

# Pacheco

## State Park



### Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(209) 826-6283** or **(209) 826-1197**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact [interp@parks.ca.gov](mailto:interp@parks.ca.gov).

### CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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Discover the many states of California.™

### Pacheco State Park

38787 Dinosaur Point Road

Hollister, CA 95023

(209) 826-6283

[www.parks.ca.gov/pacheco](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pacheco)

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*Pacheco's many  
ponds and streams  
provide tranquil spots  
to rest, water horses, or  
enjoy a picnic.*



**E**xplosions of colorful wildflowers, incredible vistas from rolling hills, secluded meadows—these are all part of vibrant Pacheco State Park. The remainder of a Mexican land grant, this 6,890-acre state park is rich with wildlife and historic features. The Pacheco area is semi-arid. Summer temperatures range from 80 to 100 degrees while winter brings a brisker 30 to 55 degrees. Evenings are cool all year due to coastal air currents moving across Pacheco Pass.

#### **PARK HISTORY**

##### **Native People**

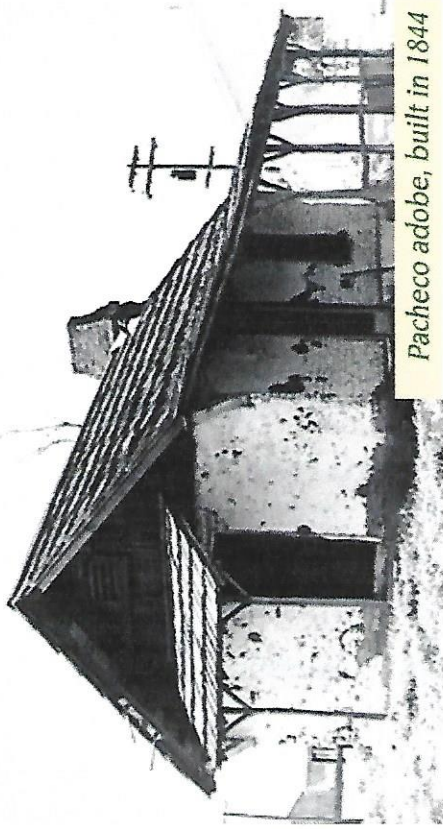
Archaeological and ethnographic evidence indicates that Pacheco Pass was a borderland primarily inhabited by the Northern Valley Yokuts tribe and the Mutsun branch of Coastal Ohlone. Small, seasonal camps and larger villages, with immense circular structures where extended family resided, were common.

The native people experienced large population losses as a result of Spanish and Mexican incursions, European and Canadian fur trappers, and American gold prospectors and settlers. Today, small numbers of Yokuts and Ohlone people still live in California and honor their ancient roots.

Highway 152 along the park traces an old native trail running from the Central Valley to the coast.

##### **The Pacheco Land**

Pacheco Pass is strategically located at the edge of the Diablo Range, providing a vital



*Pacheco adobe, built in 1844*

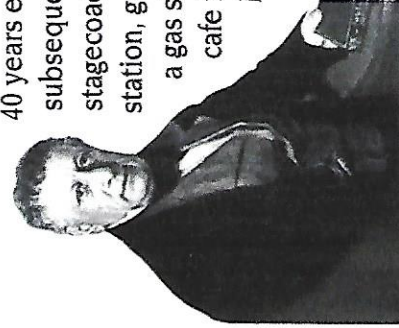
transportation link between the Pacific coast and California's San Joaquin Valley.

In 1806 Gabriel Moraga and Father Pedro Muñoz traversed the pass during the first documented European expedition. They camped at a former Yokuts village site.

Soldier and wagon maker Francisco Perez Pacheco came to California from Mexico in 1820. The Mexican governor granted a 48,000-acre parcel, El Rancho San Luis Gonzaga, to Francisco Pacheco in 1843.

The following year, his son Juan Perez Pacheco built an adobe outpost on the site of today's San Luis Reservoir, near the location where Moraga and Muñoz had camped nearly 40 years earlier. The adobe subsequently served as a stagecoach stop, telegraph station, gambling hall, and even a gas station and roadside cafe for travelers.

Many roads have since been built through the tranquil hills, including the original Pacheco



*Francisco Pacheco*

Pass toll road, engineered by Andrew Firebaugh in 1856.

The Pacheco family continued to flourish, increasing their land holdings until they were among the wealthiest landowners in California. Pacheco descendants maintained title to this property for five generations.

