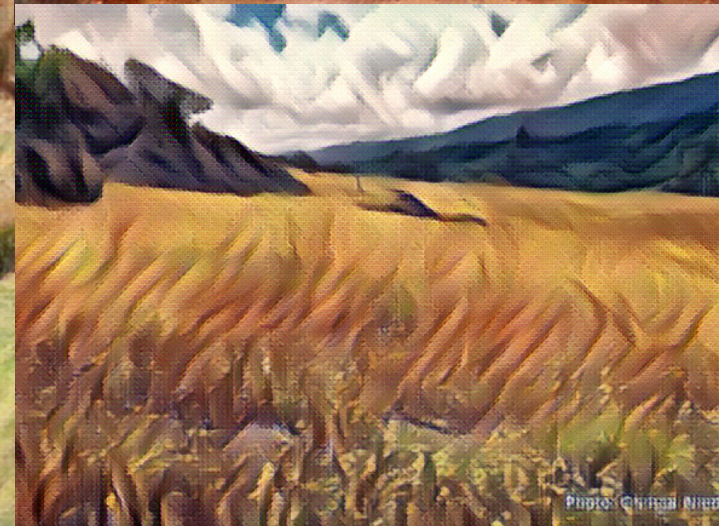
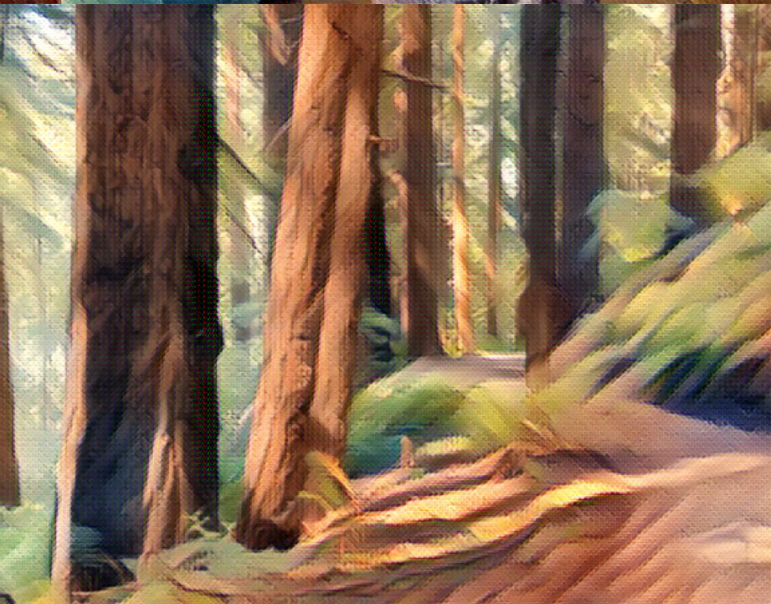


# JUNIOR RANGER CHALLENGE







# JUNIOR RANGER CHALLENGE

Welcome, future Junior Rangers, to San Mateo County Parks! We are so excited for you and your family to explore San Mateo County's wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Our friend Scout the Scrub Jay will join you along the way to introduce fun facts and some activities! As Scout would agree, our county offers one of the most diverse group of parks in California:

Hi all! I'm Scout! Let's look at this map!  
To the South, you can explore the tallest trees in the world in our Redwood forests.  
To the North, you'll get 360 degree views of the Bay Area from atop San Bruno Mountain.  
To the East and West, you can explore intertidal habitats, with all sorts of cool aquatic life!  
In the middle, there are vast parks of oak woodlands and grasslands.





# INTRODUCTION

To become a Junior Ranger, you will have to **explore at least one park** and **complete some of the activities** found on the San Mateo Junior Ranger website. Here's how to do this:

**STEP #1:** You need to complete this section's introductory activities: **What does it mean to be a Junior Ranger, Park Rules, Be Safe, and Intro to Habitats and Ecosystems**. All are great preparation to get you ready to explore, so you need to do all four!

