

City of Sebastopol

Park and Recreation Resources

Summary

This report provides basic information about Sebastopol park and recreation resources, and includes: official City parks; other park and open space resources; and recreation facilities. It does not include school sites, most of which also provide recreation areas open to the public during non-school hours.

City Parks and Open Space Resources

Ives Park

Description: Ives Park is a community park, located at 7400 Willow Street. It was built over 65 years ago and is the oldest park in Sebastopol. It contains a municipal swimming pool, baseball field, playground, theatre stage, grassy fields, and picnic areas as well as a portion of Calder Creek. Ives Park is also home to several festivals: Cajun Festival, the Roma Festival, and the annual Sebastopol Apple Blossom Festival that draws approximately 25,000 people.

The City Council adopted a Renovation Master Plan in 2013. Implementation of the Master Plan is estimated to cost over \$4 million. Due to the interrelatedness of improvements, they should be implemented in major phases. The City is monitoring grant opportunities for this project.

Ives Park Master Plan http://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/sites/default/files/rmansour/ives_park_master_plan_final_full.pdf

Laguna Preserve

Description: The Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve is a diverse wetlands area, located adjacent to Laguna Youth Park on the eastern edge of Sebastopol. It is biologically diverse, as it is home to many species of birds, mammals, fish, and amphibians as well as native plant species. It provides an important overflow area for the Russian River during periods of heavy winter rain, serving as a natural holding basin, which captures and slows floodwaters, easing their impact on lower Russian River communities. It contains several miles of trails on both sides of the Laguna de Santa Rosa, a seasonal floating bridge, as well as an outdoor classroom that can accommodate approximately 50 people.

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Since 1998, the City has implemented the Laguna Park Master Plan in numerous phases, removing debris, unnecessary fencing, and non-native plant and tree species, developing trails, and planting thousands of native trees and shrubs.

When the Laguna Preserve areas, Tomodachi Park, and the Laguna Uplands site are considered together, there are over 97 acres of publicly accessible Laguna park lands in the City of Sebastopol, which would appear to be an extraordinary number of open space acres for a very small city.

Laguna Preserve park areas are counted minimally towards the General Plan park standards.

Laguna de Santa Rosa Master Plan:

http://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/sites/default/files/admin/laguna_de_santa_rosa_park_master_plan_volume_1.pdf

Laguna Youth Park

Description: The Laguna Youth Park is a community park, located on the eastern border of Sebastopol between the Community Center, Youth Annex, and the Laguna de Santa Rosa. It was built in 1987 and contains picnic areas and two baseball fields that are used by the Little League. The Youth Annex includes a brick labyrinth in its lawn area. The relatively new 'Peace Garden' is also located in this area, with implementation of improvements partly completed. The area, adjacent to the Community Center, is also home to several annual events, which draw thousands of people.

Luther Burbank Gold Ridge Experiment Farm

Description: Luther Burbank purchased a 15-acre farm on Gold Ridge in Sebastopol in 1885. Burbank introduced over 800 varieties of fruits, flowers, vegetables, and grains during his career. He developed many of California's plums and prunes, the ancestor of the Idaho Potato, the Shasta Daisy, as well as Plumcots, Thornless Blackberry, and Spineless Cactus. Burbank he developed and grew thousands of new hybrids, cross breeds and selections at his Experiment Farm. After Luther died in 1926, Mrs. Burbank established an apple orchard on a portion of the Farm and leased the rest to Stark Brothers Nursery. When their lease expired in 1957 the property deteriorated and subsequently passed into new ownership.

Local historians, intent on preserving the Burbank legacy in Sebastopol, formed the Western

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Sonoma County Historical Society in 1974. The cottage was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The City worked with the Society in its efforts to obtain three acres of the original farm and to restore the Cottage on the property. Restoration began in 1983. The Society's Farm Committee, with the aid of volunteers continues to maintain the cottage and Burbank plant varieties, provide a self-guiding plant walk, and train Docents for guided tours since 1983.

Maintenance of this property is entirely performed by Historical Society volunteers, or by contractors retained by the Society.

See: Website <http://www.wschsgf.org/luther-burbank-gold-ridge-experiment-farm>

Skategarden Park

Description: Skategarden Park includes a skate park and community garden, and is located on Laguna Park Way across from The Barlow. It was built in 2008 and contains a 15,000 square foot state-of-the-art skate structure and 23 community garden plots. There is also an 'art wall' where anyone can paint, and which changes on a weekly basis.

