

# guide to the lower ventura river parkway

The **Ventura River Parkway** is a network of parks, open space, and trails that provide opportunities for recreation, education and stewardship of the Ventura River.

The **Ventura River Trail** (1999) and the **Ojai Valley Trail** (1983) provide a continuous multi-use paved path along the Ventura River corridor from the beach all the way to the City of Ojai. The trail follows the route of the old Southern Pacific Railroad that once transported Ojai Valley produce to Ventura. The 1969 floods washed out much of the tracks, which were later converted from 'Rails to Trails'. Many side trips provide access to the river and creeks as well as scenic overviews of the watershed.

The **Ventura River Trail** runs from Main St. in Ventura's historic downtown to Foster Park 6.3 miles inland. The trail features the area's natural and industrial heritage, including an impressive wall of sedimentary layers exposed by the Ventura River, active and abandoned industrial sites, and operating oil derricks.

## places to explore

### if you have 30 - 45 minutes

#### SURFER'S POINT

Just a short distance from Ventura's historic downtown lies the mouth of the Ventura River. The popular Omar Rains bike path fronts the Ventura County Fairgrounds at Surfer's Point. This path was re-routed in 2011 as part of an innovative beach restoration project. Nearby parking provides convenient access to consistent surfing waves.

#### WILLOUGHBY PRESERVE

A small network of trails on the Ventura Hillside Conservancy (VHC) property provides a unique look at the lower river where it enters the estuary. The rivermouth and estuary provide excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing.

For more information visit: [www.venturahillside.org](http://www.venturahillside.org)

#### EMMA WOOD STATE BEACH

On the opposite bank of the estuary from Surfer's Point lies the Seaside Wilderness Park/Emma Wood State Beach, providing opportunities for camping, hiking and exploring the river delta's coastal dune habitat. Remnants of a WWII-era artillery gun turret can be found near the rivermouth.

For more information visit: [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

### if you have an hour or more

#### GRANT PARK OVERLOOK

Grant Park lies on the ridge above historic downtown Ventura. The landmark Serra Cross overlooks the San Buenaventura Mission (1782). Although Grant Park is accessible by car, hikers may enjoy the easy switchbacks of the recently constructed Ventura Botanical Gardens Demonstration Trail that climbs the steep grade behind City Hall to the ridgeline above. Here, one gains an expansive overview of the coastline and Channel Islands to the south and the Ventura River watershed and the mountains of the Los Padres National Forest to the north.

For more information visit: [www.serracrosspark.org](http://www.serracrosspark.org)  
[www.venturabotanicalgardens.com](http://www.venturabotanicalgardens.com)

#### FOSTER PARK

Foster Park is the gateway to the Ojai Valley, featuring a linear park along the Ventura River. The park has restrooms, water fountains and parking and is a popular family spot on weekends. This is a destination for cyclists from Ventura, or a good starting point for those wanting to ride the Ojai Valley Trail to Ojai.

#### MISSION AQUEDUCT

A visible section of the mission aqueduct still exists just east of Highway 33 on Canada Larga Road. It is one of the few remaining parts of a seven mile long system that delivered water from San Antonio Creek to a filtration plant located at Eastwood Park behind the San Buenaventura Mission. The aqueduct was built of river cobblestones and cement by Chumash workers under the direction of mission priests.

## GUIDELINES

For the preservation of natural habitat, protection of wildlife and the safety of all visitors...

- Please stay on marked trails
- Please keep dogs leashed at all times and do not allow them to swim in the river
- No fires, fireworks, or smoking, please
- No firearms of any kind are permitted
- No motorized vehicles or recreational toys
- Please exercise courtesy for others at all times
- Carry your cell phone in case of emergency
- No overnight camping
- Please carry out everything you bring in (trash cans are located at the trailheads)
- Fishing is prohibited due to endangered steelhead trout

## PARKWAY LEGEND

- Ventura River Bike Trail
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- ... California Coastal Trail / Anza National Historic Trail
- ... Potential Multi-Use Trail (proposed)
- ... Secondary / Ephemeral Trails
- ... Existing Community Bikeway
- Ventura River Corridor
- Community Parks & Open Spaces
- Conservancy Property (VHC)
- ✱ Bike Trail Access Point
- ✱ River Corridor Access Point
- ✱ Landmark / Point of Interest
- 🚏 Gold Coast Transit Stop, Route 6
- 🚏 Gold Coast Transit Stop, Route 16
- 🚶 River Parkway Trailhead
- 🏠 Park Entrance Station
- 🅑 Parking
- 🚻 Restrooms
- 🍷 Picnic Area
- 🏕 Camping Area
- 📷 Viewshed / Vista Point
- 👁 Wildlife Viewing Area

**California Coastal Trail to Santa Barbara**  
The Anza National Historic Trail follows the California Coastal Trail through Ventura and commemorates the 1775-1776 Spanish expedition to settle Alta California.

