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## **FEATURES**



LA Couple Ties the Knot at Ramona Oaks RV Resort



Turning Pointe School of Dance Presents Cinderella



Get Ready for Ribs!



Local Blacksmith Forges Ahead with Age-Old Trade

By Angela McLaughlin - Ramona

Emerald rolling hills sprinkled with

wildflowers and groves of oak trees,

cattle peacefully graze in the open fields — the beauty and serenity of

our next hike will help satisfy your

Santa Ysabel County East Preserve is a 3,800-acre preserve that offers

more than 13 miles of trails. While

preserve, I will mainly discuss the trailhead at one of them.

To reach the trailhead, follow Highway 78 toward Julian. When you reach the

town of Santa Ysabel, turn left onto

Highway 79. You will see a sign for

the preserve on the right side of the

road and will come to a gate that is

there are two entrances into the

craving for nature.

red-tailed hawks soaring overhead as

Home Journal • Thu, Apr 20, 2017



JHS ~ One Look Back, Two Looks Forward

## A Hiker's Paradise: Santa Ysabel County East Preserve



The Santa Ysabel County East Preserve's West Vista Loop Trail brings hikers through beautiful shady oak groves. Photo by Angela McLaughlin

used for cattle grazing, it is important not to block the large gate with your vehicle.

the start of the trail.

Be aware that there is no parking lot for this trailhead. Visitors may park on the gravel shoulder near the gate. As this area is

The beginning of the trail is fairly flat and eases hikers into their workout. The trail will soon begin to steadily climb. On your left, you will have gorgeous views of the foothills and the valley in between — during the rainy season, there may be water flowing in the creek below.

Areas of the trail are uneven and slanted, so good hiking shoes that provide ankle support are necessary. As a result of the recent rains, some areas of the trail have deep ruts, and other spots are slippery due to loose dirt and rocks — make sure to watch your footing.

The first portion, West Vista Loop Trail, will take hikers on a climb into a grove of oaks. After the first mile, hikers will encounter a picnic area that makes for a nice place to rest and rehydrate. You will come to a split in the trail that is the beginning of the loop.

I recently hiked West Vista Loop Trail, which is about 4.5 miles round-trip. With the elevation change, it offered a nice challenge and workout — and was certainly long enough for my furry companions!

For hikers looking to experience something more strenuous, the loop connects to a three-mile-long segment of the Coast to

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Crest Trail. This trail connects to the Kanaka Loop, which leads to the other entrance of the preserve at 500 Farmer Rd. This entrance offers a larger staging area, beneficial to bigger groups and those looking to bring horses onto the trail.

The combination of woodlands, grasslands and other landscapes in the preserve provides a hospitable home for local wildlife. In addition to the spunky ground squirrels, visitors may encounter deer, coyotes, hawks and vultures, among other wildlife.

The trail is multi-use and is often frequented by bikers and horseback riders. Dogs are welcome on the trail but must be leashed. As this is a sensitive habitat, it is important that you stay on the trail and bring out anything that you bring in.

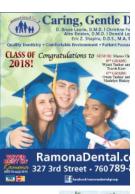
As always, remember to bring enough water for your hike, wear sturdy shoes and sunscreen, and bring a first aid kit. It is important to let someone know where you will be hiking before you venture out. 'Tis the season for rattlesnakes, so be sure to watch where you place your hands and feet.

With wildflowers in full bloom, now is the perfect time to visit the preserve. Head out to Santa Ysabel for your next hiking adventure!

For information or to recommend a local trail, email angelamclaughlin@ramonajournal.com.

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