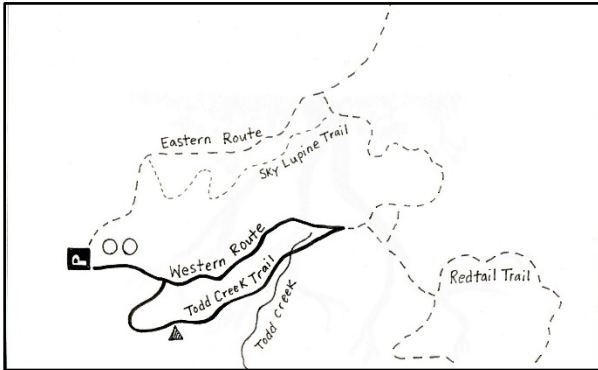




## Taylor Mountain Regional Park Quest

**Welcome to Taylor Mountain Regional Park!  
Should you choose to accept your quest, you  
will be sent on a 2 mile hike to learn about  
local ecology and practice being a scientist!  
Are you ready?**



Start your quest at the 2080 Kawana Terrace  
entrance by the restrooms.

*1. Follow the gravel path until the marker for  
Todd trail, things will stay level as you  
encounter more detail!*

Throughout this quest, it will be important that  
you are a good observer. There will be many  
treasures you'll need a good eye to find!  
Practice this guide a few times.

**As you walk along the trail, observe your  
surroundings. Find something that stands out  
to you and use these cues to practice your  
scientific skills!**

"I notice \_\_\_\_\_."

"I wonder \_\_\_\_\_."

"It reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_."

*2. Cross the bridge and head for the trees, while  
you walk the path look out for these!*

Look for a plant whose smooth leaves could be  
green, red, brown, or sticks with no leaves. The  
leaves are in sets of three. This  
is Poison Oak. It is irritating to  
humans, but it does provide  
food and habitat for animals.



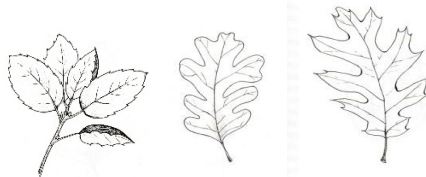
**Can you think of what animals  
will eat it? Here is a rhyme  
which you can repeat as you  
are hiking along the trail:**

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

*3. As you follow the trail, look at the trees. You  
are in an oak woodland you see! There are a  
variety of oaks that sway in the breeze, I will  
teach you how to spot them based on the  
leaves!*

In this park there are 3 main types of oaks you'll  
see:

- Coastal live oak leaves are dark green, oval,  
and spiny. They are typically 1-1 ½ inches in  
length.
- Valley oak leaves are 2-4 inches long, matte  
green, covered in soft fuzz with very defined  
lobes.
- Black oak leaves are similar to valley oak  
leaves in shape but much larger with more  
pointy lobes. They tend to be 4-8 inches long.



**Can you find all three types throughout the  
quest?**

*4. Look to your right as you come to a break in  
the trees, you'll see a sight to behold, and oh  
what could it be?*

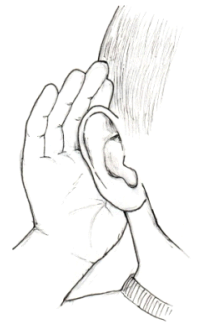
The city you see was founded in 1833 and is the  
largest city in the North Bay. It has been home  
to a few famous folks you may have heard of,  
including the botanist Luther Burbank and the  
cartoonist Charles Schulz.

**Do you know what city that is and can you spot  
any landmarks? How far can you see? What  
do you think is beyond those mountains on the  
other side of the city? Draw the view.**



*5. Keeping on the path as the trees grow near,  
stop for a minute what can you hear?*

This is a perfect place to be still for a bit and  
listen to 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. These are  
your deer ears, your ears act  
as sound catchers.



**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!**

6. *The path meanders in and out of sun and shade, you'll cross some bridges along the way!*

Taylor Mountain Regional Park is part of the Laguna de Santa Rosa drainage basin. The creeks you cross in this quest drain west into Five Creek. The habitat near creeks, streams and rivers is called a riparian habitat.

**Are plants different near the creeks than on the hills? Is there water in the creek right now, why do you think there is or is not water right now?**

7. *While walking along gaze up into the trees, do you notice a plant hanging like a trapeze?*

The light green hanging plant in the trees is called a lichen. In fact, it is the California State lichen, the "lace lichen." Two types of lichen we have in the park are the lace lichen, which looks like lace, and the beard lichen, which has more of a branch structure. These plants help the tree collect moisture.

**Can you find both kinds of lichen? In the space below draw a lichen you see.**



8. *After a bit of a hill you'll loop in a leftward direction – stay the course and don't make another selection! Keep walking along through a big briar patch, don't mess with these plants or you may get a scratch.*

This plant is called Himalayan Blackberry and you have probably eaten its berries at some time. They are delicious. This plant is from Western Europe and is not native to California. It was introduced about the time that Santa Rosa was becoming a city.



**What do you notice about the Himalayan blackberry plant? Are there berries right now? If there are no berries, what is there?**

9. *The path gets wider and the trees aren't so near, off in the distance the city will reappear.*

The terrain around you has changed and you are in more of a field. You will see a water trough to your left and you may have come across cows on your trek. Taylor Mountain has a history of cattle grazing and we share the park with cows to this day. The cattle are here to graze the land and help prevent wildfires.

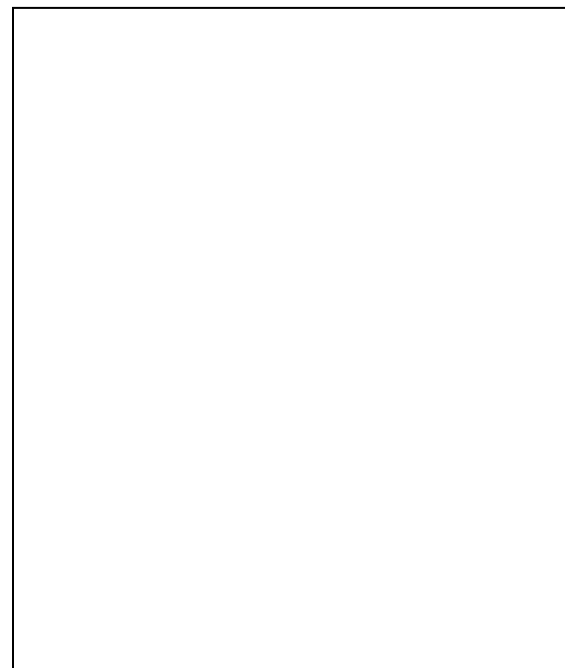
**What kinds of wildlife did you see today? Did you see any signs of wildlife you could describe?**



10. *We are close to the end of our time together, I hope you have learned some facts to remember.*

Have you practiced gratitude before? It can help you feel better if you are ever feeling down.

**List 5 things you are grateful for in the box below.**



**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](http://SonomaCountyParks.org).