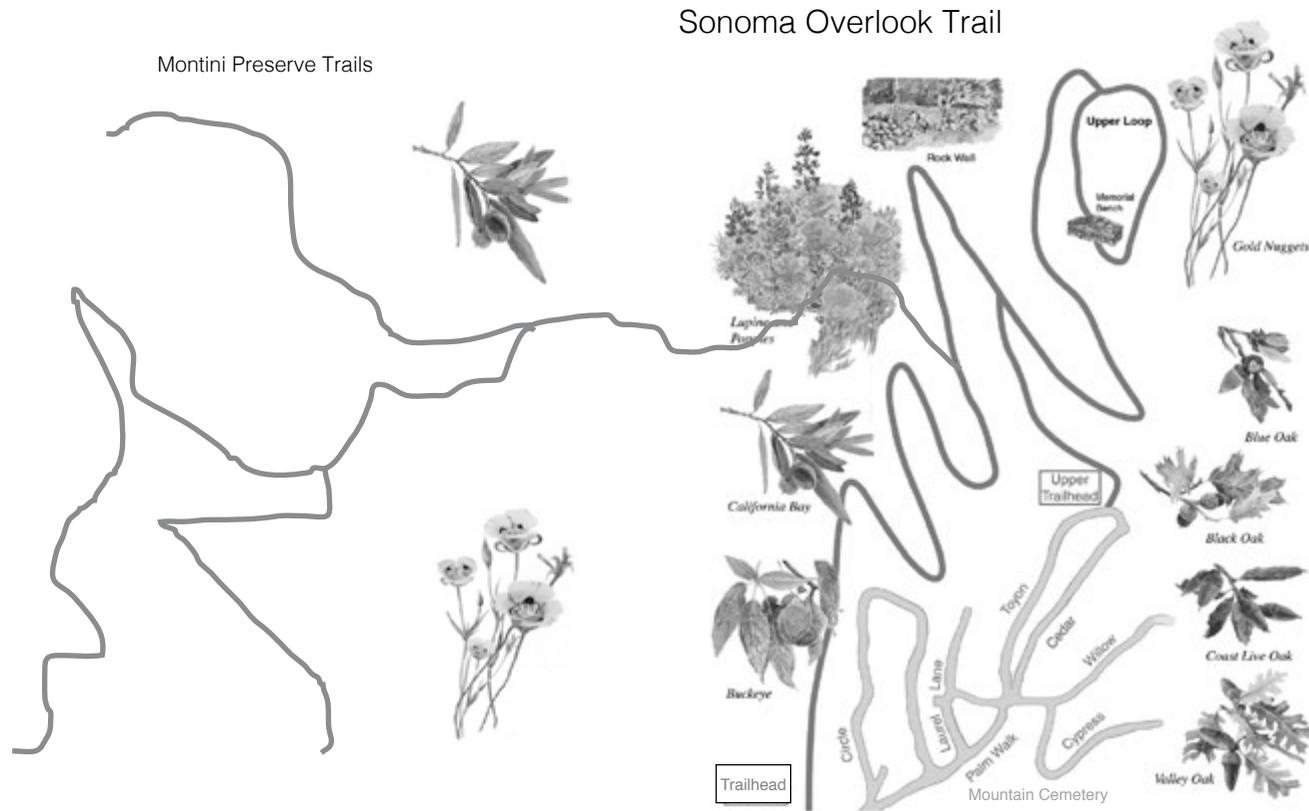


Welcome to Sonoma Overlook Trail

ENJOY OUR HERITAGE

Originally a hunting territory for Native Americans, the area over which Sonoma Overlook Trail now passes has served many other purposes. Arrowheads found in the area indicate the presence of the first permanent residents, members of the Muchi tribe, a sub-branch of the Coastal Miwoks. While living on the former Sonoma Mission site, these Native Americans used the hillside areas for hunting. By the mid-nineteenth century, the property had become part of the estate of General Mariano G. Vallejo, who gave the sloping portion of what was then called Battery Hill to the Pueblo de Sonoma for use as a community cemetery, a purpose it serves to this day.

In the 1890's Solomon Schocken purchased the upper, rockier portion of the hill to the east of Sonoma Overlook Trail and established a successful stone quarry. He provided stone used in the construction of several Sonoma buildings and in the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. From the basalt that was plentiful at the site, Schocken also fashioned cobblestones and paving blocks used on streets throughout the Bay Area. By the early 1920's, however, the popularity of the automobile had so



decreased the demand for those materials that the quarry was closed. In the years that followed, the abandoned hillside came to serve as a garbage dump, but was closed to that use in the 1950's. The city-owned property remained undeveloped, even somewhat neglected, for decades.

Then, in the 1990's, two groups became interested in the area: those who wanted to preserve it and those who wanted to develop it. The differing views on its best use aroused community interest. A vote of the citizenry strongly rejected any commercial development, and participation in subsequent community forums registered popular support for limited access to the property.

