

# BAY NATURE

AN EXPLORATION OF NATURE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

## Getting Outside in Your Golden Years

by [Carly Peltier](#) on June 09, 2011



Though not yet a senior herself, Anne Ferguson was inspired by her grandparents to create an online resource for older adults.

Photo courtesy Anne Ferguson.

The 2000 census counted more than 750,000 adults age 65 and over in the San Francisco Bay Area. That's expected to double in the next 20 years—and a lot of those folks would like to be out hiking in the Bay Area's hundreds of open-space parks.

When Anne Ferguson moved to the Bay Area 10 years ago, she was amazed by the region's rich outdoor resources. And, remembering how her grandparents taught her to

love the outdoors, she wanted to make it easier for people over 65 to get outside. So, of course, she started a website: [bayareaolderadults.org](http://bayareaolderadults.org).

Though not yet a senior herself, she was inspired by her grandparents, who spent time with her in the outdoors, sharing their knowledge and active lifestyle. "One thing that affected me as a child were my grandparents taking me outdoors, learning about nature and what mushrooms you can pick and things like that," says Ferguson. "They taught me how to really love and appreciate nature."

So Ferguson, whose day job is at a Silicon Valley biotech company, started [bayareaolderadults.org](http://bayareaolderadults.org) to help adults 65 and over lead healthy and active lives and connect them to a community of like-minded people.

Not long ago, the web might not have been the best medium for such an effort, but that's changing quickly. "Older people using the Internet has increased 200 percent in the last 10 years," says Ferguson. In 2010, 43 percent of people over 65 were actively using the Internet, and research suggests that that percentage is even higher in the Bay Area. The site, a year old, doesn't rack up huge traffic, but it's growing steadily and finding an audience at senior centers and other services agencies and organizations.

Outdoor activities listed on the site range from wildlife walks to horseback riding to lawn bowling. "It's healthy to be out there exercising," says Ferguson. "You get this joy of learning and paying attention to nature, bobcats, deer, wild turkey, if you just open your eyes and pay attention. And it's just important to appreciate nature and parks because we don't want them to go away! We have to support them in any way we can."

Ferguson says she's now working on making transportation easier for the participants because many times they don't or can't go alone. So she aims to add a ride-share system to the Bay Area Older Adults site to connect other adults with each other and with rides.

Check out the website at [bayareaolderadults.org](http://bayareaolderadults.org), or contact Ferguson at [info@bayareaolderadults.org](mailto:info@bayareaolderadults.org).