

OC Parks

Jr. Ranger



West Region





OC Parks

OC Parks encompasses regional, wilderness, historical and coastal facilities throughout the County of Orange, California. Featuring approximately 60,000 acres of parkland, open space and shoreline, Orange County's award-winning parks and programs are enjoyed by millions of residents and visitors each year, in ways as diverse as the parks themselves.

Our Mission

We preserve and enhance OC Parks' natural and cultural resources for recreation, education and exploration.

This Book Belongs To:

Name: _____ Age: _____

Favorite OC Park: _____

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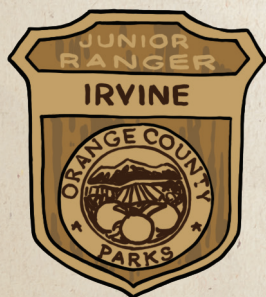


OC Parks Jr. Ranger Program

The OC Parks Jr. Ranger Program encourages park guests to explore the outdoor world within OC Parks by developing a sense of belonging, becoming a part of nature and feeling empowered to be stewards of Orange County's natural and cultural resources.

The OC Parks Jr. Ranger Program includes 20 of OC Parks' amazing parks and historic sites throughout the County of Orange. The sites are divided into four geographic areas (north, south, east and west), with a separate activity booklet for each region.

- Complete the activities for each park to receive the park's unique Jr. Ranger badge.
- Earn badges from all five parks in the region and receive a Jr. Ranger vest.
- Earn all 20 OC Parks Jr. Ranger badges to receive the grand prize, a Jr. Ranger backpack!



Instructions

Step 1: To earn a park's Jr. Ranger badge, complete at least one "Anywhere Activity" and the specific pages for that park. Anywhere Activities can be done at any park location and are encouraged to be completed multiple times - it's a new experience each time! Additional copies of these activities can be downloaded at ocparks.com.

Step 2: Show your completed activities to staff or volunteers at the park office or nature center. They will administer the Jr. Ranger oath, sign off on your pages and present you with a park badge.

Step 3: Using this booklet, repeat steps 1 and 2 at each of the five locations in the selected region.

Step 4: To receive your west region prize, bring all five badges or your fully completed activity booklet to the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center at Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve. Be sure to check current operating hours prior to your visit. Appointments are recommended by emailing jr.ranger@ocparks.com.

If you have already completed another regional activity booklet and have received your Jr. Ranger vest, congratulations! You're well on your way to receiving the grand prize!

Step 5: Once you have earned all 20 Jr. Ranger Program badges, bring them to OC Parks Headquarters located at Irvine Ranch Historic Park (13042 Old Myford Road, Irvine, CA 92602) to receive your grand prize. Appointments are required by emailing jr.ranger@ocparks.com.

A Note to Adults: You are strongly encouraged to let your learner take the lead on all activities. They are designed to promote curiosity and a sense of wonder. Getting correct answers is not nearly as important as having an immersive outdoor learning experience.

West Region Introduction

OC Parks in the western region of Orange County are incredibly diverse. There are more people living within 5 miles of Mile Square Regional Park in Fountain Valley than any other OC Parks facility. Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve helps protect one of Southern California's last coastal salt marshes, home to several endangered and threatened species. Laguna Coast Wilderness Park is part of a network of preserves that make up one of the largest coastal greenbelts in the state, a strip of natural vegetation protecting land that stretches all the way from the coast to the inland city of Irvine. With playgrounds, a butterfly garden, plenty of great picnicking spots and a 123-acre wilderness area, Mason Regional Park is a great spot for a family adventure. The Old Orange County Courthouse is Southern California's oldest court building and has been witness to several historic court cases that shaped Orange County into what it is today. Each of these sites offer unique opportunities to explore Orange County in various ways.



Meet Ranger Sage

West Region Jr. Ranger Mascot



Hi there! It's Ranger Sage, your friendly neighborhood raccoon. I'm not picky about where I live, but I must say, the parks in Orange County are rather spectacular. When I'm not in a dumpster looking for snacks, you can find me scurrying through some of my favorite spots like Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve, Laguna Coast Wilderness Park, Mason Regional Park, Mile Square Regional Park and the Old Orange County Courthouse. They all have something unique to offer, whether it is trees to climb on, mice to eat or more trash cans to explore!

