We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

— Aldo Leopold

**Bounded by Los Altos Hills, Stanford University and Portola Valley, the 622-acre Enid Pearson-Arastradero Preserve contains three major plant communities: grassland savanna, oak woodland and riparian.**

Small plots of native grasses are still found on Pearson-Arastradero including purple needlegrass, blue wild rye, wet meadow rye, and California brome. Blue, valley and coast live oak are the predominant oaks found on the hillsides and in ravines, with smatterings of black and scrub oak found elsewhere. California laurel (bay tree), willows, toyon, buckeye, elderberry, wild rose, snowberry, and poison oak are found along the creekside corridors.

**RESTORATION & HABITAT PROTECTION**

Two hundred years ago, California’s golden valleys and foothills were dominated by perennial bunchgrasses and wildflowers. These perennials supported vast herds of elk, deer and antelope that roamed the landscape. European annual grasses, introduced by Spanish settlers, quickly out-competed the native species once they produced more seeds and had no predators. Eventually, these non-native grasses and weeds replaced over 90% of the Californian grasslands.

Our oak woodlands have declined as well; settlers cleared the land of oaks to increase grazing land for livestock. The livestock ate acorns and saplings and compacted the soil making it difficult for oak roots to penetrate. The proliferation of non-native plants compounded the impact to the oaks since they deplete soil moisture faster than native grasses.

Poison oak benefits wildlife and provides beautiful fall color, but oil from any part of the plant can cause a severe rash. Poison oak appears in different forms and is best avoided by staying on trails and not touching unblemished plants.

**HISTORY**

Before it was preserved as open space, Enid Pearson-Arastradero Preserve was a working ranch. In the early 1970s, a developer proposed building 1,776 new houses on the property. Determined to keep land in the foothills as open space, the Palo Alto City Council purchased 433 acres in 1976.

In 1984 the Council adopted a Park Master Plan for the creation of a “low intensity park, with emphasis on the natural and open space amenities of the land and sensitivity to the fragile foothills ecology.” Since then, many more acres were acquired, bringing the total acreage to 622.

Since 1997 Grassroots Ecology has undertaken a unique partnership with the City to conduct a stewardship program on the Preserve. Grassroots Ecology has been responsible for improvements to the trail system, control of non-native plants, environmental education programs and habitat restoration projects.

Volunteers are presently at work planting acorns and caging oak saplings to increase the number of oaks in the Preserve. In the grasslands, they are removing thistle and teasel, and planting native grasses. The goal of this ambitious project is to restore precious habitat to its natural splendor for the benefit of wildlife and future generations.

**PEOPLE & ACTIVITIES**

Weeks and weekends are open to the public every day. Gates are locked at closing time. Last entry is one-half hour before closing. Visitors who wish to use the Preserve must park in designated parking areas to ensure adequate parking.

Open space@cityofpaloalto.org
650 329-2423
Palo Alto, CA 94306

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Palo Alto, CA 94306

Grassroots Ecology is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the oak woodlands and grasslands of the foothills of the San Francisco Bay Area. Grassroots Ecology endeavors to become a leading-edge organization through the protection of open space and endangered species, the enhancement of natural habitats, and the promotion of environmental literacy.

Hiking and horse trails in the Preserve are managed by City of Palo Alto Parks, Open Space, and Recreation. Call 650-329-2423 for information. If the parking lot is full, one may park on the 650-329-2423 or 650-329-2423 for information.

Volunteers and interns are key to the success of the organization.

Volunteers can participate in trail maintenance, restoration, and environmental education activities.

For more information about restoration activities, call 650-962-9876 x311 to RSVP. For more information about trails, visit http://enjoyonline.cityofpaloalto.org.

**PARK RULES**

• Park in designated parking areas.
• Please be courteous to other trail users. Always yield to equestrians. Bikes must also yield to hikers. When in a group, avoid blocking the trail.
• Stay on marked trails. Seasonal trails are closed during periods of high rain and snow. Off-leash areas in Palo Alto are located at Peers Park (1899 Park Blvd.).
• Dogs must be on leash at all times. Feeding wildlife is prohibited.
• Bicycle helmets required.
• No remote-controlled devices.
• No hunting or camping.
• No livestock.
• No fires, barbecues and smoking permitted.
• No alcohol or drugs.
• No tobacco use.
• No snowmobiles.
• No motor vehicles.

