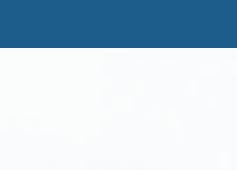
Foothills Park

Palo Alto Open Space









Just a few miles from the roar of Silicon Valley, Foothills Park provides an oasis of serenity. Hiking amongst the oaks, toyon and bay trees will quickly revive the spirit.

NATURAL HISTORY FEATURES

Bounded by Portola Valley, Los Altos Hills, the Pearson-Arastradero Preserve and Los Trancos Open Space, the 1,400-acre Foothills Park is a nature lover's paradise. Fifteen miles of trails provide access to three distinct habitats: chaparral, oak woodland and grasslands.

Chaparral plant communities, found on many south-facing slopes and ridges in the park, are adapted to hot, dry conditions. Deep root systems and small, thick leaves positioned to reduce surface area exposed to the sun, are adaptations these plants have developed to help conserve moisture. Chamise is the dominant plant species, along with manzanita, ceanothus, and scrub oak.

The **Oak Woodland** community is represented by coast live oak, California buckeye, madrone, California laurel, and the ever-present poison oak. Common wildlife include the dusky-footed woodrat, white-footed mouse, scrub jay, and slender salamander (near Boronda Lake).

California's summer-gold **Grasslands** are dominated by annual species that arrived here as seeds in the fur and hooves of livestock brought by early European settlers. These grasses have largely crowded out the native grasses that colored the hillsides gray-green in summer. In fact, many of today's grasslands were evergreen forests or oak woodlands before woodcutting and livestock grazing took their toll. Grasslands are home to huge numbers of rodents such as mice, gophers, jackrabbits; insects; and larger predators like bobcats, red-tailed hawks, owls and coyotes.

Athletic and highly intelligent, coyotes play an indispensable role in California open spaces, where they are often the top predator. Coyotes keep rodent populations (mice, gophers, ground squirrels, and rabbits) in balance, helping to maintain a healthy ecosystem.



HISTORY

For at least 3,000 years, these hills were the hunting grounds and summer home of the native Ohlone people. During the dry season they left their permanent settlements along the bay shore for seasonal camps near upland creeks and streams.

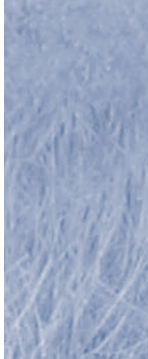
In 1833 the Mexican governor of Alta California granted a square league (4,400 acres) of land above Los Trancos and San Francisquito creeks to Domingo Peralta and Don Maximo Martinez. This was the beginning of Rancho del Corte Madera, "the place of the woodcutters."

After a Martinez daughter married into the Boronda family the property became known as Boronda Farm. A stockbroker who bought the land from the Borondas in 1914 planted fruit trees and other exotic species in what is now the Orchard Glen Picnic Area.

Dr. Russel V. Lee, a founder of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic, and his wife Dorothy bought the property in 1941 and built an A-frame barn and stable, now the Nature Interpretive Center. In 1958 they sold 1,194 acres to the City of Palo Alto for $1,000 an acre, with the intention of preserving the land for open space. Foothills Park was opened to residents of Palo Alto in 1965.



Foothills Park



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

- Fifteen miles of hiking trails, including the Toyon self-guided nature trail
- Overnight camping (May 1 – October 31)
- Bird watching
- Boating in non-motorized, hand-launched boats and canoes. Canoe rentals weekends and holidays May 1 to October 31.
- Fishing in Boronda Lake, state license required
- Native plant restoration projects
- Nature walks, full-moon night hikes, summer campfire programs, astronomy star parties, and programs on ecology and natural history are presented for all ages, and are offered throughout the year. A schedule of programs is available in the City's *Enjoy!* catalog or see http://enjoyonline.cityofpaloalto.org. Call 650-329-2423 for information.
- Special request programs available. See bit.ly/InterpForm.