Although I'm an elusive critter that prefers to explore at night, you can often spot the tracks I leave behind. Besides, at least one of us Jr. Ranger Mascots have to protect the parks after dark! My awesome mask helps me camouflage at night, making evening patrol even easier. When you're out and about during the day exploring my beloved natural spaces and historic sites, stop by the ranger station and say hi. We've always got a tail to tell!

Essentials of Hiking

Preparedness is Key!

OC Parks are for everyone to enjoy. In the space below, draw who you are adventuring with today!

Who do you want to bring with you next time?

Have you heard of the 10 Essentials of Hiking? It's recommended you pack the items below to be prepared for any unexpected situation in the outdoors. Circle the items you brought on your adventure today.



Appropriate footwear



Maps and compass/GPS



Water



Snacks



Layered clothing



Safety items



First aid kit



Multi-tool



Sun protection






















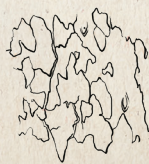




Shelter

What additional items might you bring next time?

Park Bingo

Nature is All Around

Look for each of these objects as you make your way through the park. When you find one, mark it with an X. Once you get five in a row up, down or diagonal, shout BINGO! Keep exploring and see what else you can discover and if you can get more than one BINGO!

				
Singing bird	Clouds	Flower	Worm	Tall tree
				
Nest	Compound leaf	Tall grass	Hummingbird	Flower bud
		FREE!		
Shell	Rocks	FREE!	Seed	Spider
				
Lizard	Web	Fungus	Elliptical leaf	Fish
				
Puzzle bark	Woodpecker	Broad leaf	Squirrel	Flying insect

Nature Journaling

Improve Your Observation

Nature journaling can be practiced in almost any space and can help create connections with the environment around us through focused observation.

Find an area within the park that you would like to observe and document. Spend 3-5 minutes in that location and pay attention to details you might otherwise overlook. Use your senses to focus on what you observed. What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you see?

Use the space below to draw or describe your observations.



Zoom in, zoom out: Observe an organism as a whole then focus on one small feature (for example a leaf or feather). Finish by observing the organism in the big picture of its habitat.

Diversity Blitz: Find as many different organisms as possible around you and categorize them by type (for example flowers, trees, bugs, etc.).

What's Worth Preserving or Enhancing in OC Parks?



Name three things you discovered in this park today.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ask someone you know what three things they enjoy most about this park.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are they the same or different than your items?

Why are these things worth preserving?

What would you change or add to enhance this park?