Spooner Park

Description: Spooner Park is a 'pocket park,' located at 910 South Main Street (SR116). It also includes the 'Solar Dragon' solar panel installation, which offsets power use by a nearby City well.

Tomodachi Park

Description: Tomodachi Park is a Laguna Preserve park, located at 6665 Sebastopol Avenue. It was completed in 2013 and resulted from collaboration with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District that allowed the City to purchase the 'Village Park' property. Park improvements occurred in the open space area of the property; the mobile home use has been maintained and is now known as Park Village, operated by West County Community Services.

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Tomodachi Park is approximately 8.7 acres and includes picnic tables, barbecues, a short trail segment, and native tree planting. The intent of the park design is to be a passive use park in the Laguna Preserve system. The park includes stately Valley Oaks and access to the Laguna channel. Low split-rail-type fencing delineates the park area from the adjacent mobile home area to protect the privacy of the Village Park residents. The improvements were also designed so as not to conflict with Caltrans frontage improvements related to the pending Highway 12 bridge replacement project. The remaining Park Village mobile home area is approximately 4 acres in size.

The entire site is in the 100-year floodplain, with lower areas generally subject to annual flooding, and the entire site at risk in a major flood. Park improvements have been designed to be generally compatible with flooding.

Mario Savio Free Speech Town Plaza

Description: The Town Plaza is a town square, located at 6901 McKinley Street. It includes a gazebo, a fountain, numerous benches, including an “Occupy Bench” project installed in 2019, and a public restroom as well as perimeter parking.

Willard Libby Park

Description: Willard Libby Park (Libby Park) is a neighborhood park, located at 7985 Valentine Avenue adjacent to Brookhaven School on the western side of Sebastopol. It was built in the mid-1970s and contains the Garzot Community Building, a playground, a pond, two baseball fields, tennis courts, a small rock climbing wall, a bocce ball court, a gazebo, picnic areas, and lawns. Several local schools frequent Libby Park for field trips.

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Other Park and Open Space Resources

Laguna Uplands

Description: The Laguna Uplands is a natural open space area, located to the east of Sebastopol on the western edge of the Laguna de Santa Rosa. The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation owns the site and its conservation values are protected permanently by an Open Space District conservation easement. Native plant restoration is ongoing. The site is open to the public and there is a short pathway that can be accessed at the end of Palm Drive; or the site may be accessed via a walkway at the back of Palm Drive Hospital. The site is characterized by moderately sloping hillsides, with sweeping scenic views across the Laguna looking toward Taylor Mountain and Santa Rosa.

The site has an 'outdoor classroom' feature, which also doubles as an emergency medical helicopter landing site. Students use this site as an outdoor classroom to learn about nature through the Open Space District's In Our Own Back Yard educational program. Restoration plantings have also been implemented by Laguna Keepers and other volunteers organized by the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation.

Ragle Ranch Regional Park

Description: Ragle Ranch Regional Park (Ragle Ranch) is a 157-acre Sonoma County Regional Park, located to the west of Sebastopol and immediately adjoining the City border

Ragle Ranch contains a number of amenities: Baseball fields, soccer fields, volleyball courts, picnic areas, a playground, a dog park, a peace garden with a sculpture, a small pond, a large grove of California Live Oak trees, and several miles of trails, including a nature trail that connects to Atascadero Creek. Ragle Park is also home to the annual Gravenstein Apple Fair, held in August.

Railroad Forest Bike Path

Description: The Railroad Forest Bike Path, completed in 2005, is a Class I facility, approximately 1/4 mile in length, which runs northerly from the Joe Rodota Trail, east of Petaluma Avenue (SR 116) to the intersection of Sebastopol Avenue (SR 12) and Morris Street.

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It forms part of the linkage through the Sebastopol, which connects the County's Joe Rodota and West County Trail, providing a continuous route for recreational users and bike commuters between western Sonoma County and Santa Rosa. It includes two bridges that span the lower reaches of Calder Creek and jurisdictional wetlands. The path was designed and constructed by the City, using a combination of funding sources including TDA Article 3, BAAQMD (Air District) funds and a State Recreational Trails grant.

Joe Rodota and West County Regional Trails

Description: The Joe Rodota Trail is an 8.47 mile paved trail that is located between Santa Rosa and Sebastopol.

