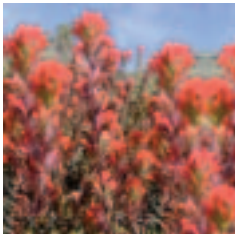
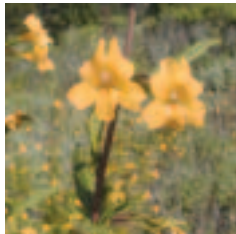


A FEW WILDFLOWERS



paintbrush
Castilleja affinis



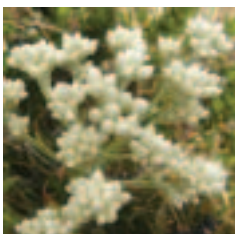
monkeyflower
Mimulus aurantiacus



chocolate lily
Fritillaria lanceolata



california fuchsia
Zauschneria californica



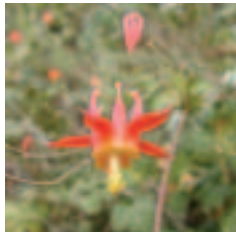
pearly everlasting
Anaphalis margaritacea



wild morning glory
Calystegia macrostegia



california poppy
Eschscholtzia californica



columbine
Aquilegia eximia



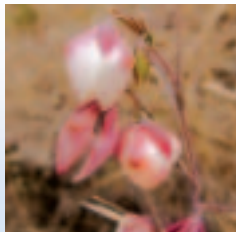
wild strawberry
Fragaria californica



lupine
Lupinus succulentus



wild rose
Rosa californica



fairy lanterns
Calochortus albus

TRAIL GUIDE

Reservoir Canyon natural reserve

WAYPOINTS
PLUS GPS
TOPO MAPS
& AERIAL

RESERVOIR CANYON

DIRECTIONS On Highway 101, drive one mile north of Monterey Street in San Luis Obispo, then turn right onto Reservoir Canyon Road. Drive to the end of the road and park in the dirt lot. The trail starts on the other side of the gate. Please be mindful of the No Trespassing signs posted. Upon leaving, enter Highway 101 very carefully.

HISTORY Throughout California, obsolete local water systems have been converted to public open space reserves. Historically, protection of local watersheds has turned out to be one of the soundest investments made by the public in habitat and water quality protection.

The small stream in Reservoir Canyon is perennial. In the late 1800's a private water company purchased the land and built several diversion structures along the creek to carry water to a holding reservoir. Here and there along the trail through Reservoir Canyon you can still see remnants of the old water collection system.

The system operated until about the 1950's, when the City of San Luis Obispo gained access to the larger and more reliable water supply from the Salinas Reservoir near Santa Margarita. Once this water began to flow into the City, the small systems in Reservoir Canyon and other parts of the local watershed were abandoned.

The City never sold the Reservoir Canyon property and eventually designated it as a City open space. The canyon has retained its beauty and integrity largely because it was an important watershed for the community. Recently the City purchased 284 acres of the canyon to add to the original 200 acres, and is in discussions with several landowners regarding acquisition of easements or land, with the goal of preserving as much of the canyon as possible for its habitat and passive recreational values.

As you hike around and enjoy the beauty and serenity of Reservoir Canyon, remember that our good fortune today results from the foresight of those who sought many years ago to provide reliable, quality water and to protect its sources.

SPONSORS Special thanks to the City of San Luis Obispo's Promotional Coordinating Committee for funding this trail guide, and Coyote Regional Outdoor Adventures at (805) 466-4550 for providing GPS and trail data. The City of San Luis Obispo's Natural Resources Department and the Parks & Recreation Ranger Service acquire and maintain the City's open space and trail system. In cooperation with the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo (ECOSLO), the Natural Resources program manages the Natural San Luis Docents and the SLO Stewards programs. If you would like to volunteer to maintain trails or to be a docent, please call ECOSLO at (805) 544-1777 or check out the website at www.slocity.org/naturalresources/.

