



Ocean Trails Reserve (Founders Park, Sunrise, Sunset Trails)

This moderate hike will take you and your group through **Founders Park**, down the switch backs on the **Sunset Trail**, along the beach, and then back up the **Sunrise Trail** back to Founders Park. Parking will be at the visitors' lot at the end of Trump National Drive next to the golf course club house.

Founders Park: Point out the plaque dedicated to the founders of Rancho Palos Verdes. As you approach the Sunset trail, you will also see a large plaque dedicated to the Ishibashi family and the other Japanese farmers who once farmed a good portion of the Peninsula.

When you descend the **Sunset Trail** there are some interesting geological features to discuss: large cobbles with piddock clam holes are imbedded in the cliff face indicating that the area was once a beach. You can talk about the effects of erosion that has exposed them. The marine terraces can be easily seen from this vantage point, so it is good place to talk about how the Peninsula was formed.

The hike will then continue around Halfway Point, which, unlike the other promontories in PV, is not igneous rock. It is sedimentary rock with high silica content, and in areas has been changed into contact metamorphic rock due to extreme heat. In the areas that remain sedimentary rock, fossil shells can be found. Chunks of chert are also readily found. The walk up the **Sunrise Trail** will take you through the "graben" (German for ditch or grave). That is the repaired landslide area from the 1999 landslide. The repair was done using a geo-technical material of plastic layered with earth and drainage pipes. After the repair was completed, the area was planted using a hydro seeding technique, and watered with an overhead system. A riparian habitat of mule fat, willows, and giant ryegrass is apparent where seeping water is found year round. This whole area is home to many animals including snakes, lizards, fox, raccoons, opossums, cottontail rabbits, and a large variety of birds. Listen for the mewing calls of the endangered gnatcatcher.

The original owners, the Zuckermans, planted California Sage Scrub habitat around the golf course, and successful restoration can be seen along many of the trails and coastal bluffs. Nonnative trees from Australia and New Zealand can also be spotted in the park and around the golf course.

○ **Some of the native plants in the area:**

- ✓ **Sagebrush:** Native Americans (NA) used it for medicinal purposes by making a tea to relieve cramps, pain at childbirth, and as eyewash. Also, it was used as an aromatic in sweat baths, and as an insecticide sprinkled on the floors of dwellings as a flea and tick repellent. The seeds were ground and used in a flour mixture to make flatbread similar to a tortilla. It is sometimes called "cowboy cologne". The plant is the nesting site of the [California gnatcatcher](#).
- Saltbush:** The leaves collect salt through the root system and from ocean spray. NA would add leaves to their fires the brush off the ash and collect the salt crystals.
- ✓ **Sage (black and purple):** Black sage has dark green leaves, and the purple sage has grayish-green leaves. Both have purplish pom-pom like flowers. Both are very aromatic and smell like stuffing when crushed.
- ✓ **Buckwheat:** California buckwheat has dark green slender leaves and looks like rosemary. Ashy leaf buckwheat has grayish-green colored leaves. Both have pinkish flowers above the leaves that turn brown in the fall. Many birds and insects eat the seeds. The NA used the ground seeds in a flour mixture to make flatbread.

- ✓ **Lemonade Berry Bush:** It is a large shrub with dark green leaves and red berries that ripen with a white coating that tastes sour. The NA made a refreshing drink from the berries and also roasted the berries to grind for a coffee-like drink.
 - ✓ **Prickly Pear Cactus:** It is an edible plant and the NA ate both the paddle and the fruit. You may spot 3 varieties; beaver tail, coastal, and chaparral. It is a good habitat for the [cactus wren](#). It is known in Mexican cuisine as “nopales” and tastes like green beans. The fruit is sweet and is known as “tuna” in Spanish.
 - ✓ **Jumping Cholla:** Segments detach as if jumping at you. It has barbed spines and is also a good habitat for the cactus wren.
 - ✓ **California Bush Sunflower:** The plant has bright yellow flowers and is a good bird habitat. The lack of water makes for dry branches that appear dead during the summer.
 - ✓ **Coyote Bush:** Separate male and female plants that produce fluffy white flowers. When in bloom the stalks resemble a coyote’s tail.
 - ✓ **Giant Rye Grass:** NA also used these seeds to ground into a flour mixture to make flatbread. The shafts were used as arrows to stun birds, and the leaves were used as thatch.
 - ✓ **Mule Fat:** This plant was at one time used for food for horses and donkeys. They, however did not like it, but the mules did and grew fat, hence the name. NA used the branches as a hand drill with tinder and a wooden block when starting fires and the long straight branches were used to make arrow shafts.
 - ✓ **Dudlea:** This evergreen perennial succulent can be found on steep, rocky slopes and other areas containing rocky soils. Under proper conditions Dudlea can survive up to 100 years, hence their nickname “Live forever”.
 - ✓ **Deerweed:** It is habitat and food for the PV Blue Butterfly. The flowers are yellow but turn to a deep orange once the flower is pollinated.
 - ✓ **Coastal Golden Bush:** This shrub has tall stalks with deep golden blossoms. It is good bird habitat and produces lots of food for seed eating birds. Look for spittle bugs on the leaves. They are the larval stage of an insect called a leafhopper, and they produce a foamy substance that protects the insect that looks like spit.
 - ✓ **Wishbone Plant:** Also called Four O’clock. It is an herbaceous succulent with thick leaves and small purple flowers that close up at night. The branches curve to resemble the shape of a wishbone.
 - ✓ **California Boxthorn:** This fall blooming perennial shrub has very stiff thorny branches that resemble a tangle of dead twigs when dormant. It is a member of the nightshade family, but is unique in that its flowers have only four petals instead of 5. The small red fruit is edible, however is difficult to find as the birds love to eat them.
- **Additional Topics To Discuss During Your Walk**
- ✓ Lobster season is between October and March, and fishermen mark their traps with different colored buoys visible from the bluffs. Spiny lobsters must be a minimum size of 3 ¼ inches measured in a straight line from rear edge of the eye socket to the rear edge of the body shell. Between seasons sea urchins are harvested for sail to Asian markets overseas.
 - ✓ Participants will also be interested in other topics docents are familiar with, including the [Tongva](#), the Sepulveda Rancho, the [kelp forest](#), and the ocean habitat in general.

J. Fodor October 2018

Based upon notes provided by C. Blindbury, J. Nieto, October 2007