FACILITIES

Foothills Park Interpretive Center

Towle Campground 8 campsites open May 1 to October 31

Picnic facilities and barbecues

- Lakeside: hillside behind Boronda Lake
- Shady Cove: hillside below lake dam, south of the road
- Encinal: hillside at east end of Las Trampas Valley, north of the road
- Pine Gulch: hillside across from Orchard Glen, north of the road
- Orchard Glen: meadow near restrooms
- Oak Grove: reserved group picnic area, at west end of Las Trampas Valley



How to get there

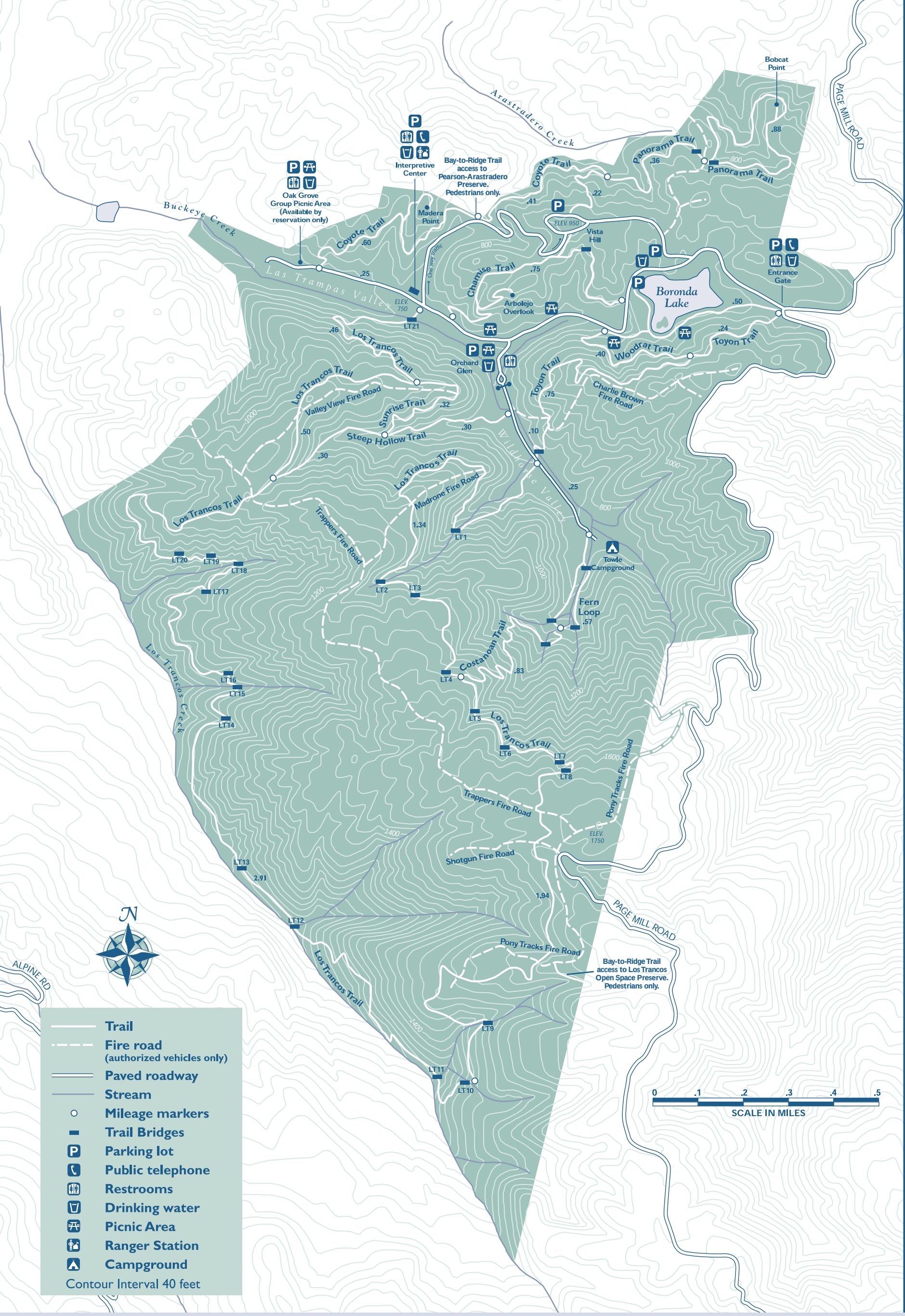
Foothills Park, Pearson Arastradero Preserve and Baylands Nature Preserve include almost 4,000 acres maintained and managed by the City of Palo Alto as open space for recreation and wildlife habitat preservation.

