



# 2025 Cahuilla Lodge Where to Go Camping Guide



*Serving*



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE  
CALIFORNIA



**PRESENTED BY CAHUILLA LODGE # 127, ORDER OF THE ARROW  
SERVING CALIFORNIA INLAND EMPIRE COUNCIL # 45 SINCE 1973**

## **Front Cover**

Entrance to Joshua Tree National Park, photo courtesy of National Park Service.

## **Contributors**

This version of the Where to Go Camping Guide was updated to fix editing errors throughout the document, as well as incorporating the new Scouting America branding and terminology.

The following people were instrumental in producing and completing previous versions of this camping guide published by the Order of the Arrow as a service to the California Inland Empire Council and used in putting together this new edition. Many spent countless hours doing research and writing. We would like to thank them for their service.

Mathew Brandt, Jeff Casey, Richard Covington, Brad Denbo, Brad Eells, Matt Harmon, James Hermes, Aaron Jones, Jeremy Long, Ian McLeod, Rosana McLeod, Scott McLeod, Jason Palmantier, Kim Readdy, Tracy Schultz, Jim Thomas, Steve Tyrrell, Vinney Williams, Cynthia Blessum, Jared Brandt, Frank Gruendner, Michael Hare, Don Salva, Andrew Blessum.

## **Chapters and Districts of the California Inland Empire Council:**

Aca – Sunrise District

A-tsa – Grey Arrow District

Navajo – Old Baldy and Temescal Districts

Serrano – High Desert District

Tahquitz – Tahquitz District

Wanakik – Mt. Rubidoux District

## **Updates:**

Version 1.0 – Released December 31, 2006

Version 1.1 – Released January 16, 2007

Version 1.2 – Released December 22, 2010

Version 2.0 – Released October 12, 2014

Version 2.1 – Released October 3, 2015

Version 2.2 – Released September 23, 2016

Version 2.3 – Released September 6, 2017

Version 2.4 – Released September 13, 2018

Version 3.0 – Released September 6, 2019

Version 3.1 – Released August, 2020

Version 3.2 – Released December, 2021

Version 3.3 – Released February, 2022

Version 4.0 – Released May, 2024

Version 4.1 – Released August, 2025

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## Guide To Safe Scouting SAFE Checklist



Scouts and their parents expect all Scouting America activities to be conducted safely. To ensure the safety of participants, the Scouting America expects leaders to use the four points of **SAFE** when delivering the Scouting program.

### **SUPERVISION**

Youth are supervised by qualified and trustworthy adults who set the example for safety.

- Accepting responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth under their care.
- Ensuring that adults are adequately trained, experienced, and skilled to lead the activity, including the ability to prevent and respond to likely problems and potential emergencies.
- Knowing and delivering the program of the Scouting America with integrity.
- Using qualified instructors, guides, or safety personnel as needed to provide additional guidance.
- Maintaining engagement with participants during activities to ensure compliance with established rules and procedures.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Activities are assessed for risks during planning. Leaders have reviewed applicable program guidance or standards and have verified the activity is not prohibited. Risk avoidance or mitigation is incorporated into the activity.

- Predetermining what guidance and standards are typically applied to the activity, including those specific to the Scouting America program.
- Planning for safe travel to and from the activity site.
- Validating the activity is age-appropriate for the Scouting America program level.
- Determining whether the unit has sufficient training, resources, and experience to meet the identified standards and, if not, modifying the activity accordingly.
- Developing contingency plans for changes in weather and environment and arranging for communication with participants, parents, and emergency services.

### **FITNESS AND SKILL**

Participants' Annual Health and Medical Records are reviewed, and leaders have confirmed that prerequisite fitness and skill levels exist for participants to take part safely.

- Confirming the activity is right for the age, maturity, and physical abilities of participants.
- Considering as risk factors temporary or chronic health conditions of participants.
- Validating minimum skill requirements identified during planning and ensuring participants stay within the limits of their abilities.
- Providing training to participants with limited skills and assessing their skills before they attempt more advanced skills.

### **EQUIPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT**

Safe and appropriately sized equipment, courses, camps, campsites, trails, or playing fields are used properly. Leaders periodically check gear use and the environment for changing conditions that could affect safety.

- Confirming participants' clothing is appropriate for expected temperatures, sun exposure, weather events, and terrain.
- Providing equipment that is appropriately sized for participants, is in good repair, and is used properly.
- Ensuring personal and group safety equipment is available, properly fitted, and used consistently and in accordance with training.
- Reviewing the activity area for suitability during planning and immediately before use, and monitoring the area during the activity through supervision.
- Adjusting the activity for changing conditions or ending it if safety cannot be maintained.



## **Sustainability and Outdoor Ethics in Scouting America Outdoor Programs**

From a Cub Scout's first hike in a local park to the thrill of our High Adventure bases, from our backyard to the backcountry, our outdoor ethics guide us to be responsible outdoor citizens — protecting our natural world for generations to come and being considerate of other visitors. Scouting has a long, proud tradition of conservation service to the nation. How do we maintain our outdoor ethics and preserve that tradition?



**Outdoor Ethics** is the umbrella term for how a Scout relates to the outdoors.

- The **Outdoor Code** is Scouting's aspirational statement of Outdoor Ethics.
- To support the Outdoor Code with proven principles and skills, Scouting has incorporated **Leave No Trace**, for non-motorized outdoor activities, and **Tread Lightly!**, for motorized activities.
- The **Land Ethic** challenges us to be committed to conservation and stewardship of our environment.

### **The Outdoor Code:**

The Outdoor Code captures the essence of the Scouting's Outdoor Ethics and establishes our aspirations and commitment.

**As an American, I will do my best to –**

- **Be clean in my outdoor manners.**
  - I will treat the outdoors as a heritage. I will take care of it for myself and others. I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.
- **Be careful with fire.**
  - I will prevent wildfire. I will build my fires only when and where they are permitted and appropriate. When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold out. I will leave a clean fire ring or remove all evidence of my fire.
- **Be considerate in the outdoors.**
  - I will treat the land and other land users with respect. I will follow the principles of outdoor ethics for all outdoor activities.
- **Be conservation minded.**
  - I will learn about and practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife and energy. I will urge others to do the same.

Learn more about the [Outdoor Code](#).

## Leave No Trace:



The Leave No Trace Seven Principles are:

- **Plan Ahead and Prepare:** Proper trip planning and preparation helps hikers and campers accomplish trip goals safely and enjoyably while minimizing damage to natural and cultural resources. Campers who plan ahead can avoid unexpected situations, and minimize their impact by complying with area regulations such as observing limitations on group size.
- **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces:** Damage to land occurs when visitors trample vegetation or communities of organisms beyond recovery. The resulting barren areas develop into undesirable trails, campsites, and soil erosion.
- **Dispose of Waste Properly:** This principle reminds back-country visitors to take their trash home with them. It makes sense to carry out of the backcountry the extra materials taken there by your group or others. Inspect your campsite for trash or spilled foods. Accept the challenge of packing out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- **Leave What You Find:** Allow others a sense of discovery, and preserve the past. Leave rocks, plants, animals, archaeological artifacts, and other objects as you find them. Examine but do not touch cultural or historical structures and artifacts. It may be illegal to remove artifacts.
- **Minimize Campfire Impacts:** If you build a fire, the most important consideration is the potential for resource damage. Whenever possible, use an existing campfire ring in a well-placed campsite. Choose not to have a fire in areas where wood is scarce—at higher elevations, in heavily used areas with a limited wood supply, or in desert settings.
- **Respect Wildlife:** Whenever you are in an outdoor space, you are in the natural habitat of many wild animals and should work to minimize your impact on them.
- **Be Considerate of Others:** Thoughtful campers respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be considerate of other campers and respect their privacy.

Learn more about [Leave No Trace](https://www.LNT.org).

© Leave No Trace: [www.LNT.org](https://www.LNT.org)

## **Tread Lightly!**

Tread Lightly! is a national nonprofit organization and Scouting partner with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship. Tread Lightly's goal is to balance the needs of the people who enjoy outdoor recreation with our need to maintain a healthy environment.

### **Tread Principles:**

**Travel Responsibly** on land by staying on designated roads, trails and area. Go over, not around, obstacles to avoid widening the trails. Cross streams only at designated fords. when possible, avoid wet, muddy trails. On water, stay on designated waterways and launch your watercraft in designated areas.

**Respect the Rights of Others** including private property owners, all recreational trail users, campers and others so they can enjoy their recreational activities undisturbed. Leave gates as you found them. Yield right of way to those passing you or going uphill. On water, respect anglers, swimmers, skiers, boaters, divers and those on or near shore.

**Educate Yourself** prior to your trip by obtaining travel maps and regulations from public agencies. Plan for your trip, take recreation skills classes and know how to operate your equipment safely.

**Avoid Sensitive Areas** on land such as meadows, lake shores, wetlands and streams. Always ride with caution any time water is present. Wet soils are more susceptible to damage. Riding along river and stream beds causes erosion and habitat destruction. Stay on designated routes. This protects wildlife habitats and sensitive soils from damage. Don't disturb historical, archeological or paleontological sites. On water, avoid operating your watercraft in shallow waters or near shorelines at high speeds.

**Do Your Part** by modeling appropriate behavior, leaving the area better than you found it, properly disposing of waste, minimizing the use of fire, avoiding the spread of invasive species and repairing degraded areas.

Learn more about [Tread Lightly!](https://treadlightly.org)



© Tread Lightly!: treadlightly.org



## **Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic:**

**“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”**

**- Aldo Leopold**



Scouts and Venturers who embrace the Outdoor Code and the principles of Leave No Trace often find that they wish to give back and help protect the environment that has given them so much. Some may find that they are “wild with love for the green outdoors—the trees, the tree-top singers, the wood-herbs, and the nightly things that left their tracks in the mud,” in the words of Ernest Thompson Seton, the first Chief Scout.

These Scouts and Venturers have begun to feel what Aldo Leopold called the “Land Ethic.” The Land Ethic extends our concern beyond our fellow Scouts and Venturers, our families and friends, and even humanity itself to the entire environmental community of which we are a part—the deserts, forests, fish, wildlife, plants, rocks, oceans, and web of life encompassing them—what Leopold called “the Land.”

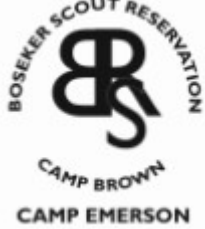
- Learn more about the [Land Ethic](#).

To learn more about Outdoor Ethics within the Scouting America, visit

<https://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/outdoor-ethics/>

<https://scouting-oec.org/programs>

## **California Inland Empire Council Camping Opportunities**



California Inland Empire Council offers Scouts and Scouters **Camp Emerson, and Camp Brown at Boseker Scout Reservation.**

Boseker Scout Reservation is the home of Camps Emerson and Brown, and hosts a number of Scouting events throughout the year. Located in Idyllwild, Ca. Boseker Scout Reservation is surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest in the San Bernardino Mountains. A gift to the California Inland Empire Council by Dr. Edward Boseker and his wife, the reservation now bears the Boseker name in their honor.

Camp Emerson offers a beautiful camp in an old pine forest that has been serving Scouts since 1919, making it one of the oldest, continuous running Scout Camps west of the Mississippi, and a number of major camp improvement projects were completed for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. This camp focuses on both young and experienced Scouts through a variety of specialized programs.

All of our camps are available and used for Scouting activities year-round, from their landmark summer programs to district activities and camporees, to spending the night in the snow during their Klondike Derbies.

Check the council website for more information or to make reservations. <https://iescouts.org/>



The tipis from Tribe of Wisumahi  
(Photo: J. Hermes)



Tahquitz Rock is definitely a famous landmark at  
Camp Emerson  
(Photo: M. Hare)

Our council camp is also available for weekend use for camping and service to the camps. Contact the camp ranger or the CIEC council office to see availability (plan ahead – they fill up fast).



Welcome to Camp  
(Photo: Monday Memo)

The following pages offer just some of what Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing Crews, and Sea Scouts can experience at Camp Emerson.

## **Camp Emerson at Boseker Scout Reservation**

### **Camp Details**

53155 Idyllbrook Road  
Idyllwild, CA 92549  
Phone: (951) 659-2690

<https://iescouts.org/camps/camp-emerson/>



Scouts canoeing at summer camp  
(Photo: C. Blessum)



Scout shotgun shooting at summer camp  
(photo: iescouts.org)

Nestled on the outskirts of the beautiful mountain community of Idyllwild is Camp Emerson at Boseker Scout Reservation. At an elevation of 5,000 feet, the camp is built at the intersection of the lower-elevation Jeffrey Pines and the higher-elevation Ponderosas, providing a beautiful mountain landscape for all to enjoy.

Strawberry Creek, a main artery through Idyllwild, runs through the middle of camp. The camp offers a variety of campsites, from the furnished areas in Simonds Flat to more rustic Alpine sites in the camp's Northern and Eastern reaches.

Camp Emerson offers the best combination of location, price, and quality in Southern California. With gas prices continuing to rise, location is very important and your local Scout camp rises to the challenge. This doesn't mean you

will lose out on program – Camp Emerson has its own special programs that are great for Scouts young and old that are hard to find elsewhere.

Sign-ups for camp are happening now. Download the registration packet at and call the Council Service Center to make your deposit today!

Available Dates for Summer Camp:

<https://iescouts.org/summercamp/>

### **Trail to First Class, First Year Camper Program**

The Trail to First Class program is offered to new Scouts that want to start the trail to Eagle running. By working with the Camp Staff and their unit leader, Scouts are able to complete many items in the Tenderfoot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, and 1<sup>st</sup> Class ranks, as well as the First Aid, Swimming, and Pioneering merit badges.

The program is the perfect place for a 1<sup>st</sup> year Summer Camp attendee to be, learning the skills every new scout needs, as well as leaving one session open for them to choose. Many other camps offer some kind of First Class program, but our first-year camper program keeps in mind that there are a lot of other areas and activities in camp that your Scouts will want to explore.





## **Resident Camping**

Camp Emerson at Boseker Scout Reservation is available throughout the year for service and camping. To find out about availability, please contact the camp by phone or email at least six (6) months in advance.



Scouts do a night climb on the camp's 60 foot climbing tower  
(Photo: iescouts.org)



Scouts perform a flag ceremony at  
Camp Emerson  
(Photo: S. McLeod)

## **Scouts BSA Winter Camp**

Scouts BSA Winter Camp will include an outdoor winter program as well as the opportunity to earn two different Merit Badges. At Camp Emerson Winter Camp campers can either stay in our rustic bunkhouse cabins or for the more adventurous Scouts you can camp outside in tents. Warm hearty meals will be provided and are not only satisfying but will also help maintain energy levels and warmth. This means that participants can focus on enjoying the camp's activities and the winter outdoor experience. Proper winter clothing and gear are essential, and participants should come prepared with warm clothing, layers, gloves, hats, and winter boots.

To learn more go to <https://iescouts.org/wintercamp/>



Scouts play in the snow  
(Photo: iescouts.org)



Family Camp Cub Scouts participating in the nature program  
(Photo: J. Hermes)

### **Cub Scout Family Adventure Camp**

Ready for a new kind of adventure? At camp Emerson, Family Camp is an outdoor adventure designed for your entire family. Cub Scouting offers many new and exciting opportunities throughout the year, none of which compare to a stay in nature for a youth. To sleep in a tent; to explore the outdoors and learn about nature; to swim and play with their buddies to learn new skills, to experience archery, bb gun shooting, and earn Adventure Loops; these are the Cub Scout Adventures. At Family Camp, take the opportunity to share with your youth in this incredible experience. Visit <https://iescouts.org/cubscoutcamp/> to learn more.

### **Cub Scout Family Winter Camp**

Cub Scout Winter Family camp is a fantastic way for Scouting families to spend quality time together. Families will sleep in our camp cabins furnished with bunk beds, ensuring a comfortable and warm place to rest at night. There will be a wide range of winter activities to keep everyone entertained during the day. Our camp cook will prepare delicious and hearty meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Bring appropriate winter clothing, such as warm jackets, gloves, and snow boots. You will also want to bring sleeping bags, bedding, and pillows for your cabin. To learn more go to <https://iescouts.org/wintercamp/>



Winter view from the main lodge  
(Photo: iescouts.org)



Scouts sledding at winter camp  
(Photo: iescouts.org)



The range is always popular  
(Photo: M. Hare)



## **Council Training Programs**



At NYLT, a Scout from B Troop is just finishing up dinner.  
(Photo: R. Quesada)

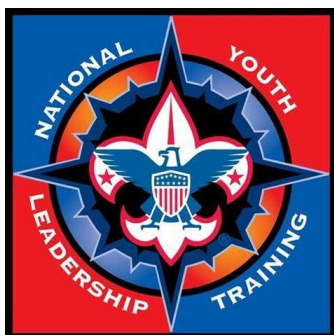
Our council's extensive Junior Leader Training opportunities provide youth with the "toolbox" they need to be effective leaders in their unit and community.

From there, they will learn how to manage their unit and themselves at National Youth Leader Training (NYLT).

On top of the leadership training being taught, the participants camp for a week during NYLT, which satisfies the week-long camping experience requirement and the participants have fun which keeps them motivated to learn.

Please remember that these courses are only open to youth in the Scouts BSA and programs that are under 18, or in the Venturing program and under 21 years of age, and have satisfied the prerequisites.

### **National Youth Leader Training (NYLT)**



The NYLT program is our Council's advanced leader training. It provides the tools for a scout to manage their unit and themselves effectively. These tools are the same ones being taught to adult Scouters at the Wood Badge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century course.

The course models a month in the life of a troop – three meetings (one each day for the first three days) all leading up to a big outdoor experience (an overnight outpost camp). The course uses the patrol method and presents model Patrol Leader Council meetings.

Patrols are challenged early in the week to present to the troop at the end of the week their "Quest for the Meaning of Leadership." While the challenge is designed to have them go through the four stages of team development, it will help patrols and individual Scouts internalize the leadership skills and concepts being presented to them along the way.

Throughout the course, the staff will be modeling the concepts and skills that are the core content of the course. The focus of each session is not only knowledge but giving the youth a "Toolbox of Skills" that equips them with the "how."

To attend, Scouts must be at least 13 years old, have completed Cedar Badge (ILST), and have completed 1<sup>st</sup> Class rank, and Venturers must be 14 (or 13 and completed eighth grade) To learn more go to <https://iescouts.org/nylt/>.



At NYLT, a patrol works together to get all of their members through the spider's web (Photo: R. Quesada)



## **High Adventure Opportunities**

It wasn't long ago that the youth in your Troop were just little Tenderfoots still trying to learn. Now that they've grown up, they aren't looking for the same old thing.

### **Philmont Scout Ranch**

#### **Philmont Scout Ranch**

17 Deer Run Road  
Cimarron, NM 87714  
Phone: (505) 376-2281

<https://www.philmontscout ranch.org/>

Philmont Scout Ranch is the Scouting America's largest National High Adventure Base. It covers 140,177 acres of rugged mountain wilderness in the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains in northeastern New Mexico. Philmont Scout Ranch operates 35 staffed camps and 55 trail camps across the rugged terrain that ranges in elevation from 6,500 to 12,441 feet.

If you are interested in your unit attending Philmont in the future, you should consider planning your trip 18 to 24 months in advance. Please see the Philmont Scout Ranch website or call the Ranch at the number above for the latest information.



Philmont Cavalcade  
Photo (D. Lesyna)



One of the many 'Red Roof Inns'  
(Photo: M. Hare)



Cavalcade Through The Valley  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

### **Northern Tier National High Adventure Base**

#### **Northern Tier**

14790 Moose Lake Road  
P.O. Box 509  
Ely, MN 55731  
Phone: (218) 365-4811

<https://www.ntier.org/>

Northern Tier is the Scouting America's gateway to adventure in the Great Northwoods.

In the summer, Scouts from Northern Tier's three wilderness canoe bases explore millions of acres of pristine lakes, meandering rivers, dense forests and wetlands in Northern Minnesota, Northwest Ontario and Northeast Manitoba. In the winter, Northern Tier is home to the Okpik Cold Weather Camping program, Scouting America's premier winter high adventure program. Fall trips are also available.



Ready to go (Photo: M. Hare)



Canoeing paradise (Photo: K. Campbell)

## Florida Sea Base

### Florida Sea Base

73800 Overseas Highway  
P.O. Box 1906  
Islamorada, FL 33036  
Phone: (305) 664-4173

<https://seabaseha.org/>

Sea Base is a unique Scouting program that offers aquatics programs found nowhere else. Whether your interests lie in sailing, scuba diving, rustic camping on an undeveloped barrier island, fishing or a combination of all, this is the place for your Troop, Team, Crew, Sea Ship or Explorer Post. Sea Base serves around 16,000 participants annually. Sea Base now operates 18 different adventures out of five locations: two in the Florida Keys, two in the US Virgin Islands, and one in Marsh Harbour, Bahamas.



Scuba Diving (Photo: C. Brown)



Bahamas Sailing (Photo: L. Cole)



Great Fishing (Photo: K. Campbell)

## Summit Bechtel Reserve

### Summit Bechtel Reserve

2550 Jack Furst Drive  
Glen Jean, WV 25846  
Phone: (304) 465-2800

<https://www.summitbsa.org/>

Situated in the wilds of West Virginia, The Summit is training, Scouting, and adventure center for the millions of youth and adults involved in the Scouting America and anyone who loves the outdoors.

The Summit Bechtel Reserve is also home to the National Scout Jamboree and the Paul R. Christen National High Adventure Base which complements the three existing

bases: Philmont Scout Ranch, Northern Tier and Florida Sea Base. Get ready for the next century of Scouting. With incredible facilities and amazing outdoor programs, The Summit is a place that takes Scouts and Ventures' to the limits of what they think they can do, and then pushes them further.



White water rafting  
(Photo: M. Burk)



Biking (Photo: M. Burk)



Zip Lines (Photo: K. Campbell)



There are also many opportunities to earn High Adventure Awards from a number of California Councils. See <http://highadventureawards.com/> for a listing of councils and the high adventure awards offered.

The awards are divided into 2 categories, Cub Scouts and Scouts/Venturers. The High Adventure Awards books are in PDF format for you to download.



## **Mountain Camping, Hiking, and Backpacking**

*“The Mountains are calling, and I must go.”* Those were the words of noted conservationist, John Muir.



A picturesque moment at Dry Lake in the  
San Geronimo Wilderness  
(Photo: T. Schultze)

The mountains are something of a magnet for a Scout. Maybe it's the majestic peaks or the beautiful tall pines in their forests. Perhaps it's the crisp, clear air in contrast to the smog and haze in the valleys below. Maybe it is just the quiet solitude, miles from homework and chores. Whatever it is, we are lucky to have these high places in our backyard.

You can bring your troop to a local campground and just let them have fun exploring all weekend. Or you can get them hiking, hoping to ascend the highest peaks in our local mountain ranges.

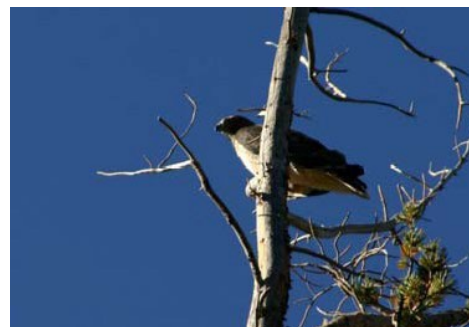
Where there are peaks, there are patches to be earned, from the peaks of the most well-known mountains to the ultimate, the 9 Peaks Award offered by our council. Any Scout with a 9 Peaks patch has

instant credibility for his hiking and backpacking prowess.

These mountains are also great primers for the ultimate in Scout backpacking, Philmont. Many a troop before you prepared for the trip to Cimarron by taking these same steps upward and onward.

We have divided this section into the three major mountain ranges in the Inland Empire, the San Bernardino, the San Gabriel, and the San Jacinto Mountains. All three ranges offer a unique experience. With so many acres of land to be covered, this section can't possibly be holistic. Rather, use it as a guide to find your own Troop adventures.

You may notice some of the major lakes are not in this section. To find information on those areas, go to the Local Camping, Lakes, & Streams section of this book.



Look closely, and you will find nature all  
around you in the mountains  
(Photo: M. Harmon)



So much to do and see, from the mountains to the deserts. Get out there and have fun!



## **San Bernardino Mountains**

### **San Bernardino National Forest**

San Jacinto Ranger Station

54270 Pine Crest

Idyllwild, CA 92549

Phone (909) 382-2921

Big Bear Discovery Center

40971 North Shore Dr. Highway 38

Fawnskin, CA 92333

Phone: (909) 382-2790

Lytle Creek Ranger Station

1209 Lytle Creek Rd

Lytle Creek, CA 92358

Phone (909) 382-2851

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/sanbernardino>

Between Cajon Pass and San Geronio Pass you will find a most majestic and inspiring collection of streams, canyons, rivers, forests and peaks known as the San Bernardino Mountains. You could call it “The Alps of Southern California” as it is filled with numerous peaks, many of which are over 10,000 feet high, with Mt. San Geronio dominating the range with an elevation of 11,502 feet.