This park exists as the dream of Paula Fatjo, an Arabian horse breeder and a fifth-generation Pacheco descendant. After inheriting the land, Fatjo wanted her ranch to be safeguarded for those who shared her love for its history, solitude, and beauty. Paula restored the Pacheco adobe, living there until much of the acreage was taken by eminent domain for the construction of San Luis Reservoir. The adobe did not survive its attempted move intact; ruins are near Ranch Headquarters. In 1992, Fatjo deeded the last 6,890 acres of her ranch to the State.

#### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

##### **Natural Features**

Pacheco State Park is famed for its sweeping panoramas of mostly undeveloped grasslands and oak woodlands. Its location atop the Diablo Mountain Range provides impressive vistas in all directions. The 1,927-foot Spikes Peak offers a 360-degree view of San Luis Reservoir, the Central Valley, and the Coast Mountain Range. Grasslands, woodlands, ponds, and natural springs provide seasonal changes. Summer and autumn grasses turn gold, while spring rains bring bursts of wildflower colors. Frequent strong winds have sculpted the blue, valley, and live oaks into striking windswept forms.

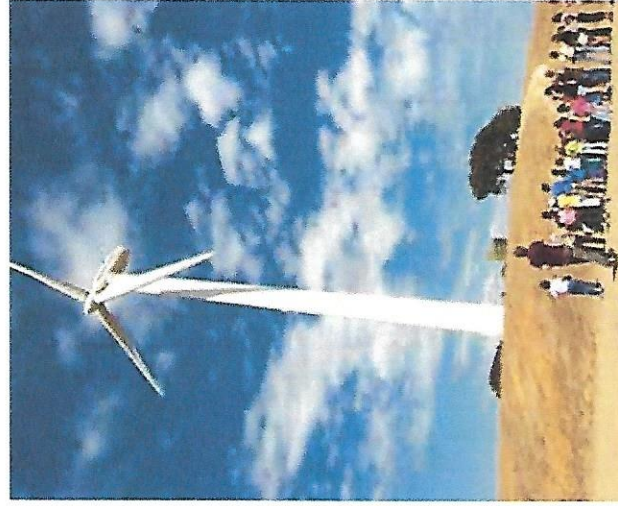
## Plants and Animals

The park's native perennial grasses include one-sided bluegrass, purple needlegrass, and wild rye grasses. Carpeting the hills in spring are such wildflowers as butter-n-eggs, yellow violets, shooting star, popcorn flower, larkspur, and California poppy.

A variety of wild animals calls the park home. Tule elk, deer, bobcats, coyotes, and foxes roam the slopes while golden eagles and several species of hawks soar above the treetops. Cattle graze on the historic ranch in winter and spring, as they have for more than 100 years.

## WIND TURBINE FARM

Three-armed sentinels dot the hills of Pacheco State Park, providing clean energy for homes across the state. The eastern portion of the park is leased to a commercial venture that operates wind power plants



*School groups learn about wind energy.*

and maintains turbines that generate enough electrical power for 3,500 homes. Call the park for tour information.

## ACTIVITIES

**Trails**—Twenty-eight miles of trails offer several varied loop choices for visitors.

**Hiking**—Visitors are encouraged to hike the trails once traversed by many historical figures—including the Yokuts and Mutsun people, Spanish

missionaries and soldiers, Mexican vaqueros, gold seekers, and bandits.

**Biking**—All park trails currently allow bicycles and offer beginners and skilled riders a challenging and enjoyable ride over gentle slopes and steep hills.

**Equestrians**—Paula Fatjo donated the property to promote a love of horses and of undisturbed land. Scenic equestrian trails wind throughout the park, and several small ponds provide drinking water for the horses. Primitive horse camping is available at the day-use area. Advance reservations are required and can be made by calling (209) 826-1197.

## Special Events/Programs

Springtime guided walks highlight the park's fascinating history, and wildflower displays showcase its natural features. Several special events, such as Kite Day and Wildflower Day, are held annually. See [www.parks.ca.gov/pacheco](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pacheco) for an event schedule.



## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Accessibility is continually improving; however, there are currently no wheelchair-accessible activities at this park. For updates, check <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Henry W. Coe State Park  
9000 East Dunne Avenue  
Morgan Hill 95037  
(408) 779-2728
- San Luis Reservoir State  
Recreation Area, 7 miles  
west of I-5 on Hwy. 152, 31426 Gonzaga Road,  
Gustine 95322 (209) 826-1197

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- The park's natural and cultural resources are protected by state law and may not be removed or disturbed.
- Firearms and hunting are prohibited in state parks.
- Except for service animals, dogs are not allowed on trails or in the park backcountry.
- Drinking water is not available in the park.

**WARNING:** The western black-legged tick is common throughout California and is often found on the tips of grasses and shrubs. Rattlesnakes and poison oak are also present. Help preserve natural features and stay safe. Stay on marked trails and avoid contact with vegetation.