Islaís Creek Watershed

Islaís Creek, once known as DuVrees Creek, begins in Glen Canyon amidst Franciscan chert outcrops and Marin Headlands terrane. This bedrock is 100-200 million years old and is often red in color from remnant hydrothermal springs in the area. Islaís Creek was once the largest body of water in San Francisco, running 3.5 miles in length and almost 2 miles wide at the mouth connecting into the Bay. Until the late 1880s, Islaís Creek provided up to 85% of the drinking water for San Francisco residents.

Precita Creek also flowed into the Islaís Creek estuary from the northwest running under the present-day Mission and Noe Valley Districts. Precita Creek originally flowed as a freshwater stream along today’s Army Street between San Jose Avenue and Potrero Avenue. It joined with Islaís Creek at what is now the intersection of Army Street and Evans Avenue.

The original inhabitants of the area were the Muwekma Ohlone people, also known as Costanoans. A major division of this large Northern California group was the Ramaymuk who lived on the San Francisco Peninsula. The particular tribe thought to have lived in San Francisco was the Yelamu.

Several important native species are found in the Islaís Creek Basin, including the Pacific chorus frog, the Islaís or Evergreen Cherry (Prunus ilicifolia) after which Islaís Creek is named, and the endangered Mission blue butterfly which is only found in two other Bay Area locations besides the Twin Peaks region.

Natural History

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Current Projects

Heron’s Head Park is a 24-acre park, including salt marsh and upland restoration and a demonstration and education center, on what was known as Pier 58.
San Francisco’s Pier 70 will be redeveloped into a mixed-use district, restoring historic resources on the site and providing new waterfront open space.

The Mission & Valencia Green Gateway is green infrastructure project of the SFPUC in partnership with the Planning Department and Department of Public Works, located along Valencia Street between Cesar Chavez and Mission streets.

Pre - 1850

Historic Islaís Creek carried flows from the interior ridgeline of the city down to the San Francisco Bay.

1915

As industry and slaughterhouses expanded southward from Potrero Point into the Islaís watershed, more and more piers were built out over Islaís Creek itself. At one point, the largest sardine cannery in the world operated on one of these piers.

1929

This map shows the shoreline in 1929. The shoreline change was partly due to a San Francisco Board of Supervisors vote to use 1906 earthquake debris to fill both sides of Islaís Creek, hastening the area’s conversion to an industrial waterfront hub.

2013

Much of Islaís Creek and its marshy areas were eventually filled. This is a map of the neighborhoods and shoreline today.

SEWER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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