Devil's Slide Trail

Park Headquarters 650-355-8289
Police, Fire, or Medical Emergency 911

Funding for this brochure provided through a grant from the San Mateo County Parks Foundation.

San Mateo County Parks
Reservations 650-363-4021
General information 650-363-4020
www.SMCoParks.org

The Department manages parks, trails, and historic sites to preserve public lands and provide opportunities for education and recreation. The system's properties include parks, preserves, trails, and historic sites located throughout the County and encompassing nearly 16,000 acres. The parks represent our region's wondrously diverse natural settings, from rugged tidepools, lush mountain forests, and remote campsites to Bayfront shoreline, sunny picnic areas, and popular playgrounds. The Department sells annual passes, offering unlimited entrances to all County Parks for a year.

Support your parks

You can volunteer to help rangers protect and improve parklands and serve park visitors. The Devil's Slide Trail Ambassadors assist park rangers by observing and reporting on trail conditions and providing information to trail visitors. To volunteer, visit www.SMCoParks.org or call 650-599-1306.

The San Mateo County Parks Foundation raises funds to improve the quality of County Parks for our community. For information, visit www.SupportParks.org.

Devil's Slide Trail

A San Mateo County Regional Trail

Devil’s Slide Trail

This 1.3-mile-long trail is built on what was once a treacherous stretch of Highway 1 and the site of frequent landslides, accidents, and closures. When the Tom Lantos Tunnels opened in 2012, the San Mateo County Parks Department began converting this segment of the old highway to this public multi-use, non-motorized trail.

The trail opened in 2014, and offers spectacular ocean views and unparalleled opportunities for viewing birds and marine mammals. The Devil’s Slide Trail is a section of the California Coastal Trail, which will extend 1,200 miles from Oregon to Mexico.

Wild places & friendly spaces

San Mateo County Parks

San Mateo County Parks

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Public transportation

For more information call 650-363-4020
San Carlos Caltrain Station to Devil’s Slide – take the 6:23 AM or 7:34 AM train from San Carlos Caltrain Station to Pacifica. For the best ride, call 650-363-4020 or visit the Caltrain website.

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Wildlife

Opportunities to see wildlife along the trail are everywhere. In the tidepools, look for Brandt’s Cormorants, Western Gulls, and Common Terns. In the distance, observe Turkey Vultures soaring through the sky.

Offshore, you may see marine mammals like harbor seals, sea lions, and gray whales migrating from their winter breeding grounds in Mexico and their summer feeding habitat in the Arctic. Look for spouts or splashes that indicate whales or other marine mammals.

Trail geology

Devil’s Slide Trail offers a great demonstration of coastal geology. At the south end of the trail, the weathered rock face is the granitic rock of Montara Mountain. In contrast, at the north end, rough sedimentary layers of shale and sandstone – once ocean floor – have been thrust up and folded over millions of years. Landslides in this area occur where the sedimentary layers were thrust over the granitic rock.

Surf and waves

Over the centuries, waves have broken these cliffs. At the same time, the pounding surf washes away the bottom of the slide. Devil’s Slide continues to move into the Pacific Ocean, part of the natural process that shapes our ever-changing coastline.

History

Wild places & friendly spaces

The Devil’s Slide Trail is a section of the California Coastal Trail, which will extend 1,200 miles from Oregon to Mexico. The growing coastside population led to the passage of the California Coastal Act in 1976. Nearby protected areas include three National Marine Sanctuaries and state Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve is an MPA and a San Mateo County Park.

The California Coastal Act protects these marine areas and the shoreline through a partnership between San Mateo County and the California Coastal Commission.
Wildlife

Opportunities to see wildlife along the trail are abundant. Trail users may see raptors overhead, such as Turkey Vulture, Red-Tailed Hawk, and Peregrine Falcon. Songbirds in the area include Song Sparrow, Bewick’s Wren, and Golden-Crowned Sparrow. The area also includes many seabirds, which choose to nest in remote places where predators cannot easily reach chicks or eggs. The offshore rocks and cliffs are perfect spots for Peregrine Falcons, Pigeon Guillemots, Brandt’s Cormorants, Western Gulls, and Common Murres. The fencing and native vegetation hides hikers and visitors so the birds can nest without fear or disturbance. Please respect their privacy. Offshore, you may see marine mammals, including gray whales migrating from their winter breeding grounds in Mexico and their summer feeding habitat in the Arctic. Look for spouts or splashes that indicate whales or other marine mammals.

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Millions of years of upward pressure has weakened and broken these cliffs. At the same time, the pounding surf washes away the bottom of the slide. Devil’s Slide continues to move into the Pacific Ocean, part of the natural process that shapes our ever-changing coastline.

A legacy of land protection

The growing coastside population led to the passage of the California Coastal Act in 1976. Nearby protected areas include three National Marine Sanctuaries and state Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, just to the south in Moss Beach, is both an MPA and a San Mateo County Park.

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Support your parks

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