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 more than 17,000 acres.

The parks represent our region's wonderfully diverse natural settings, from rugged tidal pools, lush mountain forests, and remote coves 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 San Mateo County Parks Foundation raises funds to improve the quality of County Parks for our community. For information, visit www.SupportParks.org.
The Volunteer Horse Patrol (vmpc.org) promotes protection and enjoyment of these parks.
Sam McDonald County Park

Sam McDonald County Park offers magnificent redwood forests and a ridge with vistas of the Pacific Ocean. The Park, some 850 acres, includes youth camps, an equestrian camp, and a hiker’s hut. Adjacent to McDonald, Heritage Grove is a stunning 57-acre preserve of old-growth redwood forest.

Natural features

Much of Sam McDonald is very steep. Ferns and other shade-loving plants are found in lower elevations; the higher-elevation knolls are covered each spring with colorful wildflowers such as sticky monkeyflower, wood rose, and sun cup. The forests, dominated by coast redwood, also include Douglas-fir, madrone, California laurel, buckeye, big leaf maple, and oak trees.

Common wildlife includes black-tailed deer, raccoons, opossums, foxes, bobcats, woodpeckers, Steller’s jays, garter and gopher snakes, and banana slugs. Heritage Grove offers visitors an opportunity to experience the stunning beauty of old-growth coast redwoods. Located on Alpine Creek, the grove includes what are considered to be among the Santa Cruz Mountain’s largest redwoods.

Activities and facilities

Several miles of trails for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians connect to adjacent parks. Trails in Heritage Grove wind through the redwoods. Heritage Grove Trail, open only to hikers, connects with other trails in the complex. The Grove can also be admired from the parking lot off Alpine Road, accessible from Pescadero Road.

The Sierra Club’s Hiker’s Hut may be reserved by calling the Sierra Club at 650-390-8411 x393. Groups may reserve any of several youth camps or the Jack Brook Horse Camp (seasonal). Make reservations for these camps at www.SMCoParks.org or 650-363-4021.

Trails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trails</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Tree Trail</td>
<td>1.2 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranger station to Hiker’s Hut</td>
<td>1.5 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Grove Trail</td>
<td>3.2 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towne Fire Road</td>
<td>5.0 miles</td>
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- Hikers, runners, bicyclists, and equestrians share these trails. Please be alert and courteous to all trail users.
- Always yield to equestrians by stepping to the edge of the path.
- Bicyclists always yield to other trail users.
- Weather conditions may cause seasonal trail closures.

For more trail information and routes, visit www.SMCoParks.org.