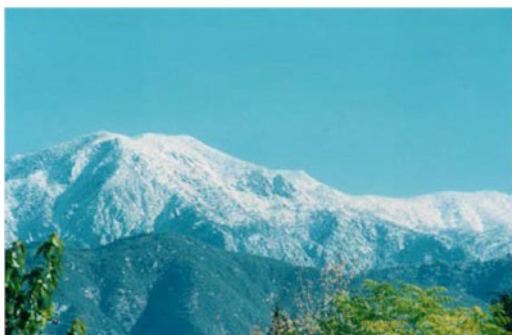
Like the San Gabriels, the San Bernardino Mountains are steeped in history. It is here that Native Americans hunted the deer, where Californians searched for the grizzly bear, and where the miner dug in search of wealth.

This is a large area and there is much to see, and much more to experience.

The San Bernardinos have something for everyone, but one thing that is particularly attractive is the San Geronio Wilderness where Scouts can hike and camp without being disturbed by generators, vehicle sounds, or loud music.

The San Bernardinos were discovered early on by Scouters and many Scout camps are the result.

The grizzly bears are all gone now, but many black bears remain. The deer are not as numerous as in past times, but you can still catch a glimpse of one if you are still. Stellar Jays will try to steal your food, if you leave it out, and Gray Squirrels will put on a show for free.



A beautiful snowy morning in the  
San Bernardinos  
(Photo: T. Schultze)



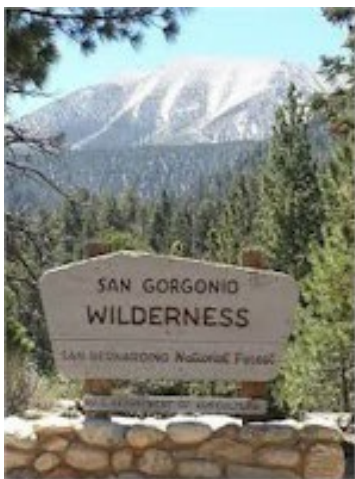
Turn off the Xbox, dust off the backpack, pull on your boots and head for the high country. To paraphrase a popular commercial...

**“The San Bernardino Mountains...it just doesn’t get much better than this!”**

**San Bernardino Mountain Hiking and Backpacking****South Fork Trail****South Fork Trail 1E04**

Latitude: 34.161315

Longitude: -166.871982



San Geronimo Peak from the South Fork Trail (Photo: M. Hare)

The South Fork Trailhead is on Jenks Lake Road, 2.5 miles from Highway 38. The trail begins at the large paved parking lot (6,900') on Jenks Lake Road East and climbs 2.5 miles where it crosses the Wilderness boundary just beyond a short side trail (NE) to a photo overlook (Poop-Out Hill, 7,740') and Wilderness information display.

The trail then crosses the Wilderness boundary and continues another 1.7 miles to South Fork Meadows (8,200'). Here the trail forks: to the left (East) is Dry Lake (1.5 miles, 9,000') and to the right (West) is Dollar

The Dry Lake camping area (remember that camping is at least 200 feet from meadows, streams, springs, trails, and other occupied sites) is spread through two drainages. The first has only one or two good camping sites, the second, in the largest draw, has almost all the sites as well as Lodgepole Spring (about .25 mile up the trail towards Fish Creek Saddle-9,900').

One and three-tenths miles beyond Dry Lake is Trail Flats Camp (no water, 9,700'). Three-tenths mile further on is Mineshaft Saddle (9,960'), from which the hiker may choose to climb to the summit of San Geronimo Mountain (11,499').

The 3.5-mile Sky High Trail from Mineshaft Saddle to the peak is occasionally steep, often rocky, and usually snow-covered in the early Fall, Winter, and late Spring. The climb should always be done with care. Warm garments are a necessity since the wind can and may pick up sharply at the peak. Just East of the true peak is Summit Camp, best reached by either the Sky High or Vivian Creek trail. Rocky and windswept, it presents a panoramic view of Southern California. Here you will find a few rock walled shelters to take protection from the frequent buffeting wind.

Camping at Dollar Lake is at Dollar Lakes Forks Trail Camp (9,300'), located approximately .3 miles from the lake. Camping is prohibited within ¼ mile of Dollar Lake, including camping on the ridges above the lake.

Dollar Lake Saddle (9,960' - no camping here, no water) is located .7 mile beyond Dollar Lake. From the Saddle, it is 5 miles to the summit of San Geronimo Mountain (11,499'). One popular camp accessible from Dollar Lake Saddle is Red Rock Flat (10,100'), ¼ mile West of the saddle. High Meadow Springs (10,400') is ½ mile further with water available for both camps.

Though beautiful, the South Fork Trail is one of the most heavily used trails. If you have visited this region before, consider a trip to one of the following trails.

**Lost Creek Trail****Lost Creek Trail 1E09**

Latitude: 34.170767

Longitude: -116.829773

The Lost Creek trailhead is across Highway 38 from the South Fork Campground. Beginning at the parking lot (6,320'), it crosses under the bridge. The beginning of the Lost Creek Trail follows the Santa Ana River Trail (2E03). After approximately .5 mile, the Lost

Creek Trail splits from the Santa Ana River trail and heads up an old jeep road for about 1 mile before heading off (South/West) on a trail towards Grinnell Ridge Camp (no water-8,500'). From the Grinnell Ridge Camp, the trail descends into South Fork Meadows and meets with the South Fork Trail. This trail is one of the most underused and offers solitude and good views North to Santa Ana Canyon and Sugarloaf Peak.

**Aspen Grove Trail****Aspen Grove Trail 2E05**

Latitude:	34.147557
Longitude:	-116.789885

Turn right (South) off Highway 38 about 6 miles past the Barton Flats Visitor Center on Forest Service Road 1N02. Follow 1N02 until it forks right to 1N05. Go right up 1N05 (this is a rough unmaintained road not intended for low-slung autos) to the signed

Aspen Grove Trail parking (7,400'), 2.6 miles in from Highway 38. After crossing the creek, take the trail to the left. After 1.5 miles, the trail joins the Fish Creek Trail (8,180'). This trail offers quiet and the opportunity for the visitor to explore a small remnant grove of Quaking Aspens (*Populus tremuloides*), only found in one other location outside of the Sierra Nevada range.

**Fish Creek Trail****Fish Creek Trail 1W07**

Latitude:	34.124733
Longitude:	-116.766991

To reach the trailhead turn right (South) off Highway 38 about 6 miles past the Barton Flats Visitor Center, on Forest Service Road 1N02. Follow 1N02 until it forks right to 1N05. Follow 1N05 (not intended for low-slung autos) about 7 miles to the trailhead

(8,180'). From the Fish Creek trailhead, it is 1.7 miles to Fish Creek Trail Camp (8,600'). Water is available (normally) approximately 1/2 mile beyond Fish Creek Trail Camp (Fish Creek crosses the trail). During early spring, water may be found flowing directly through camp.

Three and three-tenths miles further is Fish Creek Saddle (no water-9,900'). Water is obtained from Lodgepole Spring (9,000'), seven-tenths of a mile down a trace trail to Dry Lake (9,000'), or packed up from Fish Creek. From Fish Creek Saddle, it is .9 mile to Mineshaft Saddle (9,960') where it meets the Sky-High Trail. The summit of San Gorgonio (11,499') is 3.5 miles further.

**North Fork Meadows (Big Tree) Trail, Whitewater River****North Fork Meadows (Big Tree) Trail 1E05.3A**

Latitude:	34.110594
Longitude:	-116.819623

The best access to this trail is via the Fish Creek Trail (8,180'). Two camps are accessible from Mineshaft Saddle (9,960'). From Mineshaft Saddle, the trail descends Northeast to Mineshaft Flats (1.8 miles-9,600'). The camp lies to the West of the trail. Water is available approximately

3 miles along the trail below the camp.

One mile beyond (and below) Mineshaft Flats is Big Tree Camp (8,400'). Water is available from the North Fork of the Whitewater River. **This area is remote and rugged and offers the visitor solitude and far-off views of Yucca Valley and Joshua Tree National Park.**

**Vivian Creek Trail****Vivian Creek Trail 1E08**

Latitude:	34.0818392
Longitude:	-116.6812848

The trailhead is reached by turning East off Highway 38 to Forest Falls. Continue through Forest Falls to the top end (East end) of the picnic area at the end of the road (6,080').

The Vivian Creek Trail is the shortest and the steepest route to the summit of Mt. San Gorgonio. One and two-tenths miles from the trailhead is Vivian Creek Camp (7,100'). Campsites are located upslope to the right of the trail after reaching the stream: one is halfway up the slope, and the other is at the top of the slope (no camping within 200 feet of the trail or creek).

One and three-tenths miles from Vivian Creek Camp is Halfway Camp (8,100'). Water is obtained from the creek 200 yards before camp. Two and three-tenths miles further is High Creek Camp (water available - 9,200'). The summit of San Gorgonio (11,499') is 3 miles beyond High Creek. The upper end of this trail offers outstanding views of Yucaipa Ridge and Galena Peak, as well as sweeping

panoramic views from the top of Mt. San Gorgonio. After the South Fork Trail, this is the second most used trail in the Wilderness.

### **Momyer Creek Trail**

#### **Momyer Creek Trail 1E06**

Latitude: 34.087048  
Longitude: -116.914872

The trailhead is reached by turning east off Highway 38 to Forest Falls. Continue up the road 3 miles to the large parking area (5,400') on your left 100 yards before the fire station. Alger Creek Camp (7,100') is 3.7 miles. The single site is located about .25 miles below the trail.

Two miles further is Dobbs Camp (water available-7,200'). Another 1.5 miles is Saxton Camp (8,400'). Water here is obtained from a small spring .2 miles below the camp along the trail. Two miles further is Dollar Lake Saddle (no water-9,960'). This one of the most underused trails. This area offers the visitor solitude and good views of Mill Creek Canyon and Yucaipa Ridge from the upper end of the trail.

### **San Bernardino Peak Trail**

#### **San Bernadino Peak Trail 1W07**

Latitude: 34.146021  
Longitude: -116.978423

The trailhead (5,960') leaves from behind the Camp Angelus Fire Station at Angelus Oaks. Stay to the right up the dirt road 300 yards. Columbine Camp (water available-8,000') is 4.7 miles from the trailhead just beyond Manzanita Flats. The camp is to the right (South) of the trail and .7 mile and 300 vertical feet below it.

Two miles beyond Columbine Springs Junction is Limber Pine Bench Camp (9,200'). Water is obtained from a spring .3 miles beyond the camp.

Two and two-tenths miles further beyond Limber Pine Camp located on the San Bernardino Peak Divide Trail is San Bernardino (10,624') and San Bernardino East Peaks. Another two-mile East along the Peak Divide Trail is Trail Fork Springs (water available near trail junction-10,400')

The San Bernardino Peak Trail and the Divide Trail both offer outstanding views in all directions. The flatlands of the Inland Empire lay nearly 10,000 vertical feet below Limber Pine Camp and the trail above.

### **Forsee Creek Trail**

#### **Forsee Creek Trail 1E06**

Latitude: 34.160193  
Longitude: -116.899688

Turn right (Southeast) on Jenks Lake Road West off of Highway 38. One-quarter mile from Highway 38 is a signed dirt road on your right. This is a rough, rocky road not intended for low-slung

autos, but is usually passable.

Three-quarters to one mile up the trail is the cutoff for John's Meadow (heading to the West). John's Meadow (and camp) is located at 7,200' and 3.9 miles from the trailhead. Plenty of water is available here year-round.

Four miles from the trailhead (6,400') is Jackstraw Camp. Jackstraw Camp (9,200') is located .2 miles to the right (West) of the trail and is supplied by a small and intermittent water source. One and nine-tenths miles beyond Jackstraw is Trail Fork Springs Camp (10,400'). Water is located about 100 yards Southwest of the camp at the Spring.



Troop 8 Scouts learn the nuances of filtering their water at John's Meadow  
(Photo: R. Covington)



To the East along the Peak Divide Trail lie two additional camps. The first, Anderson Flat (no water-10,500'), is .4 miles up the trail. The second is Shields Flat (no water-10,400') 1.8 miles East of Anderson Flat, 2.3 miles East of Trail Fork, and only 1.2 miles West of High Meadow Spring (10,300') which is the preferred water source.

This trail is mostly shaded up to Jackstraw Springs Camp and offers outstanding sunset views West from Trail Fork Springs Camp.

### **Deer Springs Trail**

<b>Deer Springs Trail</b>	
Latitude:	33.753026
Longitude:	-116.722708

The Deer Springs Trail begins on Hwy 243 one mile north of Idyllwild. The first 2.3 mile section is to a junction, take the cutoff trail to the right 1 mile to the top of Suicide Rock with panoramic views of Strawberry Valley and Idyllwild. This route starts in oak trees at 5,600 feet, ascending to 7,528 feet in the pines on top of Suicide Rock. Back at the junction of Deer Springs Trail and Suicide Trail, the trail to the left continues to San Jacinto Peak.

### **Bear Wallow Camping Area**

<b>Bear Wallow Camping Area</b>	
Latitude:	36.85890006
Longitude:	-119.0903697

Located along north side of the Kings River on a large sandy flat area. Take a day hike on the Bear Wallow trail located just west of the campground. Great place for camping in spring and fall. Very hot during summer months. Please pack out all garbage. No cell phone coverage in the area. Pay phone is available at Balch Camp.

(Source: Write-ups from San Geronio Wilderness Association, available at <http://www.sgwa.org>)



On the trail to Jack Straw Springs  
(Photo: R. Smith)



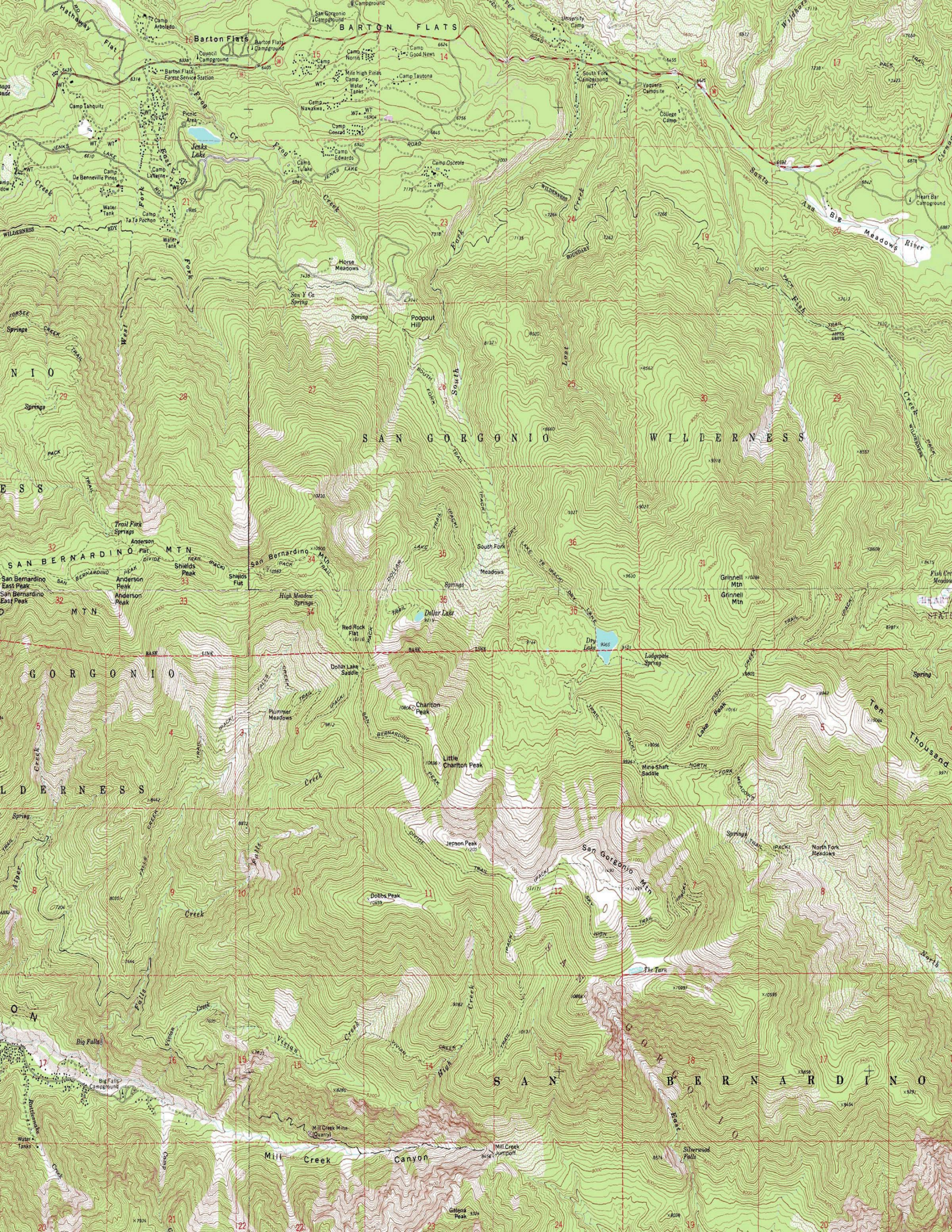
Pacific Crest Trail Sign (Photo: M. Hare)

Trailhead/ Elevation	Wilderness Location	Elevation	One Way Miles	Water
South Fork 6,880'	Horse meadows *	7,360	1.3	N
	Poopout Hill *	7,840	2.2	N
	South Fork Meadow *	8,400	3.7	Y
	Dry Lake / Lodgepole	9,101	5.9	Seasonal
	Trail Flats	9,680	6.7	N
	Mineshaft Saddle *	9,920	7.3	N
	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	11.3	N
	Dollar Lake	9,219	5.7	Seasonal
	Dollar Lake Saddle *	9,920	5.9	N
	Dry Lake View	10,400	7	N
	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	9.4	N
Lost Creek 6320'	Grinnell Ridge	8,132	4.4	N
	South Fork Meadow *	8,400	5.7	Y
	Dry Lake / Lodgepole	9,101	7.5	Seasonal
	Mineshaft Saddle *	9,920	9.3	N
	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	13.3	N
Aspen Grove 7,410'	Fish Creek Camp	8,320	3.2	Seasonal
	Fish Creek Saddle	9,805	6.2	N
Fish Creek 8,160'	Fish Creek Camp	8,320	1.9	Seasonal
	Fish Creek Saddle	9,805	4.9	N
	Mineshaft Saddle *	9,920	6	N
	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	10	N
	Fish Creek to Mineshaft Flat	9,280	7	Seasonal
Vivian 6,080'	Big Tree	8,480	8.2	Y
	Vivian Creek Camp	7,200	1.5	Y
	Halfway Camp	8,040	3.1	Seasonal
	High Creek Camp	9,260	5.6	Y
Momyer 5,440'	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	9.2	N
	Alger Creek	7,040	3.9	Y
	Dobbs Cabin	7,280	6	Y
	Saxton	8,560	7.4	Y
	Dollar Lake Saddle *	9,920	9.7	N
San Bernardino 5,960'	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	13.2	N
	Manzanita Flats *	8,300	4.2	N
	Columbine Springs	8,000	4.9	Seasonal
	Limber Pine Bench	9,360	5.9	Y
	San Bernardino Peak	10,649	8	N
Forsee Creek 6,760'	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	16.5	N
	Jackstraw Spring	9,200	4.1	Seasonal
	Trail Fork Springs	10,440	5.8	Seasonal
	Anderson Flat	10,560	6.3	N
	Shields Flat	10,420	7	N
	High Meadow Springs	10,320	8.1	Y
	Red Rock Flat	10,080	8.6	N
	Dollar Lake Saddle *	9,920	8.8	N
	San Gorgonio Peak	11,502	12.3	N
	Forsee Creek to Johns Meadow	7,260	3.1	Y
	Manzanita Flats *	8,300	5	N

\*NO Camping at these locations

Verify Water Conditions Before Going







## **San Bernardino Mountain Camping**

There are more than enough camping locations in the San Bernardino Mountains for you. Below are the campsites managed by the Forest Service. Some campsites required reservations, which you can obtain by going to the San Bernardino National Forest website or the National Recreation Reservation Service at <http://www.recreation.gov>.

Prices and availability may change, so be sure to check the website before going and to reserve.

### **Applewhite Campground**

<b>Applewhite Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.259810
Longitude:	-117.493268
Elevation:	3300

Located three miles north of the Lytle Creek Ranger Station, the campground provides an easy get-away. Trees surround the campsites and Lytle Creek flows across the street at Applewhite Picnic Area. Please use caution crossing the road.

\$10 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and 1 vehicle. Two vehicles total allowed; second vehicle is \$5/night. There is no overflow parking available. The fee is payable at a self-serve station at the entrance to the campground, cash or check only.

### **Barton Flats Campground**

<b>Barton Flats Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.171955
Longitude:	-116.875098
Elevation:	6500

Located thirty-six miles northeast of San Bernardino, this hosted campground has 51 reservable sites (7 of them are accessible). There are showers, an RV dump station and firewood for sale on site. Bear boxes are available at each campsite for food storage. Box dimension 48"x 29"x 26".

The Rio Monte hiking trail starts here and leads uphill to Jenks Lake and Santa Ana River. This campground is within twenty-five miles of Big Bear Lake and at an elevation of 6,500 feet.

This campground requires a 2 day minimum stay on the weekends and a 3 day minimum stay on holiday weekends.

\$36 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle is \$8/night.

### **Big Pine Flats**

<b>Big Pine Flats Family Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.319528
Longitude:	-117.013125
Elevation:	6800

Big Pine Flat Family Campground is located in the mountains at an elevation of 6820 feet. It has 19 sites and is a first come-first serve campground. There is an on-site campground host. Campsites include picnic table, fire ring, and drinking water. Nearest showers are located at Serrano Campground.

\$29 for a single site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle is \$8/night.

### **Crab Flats**

<b>Crab Flats Family Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.319528
Longitude:	-117.013125
Elevation:	6200

This family campground is located in an area with tall pines, oaks and cedar trees. Crab Flats has 28 sites. 23 sites are reservable sites with a space length of 15 feet through [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

There are 5 first-come, first-serve sites. Off-Highway vehicle trails are nearby. Green Valley Lake is approximately six miles away. There is no overflow parking. No large RVs. This campground is for off-highway vehicle oriented camping. Amenities include 1 campfire ring, picnic table, drinking water.

\$27 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle free is \$8/night.

**Dogwood****Dogwood  
Family Campground**

Latitude: 34.234087  
 Longitude: -117.210515  
 Elevation: 5600

This family campground is located 20 miles northeast of San Bernardino, CA in the San Bernardino National Forest. There are 87 reservable sites. There are no first-come first serve sites. Activities include Interpretive programs on Friday and Saturday nights, hiking trails, 15 minutes away from Lake Gregory, with boating, fishing and a water slide park.

Amenities and services include camp host, dump station, RV hookups, fire rings, firewood sales, interpretive trails, interpretive programs, picnic tables, showers and restrooms. Accessible. Lake Arrowhead Village, with its fine dining and quaint shops, is only 5 minutes away.

\$40 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicles fee is \$8/night.

**Green Valley****Green Valley  
Family Campground**

Latitude: 34.244804  
 Longitude: -117.063226  
 Elevation: 7000

Green Valley Family Campground is located in the mountains north of Arrowbear, the midway point between Lake Arrowhead and Big Bear. It has 37 camping sites. There are 11 sites that are first come/first serve the other 26 sites are by reservation.

Amenities include 1 campfire ring, picnic table, flush toilets and drinking water. Green Valley Lake, known for its exceptional trout fishing, is located about a mile from this beautiful mountain campground.

\$29 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicles fee is \$8/night.

**Hanna Flats****Hanna Flats  
Family Campground**

Latitude: 34.288111  
 Longitude: -116.975690  
 Elevation: 7000

Tucked away down a winding dirt road and under towering Jeffrey pine trees, the Hanna Flat campground offers an escape for visitors who want a more primitive camping experience that still offers many amenities. Despite being located only two miles off CA Highway 38, north of the town of Fawnskin, Hanna Flat provides campers with solitude, fresh pine-scented air, and cool star-filled nights.

This is a great campground for families, those who are new to camping, and hikers. With ample shade and an elevation near 7000 feet, the high temperatures in the summer rarely exceed 90° F, with nights dropping down into the 50° to 65° F range. Each campsite has 1 fire ring, picnic table and bear box.

