

## Trails Connecting Camps Whispering Oaks and Winacka



Girls, leaders, and camp staff are invited to explore the camps owned and operated by Girl Scouts San Diego! 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 at camp, and look at the map online as they plan the days at camp. These trails are not open to the public. Camp trail information is posted at [sdgirlscouts.org/camphikes](http://sdgirlscouts.org/camphikes). There are three trail guide documents: one for Camp Winacka, one for Whispering Oaks, and one for the two trails connecting the camps.

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### Hiking at Camp

**TRAIL TRAVEL.** First explore camp on the trails that start at or near the units or Lodge. Some of the trails at camp are short, but are a long way away from the units. You need to add up the distances for each trail you will be walking, on to get your total distance. All distances and coordinates are approximate.

- Hiking with girls takes approximately double the time a walk the same distance would take at home or by yourself. Most adults have a 20 minute/mile pace. At camp, this same mile may take 40 minutes.
- Have one adult at the beginning and one adult at the end of your group to prevent losing stragglers. Always stay in sight of the person behind and ahead you. Do **not** let the strongest hiker set the pace; they will exhaust the others.
- Stop at trail intersections to make sure that everyone in the group makes the turn. When climbing over rocks or challenging surfaces, give the person behind you a hand once you've gotten up.
- Put those with asthma up front to decrease the likelihood of inhaling dust. If start sweating (or complaining) or get red faces, stop to remove clothing layers and to take a break.

**TRAIL SAFETY.** Sign out a walkie-talkie from the ranger while hiking to report emergencies. Phones will lose signal on **all** trails. Even if you don't think anything will happen, there have been fire-related evacuations in the past, at these camps, and though rare, you would want a walkie-talkie to learn about one.

**Poison oak** is common off the trail and away from the units. Stay on the trails, which are usually kept clear of poison oak by our Rangers. In the summer, plants have clusters of three

shiny leaves; in the fall the leaves are bright red; and in the winter, there are no leaves but the stems still have the irritating oil that causes the rash.

**Snakes** live at camp, but they try to avoid us, so a sighting can be considered a privilege rather than something to fear. Watch where you put your hands (when climbing or picking up sticks), your feet (when walking), and your seat (when sitting). Stay on trails and out of tall grass, wear closed-toed shoes. If you see a snake, call out “Freeze!” and let the snake move off the trail or under the rock.

**TRAIL GEAR.** Always bring water and snack. Wear closed-toed shoes, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and long-sleeved shirt. In colder weather, dress in layers.

Bring a first aid kit. Divide it up between the girls if one person doesn't want to carry it all. Bring toilet paper and a baggie to put used paper, if someone needs ‘to go’ and you are far from toilets.

**TRAIL ACTIVITIES.** Take time to “smell the sage,” feel the wind, hear the birds, and slow down. Leave all rocks, plants and flowers on the trail, so the next hiking group can enjoy this nature.

The trail guides provide “home prep keywords.” You can assign one to each girl before the trip. Have them report back on the trail when the topic comes up. This method of learning is called “The Jig-Saw Puzzle” and helps to involve everyone to create stronger memories and learning.

**TRAIL MAP.** Start by orienting the Camp Trails map. 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. Find this road on the map, just below the playfield. Turn your body around, so that the road on the map is parallel to the road you are standing on. Now the map is oriented. Look up the road on the right to the buildings that are in the trees. What unit is this? (Hilltop) Now choose a trail, start walking and follow the trails!

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.

You may want to repeat this at trail intersections. You can match the direction of the trail(s) or any linear feature with map. When you come to a road or trail, you can orient the map and then choose which direction to turn or which trail to take.

Troops need to contact Girl Scouts San Diego if they want to visit either camp for a “day hike.” To correct these trail guides, which are prepared by volunteers, **contact** [gchiker@san.rr.com](mailto:gchiker@san.rr.com). We appreciate your help to improve how girls and adults can enjoy the trails and nature at camp.