**STEP #2:** After you complete those, pick the kinds of places you want to go to! You have to **pick at least 2**. Here are the kinds of places, what we call **groups**:

- Historic Sites
- Riparian
- Scrub/Chaparral
- Redwood
- Intertidal
- Oak Woodland
- Grassland

**STEP #3:** Each group has 3 activities. Some are more difficult than others, but try the best you can to complete all 3 activities per group! There is an answer key on the website for the tricky ones! Email [kewright@smcgov.org](mailto:kewright@smcgov.org) for questions. You may do a different activity from another group if one is too difficult. Use the Checklist to keep track of what you've completed!



At the end of this section is the **Table of Contents**, with which parks fall under which group! You will see that some parks fall under more than one group, so pick where you are going wisely! The **Table of Contents** also lists the activities you will do.

**STEP #4:** If you complete:

**2 groups** for a total of 10 activities: you get the Junior Ranger badge and certificate

**3 groups** for a total of 13 activities: Junior Ranger badge, certificate, and notebook

**4 groups** for a total of 16 activities: Junior Ranger badge, certificate, notebook, and water bottle!

**STEP #5:** Take a picture of yourself working on an activity at a park and email it with proof of your completed activities and your checklist to [kewright@smcgov.org](mailto:kewright@smcgov.org) to receive your prizes! Make sure you say the Junior Ranger Pledge too!





# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A JUNIOR RANGER?

Look at  
the Answer Key!

A Junior Ranger can be anyone, of any age, from any place! However, Junior Rangers all have shared traits to show their love of the parks. **Use the word search to find what it means to be a Junior Ranger!**

RESPECTFUL	HONEST
ADVENTUROUS	INTELLIGENT
ARTISTIC	KNOWLEDGEABLE
CARING	OPTIMISTIC
CREATIVE	PASSIONATE
ENERGETIC	THOUGHTFUL
FRIENDLY	WATCHFUL
HELPFUL	SCIENTIST
HIKER	HISTORIAN

Y	C	B	E	S	L	C	C	E	R	Y	H	E	E	G	H	M	D	W	L	E	I
E	N	C	M	Q	L	U	T	C	C	C	R	E	A	T	I	V	E	T	A	A	I
H	X	Y	W	W	K	Y	F	W	H	I	K	E	R	V	P	W	X	D	S	D	Q
M	Q	X	E	C	I	N	C	T	J	T	T	W	P	I	S	N	H	W	L	V	L
K	G	Y	A	P	G	C	O	A	C	T	Q	S	H	D	Y	T	R	L	U	E	U
S	Z	I	D	V	K	M	X	W	R	E	S	G	I	Z	U	E	F	D	F	N	F
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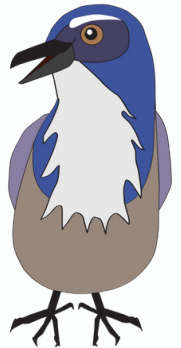
# INTRODUCTION

## PARK RULES

Look at the Answer Key!

Like with all things, it is important to treat your parks with kindness and respect. As a Junior Ranger, it is your job to understand the rules and make sure your group does the same! We follow the ideas of **Leave No Trace**:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors.



**Unscramble these phrases** to learn the San Mateo County Parks rules.

**Use the bolded letters to find out the hidden sentence!**

SAYT ON IRTAL

TYAS LOESC TO AN **UDALT**

DO NOT APP**ARHOC** WILE**FDLI**

**AHEV** CAR**IPMFSE** IN EF**RI** SPT**I** LNYO

DO NOT CIKP FL**SOEWR** OR STL**NAP**

FIN**SHIG** AND HINUNT**G** ARE NOT **P**ERTID**TEM**

DO NOT ITL**TER**, PUT HT**ASR** IN GABE**ARG** IS**NB**

DO NOT DE**FE** FLE**IIDWL**

J \_ \_ \_ \_ R \_ \_ \_ \_ A \_ \_ \_ \_ K S \_ \_ \_ !



# INTRODUCTION

## BE SAFE

You're almost ready to head out and become a proper Junior Ranger! However, there are some plants and wildlife that you want to avoid to have the best time possible and stay safe. Ask an adult to read the following two pages aloud while you listen carefully or read on your own. Answer the question at the end and you'll be good to go!

