

MONTEREY COUNTY
nature



Glory in county's great outdoors

*From hillsides to high peaks
to sandy coves on the coast,
nature's awe-inspiring
beauty is at hand here*

Nature's beauty steps out of the mist to greet you, no matter where you tread in Monterey County. In spring, you'll see grassy green slopes saturated with patches of blue and orange wildflowers. Marshlands and Elkhorn Slough near Moss Landing offer fertile zones for watching birds. In winter, look upward. That's real snow frosting peaks.

Off Marina State Beach, you'll see an otter bobbing on its back as buoyantly as a block of balsam. No need to put on a wetsuit to see what's *under* the bay, either. Simply visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium. It brings creatures from the deep to the surface for viewing and study.

Hikers head into the Pinnacles National Monument, the rugged remains of an ancient volcano east of Soledad. The

former Fort Ord Army base has more than 86 miles of trails for mountain biking, running and horseback riding. You're likely to glimpse coyotes, turkey vultures or deer.

Not to forget Point Lobos off Highway 1 and the Big Sur Coast, a collision of frothing sea and gray rock. Easy access to such areas is one more benefit of living here.

— Dave Nordstrand