



Penitencia Creek Parkway



County of Santa Clara
Parks and Recreation Department
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www.parkhere.org



Use this QR code to view your GPS location on the guide map using



Photo: Ron Horii



Penitencia Creek Trail along Dr. Robert Gross Recharge Ponds.

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.



Welcome

Welcome to the Penitencia Creek Parkway. This linear park and regional trail incorporates parklands and open space that is managed by a number of agencies including Santa Clara County, the City of San Jose, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Santa Clara County manages portions of the Penitencia Creek Trail and Penitencia Creek Gardens. The future vision is to expand the Penitencia Creek Trail to connect Alum Rock Park (City of San Jose) to the Coyote Creek confluence.

Gardens and access point to the trail are located on the northwest corner of Jackson and Mabury. The trail crosses Jackson Avenue 0.2 miles north of Mabury Road, on the south side of Penitencia Creek Road.

Public Transportation

Valley Transportation Authority buses serve the Penitencia Creek Parkway. In addition, the Penitencia Creek Light Rail Station is just south of the park chain on Capitol Avenue.

Share the Trails

Be Considerate: Use particular caution when passing children, senior citizens, and people with dogs.

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.

Bicyclists: Yield to pedestrians and equestrians. Ride cautiously and in single file. Observe speed limits as posted.

Cultural History

Native Americans inhabited this area for centuries and referred to the canyon and creek as "Shistuk", which means "Place of the Jackrabbits". In 1778, King Charles III of Spain granted this land to the settlers of the Pueblo of San Jose de Guadalupe. The early Spanish pioneers called the area "Arroyo Aquaje" and used it as a place to water their stock. The creek was an important water spot for treks between the Pueblo, Mission Santa Clara and Mission San Jose. A small adobe, located adjacent to the creek, was used by the mission padres to be penitent or hear confessions. The creek was eventually named Penitencia Creek.

In the latter part of the 19th century, the ranchos were replaced with orchards. In 1906, the Women's Outdoor Art League recognized the importance of preserving the creek and planted eucalyptus trees where local farmers had removed the native sycamores, willows, and alders. These trees still stand today near Penitencia Creek Road and Noble Avenue. In 1918, Supervisor Henry Ayers proposed that the county acquire and preserve the creek. After World War I, San Jose expanded towards Penitencia Creek and further proposals to create a streamside park were put forward.

In 1972, the County Board of Supervisors allocated \$3.5 million from the Parks Charter Amendment to purchase lands and develop a master plan for the creek. Other agencies involved in supporting this parkway included the City of San Jose, Santa Clara Valley Water District, East Side Union School District, and Berryessa Union School District. The park at Mabury and Jackson Roads was completed in the early 1990s as part of the implementation of the goals of the 1977 master plan. Today, numerous agencies work together to provide an aesthetic balance between flood control, natural preservation, and recreational development.

How to Get There

From U.S. 101

Take the McKee Road exit in San Jose. Travel east on McKee 1.2 miles to Jackson Avenue. Turn left on Jackson and proceed 0.7 miles to Mabury Road. The Penitencia Creek Gardens and access point to the trail are located on the northwest corner of Jackson and Mabury. The trail crosses Jackson Avenue 0.2 miles north of Mabury on the south side of Penitencia Creek. Penitencia Creek Road parallels the trail from Capitol Avenue to Alum Rock Park. To reach the City of San Jose's Penitencia Creek Park, take the McKee Road exit east. Follow McKee Road 1.8 miles to Capitol Avenue, turn left on Capitol. Travel north on Capitol 1.2 miles to Penitencia Creek Road. Turn right and proceed east to the park's entrance to the left.

From Interstate 680

To reach the park chain from Interstate 680, take the Berryessa Road exit and proceed east 0.2 miles to Capitol Avenue. Turn right and follow Capitol Avenue south 0.4 miles to Penitencia Creek Road. You may either follow Penitencia Creek Road to the City of San Jose's Penitencia Creek Park or continue on Capitol Avenue south 0.4 miles to Mabury Road in order to reach the Penitencia Creek Gardens. Turn right on Mabury and travel west 0.5 miles to Jackson Avenue. The Penitencia Creek



Activities

The 15-acre Penitencia Creek Gardens provides opportunities to stroll, explore and picnic, and the pond is a stop on the migratory flyway. The Penitencia Creek Trail offers recreational opportunities for bicyclists, hikers, skaters, dog walkers and wildlife observation. The Penitencia Creek Trail proceeds intermittently from the start of the parkway at the City of San Jose's 700-acre Alum Rock Regional Park.

Some portions of the trail are as yet undeveloped. Between Alum Rock Park and Noble Avenue, trail users must use the road shoulder. From Noble Avenue to Piedmont Road, an unpaved trail is available. The paved trail from White/Piedmont Roads to the Jackson/Mabury area is continuous except for the on-street crossings of Penitencia Creek Road, Capitol Avenue and Jackson Avenue. From Penitencia Creek Gardens, the trail continues another 0.3 miles using the sidewalk along Mabury Road.



Bridge along Penitencia Creek

Photo: Ron Horii