



University of California Cooperative Extension
 Master Composters facility.

Accessibility

In compliance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its programs, services, or activities. The Department will make reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy our programs, services, facilities, and activities. If you need assistance with an ADA request, please contact our ADA Coordinator at: ADACoordinator@prk.sccgov.org.



Park Charter Funds at Work... Thank You!

Welcome

Welcome to Martial Cottle Park, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department's newest urban park. Martial Cottle Park showcases our agricultural past and highlights innovations in modern organic, sustainable, and urban farming practices. A significant portion of the park is actively farmed while additional parcels provide agricultural education and community involvement opportunities for the public.

Activities

Throughout the park's 287 acres, visitors can enjoy aspects of a traditional urban park, such as trails, green space and picnic areas, as well as learn the Cottle family's story, about Santa Clara Valley's agricultural past, and how agriculture remains an integral part of this historic ranch. The trail system offers recreational opportunities for walkers, joggers, bicyclists, skaters, non-motorized scooters, and inline skaters. Equestrians and dogs on 6-foot leash are also welcome on the trail. Please pick up after your pets. Deed restrictions prohibit the use of lawns for organized sports activities.

Location

5283 Snell Ave San Jose, CA 95136
 Park Office: (408) 535-4060



Hours and Fees

The park is open year-round from 8 a.m. until sunset. Vehicle entry fees are collected year-round. Fees are required for vehicle entrance and for use of group picnic areas. Fees are posted at the entrance station.

Sharing the Trails

For the safety and protection of all visitors, please adhere to the following trail etiquette guidelines:

- Be Considerate:** Keep speeds at a safe pace. Yield to slower trail users. Use particular caution when passing children and senior citizens. Respect everyone's right to use the trail.
- Use Open Trails Only:** Trails may be closed due to sensitive environmental concerns.
- Be Aware of Conditions:** Riding (even on open trails) when conditions are poor, such as shortly after a rain, may cause trail damage.
- Plan Ahead:** Know your equipment, your ability and where you are going. Carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions.

History of the Martial Cottle Family Ranch

Established by Edward Cottle in 1856 and continually maintained and farmed by his descendants until 2014, this land remained in agricultural production under one family for more than 150 years. Vermont-born Edward Cottle emigrated from Missouri to Santa Clara County by wagon in 1854 and settled near Coyote Creek. Two years later he purchased a portion of Rancho Santa Teresa from the Bernal family and began raising milk cows, grazing cattle, and planting grain and row crops. Edward later divided the land between his two sons, Martial and Warren. Martial Cottle's approximately 350-acre parcel remained in agriculture with his descendants living and farming there until 2014, when

his last living heir, Walter Cottle Lester, passed away. As the agricultural economy of the Santa Clara Valley changed, so did the products of the Cottle ranch. From cattle and dairy pastures to wheat fields and row crops, this land helped sustain the valley's growing population and changing agriculture markets. During World War I and again in the 1920s and 30s, portions of the ranch were leased to Japanese tenant farmers who grew sugar beets, onions, carrots, peppers, and strawberries. Although large-scale fruit orchards symbolic of Santa Clara County's agricultural history were not planted here, there were some plum, apricot, cherry, quince, and apple trees. The Cottles and Lesters did, however, manage large fruit orchards on other family-owned properties around the valley. In order to maintain its agricultural history and preserve this land for future generations, the Cottle-Lester family withstood the pressures of urban development and turned down fortunes offered by developers. In 2003 Walter Cottle Lester, in accordance with his mother Ethel's wishes, transferred his remaining 287 acres to the State and County for development of a public park that informs and educates the public about the agricultural heritage of the Santa Clara Valley. In a 2013 San Jose Mercury News interview, Walter Cottle Lester stated "I was born here. I've spent my entire life here. It would be nice for kids in future generations to know what it was like before it all changed."



View of the Cottle House from the southwest, circa 1887

About Martial Cottle Park

Martial Cottle Park would not be what it is without its park partners. These partners have organizational missions that align with the agricultural vision for the park, operate parcels within

the park boundary, provide programming for the public, and support projects at the park. Jacobs Farm, a leader in organic farming, has partnered with County Parks for the long term organic agricultural production of 180 acres or nearly half of the entire park property, helping to preserve the Cottle's vision that some of the park land remain in active cultivation. It is a rare opportunity to bring fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs to the community directly from "field to fork." The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), Our City Forest, and City of San Jose offer educational programming and opportunities for involvement to the community, focusing on agriculture and the environment. UCCE, through its 4-H, Master Gardener, Master Composter, and Small Farms programs, along with Our City Forest provide tours, classes, workshops, and volunteer opportunities for the public. The City of San Jose operates a community garden at the park. The Martial Cottle Park Foundation, which was established by Walter Cottle Lester, assists the County in developing, improving, and operating the park primarily through charitable contributions. Goals of the Foundation include repairing and restoring the historic structures and equipment and supporting projects within the park. The Friends of Martial Cottle Park inspires the community to care for, learn about, and enjoy the park and the agricultural heritage of Santa Clara Valley by promoting programs and projects that support and preserve the park. Construction and development of the Cottle and Lester Historic Ranch, the section of the park which is currently closed to the public, is highly anticipated. When opened to the public, the Cottle and Lester Historic Ranch will feature interpretive exhibits and programs, museum displays, displays of farm equipment, additional picnic areas, and more. Martial Cottle Park hosts a number of events and seasonal celebrations such as a Fall Festival, a pumpkin patch, and Christmas tree sales for the holiday season. Reservations for the group areas are year-round.