HISTORY
In the 1970s, Palo Alto purchased the Arastradero property (433 acres and three buildings) from Arastra Ltd. after the city amended its Comprehensive Plan to include most of the foothills in the Open Space Controlled Development. In 1984 the space was dedicated as park land, with "...emphasis on the natural and open space amenities of the land and sensitivity to the fragile foothills ecology."

Arastradero Preserve was renamed Enid Pearson-Arastradero Preserve in 2004 to honor former city council member Enid Pearson who was instrumental in the passage of a measure in 1965 that prohibits Palo Alto from selling any park land without voters’ approval.

EXISTING CONDITIONS
- The preserve is a mixture of rolling savanna grassland and broadleaf evergreen forest.
- Elevation varies from 275 feet in the northeast to 775 feet in the southwest.
- Wildlife includes deer, bobcats, coyotes, and many varieties of birds.
- View of the bay.
- 10.25 miles of trails for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. Most of the trails (6.6 miles) are open year-round. Some trails (3.6 miles) are designated as “seasonal” and are closed at the trailheads after heavy rain.
• Arastradero Lake is a twenty minute hike from the parking lot and is open all year to fishing.
  • All California Fish and Game rules apply.
  • Boats, flotation devices, and swimming are not permitted.

ESSENTIAL PARK ACTIVITIES
☐ Play for Children
☐ Throw a Ball
☐ Exercise and Fitness
☐ Gathering
☐ Relax and Enjoy Outdoors

ADDITIONAL PARK FEATURES
• Parking

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS
• Great public-private partnership with Acterra to restore habitat, install native plants, remove invasive species and help increase biodiversity on the preserve
• Multi-use trails allow several user groups to use the site
• Parking lot size and signage intentionally limits use of the reserve to trail users only
• Parking lot size creates visitor conflicts and fights over space
• Overflow lot not open to individual trail users
• Reserve users have been observed parking in residential areas when lot is full
• Low-impact designation means the preserve does not have a picnic area or many furnishings
• Sensitive surrounding ecology can be damaged by undesignated uses
• Undesignated use of parking lot by road bicyclists
• Conflicts among multiple types of park users/groups
• Multiple points of entry make signage and contact with visitors challenging

SITE-SPECIFIC PUBLIC INPUT
• One trail for off-leash dogs
• Close trails for horses and cyclists during the winter
• Parking limits access
BAYLANDS NATURE PRESERVE

Location: 2500 Embarcadero Road
Owner: City of Palo Alto
Size: 1,940 acres
Year: 1921-1958

HISTORY
The Byxbee Park Hills area of Baylands was named for John Fletcher Byxbee Jr., Palo Alto City Engineer from 1906 to 1941. Byxbee envisioned the development of the Baylands as a park and recreation center and in January 1921, the Board of Public Works recommended the initial purchase of 40 acres of marshland. Nine years later, Byxbee submitted a plan that included a municipal airport, a salt-water swimming pool, a yacht harbor -- yachting was his main recreation -- and clubhouse, a basin for seaplanes, and areas for playgrounds, picnic grounds, golf course, and a game reserve. The cost was estimated at $2.2 million dollars.

In 1968, the city Council named the park the John Fletcher Byxbee Recreation Area. However, today the term “Baylands Nature Preserve” is used more readily in the city’s publications. The area covers several facilities and occupies 1,940 acres. The land was acquired between 1921 and 1958 through a series of acquisitions and one condemnation - 23 transactions in all.

At present, the Baylands complex consists of the former Yacht Harbor area, the Palo Alto Airport, the Municipal Golf Course, the Duck Pond and public picnic area, the Baylands Athletic Center, the Sailing Station, the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center, the Harriet Mundy Marsh and tidal basin.
The Baylands has been a focus for activism on behalf of the natural environment and several features bear the names of key players in preserving and enhancing this unique space:
- Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center (rededicated 1978)
- Emily Renzel Wetlands Restoration (1992)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
- Bounded by Mountain View and East Palo Alto, the 1,940-acre Baylands Preserve is one of the largest tracts of undisturbed marshland remaining in the San Francisco Bay.
- Fifteen miles of multi-use trails provide access to a unique mixture of tidal and fresh water habitats.
- Many consider this area to be one of the best bird watching areas on the west coast. The preserve has a substantial resident population of birds as well as being a major migratory stopover on the Pacific Flyway.
- Include walking, running or biking on 15 miles of trails; bird watching; wind surfing and boating (non-motorized craft such as canoes, kayaks or small, hand-launched boats and sailboards).
- The city also offers a variety of nature walks and programs on ecology and natural history.

ESSENTIAL PARK ACTIVITIES
- Play for Children
- Throw a Ball
- Exercise and Fitness
- Gathering
- Relax and Enjoy Outdoors

ADDITIONAL PARK FEATURES
- The Duck Pond is a popular family attraction. Besides the resident population of several species of ducks, it is a way station for many migratory birds. The pond was originally built as a swimming pool, but because of siltation problems, it was soon converted to a bird refuge with funds from the estate of Lucie Stern. On the far side of the pond there are two tables with two benches nestled among the trees and shrubs for picnickers.
- The Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center is built on pilings at the edge of the salt marsh. A plank walk leads a quarter-mile across the marsh to open water and a panoramic view of San Francisco Bay. The Center offers various programs and activities such as nature walks, animal and fossil workshops for children, an ecology laboratory, and displays of tidelands flora and fauna.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS
- Significant bird habitat and flyway
- Some activities limited by airport flight path (kite flying)
- Sensitive equipment
- High impact from lea level rise
- Save the Bay Native Plant Nursery provides the preserve with thousands of native plants for habitat restoration with many volunteers to help do the work
- Boardwalk is currently closed while a maintenance feasibility study is under way

SITE-SPECIFIC PUBLIC INPUT
- Difficult to access on bike or on foot
- Restrooms
- Recreation with dogs
Location: At the end of Old Adobe Rd off of Arastradero Rd  
Owner: City of Palo Alto  
Size: 21 acres  
Year: N/A  

HISTORY  
This reserve of grassland and oaks is named for Dr. Esther Clark, one of the founding members of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic. A graduate of Stanford and Stanford Medical School, she was also the founder of the Children’s Health Council.  

