

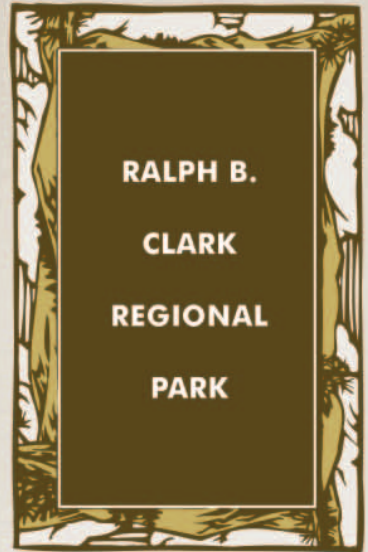


History

Over 400,000 years ago, Ralph B. Clark Regional Park was a land inhabited by creatures much different than those found here today. King-tailed cats, mammoths, ground sloths, tapirs and extinct horses and bears lived among the ox-bow lakes, reeds, meadows and oak woodlands. Pond turtles, and a type of ancient llama known only to this site, complemented the turkeys, bobcats, deer and antelope that roamed here. The site, due to its great variety of fossils, has potential for investigation comparable to the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles.

The park's rich fossil beds were exposed when the California Division of Highways excavated sand and gravel to construct the Santa Ana and Riverside Freeways between 1956 and 1970. At that time, the park was known as the Emery Borrow Pit.

The site's significance led to public demand for preservation. As a result, the County of Orange acquired the property in 1974. The park site was opened in 1981 as Los Coyotes Regional Park and was later renamed Ralph B. Clark Regional Park in 1987. Supervisor Clark was instrumental in the acquisition, planning and development of the 105-acre site during his 16 years in office.



The Park Interpretive Center

Clark Regional Park not only preserves prehistoric fossil beds but also provides a variety of recreational and educational opportunities.

The Los Coyotes Paleontology Museum located within Ralph B. Clark Interpretive Center - one of the more significant fossil museums in southern California - showcases the unique pre-history of this area. Originally opened in 1987 and recently renovated in 2003, the center offers visitors the opportunity to view new displays and science collections that depict the ancient history of the Coyote Hills area in northern Orange County. New exhibits feature fossils from "Ice Age" animals such as bison, mastodon, ground sloth, and tapir. In addition, the center has recently added a partial mammoth skeleton to the collection.



Many of the new fossils, which correlate time-wise with those found here at Clark Park, were excavated and donated from local development projects in Fullerton and Brea. A visit to the marine fossil site is available through scheduled group tours and public programs. Call the office at 714/973-3170.

The museum's research staff welcomes volunteers (age 16 & up). For more information, call the museum at 714/973-6670.

The center is closed Mondays, Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Contact the park office for center hours before your visit. If staff is unavailable, the center will be closed.

Park Facilities

At 105 acres, Clark Regional Park is nestled at the foot of the Coyote Hills, spanning the area to the north and south of Rosecrans Avenue. The park features picnic areas with barbecues and tables intermingled with open play areas, playgrounds, softball fields, a baseball diamond, tennis courts, volleyball courts and horse-shoe pits.

The park's amphitheater is ideal for outdoor plays and recreational programs. Fishing in the lake for largemouth bass, bluegill, catfish and trout is available for those displaying a current State fishing license.

Seven picnic sites are available for reservation and are equipped to meet the picnicking needs of groups from 25 to 250 persons. When not in use by organized youth leagues, the ball fields are also available for reservation by private parties. Information concerning group permits and reservations may be obtained at the park office. Reservation fees are required. A County Property Permit is also required for equipment and all hired services brought into the park such as caterers, food and play equipment, entertainers and photographers.

Courtesy of the
County of Orange
Board of Supervisors



county of orange
**HARBORS
BEACHES
& PARKS**

Resources & Development Management Department

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