

Take a Hike!

Explore Catalina Island Wildlands in the Spring

AVALON, Calif., May 5, 2014 - The wildflowers are in bloom, and the spring weather is perfect for a hike on one of the many trails the Catalina Island Conservancy maintains on Catalina Island.

Hikers can explore spectacular canyons, experience panoramic views from mountain ridgelines, trek through breeze-swept grasslands and enjoy scenic isolated beaches on the Conservancy's 80 miles of trails. They might even spot the Island's iconic bison, bald eagles and the elusive Catalina Island fox along the way.

The Conservancy established and maintains the trails through the wildlands as part of its mission to restore and protect the invaluable natural, cultural and recreational assets of Catalina.

"The Conservancy's trail system gives hikers of all ability levels an opportunity to challenge themselves physically, connect with nature and make lifelong memories on Catalina Island," said Ann M. Muscat, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Conservancy. "Just an hour away from the mainland, Catalina Island represents California the way it was and California the way it can be."

To determine an appropriate hike based on ability and available time, visitors to the Island may consult helpful staff at any Conservancy location: the Explore Store in Avalon, Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden, Nature Center at Avalon Canyon and Airport in the Sky. For safety reasons, the Conservancy requires hiking permits, so that hikers can be located in the event of an emergency. The permits are free and may be obtained online at www.catalinaconservancy.org or at any of the Conservancy's Island locations.

Hiking maps can be downloaded from the Conservancy's website or purchased in the Explore Store in Avalon. Hikers can also explore Catalina with the Conservancy's new iPhone and Android apps, which offer a GPS-driven map of some of the most popular trails. The app may be purchased for \$3.99 in the iStore and Android Market by searching for "Santa Catalina Island Conservancy." A portion of the purchase price supports the Conservancy's work on the Island.

Hikers can enter the wildlands on foot or take the Conservancy's Wildlands Express to the Airport in the Sky to start their adventure from there.

One of the more popular trails out of Avalon is the Garden to Sky Hike. It starts at the Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden and leads to Divide Road from the top of Avalon Canyon. The entire roundtrip hike is 2.5 miles and can take up to two hours or so to complete. A sign at the top reads, "You Made It," but the spectacular view is the real reward. From here, hikers can see both sides of the Island.

This gentle hike can be turned into a loop by descending on the Hermit Gulch Trail. Right where the trail begins to head back into the canyon is a new shade structure, a gift from the Pasadena-based Elliott Family Foundation. It is one of two structures the foundation donated to the Conservancy. The other is between Little Harbor and Two Harbors on the Trans-Catalina Trail, between mile posts 23 and 24.

"Exploring Catalina Island on foot is a great way to experience nature and rekindle your spirits," Muscat said.

To ensure a safe and comfortable hike on Catalina, please:

- Wear good walking or hiking shoes
- Wear layers of clothing to account for the changes in temperatures during the day
- Bring plenty of water and snacks
- Wear sunscreen and a hat
- Avoid poison oak in the canyons and creek-beds. The rule of thumb is: "Leaves of three, let 'em be."
- Keep a safe distance from all wildlife. The bison and deer are wild. The Southern Pacific rattlesnake also inhabits the island, although it is rare to see one on the trail.

For more information about hiking on Catalina, please call [310-510-2595](tel:310-510-2595), ext. 108. To obtain a permit online, please visit catalinaconservancy.org.

PHOTOS & CAPTIONS



Hiking the Catalina Island Conservancy's 80 miles of trails offers unparalleled views and a chance to experience nature. Photo by Pat Maxwell. Courtesy of the Catalina Island Conservancy.



Many of the Catalina Island Conservancy's trails lead to scenic overlooks like this one near Little Harbor and Shark Harbor. Photo by Stuart Palley. Courtesy of the Catalina Island Conservancy.