

SUNSET RIDGE DISCOVERY HIKE AT CAMP WINACKA

Girls, leaders, and camp staff are invited to explore Camp! The trails at Camps Winacka and Whispering Oaks are outstanding opportunities for camp orientation, physical activity, nature learning and inquiry, and discovery of the wonders of nature. Leaders can pick up a trails map, and the troop or unit can explore this part of the camp **in a one-hour hike**. The trails map and this guide can be viewed online by leaders, to plan their troop's camp stay.

Themes. This hike explores three habitats at Camp Winacka: the meadow ecosystem (below the lodge), chaparral ecosystem (with "tunnels" formed by the Manzanita shrubs), and oak woodland ecosystem (near the flagpole and at Sunset Rocks).

Walk from Lodge to the flagpole, then downhill through the oak trees.

*The oak trees are a small **oak woodland ecosystem**.*

Walk over the wooden bridge into the meadow and follow the trail.

*The grasses in the meadow are part of a **meadow ecosystem**.*

Walk across the road, to a trail that starts with about 10 wooden steps. Walk up the steps and continue on the trail.

*This trail goes uphill through a **chaparral ecosystem** with manzanita shrubs and some undergrowth.*

Stop #1. Manzanita Tunnel.

This stop gives you a chance to look closely at the manzanita shrubs.

***Manzanita.** Large shrub that has smooth dull red bark and grey-green leaves. Manzanita means "little apple" in Spanish. It is one of the best food sources for birds and animals in this habitat.*

Walk across the camp road, just after you pass the cabins at Rocky Ridge Unit. That is the beginning of Sunset Ridge Trail. Follow the trail uphill.

Stop #2. Sunset Rocks. This stop is the first of two large exposed (not covered by soil) flat rock formations on this hike. Sit on the rocks and rub the surfaces.

On a clear day, you can see the ocean to the west!

*Look for a **white vein** through the grey rock. It is mostly composed of the minerals **quartz**. Look for minerals that are black and shine in the sun, they are **mica**.*

*Notice the large **metate** (indentation) in the rock where Diegueno Indian women ground acorns into flour.*

Walk further away from the trail and climb to the highest point on the rocks. This a great place to return to view the sunset!

Look for the three mountain peaks to the south. From the left, they are North Peak, Middle Peak and Cuyamaca Peak.

Walk back to Sunset Ridge trail and turn left (north).

If there are clouds in the sky, can you tell which way the wind is blowing by watching them? If you can see big birds soaring in the sky, what are they looking for?

Stop #3. Live oaks. Look around you at the trees. This is an **oak woodland** ecosystem. Most of the oak trees survived the fire, and they sprouted new branches and leaves.

On the right are small Engelmann and coast live oak trees.

Engelmann oak. Look at the dull bluish-green oval-shaped leaves. Engelmann oaks are “endemic” to San Diego County, meaning they only grow in this county.

Coast live oak. Next to it is a coast live oak tree. It has cupped, shiny, dark-green leaves with jagged edges. Both of these trees keep their leaves all year round, and therefore are called “live oaks.”

Walk to the end of Sunset Ridge trail and turn right onto Tower Trail.

Encourage the girls to look for signs of animals in the trail. They might see deer and raccoon tracks, nests, gopher holes, spider webs and scat (poop).

Stop #4. Flat rocks. This stop a large exposed flat rock formation.

*Look again for **quartz** and **mica**. Look for evidence of rust (orange stain) that indicate rocks have a high iron content.*

*Each **lichen** species has a distinctive color, encourage the girls to discover how many species of lichen are on these rocks. Pour water on some lichens. What happens?*

Stop #5. Meadow overlook. Look to your right. Below is the meadow at the center of Camp Winacka.

The grasses are brown for most of the year, and green in the spring after the winter rains. The trees and shrubs are green all year.

Walk along the trail through the **chaparral ecosystem**.

