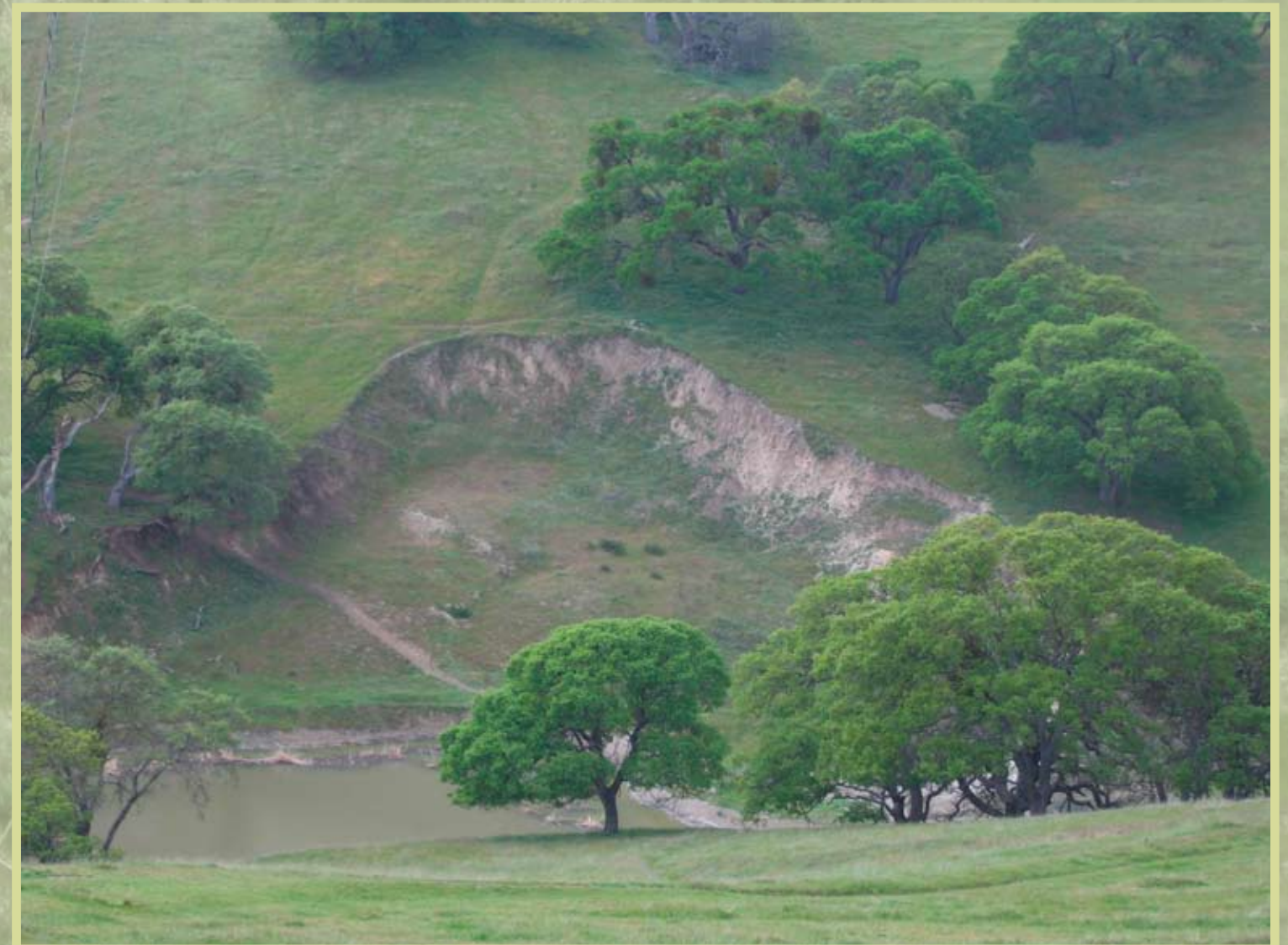


Art on a Grand Scale

Humans use clay and water to create things ranging from adobe houses to porcelain vases. Nature can take the same ingredients and create intricate landscapes. Wet clay also results in the landslides which scar many hillsides in the park. Masses of wet soil slip downhill, riding on a soupy layer of clay and water. Over time, these scars may heal into smooth hillsides or may progress into gullies and canyons.



The step-like patterns on some hillsides (terraces) start as natural undulations in the soil. In winter and spring, the slippery clays creep downhill. Cattle crossing the hillside walk on the undulations and flatten them into terraces.



Photos taken at Del Valle Regional Park by Nick Cavagnaro

In two places in the park, landslides have created seasonal ponds. At Sindich and Maricich lagoons, landslides dammed gullies which eventually filled with water. Although ranchers modified the ponds to suit their needs, they remain beautiful creations of clay and water.