



Photo of Juan Bautista de Anza Park



CITY of CALABASAS

Section 3

INVENTORY OF RECREATION LAND AND FACILITIES

- *Summary of Findings*
- *Park Definitions*
- *Summary of Recreation Facilities*
- *Other Recreation Facilities*
- *Nearby Recreation Facilities*
- *Private Facilities*
- *Sport Facilities*

INTRODUCTION

This section of the document provides an inventory of existing recreation resources in the community. A more detailed analysis of the condition of the existing parks is found in Appendix B.

Listed below is a summary of the findings and conclusions of the inventory and analysis of the existing park and recreation resources in Calabasas.

A. Summary of Findings

- The City of Calabasas owns a total of 56.6 acres of park land. This includes two mini-parks, two neighborhood parks, one community park, five special use areas, and one undesignated/undeveloped park site.
- For a city of its size, Calabasas has significant recreation facilities, including the Tennis & Swim Center (16 tennis courts and an outdoor pool), the Agoura Hills/Calabasas Community Center (gym and climbing wall), the Klubhouse Pre-School building at Creekside Park, and attractive meeting rooms and offices at De Anza Park. However, the City has very few sport fields. Most of the fields in the community are located on school sites. At City parks, there are a total of three fields: Two with multi-use backstops and one youth baseball field. Due to topographic constraints and the limited availability of suitable land, finding additional sites for active recreation facilities and sports fields will likely be a challenge.
- There are also 8 school facilities in Calabasas. These provide some additional park land to City residents through a joint use agreement between the School District and the City.
- A new Middle School opened in Calabasas during the 2003/2004 school year. As part of the construction, Calabasas contributed financially and has exclusive use of specific school facilities through a specially crafted joint use agreement.
- There is a significant amount of open space in the City. Most of the open space is land zoned either as “Open Space” or as “Hillside Mountainous”. Both zones restrict development. Some of the land zoned “Open Space” or “Hillside Mountainous” is privately owned. The City of Calabasas owns almost 300 acres of open space, but the Community Services Department is not currently responsible for it and does not include any open space in its park inventory. Open space in Calabasas is owned by the City, other public agencies, homeowners associations, or by non-profit groups including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains

Restoration Trust.

- There are some trails within the City of Calabasas, including several regional trails, but the Community Services Department is not responsible for any trails outside of existing parks, and does not include trails within its parks inventory. There are many opportunities for trails and trail connections because of the quantity of open space land in Calabasas.

B. Park Definitions

The most effective and efficient park system to manage is one made up of different park types; each designed to provide a specific type of recreation experience or opportunity. When classified and used properly, they are easier to maintain, create fewer conflicts between user groups and have less impact on adjoining neighbors. In order to assess the park system in Calabasas and to address specific land needs, the existing resources have been listed based on the following classifications.

Mini-parks

Mini-parks, tot lots and children's playgrounds are all small single purpose play lots designed primarily for small children use. Due to their size, the facilities are usually limited to a small open grass area, a children's playground, and a picnic area. The service area is roughly one-quarter mile radius and the size is usually less than two acres.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are a combination playground and open space area designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. They are generally small in size and serve an area of about one-half mile radius. Typically, facilities found in a neighborhood park include a children's playground, picnic areas, trails, open grass areas for passive use, outdoor basketball courts, and multi-use sport fields for soccer and youth baseball etc. In most communities, their size ranges from 2 - 10 acres, with the optimum size of about 5 acres.

Community Parks

A community park is planned primarily to provide active and structured recreation opportunities. In general, community park facilities are designed for organized activities and sports, although individual and family activities are also encouraged. Community parks serve a larger area and offer more facilities. As a result, they require more support facilities, such as parking, restrooms, and covered play areas. These parks usually have sport fields or similar facilities as a central focus. The service area is roughly a 1 - 2 mile radius. In most communities, the size ranges from 15 to 50 acres, with the optimum size at 30 acres. Due to the land constraints in Calabasas, the community parks are smaller, about 8 to 10 acres in size. While they are highly developed and include active recreation facilities, community parks in Calabasas may not include many sports fields due to the land constraints.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are recreational areas serving the city and beyond. They are usually large in size and often include a specific use or feature that makes them unique. Typically, use focuses on passive types of recreational activities. Those located within urban areas sometimes offer a wider range of facilities and activities. Calabasas does not have

any regional parks, and none are recommended.

