The Baylands

In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks.
—John Muir

FACILITIES

- Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center
  Call 650-329-2506 for open hours
- Byxbee Park
- Emily Renzel Wetlands
- Baylands Athletic Center (baseball and softball)
- Wildlife observation platforms and benches
- Picnic facilities and barbecues (First-come, first-served for groups up to 24 persons.)

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

- Walking and biking trails, bird watching, sailboarding and boating with non-motorized, hand-launched watercraft such as canoes and kayaks.
- Nature walks and programs on ecology and natural history are presented for all age groups and are offered on weekends throughout the year. A schedule of programs is available in the City’s Enjoy! catalog or on the Internet at http://enjoyonline.cityofpaloalto.org. Call 650-617-3156 for information.
- School programs are offered September through June, Monday through Friday. Call 650-329-2506 for information.

HISTORY

Over a century ago, the Palo Alto Baylands salt marshes extended inland approximately to the location of the Bayshore Freeway. The marshes were a valuable resource providing Native Americans and early city residents with fish, shellfish, small mammals, waterfowl and plants for food, medicine, and construction materials.

Palo Alto’s stewardship of the Baylands began in 1921 with the purchase of 40 acres. In the 1930s the yacht harbor clubhouse, a saltwater swimming pool (now the Duck Pond), and the lagoon were constructed.

Today the Baylands covers 1,940 acres—1600 acres are protected in the Baylands Nature Preserve. The preserve includes some of the last remaining salt marsh/mudflat habitats on the West Coast. It is home to the endangered Ridgeway Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse.

Unlike other Bay marshes which have plants that grow in distinct zones, the Palo Alto marshes have a mixed plant distribution. This includes pickleweed and cordgrass habitats that are interspersed between mudflats.

Bird watching in the Baylands is excellent year-round. In winter-time extreme high tides bring bird watchers from around the world. In the spring and fall this is a prime stopover or destination for birds traveling on the Pacific route of their migratory flyway.