

# 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 her life was performed south of the park from 1927 to 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 beneath 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 Jan. 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**  
742 Clarence Ln., Escondido, CA 92029  
760-745-4379

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 opportunities under the shroud of an old oak grove, with numerous picnic sites that can accommodate everything from small picnics to large corporate or family events. Park facilities also include two large playgrounds, horseshoe pits and a small museum.



## 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.
- FIREARMS & WEAPONS:** Firearms and weapons are not permitted in any County Park.
- FIREWORKS:** Fireworks 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.
- SMOKING:** Smoking, including the use of vaporizing products, is not permitted.
- TRAILS:** Please stay on designated trails. Please share the trail.
- TREES:** Do not tie or hang anything to trees, including piñatas, hammocks, ropes, wire, or tents. Do not drive nails, screws, or staples into trees.
- VEHICLES:** Vehicles are not allowed beyond the designated parking lot.

## INFORMATION



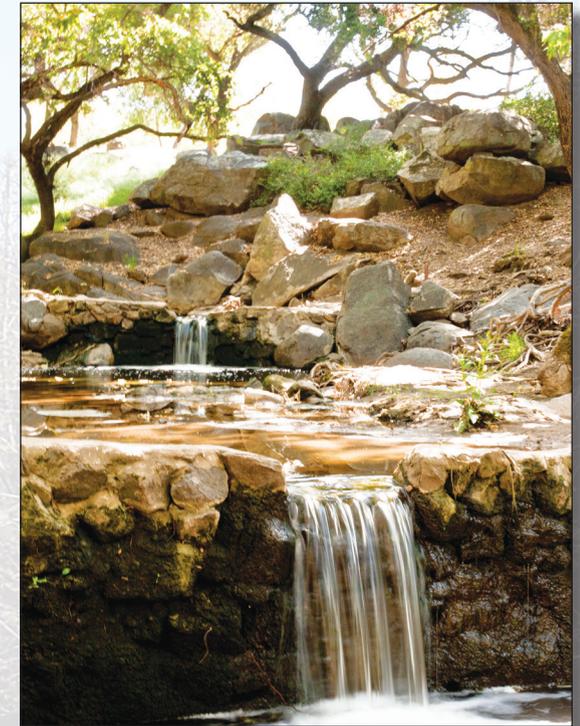
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Department of Parks and Recreation**  
5500 Overland Ave., Suite 410  
San Diego, CA 92123

Reservations & Information  
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# FELICITA COUNTY PARK

**A San Diego County  
Day Use Park**



## Weddings and Events



The north end of the park provides a quiet, natural setting for a wedding or private special event. A reception area sits close by, complete with a restroom and changing room, a covered pavilion and convenient parking.

Picnic Area 1 is also a nice reception spot. It is located near the playground, with a stage and large concrete dance floor. Area 1 can accommodate large groups of up to 300. Electricity is provided for all Area 1 reservations.

## 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, 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 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, electricity, one large 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, electricity, one large and two small barbecues.

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

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

**Picnic Area 7:** Exclusive area for up to 100 people. The area includes two small barbecues, partial shade and is separated from the center of park.

Note: For those without reservations, electricity can be purchased for \$25 for Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.

## Hiking Trails



Hikers can enjoy 1.5 miles of walking trails surrounding the park. They include the Ipaí and the North Creek trails.

TRACK Trails for kids are also on site; nature-based scavenger hunts that provide education and rewards.



# Felicita County Park Map

