

Palo Alto Baylands Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Prepared for:
City of Palo Alto

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CITY OF
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Palo Alto Baylands

Vision, Goals, Objectives

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Acronyms and Other Abbreviations

Baylands	Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve
BCCP	Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan
City	City of Palo Alto
LATP	Los Altos Treatment Plant





Vision, Goals, and Objectives



1 Purpose and Background

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan (BCCP) is to develop goals, policies, prioritized action steps, and best management practices enabling the City of Palo Alto (City) to holistically manage the 1,976-acre Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve (Baylands) over the next 15 years and beyond by balancing ecosystem protection, environmental education, and recreational uses. The Baylands Master Plan (updated in 2008) laid out policies and goals for management of the Baylands. The BCCP builds on the master plan to incorporate clear direction for managing the Baylands, using an ecosystem-based approach that strikes the appropriate balance of conservation and recreation goals, and considers future projects and current trends such as climate change and sea level rise.

The planning team has conducted workshops with key stakeholders, City staff, and the public to solicit ideas and input, identify goals and priorities, determine opportunities, and identify concerns.

1.2 Background

The Baylands Master Plan, originally published in 1978, provided a framework and guide for actions in the Baylands that also sought to preserve and enhance the area's unique resources. The 2008 update to the master plan calls for completion of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan as a document that may include specific programs to achieve the goals and policies of the Baylands Master Plan. Some of the goals established in the 2008 Baylands Master Plan are listed below.

- Recreation activities and facilities at the Baylands are to exist in harmony with resource preservation.
- Existing and proposed activities are to be compatible with the ecological and physical constraints and opportunities of the natural Baylands systems.
- Transform Byxbee from landfill into a rolling pastoral park that would be an environmental asset and a continuation of the natural open space.



The vision, goals, and objectives of the BCCP build on the goals of the master plan and include goals and actionable objectives developed from the stakeholder engagement process.

2 Vision for the Baylands and the Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The Baylands is an ecological safe haven where the habitat, wildlife, and natural resources entrusted to Palo Alto are protected and preserved. The Baylands is a sanctuary that rekindles the human spirit through introspection and passive recreation, and offers a living link to our cultural history.

Implementing the BCCP will help guide protection of the preserve's habitat, wildlife, and natural resources; ensure that stewardship and nature-friendly recreational opportunities are available for park visitors to enjoy the Baylands now and in the future; and help the City manage the Baylands in a way that allows the preserve to thrive in the face of challenges such as sea level rise and climate change.

3 Goals and Objectives of the Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan

3.1 Natural Resources Management

3.1.1 Natural Resources

- Maintain, protect, and preserve existing functioning native habitats, ecosystem functions, and wildlife corridors.
 - Identify existing functioning habitats and wildlife corridors.
 - Establish procedures for prioritizing and preserving existing functioning habitats and wildlife corridors.
- Enhance and restore degraded habitats and habitat corridors.
 - Identify locations of sensitive and degraded areas in the Baylands that should be prioritized for restoration.
 - Identify feasible and appropriate locations and opportunities for enhancing and restoring riparian habitat.
 - Create a strategy to prioritize the areas that should be enhanced or restored.
- Manage the Baylands as habitat for native species and the preservation of biodiversity.
 - Identify locations, opportunities, and constraints for ecological processes and habitats that support native and diverse biological resources.
 - Restrict access to areas that support sensitive native biotic resources.
- Protect and enhance hydrologic connectivity.
 - Identify existing hydrologic connections.
 - Identify opportunities for feasibly enhancing hydrologic connectivity.



3.1.2 Sea Level Rise

- Incorporate climate change and sea level rise into long-term management and policies.
 - Determine which areas of the Baylands and the adjacent city are most vulnerable.
 - Employ adaptive management strategies to natural resource management to adapt to climate change.
 - Encourage pilot study of a “horizontal levee” and other innovative sea level rise adaptation strategies.
 - Coordinate with regional planning efforts and projects such as the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority SAFER Bay Project and Resilient by Design.
 - Coordinate with regional planning efforts to identify high-level protection measures for critical infrastructure such as the Palo Alto Airport, the Regional Water Quality Control Plant, and U.S. Highway 101.
 - Promote the development of educational programs that focus on sea level rise and adaptive strategies.

