

The Third Annual OC Wildflower Photo Contest Starts March 21

As Published in the Orange County Register March 2011

The third annual Orange County Wildflower Photo Contest starts in two weeks with prizes awarded to the judges' picks for best photos and to winners decided by voters as their favorites.



This photo of California Poppy with Bird's Eye Gilia was judged the best of 1,253 entries in the O.C. Wildflower Photo Contest 2010. It was photographed by Lisa Burton of Riverside.

The contest runs from March 21 through April 21 and is sponsored by the Orange County Register and the OC Hiking Club. After this year's heavy rains, the hillsides and landscapes of Orange County should be covered with a spectrum of colors.

There is no entry fee, and photos will be submitted online. We'll have more details on how to enter, rules, prizes and photo tips later.

Prizes will be awarded this year at the SoCal Wildflower Fest & Hike-a-Thon April 30 at Irvine Regional Park. The all-day fest will feature wildflower hikes, orienteering, music, food, outdoors skills clinic and photography demonstrations. The festival is sponsored by the OC Register and OC Hiking Club and OC Parks.

The winning photos will also appear in the Orange County Register and ocregister.com.

Last year's top two winners from 1,250 entries were the judge's pick Lisa Burton of Riverside for her photo of California poppies with bird's-eye Gilia and Sandy Carroll, 20, of Westminster, who won the popular vote. The 2009 grand prize winners were the judge's pick Patricia Hadley of Yorba Linda, and top vote-getter Jim Schultz of Huntington Beach.

Continued below....

The categories for photos this year include:

Nature – Wildflowers.

Wildflowers with people and/or pets.

Nature only – Wildflowers without any trace of human interaction or interference. For example, no dirt trails, fence posts, non-indigenous plants.

Non-native flowers.

Wildflowers youth – Any wildflowers shot by youth 18 and under. (Proof of age will be required for prize winners.)

For more info. about the SoCal Wildflower Fest & Hike-a-Thon, visit: <http://socalwildflowerfest.org/>

Intro to Hiking Equipment Checklist

Comfortable shoes: running shoes, trail running shoes, hiking boots	1 shoe size bigger than normal (your feet will swell), more tread for steeper inclines, ankle support for uneven terrain.
Socks	Wool synthetic blend: favorites are Thorlow, Smartwool, injinji toe socks
Water and snacks	Bring water extra and hydrate frequently, add electrolytes to water. Snacks include: fruit, gorp, Fig Newton's, power bars
Hot weather:	Sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, long sleeved sunproof/wicking fabric, shorts, pants or yoga style pants (Under Armour)
Cold weather	Wear layers: under garments, fleece, gortex/windproof outer layers, hat and gloves
Small backpack	To carry your stuff
Small digital camera	Not the big one with all the lenses. Put new batteries in before leaving the house and empty the memory card
Small flashlight	Just in case (Petzel headlamp)
Clean shirt/sweatshirt	Have a clean shirt/sweatshirt waiting for you

For more information: http://www.oc-hiking.com/files/Intro_to_hiking_equipment_checklist-OC_HIKING_CLUB.pdf

REI SPECIAL FOR OCHC MEMBERS ONLY!

Learning to backpack for the first time? OC Hiking Club Members receive 25% off the cost of cost of first time equipment rental at REI.

*Members must provide a printout of the OC Hiking Club event posting at the time of rental.



Vegan Granola Bars



2 C. Steel cut oats
2/3 C. Wet sweetener (Agave Syrup or Maple Syrup)
1/4 C. Another variety of sweetener (wet or dry)
4 Tbsp Nut butter such as almond or peanut
1/2 C. Flax seed meal or wheat germ, pan toasted
1 1/2 C. Dried fruit assortment
1 C. Unsweetened shredded coconut (or more fruit/grains)
1/2 C. Whole nuts (for chunky texture)
1 C. Chopped nuts (assorted)
1/2 C. Seeds (sunflower, sesame, poppy, etc.)
1 Tbsp Vanilla extract
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp salt (*adjust based on how many of your nuts are pre-salted*)
spray canola or olive oil

optional:

*thin layer of dark chocolate chips as a topping
*Substitute half the buttery spread with a nut butter such as almond or peanut butter

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Layer parchment paper or foil in a square casserole dish. Grease the insides with canola or olive oil.
3. In a large mixing bowl, add the oatmeal, coconut and nuts and toss well. Transfer this dry mix to the casserole dish. Spray a bit of spray oil on top of dry mix-this will aid the toasting process.
4. Place dish in oven to toast for 10 minutes.
5. Over low heat, toast your flax seed meal or wheat germ in a dry pan for about 1 minute. Transfer toasted meal to large mixing bowl.
6. Stove top: Place a soup pan over high heat. Add the buttery spread, liquid and dry sweeteners, vanilla extract, salt and cinnamon. Heat until it has melted together and becomes bubbly. Turn heat to low.
7. Measure fruit and seed ingredients and place in large mixing bowl. Toss well.
8. By now, your ten minute oat/coconut/nut mix should be just about lightly toasted. Pull the casserole dish out of the oven. Carefully transfer the toasted mix into the large mixing bowl.
9. Next, pour the butter/sugar hot liquid into the mixing bowl. Stir well until the mixture is thick, firm and well combined.
10. Pour the entire mixture into your lined casserole dish. Add any toppings (chocolate/crushed nuts/other).
11. Bake at 300 degrees for 35 minutes.
12. Allow to cool for one hour before slicing into bars. Allow to fully cool in fridge for storage. Bars will become chewy and firm in a cold fridge.

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available for our most
popular hikes?