The trail starts at the pedestrian/bicycle bridge intersection with the Prince Memorial Greenway (between West 3rd Street and Railroad Street), southwest of the Marriott Courtyard Hotel. The trail ends near the intersection of Mill Station Road and Highway 116 in Sebastopol. Access to the trail is located off the following public streets: Roberts Avenue, Dutton Avenue, Stony Point Road, Wright Road, Sebastopol Road, Merced Avenue, Llano Road, Petaluma Avenue, High School Road, Cleveland Avenue, Ellis Court, DuFranc Avenue, Hurlbut Avenue, and Highway 116.

Sections of the trail run along an abandoned railroad line. The trail offers an opportunity for families with young children to experience an outdoor outing for walking, bicycle riding, horseback-riding, and roller-skating. The trail meanders along agricultural ranches, and the Laguna of Santa Rosa. There are signs of the historic railroad throughout the property. Three bridges are on top of the old train trestles. The trail is especially popular in the spring with a burst of color from wildflowers. The trail is an excellent place for year-round bird watching.

The West County Trail parallels Highway 116, going from Sebastopol to Forestville. The Joe Rodota and West County Regional Trails are built along land that was once the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway, a line that linked Petaluma and Santa Rosa with Sebastopol and Forestville. The trails are paved and total 14 miles. An unpaved equestrian trail runs parallel to the paved trail. The trail offers beautiful views of farms, vineyards, and other agricultural lands. The County of Sonoma maintains this trail system.

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Jewell Avenue Extension

Description: The Jewell Avenue Extension is a Class 1 bike path that is 0.9 miles long, located at Jewell Avenue and Meadowlark Drive.

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Sebastopol Recreation Facilities

Ives Pool

Description: Ives Pool is located within Ives Park on City-owned land at 7400 Willow Street.

It includes two pools: A six lane pool that measures 16 yards by 25 yards and a smaller pool that measures 16 yards by 14 yards. Ives Pool is used by both the Analy High School and El Molino High School swim teams and home to a wide variety of programs, serving a large number of users. Ives Pool is the only public pool in Sonoma County that is successfully operated by a non-profit organization. While substantially maintained by the pool non-profit organization, the City provides maintenance support for Ives Pool.

Website <http://www.ivespool.org>

Sebastopol Center for the Arts and Veterans Building

Description: The Sebastopol Center for the Arts (Center for the Arts) is located in the Veterans Building, adjacent to Ives Park and Ives Pool, at 282 South High Street.

The Center presents exhibits, performances, classes and events, in the visual, performing, literary and film arts. In 2013 the Center had 18 gallery exhibitions that displayed 825 works of art from 550 artists. The Center also presents concerts. In addition, the Center produces the acclaimed annual Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival, which in 2014 showed 52 films and drew filmmakers from Los Angeles, Pennsylvania, New York, and Ireland. In addition, the Center conducts numerous art, music, movement and writing classes for adults and children.

Sebastopol Community Center and Youth Annex

Description: The Sebastopol Community and Cultural Center (Community Center) currently operates out of three City-owned buildings: The Main Event Hall (390 Morris Street), the Youth Annex (425 Morris Street), and the Garzot Community Building (7985 Valentine Avenue).

The Community Center was founded in collaboration with the City in 1982 to provide a vehicle for the citizens of Sebastopol and surrounding areas to provide recreation services. Unlike some

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larger cities, the City does not run 'recreation' services, and the Community Center was intended to help provide this function (along with other entities like Ives Pool, Little League, and the Center for the Arts).

The Community Center operates on the City land on a rent-free basis, and receives some budget support from the City. The Community Center is a non-profit agency, which supports itself through fees for services, fundraising efforts, donations, and limited City support. Committed to quality education and enrichment, the Sebastopol Community Center originates and develops a wide range of recreational, service, and cultural programs. The Center provides the facilities to meet these community needs at all levels and for all ages, and also rents space for community and private events.

See: Website <http://www.seb.org>

Sebastopol Library

Description: The Sebastopol branch library, located at 7140 Bodega Avenue, is one of the most heavily-utilized branches in the Sonoma County library system. The library is operated by the County library system, but is on a site and building owned by the City of Sebastopol.

In 2014, the City sponsored a major re-landscaping of the library and City Hall properties, which has been partly implemented and is ongoing.

Sebastopol Little League

Description: Sebastopol Little League (League) is a youth baseball organization affiliated with Little League Baseball, Inc. headquartered in Williamsport, PA.