Nearby, the moderate Hanna Flat trail leads hikers on a 7.8 mile roundtrip journey to the top of Gray's Peak. Within a mile and a half, hikers can pick up the PCT, near the Holcomb Creek crossing. Two to two and a half miles north of the campground on forest road 3N14 are three recreational target shooting areas. Approximately 5 miles away is the Big Pine Flat OHV staging area for green sticker vehicles and dirt bikes.

\$33 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

**Heart Bar****Heart Bar  
Family Campground**

Latitude: 34.158791  
 Longitude: -116.785682  
 Elevation: 6800

Heart Bar Family Campground has 89 sites. There are 63 sites that are reservable. There are 26 first come/first serve sites. Amenities include a campfire ring, picnic table, potable water, firewood sales and a campground host. Bear boxes are available at each campsite for food storage. Box dimension 48"x 29"x 26".

This campground is located near the San Geronio Wilderness and Sand to Snow National Monument. It is approximately 20.3 miles from the Big Bear Discovery Center. There are 2 accessible campsites.

\$29 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

### **Holcomb Valley**

<b>Holcomb Valley Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.302593
Longitude:	-116.895933
Elevation:	7400

This family campground has 19 single-family campsites. All sites are first-come first-serve. Holcomb Valley campground is located approximately 5 miles north of Big Bear Lake off Forest Service Road 3N16. Although this campground is open year-round, vehicle access will be based on road conditions. Please contact the Big Bear Discovery Center for current road conditions.

Amenities include a picnic table, 1 fire ring, bear boxes and vault toilets. There is no water available. A campground host is on site during mid-May through October.

\$27 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

### **Horse Springs**

<b>Horse Springs Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.352124
Longitude:	-117.070488
Elevation:	5800

For those visitors who want to get away from the hustle and bustle of the nearby Big Bear valley, Horse Springs campground offers a secluded escape unlike many others on the San Bernardino National Forest. Surrounded by a high desert environment, the campground is a cluster of juniper and pine trees that offers sweeping mountain views in all directions.

This campground is ideal for OHV users, as it is close to designated green-sticker routes and close to the forest boundary with the BLM Juniper Flats district. There are 11 single-family campsites, some with lots of shade and others with little to no shade.

Reservations are first-come first-serve, and \$10 per night per site.

### **North Shore**

<b>North Shore Family Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.267163
Longitude:	-117.165167
Elevation:	5300

North Shore Family campground is within a mixed oak and conifer forest. It is located 23 miles northeast of San Bernardino in the San Bernardino National Forest, 3 miles from Lake Arrowhead Village. There are 28 camping sites. There are 6 first come/first serve sites and 22 reservable sites. Amenities include 1 campfire ring, picnic table, flush toilets, firewood is available for sale. Campground host is on site.

Lake Gregory is 20 minutes away and offers fishing, boat rentals and a water slide park.

\$29 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

### **Pineknott**

<b>Pineknott Family Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.235063
Longitude:	-116.884067
Elevation:	7000

Pineknott Campground is located in the San Bernardino mountains near Big Bear Lake. The campground is situated in a fir, pine and oak forest setting. There are 47 sites that are reservable. There are no first come/first serve sites. Popular activities include sight-seeing, shopping, mountain biking, hiking and fishing. A marina and water recreation areas are five miles from the campground.

\$34 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.



**San Gorgonio****San Gorgonio  
Family Campground**

Latitude: 34.174074  
 Longitude: -116.867644  
 Elevation: 6500

This family campground is located 36 miles northeast of San Bernardino, California, within 25 miles of Big Bear Lake. There are 54 camping sites that are reservable.

There are no first come/first serve sites. Amenities include 1 campfire ring, picnic table, bear box, flush toilets and showers. Firewood is available for sale at the campground. This campground is close to the

Barton Flats Visitor Center and Greyback Amphitheatre where campfire programs are presented on summertime weekends.

\$34 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

**Serrano****Serrano  
Family Campground**

Latitude: 34.263786  
 Longitude: -116.918022  
 Elevation: 6800

Serrano family campground is located on the north side of Big Bear Lake, 2 miles east of Fawnskin. There are 93 single sites and 16 double sites. Popular activities include hiking, mountain biking, boating and fishing. Amenities and services include camp host, comfort station, dump station, RV hookups, fire rings, firewood sales, interpretive programs, interpretive trails, picnic tables, showers and restrooms.

Bear Boxes. Accessible.

Reservations can be placed as late as 24 hours in advance based upon availability. For example, reservations could be made on a Thursday before 2pm for an arrival the next day, Friday for a 2pm check-in if there is site availability.

\$40 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

**South Fork****South Fork  
Family Campground**

Latitude: 34.169634  
 Longitude: -116.827418  
 Elevation: 6400

This family campground is located in a pine/fir forest near the Santa Ana River along Hwy 38 between Angelus Oaks and Big Bear Lake. There are 28 sites. Each site accommodates a maximum of 8 persons. First come/first serve; no reservations accepted. Open during the summer and fall months only.

\$29 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

**Wild Horse Equestrian Camp****Wild Horse Equestrian  
Campground**

Latitude: 34.154364  
 Longitude: -116.778976  
 Elevation: 7000

This campground offers eight single-family campsites and three double campsites that are available for tent and RV camping. Some sites are accessible and only campers with horses are allowed to use this campground. Campground accesses the Santa Ana River Trail and numerous trails in the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area. Facilities include 30 each 12' x 12' single-horse corrals, 2 flush

toilets, water hydrants, 2 showers, picnic tables, fire rings with grates, 1 group fire ring, horseshoe game area, and horse mounting area for visitors needing assistance. Only campers **WITH HORSES** are permitted to camp at Wildhorse Equestrian Campground. Campers without horses may make reservations at Heart Bar Family Campground.

\$35 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$8/night.

(Sources: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/> and <https://www.recreation.gov/>)

## **San Gabriel Mountains**

### **Angeles National Forest**

Angeles National Forest  
701 N. Santa Anita Ave.  
Arcadia, CA 91006  
Phone (626) 574-1613

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument  
110 N. Wabash Ave  
Glendora, CA 91741  
Phone (626) 335-1251

Los Angeles Gateway Ranger District  
12371 N. Little Tujunga Canyon Rd  
San Fernando, CA 91342  
Phone (818) 899-1900

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/angeles>

Stretching for more than sixty miles from the Ridge Route to Cajon Pass, the San Gabriel Mountains provide us within as “urban wilderness,” easily accessible by most Southern Californians. This area offers the outdoorsman a truly beautiful landscape amid one of the world’s population centers.

Most of the San Gabriels are incorporated into Angeles National Forest. With nearly 700,000 acres, you can find a lot of places to go, and a lot of things to do. Over 1,300 miles of roads crisscross the forest and nearly 500 miles of hiking and riding trails assures you of being able to get into all but the most remote areas. Public campgrounds and picnic areas abound making the San Gabriels a great place for training, nature study, wildlife observation, fishing, or just plain

This mountain range is actually made up of two parallel ranges, with the front range having the lower peaks with most less than 6,000 feet tall. The Northern range contains such peaks as Throop, Islip, and Baden-Powell, all over 8,000 feet. At 10,064 feet, Mt.

San Antonio (Baldy) is the tallest peak in the San Gabriels and the hike to the top is particularly interesting.

Through the years the San Gabriel Mountains has seen the passing of trappers, hunters, ranchers, and timber men. However, it was probably the gold seekers that did the most to open the canyon country. Today gold can still be found in the San Gabriel River and its feeder streams. The true richness, however, can best be found by wandering through the trails and canyons that divide this forest region.

Unlike many mountainous areas, the San Gabriels can offer excellent camping year-round. When the highlands are covered with snow you can still find quiet camps below snowline. You can also spend the winter months exploring the desert-facing sides of the range.

It would be impossible to list all of the camping locations available in the San Gabriel Mountains, and that is not within the scope of this guide. Yet, a couple of locations must be brought to your attention. With luck you may just get a taste of the flavor of this wonderful “urban jewel.”



## **San Gabriel Mountain Hiking and Backpacking**

### **Mt. Baden-Powell**



Troop 8 at the Baden-Powell monument  
on the peak  
(Photo: R. Covington)

Total Mileage (One-way): 4 mi; Elevation Gain: 2,800 feet

If a Scout could only take one hike in their life this might well be it!

Named for the founder of the Scouting movement, Lord Robert Baden-Powell, this 9,399-foot peak was originally known as North Baldy. C.J. Carlson, a well-recognized Scouter in the 1920s and 1930s, petitioned the government to make the name change.

Incidentally, this was the same C.J. Carlson that was able to arrange for the donation of the original land that is now our own Camp Emerson in Idyllwild.

This is more than just a hike, it is a pilgrimage. Atop the peak you will find the cement monument dedicated to Scouting. The cement was carried on the backs of over 2,000 scouts in the late fifties all the way from the trailhead at Vincent Gap. When you view it take a moment to consider their dedication.

About 5 miles from Big Pines, on the Angeles Crest Highway (Highway 2) you will find the Vincent Gap trailhead. The parking lot is quite large and parking should be no problem. The trail signs are highly visible. Take the trail the leads uphill, toward your right. You will soon hit the first of 41 switchbacks which make this hike so interesting.

After about 1.5 miles you will come to a sign that reads "Lamel Springs ¼ mile." Actually, the distance is much less. This is the only water that you can count on along the trail. Soon you will begin to see breathtaking views of the Mojave Desert.

At about 3.5 miles you will see the first of the Limber Pines (*Pinus Flexilus*) that maintain a foothold on the ridges. You will see a side trail leading to a forest of these trees about 350 yards away. A little farther you will see the trail sign that leads to Little Jimmy and Crystal Lake. Keep to the left trail (the main one) and in just a couple of more switchbacks you will reach the summit. This is where you will find the "hogback" which can be quite narrow in places and windswept. Not a good place to be after the snows fall unless you are a properly equipped, well-trained, mountaineer.

The view from the top is grand! Look at the monument, read the inscriptions on the plaques, and enjoy this mountain-top experience. During the summer months you may even be "buzzed" by sailplanes as they soar and play in the thermal updrafts.

This is one of the very best conditioning hikes you can utilize as it packs a substantial elevation gain in a relatively short hike. This is a real "calf-stretcher!"



## **The Devil's Punchbowl**

Total Mileage (One-Way): 3 mi; Elevation Gain: 1,000 feet

This is a “got to see” place as it is nearly impossible to describe!

Mother Nature must have taken everything she had left when she was finished designing the world and dumped it here. It is really awesome.

Actually, two hikes are available; this one from South Fork Campground; and a shorter one into the bowl itself. The shorter 1-mile hike would be very good to introduce you to the local geology and to also visit the interpretive center at the park headquarters.

This is best if you plan to use a car shuttle.

From Highway 138 turn South onto Big Rock Creek Road and continue to Sycamore Flat Campground. Sometimes, due to road conditions, this becomes your new trailhead.

South Fork is about 1-mile past Sycamore Flat and is well described on a local map. Due to heavy usage in past years it does not presently allow car camping.

Walk through the campground to the Southern end and follow the signs. You will cross a stream and then proceed uphill then dropping into Holcomb Canyon. Here you will find an idyllic glade with splashing streamlets. Soon you will again continue an uphill climb leading you to a rock outcropping known as the Devil's Chair. Be careful and don't climb over (or fall under) the fence.

It is very hard to contain yourself and not test your echo!

Head back to the trail split and follow the trail around and in a little over 2 miles you will reach the County Park, where, if you planned it right, your vehicles are waiting.

This is a neat little excursion into the jumbled rocks region and is well worth the effort. Take a camera as the rocks seem to change color as the sun plays games especially in late afternoon.

While at the Park Headquarters visit the small, but well maintained, visitor center. Sometimes owls and other birds and mammals are available for viewing as they are cared for prior to release into the wilderness.

If you don't have the time for a full hike, or if your Scouts are not up to this level of hiking, make it a point still to visit the Devil's Punchbowl. You can even watch the rock climbers as they try to scale the sheer walls.

## **Third Stream Crossing**

Total Mileage (One-Way): 3 mi; Elevation Gain: 1,200 feet

This hike takes you from the gravel and rock-strewn canyon bottom up to the forested, cool, streamside campsite known as Third Stream Crossing. If you actually count the crossings, including streamlets, you may or may not come up with the right number but the campsite will be there nonetheless.

This is one of the nicest hikes you can take. This hike is not very demanding and the trail is usually well maintained. The hike will, at times, insulate you from the outside world and you will find it hard to believe that you are so near the metropolis below.

If you are very quiet, you can even catch a glimpse of a bighorn sheep. If you feel lucky, you can even try your hand at panning for gold in the sands of the stream bottoms.

From Interstate 15 exit Sierra Avenue and proceed West, up the wash, on Lytle Creek Road. Soon you will come to the Lytle Creek Ranger Station where you must obtain a Wilderness Permit. This would also be a good time to talk with the Rangers about water availability, trail conditions, etc.

Continue on Lytle Creek Road about 2 more miles to the intersection of Middle Fork Road, on your left. This blacktop road will quickly turn to somewhat maintained dirt which you will follow for another

3 miles or so. You can then park in the “parking lot.” You will know you are there because the road ends and one of more trash barrels are in view. The trailhead here has attracted some theft, so you may consider someone providing security for the vehicles.

Follow the trail and you will soon come to a sign that reads “Cucamonga Wilderness.” Continue up the trail past the junction to Stone House Trail Camp, about a 1/2 mile up the trail, and in about 2 miles you will reach Third Stream Crossing.

This “pie-shaped” campsite is located right along the stream. The trail continues across the stream and switchbacks up to Comanche Camp, then to Icehouse Saddle.

At Third Stream Crossing you will find something that is not on your map. If you travel a few yards downstream you will see a streamlet entering from a canyon across the stream. Following this streamlet upstream a few hundred yards and your efforts will be rewarded with the sound, and view, of one of the most picturesque waterfalls in the San Gabriel Mountains. Take a moment to listen to the falls, or maybe even have a Scout’s Own. It would be hard to find a better location.

### **Blue Ridge to Mt. Baldy**

5 miles

Trailhead at Big Pines Visitor Center

I 15 North to Hwy 138 to Hwy 2 towards Wrightwood, CA. Go past Wrightwood on Hwy 2 three miles to Big Pines Visitor Center. The trailhead is just across the road from the center.

### **Table Mountain Trail**

½ mile

See Table Mountain entry for directions. Trailhead is just off of the parking lot.

### **Lighting Ridge Trail**

¾ mile

Interstate North to Hwy 138 to Hwy 2 towards Wrightwood. Go past Wrightwood 4.5 miles to Inspiration Point. The trailhead is on the North side of the parking lot.

### **Mine Gulch from Vincent Gap**

4 ½ miles

Trailhead at Vincent Gap See Baden-Powell

### **Little Fish Fork**

3 ¼ miles

Trailhead at Lupine CG See camp access above

### **Upper Fish Fork**

3 ¼ miles

Trailhead at Lupine CG See camp access above

### **Big Pines**

½ mile

Trailhead at Big Pines Visitor Center  
Highway 2, West of Wrightwood

### **Blue Ridge**

2 miles

Trailhead at Big Pines Visitor Center  
Highway 2, West of Wrightwood

### **Deer Flat Group Camp**

Pacific Crest Trail intersect on a 2-mile hike (North through camp) See  
camp access above

### **Grassy Hollow**

Pacific Crest Trail intersect  
See camp access above

### **Jackson Flat Camp**

Pacific Crest Trail intersect on a short trail North of camp  
See camp access above

### **Guffy**

Pacific Crest Trail intersect just outside camp See  
camp access above

### **Manker Flat Camp**

Trail that leads out of camp and on to San Antonio Falls See  
camp entree



## **San Gabriel Mountain Camping**

There are several campgrounds in the Big Pines region of the Angeles National Forest that are managed by Mountain High Resorts. These following campgrounds require a Big Pines Parking pass, instead of the Forest Service Adventure pass: Appletree campground, Arch Picnic Area, Grassy Hollow Campground/Picnic Area, Inspiration Point Trailhead, Mescal Picnic Area, Northshore Fishing Site, Peavine Campground, and Vincent Gap Trailhead.

### **Apple Tree**

<b>Appletree Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.386599
Longitude:	-117.713431
Elevation:	6200

The campground has eight first-come, first-served walk-in (less than 100-yards with a slight inclination) campsites with piped water, designated picnic table, campfire ring, and BBQ pedestal grills. (three sites are ADA accessible). The nearby slopes and open spaces offer a snowy playground for snow play and families.

No reservations: Big Pines Pass from Mountain High Resort is required. For info, please contact the concessionaire - Mountain High Resort (888) 754-7878.

Location: From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive five miles to Wrightwood. Continue for three miles to Big Pines. Turn right on Big Pines Highway (County road N4) and drive two miles to campground. Open year round.

### **Big Rock**

<b>Big Rock Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.387932
Longitude:	-117.776933
Elevation:	5500

There are 8 campsites for tents. Fire pits (see ranger station for fire permit), vault toilets and picnic tables are provided. There is no piped water so bring your own. Pets on leashes are permitted.

No reservations: no fee (must have forest adventure pass in car)  
Contact at (805) 944-2187

Location: From Highway 138 in Pearblossom, turn South on Longview Road. Turn left on Valyermo Road and drive past the ranger station. Turn right on Big Rock Road and continue up the canyon past the South Fork Camp turn and past Camp Fenner to the campground entrance road on the right. Open June to October.

### **Blue Ridge**

<b>Blue Ridge Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.359675
Longitude:	-117.687263
Elevation:	7900

There are 8 campsites for tents or motor homes up to 16 feet long. Fire pits, picnic tables and vault toilets are provided. Bring your own water. Pets permitted on leash.

No reservations; no fee (must have forest adventure pass in car)  
Contact at (805) 944-2187

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive 5 miles into Wrightwood. Continue past Wrightwood 3 miles to Big Pines Visitor Center. Continue on Angeles Crest Highway for 1.5 miles to Inspiration Point.

Turn left (opposite Inspiration Point) on Blue Ridge Road (dirt) and drive three miles to campground. Open June to October.

**Cabin Flat****Cabin Flat Campground**

Latitude: 34.343942  
 Longitude: -117.699631  
 Elevation: 5300

There are 12 tent sites. Picnic tables, fire pits and vault toilets are provided. No piped water. Pets permitted on a leash.

No reservations; no fee (must have forest adventure pass in car)  
 Contact at (805) 944-2187

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive five miles into Wrightwood. Continue for three miles to Big Pines. Turn left and continue on Angeles Crest Highway for 1.5 miles. Turn left (opposite Inspiration Point) On Blue Ridge Road and drive 12 miles to campground (the road becomes a rough, dirt road after the first three miles). Open May to October.

**Camp Wrightwood****Camp Wrightwood**

Latitude: 34.3532  
 Longitude: -117.6314  
 Elevation: 6000

Camp Wrightwood provides an alpine forest setting for youth and family camps and retreats. The camp is situated at an

elevation 6300 feet and is only 4 miles from Mountain High Ski Area. Food service and self-cooking options are available with accommodations for 181 guests in lodges and cabins with communal and semi-private bathrooms. This easily accessible camp is located adjacent to the community of Wrightwood.

Contacts: 760-249-3453 and  
<http://www.campwrightwood.org>



A Scout along the Gabrielino Trail going into Camp Sturtevant (Photo: J. Casey)

**Sturtevant Camp****Sturtevant Camp**

Latitude: 34.2219  
 Longitude: -118.0348  
 Elevation: 3200

Perhaps the most unique United Methodist Camp in the country, Sturtevant's Camp is located in the Angeles Forest above Sierra Madre. The camp is accessible only by a scenic moderate-grade four-mile hike. The camp is a great experience for hikers looking for a special getaway adjacent to the Los Angeles basin. At the camp you will find recreation opportunities which include a volleyball court, water slide and zip line. And you will want to take a turn on the spectacular tree swing.



He isn't really drinking from Sturtevant Falls, is he? (Photo: J. Casey)

Sturtevant's camp is a self-cooking camp with 40 beds and semi-private and communal bathrooms. You can make arrangements to have your gear and food packed in on the last working mule pack train in the San Gabriel Mountains. The camp generates its electricity from a micro hydro generator using the water flow from the adjacent stream. Sturtevant's Camp provides that special camp or retreat experience for youth, families or adults looking to transcend time. They also have rates for use of the cabins, kitchen, lodge, etc.

The camp is reopened to the public after fire recovery efforts.

<https://www.sturtevantcamp.com/>

## **Coulter Group Camp**

<b>Coulter Group Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.19220001
Longitude:	-118.140001
Elevation:	5200

There is one large campsite that will accommodate up to 50 people. Maximum RV length is 40', no hookups. Vault toilet. No water available. Please bring enough water for cooking, cleaning, drinking, and extinguishing campfires. Pets permitted on a leash.

Reservations are \$100 group fee per night, call (877) 444-6777 or online at <https://www.recreation.gov/>

From Interstate 210 North of Pasadena, take the Angeles Crest Highway (Highway 2) exit and drive 26 miles to the signed campground. Open March to November.

## **Coldbrook**

<b>Coldbrook Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.291484
Longitude:	-117.840418
Elevation:	3350

There are 22 campsites with picnic tables. Maximum RV length is 22', no hookups. Campfire rings and three vault toilets are present. Seasonal stream water (treat before using). However, water flow may be low or non-existent due to reduced rainfall. Please bring enough water for cooking, cleaning, drinking, and extinguishing campfires.

No reservations; \$12 fee per night, and \$5/night for extra vehicles. Contact at (626) 574-1613

From Interstate 210, take the Azusa Canyon exit. Drive 18 miles North on San Gabriel Canyon Road (Highway 39) to the campground. Open year-round.

## **Crystal Lake**

<b>Crystal lake Recreation Area Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.325682
Longitude:	-117.832889
Elevation:	5539

There are a total of 50 campsites with picnic tables for tents or motor homes up to 22 feet long (no hookups) spread through Loops A-D. Piped water, fire pits and picnic tables are provided. Flush toilets are available. Pets permitted on leashes.

No reservations; \$12 fee per night, and \$5/night for extra vehicles. Contact at 626-335-1251

From Interstate 210, take the Azusa exit. Drive 25 miles North on San Gabriel Canyon Road (Highway 39) to the Crystal Lake Rec. Area. Open year-round

## **Guffy**

<b>Guffy Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.341053
Longitude:	-117.65527
Elevation:	8300

There are 6 campsites for tents with picnic tables and campfire rings. Vault toilets are available. No water available. Please bring enough water for cooking, cleaning, drinking, and extinguishing campfires. Pets are permitted on leashes.

No reservations, no fee (must have Adventure Pass in car) Contact at (661) 269-2808 or (760) 249-3504

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Hwy 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Hwy and drive 5 miles into Wrightwood. Continue for 3 miles to Big Pines. Turn left and continue on Angeles Crest Hwy 1.5 miles. Turn left (opposite Inspiration Point) on Blue Ridge Rd. and drive 6 miles to the campground (it's dirt road after the first 3 miles). Hike in only from November to April due to seasonal closures of Blue Ridge Road (Forest Service Road 3N06)



**Jackson Flat Group Camp****Jackson Flat Group Campground**

Latitude: 34.381640  
 Longitude: -117.737353  
 Elevation: 7500

This campground is set among groves of pine and fir trees. These sites are for walk-in tent campers only. A short walk about 200 yards leads to five group tent areas, which accommodate 30-40 people each for a total capacity of 180 persons.

Sites 1, 2 and 3 have a maximum capacity of 40 people. These sites feature three long group picnic tables, one picnic table for food preparation, three bear-proof food storage lockers, one large barbeque grill, a group fire ring, one permanent trash can, and a water spigot.

Sites 4 and 5 have a maximum capacity of 30 people. These sites feature two long group picnic tables, one picnic table for food preparation, two bear-proof food storage lockers, one large barbeque grill, a group fire ring, one permanent trash can, and a water spigot.

Three restroom buildings with flush toilets are located throughout the campground.

The campground has two large gathering areas with a central fire pit in each area and a water spigot nearby.

Reservation only; sites 1 2 and 3 are \$230 per night, sites 4 and 5 are \$180 per night. Call for fee (877) 444-6777 or online via <https://www.recreation.gov>

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive five miles to Wrightwood. Continue for three miles to Big Pines. Turn left and continue on Angeles Crest Highway for two miles. Turn right, opposite the sign for Grassy Hollow. Then drive one mile to campground. Open June to October.

**Lake****Lake Campground**

Latitude: 34.391061  
 Longitude: -117.722570  
 Elevation: 6100

There are 8 campsites for tents or motor homes up to 18 feet long. Piped water, fire pits (see ranger station for fire permit), vault toilets and picnic tables are provided. Pets permitted on leash.

