



# **TOUR OUR TRAILS**

**Your Passport  
to County Parks**

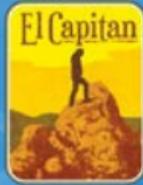
# EXPLORE THE UPSIDE OF OUTSIDE

Visit San Diego County parks and preserves

[sdparks.org](http://sdparks.org)



## COUNTY PARKS **WARRIOR HIKE CHALLENGE**

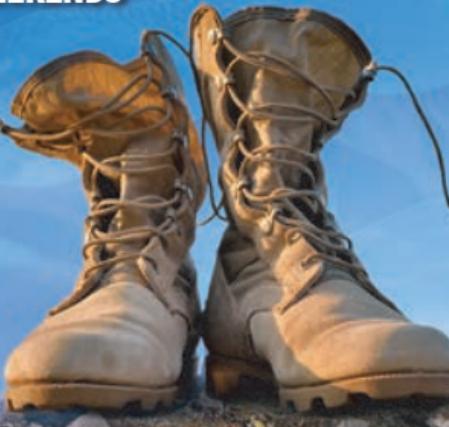


### MEMORIAL AND VETERANS DAY WEEKENDS

Our bi-annual Warrior Hike Challenges test the mettle of our local military members, their families and supporters. Choose from three heats and join the hike that salutes everyday heroes.

[sdparks.org/warriorhike](http://sdparks.org/warriorhike)

## EL CAPITAN COUNTY PRESERVE



# THIS PASSPORT BELONGS TO

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation manages hundreds of miles of trails in over 130 parks and preserves across San Diego – from the ocean to the valleys and the mountains to the desert. Local parks, community centers and historic sites sit in urban settings and open space preserves skirt regional boundaries, protecting wildlife corridors while offering a peaceful retreat to visitors.

Properties reflect a careful balance between recreation and efforts to protect the natural environment. Programs provide education, enrichment, windows to wellness and unique outdoor experiences.

We invite you to explore our favorite trail destinations! Locales in this booklet have been selected in all parts of San Diego County, based on their level of difficulty. We encourage you to start small and work your way up to the tougher hikes. Happy Trails!



# TOUR OUR TRAILS CHALLENGE

## RECREATION WITH REWARDS

- ✓ Visit all of the parks and preserves in the EASY section, earn a sticker. Pick it up at any ranger station in the “easy” section.
- ✓ Visit all of the parks and preserves in the MODERATE section, earn a water bottle. Pick it up at any ranger station in the “moderate” section.
- ✓ Visit all of the parks and preserves in the TOUGH section, earn a canvas bag. Pick it up at any ranger station in the “tough” section.
- ✓ Visit all 15 park destinations, earn a limited-edition fabric patch.

### PROOF OF PARTICIPATION + PRIZE PICK-UP

When all five hikes are completed in a section, bring your booklet to a park in that group for a special prize and when you've completed all 15, email [AskParks.Lue@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:AskParks.Lue@sdcounty.ca.gov) for info on how to get your patch.

County of San Diego  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
5500 Overland Ave., Suite 410, San Diego, CA 92123  
Local: 858-565-3600 | Toll-free: 877-565-3600

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# EASY TRAILS



# SAN ELIJO LAGOON

2710 Manchester Ave., Cardiff-by-the-Sea, CA 92007  
760-634-3026



TRAIL: Nature Center Loop Trail, 0.75 miles

HOURS: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Interpretive panels by lagoon

One of San Diego's largest wetlands, the 979-acre San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve features a primarily shallow water estuary, formed where the Escondido and La Orilla Creeks meet the Pacific Ocean. The County's first ADA-accessible trail sits just outside the Nature Center – a popular route for visitors of all ages and abilities. The 0.75-mile loop trail is part of a 7-mile network of trails on site.



