



Open Space & Trails

Trail Ambassador Program



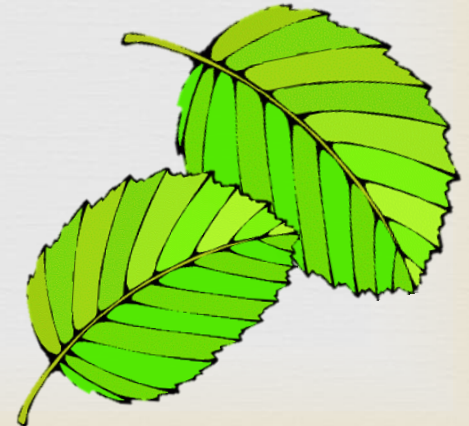


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What this guide covers:

- ❖ What is a Natural Resource?
- ❖ Where is the Santa Clara River?
- ❖ Why is the Santa Clara River important to Santa Clarita?
- ❖ What is a Cultural Resource?
- ❖ What is a Native Species?
- ❖ What is an Endangered Species?
- ❖ Wildlife Undercrossings
- ❖ Animal Tracks
- ❖ Trash Pickup
- ❖ Avoiding Hazards
- ❖ Plan Your Hike
- ❖ What are the parts of a Trailhead?
- ❖ Stay Connected!
- ❖ Open Space & Trails Rules
- ❖ Trail Etiquette
- ❖ Reporting Trail Conditions
- ❖ **BECOMING A TRAIL AMBASSADOR**



Want to learn more about Santa Clarita, its **historical**, **cultural** and **natural** resources?



Are you interested in learning about the City of Santa Clarita's open spaces and trails, and how to **protect** them?



Would you like to let the City of Santa Clarita know of any problems on the trails, and **tell us about your hikes**?

If this sounds like fun to you, then this guide will give you tips to become a **Trail Ambassador**. Make sure you read each page, because you will be able to sign up to be a Trail Ambassador at the end.



What is a Natural Resource?

Natural wealth of a country, consisting of land, forests, mineral deposits, water, plants and animals.



Photos by Jenny Joo

Where is the Santa Clara River?



- Ever notice all of the bridges around the City over dry creek beds? Did you know that the word “Seco” means “dry”?
 - There is a river that runs through the middle of the City- but most months it flows under the surface. That is why you only see it when it rains!
- Protecting the river protects air quality and water quality for City residents.
- The river acts as a “wildlife corridor” for animals.
 - Wildlife corridors act as natural “highways” for animals.

Why is the Santa Clara River Important to Santa Clarita?



- The Santa Clara River watershed is like a giant bowl, surrounded by mountains, which collects water and funnels it into the river. The river supports many populations: the human communities which dot its banks, plus a great variety of plants and animals.
- The headwaters of the Santa Clara River start in the mountains above Acton. The river flows over 100 miles, ending at the Pacific Ocean in Ventura. The Santa Clara River is one of the last “wild” rivers in California.
- The Santa Clara River watershed is home to 14 special bird species and 6 plant species which are endangered or threatened.

What is a Cultural Resource?

Collective evidence of the past activities and accomplishments of people



Last Tataviam family (1920's)

An example of Santa Clarita's cultural resource is the culture of the Tataviam Indians, a name which means "People of the Sunny Slopes". As early inhabitants of the Santa Clarita Valley, they found everything they needed to survive right here.

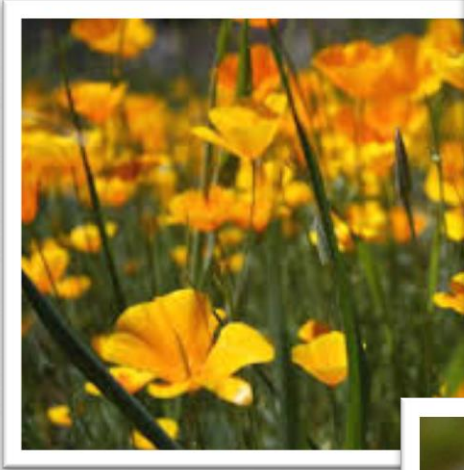
What do you think these early people needed to live here?

This area in Southern California offered one of the most abundant food supply in North America: yucca plants, acorns, deer, manzanita berries.

