



# Shipley Nature Center

HUNTINGTON CENTRAL PARK WEST  
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# THE SHIPLEY NATURE CENTER  
FB - FRIENDS OF SHIPLEY NATURE CENTER

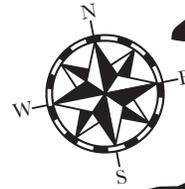


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WRITTEN BY: FRIENDS OF SHIPLEY NATURE CENTER

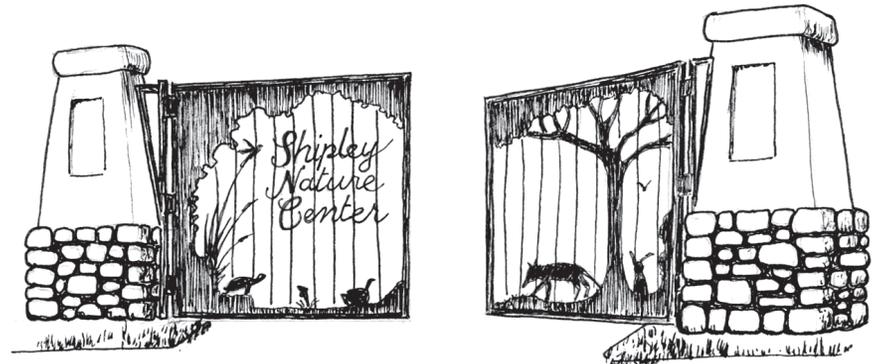
2021

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# Trail Guide

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## 1 DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

The area to your left is planted with examples of Southern Californian native plants for hummingbird, butterfly, coastal sage scrub, riparian, and drought-resistant gardens. Native plants need less water and no fertilizer, and require little care once established. Southern Californians are encouraged to plant natives in their gardens to save water and preserve our local botanic history.

## 2 SOUTHERN OAK WOODLAND HABITAT

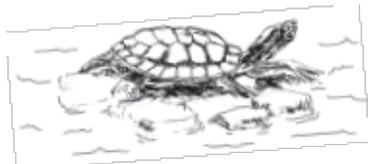
These coastal live oaks are more than 40 years old, and can live to be 350! In the spring, they blossom with small tassels. When pollinated, these tassels can grow into acorns that ripen in the fall. Acorns provide food for animals, and were stored by indigenous peoples for long periods of time to make flour. We have to keep a close eye on our oaks for signs of infection from shot hole borer beetles.

## 3 SHIPLEY'S PAST AND PRESENT

Shipley was formerly an industrial dumping ground for the construction of the 405 freeway. In some areas of Shipley, you can still see large concrete slabs from said dumping. A huge amount of work has been done since the 1970s to transform Shipley Nature Center back into native habitat.

## 4 MEADOW/GRASSLAND HABITAT

Native Californian meadows and grasslands are some of the hardest habitats to restore due to invasive grasses and a lack of native grass seed banks. While we continue to find a way to bring this meadow to life with native grasses, we currently encourage native perennials and shrubs to grow, such as seasonal sunflower and coral bells. We also have California buckeyes growing in this area, a tree that is native only to California! In winter it becomes dormant, meaning it naturally sheds its leaves to reveal its silver bark, and will begin to grow new leaves and flowers in early spring. Its large fruits are unique, but toxic and inedible.



## 13 TORREY PINE/CHAPARRAL HABITAT

While this area used to contain Monterey pines, they are now being replaced by the endangered and more locally adapted Torrey pine. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Torrey pines became the rarest pine species in the world, when only 100 individuals were left. Restoration efforts have restored Torrey populations to the thousands. Under the pines are examples of coastal sage scrub and chaparral plants.

## 14 SAGE MEADOW

Here is where we store mulch. Despite the open space, the area is still frequently visited by rabbits, hummingbirds, and even a hawk or coyote early in the morning. It's also the best place to see buffalo gourd, otherwise known as stinking gourd or *Cucurbita foetidissima*. When pollinated, the crawling vine will produce gold, baseball-sized gourds in the fall. The fruit is inedible and even toxic to humans.