Check them out:

http://www.oc-hiking.com/orange_county_hikes.htm

OCHC Business Directory

*Reach more customers **AND** get a tax deduction! The OC Hiking Club is creating a Member Business Directory where you can promote your business or organization to more than 6,000 local customers. Contact Kate at [sponsorship @oc-hiking.com](mailto:sponsorship@oc-hiking.com) for more information.*

Sponsor Kids in Need of Nature!

Is your company looking to make a difference in the life of a child? Corporate sponsorships are needed for the OC Hiking Club's Kids in Need of Nature program. Contact Kate at [sponsorship @oc-hiking.com](mailto:sponsorship@oc-hiking.com) for more information. All donations are tax deductible.

OC Mountains to Sea Trail (Mountains Portion) by Jim Allen, OCHC Member

The OC Mountains to Sea Trail is a 22 mile long combination of hiking and biking paths that travel from the OC foothills to the Pacific Ocean. The trail follows former Irvine Company land through the cities of Anaheim, Orange, Tustin, Irvine, and Newport Beach. This report discusses the "mountain" portion of the trail as it passes through four OC parks: Weir Canyon, Santiago Oaks, Irvine Regional, and Peters Canyon. This stretch of trail is 12.2 miles and is on multi-use hiking paths.

The trail is extremely scenic but rugged as there is almost 3,000' feet of elevation gain and 3,500' of elevation loss. Expect to get the heart rate up on several short but steep hills sprinkled throughout the hike. You can also expect to see wildlife as deer, hawks, owls, coyotes, and bobcat make these wilderness parks their home. As this is typical Southern California chaparral country, there is little shade for almost the entire 12 miles. Do this hike early in the morning or evening and not in the dead of summer.

Details

This is a one way (point to point) hike. Therefore, you will need to arrange for a drop off and pickup or park one car at the end of the trail and then drive a second to the trailhead. This is a wilderness hike for most part but there are bathroom facilities at Irvine Regional Park about 8 miles into the hike.

The end of the trail is at Cedar Grove Park in Tustin Ranch. It is located at the corner of Pioneer Rd and Pioneer Way, off Jamboree Road. From the North, take Chapman/Santiago Canyon Road to Jamboree and go south. Turn right on Pioneer and follow Pioneer to the park on the right side of Pioneer.

From the South, take the 5 fwy north to Tustin Ranch Road. Turn right and go North on Tustin Ranch. Turn left on Pioneer Way and the park is right there. Park one car here.

The trailhead is on Hidden Canyon Road in Anaheim Hills. From Santiago Canyon Road in Orange, head North on Cannon Street and turn right on Serrano. Follow Serrano past Nohl Ranch Road to Hidden Canyon. Turn right on Hidden Canyon and follow until the road dead ends at the trailhead.

From the 91 freeway in Anaheim Hills, exit at Weir Canyon and go south to Serrano. In about 2 miles you will see Hidden Canyon on the left. This is a residential area so be careful where you park.

Trail Description

Section 1: Weir Canyon Loop, 3.95 miles

The Weir Canyon Loop is an up and down trail that is very scenic. While it has some hills most are not terribly steep. Total gain and loss for this portion is 1,100' gain and 1,100' loss.

Section 2: Santiago Oaks to Irvine Park, 2.2 miles

This section starts back at the original trailhead on Hidden Canyon. Instead of going left towards Weir Canyon, you head right following the signs for Santiago Oaks Regional Park. This section follows the Anaheim Hills trail for a little over a mile until you intersect the signed Deer trail coming in from the left. The Deer trail is the longest climb of the hike though it is well graded and not terribly tough. The total climb is about 300' over 7/10 of a mile. This trail is aptly named as I have seen mule deer hanging out on the north side of the canyon several times.

Section 3: Irvine Park & Jamboree Road to Peters Canyon, 2.9 miles

This trail is technically a continuation of Barham Ridge (also called Chutes by mountain bikers). You will see the Villa Park Dam and a wetlands area below the trail on the right.

Section 4: Peters Canyon to Cedar Grove Park, 3.1 miles

This is the homestretch leg of the hike with just one major (steep) obstacle left to tackle. From the corner of Canyon View and Jamboree (about the 9 mile mark) you will see the entrance to Peters Canyon Park. Take the trail leading into the park (the Lake View Trail) through a nicely shaded tunnel of willows and cottonwoods that roughly parallels Jamboree.

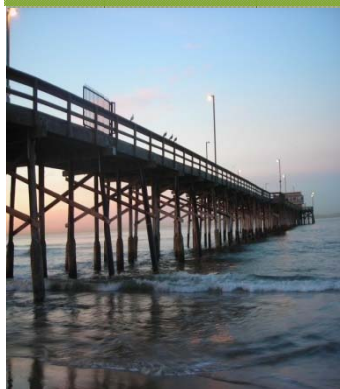
For more information: <http://www.irvinecompany.com/Our-Legacy/forever-wild/mountains-to-sea-trail.aspx>

Taking Teens to the Top!

OCHC Hike Organizer Mitch shares photos from his monthly outing with local teens.



Suki Reed in the OC Register!



Suki Reed, President of OC Hiking Club, is a writer for the Orange County Register. Past articles include topics such as hiking for stress relief, camera tips, and favorite local hiking spots. Look for her articles on the back page of the Outdoor Section every Monday. Past articles can be found at:

<http://www.ocregister.com/fi/search?q=suki+reed>

Toward the end of my walk, I came to the conclusion that I really appreciate the steps taken to reach goals. I honor the work, I like the journey, I cherish the results, but I always find something in the end result that enlightens me. In every preparation there is a lesson to be learned. With every lesson, I'm inspired to try again for a better result. -Deena Kastor

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