



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES
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NEWS RELEASE

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PUBLIC OPENING FOR VALLE DEL PÁJARO COUNTY PARK

The County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services, along with Supervisor Felipe Hernandez, are pleased to announce the opening of the new South County park, Valle del Pájaro County Park, to the public with interim amenities. In celebration, a public opening ceremony will be held at Valle del Pájaro County Park.

WHAT: Valle del Pájaro Public Opening

WHERE: 188 Whiting Road, Watsonville

WHEN: Friday, July 11, 2025, 10 a.m.

In August 2023, Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors approved the acquisition of the new 38.5-acre park in South County. Since then, the County Parks Department has been planning and working on the interim features for Valle del Pájaro. Community surveys were conducted to gather input into what features and amenities would be the most desired.

The Parks Department has established a new walking loop trail, ADA-accessible parking, picnic areas and a road from the entrance of the park to the parking area as part of the first phase of interim features. Valle del Pájaro is the first new park in unincorporated South County in decades. The park supports the department's strategic plan goal of equity. It will advance opportunities for people who have traditionally had limited access to parks and open spaces, supporting their health and well-being.

“The opening of Valle del Pájaro Santa Cruz County Park is a milestone for South County—an area that has long faced disparities in access to parks and open space. This park represents our commitment to equity and environmental justice, ensuring that families in Watsonville and beyond have more opportunities to enjoy nature, play, and connect as a community. I’m excited to help shape the future of this space with input from the people it’s meant to serve” said Supervisor Hernandez, who contributed funding for the project through his office.

“In strong alignment with the Park’s Strategic Plan goal of Equity, this investment in South County brings us tremendous joy, giving residents another fantastic option for outdoor use and availability of open space,” said County Parks Deputy Director Rebecca Hurley.

The Parks Department, in collaboration with County Park Friends and community partners, established a naming committee that worked closely with the community and South County schools to develop options for naming the new park. Together, the group presented a list of options to the Santa Cruz County Parks & Recreation Commission, topped by Valle del Pájaro. The Parks Commission voted to approve Valle del Pájaro.

On June 10, 2025, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the naming of Valle del Pájaro County Park. This new park is the first Spanish-language name for a park in County history, honoring the culture and heritage of the community it will serve.

The park is now open to the public, with additional interim features slated for installation in 2026 as County Parks conducts community engagement to generate a park master plan.

For additional information please contact parksinfo@santacruzcountyca.gov