

more native plants...

Spiny rush *Juncus acutus* 🌿

Dense stands of these sharp-pointed plants provide safe nesting sites for ducks and other birds. The round leaves were used to weave coiled baskets. This species is considered “sensitive” due to the decline of salt marsh habitat.



Toyon *Heteromeles arbutifolia* 🌿 🍓

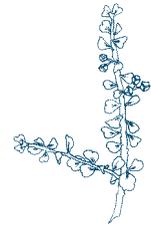
Also known as Christmasberry or hollyberry, this evergreen shrub bears small white flowers in early summer, followed by pea-sized red fruits. The fruits are relished by many birds and were eaten by early native people.



Wart-stemmed ceanothus

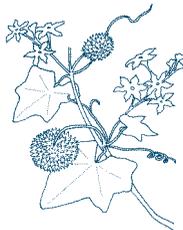
Ceanothus verrucosus

This ceanothus, sometimes called California white lilac, has showy white flowers in early spring. The other plant growing over this shrub and sometimes covering it completely is called virgin's bower or clematis.



Wild cucumber *Marah macrocarpus* 🌿

In early spring this gourd family member sends out climbing vines with tendrils that cover shrubs. The small white flowers are followed by spiny green inedible fruits. This plant, which contains chemicals called saponins, is toxic if eaten, yet it was used in a variety of ways by native people.



Willow *Salix* species 🌿

Willows are part of the riparian (river) plant community, occupying moist habitats along streams, creeks and channels. Willows provided the Kumeyaay people with flexible branches for building ramadas, and making bows and arrows. They used the soft inner bark for bedding material and pounded it into cloth.



RIOS AVENUE TRAILHEAD

Driving Directions

- Off I-5 take the Lomas Santa Fe exit and go west on Lomas Santa Fe Drive
- Turn right onto Rios Avenue
- Drive to the end of Rios Avenue and park along the curb

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation and the California Department of Fish and Game are jointly responsible for preserving this area as a nature sanctuary. Check the County's information kiosk at the start of the trail for notices and seasonal updates.

RULES & REGULATIONS

Allowed

- Trails are open during daylight hours.
- Stay on established trails only.
- Dogs are allowed if on a leash of 6 feet or less at all times.
- Carry out your trash, including your pet's waste.

Not Allowed

- Nets or seines are not allowed, and commercial fishing of any kind is prohibited.
- Boating, kayaking, swimming and wading are not allowed.
- Bicycles, motorcycles and other vehicles are prohibited.
- Do not disturb or collect any plants, animals or minerals.
- Do not feed the wildlife or release any animals into the reserve.

By observing these rules you're helping to maintain this trail for people and wildlife.

Thank you.

San Elijo Lagoon

ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

San Elijo Lagoon is one of San Diego County's largest coastal wetlands and home to an exceptional number of plants, birds and animals. It lies along the coast between the cities of Solana Beach and Encinitas, extending inland to the community of Rancho Santa Fe. As a county regional park and state ecological reserve it encompasses nearly 1,000 acres of diverse habitat. With over seven miles of trails accessed via eight trailheads, you may encounter a wide variety of flora and fauna.



San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy

San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust working to preserve, protect and enhance San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve and its watershed. Educational outreach is an integral component of the mission of the Conservancy. We depend on the financial support of individuals and foundations in order to provide educational materials, maintain the health of the reserve, and acquire additional acreage. To make a donation please phone our office or go to our website.

SELCO offices: 2049 San Elijo Ave., Cardiff, CA 92007

Mailing address:

