

# Junior Ranger Explorer Guide



## Alum Rock Park

San José, California • Est. 1872

For use by children ages 7-9 and their families

This guide belongs to:

\_\_\_\_\_

# JUNIOR RANGER EXPLORER

Hi my name is Bandit and I will help guide you through your missions to becoming a Junior Ranger.

You are about to embark on a fun journey to get to know Alum Rock Park in a very special way.



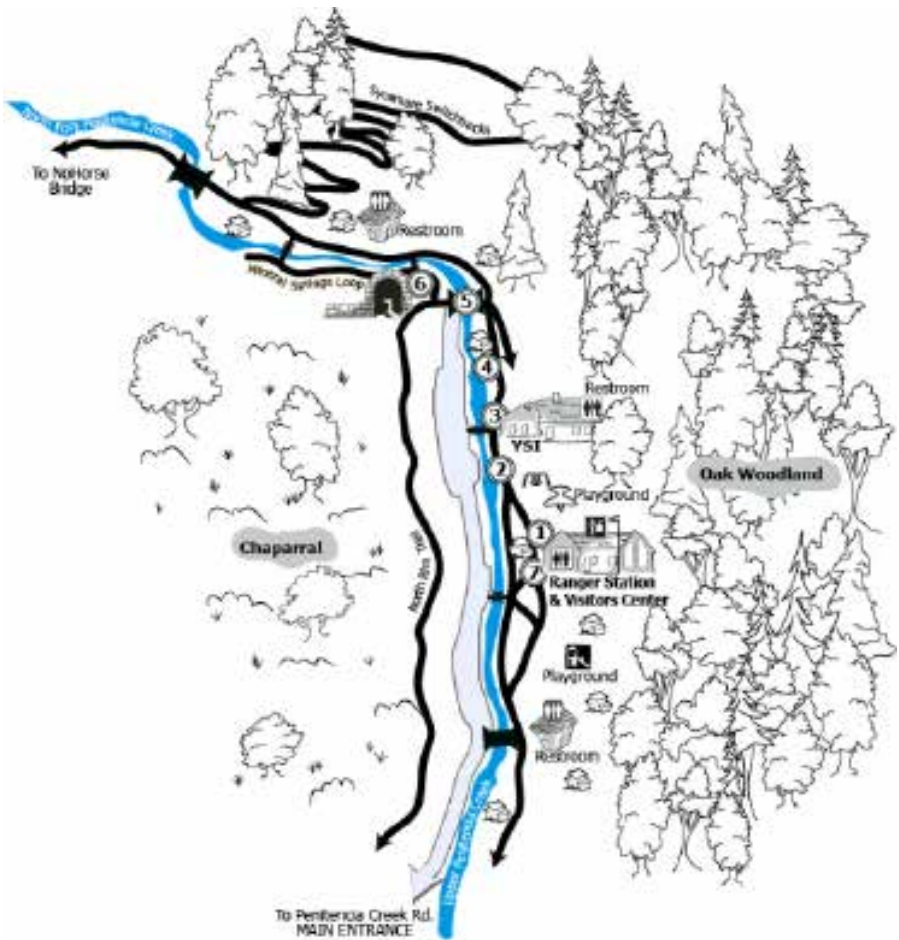
# **BANDIT'S TEN SAFETY TIPS**

- Know where the Ranger office is located in case you need help.
- Practice good hiking manners, pack food and water in, pack trash out. Leave only footprints.
- Always hike with a buddy; it is safer and more fun.
- Stay on marked trails. Going off trail causes erosion and is dangerous.
- Always be prepared, carry water and a first aid kit.
- When hiking, try and wear closed toed shoes.
- Keep the wildlife wild. Do not feed or harass the animals.
- If you see a big animal, make noise, look big and do NOT run.
- Remember to follow all park rules and know when the park closes.
- Always have fun!



# ALUM ROCK PARK MAP

This map covers activities in the Explorer Guide. The Visitors Center has maps of the entire park.



Start at the Park Ranger Office and head East toward the playground that has the cement eagle and spider.