Dr. Clark sold the land for Clark Preserve to the city of Palo Alto on the condition that it be preserved as an open space. For details on park history, see the Palo Alto Historical Association chapter on Esther Clark Park.  

EXISTING CONDITIONS  
• The Esther Clark Nature Preserve is a small, undeveloped nature reserve of grassland and oaks.  
• It has no other amenities.  

ESSENTIAL PARK ACTIVITIES  
☐ Play for Children  
☐ Throw a Ball  
☐ Exercise and Fitness  
☐ Gathering  
☐ Relax and Enjoy Outdoors  

ADDITIONAL PARK FEATURES  
• N/A  

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS  
• Habitat restoration projects  
• Opportunity to form a ‘Friends of’ group  
• Need for a simple trail system that links adjoining paths  
• Need for amenities such as benches along trails  
• Limited staffing makes regular patrols difficult
• Need for dedicated funding and staffing for preserves
• No parking provided

SITE-SPECIFIC PUBLIC INPUT
• Drinking water
• Poorly publicized
FOOTHILLS PARK

Location: 3300 Page Mill Road
Owner: City of Palo Alto
Size: 1,400 acres
Year: 1965

HISTORY
The land for Foothills Park was sold to the City of Palo Alto by Dr. Russel Lee, founder of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic, and his wife Dorothy in 1958, on the condition that it be preserved as open space. The park was formally opened and dedicated in 1965. The Interpretive Center in the park is housed in a building originally built by the Lees as a horse stable. For more information, see the Palo Alto Historical Association’s chapter on Foothills Park in their city history.

EXISTING CONDITIONS
• Bounded by Portola Valley, Los Altos Hills, Pearson-Arastradero Preserve and Los Trancos Open Space Preserve, the 1,400-acre Foothills Park is a nature lover’s paradise. Miles of trails provide access through rugged chaparral, woodlands, fields, streams, and a lake, and provide spectacular views of the Bay Area. Wildlife abounds, and it is common to see deer and coyotes.
• Foothills Park is open to Palo Alto residents and their accompanied guests only. Proof of residency is required. Guests must be accompanied by a Palo Alto resident. Limit of 15 guests per resident in two additional cars.
• Groups of 25 or more adults and children (both residents and non-residents included) must make a reservation in advance, or get a permit in advance from the supervising ranger. There must be one Palo Alto resident for each 15 non-resident guests.
• Groups of 24 or fewer (residents plus non-residents, children included) do not require a reservation.

• Hiking Trails: There are fifteen miles of hiking trails, which offer a variety of hiking experiences. The longest hike is the Los Trancos Trail, which is 7.5 miles. The Toyon Self-Guided Nature Trail enables you to learn about nature at your own pace.

• Lake, Fishing, and Boating: Fishing is permitted in Boronda Lake. All anglers age 16 and over must have a California Sport Fishing License. Fish species in the lake include bass, catfish, and sunfish. While swimming is prohibited you may enjoy the lake with your non-motorized and hand-launched boat. Canoes are also available for rent on the weekends and holidays from May 1st to October 31st, weather and staffing permitting.

• Picnic Areas: Five picnic areas are first-come, first-served, and there is one picnic area that is by reservation only. Tables, barbecues, and water are available. Groups at the non-reservable picnic areas may not exceed 24 people (adults and children, residents and non-residents included). Groups of 25 or more people must have a reservation. The Oak Grove group picnic area is the only picnic area that is reservable, and can be used by groups of 1-150.

ESSENTIAL PARK ACTIVITIES
☐ Play for Children
☐ Throw a Ball
☐ Exercise and Fitness
☐ Gathering
☐ Relax and Enjoy Outdoors

ADDITIONAL PARK FEATURES
• Parking
• Towle Camp is a seasonal campground available to residents and their accompanied guests for tent camping from May 1 to October 31. Eight campsites, each with a charcoal barbecue, water, picnic table, tent pad and food box. Six of the campsites can accommodate up to eight people, and the remaining two campsites can accommodate up to sixteen people.
• The Nature Interpretive Center has exhibits and maps and is the starting point for many nature walks. There is a meeting room available for rent.
• Nature Programs: Ranger-led activities are available throughout the year in Foothills Park. See the Activities and Programs page for more information.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS
• 7.7 acres recently added to site
• Facilities on site allow for many visitor opportunities
• Limited staffing makes regular patrols difficult given total mileage of trails
• Public is responsible for reporting trail troubles
• Small, primitive campground limits the number of visitors and its location allows for summer use only
• Limited staffing makes it difficult to enforce residency restrictions

SITE-SPECIFIC PUBLIC INPUT
• Trails are narrow
• Access for bicycles
• Allow dogs on one loop
• Open park to non-residents