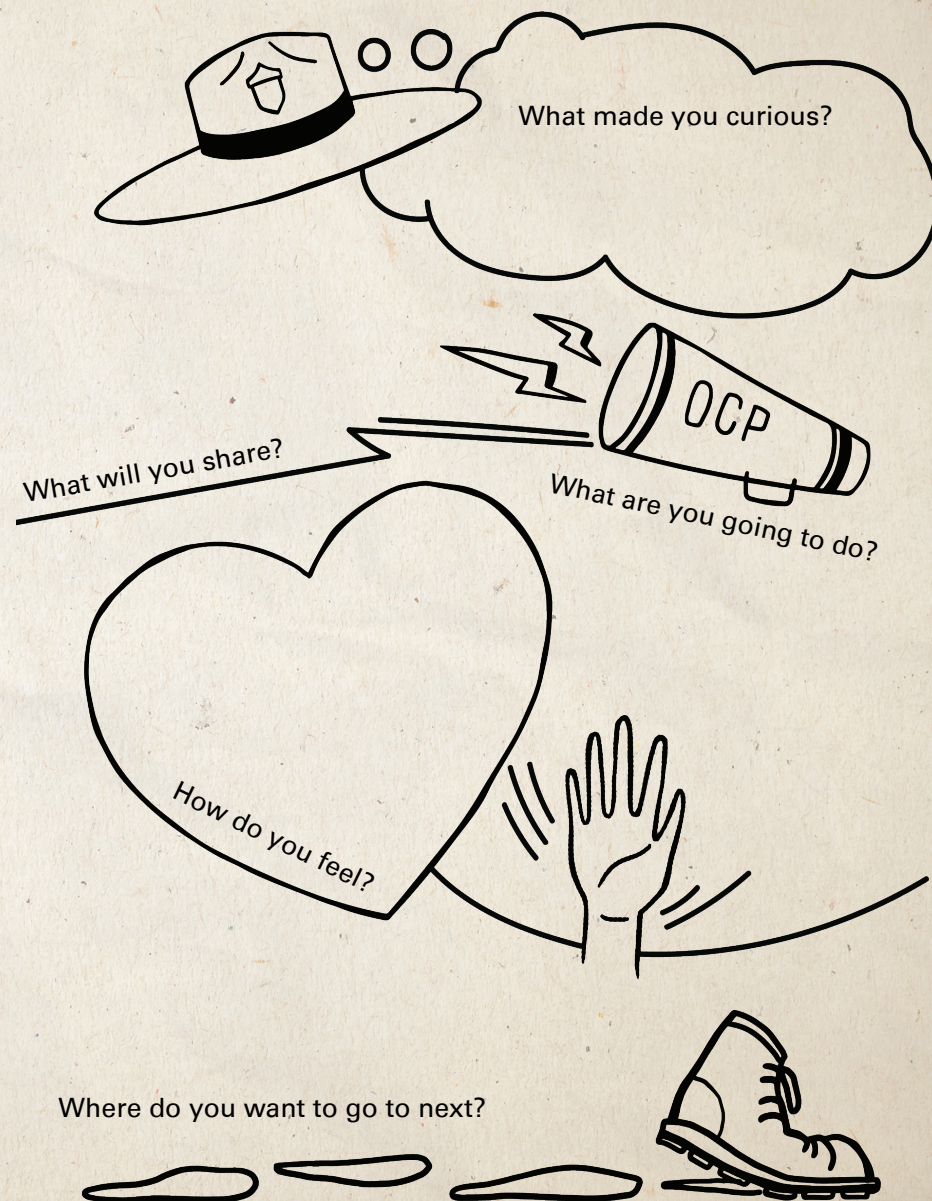
Park Protectors

OC Parks preserves and enhances the natural and cultural resources found throughout our parks for recreation, education and exploration. This includes, but is not limited to plants, animals, geological features, fossils and artifacts. Protecting these amazing resources allows future generations to enjoy them, just like you are doing today!

Draw at least three features you feel are important to protect, preserve and enhance for people to enjoy for years to come inside the orange below.



Tell Your OC Parks Jr. Ranger Story!



Laguna Coast Wilderness Park

Why Did the Bobcat Cross the Road?

Laguna Canyon Road (SR-133) divides Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and separates most of the park from Barbara's Lake, a primary source of water for wildlife in the area.

The wildlife corridor on Barbara's Lake Trail provides animals an option to cross under the road and avoid fast moving cars.



Use a park map to navigate to the undercrossing about 100 yards east of the Nix Nature Center parking lot.

As you approach the undercrossing for Laguna Canyon Road, look for signs of animals utilizing this corridor. They may include tracks and footprints, feathers, scat (poop) and bird droppings or nests.

Draw three signs of wildlife activity you see in the space below:



Barbara's Lake is the only natural lake in Orange County and is named after conservationist Barbara Rabinowitsh who worked to protect the area from development.



If you were an animal, would you feel safe using the wildlife corridor? Why or why not? Are there any improvements or changes to the corridor you think would make an animal use it more?

Draw your design for a new crossing:

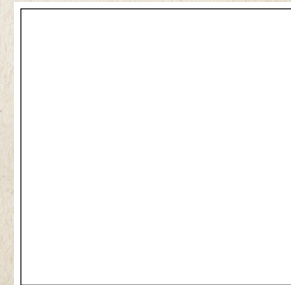
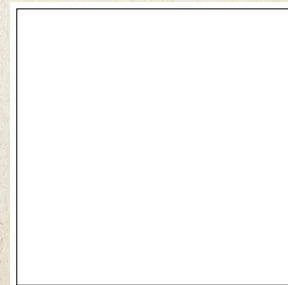
Walk through the crossing and travel under the busy road.

You made it through the wildlife corridor! Animals move to different locations if they need food, water and shelter. Explore the trails on this side of the corridor. Can you find examples of these necessities on this side? Draw an example of each in the space provided below.

Water

Shelter

Food



Mason Regional Park

Tricky Turtles

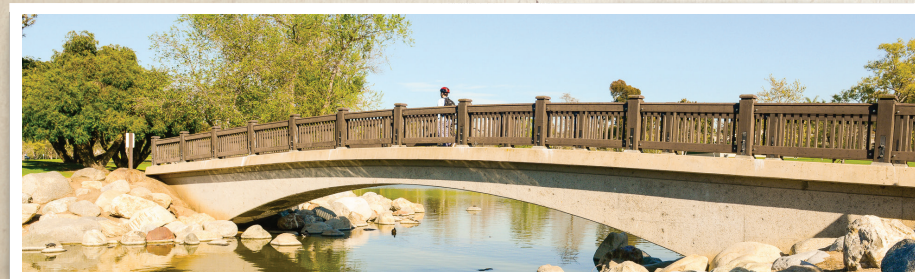
Red-eared sliders are not naturally found in Orange County and are native to the Midwest and northern Mexico. This reptile is considered one of the world's 100 most invasive species by the Humane World for Animals due to its 30-year lifespan, adaptability to new environments and lack of predatory animals.