It was organized in 1957 and operates a number of different leagues for different age groups, serving many youth and adults every year. The League operates three ball-fields on City-owned land, with two fields at the Laguna Youth Park, and one field at Ives Park. The League maintains and manages these fields.

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Sebastopol Senior Center

Description: The Sebastopol Senior Center (Senior Center) (formerly The Burbank Activity Center) is located in a City-owned house at 167 North High Street.

Its concept was developed by 10 community-minded leaders in 1968 to create a gathering place for seniors in the Sebastopol community. The City Council gave their support and authorized the use of a City-owned house in 1969. The Senior Center has the distinction of being the oldest continually operating senior center in Sonoma County. With City support and donations from the community, the Senior Center remodeled and expanded its facilities to enhance its services. The Senior Center's mission is to create an environment that encourages independence for seniors, and provides learning, social, and recreational opportunities in pursuit of an active, healthy life. The Center also provides resources and referrals for seniors, their family members, and other individuals, and helps the greater community understand the aging process and the issues that surround that process.

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City Parks:						
Park	Location	Year Est.	Acres	Facilities and Activities	Benches, Tables, BBQ Pits, and Water Fountains?	Trash-Recycle Bins?
Ives Park	7400 Willow Street	1947	6.4	Swimming pool, baseball field, play structure, ponds, stage area, grass fields, picnic areas, restrooms, 3 bridges, and Veterans' Building (adjacent).	Benches: Yes Tables: Yes BBQ Pits: Yes Water Fountains: Yes	Yes
Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve Park	Adjacent to Laguna Youth Park	1998	81 (1)	Passive recreation uses: Trails, outdoor classroom for 50, and wildlife observation areas.	Benches: Yes Tables: Yes BBQ Pits: No Water Fountains: No	Yes
Laguna Youth Park	Adjacent to Community Center	1988	6.0 (2)	2 baseball fields, play structure, and picnic areas.	Benches: No Tables: No BBQ Pits: Yes Water Fountains:	Yes
Luther Burbank's Gold Ridge Experiment Farm Park	7777 Bodega Avenue	-	3.2	Cottage, walking trails, and historical plantings.	Benches: Yes Tables: Yes BBQ Pits: No Water Fountains: Yes	Yes
Skategarden Park and Expansion (Playground)	6750 Laguna Park Way	2008	1.6	Skate structure, 23 garden plots, art wall, and chess table.	Benches: Yes Tables: Yes BBQ Pits: No Water Fountains: Yes	Yes
Spooner Park	910 South Main Street	-	0.5	Grass, solar panels, and 'welcome' sign.	Benches: No Tables: No BBQ Pits: No Water Fountains: No	No
Tomodachi Park	6665 Sebastopol Avenue	2013	8.7 (4)	Picnic area, short walking trail in Oak Woodland area (adjacent to Laguna Channel)	Benches: Yes Tables: yes BBQ Pits: Yes Water Fountains: No	Yes
Mario Savio Free Speech Town Plaza	6901 McKinley Street	1994	0.9	Gazebo, fountain, benches, and restrooms.	Benches: Yes Tables: No BBQ Pits: No Water Fountains: Yes	Yes
Willard Libby Park	7985 Valentine Avenue	-	5.5	Play structure, bocce ball court, volleyball court, gazebo, pond, and Garzot Community Building.	Benches: Yes Tables: Yes BBQ Pits: Yes Water Fountains: Yes	Yes
Open Space and Regional Parks:						
Laguna Uplands	Adjacent to Palm Drive Hospital	-	8.0	Natural Laguna landscape, short walking trail, and outdoor classroom/helicopter landing area.	Benches: Yes Tables: No BBQ Pits: No Water Fountains: No	No
Ragle Ranch Regional Park	500 Ragle Road	-	155.9	Regional park with soccer fields, tennis courts, play structure, pond, picnic areas, dog park, extensive walking trails.	Benches: Yes Tables: Yes BBQ Pits: Yes Water Fountains: Yes	Yes

General note: Acres rounded.

Footnotes:

- (1) Acreage approximate due to overlap with Youth Park and other parcels; includes area behind/around Youth Park, Meadowlark Field, natural areas along west side of Laguna channel, Railroad Forest.
- (2) Acreage approximate; includes Youth Park, ball fields, Community Center, Youth Annex