Nature

Land animals like the coyote, gray fox, raccoon and desert cottontail can be seen on site – along with the pacific tree frog and garden salamander, which make their homes along the water’s edge. Birdwatchers have documented more than 200 species of birds here at Otay Lakes County Park – from great blue herons and snowy egrets to the endangered Least Bell’s Vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes are an important natural element in the population control of small mammals. Nearly all of these diet consists of animals such as mice and rats. Because they are so beneficial, rattlesnakes are fully protected within County Parks.

If you encounter a rattlesnake while hiking, consider yourself lucky to have seen one of nature’s most interesting animals. If you see a rattlesnake at a campsite or picnic area, please inform the park rangers. They will do their best to relocate the snake.

Rentals/Reservations

If you’re planning a group event, there are four reservable spaces including one that can accommodate up to 100 people with a large dance pavilion and offers sweeping views of the lake below. Moon bounces and caterers are permitted for an additional fee. Reservations can be made up to one year advance by calling (877) 565-3600 or by visiting sdparks.org.

Otay Lakes County Park

2270 Wueste Road • Chula Vista, CA 91915
(619) 482-7361

The 78-acre Otay Lakes County Park has long been a favorite in the South Bay. A spacious playground, horseshoe pits, hiking trails, lawn area, and the native plant and demonstration garden are just a few of the many reasons to visit. In addition, birdwatchers will find much to enjoy the park and surrounding area.

Rules and Regulations

Alcoholic Beverages: Alcoholic beverages are permitted providing the alcohol content does not exceed 20%.

Drones: Remotely piloted aircraft and drones are prohibited.

Fireworks: Fireworks are not permitted in any County Park.

Firearms & Weapons: Firearms and weapons are not permitted in any County Park.

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

Natural & Cultural Features: All plants, animals, natural and cultural features are fully protected and may not be harmed or removed.

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.

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

Smoking: Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, is prohibited.

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

Information

County of San Diego
Department of Parks and Recreation
5500 Overland Ave., Suite 410
San Diego, CA 92123

Reservations & Information
(877) 565-3600 • (858) 565-3600

Visit us at sdparks.org

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Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in any County Park.

REMOTELY PILoted AIRCRAFT AND DRONES ARE PROHIBITED.
Welcome to Otay Lakes County Park

Otay Lakes County Park spans 78 acres and is a long-time favorite for families in the area. It’s also beloved by birdwatchers and visitors who want to get away for an hour or two to enjoy some quality time in the great outdoors. Located less than 20 miles from downtown San Diego and 4 miles from the international border with Mexico, Otay Lakes County Park is part of a greater, 286-acre preserve called Otay Valley Regional Park which is managed by the County of San Diego in conjunction with the City of San Diego and the City of Chula Vista.

Planning is currently underway to connect this park to Otay Valley Regional Park. The planning area for Otay Valley Regional Park will extend about 11 miles inland from the southeastern edge of the salt ponds at the mouth of the river, through the Otay River Valley, to the land surrounding both Lower and Upper Otay Lakes. This is part of an ongoing mission to provide an expansive, region-wide trails system that can support all trail users – from hikers and sightseers to bicyclists and equestrian users.

Families will enjoy the on-site playground, expansive lawn area with shade, and horseshoe courts. Parking and restrooms are available on site. The day-use fee is $3 per vehicle.

The Lower Otay Reservoir is managed by the City of San Diego. It is a great place to launch your boat, kayak or fish. They are open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. For more information on rentals and permits, call (619) 397-5212.

Trails

Day-trippers can take a tour of the native plant and demonstration garden or hike 0.8 miles from the east of the park up to the water tower – an easy climb that leads to even better views of the lake. For a longer, more challenging hike you can continue up the trails from the bench to reach the summit and continue down the path for a beautiful view of Otay Valley. The total trail length is 2.7 miles.

History

Research tells us that more than 9,000 years ago, prehistoric Kumeyaay Native Americans made this river valley their home, taking advantage of the abundant natural resources that are unique to this region. In the 1770s, Father Junipero Serra chose the valley as his first camp as he travelled north to establish the California mission system.

In the 1880s, vast Spanish ranchos covered the area and cattle grazed along the giant mesas that appear from here to the ocean. More recently – over the past hundred years and to support a growing San Diego population – the Otay dam was built, and sand and gravel have been cultivated from key areas along the riverfront.