



Girl Scouts – Mt. Wilson Vista Council Council's Own

CALIFORNIA NATIVES

To earn this Interest Project Award complete at least SEVEN activities as follows: TWO Skill Builders activities, ONE Technology Activity, ONE Service Project Activity, ONE Career Exploration Activity, and TWO activities from any category you choose.

SKILL BUILDERS

1. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area protects the greatest expanse of the Mediterranean ecosystem in the National Park Service. The Mediterranean climate is characterized by hot, dry summers and relatively mild, wet winters. This unique ecosystem is found in only four other places in the world—central Chile, southwestern Australia, southern Africa and the Mediterranean Basin in Europe—comprising approximately 2% of the world's landforms. The park is home to 26 distinct natural communities, from freshwater aquatic habitats and coastal lagoons to oak woodlands, valley oak savanna and chaparral. It is a critical haven for more than 450 animal species and 25 rare, threatened or endangered species.
 - a. Find at least 5 each of plants and animals that are native to California.
 - b. Determine whether any of them appear on the EXTINCT, ENDANGERED, THREATENED, RARE or RECOVERED lists.
 - c. What non-native plants and animals are threatening Zuma Canyon?
2. Restoration is a critical element of re-establishing damaged environments to a native state and increasing biodiversity in both plants and animals.
 - a. What is being done in California to restore our coastline?
 - b. Research at least 2 organizations or companies that are restoring native plant life to California. Find out how to volunteer at these locations.
 - c. Find out what can be done in your own neighborhood to help restore native populations. Do something about it!
3. Low water landscaping is an important part of conservation in Southern California.
 - a. Find out the benefits of native/low water landscaping.
 - b. What is in the landscaping around you? Are they native or California friendly?
 - c. What are attractive plants that are environmentally friendly for landscaping?
4. Conservation starts with appreciation. Most people can get fired up about saving the environment if they can appreciate what saving the environment does.
 - a. Take a hike in a National Park or one of our great city parks. Notice the native wildlife and plants. Take stock of the damage non native plants and animals do to the environment.
 - b. Look up the history and photos of where you went hiking before non native species moved in. What has changed?
 - c. Take pictures and create your own record of the current landscape.
 - d. Tell a friend about the hike – or get one to come with you!

TECHNOLOGY

1. Restoring native plant life is a delicate task.
 - a. Learn the proper techniques for weeding and planting.
 - b. Put together a basic tool kit for proper weeding and planting.
 - c. Demonstrate the correct way to weed and plant.
2. Trees and plants perform amazing technological feats like cleaning our air.
 - a. Find out about all the things that plants and trees do to aid our environment.
 - b. Research what man made technologies perform the same function.
 - c. Evaluate the cost of cutting down trees and plants in environmental and dollar terms.

SERVICE PROJECTS

1. Volunteer with one of the local environmental restoration organizations. Make sure you follow all of the safety guidelines.
2. Find a younger girl troop you can take on a hike and teach about native California plant and animal life. Get them excited about conservation and restoration. Make sure to have the proper number of chaperones.
3. Find a nursing home or children's center or another place of your choosing and donate low water or California native plants to people in the home. Teach them about how to care for their plants and the benefits of California natives.

CAREER EXPLORATION

1. Find out about working in environmental conservation.
 - a. Where do they work? National parks only?
 - b. What kind of degree do you have to have?
 - c. What do they do on a day-to-day basis?
 - d. How do you find a job in this field? What are the kinds of jobs available?
2. Redesign from scratch all the landscaping at your home and populate it with low water plants or California natives. Present it to your parents. Ask your parents if you can replace some non-native plants with native or low water plants.