# the ventura river parkway

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 mi



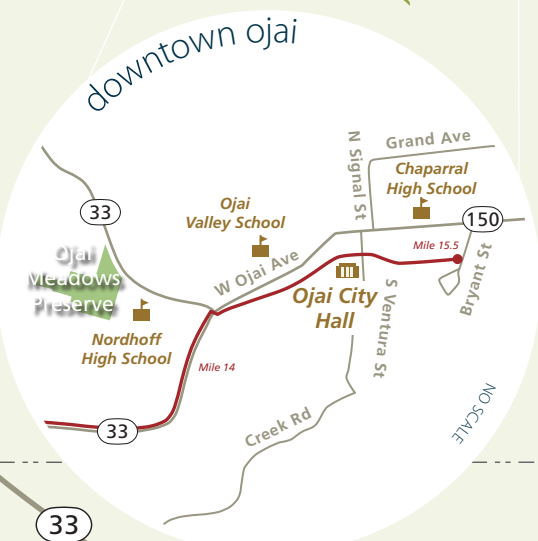


# guide to the upper ventura river parkway

The **Ojai Valley Trail** winds 9 miles through wooded areas near the river from Foster Park to the City of Ojai. One side of the trail is paved for bicyclists, walkers, and runners. A fence separates the paved path from an adjacent dirt bridle path for horseback riders. Some sections of the Ojai Valley Trail parallel Hwy 33, while others wind through wooded areas and along riverbeds.

The **Ventura River Preserve** includes three miles of the Ventura River and over 1500 acres of the surrounding ridges and canyons. Hiking, horseback and bicycle riding, dog walking, birdwatching, photography, and just enjoying wild open spaces are among the many recreational activities the preserve has to offer. The preserve is one of several areas owned and managed by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC).

For more information visit: [www.ovlc.org](http://www.ovlc.org)



## places to explore

### THE VENTURA RIVER PRESERVE

Many miles of trails provide opportunity for exploration within the floodplain of the river. A loop may be made through the shady oak woodlands of Rice and Wills canyons, while the more strenuous Oso Ridge Trail offers expansive views of the watershed and Lake Casitas.

### OJAI BY BIKE

The pedestrian/bicycle path combining the 6.3-mile Ventura River Trail and the 9-mile Ojai Valley Trail has been named one of the best 15-mile bike rides in Southern California. The gradual elevation change makes it an enjoyable day trip. One way trips are made possible by utilizing the bike racks provided by the local bus service. Many people park at Foster Park for a shorter ride to Ojai and back.

### COZY DELL TRAIL

Cozy Dell Trailhead is located near Friends Packing House on Hwy 33. The trail offers scenic views of the Ventura River and is rated as moderate. The trail is primarily used for hiking & mountain biking and is accessible year-round. It may be done as a 3 mile out and back, or one may continue on to the Foothill/Pratt trail above Ojai.

### SULPHUR MOUNTAIN ROAD

Sulphur Mountain Road is an 18 mile out and back fire-road trail that features beautiful views of the Ojai Valley and out to the Pacific Ocean. The trail is rated as moderate and primarily used for birding, hiking, mountain biking & walking.

### FOSTER PARK

This county park has shade, restrooms, picnic tables and access to the Ventura River. The large sycamores and flowing river make Foster Park a popular weekend destination for families and a primary trailhead for hikers and cyclists using the Ventura River/Ojai Valley Trail.

## CONTACT INFO

- City of Ojai: 805-646-5581
- City of Ventura: 805-677-3999
- County of Ventura, Parks Dept: 805-654-3951
- Emma Wood State Beach: 805-968-1033
- Friends of the Ventura River: 805-620-7001
- Gold Coast Transit: 805-487-2222
- Ojai Police Department: 805-646-1414
- Ojai Trolley: 805-646-5581 x207
- Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC): 805-649-6852
- US Forest Service: 805-646-4348
- Ventura Hillsides Conservancy (VHC): 805-643-8044
- Ventura County Sheriff: 805-654-9511
- Ventura Police Department: 805-650-8010

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- Community Parks & Open Spaces
- Conservancy Property (OVLC)
- Bike Trail Access Point
- River Corridor Access Point
- Landmark / Point of Interest
- Ojai Trolley Stop
- Gold Coast Transit Stop, Route 16
- River Parkway Trailhead
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Camping Area
- Viewshed / Vista Point
- Wildlife Viewing Area



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The Ventura River Parkway Trail Guide was prepared by:  
**Friends of the Ventura River**  
[www.FriendsofVenturaRiver.org](http://www.FriendsofVenturaRiver.org)

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