



Public Lands of the Western Transverse Ranges

- Major Stream
- Highway
- National Parks
- National Forests
- National Monuments
- National Wildlife Refuges
- National Recreation Areas
- Wilderness Areas
- Other National Public Lands
- State Parks, Beaches, & Recreation Areas
- State Reserves (Limited Access)
- Local Parks, Reserves, & Open Spaces
- Private Conservation Lands (Variable Public Access)



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**RUNNERS FOR
PUBLIC LANDS**

1



Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes

Near Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County

Over 18,000 years of onshore winds has turned this expanse of coastline in northern Santa Barbara County into one of the most spectacular dune systems in North America. Not only does this area feature the West Coast's tallest dunes (the second-largest dune system in California), it also supports unique plants and threatened or endangered bird species such as the western snowy plover. These dunes have a rich cultural history, too. They were first inhabited by the Chumash—the region's Indigenous peoples—and they have been a backdrop for movies since the 1920s. The dunes are spread across multiple parks, preserves, and other protected areas, including the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge, Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve, and Pismo State Beach. Some areas have seasonal restrictions to help protect snowy plovers and other wildlife that are sensitive to human activities. Running options in the area include Lake Oso Flaco and miles of accessible beach.

2



Carrizo Plain National Monument

San Luis Obispo County

This swath of more than 200,000 acres in southeastern San Luis Obispo County was designated as a national monument in 2001. It's home to the largest intact San Joaquin Valley ecosystem, consisting of native grasslands and sparse shrublands that are home to at least 13 threatened or endangered plants and animals. The Carrizo Plain itself is nestled between the Caliente and Temblor Ranges, which are packed with fascinating geological features. The oddly shaped Wallace Creek is the best place on Earth to see the San Andreas Fault—which completely transects the national monument—in its slip-strike action. As with most of the region, the Carrizo Plain has a long and storied cultural history. The Chumash, Salinan, and Yokuts peoples have deep roots in the area as shown by their stunning pictographs on Painted Rock. An epic wildflower superbloom occurs across the Carrizo Plain every several years, drawing visitors from all over the world. The area is easily accessible and has great trails for running such as the Caliente Mountain Ridge Trail.

3



Mt. Pinos/Iwihinmu (Los Padres National Forest)

Southern Kern County/Northern Ventura County

The Los Padres National Forest is one of California's largest and most diverse national forests, and Mt. Pinos (known originally as Iwihinmu) is its tallest mountain. Standing at nearly 8,850 feet in elevation, this mountain is home to Jeffrey pine and mixed-conifer forests that support black bears, mountain lions, endangered California condors, and plants that can only be found in alpine conditions. Iwihinmu has been culturally and spiritually central to Chumash peoples for millennia. The area is less than two hours away from nearby population centers like Los Angeles and Ventura/Oxnard, but it offers Sierra Nevada-like experiences for runners, hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and cross-country skiers. Multiple trails can be found on the mountain, including the McGill Trail, Mt. Pinos Summit Trail, and Vincent Tumamait Trail. These trails are in close proximity to both car campgrounds and wilderness campsites. Views from the summit are stunning: the Pacific Ocean and Channel Islands, Santa Monica Mountains, Sierra Nevada, Carrizo Plain, and Central Valley can all be seen from this amazing high point.

4



5



Ventura River Preserve

Ojai, Ventura County

This beautiful preserve is managed by Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. It is one of many preserves managed by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land trust that is open to the public in the region. Located in the western Ojai Valley, the Ventura River Preserve protects three miles of the Ventura River and surrounding canyons. Diverse topography creates ideal conditions for a variety of plant communities. Steep north facing slopes in Wills Canyon offer refuge for shade-loving plants while chaparral-blanketed hillsides are open to summer sun. Pockets of grasslands and meadows offer a colorful variety of spring wildflowers and grasses. A variety of wildlife call this preserve home, including black bears, mountain lions, bobcats, badgers, coyotes, mule deer, and several bird species. The preserve provides excellent views of the Santa Ynez and Topatopa Mountains while running, hiking, biking, or horseback riding on the miles of trails across the area.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Ventura and Los Angeles Counties

The Santa Monica Mountains are perhaps the best place to experience California's unique Mediterranean climate. Hardy native shrubs of the chaparral ecosystem dominate this rocky landscape by the coast that is only minutes away from Los Angeles. In a sea of urban and suburban development, the Santa Monica Mountains provide vital habitat for threatened populations of mountain lions and other species. There are also historic and cultural sites throughout this area which was first inhabited by the Tongva and Chumash peoples. This national recreation area is one of only three such designations in California, and it is uniquely comprised of a plethora of state parks, local open spaces, and federal lands, the management of which is led by the National Park Service. There are several trails that offer fantastic experiences in these coastal mountains. The Backbone Trail extends 68 miles across the national recreation area from the Pacific Palisades in the east to Point Mugu State Park in the west. This and other ocean view trails are perfect for running.

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Selected Organizations Dedicated to Protecting and Stewarding These Lands

[Los Padres ForestWatch](#)

[Ojai Valley Land Conservancy](#)

[Ventura Land Trust](#)

[Sage Trail Alliance](#)

[Los Padres Forest Association](#)

[Montecito Trails Foundation](#)

[National Parks Conservation Association](#)

[TreePeople](#)

Map and photos #1-4 by Bryant Baker, Runners for Public Lands (RPL) Board Director and Conservation Director at Los Padres ForestWatch. Photo #5 by Marjolaine Mazurier, RPL Advocacy & Education Committee member.