



FACT SHEET

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is open space the same as a park?

The first priority of open space is the conservation value of the land. Recreation facilities like trails, restrooms, and parking are designed so visitors can enjoy the natural world with little ecological impact.

Parks provide more intensive recreation and offer highly developed facilities. The emphasis is on providing a broad range of visitor activities.

2. What is a special district?

A special district is a governmental agency, other than a city or county, organized for specified purposes within a defined boundary. School districts and fire protection agencies are familiar examples.

Special districts have many of the same powers as other local governments. They also have the same responsibility for openness and accountability.

3. How is the Open Space Authority funded?

Funding for OSA is derived from benefit assessments renewed annually by the Board. An assessment of \$12 on single family homes and an adjusted rate on commercial and industrial properties provides \$4 million in revenues. OSA also leverages its funds through grants, projects with other agencies, and private donations.

4. How does OSA decide what properties to purchase?

The Open Space Authority established ten study areas in order to collect information about land within its boundaries. Priority is given to acquisitions that can serve a broad public, adjoin other open space, are visible to the urban area or are especially at risk of development.

5. Why are some lands closed to the public?

Usually a property is closed after it's purchased so staff can conduct a survey of various features. This helps determine the best alignment for trails and identify other concerns.

Before planning for new facilities can begin, the Open Space Authority must be sure money will be available for ongoing maintenance as well as design and construction. The design process often involves resource studies, permits, and public review and can take a number of years.

6. Are there mountain lions on OSA properties?

Lions have been seen on Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve. Notice of any recent sighting is posted on the preserve's message boards. Precautions for visitors include hiking with a friend, keeping children within reach, and being alert to your surroundings at all times.

7. Can I bring my dog on trails?

Dogs and other pets are prohibited on all Open Space Authority lands.

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