Reservations; \$30 fee per night. Call for fee (877) 444-6777 or online via <https://www.recreation.gov>

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive five miles into Wrightwood. Continue for three miles to Big Pines. Turn right on Big Pines Highway and drive 2.5 miles to the campground. Open May to November.

**Lupine****Lupine Campground**

Latitude: 34.329593  
 Longitude: -117.668071  
 Elevation: 6600

There are 11 tent sites. Picnic tables and fire pits are provided. Vault toilets are available. No piped water so bring your own. Pet on leashes permitted.

No reservations, no fee (must have forest adventure pass in car)  
 Contact at (661) 269-2808 or (760) 249-3504

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive 5 miles into Wrightwood. Continue for three miles to Big Pines. Turn left and continue on Angeles Crest Highway for 1.5 miles. Turn left (opposite Inspiration Point) on Blue Ridge Road (it's a rough dirt road after the first three miles) and drive 9 miles to campsite. Lupine Campground is open year-round. However, it is hike-in only from early- to mid-November to late-April through early-May due to seasonal closures of Blue Ridge Road (Forest Service Road 3N06).

**Manker Flats****Manker Flat  
Campground**

Latitude: 34.265000  
 Longitude: -117.630833  
 Elevation: 6000

Camp high in the clouds at Manker Flat Campground. This campground offers 21 campsites open year-round. However, piped-water is turned off for the season with freezing temperatures. Each site comes with a spacious spot for all your family camping needs and includes a picnic table, fire ring, and vault toilets. It's located within a short drive to historic Mt. Baldy Schoolhouse and Visitor Center where

visitors can discover the land's Native American roots.

Close by, hikers have several options to begin their day's adventure including, Mt. Baldy Bowl trailhead. This trailhead can be combined with another major route, Devil's Backbone, to reach the summit (10,069') to form an impressive 11.3-mile loop hike. For the more casual hiker, a 1.4 mile round trip to the 75-foot San Antonio Falls is available.

Bears are very active in this area, so it is recommended that all campers use provided bear boxes, personal bear canisters, or seal all food as to eliminate scent.

No reservations; \$14/night for single unit. Extra vehicle fee is \$5/night.

Location: From Foothill Blvd. in Claremont, take Mills Ave. until it turns into Mt. Baldy Road. Drive 12 miles north on Mt. Baldy Rd. passed Mt. Baldy Village to the campground. (Note: Foothill can be reached by taking Mountain Ave. north from the 10 freeway). Call (626) 335-1251 for current conditions and additional information.

**Millard****Millard Trail Camp  
(Hike-in Campground)**

Latitude: 34.217416  
 Longitude: -118.145696  
 Elevation: 1900

Open when weather and road conditions allow. Walk in to campsite (25-150 feet from parking area). Six campsites. Picnic tables and campfire rings, vault toilets, no water available. Seasonal stream water may be available (treat before using). However, water flow may be low or non-existent due to reduced rainfall. May be closed occasionally do to bear activity.

No reservations, no fee (must have forest adventure pass in car) Contact at (818) 899-1900

Location: From Interstate 210 North of Pasadena, take the Lake Avenue exit North to Loma Alta Drive. Turn left (West) on Loma Alta Drive and drive to the Chaney Trail (at the flashing yellow light). Follow the signs to the campground.

**Mountain Oak****Mountain Oak  
Campground**

Latitude: 34.395092  
 Longitude: -117.729469  
 Elevation: 6200

There are 17 campsites for tents or motor homes up to 18 feet in length. Piped water, fire pits (see ranger station for fire permit) and picnic tables are provided. Flush toilets are available. Groceries and propane gas are nearby in Wrightwood (8 miles).

The single-loop campground provides lots of shade from towering trees but minimal privacy from neighboring campgrounds. Ground cover is mostly pine needles and leaves. Bear-proof food containers are provided at each campground and amenities include picnic table, grills and flush toilets. Drinking water is also available. A camp host is on-site, offering firewood for sale. The campground is also near Jackson Lake for easy access to fishing, canoeing and swimming.

Reservations; \$30 fee per night. Call for fee (877) 444-6777 or online via <https://www.recreation.gov>

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive five in to Wrightwood. Continue for three miles to Big Pines. Turn right on Big Pines Highway (County road N4) and drive three miles to the campground. Open May to October.

## **Peavine**

<b>Peavine Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.389624
Longitude:	-117.718706
Elevation:	6100

There are four tent sites. Piped water, picnic tables, fire pits and vault toilets are provided. A grocery store and propane gas are nearby. Pets permitted on leash.

No reservations: Big Pines Pass from Mountain High Resort is required. For info, please contact the concessionaire - Mountain High Resort (888) 754-7878.

Location: From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West. Turn Left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive five into Wrightwood. Continue for three miles to Big Pines. Turn right on Big Pines Highway and drive 2.6 miles to the campground. Open May to November

## **Sycamore Flat**

<b>Sycamore Flat Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.413414
Longitude:	-117.825169
Elevation:	4300

There are 11 campsites for tents or motor homes up to 22 feet long. No water available. Fire pits (see ranger station for fire permit), vault toilets and picnic tables are provided. Pets are permitted on leashes.

No reservations; Adventure pass required, Contact at (626) 574-1613

Location: From Highway 138 in Pearblossom, turn South on Longview Road. Drive to Valyermo Road and turn left. Drive past the ranger station. Turn right on Big Rock Road and drive about two miles up the canyon to the campground. Open year-round.

## **Table Mountain**

<b>Table Mountain Campground</b>	
Latitude:	34.389923
Longitude:	-117.693567
Elevation:	7200

There are 115 campsites with access to RVs up to 34ft. Campsites range from level meadow locations to shaded, hilly sites. All sites are reasonably close to vault toilets and have paved spurs and fire pits. Water spigots are spaced about every six sites.

The amphitheater site is available for day-use only and accommodates up to 150 guests and 30 vehicles. Prices vary based

on time of year. To RESERVE THE AMPHITHEATER contact Tyler Shippy at tyler\_shippy@mthigh.com or call (888) 754-7878 ext 7834.

Reservations; \$30 fee per night. Call toll free at (877) 444-6777, or online at <https://www.recreation.gov>. For more information, contact (760) 316-7828.

From Interstate 15 near Cajon, take Highway 138 West, turn left (West) on Angeles Crest Highway and drive five into Wrightwood. Continue three miles to Big Pines. Turn right on Table Mountain Road and one mile into the campground. Open May to October.

(Sources: "California Camping," Tom Stienstra, Fog Horn Press, 1995, US Forest Service Big Pines Recreation Area literature, <https://www.fs.usda.gov>, <https://www.recreation.gov>, <https://www.WrightwoodCA.com>)



## San Jacinto Mountains

### Mt San Jacinto State Park

San Jacinto Ranger District  
54270 Pine Crest  
Idyllwild, CA 92549  
Phone (909) 382-2921

Idyllwild Ranger Station  
25905 Highway 243  
Idyllwild, CA 92549  
Phone (951) 659-2607

Long Valley Ranger Station  
1 Tramway Road  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

[https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=636](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=636)

What they lack in area they make up for in impact. The San Jacinto Mountains may well be the repository for more Native American artifacts than any other Southwestern mountain range.

Rising almost vertically from the desert, San Jacinto Peak is, undoubtedly the most impressive of peaks. Separated from the San Bernardino Mountains by San Geronimo Pass, this 10,834-foot-high peak stands as a sentinel, all powerful and majestic.

This was, in fact, the home of the Cahuilla, that desert tribe that foraged for food from the Whitewater Basin to the mighty peaks in this range. The vestiges of their presence remain in the pictographs and metates that are scattered all about the rocks and streams.

If you're interested in Indian history, you can take a short trip to the County Park to view the painted pictographs. Across the street from the library, and a few hundred yards uphill, is Indian Relic Park.

This isolated site has an excellent remnant of Cahuilla art and a small selection of metates, all within 100 feet of the road.

The pass at the base of this range saw the travels of many, men like Juan Bautista De Anza, Father Garces, and later, Paulino Weaver. In fact, this pass was a major freeway in times past.

Today, it is quiet, serene, and contemplative. And, although traffic sometimes snarls in places like Idyllwild, you can find a place for quiet relaxation.

Like the San Gabriels and the San Bernardinos, the San Jacintos fall into that category known as "the high country," but the San Jacintos are a little different. This range seems to be just a little bit quieter, just a little more reserved, just a little less trampled. It is a great place to be.

To truly enjoy these mountains, you must spend a little time in each season. The seasonal changes here seem to be a little more pronounced, yet all the seasons seem to be a little more tempered. Maybe it is just our imagination but the summers just aren't as hot, the winters not as cold, the autumns not as windy, or the springs not as wet as those other mountains just a few miles away.



## **San Jacinto Mountain Hiking and Backpacking**

### **Mount San Jacinto State Park**

The deeply weathered summit of Mount San Jacinto stands 10,834 feet above sea level, and is the second highest mountain range in Southern California. No more than a two-hour drive from either Los Angeles or San Diego, the mountain's magnificent granite peaks, subalpine forests, and fern-bordered mountain meadows offer a unique opportunity to explore and enjoy a scenic, high-country wilderness area. The park offers two drive-in campgrounds near the town of Idyllwild. Most of the park is a designated wilderness area enjoyed by hikers and backpackers.



From here, your journey up San Jacinto begins (Photo: J. Long)

### **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway**

Starting in Chino Canyon near Palm Springs, the tram takes passengers from Valley Station at 2,643 feet elevation to Mountain Station on the edge of the wilderness, elevation 8,516 feet.

The Mountain Station features a restaurant, gift shop, snack bar, and the state park visitor center. In Long Valley, a short walk from the station, you will find the Long Valley Ranger Station, a picnic area with barbecue stoves and restrooms, a ski center, a self-guiding nature trail, and Desert View Trail which offers panoramas of the high country including several peaks over 10,000 feet in elevation.



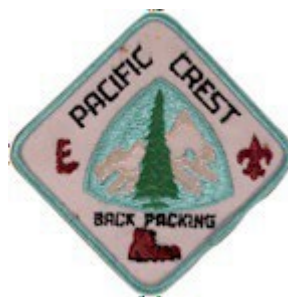
View From the Tram  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

You can also enter the hiking trail system from

this point. The tram operates year-round, except for a maintenance closure in August.

### **Pacific Crest Trail**

The Pacific Crest Trail is the jewel in the crown of America's scenic trails, spanning 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada through three Western states. The trail passes through five California State Parks: Castle Crags and McArthur-Burney Falls in Northern California; and Silverwood Lake, Anza Borrego Desert and Mt San Jacinto in Southern California.



Earn PCT High Adventure Awards!

## **San Jacinto Wilderness Permit Information**

A permit is required for day hiking and overnight trips within the state and federal wilderness areas.

Day use permits are free for both federal and state wilderness areas. Both the National Forest and State Park honor each other's day use permit, so visitors only need to obtain one for both wilderness areas. Permits are available at the following locations:

- San Jacinto Ranger District, 54270 Pine Crest, Idyllwild, CA 92549. (909) 382-2921
  - Self-issued permits will be located to the left of the doors on a permit desk 24/7
- Mt. San Jacinto State Park locations where self-issued permits are available 24/7:
  - Idyllwild Ranger Station, 25905 Highway 243, Idyllwild, CA 92549 (located on a permit desk in front of office)
  - Stone Creek Campground, five miles north of Idyllwild on Dark Canyon Road/4S02 (located at a visitor information board)
  - Long Valley Ranger Station, located at the top of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway (permits are found on a permit desk in front of office)
    - The base of the tramway is located at 1 Tram Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

Free permits are available for camping within the federal wilderness area. Please call (909) 382-2921 for locations, availability and reservations.

\$5 permits for camping within the state wilderness area are available through Mt. San Jacinto State Park offices, at [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=636](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=636)

Wilderness camping permits may be acquired up to 8 weeks before your desired camping date. One person may fill out the permit for the hiking group (up to 15 people), provided everyone is hiking together at all times.

U.S. Forest Service Permit Applications and Wilderness information can be accessed at <https://store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes> All visitors must display an Adventure Pass or Golden Passport in their vehicle when parked on National Forest land.

## **Lily Rock (Tahquitz Rock)**

This is the most prominent feature in the Idyllwild area and is more often referred to as Tahquitz Rock. On any given day you can watch the numerous climbers trying to ascend the difficult face with ropes, carabiners, and pure strength. But you don't have to do it that way. In fact, you just have to walk up the trail to the top! The rock is greatly reduced but the view is just as spectacular.

Follow Fern Valley Road to Humber Park. No permits are required for access to Lily/Tahquitz Rock via the climber's trail or the Ernie Maxwell Trail. A USFS Adventure Pass is required for parking above the signed area. Limited parking is available in a county parking lot below the sign.

Follow the "Scenic Trail" from the parking lot, turning left in about a ¼ mile up the slope. This "trail" will zigzag uphill for several hundred feet to a place called Lunch Rock. To the right you will find a trail around the base of the rock. An easy scramble takes you to the summit.



## **San Jacinto Peak**

This peak overlooks the land of “Ramona,” for it is here that Helen Hunt Jackson wrote about the plight of the Native American. And John Muir was touched by what he felt was the most beautiful sunrise in the world.

Many trails lead up to the peak and every hiker has his favorite. Marion Mountain, Black Mountain, and Humber Park all contain trailheads that will get you to the top. Or you may choose to “cheat” and take the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway up Chino Canyon and begin your trek at 8,516 feet. It is worth taking the tramway just for the ride, but taking this route disqualifies you from earning the San Jacinto Peak patch. Use this route after you’ve conquered Humber Park.

This is a singular mountain, and it really doesn’t matter how you get to the top for the trip is a reward in itself. Hiking to the peak will take you through several climatic zones as Mt. San Jacinto passes through the Lower Sonoran, Upper Sonoran, Transition, Canadian/Hudsonian, and Arctic/Alpine. Naturally, as



And this is where the journey ends  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

you climb you will see the botanic life, as well as mammalian life, changes. It is really astounding.

Look about the rocks near the streams and you may find metates. These remnants of our forbearers were caused by season and season of crushing and grinding seeds with hand held manos, or pestles. Seeds and acorns formed the mainstay of the local inhabitants prior to the coming of the Europeans.

Certainly not the tallest peak in Southern California, Mt. San Jacinto stands alone along the San Geronio Pass. It stands alone in many other ways as well.

## **Tahquitz Peak**

When you sit in the Main Lodge at Camp Emerson, you can’t help but feel awed as the sun rises over Tahquitz Peak. It is really magnificent. This hike takes you there in very short order.

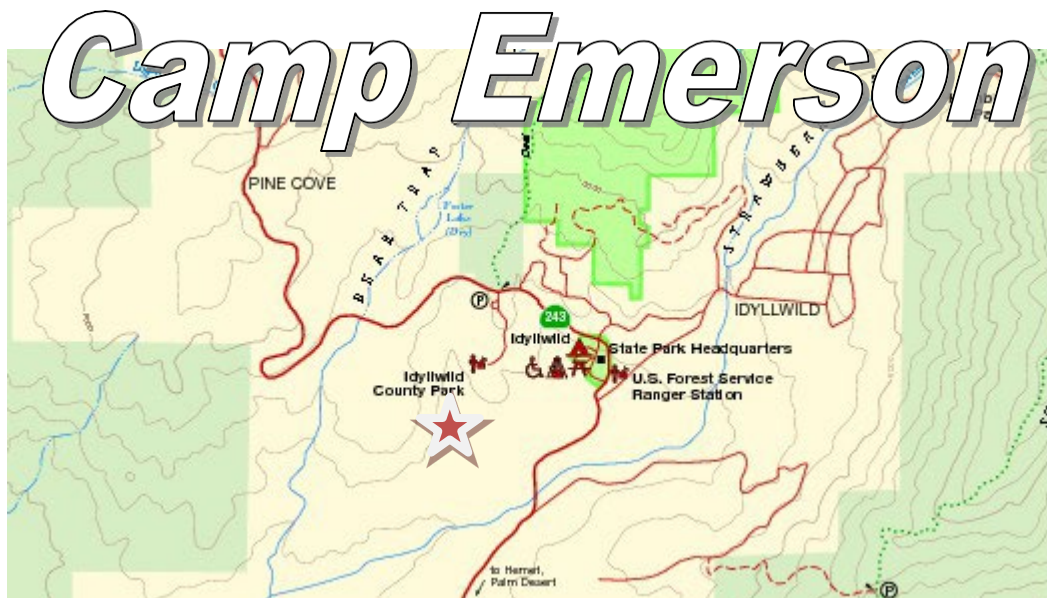
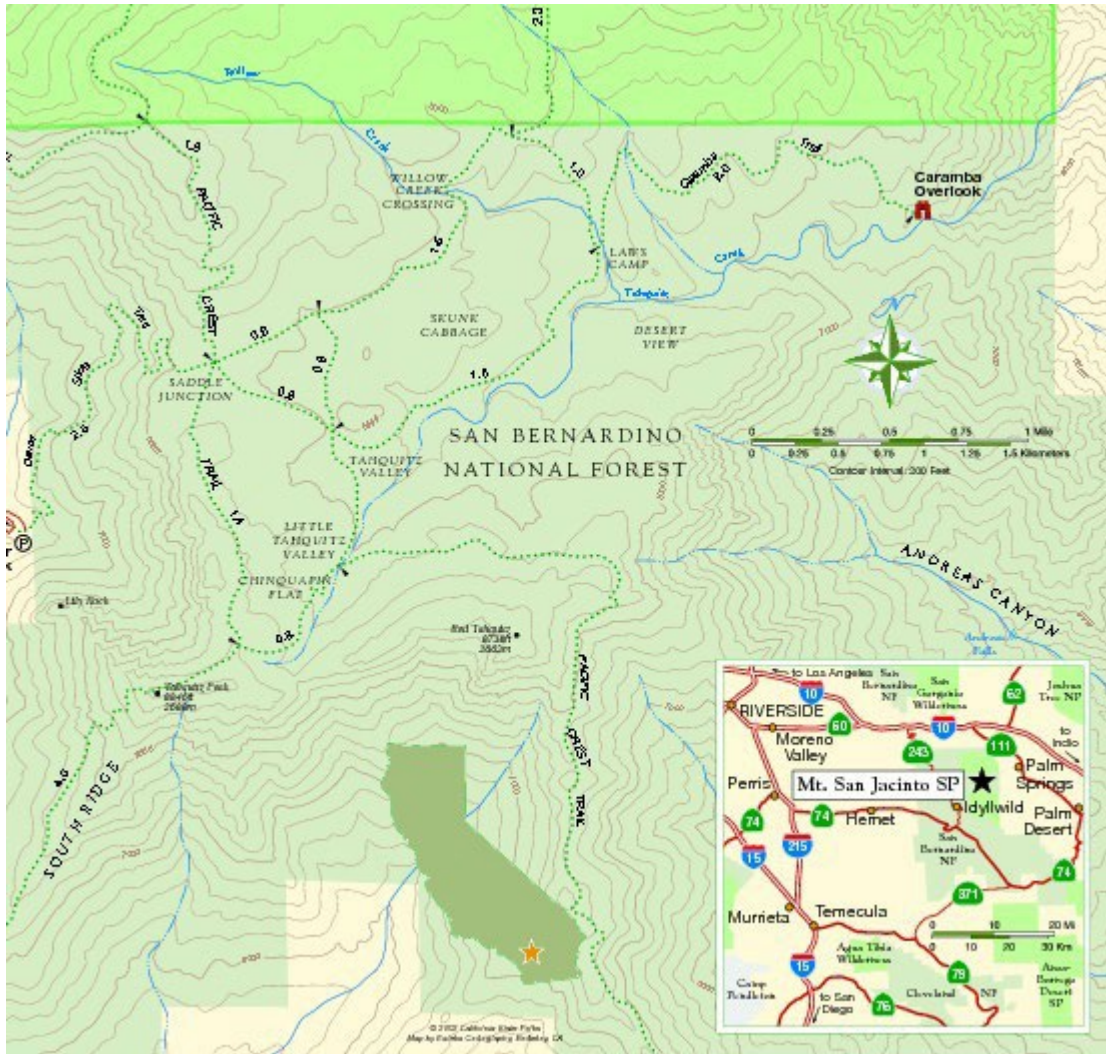
This trail is well maintained and lacks many steep areas, it is just a constant climb, but quite manageable.

Certainly, it is well worth the effort. It is 3.6 miles one-way with an elevation gain of 1,700 feet. The peak can also be accessed from the Humber Park Trailhead at 6,280 feet. It is 4.3 miles with an elevation gain of 1,850 feet from there.

Follow Saunders Meadow Road from Highway 243 South of Idyllwild, turning left on Pine Avenue, then right on Tahquitz View Drive, then right up South Ridge Road. Park near the locked gate. Hike past the gate, up the dirt road, to the South Ridge Trail. The trail starts at 6,400 feet.

You will climb and follow some switchbacks passing some good areas to rest and enjoy the view. Take your time to enjoy it. Eventually you will reach the summit and the lookout there.

Now that you have made it to the top, try to look down into Strawberry Valley and see if you can spot Camp Emerson!



## **San Jacinto Mountain Camping**

Below are the campsites managed by the Forest Service. Sites may be available on a first-come first-served basis, but it is recommended to reserve through <https://www.recreation.gov>.

### **Boulder Basin**

<b>Boulder Basin Campground</b>	
Latitude:	33.826301
Longitude:	-116.755728
Elevation:	7300

The campground offers multiple single-family campsites, available for tent and small RV / van camping. Each site is equipped with tables and campfire rings with grills. Vault toilets are also provided. The campground offers solitude and primitive camping in a scenic mountain landscape. The area provides ample recreational opportunities, including hiking, mountain biking, boulder climbing, fishing, and more.

The campground is located in a mixed conifer forest, which provides ample shade throughout the day.

There is access to several trailheads, including the Black Mountain Trail, a 3.6-mile, moderately strenuous hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding trail that travels through the forested slopes of Black Mountain. The trail provides excellent views of the Banning Pass and Mt. San Gorgonio. The trail provides access to the Pacific Crest Trail.

Water is not provided at the campground, but there is potable water available from a natural spring along Black Mountain road which is tested monthly.

\$10 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$5/night.

Location: From I-10E exit 8th St. in Banning California, turn right onto 8th St, then left on Lincoln St. then right on San Gorgonio Ave/Highway 243. From I-10W exit Hargrave St, turn left onto Hargrave St, then right on Lincoln St. then left on San Gorgonio Ave/Highway 243. Go South on 243 for approximately 17.5 miles to Black Mountain Rd (4S01 dirt road) travel approximately 6 miles to Boulder Basin Campground.

Note: Black Mountain Road (4S01) is an unpaved forest road not recommended for low clearance vehicles or trailers. **The road is in poor condition at this time. 4 Wheel Drive is recommended (April 2024).**

### **Fern Basin**

<b>Fern Basin Campground</b>	
Latitude:	33.789847
Longitude:	-116.737892
Elevation:	6300

Campground is located in a forested area. Road and spurs are paved. Parking spurs may not be level. Some first come, first serve sites may be available. All campsites have picnic tables and fire rings. Campfires are allowed within the fire rings provided if current fire restrictions allow. Firewood is not sold at the campground. Vault toilets are nearby. Water may not be available, call the Ranger Station to check on status.

Amenities include dumpster, picnic tables, water faucets and restrooms. Within 10 miles grocery store, laundry, lookout tower, movie theater, overlook ATV/OHV trails, rock climbing, hiking trails, horseback riding, mountain biking, nature center and picnic area.

**Potable water is not currently available at this campsite, so plan accordingly (April 2024).**

\$10 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$5/night.

Location: From Idyllwild, travel north on State Route 243 about 4 miles. Turn right at the campground sign and continue to Forest Service Road 4S02. Turn left and proceed less than a mile to an intersection. Continue straight on the Forest Service Road and turn left into the campground.



**Marion Mountain****Fern Basin  
Campground**

Latitude: 33.792513  
 Longitude: -116.732065  
 Elevation: 6400

There are 25 campsites, each has a picnic table and a campfire ring with a grill. Roads and campsite parking spurs are paved. Other amenities include water faucets, trash receptacles and restrooms with vault (pit) toilets. Firewood, restaurants, shops, gas stations and other facilities are available 7 miles south in the town of Idyllwild.

The popular Marion Mountain Trail is easily accessible from the campground; it leads to other portions of the local trail network including the strenuous 5.4 mile hike to San Jacinto Peak at 10,834 feet elevation.

Additional recreation opportunities include lookout towers, scenic overlooks, OHV roads, rock climbing, horseback riding, mountain biking, fishing, picnic areas and a nature center.

\$10 for a Single Site, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Extra vehicle fee is \$5/night.

