreen's store. It is only 0.6 miles away, as the crow flies, but it feels like a world away.

Returning to the main trail, the hiker proceeds northward, up another hill to a fourth gate. The elevation is

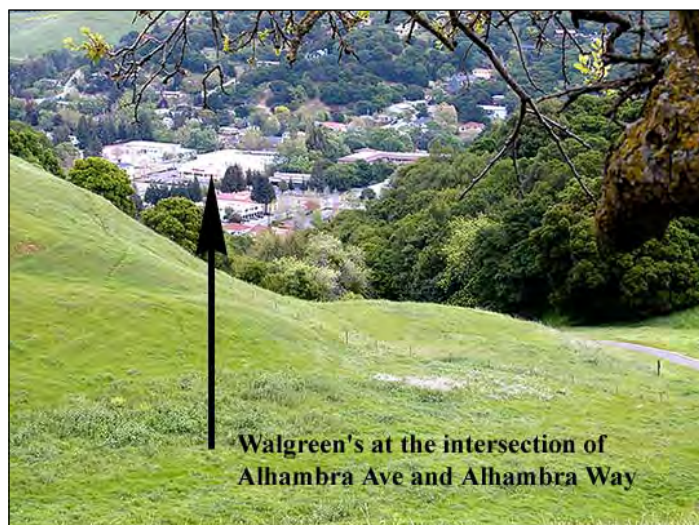


now about 550 feet above sea level, slightly higher than the throne. About 200 paces north of this gate, a signpost indicates the hiker can continue

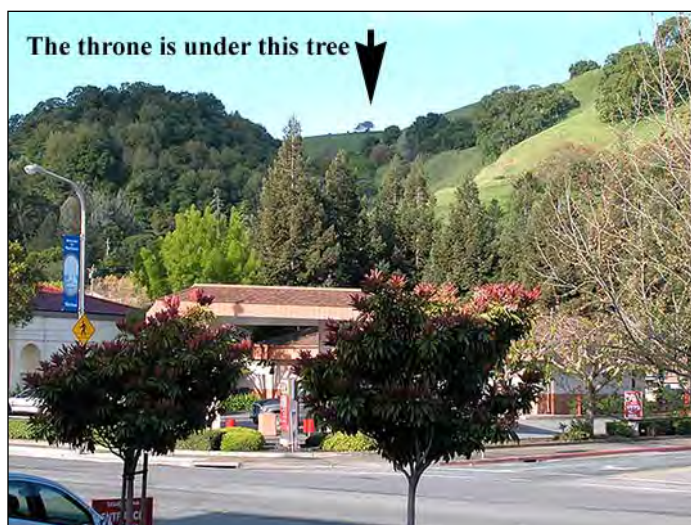
north or turn right (east) and go down hill. The downhill path takes the walker to the "F" Street trail head. To return to the car, take "F" Street downhill to Ricks Ave, turn right. Ricks will become Canyon Way. Follow it to the end.

New security measures for all National Park facilities have ended that practice.

After parking, continue on Canyon Way, through the EBRP gate. There is a tunnel under State Route 4 a few dozen paces from the gate. A signpost marks the trail, on the right hand side, just before entering the tunnel. The trail follows the State Route 4 road cut, climbing steeply. The hiker becomes aware of the road-noise as the elevation rises above the highway. The trail, a fire road, is disturbed annually by grading. A variety of native and weedy flowers is found on the road and on the slopes in April; California Poppy, Bur Clover, Tom Cat Clover, Lupine, Common Vetch, Monkey Flower Bush, Mustard, Filaree, Wild Geranium, Pineapple Weed. California Buttercups, Blue Dicks, and Mule Ear. Towards the top, the trail turns away from the highway and the noise. The hiker passes through a second gate, crosses a ridge above a small sharp valley, and then



Walgreen's Drugs as seen from the Stone Throne



The Stone Throne as seen from Walgreen's Drugs