# **JR. RANGER BRIEFING:**

*Pages 7-15*

*Mission 1: "Adventure Quest"*

Complete with your family.

Award: Jr. Ranger "C"

*Pages 17-22*

*Mission 2: "Park Explorer"*

Complete 2 of the 5 assigned tasks

Award: Jr. Ranger "B"

*Pages 25-26*

*Mission 3: "Ranger Quest"*

Achieve Junior Ranger status by accomplishing all objectives

Award: Jr. Ranger "A"

*Pages 27*

*Final Thoughts*

Reflect on your journey

**To earn your Badge, you must complete ALL Missions!**

# Mission One: Adventure Quest

Complete ALL on the following “Checkpoints” on pages 6 - 15 to receive your Jr. Ranger “C” award.

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## What you need for this mission:

- Junior Ranger Guide (this booklet)
- Park Map on page 5
- Close-toed shoes
- Pen or pencil

## Optional:

- Camera
- Color pencils or markers



*Color in the paw print in the lower corner to show you have completed that page.*



# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 1

*Birds of a feather flock together. . .*

Can you find the light post with the holes? The birds that made them, Acorn Woodpeckers, live in groups and share the food they store for the winter. Sometimes you will find squirrels stealing the acorns.

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*As you read these questions out loud, work as a group to come up with an answer.*

- Can you find any acorns in the holes?
  - Can Acorn Woodpeckers eat acorns all year?
  - Can you find any Acorn Woodpeckers around?
- 

Great job! Now walk on the trail heading east, the direction the sun rises, toward the Ramada picnic site. The Ramada is the covered picnic site near the playground. It used to be an Aviary!



# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 2

Can you find a bay leaf somewhere that has fallen off the tree? Pick one up from off the ground and crumple it in your hands. Now, use your nose to smell and get a smell of this native tree. When you are done, set it down and leave it be.

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*Use your sense of smell here.*

- Does anyone in your group like the leaf's smell?    YES    NO
- Does it smell like anything else you know? What?



- 
- Has anyone in your group used bay leaves for cooking or repelling mosquitoes?  
YES    NO
- 

Continue walking up the Creek Trail toward the Youth Science Institute





# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 3

Youth Science Institute (YSI) is a great place to learn about science and nature. If you visit inside, you might meet a live animal!

Go to the garden at the front of the building. This is a native plant garden, which means these plants belong here. Using the signs, pick two native plants, write down their name and draw a picture of one of their leaves or of a flower.

NATIVE PLANT 1	NATIVE PLANT 2
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Walk to the small, white, and round structure with the drinking faucets in the middle of the field.



# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 4

Isn't this an interesting water fountain?

Can you believe the water here used to come from cracks in the mountains? Today it is clean city water. Now is a great time to have a drink and rest in the breeze under the shadows of the nearby trees.

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*As you read these questions out loud, work as a group to come up with an answer.*

- What do you think mountain water at this park would taste and smell like?
  - Do you know why it is not safe to drink water that is in the creek here?
- 

In two more stops, you will find out if your answers to these questions are correct. For now, continue walking on the trail until you get to the four-way intersection. Then stand in the middle of the bridge.



# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 5

Looking down river and up at the hillsides, what do you see? The south side or north facing slope of the canyon is cool and covered mostly in oak trees; this community is called “OAK WOODLANDS”. The north side or south facing slope is dry and mostly covered with brush; this community is called “CHAPARRAL”.

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*As you read these questions out loud, work as a group to come up with an answer.*

Plant communities have creatures that prefer to live in them because they are dry or wet or sunny or shady and many other reasons.

- Can you think of some animals that want to live in Oak Woodland?
  - Can you think of some animals that want to live in Chaparral?
- 

Continue Checkpoint 5. Go to the next page to discover more about what you may already know about these "communities"



# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 5 (cont.)

Plant communities can easily be recognized by, you guessed it, the plants that live there and by how they look.