Location: From I-10E exit 8th St in Banning California turn right onto 8th St, then left on Lincoln St, then right on San Geronio Ave/Highway 243. From I-10W exit Hargrave St, turn left onto Hargrave St, then right on Lincoln St. then left on San Geronio Ave/Highway 243. Go South on 243 for approximately 20 miles just past the Alandale Fire Station. Go left at Azalea Trails Rd (Stone Creek Campground Road) for 1.5 miles. Open late-May to mid-November.

**Pinyon Flat****Pinyon Flat  
Campground**

Latitude: 33.584877  
 Longitude: -116.456766  
 Elevation: 4000

Pinyon Flat is an 18-site first-come first-served campground located within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Surrounded by a tranquil desert landscape and nearby Santa Rosa Wilderness Area, this campground is great for those who like to hike, especially when the springtime flowers are in bloom. Pinyon Trail 5E03 is located on the western side of the campground.

The fee is \$8.00 per night and reservations are not required. Bathrooms and water are available.

**Ribbonwood Equestrian Camp****Ribbonwood  
Equestrian  
Campground**

Latitude: 33.576927  
 Longitude: -116.453765  
 Elevation: 4000

Located in a chaparral brush/high desert environment, Ribbonwood Equestrian Campground offers 8 spacious pull-through campsites with room for large vehicles and trailers. Each campsite has a picnic tables, fire ring, two horse corrals (10' X 10"), and potable water hookup.

Roads and spurs are gravel, and as such may not be level. Campground amenities include accessible flush toilets, hot showers, hitch rack and potable drinking water.

\$15 per site per night, limited to 8 people and including 1 vehicle. Campsites are only available by advanced reservation through <https://www.recreation.gov>; First come, first served sites are NOT available.

Location: From Palm Springs/Highway 111: take the Palms to Pines Highway (Hwy 74) South approximately 16 miles to the community of Pinyon. Take a left turn onto Transfer Station Road (Watch for signs/directions). Entrance is on right-hand side.

From Anza: take highway 371 East to the Palms to Pines Highway (Hwy 74). Turn Right onto Hwy 74, and drive approximately 10 miles North to the community of Pinyon. Turn Right onto Transfer Station Road(watch for Signs/Directions). Campground is on the right-hand side.

## **Santa Rosa Springs**

### **Santa Rosa Yellow Post Sites**

Latitude:	33.537650
Longitude:	-116.459054
Elevation:	7300-8000

Santa Rosa Mountain has 14 remote “yellow post” camping sites scattered across the high ridge offering isolated scenic campsites ideal for tent and car camping or a relaxing picnic far from the crowds. A fire ring and a picnic table is available at each site; however, these sites do NOT contain many amenities found at developed campgrounds. Water is available only at Santa Rosa Spring Yellow

Post Site 3 & 4, the only restroom is located near Yellow Post Sites 10 - 14. Trash containers are not provided, please pack it in - pack it out! Campfire permits are required for any type of fire and may not be allowed certain times of the year. Please check current conditions.

No reservations, first-come first-served; No fee, 8 persons maximum, 2 vehicles maximum.

Location: These Yellow Post Sites are reached via Forest Road 7S02 (Santa Rosa Truck Trail). 7S02 is an unpaved road which may not be suitable for all vehicles. Please also view the [Santa Rosa Truck Trail](#) page, or call the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center at (760) 862-9984 (Closed Tues/Wed), or the Idyllwild Ranger Station for more information on road conditions and fire restrictions (909) 382-2921. Road closed to vehicles during winter. **Road is damaged from storms, four wheel drive and high clearance is recommended (April 2024).**

## **Tool Box Springs**

### **Tool Box Springs Yellow Post Sites**

Latitude:	33.615999
Longitude:	-116.660989
Elevation:	5807

These 6 remote camping sites offer isolated scenic locations ideal for tent and car camping or a relaxing picnic far from the. Other than a pit for campfires, these sites do NOT contain the amenities found at developed campgrounds. There is no water, no restrooms nearby, and no trash containers. Please pack it in - pack it out! Campfire permits are required for any type of fire and may not be allowed certain times

of the year. Please check current conditions.

No reservations; first come-first served; No fee, 8 persons maximum, 2 vehicles maximum.

Location: These Yellow Post Sites are reached via dirt Forest Road 6S13 one mile south of Lake Hemet, also known as Little Thomas Mountain Road. Easier access is via Pyramid Peak Road off of Highway 74, near the community. Please call the Idyllwild Ranger Station for road conditions, current fire restriction, and other information (909) 382-2921.

(Sources: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/> and <https://www.recreation.gov/>)

## Desert Camping



The desert is beautiful, but be cautious of your surroundings (Photo: J. Long)



Joshua Trees are truly unique  
(Photo: M. Hare)

To most people, the desert is a barren, arid, place that is both stark and inhospitable. But we are Scouts, and we know better. The desert is a great escape in the colder months when the weather is actually very welcoming.

Adapted to a dry climate and built to withstand the killer summer months, the environment of the desert can be fascinating.

Edward Abbey described a particular quality that is found in the desert. He calls it “timelessness.” Perhaps that is the best way to view this special place where the wind sculpts the sand hills and where cliffs constantly change their colors, like a geologic chameleon. Here, too, the plant life takes on a surreal presence as they compete for what little moisture that is found in this rain- shadow country.

Whatever you may think about the desert you will have to agree that it is different. It is very special in many very special ways. Only those of us who have meandered down her numerous washes, were chilled by her winter winds, felt our faces stung by windswept sand, faced the white-hot glare of a summer afternoon, or have walked the lunar landscape under a full moon, however, can begin to suspect that God had special plans when he created this unique place.

The desert is a place where we can all visit to reflect, contemplate, and learn. The changes in the desert take a long time to occur, so that everything we look at seems to be frozen in a “stop frame” mode; it is as if we, the visitor, interrupted something being created. Everything is frozen in time, open for our detailed inspection, but we must take the time to look.

This Desert Section is by no means “the authority” on desert ramblings. It is, instead, a primer to help to introduce the novice to the beauty and magic of the desert. It is also written to provide a few suggestions to the traveler who may wish to get a taste of the various “deserts” in our area.



Beautiful flowering ocotillos  
(Photo: M. Hare)







Joshua Tree in twilight (Photo: J. Long)

In the following pages, you will travel into the Mojave or “high” desert where Joshua Trees spread their arms to the heavens and where winter nights can get particularly cold. You will see the transition as we move into the Colorado or “low” desert, actually an extension of the Sonoran or “Arizona” desert. Here cholla awaits, while mesquite and palo verde grow in the numerous washes. Farther North would bring you to the Great Basin Desert areas, but this guide will limit us to places closer to home.

This section is written to bring the desert to you. You must then bring yourself to the desert. Visit it. Stay a while. A good idea is to tour the different areas and limit your hiking and backpacking until a little later, after the desert grows on you. And it will!

This section is divided into the major parks in our area, Anza Borrego Desert State Park, Death Valley National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, and Mojave National Preserve. There is also an additional section which includes some areas you may want to see that are not within the boundaries of the parks above.



11 Thousand Vertical Feet, from  
Badwater to Telescope Peak  
(Photo: T. Schultze)



The OA hard at work replacing a split-rail  
fence in Joshua Tree.  
(Photo: M. Hare)

## Anza Borrego Desert State Park

### Anza Borrego Desert State Park

Visitor Center  
200 Palm Canyon Dr  
Borrego Springs, CA 92004  
Phone (760) 767-4205

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=638](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=638)



Anza Borrego Desert  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

Named after Juan Bautista De Anza, famed Spanish explorer who first crossed this country in 1774, and the “Borrego” or Bighorn sheep, the Anza Borrego Desert State Park straddles the Imperial County line in San Diego County. This is truly a land of many contrasts. It is also a land with a very colorful history.

Native Americans lived here for countless generations and the many petroglyphs and bedrock mortars remain as mute testimony to their existence.

It is here, in Coyote Canyon, where the “White Child Monument” can be found; commemorating the birth of the first non-Indian in California. This took place on Christmas Even in 1776, the child later growing to become an important public official in San Francisco.

The Mexican War brought Kearney’s “Army of the West” through these desert passes, followed by Philip St. George Cookie and the U.S. Mormon Battalion, who constructed the first wagon road. Some parts of this road can still be seen today, especially in Box Canyon.

Known as “The Sonoran Road,” the “Southern Emigrant

Trail,” or “Cooke’s Road,” this trail was later used by the Butterfield Overland Stages and was a major corridor into California in the time of the Gold Rush. Today San Diego County Highway S-2 follows much of the original road bed of this historic trail.

Here is also found the only year-round free flowing stream in San Diego County. Coyote Creek has been an important part of local history and was the site of one of the few violent encounters between Native American and non-Indian.

It is here, too, where legends of lost mines abound and stories originated by Pegleg Smith are still told around sparkling campfires.

And there are ghosts. A small cemetery at Vallecito is reputed to be haunted) at least the sign at the visitor’s center says so) and Ghost Mountain contains the remains of Yaquitepec, home of itinerant poet Marshal South who lived the primitive’s life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Here, in the Ana Borrego, you can follow the trails of the pioneers; contemplating what it may have really been like to cross this land over 100 years ago. But be careful, you may be rudely awakened from your daydream by the sound and vibration of a 500-pound bomb exploding at the nearby Carrizo Bombing range, followed by the roar of a fighter-bomber’s jet engines as it zooms overhead “on the deck” at treetop level.

Here too, you will find “Foot and Walker Pass,” where a scar has been eroded into the hillside by the passage of uncountable wagon wheels. The name, incidentally, was given to this steep slope because in the late 1800’s most of the heavily loaded stagecoaches could not make it over the pass under the power of the team only. Therefore, to reduce the weight, and also sometimes to assist by pushing and pulling, the passengers were invited out of the coach so that they could get out on “Foot and Walk’er.”





## **Blair Valley**

Blair Valley attracted the Indians of old and it attracts hikers and campers today, with good reason.

It is a great area for primitive camping, the roads in Blair Valley are usually accessible by two-wheel drive vehicles. There are vault toilets but no water is available.

Indian morteros and pictographs can be visited, and so can remnants of more recent history such as Foot and Walker Pass, where stage coach passengers had to get out and walk over the rocks, and the site of the former home of the poet Marshall Scott and his family on Ghost Mountain.

Blair Valley's altitude contributes to its attractiveness. You are at about 2,400 feet when you turn off County Road S-2. Five miles to the Southeast, at the trailhead for the one-mile walk to the pictographs, the elevation is a mere 3,200 feet.

The California Juniper thrives in this area, as do the Desert Agave and the Mohave Yucca. Up above, in the Vallecito Mountains, the plant community changes from desert to woodland.

## **De Anza Trail Historic Hike**

Juan Batista De Anza left Tubac, Mexico with a small army to explore and discover an overland route to the missions of California. This took place in 1774. Soon after, in 1776, he again led a party overland. This group, however, consisted of men, women, children, and cattle; as well as soldiers. The journey pretty much followed the route taken in 1774.

One of the most interesting places along the trek North can be found in Coyote Canyon. This where the De Anza Trail Historic Hike takes place.

This is an especially significant hike as it was mapped and marked as an Eagle Scout Service Project, by a Riverside Scout.

The hike guide, titled De Anza Trail is available. It explains the details of the hike, as well as much of the history. The trail features several interesting places.

The Turkey Track is the name given to the confluence of three canyons, Nance, Horse, and Tule. From above it resembles a huge turkey footprint. As you proceed downhill from the Track (you could also begin the hike from the other direction, but why would you want to hike uphill?) you will enter a sheltered valley that is alive with birds. This entire area, incidentally, is closed during the summer months as it is a protected breeding habitat for bighorn sheep. Soon the foliage grows denser as you arrive at "Upper Willows" and the "White Child Monument." This is the location where the first non-Indian was born in California. This took place, at this site, on Christmas Eve in 1776. This makes a pleasant rest stop.

Following the trail you will come, in a few miles, to "Middle Willows." Here Coyote Creek lives up to its name. This is a real nice lunch stop, or you may consider making it your overnight location if you want to enjoy a more relaxed hike.

From here the hike gets wet, as the trail is in the stream bottom. Soon the valley begins to open and you will pass "Monkey Hill," then on to "Lower Willows." A short side trip to "Santa Catarina Springs" is a pleasant diversion. The hike continues downstream to "El Vado" (the crossing) it is here where it is believed that Juan Batista De Anza made the actual crossing.

The entire trail constitutes about 25 miles and should be rated as a moderate hike.

The hike can be especially pretty from late February through early April, but don't forget your insect repellent, you just might need it!

## **U.S. Mormon Battalion Trail Historic Hike**

In 1846, United States President Jefferson was facing a serious problem. Relations between the U.S. and Mexico were deteriorating and war appeared imminent. Jefferson has no military sources ready to cross the frontier into California and had to look for options.

During this time, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints were beginning their Westward trek to locate a land where they would not be persecuted for their religious beliefs.

An agreement was reached between Brigham Young, leader of the Church, and Jefferson. A Battalion would be formed from the able-bodied men of the Mormon Church. They would be trained, armed, and equipped by the Army. They would march, on foot, the 2,000 miles to California. At the end of this one-year enlistment the men would be discharged and allowed to return to their families.

What resulted was the longest march, by volunteers, in the history of American warfare. These citizen-soldiers crossed the plains and deserts, suffered numerous hardships, and completed the arduous task in a commendable fashion. They were responsible for the digging of many wells, which provided for later travelers. They also completed the first wagon road into Southern California that was later used by the Butterfield stages.

The hike, or at least one variation of it, begins in the parking area across San Diego County Road S-2 at mile marker 26. You enter the wash and begin your journey which soon leads you to historic Box Canyon. Here is where the Volunteers had to actually cut away the walls of stone to widen the canyon so that the wagons could pass. The first of the wagons had to be unloaded and disassembled, but the last ones were able to pass intact. This is a monument to their strength and courage.

Once through Box Canyon the trail crosses into Blair Valley, and on to Foot & Walker Pass. Here, on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1847, the Mormon Battalion crossed Earthquake Valley, through Sentenac Cienega, and into the ancient Indian Village of San Felipe. The next day found them at Warner's Ranch where they were able to partake in their first "Full Meal" since leaving Yuma. This consisted of two pounds of beef per person. From here they proceeded, after a short rest, to Temecula where they were told that the War was over and that instead of continuing on to Los Angeles, they were to change direction and go to San Diego, where they acted as an occupying force.

This is a fantastic hike which can open the history books to many Scouts. The hike itself is well described in the Hike Guide issued by the San Diego-Imperial County Council, titled: "U.S. Mormon Battalion Trail Historic Hike." The guide tells about the history and gives all the hike particulars.

One of the award requirements is that you must visit a memorial or museum dedicated to the Mormon volunteers. A very good one is the "U.S. Mormon Battalion Museum" located in Old Town San Diego. The free exhibit tells about the ordeal and many interesting dioramas and displays.

The hike is moderately strenuous and, of course, should not be attempted during the hotter times of year. Late winter and early spring will mean crisp nights, with pleasant days...usually!



### **Vallecito Stage Station County Park**

Vallecito is the site of a historic stage stop. Used by the Army, then later by the Butterfield Overland Stage, the park boasts a reconstructed original stage station. This can be visited during daylight hours, or by special arrangements with the campground host. Signs in the station tell about some of the local “ghosts,” including the “lady in white” who is buried in the small cemetery located atop the knoll near the station.

This is a very good place to set up “base camp” that will allow you to explore such nearby attractions as “Agua Caliente Hot Springs Park,” “Yaquitepec” on top of Ghost Mountain, the petroglyphs in Little Blair Valley, or Box Canyon. You may also wish to visit Vallecito as a staging area to begin the “U.S. Mormon Battalion Historic Hike.”

There are 44 primitive campsites at Vallecito with tables, fire rings, and barbecue stoves, as well as eight equestrian campsites with corrals. Water is available at scattered locations throughout the campground.

Fees for single sites are \$29/night, limited to 8 people. Group site is \$105/night, up to 25 people. First vehicle is included in reservation fee, and extra vehicle fee is \$4/night. The park offers adequate parking sites, water, and flush toilets.

Reservations can be made over the phone through (858) 565-3600 or (877) 565-3600, or online at <https://reservations.sd parks.org/reservation/camping/>





## **Death Valley National Park**

### **Death Valley National Park**

Furnace Creek Visitor Center

P.O. Box 579

Death Valley, CA 92328

Phone (760) 786-3200

<https://www.nps.gov/deva/>

Located in an area whose local attractions carry names like: Funeral Mountains, Furnace Creek, Coffin Peak, Starvation Canyon, and Hell's Gate, Death Valley is one of the most beautiful and fascinating places on earth.

In fact, not a valley at all, this area was formed when the ground between the two mountain ranges subsided, leaving it wedged between towering mountains above, mountains that deny Death Valley

much needed rainfall.

Originally named, according to popular folklore, by one of the members of the Jayhawker party who tried to find a shortcut to the goldfields by crossing this unmapped land, the valley is home to quite a few varieties of mammals, bird, reptile, and insects. It also boasts a visitor rate that has to be described as phenomenal.

One of the best ways to get acquainted with Death Valley, and many other desert areas for that matter, is to plan an auto tour. By selecting the areas that you find interesting, you can easily plan a route by using standard maps that will allow you to visit the sites. A phone call or two to the local Rangers can help you get "filled in" on local weather and road conditions, campsite and water availability, and other important bits of information.

Death Valley is best visited in the late fall, early winter, or spring months. March and April can, during the wet years, offer spectacular floral displays, which the winter months mean crowded camps and hard to find campsites.

A tour, such as the one described, will allow you to "meet" Death Valley. This is just an introduction. After your first visit, you will be in a better position to decide what things about Death Valley you like that would merit additional trips and exploration.

Death Valley is, to the desert, what Yosemite is to the mountains. It, too, exemplifying the majesty, the beauty, the scope, the glory, and the preciousness of our natural resources. Until you have experienced Death Valley your desert wanderings will remain incomplete.



Badwater Basin - Death Valley (Photo: M. Hare)

## **Central Death Valley Attractions**

### **Furnace Creek Inn**

Did you know that Death Valley is home to one of the few 4-star resorts in California? The Furnace Creek Inn is definitely an impressive place to visit but think twice about staying there. Nightly rates can be upwards of \$600 per night!



A moment captured in time  
(Photo: J. Long)

### **Sand Dunes**

Off Highway 190, and easily viewed from miles away, are the famous sand dunes of Death Valley. These are the classic dunes that people think deserts are, though most people know they are quite rare.

Look closely, and you might see the tracks of a beetle, or see one slowly but surely venturing over the dunes. Yes, this land with its never-ending changing landscape supports life.

This is a great place for some interpretive photography, particularly at sunrise or sunset. Be prepared to hike though, finding a patch of undisturbed sand will take you possibly a mile out into the dunes.

Be sure to use the buddy system. It is very easy to get disoriented and lost at the sand dunes.

### **Stovepipe Wells**

Along with Furnace Creek, this is one of the few areas where you can eat, and get gas. The famous sand dunes are nearby.

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center is a must-visit location for you to get the information you need to decide where to go and what to do in Death Valley. It has outstanding displays,

guidebooks, maps, slides, and videos for sale that cover virtually everything that lives, walks on, flies over, swims in, or can be found in Death Valley.

There are also two major campgrounds within a short distance, which is a great place to set up your home base for the trip.



Scouts compete to see who can slide the farthest (Photo: M. Hare)

## **Northern Death Valley Attractions**

### **The Racetrack**

The Racetrack valley is a playa where rocks seem to move by themselves leaving trails that last for years. It is 26 miles down a rough dirt road, so don't try this with a car! If you want to catch the sunrise, plan to leave very early in the morning.

There are two stops once you come to the playa. The first is near a large outcropping at the lake's North edge. This is called the "Grandstand". No Climbing

Continue South for about a mile and you will come to the

playa's Southern edge. This is where the moving rocks can be found. There is a parking area. From there, walk out onto the lake (do not walk on the lake if wet or moist, your footprints will be there for years!) for about ½ half and you will come to the rocks. They are everywhere and no two rocks make the same tracks. It is pretty easy to find large rocks with deep tracks along the lake. The tracks themselves can make some interesting patterns as well.



Nature works in mysterious ways  
(Photo: T. Schultze)



A look into the Ubehebe caldera  
(Photo: M. Hare)

### **Ubehebe Crater and Little Hebe**

These two extinct volcanic craters are easy to see from a trail just off the road at the North end of the park. The crater and caldera of Ubehebe are quite spectacular.

The Little Hebe crater is located up the trail past Ubehebe. Imagine what this area must have been like during an eruption. Look all around you and you will see the volcanic deposits that are the evidence of a more violent past.

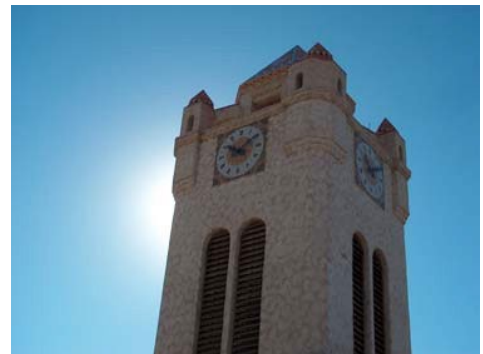
Be careful on the side of the crater though, because it is a falling hazard.

### **Scotty's Castle**

Strangely out of place, this was the magnificent home of Death Valley Scotty, a desert character, showman, legend, and part-time con artist. Yes, there is a castle in Death Valley.

Walter Scott, as his formal name was, convinced Chicago millionaire Albert Johnson to invest in a fraudulent gold mine in the Death Valley Area. Despite this, they became friends and companions. Death Valley Scotty was a welcome respite for Johnson, who nearly went bankrupt in the Great Depression. You can view evidence of this from the empty pool at the front of the castle that was never finished!

Tours of the Castle are given daily. There is a small visitor center and a ticket office to attend one of the tours. Park rangers dress in 1930s clothing. Even if you don't do the tour, you can wander around the castle's outskirts, look at old timber lines including abandoned vehicles from the Depression, and hike up to Scott's grave.



The clock tower at Scotty's Castle  
(Photo: B. Denbo)



## **Southern Death Valley Attractions**



Mountain coloring of Artist's Palette  
(Photo: J. Long)

### **Artist's Drive**

Located off Badwater Road, Artist's Drive is named after the palette of colors found in the hills alongside this one-way, narrow, paved road. Different ore deposits are responsible for the array of coloring in the hillside.

There are several areas for you to pull off and look at the hillside and Death Valley as well. The main pull-off where the colors are at their most vibrant is quite amazing.

### **Badwater**

Badwater is the lowest point in the United States. There is a salt spring here, and it is easy to surmise just where the name came from.

Here you can look up to a sheet of plywood on a hillside over 200 feet above you that has been labeled for your convenience, "Sea Level." At this spot you can see the lowest point in the United States; an interesting-smelling pool of stagnant water amid the salt flats, and, beyond Telescope Peak which is the tallest peak within the park's boundaries, you can see snow-covered Mt. Whitney the tallest peak in the lower 48 states. This is a short trip that will always be remembered.

The road South from Badwater eventually will lead you to Highway 127 that ends at Interstate 15 in the town of Baker.



The salt flat forms unique patterns  
(Photo: M. Hare)

### **Devil's Golf Course**

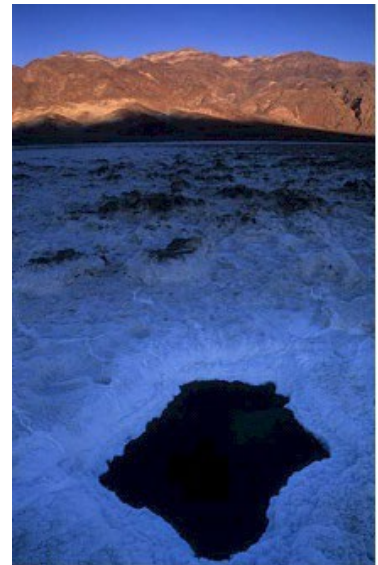
If you view Death Valley from above, you'll find the white salt flat surrounds a much darker, mysterious region. This is the Devil's Golf Course. Here, the salt crystals form hard structures that can be very difficult to hike through.

Sometimes, you will come across new crystals forming like a cup. Leave those alone and be careful not to touch them. This is nature at work and is best left undisturbed.

Hiking around, you will find some pools. These are the "holes" in the golf course. Be careful strolling through the area though. It is very easy to turn an ankle and hurt yourself. The tough walking is well worth the effort.

### **Natural Bridge**

Do you know the difference between an arch and a natural bridge? A natural bridge is actually rarer. It is an arch with a natural water flow inside of it. Death Valley has one, off Badwater Road. A short drive which is mostly dirt and occasionally asphalt takes you to the wash where the bridge exists. Simply walk up the wash and you'll come to



One of the "holes" at sunrise  
(Photo: J. Long)

the point of the bridge. The hike is about 1 mile and is moderate, though the sand will slow you down.