## 15 FREEMAN CREEK

This swale is a remnant of Freeman Creek, a waterway which once traversed all the way to the ocean before urban development. Natural waterways are important for connecting freshwater and marine areas, as well as creating riparian habitats in drier regions.

## 16 MONOCULTURE TO DIVERSITY

While this area was originally designed to be a riparian habitat, it is too dry to support many sycamores or alders. It is however well-suited to Catalina cherry trees, which flower white in the spring and grow abundantly from the cherry-like fruit that falls in early summer. We hope to plant snowberry or Oregon grape underneath our cherries. In the spring and summer, white egrets nest in our dead sycamores, preferring not to have leaves in the way of their large wings.



## 8 RIPARIAN WOODLAND

9 These closed areas are currently thick with stinging nettle, willows, and clematis vines. Purple hedge nettle and yellow seep monkeyflower grow in playful patches due to the wet soil. In the future we hope to replace some of the more precarious willows in this area with cottonwoods and sycamores, to provide a greater variety of trees.

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## 10 HISTORY VERSUS HABITAT

This area has several invasive weeds growing in it; hemlock, Peruvian and Brazilian pepper trees, passion vine, tree tobacco, and Himalayan blackberry. These plants prevent native biodiversity by out-competing native plants for resources such as water or soil nutrients. The area also contains natives like wild strawberry, wild celery, boxelder maples, and Douglas' falsewillow.

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## 11 A FAMILIAR SIGHT

Our 'California' pepper tree is the most striking visual point of this area; ironically it is not a California native. Originally from Peru, these trees were brought to California by Spanish missionaries, and have become such a familiar sight to local Californians that they are often mistaken for natives. While we prevent new pepper trees from growing in the nature center, we have chosen to leave the few large pepper trees we have in place.

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## 12 GARDEN VISITORS

Certain areas of our park, especially those with an emphasis on plants that appeal to pollinators such as hummingbirds or butterflies, are painstakingly tended to by our habitat volunteers. While native habitat is hardy and independent once established, like any garden it still needs help in getting a foothold, and must be watered, trimmed, and weeded appropriately before the plants begin to thrive naturally. We also have a lookout point at this area of the pond. If you sit and wait patiently, an egret or heron may land in the water in front of you.

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## 5 COASTAL REDWOOD GROVE

During the Ice Age, coastal redwoods could naturally grow in Southern California. Today, our redwood forests grow further north where they can soak up constant marine fog. The redwood is our state tree and is famous for growing to record-breaking sizes. In spring, tiny buttons bloom on the tips of the needled twigs, and can become thumbnail-sized cones. During fall, you might see these cones on the ground.

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## 6 COASTAL SAGE SCRUB HABITAT

Ninety percent of coastal sage scrub has been lost to European settlement and development. It is one of the most diverse habitats on the planet, filled with drought tolerant plants that can survive long, dry seasons. Our volunteers grow buckwheat, bladderpod, California sunflower, Matilija poppy, and several species of aromatic sage. These wildflowers create a lively blend of purple, white, red, and yellow blooms.