Notice the stems of the manzanita shrubs and the remains of oak tree trunks. Do they remind you of something or somebody? They are the remains of the 2003 wildfire that swept through the area.

Walk into Morningside Unit and past the shelter. Walk downhill on the stairs. Turn left on the road and walk to the Lodge.

Alternate route: On the right side of the shelter is a camp road, and you can walk on that road back to the Lodge.

*This trail goes downhill on the stairs, through the **oak woodland ecosystem**. The road enters the **meadow ecosystem** that surrounds the Lodge.*

Ask each girl to share her favorite place or memory from this Discovery Hike!

WESTSIDE DISCOVERY HIKE AT CAMP WINACKA

Girls, leaders, and camp staff are invited to explore Camp! The trails at Camps Winacka and Whispering Oaks are outstanding opportunities for camp orientation, physical activity, and nature learning. Leaders can pick up a map and interpretive guide for the trails, and the troop or unit can explore this part of Camp Winacka in a **two-hour hike**. The trails map and this Discovery Hike guide will be available online for leaders planning their troop's stay at camp.

Themes. This hike explores three themes.

- Patterns, textures and colors of rocks tell a story!
- Look for and learn six familiar plants at camp!
- Recognize you are walking through three different habitats--oak woodland, chaparral, and meadow!

Walk along the road to the Morningside Unit (112 ft) or go up the stairs to it. Find the beginning of Tower Trail at the bathroom end of the building on the uphill side. Walk up Tower Trail to stop #1 (486 ft).

Notice the stems of the manzanita shrubs and the remains of oak tree trunks. Do any of them remind you of something or somebody? They are the remains of the 2003 wildfire that swept through the area.

Stop #1. Flat rocks. This stop is the first of two large exposed (not covered by soil) flat rock outcrops on this hike. Start the Scavenger hunt. Find lichen (pronounced LIKE-en), mica (MIKE-ah), and iron stains.

*Look for small flakes in the rock that are black and shine in the sun, they are **mica**. Minerals that have high iron content oxidize (rust) and turn orange.*

*Each **lichen** species has a distinctive color, encourage the girls to discover how many species of lichen are on these rocks. Pour some water on some lichen. How does that change it?*

Walk further up the Tower Trail until it intersects Eagle Peak Trail (304 ft). Turn right (north) on Eagle Peak Trail to stop #2 (346 ft). This part of the trail is on a road.

Stop #2. Great oaks. Look for the very large, spreading Engelmann oak tree in the meadow on your right. Isn't she beautiful? Next to the large oak is a dead oak tree, which burned in the 2003 wildfire. Most of the oak trees survived the fire, and they sprouted new branches and leaves.

On the left are small Engelmann and coast live oak trees.

***Engelmann oak.** Look at the dull bluish-green oval-shaped leaves. Engelmann oaks are "endemic" to San Diego, meaning they only grow in this county.*

***Coast live oak.** Next to it is a small coast live oak tree. It has cupped, shiny, dark-green leaves with jagged edges. Both of these trees keep their leaves all year round.*

Walk past the road that leads to the tower (421 ft). Look for a trail to the left. Take this trail to stop #3 (211 ft), with a big oak on the left and the big view to the west.

Notice the large oak tree on the left. Which species of oak is it? Explore how the tree has grown up through the rocks. What's happening here? Ask the girls for ideas. (Soil is being created by tree trunk splitting the rock and breaking it apart.)

Stop #3. Western Overlook.

Look out in the distance. The flat topped mountain range in the distance to the north (right) is Palomar Mountain. This a great place to return to view the sunset!

Look below, to the meadows that are green or brown, depending on the season, and the woodlands, which have green trees all year. If there are any clouds in the sky, can you tell which way the wind is blowing by watching them? If there are birds soaring in the sky, they might be hawks looking for small animals on the ground for their next meal.

Invite girls to stand in the wind and move their bodies. Read this slowly to the girls.