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### **Chaparral** (to your right side)

*Circle the plants that you see the most:*

Grasses    Bushes    Trees

*Circle the colors you mostly see on this side:*

Yellow    Green    Blue    Red    Brown    Orange

---

### **Oak Woodlands** (to your left side)

*Circle the plants that you see the most:*

Grasses    Bushes    Trees

*Circle the colors you mostly see on this side:*

Yellow    Green    Blue    Red    Brown    Orange

---

Now, let's get the answers to those water questions. Cross the bridge and turn right on Mineral Springs Loop Trail. Stop when you get to a rock structure leaking water.



# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 6

Careful walking on mud and wet rocks, they can get slippery! Take some time exploring the Loop Trail. Did you notice some of the springs are stinky? The mineral “sulfur” is why it smells so stinky. The water comes from deep in the mountains. Touch the water. Is it cold or warm? Did you find the one hot spring? The water is not harmful to wild creatures and helps keep the creek flowing in times of drought.

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*Discuss with your group what else has the same smell.*

Take a selfie or picture of your first reaction to the smell to take home with you. On the next page, draw a picture of the face you made when you smelled the mineral spring.

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Now you’re going to retrace your journey through Alum Rock until you arrive back at the Ranger Station. On the way, can you figure out when the bridge we stopped at was built. (hint it is on a sign) 19\_\_ \_\_



# Mission One: Adventure Quest

What face did you make when you smelled the mineral spring? Draw here:

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# Mission One: Adventure Quest

## Checkpoint 7

The City of San José officially named this park in 1872. Can you believe that's AT LEAST 15 times older than you? Although the park has changed its look many times over the years, for over 140 years people have come here for rest, relaxation, and fun. And a number of those priceless memories are impossible to measure.

Enter the Visitors Center to see, touch, and learn more about Alum Rock's colorful history. We at Alum Rock hope this journey has helped you understand Alum Rock's natural surroundings. In the Visitors Center you will find the answers to these questions:

What mineral was Alum Rock's "Meteor" made of?  
\_\_\_\_\_. Was it really a  
"meteor"? \_\_\_\_\_.

Where did Alum Rock's zoo animals and horse carousel go? \_\_\_\_\_.

Circle ALL the things Park Rangers do:

*Law Enforcement*      *Search & Rescue*

*Fight Fires*      *Teach People About Nature*

*Rescue Wildlife*      *Save Lives*



# Congratulations!

## Mission 1 Complete

You have completed Mission 1! If you are done today, stop by the Visitor Center to pick up your award for Jr. Ranger “C”. If it is closed, please call (408)259-5477 to let staff know you’d like to receive your Jr. Ranger “C” award.

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*If you would like to continue your journey, turn to the next page and begin earning your Jr. Ranger “B” award!*





# Mission Two: Park Explorer

Complete 2 of following “Activities” on pages 18 - 21 to receive your Jr. Ranger “B” award. Color the paw print in the lower corner of the page to show you have completed that page.

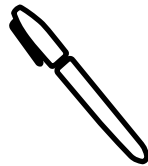
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## What you need for this mission:

- Junior Ranger Guide (this booklet)
- Park Map on page 5
- Close-toed shoes
- Pen or pencil

## Optional:

- Camera
- Color pencils or markers



# **Mission Two:** Park Explorer

## **Activity 1**

Go to your favorite place in the park. If this is your first time here pick a spot you like. Sit here for 10-15 minutes, and use your sense of sight, smell, hearing, and touch to enjoy nature.

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*Draw a picture or take a selfie of you and your location here:*



# Mission Two: Park Explorer

## Activity 2

Interview someone that works in the park. Ask the park staff the following questions:

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*Interview Questions:*

Why do you (park staff) want to work in this park? \_\_\_\_  
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What is your favorite part of working in this park? \_\_\_\_  
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*What is the most interesting story you can tell me?* \_\_\_\_  
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*Make up one question of your own.* \_\_\_\_  
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Write down the name and job title of the park staff: \_\_\_\_\_



# Mission Two: Park Explorer

## Activity 3

Hike a trail and explore the park with your family or friends for at least one hour.