Special Use Areas

Special use areas are miscellaneous public recreation areas or land occupied by a specialized facility. Some of the uses falling into this classification include community centers, golf courses, community gardens, single purpose sites for field sports or other activities, and sites occupied by special recreation buildings.

Environmental Education Center

An Environmental Education Center is a facility with the purpose of educating the public about natural resources and conservation.

Linear Parks

Linear parks are developed landscaped areas and other lands that follow linear corridors, such as abandoned railroad right-of-ways, drainage channels, power lines and other elongated features. This type of park usually contains trails, landscaped areas, viewpoints and seating areas.

**Natural Open Space Areas/
Greenways**

Natural open space areas/greenways are defined as undeveloped land primarily left in its natural environment with recreation uses as a secondary objective. It is usually owned or managed by a governmental agency and may or may not have public access. This type of land often includes habitat corridors, wetlands, steep hillsides and other similar areas. Environmentally sensitive areas can be acquired for open space and can include wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or unique and/or endangered plant species.

Private Parks

These privately owned sites contribute to the recreational opportunities in the area. Private parks include golf courses, facilities in private developments, and park areas owned by homeowners associations.

**C. Summary of
Recreation
Facilities**

The following table is a summary, by type, of all parks and recreation areas located within the Calabasas planning area.

Table 3.1
Summary of Existing Park and Recreation Resources
City of Calabasas

Park Land Type	City of Calabasas	Other Public or Non-profit	TOTAL
Mini-Parks	2.2	0.0	2.2
Neighborhood Parks	10.0	0.0	10.0
Community Parks	8.0	0.0	8.0
Special Use Areas	34.6	0.0	34.6
Natural Open Space	287.6 ¹	1470.0 ¹	1757.6 ¹
Undev / Undesignated	1.8	0.0	1.8
TOTAL	344.2	1,470.0	1,814.2

¹ Estimated acreage

One method of analyzing park land needs is to compare the amount of park land on a per capita basis. This is referred to as

the *current park land ratio* and often used as a means of comparison to other communities. Listed in the following table is the current ratio for each park land category in Calabasas.

Table 3.2
Summary of Current Ratios: Acres per 1,000 Population
City of Calabasas

Park Land Type	Ratio
Mini-Parks	0.11
Neighborhood Parks	0.50
Community Parks	0.40
Special Use Areas	1.72
Natural Open Space	14.36 ¹
Undeveloped /Undesignated	0.09

¹ Based on City-owned open space only. Does not include open space owned by other agencies.

Shown below is a listing of each existing park and recreation area under the ownership of the City of Calabasas. A more detailed description is found in Appendix B.

Table 3.3
Summary of Parks and Recreational Areas By Type
Calabasas

Park Areas	Total Acres	Comments
Mini Parks		
Freedom Park	1	
Highlands Park	0	
Subtotal	2	
Neighborhood Parks		
Gates Canyon Park	7	Potential for more use
Grape Arbor Park	3	
Subtotal	10	
Community Parks		
Juan Bautista de Anza Park	8	
Subtotal	8	
Special Use Areas		
Community Center	4	Health memberships
Creekside Park	11	Day care operation
Calabasas Bark Park	0	Heavily used
Tennis & Swim Center	7	Health memberships
Wild Walnut Park	10	Trails, Picnic Tables
Subtotal	34	
Natural Open Space		
Micor properties	33	
De Anza open space	180	
Wild Walnut open space	25	
Civic Center open space	20	
Dorothy Road properties	23	

Park Areas	Total Acres	Comments
Dry Canyon Cold Creek open space	5	
Subtotal	287	
Undeveloped /Undesignated		
Las Virgenes/Lost Hills	1	
Subtotal	1	
TOTAL	344	

Existing Parks Map

D. Other Recreation Areas

Environmental Education Center

Headwaters Corner, an environmental and cultural interpretive center was developed by the public/private partnership of the City of Calabasas and Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT). MRT's mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains through acquisition, restoration, and education. The purpose of the center is to educate the public about the natural resources of the local environment and the importance of conservation.

Current ownership by MRT includes 12 acres of land with five different ecosystems and two former single-family residences, one dating back to 1895. Both of these buildings have been adapted for educational and administrative purposes. There is one remaining parcel to acquire to complete the center. There are a number of current and planned programs at the facility.

