

# CALIFORNIA GIRL SCOUT BACKPACKERS

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## **Manzana Creek Trail** **Nira Campground to Ray's Camp**

Itinerary provided by Trek Wild

Created: December, 2019

**Distance:** 9 miles, ~800' elevation gain to Ray's Camp (There are several other camps along the trail.)

**Starting Trailhead:** Nira Campground (north of Santa Barbara)

**Finishing Trailhead:** Nira Campground

**Best Months:** End of March (to miss winter rains) through end of May or Sept-Oct. Too hot in the summer.

**Permit Limit:** None. I suggest a group size limit of 8-12 people total depending on camp. (Ray's is on the small end.)

**Preview:** This is often one of the only areas with year round water in the Central Coast area. Hike up Manzanita Creek crossing the creek a few times. Established camps include picnic table & fire ring; some have a pit toilet. Lost Valley 1.1 mi; Fish Creek 2.7 mi; Ray's Camp 4.5 mi; Manzanita 6 mi; Manzanita Narrows 7 mi. There are fun swimming holes (and year round water) at the Narrows. In spring, you may get your feet wet in crossings (in wet winters the stream can become uncrossable). In fall, leaves turn colors, the creek will be dry, and the first water is often at Ray's Camp, 4.5 miles in.

**Girl Scout Progression Points:** Beginner Backpacking Skills

### **Key Risks:**

- Water: Check water reports at [hikelospadres.com](http://hikelospadres.com); have contingency plan.
- Poison Oak: Wear pants. Trail is popular and is pretty clear, but around camp, and around the creek, there's always a few branches you don't see.
- Fire/Stove Restrictions: Check with Los Padres NF.
- People: Tent spots can be already taken - consider starting early on spring weekends to ensure your group gets a good spot.
- Stream Crossing: Big storms can swell the creek and make crossing dangerous.

### **Sample Itinerary (By Day):**

1. Hike to 4.5 mi to camp.
2. Return to trailhead.

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### Itinerary Options:

- Manzana Narrows (7 mi from trailhead) is another great spot - larger and with good swimming holes.

### Permits Needed:

- California fire permit required for stoves or campfires (see Los Padres NF website). Depending on season, campfires and stoves may or may not be allowed.
- No overnight permit required .
- Parks Management parking pass required to park at trailhead, you can self register when you arrive.

### Resources & Safety Management:

- Los Padres National Forest: [fs.usda.gov/recarea/lpnf](https://fs.usda.gov/recarea/lpnf)
- Map: Bryan Conant's San Rafael Wilderness Map ([bryanconant.com](http://bryanconant.com))
- [Hikelospadres.com](http://Hikelospadres.com): Recent trip reports including water reports



Rays Camp along the Manzana Creek Trail has space for several tents in the overflow area.  
(The camp proper, with fire ring and picnic table, is close by.)

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