**COMPLETED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **INITIAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

# SWEETWATER SUMMIT REGIONAL PARK

5102 Sweetwater Road, Bonita, CA 91902

619-472-7572



TRAIL: Morrison Pond, up to 5 miles

HOURS: 9:30 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Morrison Pond

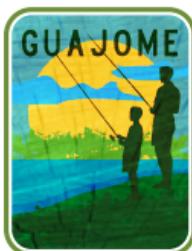
Among the 500-acre regional park lies a simple and secluded trail loop at Morrison Pond. Visitors to this trail will enjoy picturesque views while taking in the sights and sounds of nature. It's considered a birding hotspot, set below the Pacific Flyway, drawing hundreds of species to forage and nest. If you're lucky, you could spot a Least Bell's Vireo, Coastal California Gnatcatcher or Black-headed Grosbeak.



**COMPLETED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **INITIAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

# GUAJOME REGIONAL PARK

3000 Guajome Lake Road, Oceanside, CA 92057  
760-724-4489



TRAIL: Nature Trail, Summit Trail, Upper Pond Trail and Luiseno Trail combine for 3 miles

HOURS: 9:30 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: \$3 day-use fee per vehicle

PHOTO OPP: Upper Pond

Just 8 miles from the Pacific Ocean in the coastal community of Oceanside, Guajome Regional Park is beautiful year-round, and is close to many natural and historic points of interest. A 3-mile loop dirt trail meanders through woodland, chaparral, wetland, and mixed grassland habitats, attracting many migratory birds. Though unpaved, routes are flat to cater to people of all abilities.



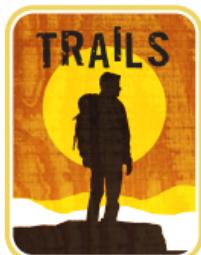
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# RAMONA GRASSLANDS COUNTY PRESERVE

17430 Highland Valley Road, Ramona, CA 92065

760-788-3326



TRAIL: Wildflower Loop Trail, 4 miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Lone Coast Live Oak in meadow

Venture through grasslands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodlands, swales and alkali playas on a path with very little elevation change when you complete all 4 miles of easy dirt trails. This is a popular spot for equestrians and Ramona locals, especially in cooler months. Keep your eyes out for cows!



**COMPLETED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INITIAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

# LOS PEÑASQUITOS CANYON PRESERVE

12020 Black Mountain Road, San Diego, CA 92129

858-484-7504



TRAIL: South Trail, up to 3 miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: \$3 at the Staging Area

PHOTO OPP: Waterfalls

Los Peñasquitos Canyon is a split property, jointly managed by the County and City of San Diego. Spanning 3,600 acres, two dirt and small rock trails start from either side of the creek and move west 3 miles, for a 6-mile round-trip hike. Visitors can meander along the watershed or take the access road for a hike that is bookended by an historic adobe and seasonally flowing waterfall. Free parking is available near the historic Ranch House, located at 12122 Canyonside Park Drive, San Diego, CA 92129.



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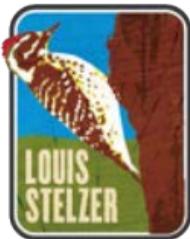
# MODERATE TRAILS



# LOUIS A. STELZER COUNTY PARK

11470 Wildcat Canyon Road, Lakeside, CA 92040

619-561-0580



TRAIL: Stelzer and Summit Trails, 2.5 miles

HOURS: 9:30 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: \$3 day-use fee per vehicle

PHOTO OPP: Kumeyaay Promontory

Louis A. Stelzer County Park is made up of 420 acres of oak woodland and coastal sage scrub. Along the Stelzer Trail, you will meander below old-growth oaks and thick vegetation, continuing up a steep hill on the Summit Trail to take in beautiful views of the mountains to the east and the valleys down below. At the top you'll also get to explore Kumeyaay Promontory.



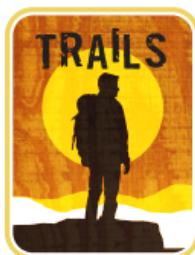
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# DEL DIOS HIGHLANDS COUNTY PRESERVE

9860 Del Dios Highway, Escondido, CA 92025

760-745-4379



TRAIL: Del Dios Highlands Preserve Trail  
2.6+ miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Lake Hodges overlook

Climbing through 774 acres of open space in Escondido, Del Dios Highlands County Preserve offers a quick trek for a brief entry to nature. Hike around several bends to a DIY fitness station, and a high point offering views of Lake Hodges and the Pacific Ocean! This trail connects to the popular 11-mile Elfin Forest trail system.



