

The City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains a diverse and valued parks system that serves millions of residents and visitors each year. The City’s parks system does more than fulfill the public’s need for leisure, it supports and provides opportunities for individual growth, cultural exchange and enrichment, and important youth development opportunities. It provides and offers a robust variety of programs for all, including individuals with disabilities and older adults. The parks system also preserves and maintains a significant portion of the San Diego region’s diverse natural habitat and supports San Diego’s economic base through tourism; and it greatly enhances the City’s ability to attract and retain businesses.

As of January 2023, the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management of:

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| Park Land | <p>42,400 acres of developed and undeveloped park land, joint use, and open space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27,109 acres of open space • 5,977 water acres within the San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park • 9,314 acres of regional, community, neighborhood, and mini parks and joint use areas • Approximately 227 miles of multi-use trails throughout the open space system, ranging from easy to difficult |
| Regional Parks | <p>Balboa Park: At approximately 1,200 acres, Balboa Park is a significant horticultural and cultural resource with more than 15,000 trees, 14 specialty gardens; nearly 100 arts, education, recreational, social and sports organizations; 17 museums and cultural institutions, and the World-Famous San Diego Zoo and Old Globe Theatre. Balboa Park entertains more than 20 million visitors a year.</p> <p>Mission Bay: At 4,235 acres, approximately half land and half water; Mission Bay Park is the largest man-made public aquatic recreational area in the world, entertaining more than 15 million visitors a year with 27 miles of bike paths and 14 miles of shoreline. The park hosts various commercial leases including 5 hotels, 10 boat marinas, 2 campgrounds, and Sea World.</p> <p>Mission Trails Regional Park: One of the largest urban parks west of the Mississippi River, Mission Trails Regional Park includes approximately 7,200 acres of open space and 60 miles of trails. Mission Trails provides visitors the chance to participate in a wide variety of hikes and multi-educational programs. Mission Trails also includes Kumeyaay Lake Campground, Old Mission Dam, and West Sycamore Open Space. It is home to 7 wildlife preserves and breeding habitats for the endangered Least Tern, with ongoing efforts to expand the park into East Elliott and West Sycamore Canyon.</p> <p>Otay Valley Regional Park: This park, which follows the Otay River watershed in the South Bay, is currently comprised of 2,029 acres, has trails and staging areas, and is a joint effort of the City of San Diego, City of Chula Vista, and County of San Diego. The park offers visitors a variety of scenic trails in a natural river valley.</p> |
| Beaches and Shoreline Parks | <p>The Department manages 13.6 miles of oceanfront shoreline between Sunset Cliffs Natural Park and Torrey Pines City Park, including 65 view areas and coastal access points.</p> |
| San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park | <p>The San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park spans 5,977 acres of ocean bottom and tidelands. The park is a popular destination for snorkelers, scuba divers, and kayakers.</p> |
| Recreation | <p>60 recreation centers and two visitor centers provide programs, activities, and events throughout the year to all ages, abilities, and income levels.</p> |
| Golf | <p>The Department manages three unique municipal golf complexes: Award-winning Torrey Pines Golf Course atop the coastline bluffs of the Pacific Ocean has two championship-level 18-hole golf courses. It is home of the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) annual Farmers Insurance Open and recently hosted the 2021 U.S. Open Golf Championship. Historic Balboa Park has both a nine-hole and an 18-hole golf course located just minutes from downtown. Mission Bay Golf Course is San Diego’s only night-lighted 18-hole golf course and practice facility.</p> |