What is a Native Species?

A plant, animal or insect that naturally occurs in a specific geographic area without having been introduced by humans

Can you name these native species?



Some of our Santa Clarita Natives

Plants

More than 6,000 species in California



California poppies



Buckwheat

Animals and Insects

Dynamic relationships between plants, animals and insects keep a healthy ecosystem



Bee



Mountain Lion

What is an Endangered Species?

A plant or animal species existing in such small numbers that it is in danger of becoming extinct, especially such a species placed in jeopardy as a result of human activity. One of the principal factors in the endangerment or extinction of a species is the destruction or pollution of its native habitat.

Some of our native endangered species



Red Legged Frog



Santa Ana Sucker Fish



Arroyo Toad

Is it a Condor or a Turkey Vulture?



These large birds are commonly seen throughout the Santa Clarita Valley
Can you identify them?

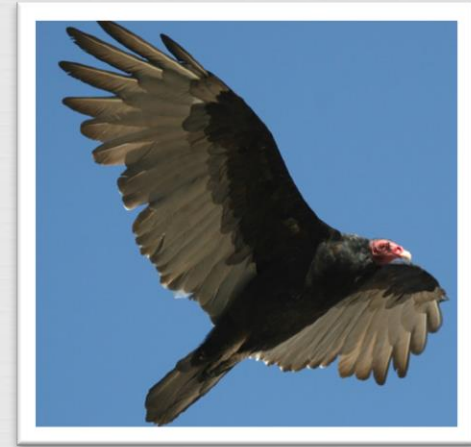


Is it a Condor or a Turkey Vulture?

California Condor



Turkey Vulture



- Juvenile condors have patches of mottled white along the leading edges of their wings.
- In flight, condors tend to hold their wings flat and soar without any rocking back and forth. They do flap their wings, but not as often as other birds such as turkey vultures.

Condors were nearly extinct. Learn more about the exciting history of the condors:

<http://www.fws.gov/cno/es/CalCondor/Condor.cfm>

- Turkey vultures have a silvery area along the back edges of their wings.
- Turkey vultures hold their wings in a slight "V" pattern, and will rock side to side in the wind. Turkey vulture flight is often described as wobbly or unstable when compared to that of a condor.
- Like all vultures, turkey vultures have an excellent sense of smell

Can you recognize a Wildlife Undercrossing?



Why are wildlife undercrossings important?

- Animals can cross *under* the freeway, keeping them out of danger
- Promotes a healthy ecosystem, allowing animals to easily migrate
- Safely connects animals to their habitat
- Allows animals to inhabit their geographic range

Parks Planning & Open Space





Snake

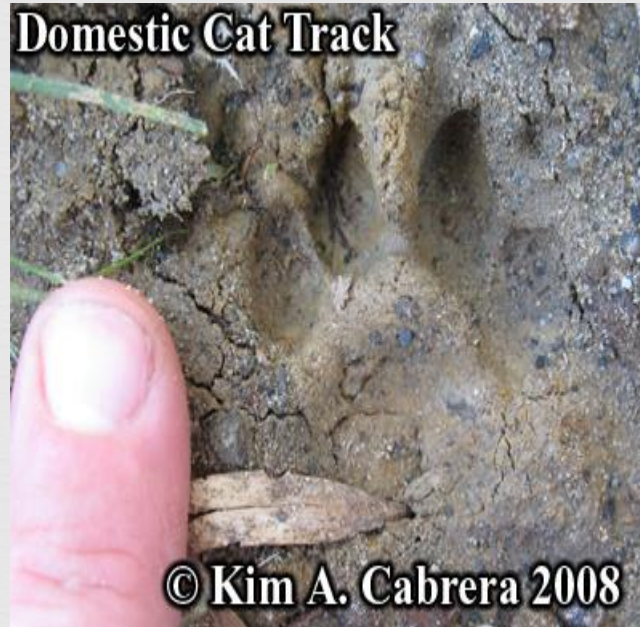
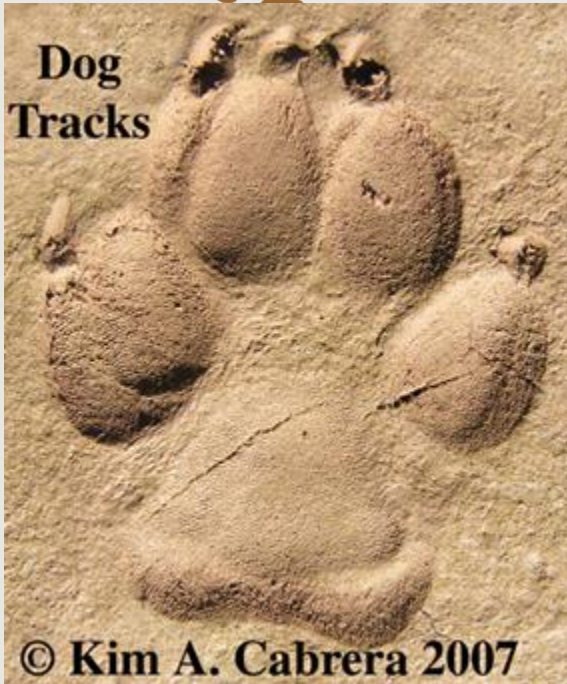
Why is it important to recognize animal tracks?