Sonoma Overlook Trail

The Sonoma Ecology Center and the City of Sonoma became involved, and thanks to their efforts Sonoma Overlook Trail is now a reality. Grants from the State of California, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the City of Sonoma funded the removal of debris from the dump, as well as restoration of the site.

The trail itself was financed by individuals, civic groups, and local businesses; it was built largely by volunteers. Today, a hike on the trail offers an opportunity for all Sonomans, their guests, and visitors to our city to experience the area and enjoy views comparable to those of the original inhabitants and early settlers of Sonoma Valley.

ENJOY SONOMA OVERLOOK TRAIL ...SAFELY!

As you travel this trail into a beautiful pocket of nature, please respect the land, other hikers, and the local inhabitants. Respect a few simple rules and have a great walk.

Stay on the trail. Walking off the trail causes erosion and damage to the hillside. Hiking on the established trail is safer for you, too. You are less likely to encounter poison oak, deer ticks, rattlesnakes, or even a mountain lion.

Please leave dogs, bicycles and horses at home. The local plants and animals will be healthier, safer, and more visible when you treat this area gently.

Enjoy the views—safely! Watch your step. Wear sturdy shoes and comfortable clothing, preferably layered, to be prepared for changing weather conditions. Wear a hat and protect your skin with sunscreen. And ALWAYS carry drinking water!

Wildfire danger is high here. Neither smoking nor fires are permitted on the hillside.

Leave wildflowers for others to enjoy. By not picking them, you allow them to produce seeds for next year. By not feeding wild animals you allow them to follow their natural instincts and to remain self-sufficient.

Don't litter! Leave the hillside as beautiful as it was when you arrived.



Illustrations by Irene Ehret

ENJOY THE PLANTS AND WILDLIFE



This Sonoma hillside is home to a large number of plants and animals native to California. Lower parts of the trail pass through mixed evergreens, with bay and coast live oak predominating. Madrone, manzanita, toyon, buckeye...and the ubiquitous poison oak...border the trail as it gradually ascends, skirting grassy meadows, which are dotted with wildflowers in the spring. A particularly treasured feature of this property is its oak woodlands. In addition to the coast live oak, the Black oak, Oregon oak, Blue oak, and Valley oak provide a crucial source of food and habitat for a wide variety of creatures.

Wildflower season opens with milkmaids and buttercups, followed by blue-eyed grass, lupines, blue larkspur, yellow mariposa lilies, brodiaea, soaproot, yarrow, clarkia, and California fuschia, to name but a few. Several species of ferns grow on the shadier slopes. These include polypody, goldback, maidenhair, and coastal wood fern.

While most of the animals that make their home here are nocturnal and thus not likely to be seen, look for signs such as tracks and scat that indicate the presence of coyotes, fox, raccoons, opossums, wild turkeys, and deer, as well as the occasional bobcat. Bird watchers will find excellent opportunities to spot numerous species. Depending on the season, you may encounter hermit thrushes, Pacific slope flycatchers, or fox sparrows near the trailhead. Birds such as the oak titmouse, California towhee, and western scrub jay can be heard and seen anywhere along the trail. The open meadows at higher elevations are frequented by American kestrels, acorn woodpeckers, and western bluebirds. At the top, while enjoying a beautiful view of Sonoma, you may be rewarded by the sight of a red-tailed hawk circling below (or a golden eagle soaring above your head!)



SELF-GUIDED CHECKLISTS
AT THE TRAILHEAD KIOSK:

- ❖ TREES
- ❖ WILDFLOWERS
- ❖ BIRDS



Directions to Sonoma Overlook Trail

The trailhead is located on First Street West, four blocks north of the Plaza, by the entrance to the Mountain Cemetery. There are also connecting trails from the Montini Preserve and from within the cemetery from Toyon Road. Look for trail information and self-guided checklists at the trailhead kiosk.

Sonoma Overlook Trail Stewards

have lead responsibility for the Trail in partnership with The Sonoma Ecology Center and the City Of Sonoma. The volunteer Stewards maintain the trail, educate the public about the history, flora and fauna of the trail with brochures and docent guided hikes for schools and groups and raise funds for these services.

Join us! To volunteer, for further information about the Stewards, or to request a docent guided hike, contact Joanna, Stewards Chair joannakemper@gmail.com. Visit us at sonomaoverlook.com and facebook.com/sonomaoverlook.

Support the Sonoma Overlook Trail

We need your support! The Overlook Trail is funded by generous contributions from members of the community and local businesses. Please send contributions via our website: www.sonomaoverlook.org or by mail: Sonoma Overlook Trail Fund, Sonoma Ecology Center, PO Box 1486, Eldridge, CA 95431

Please don't discard this brochure. Return it to the kiosk, offer it to a friend, pass it on to another hiker, or save it for a return trip! 09/14



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Sonoma Overlook Trail



**Sonoma Overlook Trail Stewards
Manage the Trail
in Partnership with the
City of Sonoma
and the
Sonoma Ecology Center**

Walk the gently graded Sonoma Overlook Trail (7% maximum grade), slightly less than three miles round trip. Enjoy panoramic views of the entire Sonoma Valley and beyond from the loop at the top of the hillside.