

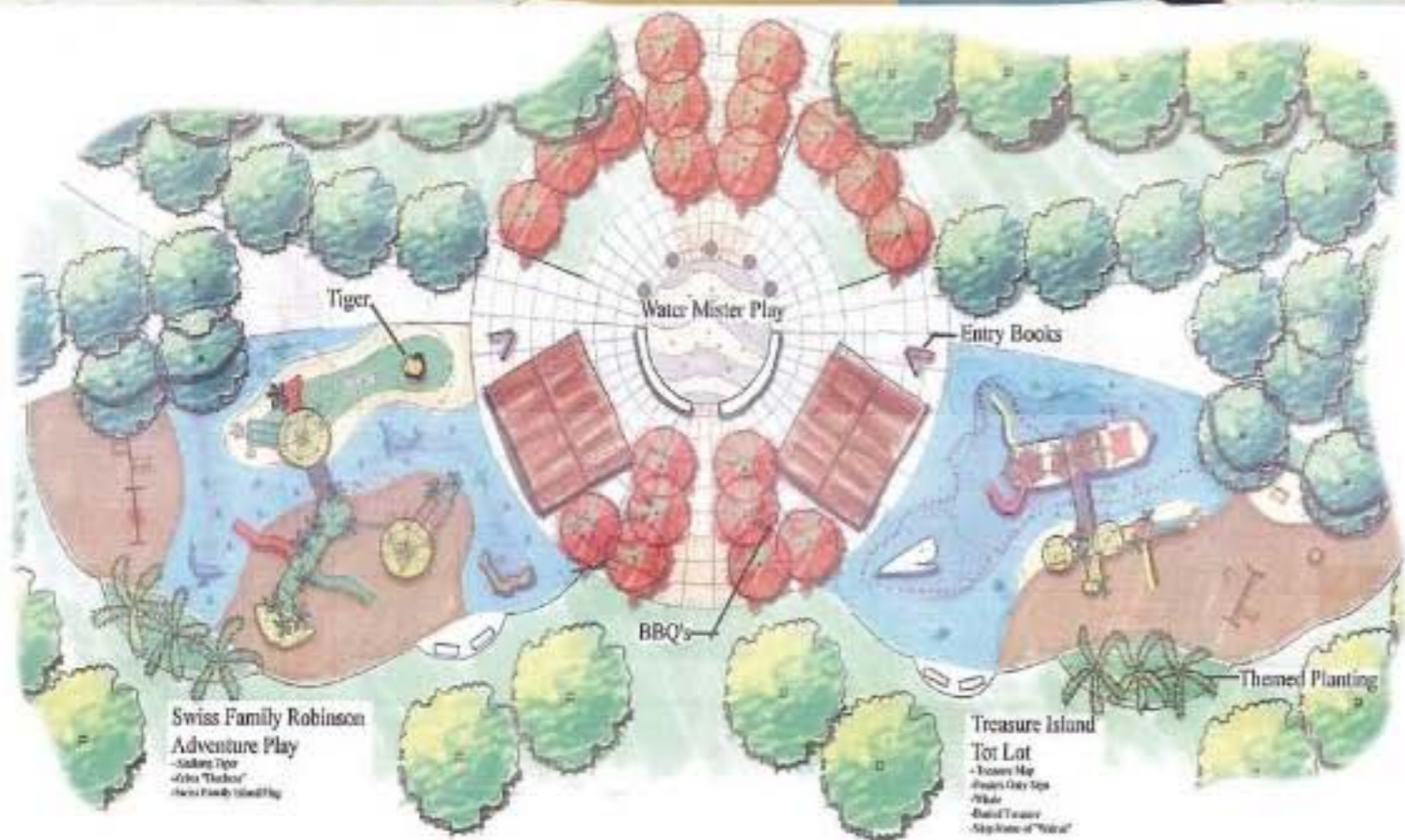


Adventure Isles

Dennis Day, Landscape Architect,
City of Sacramento,
Stephen Kelly, Editor

**Shasta Community Park,
Sacramento, Calif.**

The colorful entry plaza at Shasta Community Park offers cooling water misters to mitigate the Central Valley heat. The mister area sports low-volume spray nozzles (Water Odyssey).



Shasta Community Park in Sacramento, Calif., yes, the official residence of the Governor, features two playgrounds inspired by the perennial favorite classic adventure stories: Swiss Family Robinson and Treasure Island.

Shasta Community Park

Shasta Community Park is a 21-acre community park in Sacramento, which includes the Valley Hi/North Laguna Library, situated on three acres in the corner of the park.

Phase one of the park included development of 10.5 acres of park landscape development, which included a soccer field, softball field, two horseshoe courts, a volleyball court, a tetherball area, walking and jogging trail with exercise stations, two children's playgrounds, a large group picnic area with two shade structures, individual picnic areas, restrooms, pathway lighting and public artwork. Phase one of the park opened for public use in April 2009.

Shasta Community Park, phase two, is now under construction. It includes development of the remaining acreage of the park, a second parking lot with automatic gates, lighting for the soccer field, an outdoor wedding area with garden and gazebo, two lighted tennis courts, a youth basketball court, a neighborhood skate park, continuation of the walking and jogging trail, additional exercise stations, berms, installation of turf instead of sod, shade sail canopies over the tot lot, adventure area, and softball dugouts, shade umbrellas at the play area, additional pathway, lighting, street frontage improvements and additional public artwork. Phase two is expected to be complete by spring of 2010.