See also detailed hiking instructions from [girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org):

[http://www.sdgirlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-sdgirlscouts/documents/volunteer/Training/safety-activity-checkpoints/TR-1519W\\_Hiking\\_SAC.pdf](http://www.sdgirlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-sdgirlscouts/documents/volunteer/Training/safety-activity-checkpoints/TR-1519W_Hiking_SAC.pdf)

## Coulter Trail (COT)

Distance in Miles	Approximate time	Difficulty	Attributes	GPS Coordinates Start/End	Altitude in Ft. Start/End
1.1 miles ea. way	1 hour ea. way	Moderate	Uphill walk when starting from Winacka	N 33'02.393 W 116'38.389  N33'02.272 W 116'37.714	Winacka: 3846 ft  WO Ballfield: 4007 ft

**Home Prep Keywords:** Tree rings, Woodpecker, Buckwheat, White sage, False trail signs, Regrowth after fire, Animal tracks (turkey, deer, rabbit, raccoon)

**Common Starting Point:** Camp Winacka in-between Oak Knoll and Nature Center.

**Starting Point from Whispering Oaks:** Trail starts at the ball-field. There is less uphill travel when starting at Whispering Oaks and going to Winacka. This will take less time and may be considered a beginner hike. When you get to archery (0.4 mi from ball field) and go forward there is a false trail (wrong turn) to the R that leads you to the water towers. It is not obvious coming the other direction. At this fork take the L side of the fork to continue on Coulter trail. When you come past this point and are going downhill it feels like you are hiking on a narrow ridge, which is not noticed coming from the other direction.

**Hiking Safety:** Have one adult at the beginning and one adult at the end. Put those with asthma up front to decrease the likelihood of inhaling dust. Do **not** let the strongest hiker set the pace; they will exhaust the others. When climbing over rocks or challenging surfaces give the person behind you a hand once you've gotten up. Always stay in sight of the person behind and ahead. Always bring water and snack. Phones will lose signal on all trails. Sign out a walkie-talkie from the ranger while hiking to report emergencies. Coordinates and distance are approximate.

### Description:

There is an engraved rock on the ground signifying the start of the trail. Go up hill.

As you are hiking you see the nature center on the L and a Giant oak stump.

**Trail Activity:** Guess how old the stump is? What service does the dead bark serve?

The trail makes a R turn at the property line. There is wire fencing ahead at the property line. GPS: N33'02.469, W 116'38.346

There is a burnt stump and pine tree at this turn.

After you turn there is an enormous felled tree with woodpecker holes.

**Trail Activity:** Look for nuts in the holes. Talk about how the lifecycle of the holes first made by woodpeckers are then filled with nuts. Who fills the holes with nut? Why? Talk about the squirrels hiding the nuts, and birds feeding off leftover nuts left behind by the squirrels which end up with worms inside that many birds love.

Continue uphill. The trail veers left at an archery sign. (This left is not on the map).

Continue up and over a 'rock garden', which is the term for rocky path.

When you come to the next sign there is a big tree on the ground that is half black. GPS approx.: N33'02.462, W116'38.278

**Trail Activity:** What happened here? Talk about the natural fires, notice the regrowth around this area since the last fire.

You will come across an outcropping of rocks on the R. Buckwheat and white sage nearby. Keep going up. There is Manzanita on the L. You have now come 0.25 miles.

**Trail Activity:** Talk about how Manzanita are protected. Talk about how the bark was used for tea and other medicinal uses by Native Americans. Talk about medicinal use of Sage by the Native Americans. What do we use sage for today?

While hiking through the meadow, keep on the lookout for beige flowers. During the late summer and fall they smell like brown sugar. It can almost smell like a bowl of oatmeal. They are nicknamed 'brown sugar flowers'. GPS: N33'02.461, W116'38.275.

**Trail Activity:** One person take one flower head and rub it between your fingers and let the others smell. If everyone took a flower it would deplete the flowers in the area.