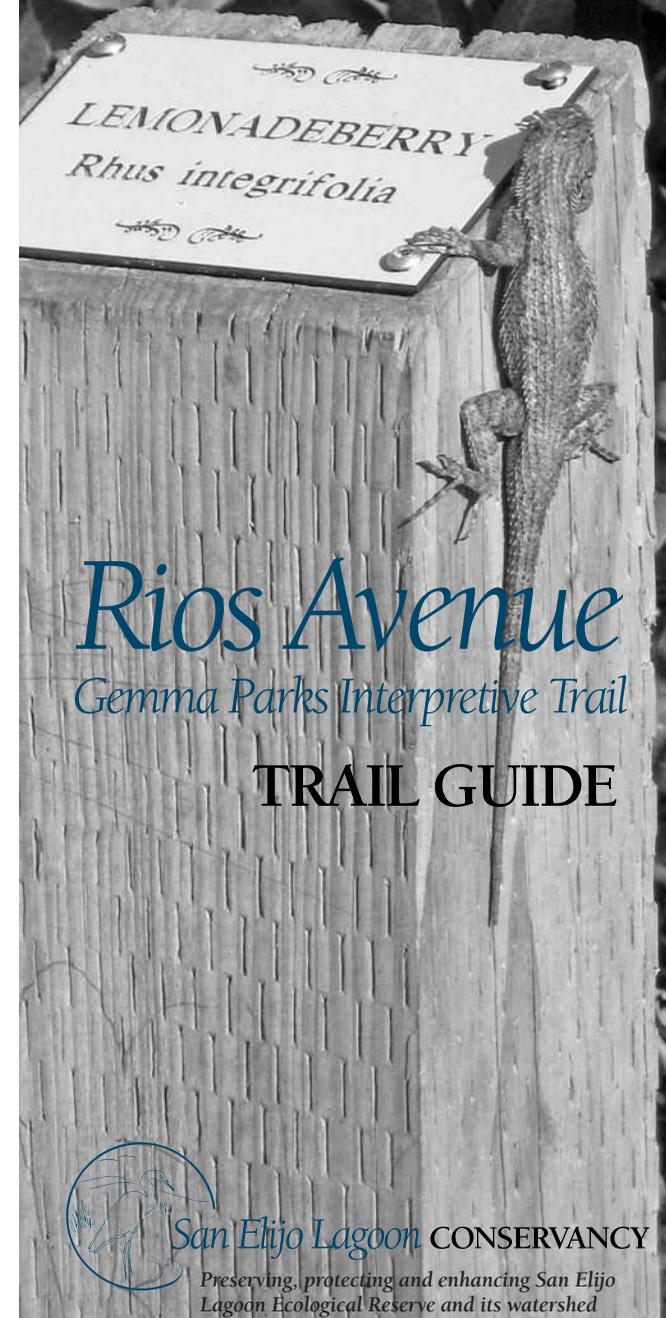
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♻️ Printed on recycled paper

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San Elijo Lagoon

ECOLOGICAL RESERVE



🌿 ethnobotanical use
🍓 landscaping use

Rios Avenue

Gemma Parks Interpretive Trail

TRAIL FEATURES

Rios Avenue Trail begins at the north end of Rios Avenue in Solana Beach and connects to the reserve's longest trail. Just east of the trailhead is a one-mile loop known as the Gemma Parks Interpretive Trail. Gemma Parks was a dedicated conservationist and this trail memorializes her energetic contributions to the environment. Along the trail are plant identification signs and this brochure will provide you with brief descriptions about these native species.

Arroyo willow *Salix lasiolepis*

These deciduous trees bear leaves that are dark green above and pale underneath. Flowers appear in early spring. Willows contain the compound salicin and are the original source of pain-relieving aspirin.

Black sage *Salvia mellifera*

This mint family member has been used as a medicinal tea and, sparingly, as a seasoning. The pale blue flowers that grow in round clusters on a spike are a favorite with bees and butterflies.



Bush sunflower *Encelia californica*

This typical member of the sunflower family is common along the coast. Flowering from late spring to summer, the yellow petals and dark disks make this an attractive addition to the home garden.

California buckwheat

Eriogonum fasciculatum

In the spring and summer this plant bears clusters of pinkish-white flowers on tall stems, which persist into fall as dried brown clusters. It was used to ease childbirth and stomachaches, and as an eye wash and mouthwash.

California sagebrush

Artemisia californica

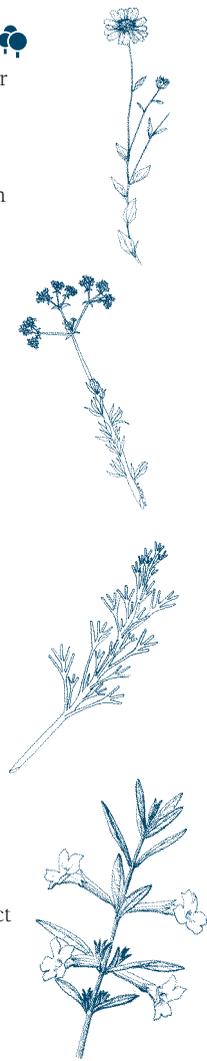
As a summer-dormant plant, this species can appear dry and leafless. After spring rains, it produces soft, gray-green leaves and spikes of tiny wind-pollinated flowers. It was used to treat stomach ailments.

Coast monkeyflower

Diplacus puniceus

Notice the sticky, dark green leaves borne in pairs along the pale brown stems. The tubular, red flowers attract hummingbirds. Can you see a monkey's face in the flower?

