

KIT CARSON DISCOVERY HIKE AT ESCONDIDO PROGRAM CENTER

Troops are invited to explore the outdoors at Escondido Program Center! There are trails, views, and wide open spaces in Kit Carson Park, just a few steps from the center. In less than an hour on this discovery hike, girls can discover “nearby nature,” get some physical activity, complete requirements for some outdoor badges, and just have fun together!

Themes. Use your senses to explore a new place. Follow trail signs and a map.

Walk across the road to El Arroyo Picnic Area sign. Cross the footbridge and walk past the swings. Promise to end the hike with time to swing!

Arroyo. *The bridge crosses a dry creek, called an arroyo. It fills with water for a short time, after a rain storm.*

Turn right on the wide unmarked trail and walk between the big Eucalyptus trees. Just past the orange trees, take the left fork. At the bench, walk between the bench and the orange trees. Stop to smell the blossoms, if the trees are blooming!

All along the hike, look for animal signs-- footprints, scat (poop), and holes. Sometimes native bees are flying around and pollinating flowers.

Walk toward the houses. Follow signs for Main and Upper Valley Trails. Notice a large area of buckwheat plants on the left.

California buckwheat. *In the spring and early summer, it has white flowers. In summer and fall, the seeds are dry and a rusty-brown color. Bees and butterflies feed on the nectar in the flowers, and birds eat the seeds.*

Walk uphill. Sing “The ants go marching one-by-one, hurrah, hurrah!” as you walk up the trail.

Video at https://youtu.be/2S_fbCGwOM. All the words at <http://www.songlyrics.com/children-lyrics/the-ants-go-marching-lyrics/>

Turn left at the View Trail sign. Hike uphill to the covered structure.

Witches hair. *Sometimes you can see a stringy orange plant called Dodder. It is a parasite, as it absorbs food from other plants.*

Sit on the benches and enjoy the view! Look for Mt. Woodson, Battle Mountain, and Bernardo Mountain. Can you find San Pasqual High School and L.R. Green Elementary School?

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

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

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. Flap, flap, gliiiiiide. Flap, flap, gliiiiiide.

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. Now trade places, the wind becomes the eagle.

Enjoy a snack! Drink water!

Continue on the trail, turn left at the View Trail sign, and walk down the wide trail.

Stop at the big rock in the trail. Look for shiny flecks of mica in the granite rock, a white vein, and yellow and orange lichens. Look at the deep cracks in the trail, evidence that water flows rapidly in a rainstorm, loosens the sand, and carries it downhill.

Look ahead to Scout Lake and walk to the water's edge.

There are often great white egrets, gulls, ducks, cormorants, and other water birds at the lake.

Turn left at the lake, walk along the picnic tables, and head for the swings! Then walk back across the bridge and road to the Center.

OTHER ACTIVITY IDEAS



Full moon hike

Look at the calendar, and plan a full-moon hike, if your encampment or overnight will have a full or nearly-full moon. Dress warmly. Take your flashlights—but turn them off and let your eyes get adjusted to the moonlight. Walk slowly and quietly, giving time to absorb the wonder and magic of the night. Stand quietly looking at the moon and the lines in its face. Notice the shadows that the moonlight casts from tree branches or girls walking with you. Don't hurry back indoors. (Best if one adult hikes the trail in daylight, in advance of this hike.)

Visit to Queen Calafia's Magical Circle sculpture

There are nine large tile sculptures in the garden created by French artist Niki de Saint Phalle. It is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am to noon, and the second Saturday from 9am to 2 pm. Call 760-839-4000

at least two weeks in advance, to ask for a private group tour. More information at <https://www.escondido.org/queen-califias-magical-circle.aspx>. Visiting this sculpture can meet some requirements of Brownie Outdoor Art Creator and Junior Outdoor Art Explorer badges.

Hike more trails

Explore other park trails, as described by San Diego Natural History Museum Canyoneers, at <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2018/feb/21/roam-kit-carson-park/#>. Get more hiking suggestions in new booklet, "Get Up and Go Outside," at https://thinmint.sdgirlscouts.org/files/program/outdoors/Get_Up_and_Go_Outside.pdf.

Junior Geocaching Badge

Get started at Kit Carson Park, where there are several geocaches! www.geochaching.com.

Thanks to Cadette Troop 4034 of Escondido Service Unit!

Send suggested changes to outdoor trainers Cindy Moore and Anne Fege, afege@aol.com.