## **Eastern Death Valley Attractions**



Sunrise view of Death Valley and Telescope Peak from Dante's View  
(Photo: T. Schultze)

### **Dante's View**

Directly above Badwater at an elevation over 5,000 feet sits Dante's View. The road to the View is off Highway 190. It is 12 miles and steep, and particularly windy at the end. If you are visiting in the winter, bring a jacket! From here, the view is absolutely amazing. Across from you in the Panamint Range is Telescope Peak. Below you, you can see the entire Death Valley. The borders of the salt flat and the Devil's Golf Course are easily identifiable. Sunrise in particular is phenomenal at this location.

### **Keane Wonder Mine**

Take the Beatty cutoff from Highway 190 and visit the Keane Wonder Mine on the Eastern approach to the valley. Here you can still see the many tram trestles which carried the steel cables for the ore cars. The winding trail to the mine offers spectacular views of the valley and the multi-colored hills surrounding it.

### **Zabriskie Point**

This is an oft-photographed point that is just South of the Furnace Creek Inn on Highway 190. If you are visiting from the park from Baker, you will see the sign coming into the park. This is a must-see location at sunrise and sunset.



Zabriskie Point at sunrise  
(Photo: J. Long)

## **Western Death Valley Attractions**

One easy to follow route brings you into Death Valley via US

395 and Hwy 178 through Ridgecrest and Trona. The Trona-Wildrose Road leads you right into Wildrose Canyon where you can locate Wildrose, Thorndike, and Mahogany Flats Campgrounds. Wildrose Canyon is where you will find the legendary Charcoal Kilns.

### **Aguereberry Point**

"Shorty" Harris and "Pete" Aguerberry were prospectors and living legends in Death Valley. Together they stumbled onto good prospects and named the site Harrisburg. Today you can take a self-guided tour through the stabilized mine. The tunnel has descriptive plates explaining some of the mine operations. A couple of old mine shacks, an abandoned Buick, rusty cans, mine tailings, and assorted mining equipment is all that remains of this one booming mining camp.

Just up the road from Harrisburg is Aguerberry Point. The view is worth the extra few miles. Near Harrisburg is the ghost town of Skidoo. If you still need to see more mine camps, this one is handy.

The Wildrose Road continues on and intersects with Route 190 where you can continue on to Stovepipe Wells by turning right.

## **Charcoal Kilns**



A view of the Death Valley charcoal kilns  
(Photo: J. Long)

Used to produce charcoal needed for the mines across the valley in the Argus Range, these “Ten Sentinels” look totally out of place. Step inside one of these stone structures and walk around, it is awesome!

The interior is shaped in the form of a parabola, which was designed to concentrate the heat during the firing of the wood to make charcoal, however, the shape also allows for interesting sound transmission, with “dead” spots at one place and amplified sound a few steps away. Even today, you can still easily detect the smell of creosote left from the numerous fires.

## **Mahogany Flat**

Mahogany Flat, at 8,400+ elevation is an often-used trailhead for a really great day hike to the tallest peak in the area, Telescope Peak. This hike should only be considered when the shows have melted from the 11,000+ summit.

## **Telescope Peak**

You may hear about Death Valley’s impressively low elevation, but did you know the park also has a peak over 11,000 feet? The trailhead can be accessed from the Mahogany Flat Campground and is a moderate to strenuous hike to the top.

## **Darwin Falls**

Darwin Falls is a waterfall located on the western edge of Death Valley National Park near the settlement of Panamint Springs, California. Although there exists a similarly named Darwin Falls Wilderness adjacent to the falls, the falls themselves are located in and administered by Death Valley National Park and the National Park Service. There are several falls, but they are mainly divided into the upper and lower with a small grotto in between. At a combined 80 feet (24 m), it is the highest waterfall in the park. The canyon is walled by dramatic plutonic rock.

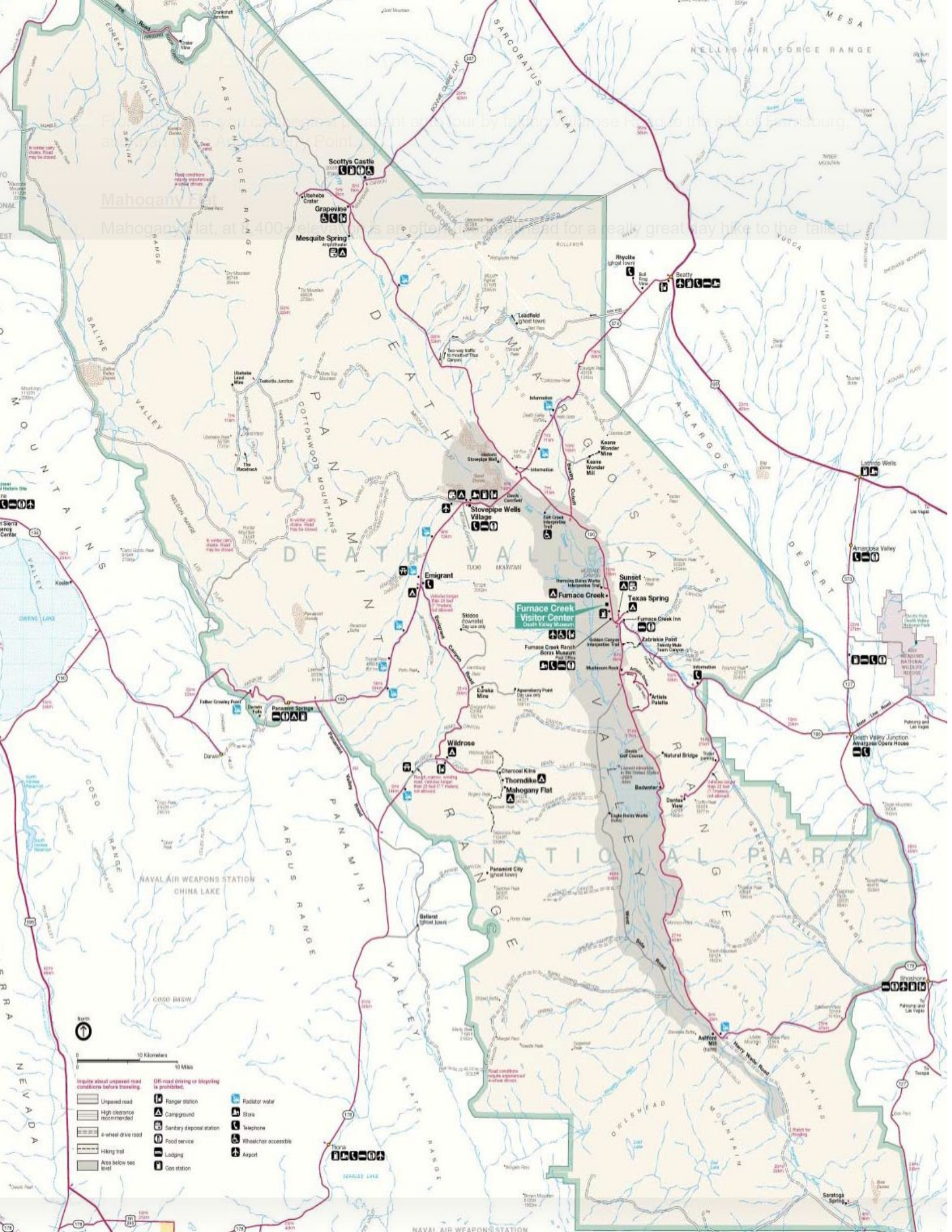


On the trail to the falls  
(Photo: M. Hare)



Darwin Falls (Photo: M. Hare)







## Mojave National Preserve

### Mojave National Preserve

Kelso Depot Visitor Center  
90942 Kelso Cima Rd  
Kelso, CA 92309  
Phone (760) 252-6108

Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center  
2 Black Canyon Rd  
Essex, CA 92332  
Phone (760) 252-6104

<https://www.nps.gov/moja/index.htm>

Bordered roughly by Interstate 40 to the South, Interstate 15 to the West, the Nevada State Line, the Mojave National Preserve covers a huge tract of lands that offers much to the desert visitor.

Managed by the National Park Service (a Preserve is essentially a National Park, but limited hunting is allowed), this large expanse contains volcanic domes, lava flows and tubes, sand dunes, dry lakes, petroglyph sites, abandoned army camps, historic roads, underground caverns, mine sites, ghost towns, and several state-operated campsites.

This is a place of solitude. Here you may watch a hawk, or an eagle soar. Here you can listen to the plaintive cries of coyotes, trying to shut out the moon's light with their

howls. Here you may find a solitary spring, providing host to myriad animal forms.

A great way to learn about the Mojave National Preserve is to visit the Kelso Visitor Center and get some of their free pamphlets, or purchase some of their excellent maps. These people are very helpful, and if you tell them that you are involved with Scouts they will even volunteer extra information.

One, easy to follow, route begins at Kelso Sand Dunes. Here you can climb some of the tallest sand dunes in California. The view from the top is worth the struggle to get there. These are known as "singing" dunes. The movement of the sand deep within the dunes makes sounds that, at time, are quite audible. After a visit here, maybe to have lunch, you can continue on to other nearby attractions.

There is the Kelso Depot, now the Preserve Visitor Center, located just a few miles up Kelbaker Road. This old railroad station can be a very interesting stop for railroad buffs.

The Cima Dome is a truly unusual site as it is the most symmetrical geological formation in the United States. This intrusion is visible over a great distance with a particularly good view from Mid-Hills Campground.

Mid-Hills, which charges a fee, is a spacious campground situated at 5,000 feet elevation. Here the nights can be chilly in the winter, but very comfortable for the rest of the year. Since

water is available, along with fire rings, tables, and pit toilets; this is a very good campsite. Also, here you will find a trail that runs about 9 miles to another popular campground, Hole-In-The Wall.

And from the Desert Interpretative Center at Hole-In-The Wall, it is just a short drive to the underground world of Mitchell Caverns. This campground is quite limited in size. You can still benefit from the fascinating Ranger-guided tours. If time still remains, you can take a neat side-trip to Amboy Crater where you can hike and climb up into a real volcano.

Mojave National Preserve...you have to see it to believe it!



There are over 150 cinder cones in Mojave National Preserve  
(Photo: T. Schultze)

## **Camp Rock Springs**

If the boys in your unit are interested in military history, especially in regards to the time period involving the Civil War, then a trip to Camp Rock Springs might be in order.

Located just South of Cedar Canyon, about 5 miles East of the intersection with Black Canyon Road (near Mid-Hills Campground), you will find, after a little searching, all that remains of this old desert military outpost.

As you proceed Eastward from Black Canyon Road, an old windmill will come into view on the right. This was originally called “Banning’s Well” after Phineas Banning who operated a freight line. Banning was, at the time, one of the wealthiest men in Southern California, responsible for many of the installations at the port of Wilmington, where the military had their stores. The name was later changed to “Government Holes” after the wells that the Army dug there to increase water flow.

On a low knoll, to the right, you will see a structure, resembling a blockhouse, made of rock. This was the headquarters, for many years, of a local cattle company. A dirt road leads to the house, take it and park in the area outside the fence.

This is a private residence, and this is private property. However, you can walk past the gate and look around the property. A sign on the door warns trespassers that the caretaker lives nearby and watches the house with binoculars. Believe it! South of the house you will find the remains of an old mine with some of the machinery and timbers, as well as tailings, scattered about.

Back at the gate, you will see a corral fence leading downhill. Follow the road in front of the fence to lead you to the streambed. Depending on the time of year, substantial water flows. Walk downstream. You can sometimes find Indian “bird point” arrowheads in the sand.

On the walls of the cliffs around you, petroglyphs can be found, as well as some graffiti painted there by Civil War era soldiers.

The streambed changes from the meandering horizontal toward the more inclined vertical in a very short distance, requiring in-stream boulder hopping (a lot of fun); or you may elect to follow the patch around the steep places, on the South side of the stream. One February we were rewarded by being able to sit “inside” a small waterfall here, letting the spray thoroughly drench us!

Where the canyon mouth opens you will find what remains of Camp Rock Springs. A plaque on a solitary boulder tells about the camp. The rock walls, obviously man-made, were part of the original corral, with the “mineshfts” being used as commissary storage areas.

Duty at Camp Rock Springs was so bad in the 1860s that most soldiers assigned there merely deserted! Little water, little food, poor rations, no feed for the horses (and at one time no horses at all), miles from nowhere, cold winter nights, unbearably hot days, and constant threat of hostile Indian attack made Camp Rock Springs one of the least desirable duty assignments.

Today a visit lets you walk quietly through the dust of the past. Perhaps, like the last time I was there, you may turn around and find yourself staring at a 1,000-pound hunk of living range cattle answering to the name of Mr. Bull!

Camp Rock Springs is certainly not for everyone, but if you are a history buff or just enjoy solitude, then you may want to add it to you list of places to go.



## Hole-In-The-Wall



Rings Look Trail

(Photo: D. Lesyna)



Trapped volcanic gas formed the “holes” in the rock formations

(Photo: D. Lesyna)

This is a “must see!” Hole-in-the-Wall is located in a volcanic area that invites boulder scrambling. Near the West end of the campground, you will find a marked trail leading you to “The Hole.” Farther West of “The Hole” is a trail leading down into the mud-hills that were formed from volcanic ash. The colorful walls invite you to explore further. The trail winds down and around, with passages getting narrower and walls getting higher. Iron rings have been installed by someone to help you climb down some of the steeper spots. In a little while you will end the trip through Banshee Canyon (the name of the passage) and enter colorful Wildhorse Canyon with Wildhorse Mesa in plain view.

It is hard to tell why the mesa was so named as wild horses never set foot on its top. You can return to

Hole-in-the-Wall by returning through Banshee Canyon, or you can turn this into a loop hike by traveling East (left) along the hills to Black Canyon Road. A short walk North (left) will return you to the campground. If you decide to follow this route be sure to stop and turn around after you leave the mouth of Banshee Canyon.

Because of the nature of the rocks the entire cliff face, which extends for quite some distance, appears unbroken. You cannot see the opening that leads to Banshee Canyon. This, therefore, becomes a Hole-in-the-Wall. Legend tells us it was used by horse thieves in the 1800s. In any case it is a fabulous place to visit.

Hole-in-the-Wall also has a Desert Interpretative Center where Rangers will explain the collections and offer much interesting information about the local desert area. Make it a point to stop here to increase your knowledge and awareness of this most interesting desert area.

Hole-in-the-Wall is located at a lower elevation than Mid-Hills and is better sheltered from the strong winds that often blow here. A trail links both camps and it would seem to be easier to follow the trail from Mid-Hills downhill than the other way around.

This campground has tables, a picnic area, fire-rings, pit toilets, and limited water. It would be a good idea to bring water with you, if possible, and not rely on what may be a questionable supply. And bring firewood, especially for the colder winter evenings.

The campsites in the Mojave National Preserve are on a first-come/first-served basis. Although you may find a sufficient number of sites available, they may not be situated next to each other so plan to arrive early or have a back-up plan.

Campground fee is \$12 per site per night, payable by self-registration with cash or check at the entrance kiosk.

The area around Hole-in-the-Wall can be particularly stunning when the spring wildflowers bloom. Then carpets of pink, yellow, orange, purple, and white blooms flow between the mesas and cliffs. This camp is also centrally located and can be used as a “base camp” where short trips can be taken to explore the local areas.

## Kelso Sand Dunes



At the foot of the sand dunes  
(Photo: T. Schultze)

The Kelso Sand Dunes are found just South of the Kelso Depot and Visitor Center. There is a marked dirt road heading West from Kelbaker Road. About 2.5 miles down the road, you will find a parking area to the right. The Dunes are a short talk North from the parking area. Plan between one and one and a half hour if you want to do a little exploring and climb to the top of the dunes. The view of Kelso, the Cima Dome, and the surrounding mountains is excellent.

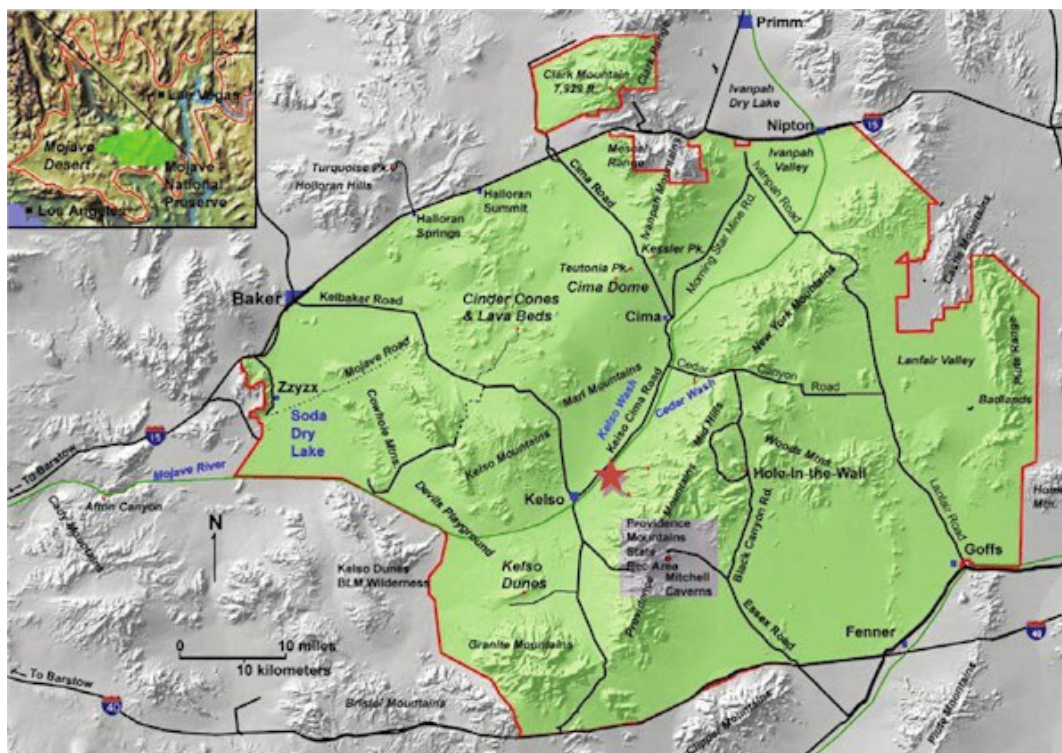
## Kelso Station



Kelso Station  
(Photo: T. Schultze)

Nearly forgotten as a small railroad stop along the Union Pacific, Kelso Station was recently renovated and turned into a museum and Visitor Center for Mojave National Preserve.

Plan to visit it. Here you will find two floors of excellent exhibits which include the telegraph used to send messages down the rail line, the beds used by the engineers which include Union Pacific-branded blankets, and a host of other interesting historical items. There is a small book store as well.





## **Joshua Tree National Park**

### **Joshua Tree National Park**

Joshua Tree Visitor Center  
6554 Park Boulevard  
Joshua Tree, CA 92256  
Phone (760) 366-1855

Joshua Tree National Park Visitor Center  
6533 Freedom Way  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277  
Phone 760-367-5500

Black Rock Nature Center  
9800 Black Rock Canyon Rd  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284  
Phone (760) 367-3001

<https://www.nps.gov/jotr/index.htm>



Scout rappels down a rock face.  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)



Nothing quite matches the beauty of Joshua  
Trees (Photo: D. Lesyna)

Created in 1994 as part of the California Desert Protection Act, Joshua Tree National Park covers 560,000 acres within Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

This is the wide-open spaces at its best! In the Northern part of the park you will find a rock climber's paradise. Quartz monzonite boulders and monoliths abound and people come from around the world to practice their skills on these particularly challenging climbs.

Here is, also, the land of the Joshua Tree. Actually, a member of the lily family, this "tree trunk with daggers for leaves" were named by Mormon pioneers who thought that, in the moonlight, the tree looked like the prophet Joshua, with his arms extended to heaven.

The Northern parts of the park are situated in the Mojave, or "high" desert where it is not unusual to find snow during the winter months. Here, besides Joshua Trees, you will find Mojave Yuccas, Nolina, and Creosote.

Firearms are not permitted in the park and therefore the wildlife has not developed a fear of hunters or humans. Rabbits can often be found wandering around the campgrounds, and quail sometimes seem to get underfoot. Coyotes are often seen, especially near twilight, as they cross roads near the many desert washes.

As you travel South you reach the transition zone between the Mojave and Colorado, or "low" desert. This is where the Joshua Trees thin out and mesquite and, especially, cholla rule. The "Cactus Garden" is home to a particularly dense crop.

In the park you will find intriguing geologic formations, including several natural arches. Malapai Hill is a unique volcanic formation that begs you to run to the top. At Cottonwood, you can find a plush oasis with palm trees and cottonwoods thriving. If you are real lucky you might even spy some desert bighorn sheep.

Short hikes abound throughout the park. It is really an explorer's paradise with several well-marked trails, and many more not so well-marked.

Old mine roads lead to abandoned prospects, adits, and shafts. DO NOT ENTER these long- abandoned mines. Shafts can be particularly dangerous as they may be undercut. Merely standing near the edge could cause the lip to cave in bring you, and tons of earth, tumbling down.

Some mines, however, such as the Lost Horse, can be viewed in reasonable safety. These mines are very well preserved, due to the fact that the air is dry and that you can't remove artifacts from park lands.

Joshua Tree offers several group campgrounds which can be reserved. Some family sites can be reserved also. Most sites, thought, are on a first-come/first-served basis. Those that do not offer water (most of them) do not have a fee.



The rangers, especially the backcountry rangers, can be a great resource in assisting in your planning. Many areas exist that have particular qualities that may be attractive to certain members of your group. If you tell the rangers what you are looking for, they will certainly try to give you some good suggestions.

The Oasis Visitor Center, which features a well-designed nature trail, has a wonderful selection of books, guides, and maps to help you to learn more about the plants, animals, rocks, and history of the monument. This would be a great place to visit before your first outing to the park.

Joshua Tree National Park has its special charm. Give it a change to work its magic on you!

### **Barker Dam**



Reflections from the lake at Barker Dam  
(Photo: T. Schultze)

There is a standing lake at Joshua Tree, and it is quite surprising and impressive. The water is actually from a man-made lake, and Barker Dam is the source. The turnoff is near Hidden Valley Campground. A short road takes you to a large parking area. This is a loop trail of only about 1 mile on mostly flat terrain.

Even when the lake gets low, it is still a great visit. The reflections from the rocks above are begging to be photographed. On good days, you can see a great meeting of the Park's wildlife. Ducks frolic on the lake and birds can be seen everywhere. The loop takes you through some petroglyphs that were vandalized, which is a great lesson on damaging the ancient wonders we find.

### **Boy Scout Trail**

Your troop can't drive past this trailhead without wanting to hike it! The Boy Scout Trail is a 7.5 mile (one way) leads from Indian Cove into the main part of the park on Park Boulevard. If you are camping at Indian Cove, you can make this a round-trip and head back for the evening from a 15 mile trip. Or, if you are going to visit other areas of Joshua Tree, you will need a waiting vehicle on the other side to pick you up. This is easy to do, with the drive back down Highway 62 and through the Park Boulevard entrance only taking a few minutes.

The trail meanders through rocks, washes, and valleys and is a moderate hike. Be sure to have plenty of water. This trail is not recommended in the hotter months where dehydration can stop any Scout in his tracks. In the milder months, however, it can be quite pleasant.

### **Cholla Cactus Gardens**



The color of the cholla changes by the second (Photo: J. Hermes)

Where the Colorado and Mojave deserts meet, the ecology can be quite dense and interesting. Nowhere is this more apparent than the Cholla Cactus Gardens off Pinto Basin Road. Here is an especially dense forest of cholla. This is a great place for viewing at sunrise at sunset. Given the right light and the right angle, you can get a particularly amazing photo as the sunlight bounces off the needles of the cactus.

## **Cottonwood**

Because this campsite is in the Southernmost part of the monument, which does not contain the huge quartz monzonite boulders for climbing, or the Joshua Trees after which the park was named, you will usually find smaller crowds.

A group camp, consisting of several sites, can be reserved at Cottonwood. The sites feature fire rings and sun shelters. The sites also have tables. Water is available, the parking lot is paved, and flush toilets have been installed. For this there is a nominal fee, but the group site is still a great value.

As with some of the other, larger, campsites periodic nature programs are conducted in the amphitheater by knowledgeable rangers. Programs can cover things from plants, mammals, geology, and even star study. You cannot imagine the number of stars in the sky until you camp at Cottonwood.

From Cottonwood you can visit the old town site of Winona, perched on the shoulder of a nearby hill. Foundation stones and a few walls still remain. You can also follow the Nature Trail out of the camp and link up with the trail to Cottonwood Springs.