- ethnobotanical use
- landscaping use



Coast prickly pear *Opuntia littoralis*

This well-armed, coastal cactus bears delicate pale golden-yellow flowers from May to June. Birds and people eat the thin-fleshed 'cactus apples.' Prickly pear is host to cochineal scale, an insect used commercially to make red dye.

Coastal goldenbush *Isocoma menziesii*

Look for clusters of small, bright golden-yellow flowers from late summer through winter. A member of the sunflower family, it produces masses of fluffy seeds that are carried easily by the wind.

Cottonwood *Populus fremontii*

Cottonwoods are a riparian (river) species indicating a source of fresh water. They grow primarily where there's subsurface water, such as near streams, springs, irrigation ditches and water tanks.

Coyote brush *Baccharis pilularis*

A member of the sunflower family, this shrub has small flowers that bloom from fall to winter, and are followed by masses of fluffy, wind-borne seeds.

Deer weed *Lotus scoparius*

This member of the pea family bears yellow flowers that turn red after pollination. A favorite of bees, it is abundant on open slopes.



Laurel sumac *Malosma laurina*

This common shrub has long leaves, folded down the middle, taco style. It blooms in late spring and early summer producing a seed harvest for birds and mammals throughout the winter. Some people have an allergic reaction to this relative of poison oak.

Lemonadeberry *Rhus integrifolia*

This common native shrub has leathery evergreen leaves and bears clusters of small pink flowers in late winter to early spring. The flowers are followed by small fruits used to flavor beverages and favored by birds. This shrub makes a nice garden hedge.

Mexican elderberry

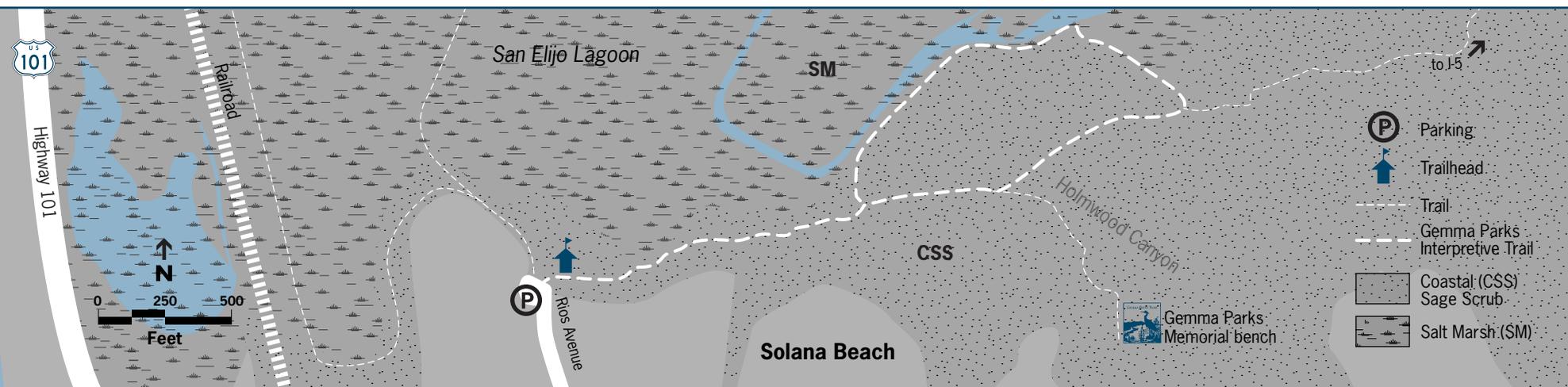
Sambucus mexicanus

This fast-growing, deciduous tree bears fragrant, cream-colored flowers through the summer. Small blue fruit follows, attracting many birds and other animals, including people who use them to make jams and wine.

San Diego sagewort *Artemisia palmeri*

A member of the sunflower family, this species has long divided leaves on tall, wandlike stems. Sagewort gets a good amount of its moisture from coastal fog. Due to habitat loss, it is considered a "sensitive" species.

see back for more native plants...



PLANT COMMUNITIES

Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS)

You'll find this plant community on upland slopes. It's composed of drought-tolerant shrubs that can persist through long periods with no rain. When rains arrive these plants respond with new growth and a burst of flowers. Look for California buckwheat, California sagebrush, black sage, monkeyflower, deer weed and bush sunflower.

Salt Marsh (SM)

Look for this plant community along the edges of the lagoon. Plants adapted to living in salty environments like this are called halophytes. Pickleweed, *Salicornia virginica*, is the most conspicuous plant of the salt marsh. Its scientific name comes from two Greek words for "salt" and "horn." It accumulates salt in fleshy stems that look like little pickles or "horns" that turn red and drop off.