MRT's Cold Creek Docents, established in 1977, conduct outdoor education programs for elementary schoolchildren, naturalist-led family walks, and resource education events in the Cold Creek watershed. MRT organizes hands-on habitat restoration and education programs throughout the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to engage the local community in becoming stewards of the land. Outdoor walks and lectures led by the MRT staff and volunteers engage the public in understanding and appreciating the dynamics of the local ecosystem and how humans are a part of the system.

Headwater's Corner is also home to the Youth Naturalist Program and Nature Discovery Camp summer day program. Headwaters Corner provides a venue for local service projects for a variety of organizations such as youth and school groups, community organizations and home school programs. MRT includes the Calabasas High School Earth Club on many environmental and cultural education opportunities for all age groups in addition to passive recreation at Headwaters Corner. MRT will work with local schools to incorporate the Headwaters Corner programs into their curriculum.

Public/Non-profit Land

Calabasas is located in a very scenic area at the edge of the Santa Monica Mountains. There is a substantial amount of publicly owned land around the City of Calabasas, as well as tracts of publicly owned land within the City. In addition, non-profit conservation groups also own land around and within the City. Public and non-profit lands within or adjacent to City limits include:

- Malibu Creek State Park, 4,000 acres
- Las Virgenes Municipal Water District’s (LVMWD) Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility, 100 acres
- Approximately 1,000 acres of open space throughout Calabasas owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- Los Angeles County Landfill (which will likely become open space after closure)
- The Mountains Restoration Trust owns approximately 1,200 acres at the site of the Headwaters Corner Education Center and in the Cold Creek Preserve

Las Virgenes Unified School District (LVUSD)

Schools are an important resource for recreation facilities, such as sport fields, playgrounds, and gymnasiums. The City and LVUSD have joint use agreements in place, and a special use agreement covering the new A.C. Stelle Middle School and its fields. Most of the sport fields in Calabasas are located at school sites. The school sites in Calabasas include:

- Calabasas High School
- Indian Hills High School
- A.E. Wright Middle School
- Alice C. Stelle Middle School¹
- Bay Laurel Elementary
- Chaparral Elementary
- Lupin Hill Elementary
- Round Meadow Elementary¹

¹ These two schools are outside Calabasas city limits, but inside the City’s planning area as depicted in the General Plan. For this reason, they are included here.

Private Facilities

Many of the homeowners associations (HOAs) and individual subdivisions in Calabasas provide some type of recreation facility for their residents. These range from small open turf areas to play areas and sport fields, and include a number of small private pools.

The other major private facility in Calabasas is the Calabasas Golf Club, a private golf club on the east side of the City.

E. Nearby Recreation Facilities

Table 3.4 lists largest and most significant park and open space recreational resources serving the Calabasas area. Due to the federal Santa Monica National Recreation Area, there are many parks and protected areas in the vicinity of Calabasas. Not all of these lands are included on the list.

Table 3.4
City of Calabasas - Summary of Nearby Resources

Recreation Area	Owner	Activity/Facility
Tapia Park	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District	Park associated with treatment plant.
Topanga State Park	California State Parks	11,000 acres of open space, 36 mi. of trail
Escondido Canyon Natural Area	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	Open space
Red Rock Canyon Park	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	Open space
Ramirez Canyon Park	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	Open space
Malibu Lagoon State Beach	CA State Parks	Open space, trails, beach, historic house
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area	National Park Service	Open Space- 550 mi. of trail 70,000 ac in public ownership
Henry Ridge Trail System	N/A	Hiking
Summit-to-Summit Trail	N/A	Hiking
Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve	CA State parks	2960 acre preserve

F. Sport Facilities

For the master plan, sport fields and athletic facilities were inventoried. The majority of the sport fields in Calabasas are located at LVUSD school sites. Without the school facilities, there would be very few sports fields available in the City.

Table 3.5
City of Calabasas - Summary of Nearby Resources

Facility	City	LVUSD	Comments
Baseball Fields	0	8	3 adult, 5 youth
Softball Fields	1	2(adult) ¹	City field is small youth field.
Soccer Fields	0	8	7 fields, 1 open turf area
Football Fields	0	1	Lighted
Tennis Courts	18	8	1 clay court (City-owned)
Roller Hockey Rink	1	0	Overlaid with basketball
Outdoor Basketball	6	14	8 at A.C. Stelle School
Outdoor Volleyball	1	0	
Gymnasiums	1	3	H.S. gym has 2 full courts.
Swimming Pools	1	1	

¹ 3 multi-use backstops are provided at A.C. Stelle, and could be upgraded.