

## Los Peñasquitos Canyon County Preserve

Los Peñasquitos Canyon County Preserve is beautiful year-round, with an ecosystem unlike any other in San Diego County. Managed jointly by the County and City of San Diego, trails sit on either side of a bubbling creek feeding a dense grove of riparian plants and trees. Fields of native chaparral sit outside the groves, butting up against suburban development – an oasis frequently visited by local hikers, cyclists and equestrians.



Trail users can take single track trails near the creek with near constant shade, or venture out to a wider, sunnier trail and access road. Visitors in the spring may be lucky to see a flowing waterfall at the west end of the preserve where the paths meet. There are approximately 12 miles of trails in this 3,700-acre preserve, which also connects to an historic adobe ranch house featuring a museum, spring house, orchard, community garden and small collection of farm animals.



A special note to preserve visitors: We ask that hikers and equestrians stay on the designated trails and obey posted signs. The habitat, plant and animal life have shown resilience and have recovered from the wildfires.



### Community Garden

Established in 2012, the community garden is comprised of 20 6' x 16' garden boxes, providing 'green thumb' lessees with the space and amenities they need to grow their own produce. The cost is \$120 per year. Gardeners are required to visit weekly and garden every season. Call 858-484-7504 for information, and to be added to the wait list.



*Goats are among the animals residing on site*

### Education

Stroll the ground on your own or with a guide; park staff and volunteer docents can share in-depth details about this one-of-a-kind property. Make a reservation or attend a scheduled tour; expert-led excursions take place every Saturday at 11 a.m. and Sunday at 1 p.m. Learn about special classes and events on [sdparks.org](http://sdparks.org).

## Rancho Peñasquitos Adobe

12122 Canyonside Park Dr.  
San Diego, CA 92129  
Ranger Office: (858) 484-7504

### Park Hours

#### Adobe Grounds and Trails

8 a.m. to sunset, 7 days a week

#### Guided Adobe House Tours

11 a.m. on Saturday, 1 p.m. on Sunday  
(and by request)

#### Self-Guided Adobe House Tours

Call (858) 484-7504 for availability

#### Self-Guided Wedding Tours

Grounds open 7 days a week during park hours, or call (858) 484-7504 to schedule a house tour.

### Special Events

Popular as an event and wedding venue, Rancho Peñasquitos provides historic charm and ample natural elegance. The bride's room, partial kitchen, abundant parking, maintained restrooms, courtyard and west-facing lawn provide the perfect backdrop for special occasions of up to 125 guests. Call 858-484-7504 to book a tour and make a reservation!



*A wedding at Los Peñasquitos*

Photo by Kim Marcelo

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

- ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:** Alcoholic beverages are allowed only in reserved areas with a permit.
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL, VEGETATION & NATURAL FEATURES:** All plants, animals, natural features, and archaeological resources are fully protected and may not be damaged, injured, or removed.
- CAMPING:** Camping is not permitted in Rancho Peñasquitos Adobe County Park.
- FIREARMS AND WEAPONS:** Firearms, fireworks, and weapons are not permitted in County Parks.
- LITTER:** No littering or dumping. Place litter and recyclable materials in the containers provided throughout the park.
- MOTORIZED MODELS:** The use or operation of motorized model planes and drones is not permitted.
- PETS:** Dogs must be licensed, restrained on a leash no longer than six feet, and attended at all times.
- SMOKING AND FIRES:** Smoking and open flames are prohibited in Rancho Peñasquitos Adobe County Park.
- TREES:** Do not tie or hang ropes, wire, or tents to trees. Do not drive nails, screws, or staples into trees.
- WHEELED DEVICES:** The use of motorized bicycles, scooters, skateboards, in-line skates or other similar wheeled devices is not permitted.
- YOUTH:** All persons under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a legally responsible adult with medical authorization for each child while in the park.

## INFORMATION



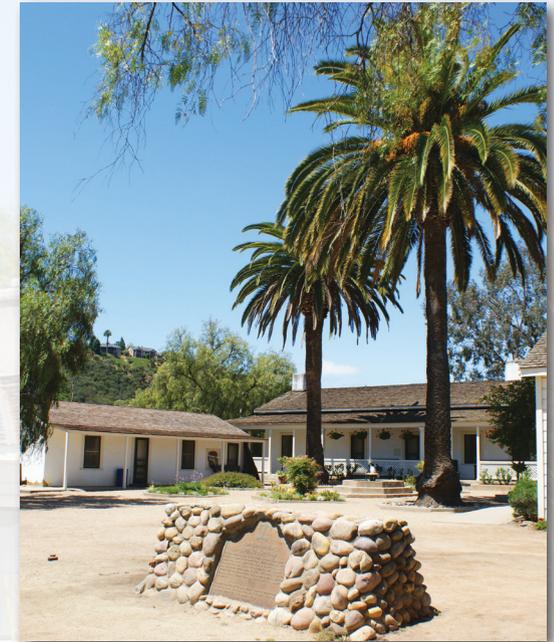
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Department of Parks and Recreation**  
5500 Overland Avenue, Suite 410  
San Diego, CA 92123