The Springs has been a haven for the thirsty traveler for untold centuries. Although I would not consider drinking the water now without purification, at one time it was so valuable that it was piped across the desert to the mines of the Dale District. The water flow has subsided much since then but many plans and cottonwoods still grow. Be careful climbing along the rocks, they are often wet and moss covered. The arrester near the springs indicates local gold mining activity.

From this oasis you can travel down the main wash toward Little Chilcoat Pass, built by teamsters in the 1800s (look at the singular boulder in the side wash as you begin the trip to the Pass and you will find a great example of a metate, indicating early man's presence), then on to Morton's Mill. The Mill site now contains the wreck of an old truck, some rusting cyanide tanks, and a few foundations. Like at Cottonwood, if you are very quiet, and very lucky, you may catch the glimpse of a rare desert bighorn sheep.

From Cottonwood Springs you can also take an 8-mile, roundtrip, hike to Lost Palms Oasis. This is a nice hike over moderate terrain. The Oasis is well worth the visit, especially the overlook to the trees. Dozens of Washingtonia Palms are scattered up and down the narrow recesses of this quiet canyon.

For those who don't want to travel all the way to Lost Palms, a short trail leads up the hill to the Mammoth Mine near the top of Mastodon Peak. This easy-to-moderate hike will take you about an hour and the view from the peak is worth it. You can usually see the Salton Sea glittering in the distance.

The Mammoth Mine is on the other side of the peak, but please, be careful.

Another landmark can be found near Cottonwood, it is "Matt Riley's Grave." This unfortunate miner perished in the summer heat and was buried where he was found. This grave is about a quarter mile North of the Cottonwood Visitor Center, 60 yards East of the road. This is a silent reminder of the Scout Motto... "Be Prepared!"

## **Geology Tour Road**

One real good way to investigate Joshua Tree National Park is to take a drive, or a hike, along Geology Tour Road. This maintained dirt road leads into the heart of one of the most fascinating portions of the park.

A "Guide to Geology Tour Road" is available at the visitor center, which describes in detail, the 18 stops along the road. This 16-mile round trip is a definite "must see" for anyone who wants to really appreciate the park.

Malapai Hill, located within walking distance of the road, is pretty much a volcano that did not reach the surface. Since it did not come into contact with the air, the black basalt is particularly dense and

heavy. Look around and find a specimen that is broken. With a small magnifying glass, or loupe, you can see olivine and quartz crystals that sparkle. Other minerals are tinged red, yellow, and violet.

On the way to the hill, look for the “Balanced Rock.” This is a great photo opportunity for your unit. A large boulder is precariously perched on a relatively small base. It looks like just a little effort could cause it to roll down the valley.

I first read about Squaw Tanks in a book published in 1919. Written by Joseph Smeaton Chase, the story described the tanks as they were back then. Mr. Chase, it seems, fell in love with the desert. To learn more about it he spent two years, with his horse Kaweah, roaming the land. “The tanks,” he wrote, “were well known in the area.” These tanks are merely depressions in the rock where water accumulates during the rare rains. After a while, however, animals fall into the tanks and drown. Spiders, lizards, snakes, rats, and other assorted creatures combine with algae to form a particularly disgusting concoction. When he arrived at Squaw Tanks the aroma was so bad that even his thirsty horse refused to drink. The horse would just “...curl his lips and make an angry sound, but he wouldn’t drink.”

The tank was improved by range cattlemen during the late 1880s, by the addition of a concrete dam, which is now filled with silt. Near the tank, which is a popular climbing area, you can find several excellent examples of “metates” which were used to grind seeds by the local Indians. It is not wise to drive any farther than this spot during rainy season unless you have 4-wheel drive, and even at that, caution should still be exercised.

A short way from Squaw Tank you can find petroglyphs chipped into the Pinto Gneiss. This ancient “graffiti” occurred when the dark “desert varnish” covering the rocks was chipped away to expose the lighter stone underneath. Remember to leave these artifacts as you found them.

Continuing on the one-way road will take you to the remains of the Gold Coin Mine. A few shafts and prospect holes can be found, as well as the remains of two cyanide tanks used in the amalgamation process. The road then leads in a big circle through Pleasant Valley and returns to the spot near Squaw Tank. The view is worth the drive. You can look toward Lost Horse Valley from the heights and you also are able to get a good view of Malapai Hill and the entire basin.

Allow 2 to 3 hours to travel Geology Tour Road. Take your time, get out, and walk around. Be sure to have your Scouts climb the rock pile West of the road near marker # 6. The giant, rectangular, block of quartz monzonite is a good backdrop for a Troop picture. Another Kodak moment!

### **Keys View**



The Salton Sea as seen from Keys View (Photo: T. Schultze)

Off of Park Boulevard is a turnoff for Keys View, and you must visit this point, especially for sunrise! On a clear day (and air quality can be an issue), you have a breathtaking view of both San Jacinto and San Geronimo Peaks. In twilight, you can clearly see the light of the Palm Springs Tramway. To the South, the Salton Sea sits quietly in the distance. If you’re lucky, you can even see into Mexico!



## **Lost Horse Mine Trail**

Still, on many days, the smog that slowly pushes its way through San Geronio Pass obscured the view. This is a great lesson for your Scouts on the impact humans have on the environment, even in these out of the way places.

Located on the road to Key's View, the visitor can stop at a small roadside exhibit, on the right, a few yards before the turnoff to the Lost Horse Mine. Here, amongst the Joshua Trees, you will find a rock-lined grave with a small headstone. This is the final resting place of Johnny Lane, one-time owner of the Lost Horse Mine. He died, probably of dehydration, and his mummified body was buried in a shallow grave, near where it was found, another victim of the desert.

Just past the gravesite, on the left side of the road, is the entrance to the Lost Horse Mine Trailhead. The dirt road leads a short distance to a small parking area. The 2 mile trail begins just past the gate. This easy-to-moderate hike leads you uphill past the remnants of past mining activity. The Lost Horse Mine, located near a hilltop, was one of the best producers in the park area with over 9,000 ounces of gold removed during the years of its operation. Since the mine is on park lands, most of the machinery remains.

The 10-stamp mill looks like it could be active again with just a few belts and a little work. These iron-headed stamps moved up and down, like an automobile intake valve, curing the gold-bearing ore as it passed beneath. The gold ore was taken out through a series of tunnels that operated on several levels. The opening to the 500-foot-deep main shafts can still be seen.

Concrete water tanks are still visible above the stamp works. The water was pumped from miles away in the Ryan area. Across the wash from the main mill site you can see the foundation remains of several houses, as well as several admits, shafts, and tunnels. The openings have been sealed, but erosion can undermine them at any time, so exercise caution.



A large plaque at the stamp mill has a diagram of the mine operation and briefly describes some of the machinery. Follow the trail uphill, past the abandoned main winch, to the top of Lost Horse Mountain. Here you will have a spectacular panorama of most of Joshua Tree National Park. Dark-colored Malapai Hill lies alone like a "bulge" in the desert floor. Just beyond, at the point of rocks, is Squaw Tank. You can see the dry lake in Pleasant Valley just south of the Gold Coin Mine.

The view is perhaps the best in the park. You can look into the Jumbo Rocks area, you can see the boulders near Belle and White Tank. To the North is the Wonderland of Rocks, whose colors change with the moods and movement of the sun.

Below you is the old mining town. You can take a little time and try to visualize what it must have been like to have been at this spot 100 years ago. The stamp mill, and the incredible noise it must have made as it attempted to wrest the minute particles of gold from solid rock, filled the air with steam and smoke on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week basis. Dynamite blasts rocked the earth, filling the canyon with the sound of exploding rock, and hydraulic drills noisily chewed into the quartz veins in preparation for the next series of blasts. Machinery screeching, men yelling, winches straining, ore cars dumping rock in the stamp mill's hopper. Smoky, dirty, and noisy, all this work for just one thing... Gold!

The mines are quiet now, with the only sound that of the wind whistling through the weathered timbers of the headframe. The only vibrations are those of an occasional hiker's footfall on the winding hillside trail.

Gold...it can still be found here, but more important things can be found here, too.

## **White Tanks**

The White Tanks actually contains several tanks, with this one being the easiest to find. This first-come/first-served campground offers parking for 2 cars in each site and is limited to 6 people per site, tents only. The sites are nestled among large boulders and are particularly attractive. Each site has a fire ring. Remember that through the park no collecting of anything is allowed, including firewood. Bring your own.

A well-marked nature trail takes the visitor on a short loop trip. Plans and geological information is given at the several sites.

One spot you will want to visit is “The Arch.”

This natural arch was formed by a combination of wind and rain eroding the White Tank Quartz Monozite. Bring your camera. At night, you can get some remarkable photographs as the moon rises over the arch.

At this point you might want to leave the marked trail and search for White Tank. One easy way is to boulder hop down the slot with the arch to your left. In a couple



Another beautiful day at The Arch  
(Photo: J. Long)

hundred yards you will find a wash (usually dry) on your left. Slightly downstream from this spot you will find the remains of White Tank. All that you will see is the 8 foot, or so, tall cement dam. This was put here to trap water for cattle near the turn of the century.

If you decide that you like dams, you can continue to search in a generally Easterly direction where, if you are lucky, you will find Grand Tanks. This is a truly large tank. Search the nooks and crannies upstream from the concrete dam and you may find the initials and date that are carved into a nearby rock. Perhaps this was an old-time cowboy's attempt at immortality.

The White Tanks area is a splendid area to boulder hop, explore, and practice rock climbing without getting very high off the ground. The maze of giant, tumbled, boulders offer numerous, cave-like, alcoves that just scream to be investigated. Watch for droppings and try to guess what types of critters call it home.

Across the paved road from the entrance to White Tank, and a short distance to the South, is a parking area and dirty road. This road leads to Hidden and Stirrup Tanks. This is a really worthwhile side trip. Again, giant boulders prevail. This area is unusually quiet with rarely even the sound of a bird to disturb the silence.

Just North of White Tanks is another small campground named Belle. Like White Tank it is a first-come/first-served site with fire rings. This too has no water available so no fee is charged. Both sites offer the very best in state-of-the-art pit toilets, so if you insist on restrooms without odors, you might want to consider heading down the road to Cottonwood. Belle does have some remarkable boulders, especially Breadloaf Rock. West of Belle, you might be able to locate Twin Tanks.

The White Tanks area is easily accessible from the Park Headquarters Entrance Station. Just be sure to turn left (South) at Pinto Wye Road. This paved road crosses the monument from the North to South linking up with Interstate 10 25 miles East of Indio. The sign at the turnoff reads “Cottonwood 26 Miles.”

## **Joshua Tree Campgrounds**

Most campsites require reservations which you can reserve online at <http://www.recreation.gov>. In the popular winter months, you should do your reservation at least 30 days in advance, even sooner if possible.

Campsites are located at Belle (just North of White Tank), Black Rock Canyon (off Joshua Lane in Yucca Valley), Cottonwood (South end of the park off Interstate 10), Hidden Valley (centrally located), Indian Cove (in an “island” by itself, you have to leave the park and enter from Joshua Tree or Twentynine Palms), Jumbo Rocks (largest camp in the park), Ryan Mountain (good access to Lost Horse Valley and Ryan Mountain), Sheeps Pass (impressive sites and protected from the wind), and White Tank (small site but location of the Joshua Tree arch).

## **Other Areas**

The following are some other desert areas that are not located in the areas mentioned in this section. Two of them, Amboy Crater and Mitchell Caverns, are located next to the Mojave National Preserve, and naturally should be part of your itinerary.

Calico Ghost Town is a great weekend outing that teaches Scouts history and desert camping. On the way, check out the Calico Early Man site off Minneola Road, just a few miles down Interstate 15 from the Calico Ghost Town exit.

## **Amboy Crater National Natural Landmark**

Located near the town of Amboy and South of Mojave National Preserve, Amboy Crater is what remains of intense volcanic activity in the fairly recent geologic past. Surrounding this 400’ or so cinder cone you will find a vast field of dark colored rocks.

From the parking area at Crater Road, follow a faint trail to the crater. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has set up signs pointing you in the right direction. It looks a lot taller and steeper from here!

Although you will see a trail leading from the North side of the crater to the top, please do not use this point of entry. This is an



Amboy Crater  
(Photo: T. Schultze)

example of how sensitive the crater is to erosion. The Sunset Crater in Arizona had to be closed due to erosion. There is a breach on the West side of Amboy Crater and the BLM trail will lead you to it. This is the only way you should go.

From the summit you can gain a greater appreciation for Mother Nature’s power. The lava flow is very easy to see and you cannot help but wonder how much energy is required to melt rock and then redeposit it, in semi-liquid form over the several square miles of terrain. Also, from the summit, you can look down into the caldera. Sometimes you will find water in the interior base of the cone. Actually, there are two calderas, indicating separate volcanic events. You will, of course, want to hike down inside the volcano’s opening. Go for it!

If it looks you can’t work Amboy Crater into your outing plans, you may want to just take a few moments to drive Old Route 66 past it. It is quite visible from the highway and is easily spotted on the horizon, or you may decide to make this a lunch stop where you can use the cone as a backdrop for your sandwiches.

Should you plan to visit Amboy Crater, or many of the other geological offerings in the Mojave National Preserve, you might want to plan to take someone along who has experience in geology. Many of the boys become quickly fascinated when they “discover” minerals in volcanic rock, or begin to learn the names of common desert rocks. They may even decide to earn the Geology Merit Badge.



## **Calico Ghost Town Regional Park**

### **Calico Ghost Town Regional Park**

Ghost Town  
36600 Ghost Town Rd  
Yermo, CA 92398  
Phone (800) 862-2542

<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/venue/calico-ghost-town/>

More than a century ago, the town of Calico was bustling with prospectors. Founded in March 1881, it grew to a population of 1,200 with 22 saloons and more than 500 mines.

Silver was king, and the Calico Mining District became one of the richest in California, producing \$86 million in silver, \$45 million in borax and, of course, gold. After 1907, when silver prices dropped and borax mining moved to Death Valley, Calico became a ghost town.

Today, Calico is one of the few remaining original mining towns of the Western United States and became a regional park in 1966. See the Calico Ghost Town Regional Park Website for prices and more information.



Be There Ghosts Here?  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

## **Minneola Early Man Site**

The Calico Early Man Site is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the United States, about 15 miles northeast of Barstow. Made famous by the world-renowned paleoanthropologist, Louis Leakey's work at the site between

1964 and 1970, the Calico Early Man site continues to spark discussion among the professional community as well as the general public.

The BLM invites the public to visit the site for self-guided tours and to learn more about California's extraordinary prehistoric past. During your visit, please respect and protect our ancient history. Minimize your impact and leave any artifacts you may find. Visitors can help protect America's public lands by reporting potential resource damage to BLM Law Enforcement Dispatch at (800) 637-9152.

## **Mitchell Caverns**

### **Providence Mountains SRA**

Mitchell Caverns  
38200 Essex Rd  
Essex, CA 92332  
Phone (760) 928-2586

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=615](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=615)

Although considered part of Mojave National Preserve, Mitchell Caverns is actually found in the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area, making it a state park entirely surrounded by the Preserve.

When Hollywood needed a cave as a location for the filming of the movie "The Doors," Mitchell Caverns was chosen. Unfortunately, during the filming the crew caused considerable damage to the pictographs that exist near the cabin mouth.

Chemehuevi Indians used these caverns for many years. One chamber has the fossilized remains of a ground sloth indicating the caved was used for more than just a religious or ceremonial site. It was also used for shelter.



A view of stalactites in the first cavern in Mitchell Caverns (Photo: T. Schultze)

These are actual limestone caverns and not “caves” or “tunnels.” Created by the effect of carbonic acid seeping through the soil eroding the softer limestone, the caverns are truly impressive. A 1-hour (sometimes longer) tour costs very little and teaches much. The knowledgeable guides explain how the caverns were formed, the various types of formations, the history of the local Native American’s use of them, and the future of this remarkable site.

The tour takes you into the two main caverns, “El Pakiva” and “El Tecopa” (there is a third cavern not open to the general public that features a multi- hundred-foot drop). The caverns are artificially lighted, with stairs and walkways to make the tour safe and easy. The guides point out the various formations and describe how each was formed. It seems that there are only a handful of different cavern formations besides stalactites and stalagmites

and Mitchell Caverns is unique in that it contains most of them. It also has one formation that is extremely rare with only 3 or 4 known to exist in the entire world.

Some tour guides can be prompted to turn all of the lights off at some time during the tour. This is a really incredible experience. When you put your hand in front of your face, touching your nose and you still can’t see it, then that is real darkness.



Mitchell Caverns has an excellent visitor center and a small campground (Photo: T Schultze)

The caverns maintain the same temperature throughout the year and are quite comfortable with just a light jacket or medium weight shirt. A flashlight is handy to bring and for the photographers out there, we recommend you take a monopod for your camera in the low light.

Beside the caverns the State Park operates a Visitor Center with displays of old mining implements, rocks and minerals, native American artifacts, and history of Jack Mitchell, who developed the caverns as a tourist attraction in the early 1900s.

The Mary Beale Nature Trail begins at the Visitor Center. This short nature trail is extremely well planned, offering excellent views of the desert and mountains, as well as descriptions of the plants along the walk. If a longer walk is desire, you may hike up to Crystal Springs, a short distance above the Visitor Center on Foshay Peak.

At night, the sky to the North bears an unusual brightness, caused by the lights of Las Vegas. Mitchell Caverns is one of the best-kept secrets of Southern California, well worth the journey.

## **Ocean, Lakes, and Rivers**

### **Boating and Canoeing**

While many Scouts, Scouters, and units dominate the lowlands and mountainous terrains of Southern California, there remains a worthy frontier for those seeking new adventures.

Despite Southern California's reputation for being an exceptionally dry area, there are water activities everywhere. In the West is the Pacific Ocean, the largest body of water in the world. In the East is the mighty Colorado River, which drains most of the Great Southwest. In between, there are lakes and streams waiting to be explored.

Whether you are using a boat, canoe, or raft, adventure awaits you on the water in Southern California. It isn't enough to just camp near a lake. For the experience to be truly fulfilling, one needs to venture out onto the water. On a day with nice sunny weather, a lake's quiet solitude is a solemn experience.

This section is organized by area, beginning with some canoe trips down the Colorado River, thanks to the Jerkwater Canoe & Kayak Company. Next, you will switch to the Pacific Ocean, with a few local Scouting facilities for canoeing, and a truly special experience hiking & camping in Channel Islands National Park. Finally, we cover several of the local lakes that allow boating or canoeing.

High Adventure awaits you as well. Maybe your Troop is ready to do a 50-mile canoe trip down the Colorado River, or you want to introduce your Scouts to kayaking. When you think of it, the water is just an extension of the land your Troop is exploring and learning from.

Without it, your experience as a Troop will be incomplete.

### **Colorado River**

Draining a significant portion of the Southwest United States, the Colorado is our region's greatest river. It is famous to most people because it flows through the majestic Grand Canyon in Arizona, and most Scouts and Scouters know of the excellent canoeing adventures on the river's California/Arizona border.

The river also provides your Scouts and important lesson. Despite the river's massive size and scale, manmade activities including dams and farm irrigation have changed the Colorado dramatically. Much of the Grand Canyon's water ecology has changed due to the Glen Canyon Dam, and the warm water that fed the beautiful delta in Mexico is diverted elsewhere. It is a beautiful river to behold, but one to be concerned with for the future.



Scouts Beginning their trip at the Hoover Dam  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

Your Scouts will cherish the chance to canoe the Colorado. The River Rat patch is easy to complete, and the 50-miler award will commemorate a memorable trip for your unit. While we can't possibly provide every iteration of starting and ending points, we wish to share just a few that you can choose from.





## **One-Day Canoe Trips**

### **Topock Gorge:**

Launch from Park Moabi Regional Park or Topock Marina and travel downstream through Topock Gorge to Castle Rock. Distance is 16 or 17 miles, respectively. While spectacular, this is a moderate to strenuous trip.

### **Needles to Park Moabi:**

Launch from Jack Smith Park and head to Park Moabi. This is a shorter, easy trip that is great for introducing your unit to canoeing. It is an easy to moderate journey.



Scouts Paddling Down the Colorado River  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

### **Black Canyon:**

Launch from the base of Hoover Dam and head to Willow Beach. Total distance is 12 miles. This is a moderate to strenuous trip that can also be done as a 2- or 3-day trip. Permits are required.

## **Two-Day Canoe Trips**

### **Needles To Castle Rock:**

On day one, paddle from Needles to Park Moabi, and on the second day head to Topock Gorge. This is an excellent intermediate trip with one day being easy and leisurely and the second more moderate.

### **Park Moabi to Windsor Beach:**

Launch from Park Moabi and paddle through Topock Gorge, past Castle Rock, and into the camping area. On the second day, paddle on to London Bridge.

### **Black Canyon:**

Launch at the base of Hoover Dam. Spend the day exploring the side canyons and hot springs. Take out the next day is at Willow Beach. Permits are required in Black Canyon.

### **Norton's Canoe Base to Fisher's Landing:**

Begin at Norton's Canoe Base and stay overnight. The next day, paddle 15 miles downstream to Fisher's Landing. You can also begin at Draper Lake and paddle 12 miles down to Norton's Canoe Base.

## **Three-Day Canoe Trips**

### **Bullhead City to Castle Rock:**

Launch from Bullhead Community Park. The first night, wilderness camp along the river and the second night, camp at Park Moabi.

### **Needles to Windsor Beach:**

Launch in Needles and paddle to Park Moabi. The second day, head through Topock Gorge and wilderness camp just at the mouth of Lake Havasu. The third day, paddle to your takeout at Windsor Beach.

## **Four-Day Canoe Trips**

### **Hoover Dam to Placer Cove (El Dorado):**

This trip starts at the Hoover Dam and you will paddle through Black Canyon and onto Lake Mohave, wilderness camping along the way. Launch permit required.

### **Bullhead City to Windsor Beach:**

This trip covers over 50 miles with some wilderness camping and civilized camping.

## **Five-Day Canoe Trips**

### **Bullhead City to Windsor Beach:**

This trip covers over 50 miles with a day layover for Scouts to complete their merit badges. The day layover would be a Park Moabi in the middle of your trip. With advance arrangements a service project can be planned with Park Moabi.

### **Hoover Dam to Cottonwood Cove:**

Begin at the base of Hoover Dam. This trip takes you through Black Canyon on to Lake Mohave, wilderness camping along the way to Cottonwood Cove. Launch permit required.

## **Moabi Regional Park**

### **Moabi Regional Park**

Moabi Regional Park  
100 Park Moabi Rd.  
Needles, CA 92363  
Phone (760) 326-9000

<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/park/moabi-regional-park/>

Moabi Regional Park is on the banks of the Colorado River 11 miles Southeast of Needles. It is a well-known starting and ending point for treks down the Colorado River. It is one of the most well-known starting areas along the Colorado River for canoeing groups.

### **Need Help with Your Trip?**

There are highly-rated experts available. In particular, the **Jerkwater Canoe & Kayak Company** has been helping Scouts canoe the Colorado River for years. Much of this section was adapted from information you can receive from their website. They offer everything from canoe rentals to guided tours. They are conveniently located in Topock, Arizona and Boulder City, Nevada, two major points along the Colorado River. Visit their website at <https://www.jerkwatercanoe.com/> or call them at 800-421-7803.



Scouts working on canoeing merit badge at Moabi (Photo: M. Hare)



Canoeing on the Colorado (Photo: M. Hare)

## **Pacific Ocean**

The Pacific Ocean is vast and covers over 40 percent of the Earth's surface. Its scale is mind-boggling, yet you have the chance to experience a small portion of it that will keep you coming back.

Most of the Ocean is not suitable for the canoeing or boating that your Unit will do as a group, but a couple locations offer very good spots for you to enjoy.

## **Catalina Island**



The harbor at Avalon is beautiful, but it is just the tip of the iceberg for Catalina Island (Photo: J. Long)

When pondering Catalina Island, most people picture rich people living it up in the City of Avalon. But venture out and you will find a vast and picturesque island that is anything but the small town that made it famous.

At first glance, Catalina looks typical of Southern California with low-growing coastal sage scrub and chaparral plants. The island scrub oak woodlands look stunted. The coastal vistas are colorful contrasts of sky, land, and sea. The watchable wildlife visible from a moving car or tour bus is most often the herd of American bison (living relicts of a 1920's movie project), the abundant common raven, or an occasional Beechey ground squirrel darting across the road.

