

Explore 28 Museums in Santa Cruz County!



History Museums

1

Agricultural History Project

Discover the history of agriculture in this area of the country – including the crops, people, artifacts and farming practices that have made the Central Coast what it is today. View our exhibits & explore our gift shop, “Country Corner.” Families welcome.

Agricultural History Project
2601 East Lake Ave. • Watsonville, CA 95076
831-724-5898

Thurs – Sun, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm or by appointment.
Call for holiday hours. Groups by appointment.
Free Admission – Donations appreciated

www.aghistoryproject.org



2

Aptos History Museum

Aptos evolved from an Indian village to a Mexican cattle rancho, Claus Spreckels' thoroughbred horse ranch (the millionaire sugar grower), a lumber town, an apple processing center, and ultimately a resort. The first public aeroplane flights took place here and it was the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake epicenter.

Aptos History Museum
7605-B Old Dominion Court • Aptos, CA 95003
831-688-1467

Mon – Fri, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm and by appointment

Free Admission – Donations appreciated



3

Capitola Historical Museum

Capitola, the oldest resort on the Pacific Coast, is celebrated with stories and photographs in the changing exhibits of Capitola Historical Museum. Research materials may be viewed by appointment. Community walking tours for groups of 25 persons or more can be arranged on weekdays from May through September with advance notice.

Capitola Historical Museum
410 Capitola Avenue • Capitola, CA 95010
831-464-0322

Wed, Fri thru Sun, 12:00 – 4:00 pm
Free Admission – Donations appreciated

www.capitolamuseum.org



4

The Museum of Art & History

The largest cultural facility in the area integrates art and history to create a unique visitor experience. “Where the Redwoods Meet the Sea: A History of Santa Cruz County and Its People” takes visitors through history with highlights on industry, tourism and the environment with an audio tour option. The Museum oversees three historic landmarks: Evergreen Cemetery, The Octagon, and the Davenport Jail.

The Museum of Art & History @ the McPherson Center
705 Front Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-429-1964

Tues – Sun 11:00 am – 5:00 pm
Admission fees: Adult – \$5, Seniors & Students over 18 – \$3, Students between 12-17 – \$2, and under 12 is free – Free First Friday of each month with extended hours to 9:00 pm.

www.santacruzmah.org



5

Pacific Migrations, New Brighton State Beach

Explore Pacific Rim migrations, both by people and by creatures of the air and sea. Discover the stories of settlers and cultures that are a part of this region's rich history. Park store sales support education in the parks. Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks members receive 15% discount.

Pacific Migrations Visitor Center
1500 Park Avenue • Capitola, CA 95010
831-464-5620, or 831-685-6444.

Call or click for hours/events.

www.ThatsMyPark.org



6

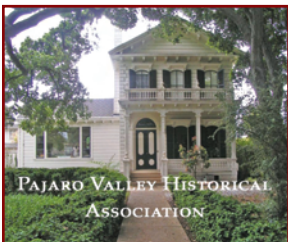
Pajaro Valley Historical Assn.

Pajaro Valley Historical Association manages the Bockius-Orr house and gardens, the Snyder Archive and the Volk Museum. We gather, research, preserve and display items relating to the history of the Pajaro Valley. Individual and group tours may be arranged. Facilities can be rented for events.

Pajaro Valley Historical Association
332 East Beach Street • Watsonville, CA 95076
831-722-0305

Tues, Wed and Thurs 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
Free admission – donations appreciated

www.pajarovalleyhistory.com



7

Rodgers House

The Rodgers House, built in the 1870's by James Rodgers, now beautifies the front entrance to your Santa Cruz County Fair and serves as national landmark on Highway 152 East of Watsonville and West of Gilroy. The house contains archives chronicling the house's history, including stories of the Rodgers Family and the history of the Pajaro Valley. Several notable family photographs show John Steinbeck, the brother of Esther Rodgers, including one carving the family Thanksgiving turkey.

Rodgers House, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds,
2601 East Lake Ave. • Watsonville, CA 95076
831-724-5671

Mon – Fri 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Tours (10+ people) Mon – Sun by appt
Free admission – donations appreciated

www.santacruzcountyfair.com



8

San Lorenzo Valley Museum

Explore San Lorenzo Valley history in a 1906 redwood church. Exhibits include logging & mill camps. Lumber shipped by flume, then narrow gauge. Also local early schools, vignettes of Victorian life, local pioneer biographies, & rotating exhibits. Visit our bookstore for history, local exploring, & nature books.

