

San Diego County Parks Society

Spring 2020



SDCPS Joins Nat'l Association of Park Foundations

The San Diego County Parks Society board of directors voted unanimously to join the National Association of Park Foundations, a nonprofit dedicated to building effective, active local park foundations.

NAPF members have access to educational programs, online resources, and networking opportunities with more than 100 other member foundations across the country.

This summer, NAPF Executive Director Donald Ortale will help SDCPS write a strategic plan focused on governance, funding, public relations, and marketing.

Santa Ysabel Nature Center Opens

A few hundred yards off State Route 79, behind the post office, the \$9.5 million Santa Ysabel Nature Center sits among Engelmann oak trees, overlooking rolling grasslands to the west and the foothills of the Volcan Mountain range to the east.

"The beaches and the bays—yeah, they're beautiful, but I would contend our back country is just as beautiful and has more treasures," said County Chairwoman Dianne Jacob at the December 14 ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The 6,000-square-foot facility offers educational exhibits about the region's cultural history and wildlife (including a taxidermied mountain lion donated by the San Diego County Parks Society).

It also boasts high-tech amenities such as WiFi, an electric vehicle charging

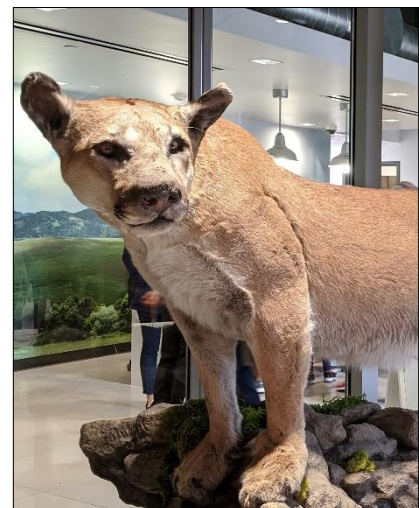
station, and 90 solar panels that provide all the power for the building.

A new 2.5-mile trail connects the nature center to 20 miles of existing trail in the 6,347-acre Santa Ysabel Preserve.

"The most important thing we may do as human beings is maintain our connection to nature," said Dwight Worden, Del Mar City Council member and San Dieguito River Park board member.

About 500 guests participated in activities including a guided hike, an architectural tour, an alpaca weaving exhibit, live art, and a birds of prey demonstration.

In addition to donating the mountain lion to the center's permanent collection, the San Diego County Parks Society funded live music from fiddle-player Celia Lawley and apple pie from Mom's Pie House.





COVID-19 Restrictions Implemented at County Parks

On March 28, nine days after California's shelter-in-place order was declared, Eucalyptus County Park in Spring Valley was nearly empty. A family of three enjoyed a picnic while an individual practiced yoga in a far corner of the park.

Picnicking and yoga were allowed at that time, but have since been forbidden in county parks, amid an ever-growing list of restrictions meant to

stop the spread of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, Waterfront Park was bustling. Dozens of people walked dogs or exercised in workout attire. Some wore facemasks, and most observed social distancing guidelines, with a few notable exceptions: ten adults stood in a tight circle following a soccer game, and a diaper-clad baby played in a fountain, despite posted signs.

As of April 9, most county

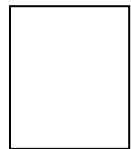
parks are still open for walking, hiking, and equestrian and bike riding. However, parking lots are closed to discourage visitors.

Parkgoers must maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another and avoid unnecessary physical contact.

The situation changes often, so before you visit, check the San Diego County Parks and Recreation website for up-to-date information.



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