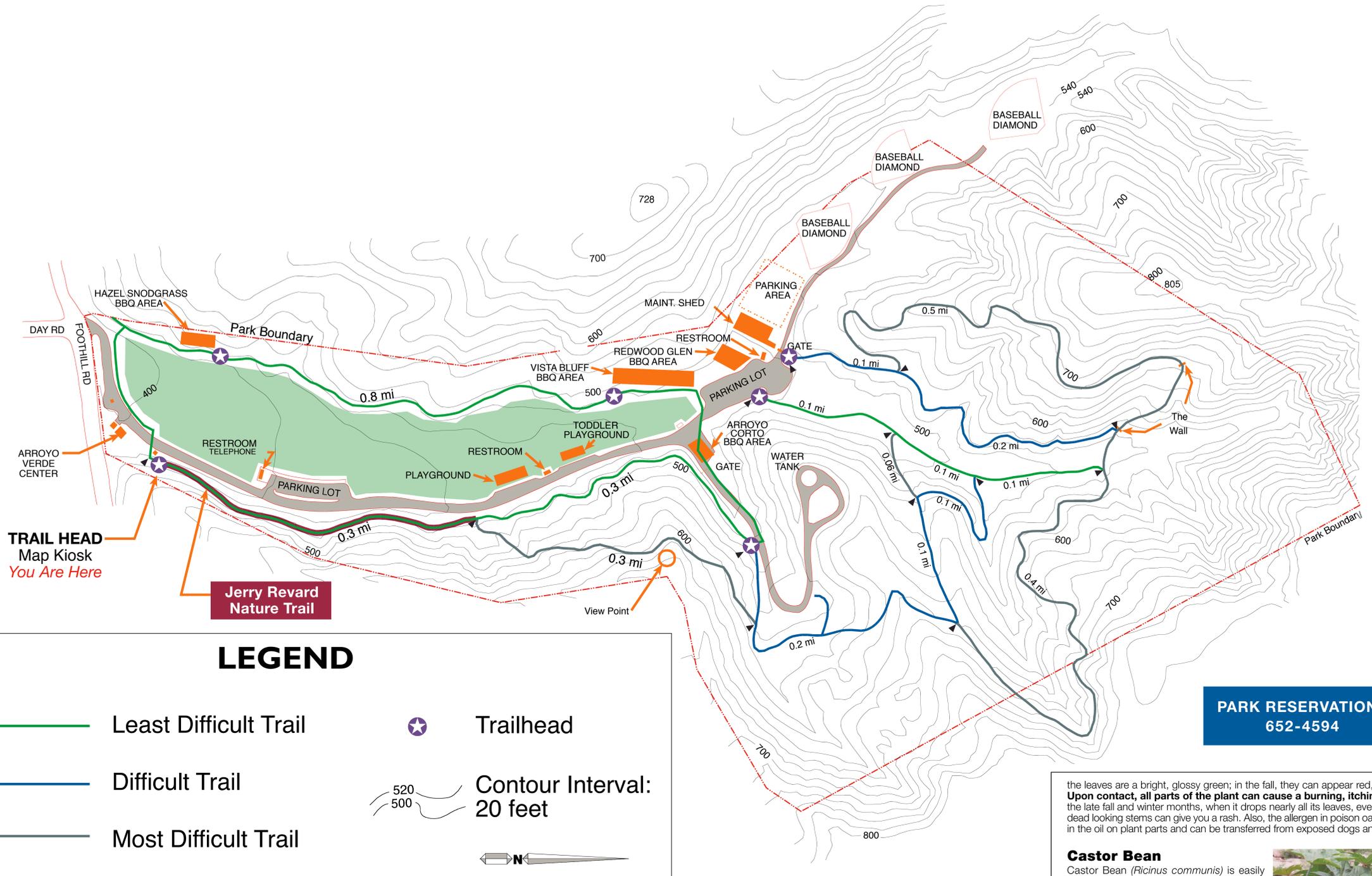


# CITY OF VENTURA ARROYO VERDE PARK TRAIL MAP



## FOR YOUR SAFETY

Arroyo Verde Park consists of 132.21 acres of relatively rugged land. A network of trails runs through natural coastal sage scrub habitat — a plant community that is rapidly disappearing in California. Arroyo Verde is home to many plants and animals. Very few of these pose a danger; however, **hikers exploring park trails need to exercise caution regarding mountain lions, rattlesnakes, ticks, and poisonous plants.**

### Mountain Lions

Arroyo Verde Park borders open space that connects to mountain lion country. The chances of seeing mountain lions are slight because they generally have large territories, and are primarily nocturnal, solitary, and secretive. On June 28, 2004 a mountain lion was seen by several people hiking along the trails at the far end of Arroyo Verde Park.

