

# Rock Ridge Trail (East)

**The Trails:** Access is taken at three trailheads. One trailhead is off of the north side of Hollytree Drive, immediately east of the park. That trail extends north for more than one and one half miles, where it intersects with an east-west trail that extends easterly for about a mile and a quarter. Another trail extends from the north side of Doubletree Road, north for about one and a quarter miles where intersects the east-west oriented trail. The third trailhead is off of Deerhill Road. All of these trails were in good condition when inspected on May 17 and 18, 2020. Although, some short sections were encroached upon by Mediterranean mustard.

All of these trail segments provide outstanding views of the surrounding hills and of portions of the Oak Park community.

**Geology:** From all trailheads the trail is underlain by Detrital Sediments of Lindero Canyon. From the trailheads off of Hollytree Drive and Doubletree Road the trail climbs over conglomerates of granitic detritus, composed of rounded pebbles, cobbles and small boulders of granitic and lesser metavolcanic rocks in incoherent sandstone matrix - massive to poorly bedded. Higher on the trails are underlain soft, friable and semi-coherent, massive to vaguely bedded sandstone. It is uncertain whether these units are of marine or nonmarine origin. These units are of late-Miocene age, i.e, 5.3 to 9.5 million years.

**Plant Life:** With the exception of the first quarter of a mile, the remainder of the hillsides were burnt over in 2018. The plant along that trail segment was covered by what is easily identified as chaparral. The remainder of the area is recovering from the devastating fire ongoing plant succession, which will evolve each year until it returns to typical chaparral. While I observed deep into the chaparral cover what looked like an old cemetery. A closer inspection lead me to the conclusion that it had been part of a film set. The markers were made of wood and had painted word on them, such as "Here lies old Bill. He wasn't fast enough on the draw." Every headboard was marked differently. Just a couple of years ago I was approach by a gentleman who said he was producing a book about the area of the Oak Park community. He had a pile of old photographs, which he asked me to review in order to determine which photos were not of places in Oak Park. One of the photos was taken from a hill, looking roughly northeasterly. You could see a small western town with a "boot hill" on a low hill beyond the town. I now assume that was the boot hill I had discovered deep in the chaparral. I don't know whether the book was ever published but the faux cemetery is no more.

Plants as encountered along the various trail segment were: Mediterranean mustard, yellow star thistle, deerweed, coast live oak, yerba santa, dodder, telegraph weed, California everlasting, red brome, tree tobacco (from Brazil and poisonous), sugar bush, bindweed, perezia, bush mallow, California encelia, horehound, purple nightshade, chamise, slender sunflower, Spanish clover, Strigose lotus, whispering bells, sow thistle, sawtoothed golden bush, black and purple sages, Braunton's milk vetch, chaparral yucca, rose snapdragon, purple owl's clover, chaparral nolina, hoary leaved ceanothus, California sagebrush, soap plant, narrow-leaved milkweed, long-beaked filagree, wild oats, slender tarweed, toyon, blue elderberry, turkey mullein, prickly poppy, golden yarrow, cliff aster, redberry, white pincushion, morning glory, hoary-leaved ceanothus, woolly blue-curly, laurel sumac, yucca, arroyo willow, bush monkey flower, eastwood manzanita, bird's beak, goldenstar, milk thistle, morning glory, strigose lotus, caterpillar phacelia, redberry, and bush mallow.

**Animal Life:** Animals that may be seen or the track from which may be seen include: birds, such as the turkey vulture, the golden eagle, the red-tailed and the red-shouldered hawks, the American kestrel, the great-horned and the barn owls, the poor-wills, the California quail, the mourning dove, the western scrub-jay, the western flycatcher, the house wren, the California towhee, the Anna's hummingbird, the English and the white-crowned sparrows, the common flicker, the common crow and the common raven; reptiles, such as the southern Pacific rattlesnake, the San Diego gopher snake, the California King snake, and the western fence lizard, among others; and mammals, such as the brush rabbit, the desert cottontail, the California ground squirrel, the Botta's pocket gopher, the agile kangaroo rat, deer mice, the dusky wood rat, the coyote, the gray fox, the ringtail cat, the southern California weasel, the striped skunk, the bobcat, the mountain lion and the mule deer.

While mountain lions are present in the hills around Simi Valley, encounters are unlikely, but you should always be alert. It is best that you do not hike alone, and that you keep small children close at hand. Rattlesnakes may be encountered — Stay on the trail and avoid them when they are encountered — Be observant and never try to handle them. Do not handle any wildlife, including bats, even if they appear to be injured or sick. Remember, you are visitors to their homes.

**Mike Kuhn,  
Executive Chair,  
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*Please see **Trail Safety Tips** at this trail's main page for more info.*