When pet turtles are no longer desired as pets, their owners frequently release them into the wild. Do you think this could be harmful to the natural environment? Why or why not?



Red-eared sliders heavily compete with native western pond turtles, a species of special concern with critically low numbers in the wild.

Introduced species are plants or animals that are transported to a new area where they don't typically live. Invasive species are introduced plants or animals that are harmful to their new habitat. Never release animals in parks. Instead, talk to a ranger about the best course of action.



Make your way to the lake to observe the turtles. Hint: The bridge is normally a good area to spot invasive turtles. Be sure to look in the water and along the lake edge.

Use the notebook page below to record your turtle observations.

Turtle-y Thoughts at Mason

How many turtles can you find?

Compare the number of turtles you see to the number of other animals using the lake. How does their population compare to other species?

*Make a prediction: What will happen to the population of red-eared sliders at Mason Regional Park over time?
Hint: They have no natural predators in Orange County.*

If you had a pet you could no longer care for, how would you find it a new home instead of releasing it in the park?

Mile Square Regional Park

Nature Trail Memory Map

Welcome to Mile Square Regional Park! In the northern portion of the park, near the archery range, you'll find the Nature Area. Its entrance is on the south side of the park road, across from the north lake near Freedom Hall.

Take some time to explore the trails and create a map based on your experience. Create symbols to mark the interesting and unique features you observe on the trail. Note your symbols on the map legend in the lower right corner of the page.



Before it was an OC Parks facility, Mile Square Regional Park was used as a military airfield during World War II.

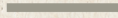




Bonus!

Give your completed map to someone else and have them try to find some of the features you listed along the Nature Trail!

Entrance to
the Nature Area

Legend

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
|  | Trail |
|  | Pond |
|  | Flower
(example) |

Old Orange County Courthouse

Designed for Dignity and Drama

The Old Orange County Courthouse was Orange County's tallest building when it was completed in 1901. Today, it's the oldest surviving courthouse in Southern California. In the early 20th century, the courthouse included the County jail, every government office and the superior court. The building was designed by architect Charles Lincoln Strange in Romanesque Revival style, popular for civic buildings at the time. This design style features many architectural and decorative elements to emphasize the significance of grand public buildings.

Complete the scavenger hunt below by finding examples of the following decorative and symbolic features found throughout the courthouse grounds:



Relief carving



Corinthian column



Baluster



Acanthus leaf



Arches



Finial



The design of the Old Orange County Courthouse was selected during an 1899 public competition sponsored by the Orange County Board of Supervisors!



Imagine you are an architect at the turn of the 20th century. Use the space below to create your entry for the County's design competition. Remember, the new courthouse needs to be a symbol of progress and demonstrate the power and importance of the rapidly growing county!

Large empty rectangular box for architectural design entry.

Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve

Salt Marsh Superheroes

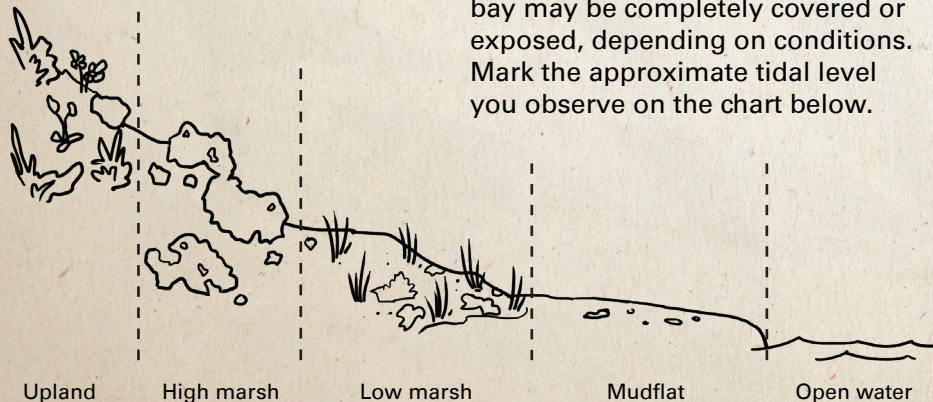
In just 12 hours, the water level in Upper Newport Bay can rise or fall by more than 10 feet! That change in water level happens twice a day, every day at this salt marsh.

