

The Reactor

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Specifically Pacifica

Pacifica is bigger than you may think. In fact, this little town is in the top quarter of incorporated cities in California. What's more, Pacifica is bigger than some counties — Alpine, Modoc, Mono, Sierra and Trinity — whose combined population is several thousand less than Pacifica's.

The city of Pacifica is larger than 16 of California's 58 counties. At least this was true in 1980. It's probably not too different now. (And you thought City Hall was overstaffed!)

Turns out that Pacifica's population today is about the same as San Mateo County's in 1920. Just imagine the people of Pacifica, but spread out over 450 square miles or so instead of 12.5.

The last time I checked, there was no city as large as Pacifica north of Santa Rosa in California's coastal counties. Pacifica is larger than Eureka, larger than Ukiah, and in the same league with Rohnert Park and Petaluma, just south of Santa Rosa.

Pacifica has one of the longest coastal frontages of any California city, more than five miles. I haven't been able to find the references to determine just which cities exceed us in that category. There can't be many. San Francisco is probably one of them, the exact figure depending on where coast stops and bay begins. North of the Golden Gate? There are none. Eureka is on a bay, not the ocean. South of here Monterey and Pacific Grove may qualify, but then you have to look to Southern California, perhaps San Diego, Oceanside and Long Beach, for candidates.

I've pointed out before that Pacifica has city parks, a county park, and almost touches a state park. We may have a record here for the city with parkland under the most jurisdictions. One of these days it might be fun to visit a city park, a county park, a park of a city and county, a state park, a state beach and a federal park, all either within the city of Pacifica or a short walk from the city. It could be done in a one-day round trip.

Start at Frontierland Park on Yosemite (city) then to San Pedro Valley Park (county) on Oddstad, then to the end of Springwood Way off Perez Drive (where a short walk will bring you to the back end of McNee Ranch State Park) then to Pacifica State Beach in Pedro Valley, then north to Sheldance Nursery and a hike to the one-eighth of Pacifica within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area of the national park system, then a visit to Sharp Park, the 450-acre recreation facility of the city and county of San Francisco located within Pacifica. (While you are in the GGNRA be sure to hike to the Plymouth Rock of the West, the San Francisco Bay Discovery site.)

One of these days, when the Discovery Site has been declared a national monument, we'll even have more of a tour. I hope by that time we can drive up.

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