**WHERE TO GO**

The Preserve is Bounded by Los Altos Hills, Stanford University and Portola Valley, the 622-acre Enid Pearson-Arastradero Preserve contains three major plant communities: grassland savanna, oak woodland and riparian. Small plots of native grasses are still found on Pearson-Arastradero including purple needlegrass, blue wild rye, wet meadow rye, and California brome. Blue, valley and coast live oak are the predominant oaks found on the hillsides and in ravines, with smatterings of black and scrub oak found elsewhere.

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• Dogs must be on leash at all times. Feeding wildlife is prohibited.
• Bicycle helmets required.
• No remote-controlled devices.
• No hunting or camping.
• No livestock.
• No fires, barbecues and smoking permitted.
• No alcohol or drugs.
• No tobacco use.
• No snowmobiles.
• No motor vehicles.
Redtail Loop Trail
1.50 miles, 40 min. round-trip
Leads from north edge of the parking lot up steep grassland trails. Views of Stanford and Palo Alto to the Bay. Hilly terrain, trails very steep in places—note seasonal trail closures posted at the parking lot. No public parking.

Portola Pastures Trail
1.50 miles, 40 min. round-trip
Seasonal access—posted closed during periods of heavy rain. Promising fun riding for mountain bikers of various skill levels. Hilly terrain through open grassland on narrow dirt trails. Trail leads through a dry stock pond and a small quarry. 400 ft. elevation run from parking area to Loop.

Arastradero Creek Trail
1.44 miles
Follows Arastradero Creek from Arastradero Road through mixed terrain including stands of wildflowers. Steep in places—at the steepest place the trail has a 15% slope. Mixed trail surfaces including natural soil, loose and compacted gravel surface; no obstacles.

Woodrat Trail
.27 miles
Seasonal access—posted closed during periods of heavy rain. Favored by equestrians. Rock obstacles on natural soil trail tread. Favored by equestrians.

Bowl Loop Trail
.24 miles
Seasonal access—posted closed during periods of heavy rain. Promising fun riding for mountain bikers of various skill levels. Hilly terrain through open grassland on narrow dirt trails. Trail leads through a dry stock pond and a small quarry. 400 ft. elevation run from parking area to Loop.

Meadowlark Trail
.27 miles
Seasonal access—posted closed during periods of heavy rain. Promising fun riding for mountain bikers of various skill levels. Hilly terrain through open grassland on narrow dirt trails. Trail leads through a dry stock pond and a small quarry. 400 ft. elevation run from parking area to Loop.

Star Trail
.24 miles
Seasonal access—posted closed during periods of heavy rain. Promising fun riding for mountain bikers of various skill levels. Hilly terrain through open grassland on narrow dirt trails. Trail leads through a dry stock pond and a small quarry. 400 ft. elevation run from parking area to Loop.

The Regional Trail
Arastradero Lake to the Bay. Hilly terrain, trails very steep in places—note seasonal trail closures posted at the parking lot. No public parking.

Orchard Trail
.25 miles
Seasonal access—posted closed during periods of heavy rain. Promising fun riding for mountain bikers of various skill levels. Hilly terrain through open grassland on narrow dirt trails. Trail leads through a dry stock pond and a small quarry. 400 ft. elevation run from parking area to Loop.

Gates
Access restrooms
Mileage markers
Access parking lot
Drinking water
Ranger Station / Information
Contour Interval 40 feet

Paved roadway
Stream
Access parking lot
Public telephone
Access restrooms
Drinking water
Gates
Ranger Station / Information
Access parking lot
Drinking water
Gates
Ranger Station / Information

PARK RULES
• No smoking.
• No pets.
• No public parking
• No dogs on weekends or holidays.
• Open to the public. Barn to sunset, every day.
• Dogs required to be on leashes at all times.
• Stay on marked trails only.
• No dogs on weekends or holidays.
• Bicycles required.
• No seasonal trail closures posted at the parking lot.
• Park in designated parking areas.
• Ca. Fishing license required, no swimming, wading or boating in lake at any time.
• Feeding wildlife prohibited.
• No remote controlled devices.

RULES
• No dogs on weekends or holidays.
• Open to the public. Barn to sunset, every day.
• Dogs on leashes at all times.
• Bicycles required.
• Parks in designated parking areas.
• Ca. Fishing license required.
• No swimming, wading or boating in lake at any time.
• Feeding wildlife prohibited.

END W. PEARSON