These large, powerful predators prey on deer and other wildlife, and play an important role in the ecosystem. Most mountain lions will avoid a confrontation and flee from humans. Mountain lion attacks on humans in the U.S. are rare; attacks that have occurred tended to target adults who were running or bending down, or unattended children.

For your safety, stay alert, keep small children in sight at all times, and be sure that you and your children know **what to do if you encounter a mountain lion:**

**Do not run!** A mountain lion's instinct is to chase a moving target.

**Look as large as possible.** Place your arms over your head, lift backpacks over your head, or open your jacket wide. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly in a loud voice.

**Small children:** Put them behind you or directly in front of you so that they appear larger, or pick them up (without bending down).

**Back away very slowly,** and give the lion room to escape.

**Do not turn your back.** When hunting deer, mountain lions prefer to ambush their prey, often from behind, striking with a bite below the base of the skull.

**Do not crouch down or bend over** to pick up rocks or sticks (you will appear smaller, like a prey animal).

**Fight back** if attacked! Use anything you have — jacket, backpack, binoculars, cap, branches, even your fists. Self-defense efforts using items such as these have been successful in mountain lion attacks.

The idea is to convince the mountain lion that you are not prey and that you may be a danger to it.



### Rattlesnakes

Arroyo Verde Park is home to the Southern Pacific Rattlesnake. Rattlesnakes are the only dangerously venomous native snakes in California. **A rattlesnake will not strike unless startled or threatened.**

**Rattlesnake bites are rarely fatal. However, if bitten seek medical treatment immediately.** Keep victim calm and inactive to minimize circulation of blood. If possible, allow the bitten limb to rest at a level lower than the person's heart. Do not apply a tourniquet. Do not cut or incise the bite site.

If you see a rattlesnake on the trail, slowly move away from the animal and give it room to leave the area. If given the opportunity, rattlesnakes will usually move away from humans. If you see a rattlesnake in a location such as the barbecue/picnic areas or bathrooms, notify the City's Parks Division (652-4550) or Ventura County Animal Regulation (888-223-7387) so that the snake can be relocated to an area away from human activity. Do not kill rattlesnakes; they are an important link in the environment and beneficial to maintaining a balance in the rodent population. Other harmless snakes that reside at Arroyo Verde Park, such as gopher snakes and racers, are often misidentified as rattlesnakes. Unlike non-venomous native California snakes, rattlesnakes have a triangular-shaped head that is larger than the neck. Rattlesnakes also have a thick body and a blunt tail with usually one or more rattles. Non-venomous snakes living at Arroyo Verde Park have slender bodies with long tapered tails and narrow heads about the same size as the neck.



### Ticks

A particular kind of tick called a black-legged tick or deer tick (one of 49 California tick species) is responsible for transmitting the bacteria that causes Lyme disease to humans. Although there have been no reported cases of Lyme disease resulting from ticks at Arroyo Verde, the park could provide habitat for infected deer ticks. Ticks favor a moist, shaded environment, especially areas with leaf litter and low-lying vegetation in wooded, brushy or overgrown grassy habitat. Ticks are usually located close to the ground.

Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and tucking pants into socks may help keep ticks from reaching your skin. Ticks feed by inserting their mouths into the skin of the host to take in blood. Deer ticks are most likely to transmit infection after feeding for two or more days. The longer the tick is attached, the greater the risk. According to the Center for Disease Control, **the transmission of the bacteria that cause Lyme disease is unlikely to occur before 36 hours of tick attachment** (although earlier transmission can occur). **Therefore, checking for ticks after hiking, and removing any attached tick that you find will help prevent infection.** Ticks may bite people as nymphs or adults, and at their juvenile (larval & nymphal) stages, they are no bigger than a pinhead. Embedded ticks should be removed using fine-tipped tweezers, grasping the tick's mouthparts



as close to the skin as possible (the bacteria is contained in the tick's midgut or salivary glands) and pulling straight out. Do not twist or jerk it. Do not pull it out using fingers as squeezing can cause the tick to release material into the wound. Cleanse the area with an antiseptic. Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, or other products for removal.