**Poison oak** has a grouping of three leaves and can grow as a shrub or as a vine scaling trees. It ranges in color from green, to yellow, to red. Its oil causes an irritating rash that can last for days. If you come into contact with poison oak, wash your skin with soap and warm water as soon as possible.



**Stinging Nettle** has bright green leaves with hollow hairs that brush off on you and sting, causing a day-long rash. It grows in moist, shady places. Don't touch the affected area and immediately wash with soap and water.

**Ticks** are parasites that feed on the blood of their host. Ticks climb vegetation and attach to any animal- humans included!- that brushes the plant. A small percentage of deer ticks carry Lyme disease. Be sure to check for and remove any ticks after spending time outdoors. You can remove ticks by sliding a credit card under them.







# INTRODUCTION

## BE SAFE

**Yellowjackets** are several different species of wasps that defend themselves by delivering a painful sting which may cause swelling and itching. If you are stung, remove the stinger, if left in your skin, by scraping from the side with your fingernail. Apply cold water or ice in a wet cloth. If allergic to yellow jacket venom seek medical attention immediately.



**Rattlesnakes** live within our parks, but often hide away from us- they need their space, so give them plenty if you see one! Look where you are stepping, and never reach under rocks or into openings.

These organisms can cause problems, but it can be easy to be safe and avoid them!

**What is something you can do to stay safe?**

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# INTRODUCTION

## HABITATS AND ECOSYSTEMS

For the rest of this booklet, we will discuss both habitats and ecosystems, and the wide variety of them we have in San Mateo County Parks. While a habitat and an ecosystem are very similar, they are not quite the same thing:

*A **habitat** is the kind of home in which an organism lives. An **ecosystem** is a large area with organisms interacting with each other and their environment.*

Think of a habitat as a specific address, while an ecosystem is a neighborhood! We have 6 ecosystems in San Mateo County Parks:



### SCRUB/CHAPARRAL

mostly hardy shrubs capable of handling our dry summers.



### GRASSLAND

mostly grasses, wildflowers, and relatives of both.



### RIPARIAN

a river or stream and the areas directly around it.



### REDWOOD

thick forest of redwood trees with little underbrush. Consistent moisture from fog.



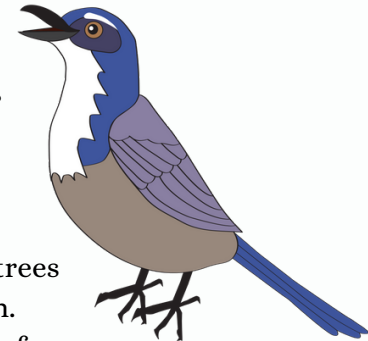
### INTERTIDAL

a beach area that changes with the tides that may have pitted rocks which keep the water through the day, called tidepools.



### OAK WOODLAND

not as thick as a forest, but not as open as a grassland. There are a variety of trees throughout but most are oaks.







# INTRODUCTION

## HABITATS AND ECOSYSTEMS

Look at the Answer Key!

**CHALLENGE: Match the organism to the ecosystem it lives in!**



**Banana slug:**

I live on a cool, dark, moist forest floor. I often move slowly underneath plants like ferns and redwood sorrel.



**Anemone:**

While I live in saltwater, I would not survive if you just plopped me anywhere in the ocean! I need a little crevice with shallow waters that change with the tide.



**Western fence lizard:**

I can live all over, but I like habitats with mostly low-growing plants. That way I can soak up the sun and eat all the insects found on the shrubs.

**Grassland**

**Scrub/Chaparral**

**Redwood**

**Intertidal**

**Oak woodland**

**Riparian**



**Coast live oak:**

As a large oak tree, I like to have relatively open spaces to get plenty of sun and space. I often live in hilly areas with a couple seasonal streams and with several other trees just like me.



**Steelhead trout:**

I need cool freshwater streams to feed and lay my eggs.



**Checkerspot butterfly:**

My habitat has to have many flowers to feed me and eventually my baby caterpillars! I prefer the flowers that grow in wide open spaces.