San Lorenzo Valley Museum
12547 Highway 9, Boulder Creek, CA 95006
831-338-8382

Wed, Fri – Sun 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Free Admission – Donations appreciated

www.slvmuseum.com



9

Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park

Located in the oldest building in Santa Cruz, a restored adobe, exhibits feature California Indians and life during the Spanish Mission period. Park store sales support education in the parks. Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks members receive 15% discount.

Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park Visitor Center
144 School Street • Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-425-5849

Call or click for hours/events.

www.ThatsMyPark.org



10

Santa Cruz Surfing

This unique little museum's exhibit chronicles over 100 years of local surfing history beginning when 3 Hawaiian princes surfed the waves off of Santa Cruz on July 5, 1885, becoming the first persons to introduce board surfing to the United States mainland. Administered by the Santa Cruz Surfing Club Preservation Society.

Santa Cruz Surfing Museum
Mark Abbot Memorial Lighthouse
701 W Cliff Dr, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

831-420-6289

Winter Hours: Thur – Mon 12:00 – 4:00 pm

Summer Hours: Wed – Mon 10:00 am – 5:00 pm Free Admission – Donations appreciated

www.santacruzsurfingmuseum.org



11

Watsonville Fire

Our museum offers an up close and personal view of the apparatus and equipment used during the history of the Watsonville Fire Department. Our building was in use by the fire department from 1924 until 1982 when the new building adjacent to the museum was opened. The two buildings together offer a glimpse of the past as well as the present. The museum is operated by the Watsonville Firefighters' Association, a registered non-profit organization.

Watsonville Fire Department Chief Gene Friend Museum
105 Second Street, Watsonville, CA 95076
831-768-3202

Thurs – Sat, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Visits are available by appointment.
Free admission – Donations appreciated. Free parking available behind the fire station.



12

Wilder Ranch State Park

Explore the history of early ranchers and farmers through exhibits, tours and living history demonstrations. Grounds include Victorian homes, barns, blacksmith and tool shops, farm animals, and an historic adobe. Park store sales support education in the parks. Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks members receive 15% discount.

Wilder Ranch State Park Visitor Center
1401 Old Coast Road • Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-426-0505

Call or click for hours/events.

www.ThatsMyPark.org



Natural History

13

Big Basin State Park

Sempervirens Room exhibits at Park Headquarters display the history of Big Basin, the oldest California State Park. Exhibits in the Nature Lodge show the natural environment of the park. Mountain Parks Foundation members receive 15% discount in Nature Store.

Big Basin Redwoods State Park - Sempervirens Room and Nature Lodge
21600 Big Basin Way • Boulder Creek, Ca., 95006
9 miles from Boulder Creek, CA on Hwy 236
831-338-8861

Daily with seasonal hours, \$10 vehicle fee
Donations appreciated.

www.mountainparks.org



14

Henry Cowell State Park

Interactive exhibits of the four diverse habitats of the park, which include many unique and endangered plants and wildlife. The Visitor Center is at the beginning of the .8 mile walk in the grove of 270 ft. tall redwood trees where you may see these bright yellow banana slugs. Mountain Parks Foundation members receive 15% discount in Nature Store.

Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park
1/2 mile from Felton on Hwy 9
525 N. Big Trees Park Road • Felton, CA 95018
831-335-8418

Open daily 11:00 am – 4:00 pm, \$10 vehicle fee

www.mountainparks.org



15

Natural Bridges State Beach Visitor Center

Exhibits share the science and wonder of monarch butterfly migration, offer a close up look at tidepool animals in the aquarium, and explore the park's other habitats. Seasonally, visit over-wintering monarch butterflies roosting in the park's trees. Park store sales support education in the parks.

Natural Bridges State Beach Visitor Center
2531 West Cliff Drive • Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-423-4609

Call or click for hours/events.

www.ThatsMyPark.org



16

Rancho Del Oso

Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center, 16 miles N of Santa Cruz, features local species (bears to butterflies). Historic materials include Native American artifacts, old logging operation relics, and historic Hoover family photographs. Nearby are trails through eight different ecological zones.

Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center
3600 Highway 1 • Davenport, CA 95017
831-427-2288

Sat and Sun, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Also by appointment between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm
No charge for school field trips – donations appreciated.
Private groups: Check with State Parks for fees

<http://www.ranchodeloso.org/>



17

Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History

Explore local natural history at the Museum: visit exhibits of forests, wetlands, and grasslands, visit a California king snake, grind acorns in our Ohlone room, touch a sea star, watch the bees in an observation hive, browse through the bookstore, and climb on the back of our life-sized sculpture of a grey whale.

Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 East Cliff Dr • Santa Cruz CA 95062-3722
831-420-6115

Hours: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Days/ School year: Tuesday through Saturday

Summer: Wednesday through Sunday

\$2.50 Adults, \$1.50 Seniors (60+)

Youth 18 and under are admitted free of charge

Free admission on first Thursday of each month. Donations appreciated

www.santacruz museums.org



18

Seacliff State Beach Visitor Center

Explore exhibits interpreting the park's natural & cultural history, including Seacliff's famous “Cement Ship,” marine fossil beds & the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. An aquarium and touch tank feature animals found in the tidepools. Park store sales support education in the parks. Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks members receive 15% discount.

Seacliff State Beach Visitor Center
201 State Park Drive • Aptos, CA 95003
831-685-6444

Call or click for hours/events.

www.ThatsMyPark.org



19

Seymour Center at Long Marine Lab

Visit a working marine lab dedicated to advancing human understanding of the world's ocean. Exhibit hall, aquarium, touch tank, tours to the marine mammal overlook, Ocean Discovery Shop, and unsurpassed vistas. Hold a sea star—marvel at a whale of a skeleton—think like an ocean scientist!

Seymour Center at Long Marine Lab
End of Delaware Avenue • Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-459-3800

Tues – Sat, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm;

Sun, 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Closed major holidays; call for extended summer days/hours

Adult – \$6, Student or Senior (64+) – \$4, Child (4-16) – \$4,

See website for special free days and discounts

<http://seymourcenter.ucsc.edu>



20

Wetlands of Watsonville

Discover one of the largest remaining freshwater wetlands along the Central Coast of California. The center offers bilingual activities for the whole family with exhibits on wetlands animals, plants, habitats and cultural history. Join us for nature walks to learn about the amazing bird species that depend on the wetlands and the plants that make this habitat special. Over 6 miles of trails open to the public 7 days a week

City of Watsonville Nature Center
30 Harkins Slough Rd. • Watsonville, CA 96076
831-768-1622

Sat–Sun 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. Nature Walks on Sun at 1:30 pm (bilingual) and Weekdays by appt.
Call for a list of special events and programs.
Free admission - Donations appreciated

www.wetlandsofwatsonville.org





Art Galleries

21

Cabrillo College Gallery

As one of the largest college galleries in the Monterey Bay Area the Cabrillo Gallery hosts 8 exhibitions annually. With a focus on national and international artists some of the 2010/2011 exhibitions include: Ruth Braunstein and the Braunstein/Quay Gallery: 1961 to the Present, Cabrillo College Art Department Faculty and Staff, The Paintings of Geoff Morten, and more.

Cabrillo College Gallery
6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos, 95003 (Library Bldg. #1002)
831-479-6308
gallery@cabrillo.edu

Mon – Fri 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Mon and Tues 7:00 – 9:00 pm. Free Admission

www.cabrillo.edu/services/artgallery



22

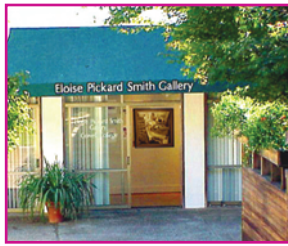
Eloise Pickard Smith Art Gallery

The first gallery on the UCSC campus, The Eloise Pickard Smith Gallery, was named after the wife of the first Provost of Cowell College. Page Smith. Eloise was an artist, appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to head the California Arts Council and also an outspoken proponent of the arts. For the last 22 years the gallery's main focus has been art of the Monterey Bay region.

Eloise Pickard Smith Gallery, Cowell College, UCSC
University of California Santa Cruz, 95064
831-459-2953

Tues – Sun 11:00 am – 4:00 pm. Closed June – Sept
Free admission. Parking: meters or \$2 permit on weekdays; no charge on weekends. Wheelchair accessible

http://cowell.ucsc.edu/smith_gallery/



23

Mary Porter Sesnon Art Gallery

The Sesnon Gallery encourages interdisciplinary discourse through the lens of the arts. An energetic laboratory on the UC Santa Cruz campus, the gallery brings the direct experience of contemporary art to a broad cross-section of the public, representing a range of methods, media and cultures. The gallery is wheelchair accessible.

