



FACT SHEET

About the Open Space Authority

Who We Are

The Open Space Authority (OSA) is an independent special district governed by its own elected seven-member board of directors. The public is also represented by a 15-member Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Created by the California Legislature in 1993, OSA's purpose is to protect sensitive lands, preserve natural communities and manage open space in ways that also promote agriculture and compatible recreation.

OSA comprises the cities of Campbell, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, Santa Clara and San Jose, as well as much of the unincorporated area of Santa Clara County.

Benefit assessments provide most of OSA's funding. Grants and gifts are another source of revenue.

Lands Open to the Public

The Open Space Authority maintains multi-use trails for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians on Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve west of Morgan Hill and Sierra Vista in the east foothills. The trails are open every day of the year and are free.

Rancho Cañada del Oro offers more than eight miles of trails for exploring the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. A staging area provides paved parking, a restroom, picnic tables and a gravel lot for horse trailers.

There is also a half-mile paved trail, which begins at the parking area and winds through the adjacent meadow. Wheelchair-adapted picnic tables are situated at several spots along the path.

The Boccardo Trail Corridor at Sierra Vista is a 3-mile loop that rises from the Todd Quick Trail in Alum Rock Park to a grassy knoll overlooking Santa Clara Valley. A portion of the trail is a designated segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Urban Open Space

Each year, 20 percent of OSA's net capital funds are earmarked for distribution to local jurisdictions within OSA boundaries to assist with their open space plans. The Urban Open Space Program helps balance large-scale acquisitions in more remote areas with smaller projects serving urban neighborhoods.

Funds may be used for such things as acquiring open space, developing trails, restoring natural environments and converting surplus or abandoned lands to open space uses.

Resource Protection

Preserving undeveloped lands and protecting their natural resources is one of OSA's primary goals. Open areas of the valley floor, hillsides, watersheds, baylands, creeks, scenic views and prime farm land are preservation priorities.

OSA is responsible for the plants, animals, water and soil resources, and cultural and recreational assets on its lands. Management goals include:

- Improving biodiversity
- Protecting rare, threatened and endangered species
- Maintaining compatible recreation and agricultural activity
- Preserving cultural resources

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