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*What is the name of the trail? Write it down or take a picture: \_\_\_\_\_*

Circle the names of some of the critters you saw on your hike through Alum Rock Park:

Squirrel      Lizard      Snake      Beetle      Wasp

Hawk      Frog      Jay bird      Vulture      Deer      Fish

Bobcat      Woodpecker      \*Mountain Lion      Butterfly

Fox      Skunk      Raccoon      Opossum      Dragonfly

Other (Fill in): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the best thing you saw on the trail? Take a picture of it or write it down:

*\* Park Rangers like to keep track of where the big cats are. Please report all mountain lion sightings to staff.*



# Mission Two: Park Explorer

## Activity 4

Attend an event in the park. Go to the Ranger Visitor Center, or call (408) 794-6648 to find out what upcoming events we have in this park.

What event did you attend? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who was the Instructor? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was your favorite part of the event? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Park staff signature:  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Mission Two: Park Explorer

## Activity 5

YSI Adventure: Visit the YSI and complete these activities:

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### SCAVENGER HUNT

1. Find a hawk and write down what kind of hawk it is.

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2. Find an insect and write down what kind insect it is.

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3. Find a snake and write down what kind of snake it is.

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### WINGSPAN STATION

What bird has the largest wingspan?

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What is your wingspan?

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What bird's wingspan is closest to your own?

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**One Free admission per  
booklet: YSI Stamp**

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**Sketches of YSI**



# Congratulations!

## Mission 2 Complete

You have completed Mission 2! If you are done today, stop by the Visitor's Center to pick up your award for Jr. Ranger "B". If it is closed, please call (408) 259-5477 to let staff know you'd like to receive your Jr. Ranger "B" award.

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*If you would like to continue your journey, turn to the next page and begin earning your Jr. Ranger "A" award!*





# **Mission Three:** Ranger Quest

## **Activity 1**

Find the miniature model of Alum Rock Park and write down the color of the flag for the Visitor Center: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Activity 2**

Ask a Park Ranger if you can sit in the Patrol truck to learn about what Rangers do. Let the Park Ranger know one thing you like about their job. While in the park learn a few safety tips from a Park Ranger.

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## **Activity 3**

Take a picture of yourself with the Park Ranger. Remember to have your parent or guardian sign the release waiver so we can post your picture.



# Congratulations!

## Mission 3 Complete

You have completed Mission 3! If you are done today, stop by the visitor center to pick up your award for Jr. Ranger “A”. If it is closed, please call (408) 259-5477 to let staff know you’d like to receive your Jr. Ranger “A” award.

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*By accepting this badge, I pledge to treat our parks with respect. I will provide a positive example of community service for my family, friends, and visitors to our parks and public lands.*

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# Final Thoughts

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# Nature Sketches

*This Junior Ranger Program was made possible thanks to these amazing people.*

Mel Sarmiento - California Naturalist

Huy Mac - City of San José Park Ranger

Jessica Friedman - City of San José Park Ranger

Mark Rayner - City of San José Exhibit Designer

Alum Rock Park, founded in 1872, was the first municipal park in the state of California. This 720 acre park is located in a valley in the Diablo Range foothills on the east side of San José, California.

## **CITY OF SAN JOSÉ ALUM ROCK PARK**

**15350 Penitencia Creek Rd  
San Jose, CA 95127  
(408) 259-5477**

Park Hours  
8 AM - 1/2 hour after sunset

# Also explore other San José parks!

## **Almaden Lake Park**

Almaden Expy & Coleman Ave  
San José, CA 95120

## **Emma Prusch Farm Park**

647 S. King Rd.  
San José, CA 95116

## **Kelley Park**

1300 Senter Rd  
San José, CA 95112

## **Lake Cunningham Park**

2305 S. White Rd.  
San José, CA 95116

## **Overfelt Garden Park**

2145 Mckee Rd.  
San José, CA 95116

# My Sketches



# My Notes

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PARKS, RECREATION &  
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Building Community Through **Fun**

# Junior Ranger Explorer Guide



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Neighborhood Services**

[www.sanjose.gov/prns](http://www.sanjose.gov/prns)

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