**Hiking Safety:** When you come to the road stop and line up along the curb. GPS: N33'02.460, W116'38.273. The safest way for a group of girls to cross the road is all at the same time. Put an adult at either end. Cross the road on the count of 3, then go up the stairs single file.

Go up a hill. In this area it is common to see woodpeckers. They have red caps on their heads, black backs and white strips under their black wings.

On the right you will see a clearing where you catch a good view of the silver windmill in the meadow behind Winacka's lodge. It is behind a row of dark green trees. GPS: N33'02.459, W116'38.272. You have come 0.51 miles.

**Trail activity:** Discuss how the windmill is actually using the power of wind to pump water and air into the lake on camp. The air is necessary to oxygenate the lake. Why do you think the lake should have oxygen? Do any of you have a fish-tank at home?

Now you are passing through a Manzanita grove, at GPS N33'02.459. W116'38.271. You will see a very nice rock with a white vein in it on the path.

Where there is a choice, take the L at the wood sign. There should be "false trail" signals on the other path. If not, create them with the girls using a straight row of rocks or twigs that obviously look 'human laid' and not there by accident (see below).

**Trail activity:** What signals do hikers use to warn others of a 'false path' or 'the wrong way'? Discuss how branches laid neatly over the entrance to the wrong direction, obviously did not fall that way accidentally, or rocks lined up in a row along the false path, or rocks with an arrow pointing towards the right path can all be used.

You will veer R almost immediately and up through a rock garden and under what we might call a 'tree bridge. GPS N33'02.458 W116'38.270.

**Trail activity:** The trail becomes sandy now. Sandy trails are good for scouting animal tracks. If the front of the line hikers find a track, have them circle it with a stick or their finger so that the people behind can also avoid stepping on it and view it as they pass by. Discuss what animals might have left the tracks. Guess how long ago he was there by the definition of the track.

Pass through another meadow. Look for the archery building ahead. Once you reach the picnic tables it is a good time for a break. You have come .63 miles. N33'02'457 W116'38.267

**Trail activity:** Break. Snack. Portapotty available. Talk about whether or not the troop would like to train for archery in the future. Look behind to the R at the water towers.

Discuss how the camp's water is stored there and pumped through the camp. Discuss how 'well water' works. Have you noticed the yellow rings in the toilets at camp? This is because of the high mineral content in the water. The Rangers monitor the water and keep it safe for drinking and cooking.

To continue, look to the left of the hay bales. There is a downhill road. Just after the rock and before the gate turn R.

You have 2 choices here. You can take the R to Hobbit trail, or continue on this trail which is straight, continuing Coulter Trail to Whispering Oaks camp. GPS N33'02.370 W116'38.844.

In a short distance you will come to a service road. Do not use the service road. Continue instead straight on Coulter Trail, crossing the service road and onto the narrow trail. You have come .9 miles.

GPS N33'02.346 W 116'37.846 Very shortly there is a choice in the trail. Take a R downhill. There should be rocks and sticks signifying a false trail (wrong way) ahead.

**Trail activity:** If there are no false trail signs create them with the girls to warn future campers not to go L.

You are overlooking chocolate pond in the distance. This is a mud flat that attracts animals when wet and is another good place in camp for tracking. A little to the L is a good view of the 3 nearby mountain peaks. The trail is now downhill. You have come 1.0 miles.

When you arrive at a stump and water spigot you are almost there. This is an old tent site that is not on the trail map and no longer in use.

**Trail activity:** Before leaving the old tent site have everyone be quiet and emerge on the ball field without making a sound. You can frame this as a scout's own reflecting on the beautiful things they have seen on the trail, but also many animals gather in the ball field for the grass and water. You may often see turkey or deer if you emerge quietly. Bathrooms located behind the ball field in what looks like a tiny cabin. Play equipment found in the ball field shed.