3.2 Public Access & Facilities

3.2.1 Recreation/Access

- Provide opportunities for recreation/access via a habitat-compatible trail network to enable wildlife observation and ensure that future generations develop an appreciation for wildlife, other wildlife-compatible recreational activities, and connections to the greater Palo Alto area.
 - Identify and develop recommendations for connection points for trails to the greater Palo Alto area.
 - Identify areas for wildlife observation that will limit disturbance to habitats and wildlife, such as areas near existing infrastructure including roads and parking lots.
- Provide appropriate facilities for visitors to the Baylands.
 - Identify appropriate locations for facilities and park amenities such as parking, restrooms, benches, and water fountains.

3.2.2 Former Los Altos Treatment Plant

- Identify alternatives for land uses at the former Los Altos Treatment Plant (LATP) site.
 - Identify locations for potential restoration opportunities and actions at the LATP site. Develop priorities and recommendations for actions to improve the site’s ecological health.

3.2.3 Palo Alto Airport

- Promote ecologically sensitive policies for areas at and near the Palo Alto Airport.
 - Coordinate projects and planning efforts with airport management staff to align with the City’s federal obligations of operating a public use airport.
 - Collaborate with airport management staff to promote safety and implement wildlife management measures near runways.

3.3 Public Art & Public Engagement

3.3.1 Public Engagement

- Promote thoughtful, well-advertised, and transparent community involvement opportunities that encourage participation by partner organizations, community



groups, and environmental education programs to foster greater public engagement in the Baylands.

- Invite community groups, stakeholders, partner organizations, and environmental education programs to participate in visioning workshops.
- Connect with visitors to the Baylands to engage and encourage feedback, foster buy-in, and educate the public.

3.3.2 Public Art

- Include appropriate environmental art in the Baylands that builds on Palo Alto’s Public Art Master Plan.
 - Identify appropriate locations for additional public art installations and artist engagement.
 - Promote ecologically and/or educationally beneficial art that minimizes disturbance to natural areas.
 - Collaborate with Parks and Open Space staff members, partner organizations, and stakeholder groups to ensure diverse community engagement in environmentally based public art projects.

3.4 Operations & Management

3.4.1 Management

- Holistically manage the Baylands to strike the appropriate balance between recreation and natural resource protection, and ensure that existing and proposed activities are compatible with the ecological and physical constraints.
 - Identify ecological and physical constraints of the natural Baylands system.
 - Develop policies that promote activities that are ecologically beneficial.
 - Coordinate management actions and priorities with other City departments/divisions and local and regional planning activities such as the San Francisco Joint Powers Authority SAFER Bay Project.
 - Seek funding for additional planning and enhancements that further the implementation of projects envisioned in the BCCP.
 - Maximize use of partnerships to implement the BCCP vision.

3.4.2 Projects

- Strategically phase projects within the Baylands to minimize disturbance to wildlife and visitor use.
 - Identify planned and future projects, project proponents, and project timelines.
 - Ensure that proposed projects are sensitive to environmental impacts and maintain land use compatibility with surrounding uses and habitats.
 - Coordinate projects and plans with local and regional projects and planning efforts.

3.4.3 Invasive Species

- Reduce the extent of invasive species in the Baylands.
 - Create a methodology for determining which invasive weeds should be prioritized for removal.
 - Identify locations where invasive weeds should be prioritized for removal.
 - Implement an early detection eradication system.



- Develop and implement a monitoring system to track long-term effectiveness.
- Create/enhance an integrated pest management approach to incorporate best available science.

3.5 Key Areas

3.5.1 Byxbee Park

- Finalize the 2015 Interim Byxbee Park Master Plan, which includes guidance for the completion of interpretive signage, incorporates policies for appropriate management of wildlife and native habitats, contains plans for trail connections to the former ITT property/Renzel Wetlands, and completes plans for parking at Byxbee Park.
 - Develop a parking design for Byxbee Park.
 - Create a methodology for determining which invasive weeds should be prioritized for removal.
 - Identify and develop recommendations for potential trail connections to the former ITT property/Renzel Wetlands.
 - Identify opportunities for additional locations to expand habitat islands.
 - Determine the feasibility of opportunities to include burrowing owl habitat in Byxbee Park.

3.5.2 Former ITT Property/Renzel Wetlands

- Restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, uplands, and hydrologic connectivity to the site; develop a plan for the potentially historic building at the former ITT property.
 - Identify and maintain existing functioning habitats.
 - Identify the locations of potential trails and connections that promote habitat-compatible access to the site that maintains important ecological process and functions.
 - Develop use alternatives for the potentially historic building at the former ITT property.
 - Identify and develop recommendations for potential trail connections from the former ITT property/Renzel Wetlands to other parts of the Baylands.
 - Incorporate current projects at Renzel Wetlands into future planning and site design.

