



Sonoma Valley Regional Park Quest

Welcome to the Land of the Oaks!

Venture out of the parking lot, through the metal gate, to join us on this quest where discoveries await! Please remember to stay safe while enjoying the park.

1. Turn your eye to the fire station and notice the ridge, where the Mayacamas range is a mountainous bridge.

At an elevation of over 2000 feet covered in Knobcone pine forest, this part of the Mayacamas Ridge burned in the 2017 Nuns Fire. The Knobcone pines need fire to reproduce. The cones open with heat and the seeds spread out on ashy soil.

Describe 5 colors you see on the ridge.

2. Head west on the paved path and go round the bend. You may discover what waits at the end. Look to your left to keep the towers in view; come to a stop on the dirt path where the trail becomes two.

Sonoma Valley Regional Park is home to many oaks. An area which consists of oak trees and open space is called an oak woodland. Many animals call oak woodlands home because of the acorns. Acorn woodpeckers hide them, and squirrels like to bury them.

Be a scientist and sketch an oak leaf you see!



3. Follow the trail of the Woodland Star, past blackened oaks for views of afar. Turn right down a rock strewn trail that ends with a seat, the wide open views of San Pablo Bay can't be beat.

This is a perfect place to sit and listen to all the sounds you can hear with deer ears. Cup your hands with fingers closed, put your hands behind your ears and push your ears forward to make them stick out. Your hands act as sound cups. What other animals have big ears?

With your deer ears, listen for one minute and count on your fingers how many sounds you hear.

Compare with your group to see if different sounds stood out to them!

4. Continue walking up the narrow way, when two paths converge past the fence you will stay. As you observe the base of the trees, watch out for plants with leaves in threes. (Poison oak)

Here you might see poison oak which can be brown, red, green, or no leaves on it at all. If you see poison oak, be careful to avoid it. Even though you want to avoid stepping in it, it does make great habitat and provides food. Birds eat the berries and deer eat the leaves. Here is a rhyme to help you to recognize it:

**"Leaves of three, leave me be
If it's hairy, it's a berry."**



5. As two roads diverge, take the one less traveled. Stay to the right as the westward trail is unraveled. Come to a big curve where two small trails do end, the main path is waiting where those two trails blend.



Look around. Do you see in the oak trees funny looking birds with a black back and a red stripe on their head? Or, do you hear their laughter as they talk to one another? These are acorn woodpeckers; birds of oak woodlands. They like to hide their acorns in the tree, like a pantry, and then come back later and eat it.

Count how many signs of wildlife you can see. Keep a tally below:

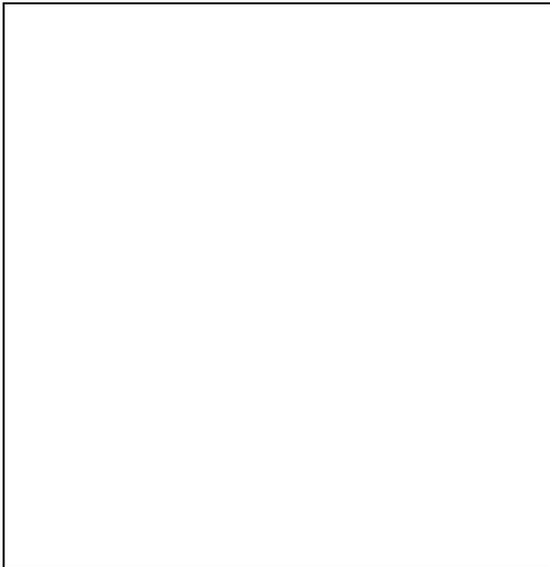


How many could you count?

6. Saunter past mighty oaks and keep the fence line in sight, Woodland Star splits into three- take the trail to the right. As Milkmaid Trail comes into view, be sure to follow where the arrow points you. See Sonoma Mountain so mighty and high, and two radio towers that point to the sky.

Have you heard of a watershed? A watershed is a place on the land where water flows out to a bigger body of water. All humans live in watersheds; we all share water. Sonoma Valley is called the Sonoma Creek watershed. While looking at Sonoma Mountain, imagine it raining. Rain collects at a high point. Then, creeks are formed and run down the mountain, into a river, or creek. On both sides of the valley creeks flow down to empty into Sonoma Creek, which empties into the San Pablo Bay.

In the space below draw what you think a watershed looks like.



7. Down the Milkmaid Trail you will go, the steps might be slippery so please go slow. A small creek on your right is bubbling past, framed by oak woodlands, flowers, and grass.

Animals need space to roam wild and free. Sonoma Valley Regional Park provides the open space for animals to come and live or, just pass through.

Imagine your favorite animal and how it moves. Imagine yourself becoming your animal and try to walk like it.



8. The creek leads to the paved path, across Milkmaid Trail it does wind, look to the left where the waters combine. Take Valley of the Moon Trail off to the right, stop when the water pipes come into sight.

Sit quietly by the creek on either side of the trail. Does the creek make noise? If it has no water, is it still important? Do you think anything uses this creek as a mode of travel?

Think of a time when you have heard water. Describe the sounds you have heard.

9. As you continue eastward following the lazy creek, it is the bench of John Martin Miller you seek.

We all need habitat, even human beings! What do you think a habitat might be? It is a place where animals live. In this oak woodland habitat, there can be many small habitats. Do you see an animal, bird, or insect right now?

What do YOU think they need to survive? (Food, Water, Air, Space.)

10. The paved path awaits you so please don't be shy, tiptoe saunter or skip as you make your way by. Travel along past the burned out stump on the hill, where the trees open up for the sunlight to spill. When you reach the two tables your travels are done, your quest is complete and we hope you had fun.

Do you know what your senses are? We all have them; touch, taste, smell, sight, sound.

Close your eyes, can you feel the sun on your face,? The wind? Hear the birds? With your finger, eyes still closed, point to where the sun is. Open your eyes to see if you are correct.

Close your eyes again.

Thank you for completing your quest! You did a great job! How do you feel? Did you learn anything new?

If you enjoyed this quest, check out others on our website at sonomacountyparks.org

Thank you for joining us!

