



# In a certain light

Over the course of a day, Baylands is ever-changing

photographs by Veronica Weber / text by Sam Sciolla

**A**t the Palo Alto Baylands, the sights and sounds that catch one's attention are as likely to come from above as from below.

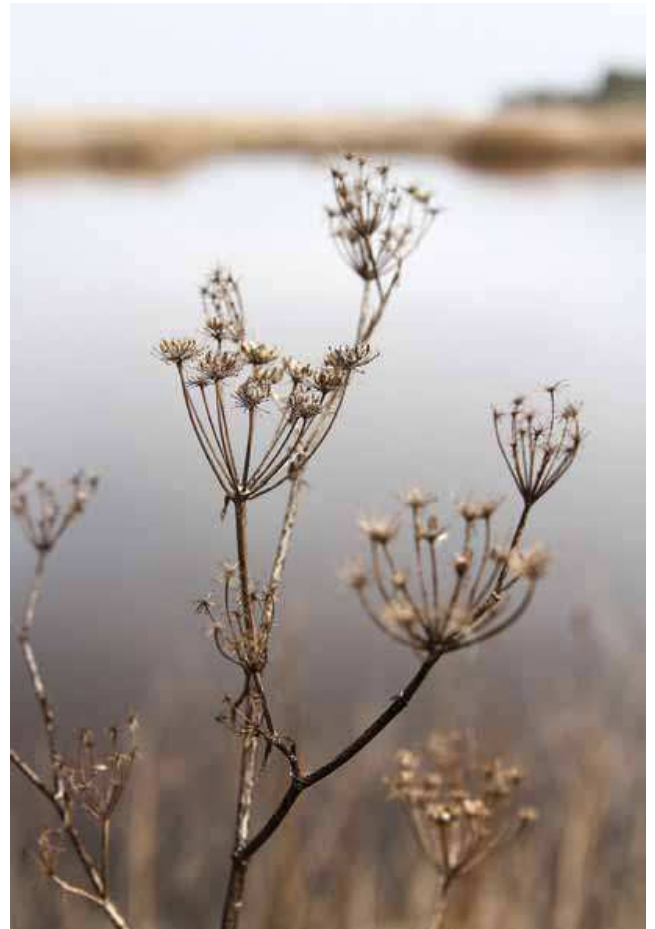
Quacking ducks flap deliberately across a light-blue sky before landing to nibble on green vegetation. Gulls float more serenely on the air currents, with wings outspread, but just as soon break the silence with a shriek or yell. A murmuring propeller plane flies low to land at the adjacent Palo Alto Airport; any birds in the way dart quickly aside.

The surface, though, isn't without activity. In one of the waterways that meanders through the marshlands, ducks shove off from a small cove and spread out like sailboats across the water. Their movements are observed and documented by a man with a camera and tripod. Farther off, in the center of the Baylands, hundreds of birds meet, white dots congregating for some mysterious purpose.

Other winged creatures are only fleetingly visible through brush, such as a brown bird with a thin, dangling beak that flits along one channel. And somewhere, over the miles of marshland, foxes and rabbits lie hidden.

The landscape too has its own character and life, one that changes with the light and wind. The water reflects clouds that are illuminated by the setting sun. The tones of the plant life vary from gray to mud brown to almost burnt

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*Clockwise, from top: American avocets take off in flight at the Palo Alto Baylands; fennel seed heads, which turn bright yellow in the summer, face the ponds of the Baylands on East Bayshore Road; a great egret walks through the pickleweed in search of food in the Baylands; small waves lap up against the marshy shores.*

*At left: A stream of water in a Palo Alto Baylands marsh reflects the waning sunlight during low tide in late February.*

**About the cover:**  
*Ducks swim in one of the many channels of the Palo Alto Baylands during sunrise on Feb. 23. Photo by Veronica Weber.*



**PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL**

**CIVIC CENTER, 250 HAMILTON AVENUE  
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**THIS IS A SUMMARY OF COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS.  
THE AGENDA WITH COMPLETE TITLES INCLUDING LEGAL  
DOCUMENTATION CAN BE VIEWED AT THE  
BELOW WEBPAGE:**

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/knowzone/agendas/council.asp>

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
PALO ALTO PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION  
AGENDA-SPECIAL MEETING- COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MARCH 2, 2015 6:00 PM**

