



# WELCOME TO THE CHUMASH TRAIL

## HISTORY OF THE CHUMASH

The Chumash were the early inhabitants of Simi Valley and spoke the language called Hokan. The vast area they called home extended from Topanga Canyon northwest to coastal San Luis Obispo and inland to the San Fernando Valley and west to the crest of the Santa Susanas to Piru. You are walking on land once inhabited by the eastern Chumash people.

The Chumash lived in harmony with the natural resources that provided food and shelter. Native plants and animals were used for food, clothing, medicine, baskets, and tools. The towering oak trees provided the Chumash with an abundance of acorns which were a primary food source. Preparing acorns to be used for food was an activity that involved shelling, using a mortar and pestle to grind the seeds into powder, then rinsing to remove the bitterness of tannic acid. Once the acorn flour was prepared, it would be added to water to make a soup or porridge served as a staple for most meals.

- **CHUMASH INDIAN MUSEUM**
- **SATWIWA NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURAL CENTER**

## THE LAND

The striking rock formations and hilly landscapes indicate the geological timeline unique to this area. Take notice of the siltstone and sandstone revealing the transformations over millions of years. You will see indications of a time when the hills were underwater. Known as the Simi Conglomerate, large rocks were deposited underwater in deep sea canyons. Fossils of ocean invertebrates and vertebrates have been discovered in this area. The Simi-Santa Rosa fault crosses the ridge near the intersection of the Chumash-Rocky Peak trails. Look for offset beds and shattered bedrock as you head north from the Chumash Trail. The land continues to transform as the geological processes evolve. As you make your way, discover the numerous ways the land reveals its geological history.

The Chumash relied on natural resources for life taking only what was essential to their survival and leaving nothing to waste. The Chumash were caretakers of nature. Please *Leave No Trace* so others may continue to be a part of the living history of the Chumash Trail.

- **SANTS BARBARA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
- **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOSSIL MAP**
- **VENTURA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## THE PLANTS

The Chumash Trail offers a diverse array of plants, grasses, bushes, and seasonal wildflowers. At first impression the abundance of grasses in this Riparian Habitat is apparent. Grasses include ripgut, red bromes, foxtail, wild oats, and soft chess. Notice the variety of subtle colors in the vegetation that change with the seasons.

Coastal oak trees spread their limbs providing shade and acorns. These oak trees are environmentally protected to maintain the integrity and history of the area.

As you ascend the trail you'll see more coastal sage scrub also known as Chaparral which provides habitats for a variety of butterflies, spiders, reptiles, birds, and small mammals. Chaparral is not only drought resistant it regenerates quickly after fires have swept through the area.

Springtime excites with a burst of color if the rains have been plentiful. Wildflowers including Lupin, Fiddlenecks, California Fuschia, Mallow, and Golden Yarrow, just to name a few. If you are lucky, you may also see the California state flower, the California Poppy.

- **RIPARIAN HABITAT**
- **COASTAL SAGE SCRUB**
- **COASTAL LIVE OAK**
- **CHAPARRAL**
- **iNATURALIST VC**

## THE ANIMALS

Birds, bees, and animals call this vibrant landscape home and are integral to the thriving ecosystem of the Chumash Trail. Listen to the sounds of a squirrel skittering, a turkey vulture soaring above, bees buzzing, and hummingbirds humming. There are so many wonderful inhabitants to see and watch.

Birds to look for include red-tailed hawks, great-horned owls, mourning doves, hummingbirds, scrub jays, mockingbirds, turkey vultures, crows, and ravens. You may even encounter the California state bird, the California quail. Look for their distinct feather plume extending from their forehead as they forage on the grounds along the trail.

Lizards are a common site and several species may cross your path. Snakes live here too so you'll want to be aware of encountering a Southern Pacific Rattlesnake, San Diego Gopher snake, and California King Snake.

Animals are abundant and if you watch carefully you'll be sure to see Rabbits, Squirrels, gophers, rats, mice, and an occasional skunk. Mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, and deer all coexist within this habitat as well.

The Chumash Trail is home to these creatures. Try to avoid any encounters by staying on the trail and always being aware of your surroundings.

- **AREA WILDLIFE**
- **CONEJO OPEN SPACE FOUNDATION**
- **BIRDS OF VENTURA COUNTY**

LEAVE NO TRACE