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## 7 CALIFORNIA BULRUSH

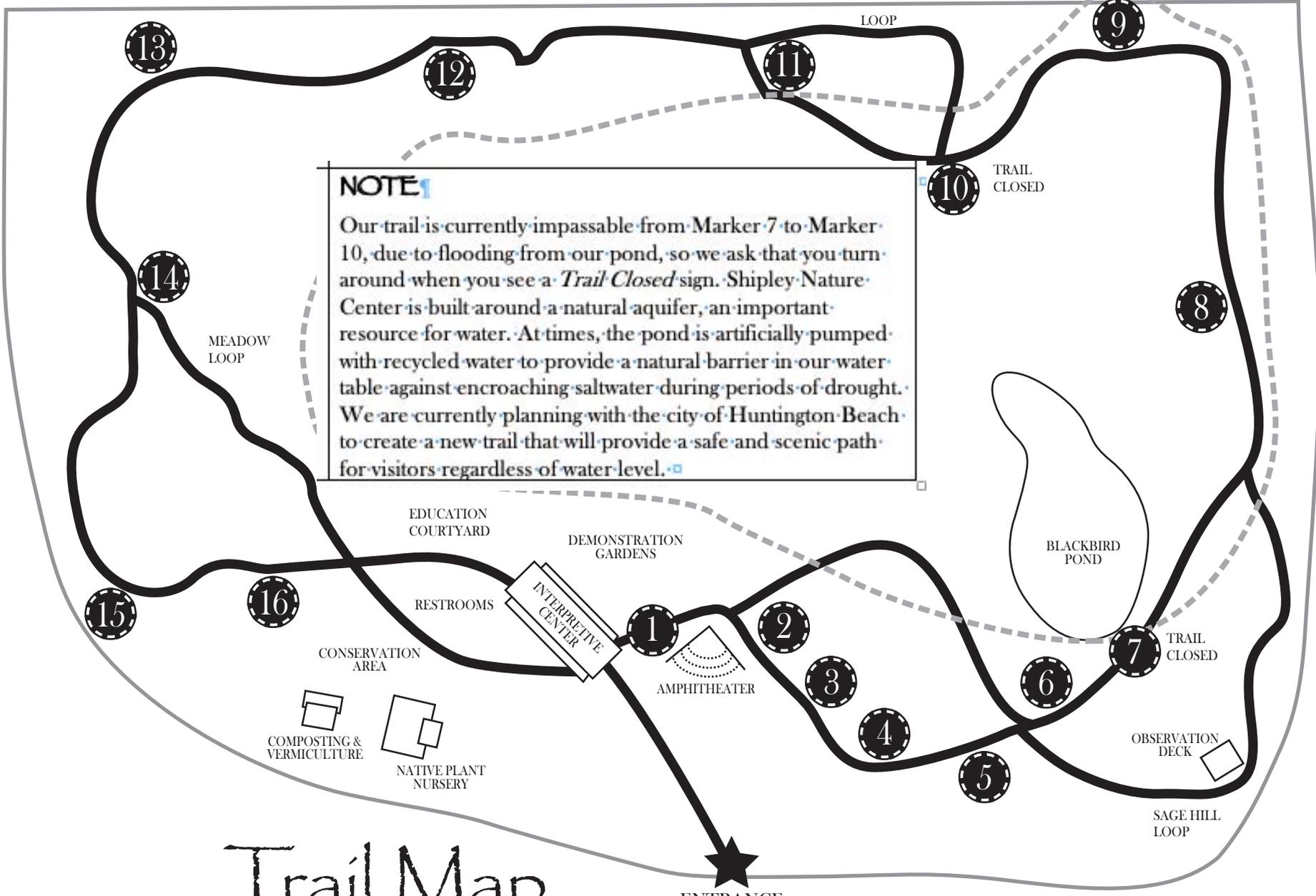
Blackbird Pond is surrounded by California bulrush, also known as tule, which could be used by indigenous tribes as building thatch (an example of a dwelling can be viewed on our Meadow Loop trail). While tule is native to our region and provides habitat for animals such as the red-winged blackbird, it is a quick grower and has blocked off the view of the pond.

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## WILLOW WETLAND HABITAT

Willows love to grow in marshy or riparian areas due to their need for water. We have both arroyo and black willow. Black willow leaves are a shiny green on both sides, while arroyo willows are a pale, silver color on one side. On the other side of our willows lies Blackbird Pond, an important location for visiting snowy egrets, great blue herons, and many other water fowl. Turtles can often be seen sunning on a log by the lookout point. Our turtles are mostly red-eared sliders; a non-native Californian pest that competes with the native western pond turtle.

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# Trail Map

--- Flood Stage of Blackbird Pond