Pretend you are a hawk in the sky. Flap your wings twice and then glide on the wind currents, glide some more, flap your wings, glide, glide. Now you see a mouse in the field and swoop down to pick it up with your strong beak.

Now stand up and you are a blade of grass. Keep your feet together and don't move them. The wind blows your body to one side, then another, round and round.

Now stand straight and you are a tree with deep roots. The wind blows but you don't move.

Now dance with the wind by creating a dance with another girl. One pretends to be the wind, the other girl is an eagle flying in the wind.

Walk back on the same trail to Eagle Peak Trail and turn right (south). Take the fork to the Tower. Stand at the base of the Tower ramp(206 ft); to your left is the beginning of the trail to Panorama Point.

Stop #4. Panorama Point. Walk to Panorama Point (357ft). Look out from Panorama Point, the highest point on camp, at 4097 feet above sea level.

Where is downtown San Diego? How far away is it? (30 miles) Where is Mexico? Where is your community?

Turn around and look toward camp. Can you see the meadow next to the Lodge? Look to the right (south) and see Sunset Ridge, which has many large boulders. Panorama Point is another great place to return for a view of the sunset.

Walk back to the Tower, retracing your steps. Notice the buckwheat plants. Then walk back down to Eagle Peak Trail. Turn right (south). Stay on this trail past the junction with Tower Trail. Turn left on Los Caballos Trail (598 ft).

Walk across the open meadow and into the chaparral, and look for the next stop on the left (512 ft)

California buckwheat. *In the spring and early summer, it has white flowers. In the late summer and fall, the seeds are dry and a rusty-brown color. This is a common plant at camp and an important food source for wildlife.*

Encourage the girls to look for signs of animals in the road. Ask what they might see (tracks, nests, gopher holes, ants, spider webs and scat (poop).

Stop #5. Shrubs. Notice the manzanita and sage plants. Can you find other plants that you've seen before?

Walk onward, on Los Caballos Trail (515 ft)

Manzanita. *Large shrub that has smooth dull red bark and grey-green leaves. Manzanita means "little apple" in Spanish. It is one of the best food sources for animals in this habitat.*

White sage. *Small shrub with light green leaves. It may have tall bloom stalks sticking up out of it. Pick a leaf, rub it between your fingers and smell it.*

Stop #6. Another flat rock. Look for more geological features on the Scavenger hunt.

Continue down Los Caballos Trail (48 ft) to the next rock outcrop.

Look to the left for the **white vein** through the grey rock. It is mostly composed of the minerals **quartz** and **feldspar**. Can you find a feldspar crystal that is really big?

Can you find an **inclusion**, the piece of grey rock inside the white rock?

Stop #7 More flat rocks. Find veins and contacts.

Look for a **white vein** that is folded like a letter "S." Notice the three metate (indentations) in the rock where Diegueno Indian women ground acorns into flour.

Walk on Los Caballos Trail until it ends at the road near the corrals (685 ft)

There are two ways back to the lodge. Follow the camp road or discover two other habitats using a connecting camp trail.

Walk left on the road (x ft). Look for Meadow Trail on the right that is about 100 ft. from the Rocky Ridge cabins. It is marked with only a "Trail" sign.

Follow Meadow Trail downhill, over the road, on the small wooden bridge, and back to the Lodge.

Look around you at the trees. This is an **oak woodland** habitat. Turn left (north) onto the camp road, toward Rocky Ridge unit.

*This trail goes downhill through a **chaparral habitat** with manzanita shrubs and some undergrowth. Then cross the road into the **meadow habitat**.*

Ask each girl to share her favorite place or memory from this Discovery Hike!