Within days to weeks following a tick bite, 50-80% of people infected with Lyme disease will have a slow expanding "bull's-eye" rash at the site of the bite (although not always present), accompanied by nonspecific flu-like symptoms such as fever, malaise, fatigue, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches, and joint pain.

**If symptoms are present seek medical attention.** Untreated Lyme disease may lead to serious nervous system disorders, heart abnormalities, and arthritis. Early diagnosis and antibiotic treatment during the early stages of Lyme disease can heal the infection; later treatment is often, but not always, successful.

**There are a number of poisonous plants in the park. For your safety DO NOT TASTE ANY PLANTS.**

### Poison Hemlock

Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is likely the most deadly plant found in Arroyo Verde Park. **All parts of this plant are poisonous, and can be fatal if eaten** (even the dry twigs).

This non-native plant was originally from Europe, and has naturalized all over California. It is a member of the carrot family, and has lacey carrot-like leaves. The flowers are tiny, white, and grow in clusters. Poison hemlock can grow to 2-4 feet (but immature plants may be only a couple of inches tall) and occasional purple spots may be seen on the stem. When the stems and flower/seed clusters are dry, it may be difficult to tell this plant from sweet fennel.

**If any part of this plant is even tasted, seek IMMEDIATE medical attention.**

**Symptoms:** Diarrhea, vomiting, violent stomach pains, trembling, numbness, dilated (enlarged) eye pupils, slow heartbeat, weakness, paralysis, respiratory failure, & death.



### Poison Oak

Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) is native to California, and found in many habitats. Related to poison ivy, it is easily identified by its leaves that are divided into three leaflets. Just remember, "leaves of three, let it be." In one location poison oak can look very shrub-like, almost like a small tree, and in another location it can look more like a vine. In the spring and summer



the leaves are a bright, glossy green; in the fall, they can appear red, or brown. **Upon contact, all parts of the plant can cause a burning, itching rash.** In the late fall and winter months, when it drops nearly all its leaves, even the bare, dead looking stems can give you a rash. Also, the allergen in poison oak is carried in the oil on plant parts and can be transferred from exposed dogs and clothing.

### Castor Bean

Castor Bean (*Ricinus communis*) is easily identified by its large palmate leaves, in which the veins of the leaf radiate out from a central point like our fingers from our palm. All parts of this non-native plant are toxic, the shiny mottled seeds in particular are extremely poisonous and can result in death if eaten. This large shrub is a native of tropical Africa and grows 4-8 feet high.

**Symptoms:** Burning in the mouth, throat and stomach; vomiting; severe stomach pains; diarrhea; thirst; blurred vision; sweating; trembling; weakness; convulsions; death.



### Tree Tobacco

Tree Tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*) is native to South America and is a member of the nicotine plant family, but isn't the variety that was smoked by Native Americans or settlers. Tree tobacco grows 6-20 feet high and all parts of the plant are poisonous and can result in death if ingested. The distinctive yellow tubular flowers may be confused with honeysuckle blossoms, so when in doubt, don't eat wild plants.

**Symptoms:** Shivering, shaking, twitching, rapid heartbeat, staggering, weakness, nausea, vomiting, stomach pains, diarrhea, colic, staring, blindness, death.



### Nightshade

Purple Nightshade (*Solanum xanthii*) is a native plant with clusters of purple saucer-shaped flowers, although five of the seven *Solanum* species found in our region are non-native (*Solanum douglasii* has white flowers). All parts of this 3-6 foot shrub are poisonous, including the round black berries. Ingestion can result in death.

**Symptoms:** Intense digestive disturbance, rapid heartbeat, weak pulse, trembling, enlarged eye pupils, depression or drowsiness, unconsciousness, death.



### Jimson Weed

Jimson Weed (*Datura* species: *D. meteloides* and *D. stramonium*) has very large upright trumpet-shaped white flowers when in bloom, and grows 1 to 5 feet tall. All parts of this native plant are toxic, particularly the seeds and leaves, and can result in death if ingested.

**Symptoms:** Abnormal thirst, distorted vision, weakness, dizziness, staggering, delirium, enlarged eye pupils, coma, death.