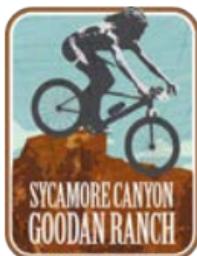
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# SYCAMORE CANYON/GOODAN RANCH

16281 Sycamore Canyon Road, Poway, CA 92064

858-513-4737



TRAIL: Martha's Grove Trail, 3.5 miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – 7 p.m., April – Sept.  
8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Oct. – March

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Nature Center at Goodan Ranch

Sycamore Canyon County Preserve encompasses 2,272 acres of open space, including the old 325-acre Goodan Ranch site and 10 miles of interconnected trails. It's a popular spot for mountain biking and it's common to see visitors on horseback – but everyone who visits on a hot day will enjoy stepping into the air-conditioned nature center to learn about local flora and fauna. The Martha's Grove trail features remnants of early Kumeyaay habitancy.

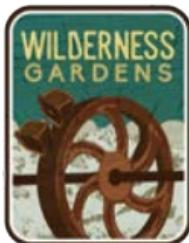


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# WILDERNESS GARDENS COUNTY PRESERVE

14209 Highway 76, Pala, CA 92059

760-742-1631



TRAIL: Frank Special Trail, 3.6 miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Thursday – Tuesday (closed on Wednesdays and in August)

PARKING: \$3 day-use fee per vehicle

PHOTO OPP: Grist Mill remains

Located in the San Luis Rey River watershed, this large preserve stretches 737 acres, with hiking hotspots like the Upper Meadow Trail which boasts views of the Pauma Valley – and remains of a grist mill near the ranger station. One of the first preserves in San Diego, this property is on the County Historic Resources Board's list of historic places.



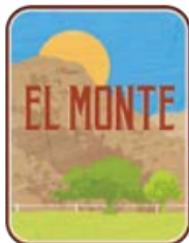
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# EL MONTE COUNTY PARK

15805 El Monte Road, Lakeside, CA 92040

619-443-1474



TRAIL: Flume Trail, up to 5 miles

HOURS: 9:30 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: \$3 day-use fee per vehicle

PHOTO OPP: Historic Flume Water Tunnel

El Monte County Park is another of the County's original park properties, featuring ample grassy lawns, play areas, mature trees and a set of historic tables with plaques calling attention to some of the area's first non-native settlers and most notable families. Travel up the hillside along the old flume route to view remnants of early water transportation, and look up to admire the rocky cliff face of El Cajon Mountain – home to El Capitan County Preserve (our toughest hike!).



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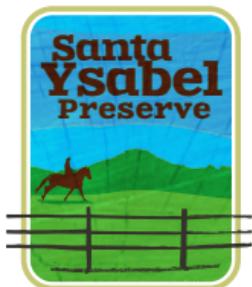
# TOUGH TRAILS



# SANTA YSABEL EAST COUNTY PRESERVE

From the Nature Center

22135 Highway 79, Santa Ysabel, CA 92070  
760-765-4098



**TRAIL:** Nature Center Loop Trail to the Coast to Crest and Western Loop Trails, 5 miles

**HOURS:** 8 a.m. – sunset (check [sdparks.org](http://sdparks.org) for current Nature Center hours)

**Parking:** FREE

**PHOTO OPP:** Santa Ysabel Valley

Near the junction of the Highways 78 and 79 sits the new zero-net-energy, LEED Gold Certified Santa Ysabel Nature Center. A true gateway to the Mountain-Borrego preserves, the building is full of interactive educational displays and sits among rolling grass-covered hillsides, California Live Oaks and locally-ranched cattle.



Four trailheads at the east and west preserves offer different hiking experiences, and the 3-mile Nature Center Loop is no exception; it connects, at the top, to a second loop and to the PCT, for a trek of up to 10 miles. Starting at the Nature Center, trek up north (parallel to the 79), and make a right toward the Coast to Crest trail. Keep left at the junction. Once you hit the second junction, keep left to head back to the Nature Center.



