

Remember, Everything's Connected

Only a few of the relationships found along the trail were discussed in this brochure. Since everything's connected, many more relationships are present.

How many more can you find? Here are some others you can search for:



Dead Trees: Good?

Dead trees, called snags, can often provide for more life than living trees. This is because many types of insects live inside dead trees, providing a valuable food source for animals such as lizards and birds. As dead trees decompose, they release nutrients back into the soil for use by future generations of plants and trees, thus completing the cycle.

Witch's Hair

Have you seen this stringy orange plant growing among the other plants and shrubs? Dodder, often known as witch's hair, is a parasitic plant that steals nutrients and water from the host plants that support it. Native Americans used it as a natural bright yellow dye.



People and Nature

We also have a relationship with nature. When you go to the market to buy an apple, remember that the apple was once a flower pollinated by insects. Your home, constructed of wood, rock, or brick, came from items harvested from nature. Take the time to slow down and experience your natural world. And remember, everything in nature is connected... even us!



TRACK your hike at
kidsinparks.com
and get **FREE** prizes!



Thanks for joining us on the trail today! Visit our website to find more TRACK Trail™ adventures near you!

The next generation of stewards will help preserve the world's plants, animals, natural lands and our heritage. What will you do to make a difference?



Kids in Parks...

Providing a network of fun-filled adventures that get kids and families active outdoors and connected to nature.



TRACK Trail Partners



JIMBO'S
...Naturally!



Kids in Parks Founding Partners



Nature's Relationships: Everything's connected

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

-John Muir



Although this brochure will not guide you to specific locations along the trail, it will tell you a story to help you discover some of the relationships found in nature. Use the pictures and text to locate as many of these relationships as you can. Keep your eyes open and have fun!

Coming or Going?

San Elijo Lagoon experiences two high and low tides each day. The outgoing tides flush out sediments and debris which are often carried into the lagoon from freshwater creeks and storm drains. The incoming tides bring in much needed oxygen, nutrients and food that many of the lagoon's plants and animals depend on.



Can you find a horned snail?



Can you find some kelp?



Can you spot the Pacific Ocean?

Watershed Connections

The nutrient rich brackish waters of the lagoon are formed when fresh rain water runs off the surrounding hillsides and gathers in creeks as it travels to San Elijo Lagoon, where it mixes with salt water from the Pacific Ocean. Everything that happens in the watershed from the distant hillsides to the ocean, affects the plants and animals that depend on the lagoon.



Can you find a fiddler crab waving his big claw?



How many jumping fish do you see?

Can you spot a bird of prey in the sky or trees?



Eating on the Fly

Have you ever tried to catch a fish with your bare hands or swat an insect out of the air? What we humans can find quite difficult, some birds do with ease. The sharp-eyed osprey glides over the lagoon, plucking fish from the water. Insectivores like the black phoebe can often be seen flying from branch to branch as they catch their food in flight.

Imitate a bird call you hear.



Freshwater

Just as humans and many other animals need freshwater to survive, so do many plants and trees. In the freshwater areas, you will see many tall trees such as willows, cottonwoods and sycamores. These large trees are a big part of the riparian woodland habitat.

How many different insects can you find?



Can you spot a freshwater pond?

Life in a Pond

Many amphibians and insects depend on the still, calm waters of freshwater ponds, from hopping tree frogs to those pesky mosquitoes and beautiful dragonflies. They all begin life as tiny tadpoles or larvae in these ponds before undergoing metamorphosis to become adults.



Feel the leaves of the woodland trees.

Birds of a Feather

Shorebirds such as the light-footed clapper rail flock to the mudflats and water's edge to feast on the many invertebrates from worms to snails to crabs. Some shorebirds probe the mud with their long bills while others stir up the mud with their feet in search of food.



How many different ducks and shorebirds can you find?



Look closely at a blade of salt grass to see the salt crystals.

Home Sweet Home

Just as some birds eat insects while others eat fish, different bird species also nest differently. Some nest high in the trees of the riparian woodland, while others make floating nests in the low-lying salt marsh plants that can rise and fall with the tides.