**ACTION**

- 1. Approval of 2013-14 Public Improvement Corporation Financial Statement

**AGENDA-SPECIAL MEETING-COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
March 2, 2015 6:05 PM**

Study Session

- 1. Study Session on Shuttle and Rideshare Program for the Future (Continued from February 2, 2015)

Consent Calendar

- 2. Approval of Amendment No. 2 to Contract C12143475 with Alta Planning + Design to Extend the Contract Term to December 31, 2015 for the Safe Routes to School Planning Project
- 3. Approval and Authorization for the City Manager to Execute an Electric Fund Construction Contract with MP Nexlevel of California, Inc., in the Amount of \$1,697,836.50, for Trenching and Installation of Utility Substructures for Underground Utility District No. 47 (Project: EL-11010) in the Area of Middlefield Road, Homer Avenue, Webster Street, and Addison Avenue; and Approval and Authorization for the City Manager to Execute Addendum No. 2 to the Agreement for Joint Participation in the Installation of the Underground Facilities System Between the City of Palo Alto, AT&T, and Comcast Corporation of California IX, Inc.
- 4. Adoption of a Resolution Designating 300 Homer Street Known as the Roth Building as a "Sender Site" in the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program and Direction to Staff to Advertise Request for Proposal to Market the TDRs
- 5. Utilities Advisory Commission Recommendation that the City Council Adopt a Resolution Approving the City of Palo Alto Utilities Legislative Guidelines
- 6. Appeal of Director of Planning and Community Environment's Architectural and Historic Review Approval of a Rehabilitation of a Category 3 Historic Resource located at 261 Hamilton - Request for Continuance to April 6, 2015
- 7. Approval of Amendment Number 3 to Contract C08125506 with The Planning Center | DCE, now Known as Placeworks, to Increase the Contract by \$157,525 to an Amount Not to Exceed \$1,894,731 and Adoption of a Budget Amendment Ordinance (BAO) to Increase the Fiscal Year 2015 Appropriation to the Planning and Community Environment Department for Preparation of a Fiscal Study in Conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Update

Action Items

- 8. Public Hearing: On Objections to Weed Abatement and Adoption of Resolution #9489 Ordering Weed Nuisance Abated
- 9. Public Hearing: Adoption of a Resolution Amending Water, Gas and Wastewater Connection and Capacity Fees and Miscellaneous Utility Charges (Utility Rate Schedules S-5, G-5, W-5 and C-1)
- 10. Discussion and Direction to Staff Regarding Establishment of an Office/R&D Annual Growth Limit (Continued from February 9, 2015)

Standing Committee Meetings

The Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 4, 2015 at 7:00 P.M. to discuss: 1) Discussion of a New Residential Curbside Collection and Composting Program, Commencing FY 2016 and Acceptance of Ongoing Staff Efforts to Later Present to Council for its Approval or Adoption; 2) Finance Committee Recommendation Regarding Adoption of a Budget Amendment Ordinance Amending the Budget for Fiscal Year 2015 to Adjust Budgeted Revenues and Expenditures in Accordance with the Recommendations in the FY 2015 Midyear Budget Review Report; and 3) Preliminary Financial Forecasts and Rate Changes for Electric, Gas, Wastewater Collection, and Water Utilities.



*At top: A pair of ducks fly away from a channel at the Palo Alto Baylands during a rosy hued sunset; above: An American avocet, seen in its winter plumage, searches for food in the Baylands water; below: The many pools of water in the marshes are visible from atop Byxbee Park, facing east.*

**Palo Alto Baylands**

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orange, and the finger-like branches of an occasional tree or bush sway in the moaning wind. Tiny swells punctuate the surfaces of the wider waterways; their soft lapping produces whispers that can only be heard down by the banks — off of the trails well-used by runners and cyclists.

Painted in pastel hues, the bay and the eastern hills beyond are visible through the power lines and towers that gird the marshlands in an unusual embrace. In the distance a feathered flock flies together in tight formation, rising and falling like an undulating sheet, or some serpentine dragon out of ancient lore.

Slowly the pinks and purples have changed to periwinkle and then darker blues. The light over Skyline Ridge begins to dim, and a full color spectrum rises from the jagged edge to the sliver moon above.

A few more planes glide in over the marshlands and touch down in the gathering darkness. Adults and children file back to their automobiles, heading back to a warm meal and their favorite TV shows.

But the birds and the brush and the water remain to await the light's return. ■

