HISTORY

Round Valley Regional Preserve was once home to California Indians. It was probably a boundary between several tribal groups, an area where members of East Bay and San Joaquin Valley groups met periodically to trade and socialize. Evidence of Native American use has been uncovered at several sites in the preserve.

The land was purchased in 1873 by Thomas Murphy, an Irish immigrant who established a ranching and farming operation. Murphy’s grandson, Jim Murphy, sold the core 700 acres of Round Valley to the East Bay Regional Park District in 1988. A few pieces of farm equipment in the preserve date to the late nineteenth century or early twentieth. Remember that all archaeological and historic objects in the preserve are protected by law; please leave them undisturbed for others to see.

To be prepared for the summer heat: use sunscreen, wear a hat and loose-fitting clothing, wear good hiking shoes, and bring plenty of water.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The 2,024-acre preserve contains non-native grassland/savannah, shrubland, and riparian woodland plant communities. The grassland is interspersed with extensive stands of blue oak woodland/savannah. Round Valley itself is primarily annual grassland with valley oak lining the intermittent drainages. Non-native grasses, inadvertently introduced to California by early settlers, comprise the annual grassland flora. The dominant grasses are annual ryegrass, wild oats, soft chess, and ripgut brome, with wild barley, foxtail chess, red brome, silver hairgrass, and annual grassland flora. The dominant grasses are annual.

Annual plant communities provide a habitat for a variety of wildlife, including several species of grasshoppers, crickets, and bees. The preserve supports a diverse population of reptiles and amphibians, including the western toad, red-legged frog, and Franklin’s tree frog. Round Valley also supports a variety of birds, including the red-tailed hawk, Cooper’s hawk, and several species of owls.

Round Valley is home to California Indians. The bedrock geology of the preserve is mostly Cretaceous Panchoke shale and sandstone, with deposits of recent alluvium on the surface in valleys and creek drainages. The preserve has small amounts of high-quality soils, located mainly in the level areas along Marsh Creek and in the valley proper. Most of the soil, however, is of lower quality, suitable only for range, wildlife, and watershed uses. The Marsh Creek (Mount Diablo) Fault is located about two miles southwest of the preserve.

To Reach Round Valley:

From Walnut Creek: From I-680, exit at Ygnacio Valley Road. Proceed on Ygnacio Valley Road to Clayton Road in Concord and turn right (east). Clayton Road becomes Marsh Creek Road in Clayton. Proceed east on Marsh Creek Road, past Deer Valley Road, until you reach the preserve staging area on your right.

From Brentwood: Take Walnut Blvd. south to Marsh Creek Road and turn right. When Marsh Creek Road intersects with Camino Diablo Road, bear right and stay on Marsh Creek Road. You will reach the preserve staging area on the left.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact the EBRPD Public Affairs Department at (510) 544-2200, fax (510) 635-3478, TDD (510) 633-0460, or info@ebparks.org.