



## Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

### **IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE YOUR FIELD TRIP**

#### **Guidelines for Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation Field Trips**

Contact: Adamari Martinez, [amartinez@mtrp.org](mailto:amartinez@mtrp.org)

Thank you for your interest in Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) and for selecting it as a destination for your class field trip. The following information will assist you in preparing for your visit. For MTRP Foundation Field Trips, there is a 15-student minimum. **New for 2025-2026:** Transportation reimbursement will only be available for Title 1 schools (maximum of \$250 per trip, 25-student minimum size field trip).

#### **Reservations**

Reservations are required for all group and class visits. [If you have not made a reservation, please do so through our website.](#) Once registered with an MTRP Foundation field trip, you will receive an auto-generated confirmation message. If scheduling conflicts or questions arise, MTRP Foundation staff will contact you to arrange a different date or time.

#### **Field Trip Guidelines**

To ensure an enjoyable learning experience for everyone, please follow the rules and guidelines for the program. [Before your field trip, please discuss the program rules and expectations with your class and share with your chaperones their roles and responsibilities](#)

For students who need special attention, please ensure that there is a teacher or chaperone assigned to be the student's buddy during their time at MTRP. Do advise our Educators at least two weeks prior to your trip if any special accommodation needs to be made. Teachers should decide in advance if they would like students to be able to shop in the Gift Shop. The Gift Shop is cashless so sales would be made with a card or Apple Pay.

Groups can bring lunches and store them on a cart behind the front desk until lunchtime; there is an outdoor amphitheater at the Visitor Center where students can eat their lunch.

#### **Supervision**

- Groups must have at least one adult chaperone for every eight children. Adult leaders should intersperse while hiking to monitor their activities and behavior.
- **IMPORTANT:** Adult chaperones must refrain from cell phone use during the program, unless there's an emergency or they're using the phone to take photos. This is for the safety of the students as well as to demonstrate engagement in the program.
- Teachers and adult chaperones are responsible for class control and discipline at ALL times; if the group becomes unmanageable, the MTRP Foundation Educator can end the program at any time.

### **Prepare for the Trails**

Everyone must wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes (no sandals) and clothes that are comfortable for hiking and can get a little dirty. Students should layer their clothing to allow for a variety of weather conditions. Students should bring a full water bottle, hat, and sunscreen.

### **Field Trip Rules**

- Stay behind the leader and on the trail at all times.
- Leave all rocks and sticks on the ground; do not remove any natural objects from MTRP.
- All animals in the park are wildlife; please do not feed or attempt to handle them.
- Discard all trash in the garbage cans and put recyclable items in the blue recycle bins.
- No running in the Visitor Center or on the trails.

### **Bus Transportation Reimbursement Procedure**

- The MTRP Foundation can support bus transportation reimbursement to Title 1 schools, up to \$250 per field trip for groups of 25 or more.
- Invoicing must be done via the school district.
- Invoicing must occur no later than 30 days after the field trip.
- Invoices must be accompanied by actual transportation cost documentation.
- Invoices prior to field trip date will not be reimbursed.
- All invoices for June field trip transportation must be received prior to June 15.

### **Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation Field Trip Programs for 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Listed below are descriptions of the guided programs offered for grades 2nd-8th. One-day field trips include: Guided nature hike with an Outdoor Educator, a tour of the Visitor Center including exhibits and a film presentation as time allows.

#### **2nd Grade: The Habitats of Mission Trails Regional Park**

An awareness of where we live in relationship to San Diego's cherished wildlife is the focus of this 2nd grade outdoor education program. The concepts of habitat and the four elements necessary for preservation – food, water, shelter, and space – are discussed in an introductory presentation. Students are then taken on an easy half-mile guided walk through some of the park's native habitats to see where some of Mission Trails' many inhabitants live. Students will also discover some of the many signs and clues wildlife leave behind. This program begins and ends at the park's Visitor Center.