Swiss Family Adventures

Swiss pastor Johann David Wyss authored *Der Schweizerische Robinson* (Swiss Family Robinson). It was published in the original German in 1812. The story, of course, follows the adventures of a Swiss family shipwrecked in route to Australia, washing ashore somewhere in the East Indies. The pastor wrote the novel to help instill in his four sons family values and self-reliance. The magical

Above, left: The Swiss Family Robinson Playground presents a large tree house play structure (Little Tikes Commercial) with bamboo poles and thatched roofs, surrounded by a sea and colorful marine creatures. Other play elements are Frog Spring Bouncers (Play and Park Structures), Swing Mats (Zeager Bros. Woodcarpet Mats), boulders (Natural Rock Formations) and spheres (Quick Crete). A cultured stone seatwall borders the play area. Amenities include a shade structure (Litchfield), tables (Victor Stanley), drinking fountains (Murdock) and site furniture (DuMor).

Above, right: The Treasure Island tot lot playground is surrounded by mature Canary Island date palms to add a tropical flavor. California fan palms and sago palms are also on site. A serpentine culture stone seat wall separate the landscaping from the tot lot. Apple blossom groundcover rose (*Rosa x noameli*) is in the foreground. A no mow fescue field extends the play area.

Left: The water element is the hub and unifying element of the Shasta Community Park playground. The playground incorporates three themes: Swiss Family Robinson playground (left) for 5-12 year olds; Treasure Island tot playground (right) and a reading area near the entry to the waterplay area.

Right + inset: The Bengal tiger, just one of the creatures the Swiss Family Robinson had to deal with on their fanciful island, attempts to climb out of the pit. The poured-in-place rubber surfacing is by Sport Surface Specialties.

Below, right: The playground makes room for a reading area where children can sit alongside two bronzed rabbit sculptures, including the venerable Peter Rabbit, the inspiration of Beatrix Potter brought to life in her *Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902). One rabbit is reading a book and the other an object that would baffle Beatrix—a laptop computer.

isle is inhabited by an impossible biodiversity of creatures and flora, a kind of marvelous free-range zoo, no doubt Noah's first landfall after the flood.

Being shipwrecked on a tropical isle has long resonated, particularly from the early voyages to the South Pacific. For folks inhabiting cities with work-a-day lives, it still continues to fascinate. One of the latest and poorest iterations is that annoyingly manipulative "Survivor" series (editor's comment).

The Swiss Family Robinson playground is a large tree house play structure with bamboo poles and thatched roofs, a life-sized tiger climbing out of a pit and a large climbing boulder.





Top + inset: A 26-foot long sperm whale encrusted with barnacles breaches from the depths of the rubberized playground surfacing. The themed sculptures are precast concrete (Universal Precast Concrete).

Below: This larger-than-life *Treasure Island* storybook is open to the beginning of Robert Louis Stevenson's story, wherein Jim Hawkins is requested to write about his adventures and begins by recalling when the "brown old seaman with the saber cut" took up his lodgings and broke out in song with the memorable refrain:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

Note: Dead Man's Chest may refer to Dead Chest Island in the British Virgin Islands, or Isla de Caja de Muertos in Puerto Rico.

Below, right: In *Treasure Island*, young Jim Hawkins discovers a map in the sea chest of the recently deceased Capt. Billy Bones, and thus begins the great adventure. The tot area features the plunders of a pirate's chest—gold bars, coins, jewels and pearls.



Treasures Abound

Treasure Island is another classic of literature that lives on today in such guises as "Pirates of the Caribbean." Robert Louis Stevenson wrote the adventure in the misty highlands of Scotland. It was first published as a series of stories in a children's magazine (1881-82), then printed in book form in 1883. The UK prime minister at the time, William Gladstone, reportedly stayed up into the wee hours to read the pirate adventure.

The Treasure Island tot lot includes a pirate ship and attached port, a treasure map with large red stepping stone shaded circles leading from the treasure map in the ship in a meandering path around the playground to "X" marks the spot where there is a realistic treasure chest with pearls, gold and jewels. A 26-foot long sperm whale appears to breach from the salty depths. Kids love to climb up the whale's back with the help of the barnacle-shaped hand holds, or to sit on its curved tail. The playgrounds are surrounded by a tropical island landscape with boulders, lush foliage and mature palm trees.

There is a water mister play area with low-volume water spray nozzles and jets set in a colorful waded pattern plaza between the two playgrounds. A large group picnic area with two shade structures and tables accommodate children's birthday parties or family reunions.

The Reading Retreat

There is also a reading area with two whimsical bronze larger-than-life rabbit sculptures inspired by Beatrix Potter's classic *Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902). One rabbit is reading a book and the other an object that Beatrix would not recognize—a laptop computer.

Team Members:

City Project Manager/Landscape Architect: Dennis Day, RLA
Consultants: Callander Associates Landscape Architecture was the prime consultant, including master planning, public workshops and construction documents for Phases I and II. The Callander team also worked closely with the consultants working on the new 20,000 sq. ft. library so the city would ultimately have a cohesive recreation facility.
Civil Engineering: Kimley-Horn and Associates, All About Playgrounds, NSP3 (North State Playgrounds)
Contractors: PBM Construction Inc., Creekmare Recreation Specialists Inc.

Vendors

DuMor: Site Furniture • **Fibar Systems:** Playground Engineer Wood Fiber
Hunter Industries: Irrigation • **Iron Mountain Forge:** BBQ Grill • **Litchfield:** Shade Structure • **Little Tikes Commercial Play Systems:** Playground Equipment • **Murdock:** Drinking Fountain • **Quick Crete:** Spheres • **Play and Park Structures:** Frog Spring Bouncer • **Sport Surface Specialties:** Poured-in-Place Rubber Surfacing
Universal Precast Concrete: Themed Concrete Sculptures • **Victor Stanley:** Tables
Water Odyssey: Low-Volume Spray Nozzles
Zeager Bros.: Woodcarpet (Swing) Mats

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