Take the trail to the L to end up at the ball field. This is the trail end. GPS N33'02.272 W 116'37.714

## Winacka-Whispering Oaks Trail (WWT)

Distance in Miles	Approximate time	Difficulty	Attributes	GPS Coordinates Start/End	Altitude in Ft. Start/End
0.5 miles each way	20 minutes each way	Beginner	Gentle slopes Short	N33°02.229 W116°38.169  N33°02.196 W116°37.895	Winacka 3882 ft  Whispering Oaks 3949 ft

**Home Prep Keywords:** Woodpecker habitat, Manzanita, Animal tracks, Kumeyaay

**Hiking Safety:** Have one adult at the beginning and one adult at the end. Always stay in sight of the person behind and ahead. Do **not** let the strongest hiker set the pace; they will exhaust the others. When climbing over rocks or challenging surfaces give the person behind you a hand once you've gotten up. Always bring water and snack. Phones will lose signal on all trails. Sign out a walkie-talkie from the ranger while hiking to report emergencies.

**Starting Point:** This description starts near the ranger's house at Winacka.

**Description:** This is a connecting trail between the two camps and the easiest way to get to the ropes courses from Winacka.

Start at the top of the driveway near the ranger's house at Winacka.

L at the trail sign, go down a little hill and then up a rise.

L at the fork. There will be a stone marker here.

**Hiking Safety:** When you get to the street line up along the curb. The safest way to cross a street with a group of girls is to line up, look both ways, count to 3 and cross all at once.

Cross the street and go up the stairs.

You will pass through a Manzanita grove.

**Trail Activity:** Talk about how the Manzanita trees are protected. Talk about how Kumeyaay Native Americans used the bark medicinally. Notice how the bark curls from the trunk.

You may pass a felled tree on the right.

Go along a rocky path. Some people call this a 'rock garden' in the trail.

**Trail Activity:** How many colors can you see in the rocks? How many types of rocks can you find?

The first moment you see the challenge (ropes) course ahead stop.

Turn L at this junction, that is almost a T in the road.

The real trail on the map is narrower than going straight ahead.

You will shortly come to a four corner stop.

Note: If you don't take the Y to the left you will come to a clearing at the challenge course, but it is OK you will end up at nearly the same place. Once this piece of trail ends you can go Left to link back up to the four-corner stop mentioned above or go Right to end up on the Whispering Oaks service road.

If you walk on the real trail, you will come to an intersection that is a four-corner stop. Go R to the ropes course and Dehr Creek Trail or go L to Hobbit's Turn Trail, that connects to Coulter Trail and Archery, or go straight to continue this trail. Coordinates are approximately N33.02.197, W116'27.95

You have probably walked about 15 minutes from the start of trail.

Go up a slight hill and curve to the right. You will pass large dead trees.

You will emerge on the Whispering Oaks service road.

L on service road towards Whispering Oaks (R takes you to Dehr Creek and Ropes).

**Trail Activity:** While walking along this service trail look in the trees for woodpeckers. They are common here. These woodpeckers are black with a white stripe on their wings and a red head. They undulate when they fly.

Go straight through what looks like a four-way stop. (L would take you up (an ugly) service trail to connect with Coulter trail. We do not advise this.)

However, there is a muddy clearing on the L called Chocolate Pond. If you come here after a rain it is a good place to go tracking. The entrance is to the L about 20 feet.

R would bring you to Chaparral Trail and the back way into Inspiration Point. The coordinates at this four-way stop are approximately N33.02.195 W116.37.849

Go up and over a little bridge. You will see tent site 2 on the Left. Go straight until you hit the road.

Now you have two choices, you can go straight into camp or start the Inspiration Point trail to the R.

This is the trail end.

**Services:** Bathrooms are found near the ball field ahead.

**If starting at Winacka:** When you get close to the challenge course at the 4 way stop, you will be led naturally onto a short piece of trail that you did not use on the way out, and not need to make an extra turn. This is difficult to explain but visible on the map.