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| Aquatics Program | There are 15 City Pools located in all council districts. The Aquatics Program serves thousands of people on an annual basis by providing aquatic activities and services for youth, adults, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. |
| Therapeutic Recreation Services | A variety of programs that are delivered for of all ability levels so that they can achieve a maximum level of independence in their leisure and recreational lifestyles. More than 50,000 people are served each year. Park de la Cruz Community Center provides an all-inclusive setting with amenities geared toward individuals with special needs, including an adaptive fitness center and sensory room. |
| Volunteers | Members of the community donated over 6,535 individual volunteer occurrences totaling more than 31,158 volunteer hours in Calendar Year 2022, which adds enrichment to the lives of park users and preserves parks for future generations. |
| AgeWell Services | AgeWell Services provides information, referral services, bi-weekly dances, trips, and special events to more than 20,000 seniors annually. Park de la Cruz Community Center has an array of ongoing health and wellness services, technical assistance, social/fitness programs, and a Monday-Friday lunch program. The Senior Lounge in Balboa Park hosts over 8,500 guests each month. The Cathy Hopper Friendship Center in Clairemont was opened to the public in March 2023. |
| Skate Parks | The Department currently offers 12 unsupervised skate parks and 1 skate plaza. |
| Pump Track | Pacific Highlands Ranch Community Park offers a concrete bicycle pump track. |
| Dog Off-Leash Areas | The Department currently offers 23 designated dog off-leash areas. |
| Fishing | There are two fishing piers along the Pacific Ocean: one at Ocean Beach (longest pier in Southern California) and the other at Pacific Beach (historic Crystal Pier). One youth fishing lake is located at Chollas Lake Park. |
| Joint Use Agreements with Local Schools | The Department manages approximately 102 Joint-Use Agreements with local school districts that provide additional recreational opportunities during non-school hours. |
| Maintenance Assessment Districts (MADs) | 55 maintenance assessment districts throughout the city provide property owners the opportunity to fund enhanced improvements, maintenance, services, and more in their communities, beyond those generally provided by the City. |
| Mt. Hope Cemetery | Historic Mt. Hope Cemetery is owned and operated by the City. Since 1869, Mt. Hope Cemetery has provided internment options at reasonable costs. Prominent San Diegans, including Alonzo Horton and Kate O. Sessions, are buried at this 110-acre site. |
| Open Space Parks | <p>Black Mountain Park is comprised of 2,352 acres, has trails for hiking, biking and equestrian use and has over 80 species of birds. The center piece of the park is the 1,554-foot summit of Black Mountain which provides 360-degree views of the area.</p> <p>Chollas Lake Park has 341 acres of recreation and open space areas located within the Chollas Creek watershed. The area includes a youth fishing lake, nature trails, playgrounds, and ballfields. The park offers summer camps, ranger-guided walks and interpretive programs, volunteer habitat restoration, and cleanup events.</p> <p>Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve consists of over 4,000 acres is home to many rare and endangered plant and animal species. Visitors using the 37 miles of multi-use trails may pass through 14 different habitat types and view a waterfall.</p> <p>San Diego River Park includes 376 acres along the San Diego River in the Mission Valley area. The San Diego River Garden features easy trails through a large native plant garden. The park contains 3 miles of paved walking and biking trails, which are wheelchair accessible. Regular Ranger-led interpretive walks and volunteer events are conducted throughout the San Diego River Park and tributary canyons.</p> <p>San Pasqual - Clevenger Canyon offers hiking and bird watching, and a 1,755-foot summit.</p> |

Tri-Canyon Open Space Parks include Marian Bear Memorial Park, Rose Canyon Open Space, and Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. The Tecolote Nature Center provides educational programs and special events throughout the year for all ages. The park system is comprised by a total of 1,796 acres.

Urban Canyonlands consist of 3,000 acres of canyon areas Citywide. The coordinates the multiple Friends of Canyon volunteer groups, leads efforts to restore and access canyon areas, and provides guidance and oversight for canyon related activities.

Brush Management

The Department conducts brush management bi-annually on approximately 916 acres of land that is located within 100 feet of a livable structure. The work is done in accordance with the San Diego Municipal Code and the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's Canyon Fire Safety Guidelines and Policies.

Gas Tax

This program maintains 85 landscaped medians at a variety of locations throughout the City.