Reservations & Information:  
Toll Free • (877) 565-3600  
Local • (858) 565-3600

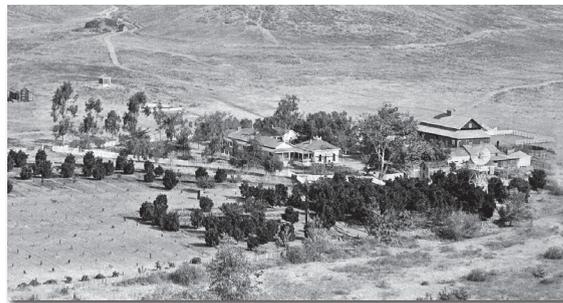
*Visit us at [sdparks.org](http://sdparks.org)*

# RANCHO PEÑASQUITOS ADOBE

## A San Diego County Historic Adobe



# Welcome to Rancho Peñasquitos Adobe



## Rancho Peñasquitos

Rancho Peñasquitos is documented as the second oldest residence in San Diego County. Construction began in 1823, following receipt of San Diego County's first Mexican land grant. Commander Francisco Maria Ruiz, a soldier who supported the missions throughout his career, earmarked the land for two small adobe buildings with a ramada, vineyard and cattle run.

In 1859, George Johnson married Estefana Alvarado, who inherited this portion of Los Peñasquitos.



They expanded and improved the ranch house, adding a central wing to connect the two separate adobes in 1862. The raised fieldstone foundation was used to provide a level adobe structure (uncommon during that time) and they gave their home a Victorian feel via embellishments like clapboard, high ceilings and porch trellising.

Following a disastrous fire in 1912, then owner Charles Mohnike rebuilt the rancho and used it for farming and cattle operations. They then built a new adobe east of Black Mountain Road, which served as their family home.



*Rancho Peñasquitos residents, late 1800s*

The courtyard – a focal point of today's ranch house – was historically at the home's rear. The geometrically shaped planters were likely used to grow herbs and flowers.

The west side of the house has a broad porch, facing the famed Road to Yuma – an important route for both travel and commerce in earlier times.



*The Spring House*

The Spring House represents the rancho's most important resource: water. This building, constructed of rock, surrounds an artesian spring – water that was relied upon as far back as the 1200s by native people called the Kumeyaays. The attached pond was filled with water for irrigation to sustain the nearby orchard.

The lathe shed was built with a heavy floor of redwood timbers from Northern California and may have been used to store fruit from the grove.



*The Lathe Shed*

Visible from that structure is the large Mohnike Barn – erected in 1912 to house horse stalls, and later used to park vehicles.



*The Mohnike Barn*

Rancho Peñasquitos is listed on the National Registrar of Historic Places as a National Historic District. Ongoing archaeological digs take place on site, revealing remnants of early civilization and the history of human habitation. One item – an earthenware jar – dates back to the late 1700s and might have been used to transport food by ship from Spain to San Diego. It's one of only two ever discovered on the west coast!

## Timeline

**Prehistory to 1769:** For possibly as long as 12,000 years, the Kumeyaay lived in Los Peñasquitos Canyon, utilizing the artesian spring and maintaining the abundant resources with stream and fire management.

**1769:** A presidio (fort) and mission were built by Spanish soldiers and priests. In the years following, they used Los Peñasquitos to grow grapes and raise sheep.

**1823:** Captain Francisco Maria Ruiz, Commandante of the Presidio, was granted 4,000 acres of land by the first Mexican governor of California. This created the first land grant in present-day San Diego County. Ruiz built two small adobe buildings on site.

**1834:** Ruiz was given a second 4,000-acre land grant. He later gave the ranch to his grand nephew, Francisco Maria Alvarado (Estefana's father).

**1846:** Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny and his half-starved Army of the West raided the rancho for food following the Battle of San Pasqual.

**1861:** Captain George Alonzo Johnson and his wife Estefana Alvarado began to expand the ranch house. Johnson lost the ranch after a bank foreclosure in 1880.

**1882:** Colonel Jacob Shell Taylor purchased the property. He raised Durham cattle and thoroughbred horses. Taylor later founded the City of Del Mar.

**1910:** Charles Mohnike, a National City cattle rancher and lemon grower, purchased the ranch. He built the Mohnike Barn in 1912. This barn is now a National Historical site.

**1974:** San Diego City and County acquired Los Peñasquitos Canyon and established a park preserve. Archaeological work began at the Ranch House.

**1980s:** Rancho Peñasquitos Adobe is restored and opened to the public.

**1994:** Rancho Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House and surrounding structures are added to the National Register of Historic Places.