PHOTOS are by Michael Clarke of the City of San Luis Obispo Natural Resource Division, Terri Dunivant of Gaia Graphics, Meg Evans of the Natural San Luis Docent Program, Jeff Greene of ImageWest Photography, and Golden State Aerial Surveys.

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BISHOP PEAK
NATURAL RESERVE

OTHER CITY TRAILS

The City of San Luis Obispo manages several open space areas and public trails. There are no fees to use these trails.

SOUTH HILLS OPEN SPACE

Southern San Luis Obispo between South Higuera and Broad Street. Take Broad Street to Woodbridge or South Street to Exposition.

ISLAY HILL OPEN SPACE

Far southeastern San Luis Obispo off Orcutt Rd. Take Tank Farm/Orcutt Road to Spanish Oaks, to the end of Sweet Bay.

LAGUNA LAKE OPEN SPACE

Southwestern San Luis Obispo between Madonna and Los Osos Valley Roads. Take Madonna Road to Dalidio, then turn into the park and stay to the right all the way to the parking area.

IRISH HILLS NATURAL RESERVE

Far southwestern San Luis Obispo off Los Osos Valley Road. Trailheads are on Perfumo Canyon Road and at the end of Madonna Road.

CERRO SAN LUIS NATURAL RESERVE

Western San Luis Obispo, just west of Highway 101. Turn off the Marsh Street entrance before it enters the freeway, on the right.

BISHOP PEAK NATURAL RESERVE

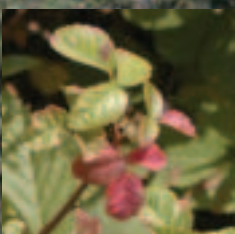
Far northwestern San Luis Obispo, between Highway 1/Santa Rosa Street and Foothill Boulevard. Take Foothill to Patricia, turn right and follow it up, then park on the left just past Patricia Court.

RAILROAD RECREATION TRAIL

Eastern San Luis Obispo, along the railroad tracks from south of the Amtrak train station to Orcutt Road near Laurel Lane.



CAUTION



poison oak
Toxicodendron diversilobum

Just one minute northeast of San Luis Obispo is a public paradise called Reservoir Canyon. To get there turn east off Highway 101, drive the half-mile up Reservoir Canyon Road and park, then walk through the gate into a lush and lovely place alive with the songs of birds and running water.

The first mile of the trail follows the creek through a mature native forest of oak, bay, and sycamore trees that shade the little pools and waterfalls caught between serpentine rock walls. Then it's a steady climb up the north face of the mountain, through open meadows and along brushy slopes to the treeless ridge. At the 1,715' high point, hikers will enjoy awesome views of the City, from the southern end of Los Osos Valley and the Irish Hills, to Cuesta Pass, to the ancient volcanic Morros rising from the El Chorro Valley between San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay.

Looking north towards Cuesta Pass from the upper end of the Reservoir Canyon Trail.



TRAIL FACTS

Year-round 2.5 mile trail with bridges, waterfalls, ponds, pools, cascades, and striking geological features. Enjoy wildlife and native plants but avoid poison oak and ticks, which are common.

The first 1.1 miles of the trail is shaded with easy, mostly level hiking. The remaining 1.4 miles is a moderate to strenuous climb ascending 1300' with little tree cover. The high point is 1,715' at the end of the trail.

Currently at 487-acres, this open space area is owned by the City of San Luis Obispo and maintained by the Ranger Service and the Natural Resources Program. Docents lead hikes throughout the year; for details please call (805) 781-7302 or 544-1777.

RULES

- ▣ Open year-round from sunrise to sunset. No fee.
- ▣ No camping or fires.
- ▣ No bicycles or motorcycles.
- ▣ Dogs must be on leash and their droppings picked up.
- ▣ Stay on designated trails.
- ▣ Respect wildlife, other users, and private properties. Open space is a precious resource. Please help us protect and preserve it for the enjoyment of everyone.



SANTA LUCIA WILDERNESS AREA