

# History of Felicita County Park

Felicita County Park is one of the oldest parks in the San Diego County park system. The area has been a popular gathering place for many centuries.

Felicita County Park has a rich and colorful history. With its abundance of water, oaks and boulders, the land was the site of a large Kumeyaay Indian village.

Because of its cultural background, the park is named after Felicita LaChappa, a Native American who lived in the San Pasqual Valley.

Named Hal-ah-wee at birth, Felicita was the daughter of Pontho, leader of their clan.



**Felicita LaChappa**

When she was a young girl, padres from Mission San Diego, accompanied by soldiers, came to her village to baptize the children. When the padres baptized Indians, they often gave them new Spanish names. This is when Hal-ah-wee's name was changed to Felicita, which generally translates to "happiness."

During the Mexican War, Felicita and her family were in the San Pasqual Indian village when the Californios and Americans fought the Battle of San Pasqual on December 6, 1846.

Aspects of Felicita's life were included in a 1917 book by Elizabeth Judson Roberts titled, *Indian Stories of the Southwest*. However, some time after the book was published, Roberts acknowledged she used creative license in depicting details of Felicita's life. A historically based, yet fictional, outdoor pageant based on Felicita's life was performed south of the park from 1927 – 1932.

In true life, Felicita had a companion named "Boley" Morales and they lived together in the San Pasqual Valley until her death in 1916.



**Performance of the Pageant**

Felicita and Morales were known by most of the pioneer families in the valley and were a common sight in the town of Escondido. Felicita's life is remarkable because it illustrates California history from the Spanish mission era, the Mexican and pioneer eras, and on into the twentieth century.

Historically, the land including what is today Felicita County Park was part of the 1842 and 1845 Rancho Bernardo Mexican Land Grants issued to Don Jose Francisco Snook. In 1867, the land was acquired by San Diego Sheriff James McCoy who herded sheep among the large oaks. Locals referred to the area as "McCoy's Grove."

Then in 1918 Ransford and Elinora Lewis purchased the land that includes what is the park today. They grew lemons, oranges, wheat and grapevines.

In 1929, the Lewis' sold the property to the County of San Diego for \$12,000. Local Escondido residents advocated that the park be named after Felicita.

Around this time Earl Shidner was hired as the first park caretaker (for \$27 per month). He built a house and garage, comfort stations, a band shell with a concrete dance floor, a barbecue pit, picnic tables, playground equipment, a food stand, and a windmill and pump.

On January 31, 2008, Felicita County Park was honored for its rich Native American and pioneer history by being listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

# Welcome to Felicita County Park

Located in southwest Escondido, Felicita County Park is one of San Diego's most diverse gathering places with year-round spring fed creeks that separate the park into a patchwork of natural and developed recreational areas.



Visitors can enjoy a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities nestled under the shroud of an old oak grove with numerous picnic sites that can accommodate a single family or host a large event such as a corporate picnic or family reunion.



**The Renaissance Faire is held twice a year at the park**

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

**VEGETATION, NATURAL & CULTURAL FEATURES:** All plants, animals, natural and cultural features are fully protected and may not be harmed or removed.

**TREES:** Do not tie or hang ropes, wire, or tents to trees. Do not drive nails, screws, or staples into trees.

**SMOKING:** Smoking is not permitted in any County Park.

**PETS:** Pets are permitted in the park during park hours. Pets must be kept on a maximum 6 ft. leash, and owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pet.

**TRAILS:** Please stay on designated trails. All trails are bike friendly. Please share the trail.

**ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:** Alcoholic beverages are permitted providing the alcohol content does not exceed 20%.

**VEHICLES:** Vehicles are not allowed beyond the designated parking lot.

**LITTER:** Littering is prohibited. Please place litter and recyclable materials in the containers provided by the park.

**FIREWORKS:** Fireworks are not permitted in any County Park.

**FIREARMS & WEAPONS:** Firearms and weapons are not permitted in any County Park.

## INFORMATION



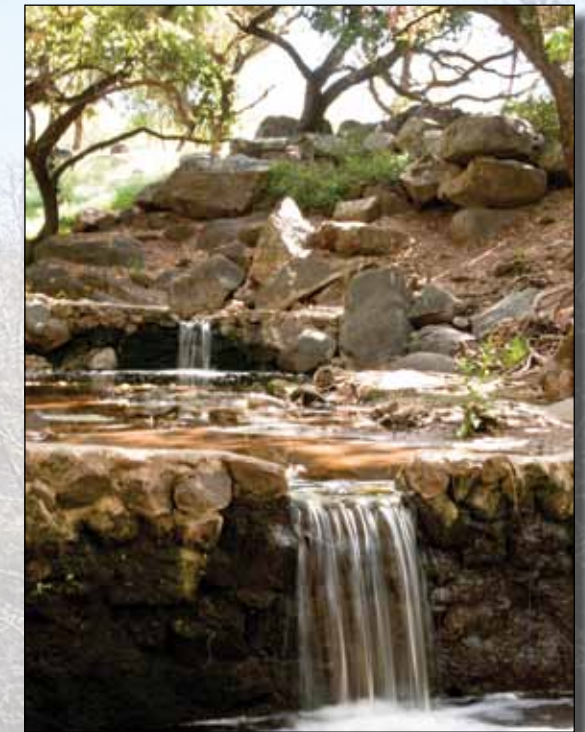
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# FELICITA COUNTY PARK

## A San Diego County Day Use Park





## Weddings



The Wedding Knoll at the north end of the park provides a quiet, natural setting for that perfect wedding or private special event. The vicinity also features a reception area close by complete with a restroom and changing room, a covered pavilion and convenient parking.

Picnic Area 1 makes for a nice reception spot, and is located near the playground, horseshoe pits and open lawn. Both reception areas can hold large groups up to 250-300 people and offers water and electricity to accommodate caterers.

## Picnic Amenities



**Picnic Area 1:** Exclusive area for up to 300 people. The vicinity includes a dance area, the amphitheater with electrical service, a covered serving pavilion, water, electricity, and two large barbecues.

**Picnic Area 2:** Exclusive area for up to 150 people. The vicinity includes a covered serving pavilion with a serving counter, water and electricity, one large brick barbecue and four small barbecues.

**Picnic Area 3:** Exclusive area for up to 150 people. The area includes a covered serving pavilion with a serving counter, water, electricity, one large barbecue and three small barbecues.

**Picnic Area 4:** Exclusive area for up to 150 people. The vicinity includes a covered serving pavilion with a serving counter, water, electricity, one large barbecue, and two small barbecues.

**Picnic Area 5:** Exclusive area for up to 150 people. The vicinity includes a large barbecue and one small barbecue.

**Picnic Area 6:** Exclusive area for up to 250 people. The vicinity includes a shaded dance pavilion with water and electricity, a large brick barbecue with a serving counter, and three small barbecues.

## Hiking Trails



Hikers can enjoy 1.5 miles of walking trails surrounding the park. There are two trails including the Ipai and the North Creek trails.

## Park Facilities



Park facilities also include two large playgrounds, horseshoe pits and a small museum. To better plan your picnic or wedding, reservations can be made up to one year in advance.

# Felicita County Park Map

