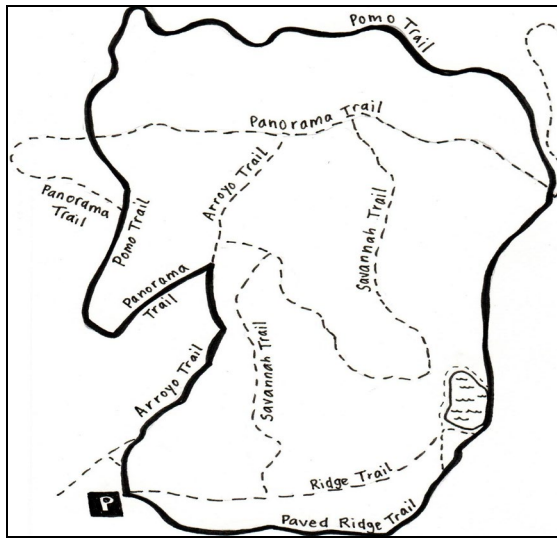




Helen Putnam Regional Park Quest

Welcome to Helen Putnam Park! Should you choose to accept your quest, you will be

sent on a 2 mile hike to learn about local ecology and practice your scientist skills! Are you up for a challenge?



Start your quest at the map by the restrooms.

1. Begin your quest on the trail to your right, You are here to learn and you just might! Let's start off with a practice test, Take a look around before you begin the quest!

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. At a quick glance, you may see only hills, but take just a moment- let your looking glass fill! There are many small treasures, not always easy to see, a variety of life we call biodiversity!

The grasslands in Helen Putnam contain a wide variety of species. Grasslands are open habitats that provide necessary food and shelter for many birds, insects, and animals. 90% of California's rare and endangered plant species live in grasslands.

Take a moment to stand still and be quiet, how many signs of wildlife do you notice around you? If you close your eyes, how many do you hear?

3. Continue along the Ridge Trail until you reach the pond. Call out once you get there, and hear yourself respond. This ecosystem relies on water to thrive, and all animals and plants need it to survive!

This pond is part of the Petaluma River watershed. A watershed is a large area of land that drains into a single large body of water. All of the creeks and streams in the Petaluma River watershed drain into the Petaluma River and then into the Pacific Ocean.

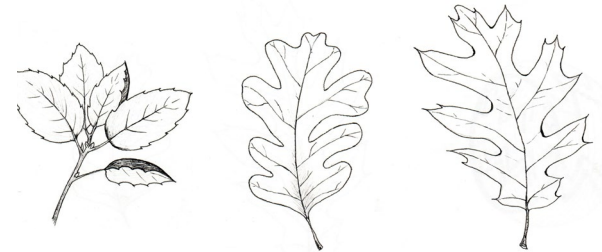
Take a moment to look out at the pond. Do you see any forms of life? Draw the pond and any plants or animals you see.



4. As you follow the trail, take notice of 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.

Sonoma County is home to many oak woodlands. An oak woodland is a type of forest with many oaks. Oak trees are important since their acorns feed many kinds of animals. In this park there are three main types of oaks:

- A. Coastal live oak leaves are dark green, oval, and spiky. They are 1-1 1/2 inches in length.
- B. Valley oak leaves are 2-4 inches long, matte green, covered in soft fuzz with a lobey edge.
- C. Black oak leaves are similar to valley oak leaves in shape but much larger with more pointy edge. They are 4-8 inches long.



Can you find all three types throughout the quest?

5. You'll come to a fork- a split in your path. But which way to go? Or so you might ask. Two from your left, and ever so thin- the Pomo Trail is where you'll begin!

The Pomo Trail is named after a Native American tribe based out of Sonoma County. Their members are now part of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. When their ancestors lived off this land thousands of years ago, they practiced gratitude for the important things in their life.

What are five things you are grateful for?

6. You'll come to a bench, a fine place to rest. With a view so splendid, you'll think it's the best! So sit for a moment. You'll be glad you didn't miss it- Sonoma Mountain stands off in the distance.

Take a seat at the Michael Davis Bench. Sonoma Mountain is an important landmark in our community. Its peak is 2,003 ft high. If you were a bird, it would take you about 9 miles to get to Sonoma Mountain from here.

If you could be a bird, what kind would you be? Can you do your favorite bird call?

7. Do you want to know something cool about oaks? Depending on the season, they have many different looks! Winter, summer, fall and spring, They always offer different bling!

What season is it? How do you know? The oak trees around you can tell you. Just like many other plants, oak trees have seasonal changes. In the spring, new leaves grow in bright green color and flowers begin to grow. In the summer, oak trees lose their flowers and acorns begin to grow in their place. In the fall, acorns reach their full size and fall from the trees. In winter, oak trees may shed some of their leaves.

Do you see any of these signs on a nearby oak tree? If you had to guess the season based on the oaks, what would you guess and why? Write your response in the box.

8. Once you reach the top of the hill, congratulate yourself because that took skill! Take a break on the Charlie Hoerner seat, that was not an easy hill to beat.



As you take a break on the bench, look out at the gorgeous Petaluma views. This ridge trail is called the Panoramic Trail, and for a good reason.

Draw the hill ranges you see from the bench in the box below.

Continue on the Pomo Trail when complete, it will soon merge with the Panorama Trail.

9. After the oak tree and the bench on your left side, head down the steep trail and make sure not to slide! We are almost to the end of our quest and journey, take your time, enjoy it, we are in no hurry.



As you finish up your hike, use the "I notice/I wonder/It reminds me of" prompt from Stop 1 to think of questions about nature that you can research from home.

Write your questions here:

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