The fluctuating water levels are called tides and are caused by the moon's gravitational forces. Organisms must adapt to living in both wet and dry conditions to survive in the marsh.



The water level can be observed almost anywhere in the park, but the Delhi Trail near the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center is a great place to start. Look at the water level. Do you think the tide is high or low? Why?

During tidal swings, sections of the bay may be completely covered or exposed, depending on conditions. Mark the approximate tidal level you observe on the chart below.



Observe the living things in the marsh and create your own salt marsh super organism! What special traits (adaptations) or salt marsh superpowers does it have to survive the daily high and low tides? You can choose adaptations from the plants and animals below or create your own.

Hint: Visit the Muth Center to find examples of salt marsh superpowers.



American coot

Has lobed feet for walking on mud.



Pickleweed

Stores salt in its branches and sheds them.



Salt grass

Sweats salt out through its pores.



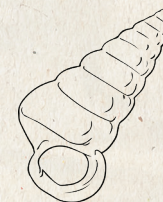
Fiddler crab

Burrows in the mud during low tide.



Long-billed curlew

Uses its extra long beak to find food in the mudflats.



California horn snail

Can close its shell with a watertight seal.



Salt marsh fleabane

Will only grow when conditions are favorable.



Striped mullet

Jumps in the air when oxygen levels in the water get too low.

Draw or write about your salt marsh superhero in the space below!

Notes

Notes

Notes

West Region Checklist

Always Check Before You Go!

Anywhere Activities	Completion Date	Staff Initials
Essentials of Hiking		
Park Bingo		
Nature Journaling		
What's Worth Preserving or Enhancing in OC Parks?		
Park Protectors		
Tell Your OC Parks Jr. Ranger Story!		

Park Name	Completion Date	Staff Initials	Badge Received
Laguna Coast Wilderness Park			
William R. Mason Regional Park			
Mile Square Regional Park			
Old Orange County Courthouse			
Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve			

The OC Parks Jr. Ranger Oath:

As an OC Parks Jr. Ranger, I promise I will help protect our parks and help our rangers teach others about them. I will help keep our parks clean and continue to learn more about nature and conservation.



Visit all 20 OC Parks Jr. Ranger Program Locations!

North Region

- **Carbon Canyon Regional Park** | 4442 Carbon Canyon Rd., Brea
- **Ralph B. Clark Regional Park** | 8800 Rosecrans Ave., Buena Park
- **Ted Craig Regional Park** | 3300 State College Blvd., Fullerton
- **George Key Ranch Historic Park** | 625 W. Bastanchury Rd., Placentia
- **Yorba Regional Park** | 7600 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim

South Region

- **Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park** | 28373 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Niguel
- **Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park** | 33401 Ortega Hwy., San Juan Capistrano
- **Heritage Hill Historical Park** | 25151 Serrano Rd., Lake Forest
- **Laguna Niguel Regional Park** | 28241 La Paz Rd., Laguna Niguel
- **Thomas F. Riley Wilderness Park** | 30952 Oso Parkway, Coto de Caza

East Region

- **Arden: Helena Modjeska Historic House and Gardens** | 29042 Modjeska Canyon Rd., Silverado
- **Irvine Regional Park** | 1 Irvine Park Rd., Orange
- **Peters Canyon Regional Park** | 8548 E. Canyon View Ave., Orange
- **O'Neill Regional Park** | 30892 Trabuco Canyon Rd., Trabuco Canyon
- **Santiago Oaks Regional Park** | 2145 N. Windes Dr., Orange

West Region

- **Laguna Coast Wilderness Park** | 18751 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach
- **William R. Mason Regional Park** | 18712 University Dr., Irvine
- **Mile Square Regional Park** | 16801 Euclid St., Fountain Valley
- **Old Orange County Courthouse** | 211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana
- **Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve** | 2301 University Dr., Newport Beach



For more information, scan QR code.

Para más información, escanee el código QR.

더 많은 정보가 필요하다면, QR 코드를 스캔하세요.

Muốn có thêm thông tin, xin quét mã số QR.

欲了解更多信息, 請掃描二維碼。

