



Guy Fleming Self-Guided Tour

Before your hike, stop at the **Visitor Center**. You may touch the animals very gently, with two feeler fingers. Only stroke the fur or feathers in its natural direction. These animals cannot re-grow their fur! They died of natural causes (or cars) and were preserved by a taxidermist. The eyes are made of glass; their insides are a foam sculpture--like the inside of a surfboard. All the animals here still live in the Reserve except the cougar.

Restrooms are located across the street from the Visitor Center, at the end of the west parking lot. There are no other restrooms until you reach the beach.

To reach the Guy Fleming Trail, walk down the dirt shoulder of the road on the Lodge (right) side until you reach the "High Point Trail" sign. Cross the street here and continue on the left side until you reach the Guy Fleming Trailhead. (.25 mile)

Walk 40 yards down the trail to the junction.

Walking to the Beach at the end of your tour.

From the trailhead, stay on the same side of the road. Go down the stairs at the end of the dirt parking area. Cross the street carefully and stay on the right shoulder all the way to the picnic area at the bottom. (.5 mile)

If you borrow trail packs, please return them to the Entrance Kiosk!

1 Trail Junction/Habitats Sign

Take a moment to read the sign. How many different habitats/biomes are there along the way? Why are there so many different habitats in such a small area?

Ask your class to notice changes as they go down the trail: temperature, wind direction, soil, sun/shade, proximity to the ocean. Subtle changes create microclimates that support different plant communities. Notice the differences in the plants: color, with/without leaves, height, and spacing between the plants.

You'll start and end the walk in Chaparral, moving through Coastal Sage Scrub, Coastal Strand, and Torrey Woodland. Some of these communities change appearance through the seasons.

Take the left fork at the junction. Each leg of your hike will be about a quarter of a mile.

2 South Overlook

Coastal Sage Scrub consists of annual flowers and low-growing, aromatic shrubs, some of which are stress deciduous—they lose their leaves when the ground dries out. These sunny, dry slopes change dramatically from winter to summer. In summer or fall, the ground may have empty spaces where seeds await the first rains of the year. The apparently lifeless shrubs are merely dormant, waiting for rain to re-awaken new growth. Any time of the year, please stay on the trail to avoid compacting the delicate soil or transporting weed seeds into the ecosystem.

The first rains of the year mark the beginning of the growing season in Southern California. Winter field trips will see the tiny green shoots of the new annual plants rising from the ground, filling in the spaces between the shrubs. In spring, you'll see many different flowers blooming and bees busy collecting pollen and nectar. Annual flowers live their whole lives in a few months: after they bloom and produce seed for next year's plants, they die. It's important not to pick wildflowers because without the flowers, there'll be no seed for next year's flowers.

As you walk to the next overlook, you'll pass through Coastal Strand with its sandy soil and salty breezes. Here the plants grow close to the ground. In spring, wildflowers cover the hillsides.

3 North Overlook/Torrey Woodland sign

The Reserve was originally set aside to protect the Torrey pine trees. All the trees you see along this trail are Torrey pines. Do all the pine trees look the same? How are the trees here different from the ones at the entrance or by the Lodge? What has changed about their environment? Salty ocean breezes prune the trees into interesting shapes, while trees in protected areas can grow up straight and tall. While salt stresses some plants, the ocean provides an important source of summer moisture for all the trees in the Reserve. Fog forms when inland heat draws moist air from the ocean. Fog droplets gather on the pine needles, collect in the grooves on the needles, and then drop to the ground. If the fog's really thick, it can sound and feel like it's raining under the pine trees!

4. Water fountain/Guy Fleming sign

The evergreen shrubs around you are chaparral, California's most common ecosystem. Chaparral prefers North and east-facing slopes. Even in hot, dry summer chaparral stays green; these plants have many adaptations that help them survive without water for many months. See if you can find some plants with these adaptations: thick waxy leaves, tiny leaves, light colored leaves, leaves with hairs, greasy leaves. Use the Chaparral Field Guide to help identify them.

1. Trail junction

If you have time, pause and review your walk with these questions and answers.

Q: What was the land like in the coastal sage scrub areas? A: hotter, sunnier, south and west-facing

Q: What was the land like in the chaparral areas? A: Cooler, shadier, east and north-facing

Q: What were some of the differences between coast sage scrub and chaparral plants?

A: CSS -- shorter, more spread out, less green (seasonally), aromatic, softer leaves, more annual plants.

Chaparral--taller, closely spaced, evergreen, leathery leaves, more small trees and shrubs.

Q: How does salt spray affect plants? A: makes them shorter, bends them in the direction of the wind; if there is less salt spray, the plants grow taller and more upright.