- Do not disturb nearby animals
- Know what is in the area for your protection as well as the animals'

Can you tell who is using this trail?



Familiar Tracks on the Trail



Do You Pick up Trash?



Stomach contents of a 4-month old California Condor chick that died in the nest, June, 2006. Sespe Condor Sanctuary, Los Padres NF



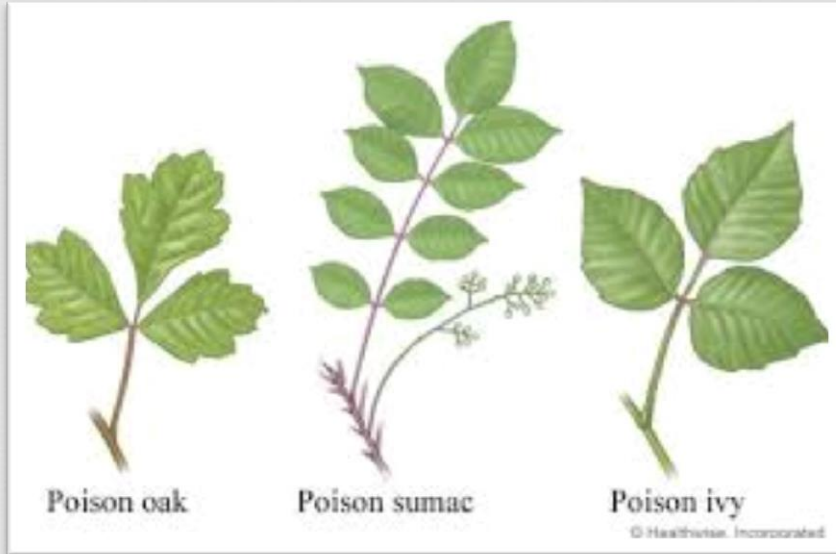
HABITATWORK.ORG
Volunteers Improving Wildlife Habitat

Since 2003, the volunteer group Habitat Works has collected 3,431 pounds of high-grade Condor Microtrash from critically identified areas known to be frequented by wild condor parents.

Keep our open spaces healthy for animals by “packing out” what you bring in - and use the trash cans provided for trash you find. Even the “small” trash makes a big difference!

Watch Out!

Trail Ambassadors know to avoid these hazards:



