



*Blue oak above Anderson Marsh*

offers views similar to those of its sibling.

If you have the ambition, consider camping on one of the summits. You'll have far-reaching, earthly views during the day and an open universe above at night. Bring all the water you'll need, be prepared for possible high winds, and head downhill into the relative safety of the forest if a thunderstorm threatens.

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## ANDERSON MARSH

**Length:** 5 to 6.5 miles round-trip

**Hiking time:** 3 hours

**High point:** 1,500 feet

**Total elevation gain:** 300 feet

**Difficulty:** easy

**Season:** year-round

**Water:** bring your own

**Maps:** USGS 7.5' Clear Lake, USGS 7.5' Lower Lake

**Information:** Anderson Marsh State Historical Park



Visit oak woodlands before exploring a marsh shoreline that hosts a variety of birds. Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and be prepared for some mud along Anderson Marsh.

From the junction of Highways 20 and 53 on Clear Lake's east side, drive south 7 miles on Highway 53, turn right onto Anderson Ranch Parkway (0.7 mile north of Highway 29), and turn right again at the entrance to the park.

Pick up the trail by heading west across the field next to a chain-link fence. Go left at a trail junction at 0.4 mile and continue alongside another chain-link fence past the occasional valley oak.

The path gradually climbs a hill under the shade of blue oak and greenleaf manzanita to a signed trail junction at 0.9 mile, where you bear left. As you bisect the grassy meadow next to the

marsh, watch for a herd of deer. Gray pines hug the foothill on the left, and cottonwood and willow surround the marsh on the right.

Without warning the trail becomes mucky and jungled, with 2-yard-high grasses, teasel, and sporadic patches of poison oak. Quite soon the marsh extends next to your feet near wood rose bushes. Pause quietly for a few moments and observe an impressive variety of waterbirds, including pelicans, green herons, and blue herons.

At 1.5 miles bear left onto the McVicar Trail. Although moist and clogged with weeds, it goes

The vineyards of Napa Valley stretch out below Mount Saint Helena.

for 0.6 mile alongside the marsh, offering ample opportunity for further bird-watching.

When you've had enough of this path, retrace your steps and bear left at a rattlesnake sign onto the Marsh Trail, which allows you to explore the east side of Anderson Marsh.

Depart the blue oak belt after 0.4 mile and move slightly closer to the marsh and a tall stand of valley oak on the right. After another 0.2 mile, the trail abruptly departs the marsh and

climbs 20 yards to another unsigned trail junction, where you head straight on the Ridge Trail toward a huge valley oak.

The trail soon heads south to a picnic table under a massive valley oak. Pause here to admire the moist lowlands to the northeast that stretch to the riparian habitat bordering Cache Creek. Turn left and follow the unsigned Anderson Flats Trail east through the oak-studded meadow for another 1 mile to the trailhead.