NGSS; 2-LS2-1, 2-LS2-2, 2-LS4-1

#### **3rd Grade: The Kumeyaay and Mission Trails Regional Park**

The Kumeyaay are our region's indigenous people, and their ancestors lived in the area that is now Mission Trails Regional Park. One of the more obvious dwelling sites used by the Kumeyaay includes a granitic bedrock area that has several depressions worn into the surface from hundreds of years of grinding acorns and other foods. This 3rd grade outdoor education program takes students on a one-mile roundtrip interpretive walk to the historic Grinding Rocks site at the edge of the San Diego River. Along the way, Kumeyaay usage of native plants

and wildlife resources will be discussed. The cultural and social customs of the Kumeyaay will be covered. This program begins and ends at the Visitor Center, where students will also get the chance to view an educational video and experience the museum.

NGSS; 3-LS3-2, 3-LS4-4, 3-5-ETS1-1, 3-5-ETS1-2

#### **4th, 5th & 6th Grade: Ecosystems of Mission Trails Regional Park**

Within the park there are seven distinct ecosystems – places where living and nonliving things interact. This one-mile exploratory walk takes students through four of the park's dominant ecosystems – coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland and riparian. Students will have an opportunity to discover the differences between each ecosystem and learn why these differences exist. We'll discuss animal species that may be found within each ecosystem (and, with hope, see some!), and identify soil composition. This program begins and ends at the park's Visitor Center.

NGSS; 4-ESS2-1, 5-ESS2-1, 5-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-4

#### **7th & 8th Grade: Biodiversity and Stewardship of Mission Trails Regional Park**

Human beings are living organisms who interact with and benefit greatly from the ecosystems around them. Ecosystems that have a greater variety of different species of plants and animals have a greater biodiversity. These ecosystems are also healthier and more stable. This field trip will emphasize biodiversity, human impact on the environment, and stewardship. We will include a discussion about biodiversity, and students will have the opportunity to be "citizen scientists" by using the iNaturalist app to track nature observations along the trail. Students will learn about stewardship and how they can be stewards for the environment, including a video about stewardship, which focuses on the stewardship involved with Mission Trails Regional Park. This program begins and ends at the park's Visitor Center.

NGSS; MS-LS2-1, MS-LS2-2, LS2.C (MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5)

#### **About Mission Trails Regional Park**

At more than 8,000 acres, Mission Trails Regional Park one of the largest urban parks in the United States. There are approximately 65 miles of trails throughout the park, including the areas of Cowles Mountain and Lake Murray. Seven native habitats are found within the park boundaries, including Chaparral, Coastal Sage Scrub, Oak Woodland, Riparian, Aquatic, Grasslands and Vernal Pools. Old Mission Dam, both a State and National Registered Historic Landmark, is also located in the park. Learn more at [www.mtrp.org](http://www.mtrp.org)

**Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center, 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, 92119**

MTRP Foundation Office: 619-668-3280; MTRP Visitor Center Front Desk: 619-668-3281

## Directions to the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center

### 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119

From Interstate 8 – Exit Mission Gorge/Fairmount and turn north onto Mission Gorge Road. At the Friars Road junction, turn right to stay on Mission Gorge Road, and follow it east for 4.2 miles. Just past the Jackson Drive intersection, turn left onto Father Junipero Serra Trail. To get to the Visitor Center, turn left into the parking lot entrance, just before you get to the half-closed road.

From Route 52 – Exit Mast Blvd. in Santee. Turn north onto Mast Blvd. and then right at the first traffic signal (West Hills Parkway). Take West Hills Parkway to Mission Gorge Road and turn right. To get to the Visitor Center, stay left at the merge and take Mission Gorge Road west 2.4 miles. After you pass the light at Golfcrest Drive, turn right onto Father Junipero Serra Trail. The entrance to the parking lot is located on the left, just before you get to the half-closed road.