Poisonous plants

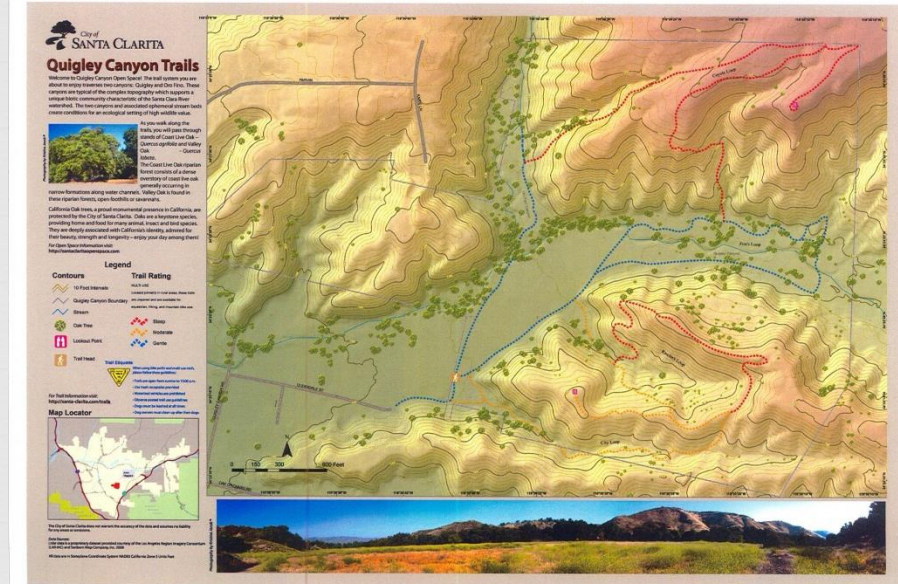
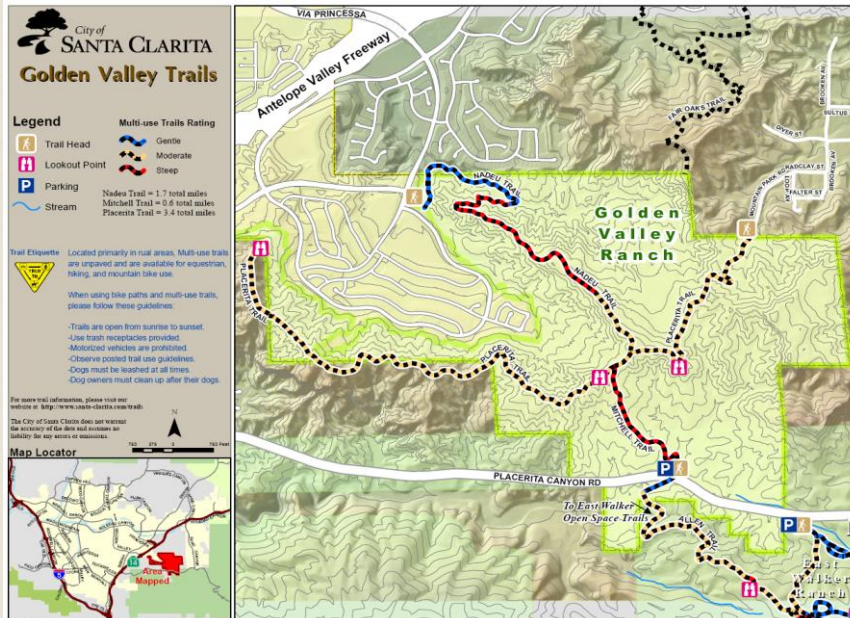
Rattlesnake



Don't get too close – give them a lot of space!

Do You Have a Plan for Your Hike?

Trail Ambassadors know where they are headed
on the trails and plan ahead



Maps at trail kiosks

Download the Interactive Trail Map app:



<http://hikesantaclarita.com/maps/interactive-trail-map/>

What Are the Parts of a Trailhead?

Parking



Entrance Signs



Gates accommodate hikers, bicyclists & equestrians but eliminates access to unauthorized motorized vehicles

Informational Kiosks



Stay Connected!

Trail ambassadors stay connected and report their hikes, submit photos, and any problems on the trails:



www.hikesantaclarita.com

eNotify - [sign up](#) for updates sent directly to your email



[@HikeSCV](#)



[@HikeSCV](#)

Use the hashtag **#HikeSantaClarita**
to share your experiences and pictures with us!

Do you know the Open Space and Trail rules?

OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL REGULATIONS
Hours of Operation: Sunrise to Sunset

- STAY ON DESIGNATED TRAILS
- DOGS MUST BE ON LEASH AND CLEANED UP AFTER
- POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS WEAPONS PROHIBITED
- MOTORIZED OR UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLE USE PROHIBITED
- NO SMOKING OR FIRES
- NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
- NO LITTERING OR DUMPING
- NO DEFACING OR DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY



Violations of the above rules is an infraction and or misdemeanor and is punishable by fine or imprisonment per Santa Clarita Municipal Code Title 14

Remember, pack out what you bring in - don't be a litterbug.