FOOTHILLS PARK
3300 Page Mill Road
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022
650 329-2423
open.space@cityofpaloalto.org
cityofpaloalto.org/openspace

HOURS
Open every day from 8 a.m. to sunset.
Last entry is one-half hour before the closing time posted on the sign near the park entrance.
Gates are locked at closing time.

CITY OF PALO ALTO

Foothills Park



Trail
Fire road (authorized vehicles only)
Paved roadway
Stream
Mileage markers
Trail Bridges
Parking lot
Public telephone
Restrooms
Drinking water
Picnic Area
Ranger Station
Campground
Contour Interval 40 feet

PARK RULES

- No smoking.
- Dogs on leash permitted except on weekends and holidays.
- Bicycles are allowed on paved roads only, and not on trails. Bicycle helmets required.
- Coasting devices (e.g., skates, scooters, skateboards) are not allowed.
- Charcoal fires in existing barbecues only.
- Speed limit is 20 MPH throughout the park.
- Golf practice, hardball and powered models are not allowed in the park.
- Feeding wildlife is prohibited.
- Remote controlled devices are not permitted.

Los Trancos Trail
7.7 miles, 3–4.5 hours
This is the longest trail in the park. It has scenic views and crosses through several plant communities. Strenuous; steep and rugged terrain, rises 985 ft. Trail bed is packed dirt; obstacles include slide area on the back side. Not appropriate for young children.

Steep Hollow Trail
.6 miles, 25 minutes
This steep, oak-shaded trail connects to Sunrise and Los Trancos trails in Wildhorse Valley. Rare leatherwood and snowberry native plants grow near the trail. Strenuous; rises 425 ft. Trail is packed dirt through steep woodland, with many steps. Very strenuous for young children.

Sunrise Trail
.32 miles 10–20 minutes
This short connecting trail provides scenic views of Wildhorse Valley and Boronda Lake. Connects Los Trancos and Steep Hollow trails. Easy; gentle slope, rising 125 ft. Trail bed is packed dirt; no major obstacles; some 3-inch rocks, loose gravel. Appropriate for children.

Fern Loop Trail
.57 miles 20–30 minutes
Loop trail climbs through a heavily wooded canyon past ferns and small seasonal waterfalls. Moderate slope. Trail bed is packed dirt. Appropriate for children.

Costanoan Trail
.83 miles 30–45 minutes
Narrow path meanders through dense woodland. Strenuous; steep trail with switchbacks that, together with Fern Loop, rises 520 ft. in 1.5 miles. Trail bed is packed dirt. Not appropriate for children.

Coyote Trail
1.01 miles 35–45 minutes
Sunny, mildly sloping trail wanders through chaparral and oak woodland. Coyote are often glimpsed in this area. Side trail to the Madera Point overlook. Easy; moderate slope. Packed dirt trail bed. Appropriate for children.

Panorama Trail
1.47 miles 35–45 minutes
This is a loop trail along gentle, grassy slopes and a shady wooded area, with views of the Bay. Easy slope. Packed dirt trail. Appropriate for children.

Toyon Trail
.99 miles 30–40 minutes
Self-guided nature hike. This shady, woodland trail features numerous native trees and wildflowers. Printed nature guides are available at both ends of the trail. Easy; mild slopes. Packed dirt trail bed. Very appropriate for children.

Woodrat Trail
.4 miles 15–20 minutes
This is a short connection between the bottom of the Boronda Lake dam and the Toyon trail, with moderate, wooded slopes. Look for woodrat nests, which look like large mounds of sticks and twigs. Easy; moderate slope rises 200 ft. Packed dirt trail bed. Appropriate for children.

Chamise Trail
.75 miles 30–40 minutes
Scenic hike through open chaparral from Vista Hill to Boronda Lake, with views of Las Trampas Valley and Wildhorse Valley. Beautiful fall foliage. Side trail leads to the Arbolejo Overlook with views of Wildhorse Valley. Moderate; grassy slopes rise 225 ft. Packed dirt trail bed with no major obstacles. Appropriate for children.

Photos: Rosemary Lombard; lettering: Carl Rohrs; graphic design: Sharon Erspamer, March 2019