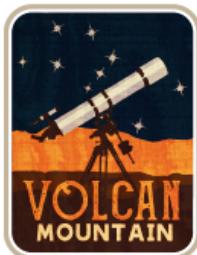
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# VOLCAN MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS PRESERVE

1209 Farmer Road at Wynola Road, Julian, CA 92036

760-765-4098



TRAIL: Five Oaks Trail, 5.4 miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – sunset

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Airway Beacon Light Tower

Volcan Mountain Wilderness Preserve includes 2,900 acres of beautiful mixed conifer forests – offering one-of-a-kind hikes and breathtaking views of both the coast and the desert on a clear day. The Five Oaks Trail winds around the mountainside through a series of switchbacks, providing shade and a peaceful retreat from the wider access road. Get ready for a good climb; though short, this trail goes straight up!



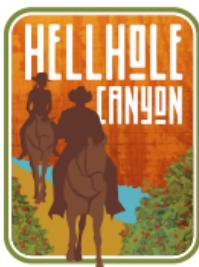
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# HELLHOLE CANYON COUNTY PRESERVE

19324 Santee Lane, Valley Center, CA 92082

760-742-1631



TRAIL: Hell Creek Trail, up to 13.5 miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. — sunset; Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday; closed in August

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Hell Creek

Hellhole Canyon County Preserve protects 1,907-acres of wildlife corridors, offering 13.5 miles of moderate-to-advanced paths above and around Hell Creek, to the top of Rodriguez Mountain. Chaparral dots the hillsides, providing safe havens for rabbits, snakes, coyotes and wild turkeys. In the spring, lilac blooms shine white and purple as far as the eye can see!

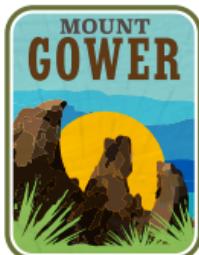


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# MT. GOWER COUNTY PRESERVE

17090 Gunn Stage Road, Ramona, CA 92065

760-788-3326



TRAIL: Mt. Gower Ridge Trail, nearly 9 miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – sunset; closed in August

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: Unique Rock Formation

This Ramona mountain is not as busy as Mt. Woodson, but is just as engaging with its cool rock formations, pretty butterflies, and a unique mix of plants, trees and flowers. Measuring 1,574 acres, the trail begins in a sandy basin, moves through several switchbacks, and eventually reaches heights of 3,103 feet where granite outcroppings are laced with moss and pooled water from seasonal rains.

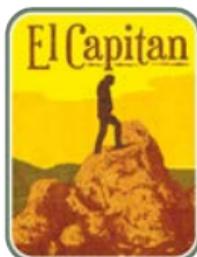


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# EL CAPITAN COUNTY PRESERVE

13775 Blue Sky Ranch Road, Lakeside, CA 92040

619-561-0580



TRAIL: El Cajon Mountain Trail, 11+ miles

HOURS: 8 a.m. – sunset; closed in August

PARKING: FREE

PHOTO OPP: El Cajon Mountain Peak Sign

El Capitan County Preserve's 2,619 acres of open space provide room to roam through woodland, coastal sage scrub and mixed chaparral. The hike is considered one of the toughest in the County and can easily take up to 6 hours to complete – though, twice a year, on Memorial and Veterans' Day weekends, we host a Warrior Hike Challenge, breaking the tough trek into three feasible heats.



**COMPLETED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INITIAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Stay Connected



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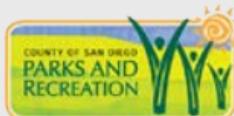
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[sdsparks.org](http://sdsparks.org)



# THE UPSIDE OF OUTSIDE

**County of San Diego  
Department of Parks and Recreation**

**5500 Overland Ave., Suite 410  
San Diego, CA 92123**

**Reservations: 858-565-3600  
Information: 858-694-3049**

**[sdsparks.org](http://sdsparks.org)**



**LIVE WELL  
SAN DIEGO**