Trail Ambassadors can report any trail areas that may need repair.

Do you know who has the right of way?

Sharing the Trail



Trail Etiquette: Right of Way



Trail Ambassadors practice Trail Etiquette: Right of Way

- ❑ Horses get the right of way as the largest creatures on the trail. Trail ambassadors share the trail with equestrians, giving them as much space as possible. When you see a horse on the trail, stop, step aside to give them room, and say “Hello” to the rider. Wait for the rider to give you further instruction, if it safe to walk by.
- ❑ Mountain bikers and hikers both need to yield to horses. Bikers with good trail etiquette will **make a little noise** by wearing a bell or calling out to others when traveling down hills or blind spots. Hikers too should always be aware of their surroundings, and share the trail.
- ❑ Horses and hikers going uphill have the right of way. Sometimes an uphill hiker will let others travel down while they take a break . Any group going uphill should travel single file, and not take up more than half of the trail.
- ❑ Whether in front of, or behind someone else, Trail Ambassadors know to **make a little noise** by calling out “Hello!” or wearing a bell.

Trail Ambassadors always stay on the trail to preserve the natural open spaces.

So, who has the right of way?



ANSWER: Horses always have the right of way

Chet says,

“Make a little noise out there! Please wear a bell!”



Kristina Jacob

Trail Ambassadors know how to follow the rules

Wildwood Canyon Burn Area

When you see these signs...
please stay on the marked trails



HEALING
IN
PROGRESS
PLEASE
STAY ON
DESIGNATED
TRAILS ONLY

Report Trail Conditions and Volunteer!



Parks Planning & Open Space

As a **Trail Ambassador**, you will be able to report trail conditions to the City.
If you see that a trail is in need of repair, [tell us!](#)

You will also have the opportunity to volunteer for trail activities,
such as keeping our trails beautiful!

Help keep our trails in shape!

Trail Ambassadors – Don't head out without:

❑ **A Plan**

- ❑ Maps - Where are you going? Do you know how long the trail is?
- ❑ Weather conditions - Is it going to be hot? Is it going to rain? Check the weather before you head out!
- ❑ Tell A Friend - always let someone know where you are going and when you will return

❑ **A Buddy** - Hiking is so much fun with a buddy! Not only does it add to the experience, but someone is there should you need help

❑ **Water** - You need plenty of water to stay hydrated on the trails

❑ **Nutrition** - You might get hungry while out enjoying nature. Bring a snack - remember to use the trash cans on the trails for any food wrappers


❑ **Sun Protection** - Even on cloudy days, the rays of the sun still shine through the clouds, and you need a sunscreen with at least SPF 30 for proper protection, hat, sun glasses, and lip balm with SPF

❑ **Protective Clothing** - Dress appropriately for the elements. Protect yourself from the weather and sun by wearing a hat, sunglasses, and clothing appropriate for the weather

❑ **First Aid Kit** - Make sure to have a small kit with you in case you get hurt on the trail. Bandages, antiseptic, ointment or spray, gauze, and pain relievers are the minimum of what you should bring on the trail.

What does it mean to be a Trail Ambassador?

- Shows respect to the Open Space and all of its inhabitants
- Stays on marked trails and follows posted guidelines at each trail head
- Follows all of the rules of Trail Etiquette
- Follows all the Open Space rules and sets a good example
- Knows the importance of our native plants and the animals that live there
- Knows to “pack out what you bring in” and puts all trash in trash receptacles
- Does not damage trees or plants, or otherwise deface or destroy property with graffiti or carvings
- Prevents wild fires by not smoking or starting camp fires in the open space
- Carries plenty of drinking water and wears protection from the elements
- Does not throw rocks, sticks or other objects at animals or people
- Keeps their dog on a leash and cleans up after their dog
- Reports trail conditions and provides feedback to the City
- A Trail Ambassador has fun!



Are you ready to be a Trail Ambassador for the City of Santa Clarita?

Can you answer YES to all of the following?

- ✓ Will you follow the guidelines?
- ✓ Will you tell us about your hike and share photos
- ✓ Will you report issues on the trail

[Click here](#) to sign up!