LEADERS' GUIDE TO WESTSIDE DISCOVERY HIKE

Summary of hike route. This hike will take you from the back of the Lodge, down to the interior camp trail, then on to the Morningside Unit. Here you will take Tower Trail to Eagle Peak Trail, then north to Western Overlook. Then you will head south back down Eagle Peak Trail to Towers, on to Panorama Point, then go back to Eagle Peak Trail and head south to its junction with Los Caballos Trail. You will follow Los Caballos Trail to its intersection with the interior camp trail by the Equestrian Facility. Return to the lodge. To help you, the distances from one place to another are in parentheses within the text.

Scavenger hunt. This is an option for the hike, and leader needs to make and bring copies to camp. You can use one checklist for each hike group of 4-8 girls and an adult, or make a copy for each buddy pair. The scavenger hunt is designed to encourage the girls to discover and experience some of the wonders of nature. To know and understand the outdoor world we must experience it by seeing, touching, hearing, smelling and sometimes even tasting! In order to live *with* the environment, modern society should have an appreciation, care, and concern for natural forces and beings.

Explain to the group that the items on the Scavenger Hunt will be found at various stops along the hike. They need to use their sense of adventure to find them all. Check off the item on the list as they are discovered. There's no "prize" except the fun and challenge of the activity and the "take home" knowledge to share, curiosity about what else is out there and a sense of accomplishment for completing the task.

Map orientation. From the back of the lodge (to the right of the trash bins), walk on the short trail to the interior camp road. Stand on the road, with the lodge to your left. Hold the map flat in front of you.

If you have a compass, hold the compass on the map so that the painted arrow on the compass aligns with the north arrow at the lower left corner of the map. Now turn your body until the red part of the movable arrow in the compass aligns with the painted north arrow on the compass. Now your map is correctly oriented.

If you don't have a compass, turn your body so that the top left corner of the map is pointing up the road like an arrow. Now the map is oriented so that the direction you are looking up the road is the same as the direction of the road on the map.

When you orient the map and know where you are on the map, you can look in a certain direction and see a real landmark and find it on the map. Look up the road on the right to the buildings that are in the trees. What unit is this? (Hilltop) Now start walking and follow the trails to your discovery adventure!

Send suggested changes to Anne Fege afege@aol.com and Gabby Coburn gcoburn@sdgirlscouts.org.

SCAVENGER HUNT

WESTSIDE DISCOVERY HIKE AT CAMP WINACKA

Date of hike _____ Time beginning hike _____ Time ending hike _____

Describe the weather: Temperature _____ Wind _____ Clouds _____

Unit/group/girls taking the hike _____

Rocks and minerals (geology)

- Mica = dark mineral particles in the rock, that sparkle in the sun like gold
- Quartz = white or light-colored mineral particles in the rock, that are dull and look like sugar crystals
- Feldspar = white or light-colored mineral particles in the rock, that have square crystals and sparkle in the sun
- Iron stains = red-colored rocks, from the rusting of iron minerals
- Veins = white stripes in the rock, where liquid minerals flowed through a crack and cooled there, sometimes less than an inch wide and sometimes much wider
- Contact = a line formed where two very different kinds of rocks come together—one is always older than the other
- Inclusion = a piece of one rock inside another, caused by a solid rock falling into molten (melted) rock, and the molten rock cooling and hardening around it

Plants (botany)

- Lichens = flat, light green plants that grow on the surface of rocks
- Coast live oak, *Quercus agrifolia* = oak trees with shiny tooth-edged leaves
- Engelmann oak, *Quercus engelmannii* = oak trees with flat, blue-green leaves
- Manzanita, *Arctostaphylos spp.* = large shrub with smooth red bark and oblong leaves
- Buckwheat, *Eriogonum spp.* = small shrub with very small leaves along the stem of the branches, white flowers, and red-brown seeds
- White sage, *Salvia spp.* = small shrub with fragrant, light green leaves

Animals (wildlife)

- Signs of animals, such as tracks, scat (poop), gopher holes, feathers, and fur.
- Insects, such as ants, aphids, beetles, and butterflies

Other observations _____