

San Rafael Wilderness

Santa Lucia and Santa Barbara Ranger Districts
Los Padres National Forest



Welcome to the San Rafael Wilderness!

The San Rafael Wilderness is located in the San Rafael and Sierra Madre Mountain Ranges in southeastern Santa Barbara County. The two main corridors into the wilderness are the Sisquoc River and Manzanita Creek. The San Rafael was established as a primitive area by the Chief of the Forest Service on January 19, 1932 and then contained 79,900 acres. On March 21, 1968 the San Rafael became the first primitive area in the Nation reclassified as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964. Sixty three years and two expansions later, it contains 197,380 acres.

Wilderness Ethic

What is wilderness? A quote from the Wilderness Act sums it up neatly: "Where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man and himself is a visitor who does not remain." Wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. Please preserve this experience for others by minimizing your impact on the land.

- Pack out all trash.
- Camp in Forest Service recreation campsites.
- Practice *Low Impact* camping.
- Bury all human waste 6-8 inches deep, 200 feet from all water sources.
- Stay on trails. Don't shortcut trail switchbacks.
- Keep stream and pools clean. Wash or bathe 200 feet or more from streams.
- Respect historical sites, private property, vegetation and wildlife.

Pack Stock

Confine pack and saddle stock at least 200 feet from streams, lake shores, trails, and camping areas. Rotate them through the area to reduce trampling and overgrazing. Place a picket line between two eight-inch-diameter trees over hardened ground where vegetation damage can be avoided. Use a highline or hobbles to restrain stock and prevent trampling of tree roots. Move your pickets frequently to avoid grazing an area to below three inches of stubble height. Pack in supplemental, certified weed-free feed, processed grain and haycubes or pellets to cut down on grazing needs. Break up and scatter horse manure. Return area to its natural state.

Wilderness Safety Tips-No 911 Here

- Let others know your travel schedule and route.
- Travel with a companion to make your trip both safe and enjoyable. Plan ahead. Carry water, maps, a first aid kit and other necessities.
- Watch for poison oak, rattlesnakes, and ticks.
- Local water sources must be boiled or filtered for safe drinking.

Mountain Bike and OHV Users-Caution!

Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not permitted in the Wilderness. This restriction includes mountain bikes.



Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
www.fs.fed.us/r5

Los Padres National Forest
www.fs.fed.us/r5/lospadres

Trail Access

Upper Sisquoc Trail: Take Highway 166 to Cuyama. Turn south on Kirschenmann Road, east on Foothill, south on Santa Barbara Canyon Road which dead ends at the trailhead.

Middle Sisquoc Trail: Take Highway 166 to New Cuyama turn south on Perkins Road and continue to dead end at trailhead for Rocky Ridge and Bull Ridge Trails. Rocky Ridge Trail connects with Jackson Trail at Montgomery Potrero. Bull Ridge Trail connects with Sweetwater Trail at Salisbury Potrero.

Lower Sisquoc and Manzana Trails: Highway 154 to either Figueroa Mountain Road or Happy Canyon Road to Nira Campground.

Santa Cruz Trailhead: Take Highway 154 to Paradise Road (Santa Ynez Recreation Area), 5 miles to Los Prietos Ranger Station continue 1.5 miles to Upper Oso Campground Road intersection. Trailhead parking is adjacent to Upper Oso Campground. Upper Oso Campground has corrals available for overnight camping.

Trail conditions vary from year to year; check with Santa Lucia Ranger District (805) 925-9538 or Santa Barbara Ranger District (805) 967-3481 for trail conditions before going into the backcountry.

Campfire Regulation

- You must have a valid California Campfire Permit to use a wood fire or stove in all areas of the San Rafael Wilderness at all times.
- Campfire permits are available at free-of-charge from any Forest Service Office.
- Wood fires may be prohibited during high fire season.
- During very extreme conditions, even stoves may be prohibited.
- Use established fire rings, fire pans or mound fires where fires are permitted.
- Keep fires small. Use only sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out all campfires completely and scatter cold ashes.

Wildlife in the San Rafael

Hundreds of species of animals live in the San Rafael Wilderness - thousands if you include the insects and other microfauna. The casual observer may not see most of these, but if you keep your eyes open and listen carefully, you may spot a few.

Most trails follow the creeks and rivers. These areas are called riparian zones and provide food, water, and shelter for most species of wildlife. In the water are rainbow trout, western pond turtles, and aquatic garter snakes, to name a few. Bordering the water you may find the western toad or hear the call of the pacific and California treefrogs. From April through June you can hear the many songbirds that nest in riparian zones, such as the yellow warbler, house wren, orange-crowned warbler, and plain titmouse. Further from the creek, up in the brush, you may hear the scrub jay, California quail, and mountain quail.

Keep a close eye on the trail, too - black bear, mountain lion, deer, bobcat, fox and coyote often leave tracks or scat. Don't forget to look up! The California condor has been reintroduced into upper Lion Canyon near Montgomery Potrero on Sierra Madre Ridge. Other large birds include the golden eagle, turkey vulture, and red-tailed hawk.

These are just some of the common species seen in the San Rafael Wilderness. Look closely and you will be surprised at how much life you see!

Black Bear Safety

The best way to avoid bear problems is not to invite bears. Remember to keep a clean camp! Bears are attracted to odors from food and refuse. Hang your food in a tree when not in camp and at night. Never approach bears, especially if there are cubs around.

Mountain Lion Safety

Mountain lion attacks are very rare, but can happen. Children should not be left unattended. If you spot a mountain lion that looks interested in you, leave the area. If attacked, stand up, fight back, shout, and throw rocks.

Heritage Resources

The Chumash Indians lived within the area we now call the San Rafael Wilderness--but they have not left the land. Modern Chumash continue to draw upon the land's bounty and they continue to use special places for traditional religious practices.

The rock paintings and carvings left by ancient Chumash are particularly fragile. This art and other archeological and historic sites are protected by law. Please do your part by not collecting artifacts that you might find during your visit. Should you be fortunate enough to find one of these rare Chumash paintings, please take the time to cool off and remove your backpack and other equipment. Move slowly and respectfully. Remember that dust stirred up by your feet can chemically bond to the paintings, dulling colors and encouraging growth of bacteria. If you are in a large group, view the art in smaller numbers--depending on the size of the rock shelter. Please do not touch the paintings or put any foreign substances on the rock art. Campfire smoke is extremely damaging to rock art, so please remember not to build campfires anywhere near the paintings.

Other points of interest include the Manzana Schoolhouse and the standing ruins of homesteads along the Sisquoc River. These sites are all that remain of a vigorous farming community that settled the flats along the river around the turn-of-the-century. The South Fork Cabin is a historic Forest Service line shack that has sheltered generations of backcountry rangers. The Dabney Cabin, nestled on a small terrace above Manzana Creek, was built in 1914 as a retreat for the family of Charles Dabney.

All archeological sites are protected under the Archeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C.470ee). On lands administered by the Forest Service, it is unlawful to excavate, remove, disturb, deface, or destroy any historic or prehistoric building, structure, ruin, site, artifact, or object, or to collect, appropriate, excavate, damage, disturb, or destroy historic or prehistoric artifacts. Violators are subject to arrest. Conviction can carry criminal penalties of up to five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines. Cultural resource laws are strictly enforced in Los Padres National Forest.

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