Mary Porter Sesnon Art Gallery
Porter College, UC Santa Cruz
831-459-3606

Tues – Sat 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Wed 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm

<http://arts.ucsc.edu/sesnon>



24

The Museum of Art & History

Special exhibitions explore art forms from modern to contemporary with themes ranging from traditional to cutting edge explorations of the digital world. The outdoor sculpture garden is a rooftop gallery for the Museum's collection in granite, bronze and clay and offers a unique view of the coastal mountain range including Loma Prieta.

The Museum of Art & History @ the McPherson Center
705 Front Street, Santa Cruz, 95060
831-429-1964

Tues – Sun 11:00 am – 5:00 pm. Free admission to members
Admission fees: Adult – \$5, Seniors & Students over 18 – \$3,
Students between 12-17 – \$2, and under 12 is free
Free First Friday of each month with extended hours to 9:00 pm
www.santacruzmah.org



25

Pajaro Valley Arts Council Gallery

The Pajaro Valley Arts Council Gallery presents rotating contemporary visual art exhibitions showcasing the diversity and talent of our regional artists. Visit our exceptional outdoor sculpture garden at Sierra Azul Nursery located at 2660 East Lake Avenue, Watsonville (M-Sun 9:30 am – 5:30 pm, June – October).

Pajaro Valley Arts Council Gallery
37 Sudden Street • Watsonville, CA 95076
831-722-3062

Thur – Fri 11:00 am – 4:00 pm, Sat – Sun 12:00 – 4:00 pm
Free Admission – Donations appreciated

www.pvarts.org



26

Santa Cruz Art League

One of the oldest art organizations of the west, the Santa Cruz Art League creates an environment for the various stages of the creative path; to network, find inspiration and support. SCAL provides exhibits, performances and educational programs for all ages. We have approximately fourteen art exhibitions a year.

Santa Cruz Art League
526 Broadway • Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-426-5787

Wed – Sat 12:00 – 5:00 pm, Sun 12:00 – 4:00 pm
Free admission

www.scal.org



27

Santa Cruz County Arts Commission

Works by local artists are exhibited year-round on the 1st & 5th floors of the Government Center. The County permanent collection, including pieces from the Visual Chronicle, is displayed on floors 1-5 of the Government Center. For information on the County's Public Art Collection, permanent collection, or exhibitions, visit www.scparks.com.

Santa Cruz County Parks Department – Public Art Program
831-454-7901
County parks are open everyday from sunrise to sunset

Santa Cruz County Government Center – Exhibitions
831-454-7901 or 831-454-2000
Mon – Fri 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, except for Holidays and Furlough days
Free Admission



28

Santa Cruz Mountains Art Center

Our Gallery features a wide variety of fine arts and crafts all handmade by local artists. Paintings (oils, acrylics, watercolors, digital), Jewelry, Ceramics, Textiles, Glass, Wood, Basketry and more!

Santa Cruz Mountains Art Center
9341 Mill Street, Ben Lomond, CA 95005
831-336-3513

Gallery Hours: Wed – Sun 12:00 – 6:00 pm
Free admission & parking

www.MountainArtCenter.org



Santa Cruz County

MUSEUMS

ART

HISTORY

NATURE



Santa Cruz County

Has Long Been

The Muse For Great

And Interesting Culture.

Come and Explore!

History Museums

- 1 - Agricultural History Project
- 2 - Aptos History
- 3 - Capitola Historical
- 4 - The Museum of Art & History
- 5 - Pacific Migrations, New Brighton State Beach
- 6 - Pajaro Valley Historical Assn.
- 7 - Rodgers House
- 8 - San Lorenzo Valley Museum
- 9 - Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park
- 10 - Santa Cruz Surfing
- 11 - Watsonville Fire
- 12 - Wilder Ranch State Park

Natural History

- 13 - Big Basin Exhibits
- 14 - Henry Cowell Visitor Center
- 15 - Natural Bridges State Beach Visitor Center
- 16 - Rancho Del Oso
- 17 - Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
- 18 - Seacliff State Beach Visitor Center
- 19 - Seymour Center at Long Marine Lab
- 20 - Wetlands of Watsonville

Art Galleries

- 21 - Cabrillo College Gallery
- 22 - Eloise Pickard Smith Art Gallery
- 23 - Mary Porter Sesnon Art Gallery
- 24 - The Museum of Art & History
- 25 - Pajaro Valley Arts Council Gallery
- 26 - Santa Cruz Art League
- 27 - Santa Cruz County Govt. Center
- 28 - Santa Cruz Mountains Art Center