Look closer though, and you discover that Catalina is complex. First off, you notice the widely varied natural communities. For instance, Thunder Beach, aptly named for the sound that surrounds you as the Pacific Ocean catches and throws head sized boulders in the surf, is as wild and remote as any beach on the West Coast. In Bulrush Canyon, a forest habitat rich with wildlife thrives under the dense, leafy canopy of large native oaks. There are grasslands on the island, too. Above Ripper's Cove, California bunch grasses add texture to hillsides generously sprinkled with wildflowers from February until June. Deep gorges echo birdsongs. On the West End, landslides of slippery silvery schist and raw red erosion gullies are reminders of on-going geologic changes. And then there are the views! The unpredictable hues of sky and ocean contrast with the dramatic silhouettes of a steeply sloped landscape. Most often, the sky is a dazzling blue and the Mediterranean climate is mild and appealing. But sometimes, chilly fog swirls around the shoulders of the hills, the wind whips, and waves punish the shore. On the other hand, summertime temperatures in Catalina's low-growing coastal sage scrub/chaparral communities can scorch. The island is moody; any day out is a fresh experience. It's best to expect the unexpected.

Sometimes the surprises are subtle, like the hum of bees on a flowering wild lilac. Other times, the surprises are dramatic: discovering a puddle that is chock full of Pacific Tree Frogs in a spring mating frenzy so noisy that it leaves your ears ringing; or the electrifying shock of witnessing a fat rattlesnake devouring a Beechy ground squirrel. But, there is always something to tuck into your memory.

You can hike Catalina. Hiking permits are available, free of charge, from the Catalina Island Conservancy at <https://catalinaconservancy.org/resources/permits/>. The permit allows access to a limited number of routes, some of which are shared by vehicles.

Another way to hike and get into otherwise inaccessible remote areas of the island, like Silver Canyon, is on the monthly HIKE with professional naturalists of the Catalina Island Conservancy. The Conservancy, steward of 88% of the island, has stepped up conservation and restoration efforts in the last half decade. Part of the conservation effort is to give people more opportunities to understand the elegant and fragile ecology of the island. The HIKE, on the first Saturday of every month, exposes people to island ecology with an exploratory approach.



## Channel Islands

### Channel Islands National Park

Channel Islands National Park  
1901 Spinnaker Dr.  
Ventura, CA 93001  
Phone (805) 658-5730

<https://www.nps.gov/chis>



Scouts hiking on Santa Rosa Island  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

Close to the California mainland, yet worlds apart, Channel Islands National Park encompasses five remarkable islands (Anacapa, Santa Cruz, , San Miguel, and Santa Barbara) and their ocean environment, preserving and protecting a wealth of natural and cultural resources.

Isolation over thousands of years has created unique animals, plants, and archeological resources found nowhere else on Earth and helped preserve a place where visitors can experience coastal Southern California as it once was.

You need to boat to get into the park's islands. The islands are only accessible by park concessionaire boats (Island Packers) or private boat. Advanced planning is highly recommended.  
(<https://islandpackers.com/home/>)

## San Diego Youth Aquatic Center

### San Diego Youth Aquatic Center

Fiesta Island Youth Camp  
1750 Fiesta Island Rd.  
San Diego, CA 92109  
Phone (619) 235-1169

<https://www.sdcscouting.org/camps/youth-aquatic-center>

The San Diego Youth Aquatic Center is nestled in a protected cove on the water on Fiesta Island in the heart of Mission Bay Park, San Diego, California.

The beautiful facility occupies one acre of land adjacent to the Fiesta Island Youth Camp and is surrounded by sandy bay front beaches with access to the Pacific Ocean. On a hot summer day with the cool ocean breeze in your face take advantage of the many instructional and recreational opportunities in sailing (catamaran and small boat), water-skiing,

canoeing, rowing, kayaking, surfing, swimming and windsurfing that are available.

The Aquatics Center's beach front facilities include: a boat ramp, a marine biology lab and touch tanks, a shark and sting ray tank, locker rooms with hot showers, meeting and program rooms, a kitchen, and court yard.

The Fiesta Island Youth Camp, which is adjacent to the Youth Aquatic Center, holds up to 400 campers, with approximately 100 parking spaces. There are 25 campsite clusters, which can accommodate a maximum of 8 campers. Each campsite has a barbeque, fire pit and picnic table. A centrally located restroom has water availability and rinsing showers. Overlooking the bay is an amphitheater, which has an accessible platform and bonfire ring, which is great for large group campfires and watching the nightly fireworks from Sea World during the summer.

The San Diego Youth Aquatics Center and Fiesta Island Youth Camp are available for any organized youth group for day use and overnight camping in a beach setting.



Seagulls Join the Camp  
(Photo: D. Lesyna)

## Newport Sea Base

### Newport Sea Base

Newport Sea Base  
1931 West Coast Highway  
Newport Beach, CA 92663  
Phone (714) 923-3191

<https://www.newportseabase.org/>

The Newport Sea Base has a history of providing quality maritime programs for youth since 1937. With a commitment to developing character, our desire is to inspire a love for the marine environment in the hearts of youth.

The Sea Base is located on 400 feet of beautiful waterfront in Newport Beach, California. The site is provided courtesy of the Orange County Board of

Supervisors, and operated by the Orange County Council, Scouting America. The base has a fleet of boats includes kayaks, canoes, rowboats and over 3 dozen sailboats. It is also home to three Sea Scout Ships; Del Mar, Renegades and Triton, as well as the Chapman University Crew Team.

In 2002, the Sea Base began a \$6.8 million project to transform the facility into a modern teaching and aquatics center. The expanded Newport Sea Base now features additional classrooms, a library, conference room, crew center, picnic area and new boating equipment.



Newport Sea Base Harbor (Photo: Sea Base Website)

## **Local Camping, Lakes, & Streams**

### **San Bernardino County Locations**

#### **Big Bear Lake**

##### **Big Bear Lake**

Big Bear Discovery Center  
40971 North Shore Drive, Highway 38  
Fawnskin, CA 92333  
Phone: (909) 382-2790  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/sanbernardino/recreation/big-bear-lake-recreation-area>

The U.S. Forest Service operates the campgrounds in the National Forest, and RV camping is also available in the Valley. Call or visit the Big Bear Discovery Center for camping information.

Paddle boating, pontoon boating, sailing or power boating... windsurfing, sailboarding, waterskiing or jet skiing - Big Bear Lake offers it all! And all boats and equipment can be rented at any one of the

marinas that dot the lake's 23 miles of shoreline. Private boat permits are required and can be purchased at any marina. Bass, trout and catfish are abundant in Big Bear Lake. Licenses and supplies can be purchased at sporting goods stores and marinas.

Attend a Ranger/Naturalist talk at the Discovery Center and learn to see the forest with new eyes. This tour can meet both Webelos and Scouts BSA merit badge requirements if you inform the ranger ahead of time and bring your requirements book with you.

Ride the Summit Sky Chair, have lunch, then hike or ride your bike back down. Take a boat tour around the lake, or be the captain of your own canoe and visit a beaver dam. There are many things to do in and around Big Bear Lake.

#### **Glen Helen Regional Park**

##### **Glen Helen Regional Park**

2555 Glen Helen Parkway  
San Bernardino, CA 92407  
Phone: (909) 887-7540  
<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/park/glen-helen-regional-park/>

Located at the base of the chaparral covered hills of the Cajon Pass with scenic views of both the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains, Glen Helen Regional Park offers 1,340 acres of land that your Scouts can use to camp, hike, swim, and fish, and is also home to the annual Sherriff's Rodeo. Please note though that Glen Helen holds many events, including concerts, at the Pavilion in the park. This

could affect fees on certain weekends, and not every concert will invite a Scout-like crowd. Make sure you check the schedule.

#### **Lake Gregory Regional Park**

##### **Lake Gregory Regional Park**

24171 Lake Drive  
Crestline, CA 92325  
Phone: (833) 360-5253  
<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/park/lake-gregory-regional-park/>

Lake Gregory Regional Park is an alpine jewel nestled in the pine forests of Crestline, with a surface area of 84 acres. Here you can fish from the shore, hike, swim, or boat on over 150 acres. The park offers a wide range of trails and footpaths to explore.

Day use access is \$30 per person, but group rates are available for over 20 people, made 48 hours in advance at \$8 per person. Watercraft launch fee is \$10. First hour of parking is free, then \$1/hour up to \$10. Fishing day pass is \$10



## **Mojave Narrows Regional Park**

### **Mojave Narrows Regional Park**

18000 Yates Road

Victorville, CA 92392

Phone: (760) 245-2226

<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/park/mojave-narrows-regional-park/>

Located alongside an old riverbed in the high desert south of Victorville, Mojave Narrows offers lush plant growth, acres of waterways, impressive strands of cottonwood and willows and broad meadows all naturally landscaped by nature. The park is home to more than 1,500 species of watchable wildlife.

In addition there is year-round fishing, disc golf course, equestrian trails, a playground, climbing rocks, splash pad and hiking trails. For campers, there are 31 tent campsites along the shores of both Horseshoe Lake and Pelican Lake, with 6 group camping sites, and 3 group equestrian sites. Sites have access to hot showers and restrooms, as well as grills, fire rings, and durno stations. 38 RV sites with full hook-ups are also located near Horseshoe Lake.

Vehicle fees are \$8 Monday-Friday, \$10 on weekends and holidays. Fishing permits are \$10 Monday-Wednesday, and \$12 Thursday-Sunday. Camping is \$30 per night up to 6 people, and \$5 per extra person. Group rates may be available, please contact for more information.

## **Mojave River Forks Regional Park**

### **Mojave River Forks Regional Park**

17891 CA Highway 173

Hesperia, CA 92345

Phone: (760) 488-0253

<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/park/mojave-river-forks-regional-park/>

Located in the Summit Valley of Hesperia at the gateway to the Pacific Crest Trail, Mojave River Forks offers camping under wide open skies away from city's hustle and bustle.

This park provides convenient access to boating and fishing on Silverwood Lake, and from there it is not much further to destinations like Lake Gregory

and the Rim of the World Highway. Adventures near Mojave River Forks include the Pacific Crest Trail and Deep Creek Hot Springs. This park provides serenity for those who enjoy nature and wide open space and is open year round. There are 25 camping sites, and 25 RV sites with hookups, and 3 group camping areas, with 2 dump stations, hot showers and restrooms are available.

Vehicle entrance fees are \$8 Monday-Thursday, and \$10 Friday-Sunday, including holidays. Camping is \$30 per night up to 6 people, and \$5 per extra person.

## **Prado Regional Park**

### **Prado Regional Park**

16700 S. Euclid Avenue

Chino, CA 91710

Phone: (909) 597-4260

<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/park/prado-regional-park/>

Located in the Chino Valley basin where San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange and Los Angeles Counties connect, Prado Regional Park is a one-stop recreational paradise.

The name Prado is derived from California's early Spanish days when the countryside was known as a "prado" or meadow.

This park is loaded with outdoor recreation and adventure offering, fishing, camping, hiking, biking and nature trails, splash pad, disc golf and outstanding picnic facilities are just a sampling of what this park has to offer. A unique feature of Prado is that it has a meeting room that seats 80 people and is ideal for club meetings, parties and receptions.

Additional activities at the park include two 18-hole golf courses at El Prado Golf Course, an Olympic shooting range at Shoot Prado, an equestrian center at Prado Park Equestrian Center and an archery range by Oranco Bowmen Archery Club.

Vehicle entrance fees are \$8 Monday-Friday, and \$10 weekends and holidays. Fishing permits are \$10 Monday-Wednesday, and \$12 Thursday-Sunday. Boat launch fees are \$5 for rowboats, kayaks, and canoes. 16' max length, no gas engines, catamarans, or inflatable vessels allowed. Camping fees are \$40 per night up to 6 people, with a \$7 reservation fee, and \$5 per extra person. Holidays are \$50 a night. Group camping over 20 people is \$5 per person.

### **Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area**

#### **Silverwood Lake SRA**

14651 Cedar Cir

Hesperia, CA 92345

Phone: (760) 389-2281

[https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=650](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=650)

Lake Silverwood is located just 30 miles from the city of San Bernardino. This beautiful 2400 acre recreation area is at an altitude of 3380 feet. The surface area of the lake is 980 acres with 13 miles of shoreline.

For your convenience, there is a bait shop, snack bar, fishing boat rentals and groceries available. There is a seven lane boat ramp, 13.5 miles of paved bike trails, and a 136 site campground with six group sites.

Day use fees are \$10 per vehicle, and \$20 on summer weekends and holidays. Boat launch fee is \$10 per vessel. Campsite fees are \$45 per night, \$50 with hookups. Group campsites are \$250-\$350 per night. Campfires are allowed in provided campfire rings, and charcoal is allowed in provided grills in campgrounds and designated picnic areas. Use of any other stoves, lanterns, and heaters are not allowed. Please check the website for current fire allowances.

### **Yucaipa Regional Park**

#### **Yucaipa Regional Park**

33900 Oak Glen Road

Yucaipa, CA 92399

Phone: (909) 790-3127

<https://parks.sbcounty.gov/park/yucaipa-regional-park/>

Yucaipa Regional Park is a favorite among Inland Empire Scouts. Located near Oak Glen, Redlands and other mountain communities, it is situated on 885 acres of land with Crafton Hills to the West and the San Bernardino Mountains to the East. Yucaipa Regional Park offers fishing from your choice of three lakes, a popular swim complex with dual flume water slides surrounded by sandy beach areas.

areas.

There are 42 sites with full hookups, 9 group tent sites, with access to hot showers, and ADA accessible restrooms, and campfire rings. Beautifully appointed large group shelters are present that can hold up to 350 people with built-in grills and running water. Open picnic tables and grills are plentiful throughout this scenic park. Other activities include year-round horse shoes and disc golf.

Vehicle entrance fees are \$8 Monday-Friday, and \$10 weekends and holidays. Fishing permits are \$10 Monday-Wednesday, and \$12 Thursday-Sunday. Camping is \$40 per night up to 6 people, and \$5 per extra person. Group camping over 20 people is \$ per person.

## **Riverside County Locations**

### **Bogart Park**

#### **Bogart Park**

9600 International Park Rd

Cherry Valley CA 92223

Phone: (951) 845-3818

<https://www.bcvparks.com/more-information/>

27 sites available, and 3 group camping areas, no hook ups. 414-acre facility located 4.5 miles North of Beaumont at the North end of Cherry Valley. Facilities include: Individual camping, available on a first-come, first-served basis or by reservation. Group camping, an equestrian campground and group picnics are also available, by reservation only. Fire pits and restrooms are present.

Vehicle entrance fee is \$10. Camping fees are \$23 per night for single sites, group sites are \$120-\$144 per night.

### **Collis Mayflower Park**

#### **Collis Mayflower Park**

4980 Colorado River Road

Route 1, Box 190E

Blythe CA 92225

Phone: (760) 922-4665

<https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/mayflower-regional-park/>

The stunning Mayflower Park is situated alongside the remarkable Colorado River in Blythe, California, only 25 miles west of Quartzsite Arizona. The clear blue of the river mimics the beautiful blue skyline with spacious green grass nestled in between. With numerous water and land activities, finding something to do is never a problem.

Mayflower Park is extremely accommodating with fishing, picnic and barbecue areas. The Park also has magnificent day and overnight use with 152 roomy RV sites with water and utilities, as well as 27 additional lovely dry camping sites. Mayflower Park is a one of a kind park with breathtaking open fields and gorgeous willowing trees perfectly placed along the dazzling Colorado River. The view alone is worth the visit, but the endless activities create lasting memories.

Day use fees are \$6 for ages 13 and over, \$3 for children. Camping fees are \$30-\$50 per night, no more than 6 occupants and 2 vehicles allowed per site, and no ground fire permitted.

### **Diamond Valley Lake**

#### **Diamond Valley Lake Marina**

2615 Angler Avenue

Hemet, CA 92545

Phone: (951) 926-7201

<https://www.dvmarina.com/>

Diamond Valley Lake Marina is located in Riverside County near the city of Hemet, CA. Take the I-215 to California Highway 74 exit East to Hemet. The highway name will change to Florida Avenue and turn right (South) on Sanderson Ave. Turn left (East) on Domenigoni Parkway and take it to Searl Parkway and turn right (South) to the East Marina.

You can also take the I-215 to Winchester Rd East and look for the signs.

Diamond Valley Reservoir is one of the largest man-made reservoirs in Southern California, with a capacity of 800,000 acre-feet, 260 ft deep, consisting of over 4,500 surface acres, and rests at an elevation of 1,756 feet. The lake is 4.5 miles long by 2 miles wide. It is managed by the Metropolitan Water District. The dams were constructed from 1995-2003 to provide additional water storage for the Southern California area. The lake is open year-round from sunrise to sunset.

Entrance fee is \$11 per vehicle. No pets, swimming, or BBQ's allowed. No camping is available.

Boat launch fee is \$13. Only boats with four- stroke engines or 2001 and later model direct-injection



two strokes that comply with CARB emission requirements are allowed. Refueling is prohibited except in designated areas. Sail, electric and man-powered boats are permitted. Float tubes and kayaks under 10 feet are not allowed. No sit-on-top kayaks are allowed. Rental boats are available at the marina.

"All boats-power boats, fishing boats, sailboats, rowboats, kayaks, canoes and certain types of catamarans-and respective engines must pass inspection and be registered to be allowed on the lake."

### **Fishing Info:**

The lake has been stocked with large and smallmouth bass, bluegill, red-eared sunfish, blue and channel catfish and rainbow trout. There are also a few striped bass and crappie which entered through the aqueduct. Fishing permits are \$9 per person over 12, and \$6 for those under.

### **Idyllwild Park**

#### **Idyllwild Regional Park**

54000 Riverside County Playground Rd.

Idyllwild CA 92549

Phone: (951) 659-2656

<https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/idyllwild-regional-park/>

Popular Idyllwild Park, located on the perimeter of the eclectic mountain village of Idyllwild, boasts 202 acres of beautiful open space, mature forest and breathtaking hiking trails. Idyllwild is a perfect venue for reconnecting with family, friends, nature, and the slower pace of small town mountain life.

Idyllwild Park's day use area offers a shaded meadow for picnicking and group outings, serving as a pleasant base for hikers, climbers, and explorers. Guests may hike any of the five trails that offer breathtaking scenery and panoramic views. For more adventurous outdoor enthusiasts, enormous granite boulders offer some of the best rock climbing challenges around. The park's rustic but well-tended campground has 88 lovely forested campsites, each with fire ring and picnic table as well as close proximity to restrooms and showers. Guests may also enjoy group camping offered nearby at RivCoPark's Lawler Lodge and Lawler Alpine Cabins.

Day use fees are \$6 for ages 13 and older, \$3 per child. Camping fees are \$30-\$35 per night, including 6 people and 2 vehicles. Extra vehicle fee is \$6 per vehicle.

### **Hurkey Creek Park**

#### **Hurkey Creek Park**

56375 Highway 74

Mountain Center CA 92561

Phone: (951) 659-2050

<https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/hurkey-creek-park/>

Beautiful Hurkey Creek Park, located off of Hwy 74 in the San Jacinto Mountains just 4 miles southeast of Mountain Center, is the perfect locale for reconnecting with nature and our local mountain ecology. This idyllic getaway boasts a seasonal creek, majestic pine trees, awe-inspiring mountain views, and all the charms and tranquility of a classic woodland recreation area.

The park's rustic but well maintained campground offers 130 individual campsites for overnight or extended stays of up to 14 days, as well as large group camping areas in 5 separate loops that can accommodate 80-100 campers each. Popular activities for both campers and day-use guests include picnicking, BBQ, hiking, biking and bird-watching. The meadow offers a large area for outdoor games or group gatherings. For the younger set, there is a fun modern playground. Guests may also enjoy winter group camping offered nearby at RivCoPark's Lawler Lodge and Lawler Alpine Cabins.

Day use fees are \$6 for ages 13 and older, \$3 per child. Camping fees are \$30-\$35 per night, including 6 people and 2 vehicles. Extra vehicle fee is \$6 per vehicle. Group camping is \$280 per night, minimum of 40 guests, paid in advance.

## **Lake Cahuilla Veterans Regional Park**

### **Lake Cahuilla Veterans Regional Park**

58075 Jefferson Street

La Quinta CA 92253

Phone: (760) 564-4712

<https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/lake-cahuilla-veterans-regional-park/>

Lake Cahuilla Veterans Regional Park is a beautiful 710-acre park set amid expansive lawns and picturesque mountain views, making it a -spectacular day or overnight destination. Situated at the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains 6 miles South East of Old Town La Quinta, Lake Cahuilla offers a delightful experience in the Coachella Valley.

With 62 hookup campsites, 10 water only, 20 equestrian campsites, and 35 dry camping sites near the gorgeous Santa Rosa Mountains, Lake Cahuilla is a natural getaway and easy destination for anyone looking to quickly escape city life into unparalleled scenery and the many outdoor activities available. Fishing in the 135-acre lake, hiking and horseback riding on nearby trails are just a few of the great experiences guests can expect. Open grass areas with picnic tables and barbecues are ideal for hosting a range of special events from birthday parties to company gatherings. Amenities include picnic facilities, dump stations, showers, restrooms, brills and fire rings.

Day use fees are \$6 for ages 13 and older, \$3 per child. Camping fees are \$24-\$45 per night. Fishing permits are \$10 per adult over 13 years, and \$8 per child.

Located 4 mi. SE of La Quinta. Take Interstate 10 to Monroe St., Monroe S to Ave. 58, Ave. 58 W two miles to park.

## **Lake Hemet**

### **Lake Hemet**

56570 Highway 74, Box 4

Mountain Center, CA 92561

Phone: (951) 659-2680

<https://www.golakehemet.com/>

Lake Hemet consists of 420 surface acres and has 4.5 miles of shoreline set at an elevation of 4,340 feet. It is part of the San Bernardino National Forest. Lake Hemet is a very beautiful lake with crystal clear water and the surrounding mountains provide spectacular scenery. The lake is open year round. Day use fee is \$25.00 per car.

Camping fees are \$55-\$74, 6 people, 2 tents and 1 vehicle max per site. Extra vehicle fee is \$25. . There are also picnic areas, horseshoe pits, a kid's playground and hiking trails. There is a lake store for tackle and supplies. Swimming is only permitted in certain areas. Group sites are \$350-\$525 per night, up to 75 people and 16 vehicles depending on the site. Group sites include picnic tables, fire rings, trash cans, restrooms and showers. RV, glamping and lake view cabins also available.

There is a launch ramp available for \$20 per vessel, they also offer kayak, pedal boat, motorboat and pontoon boat rentals.

Lake Hemet is located in the San Jacinto Mountains, approx. 25 miles East of the city of Hemet in Riverside Co. From I-10 in Beaumont, exit on hwy 79 South (Lamb Canyon Road). Turn Left on Ramona Expressway, then turn left at the end at hwy. 74 (Florida Ave.). Continue on Hwy. 74 18 miles to the lake.

**Lake Perris State Recreation Area****Lake Perris State Recreation Area**

17801 Lake Perris Drive

Perris, CA 92571

Phone: (951) 940-5603

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=651](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=651)

Lake Perris consists of 2,250 surface acres and 10 miles of shoreline at capacity. It sets at an elevation of 1,588 feet. The Park is open from 7AM-8PM (Nov 3-Mar 9) and 6AM-10PM (Mar 10-Nov 2). Entrance fee starts at is \$10 per car, \$20 for holidays and peak season weekends. There is a bait shop and a mini-mart to serve your needs.

Camping is available for \$35 for non-hookup and \$45 for hookups. Group camping is \$300.00 per unit, per night, 100 people and 20 vehicles maximum are allowed in each group unit. Call for reservations! (800) 444-7275. Ranger Station (951) 940- 5600. Visit the Perris Lake Website for fees, camping info. and reservations.

Boating, Skiing and Float-tubing are allowed. There is an excellent launch facility for \$8 per vessel. Rental boats and over-night slips are available at the marina (909) 657-2179. ALL VESSELS MUST BE OFF THE WATER BY SUNSET.

Lake Perris is also open to divers and snorkelers and has at least 15 feet visibility but usually more. The summer time is usually very crowded with jet skiers and ski boats flying around but the swells can be used to your advantage in some of the small coves if you are an experienced fisher.

Lake Perris is located Southeast of the city of Riverside, CA. From L.A. take I-10 East to I-15 South. Take 215 South and exit Ramona Expressway. Follow the signs to the lake entrance.

**Lake Skinner Reservoir****Lake Skinner Recreation Area**

37701 Warren Road

Winchester, CA 92596

Phone: (951) 926-1505

<https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/lake-skinner-recreation-area/>

Skinner Reservoir, also known as Lake Skinner, is a reservoir in western Riverside County, California, located at the foot of Bachelor Mountain in the Auld Valley, approximately 10 miles northeast of Temecula.

Lake Skinner is located in Riverside Co. near the city of Temecula. Take the I - 215 to Rancho California Road then East through wine country and

follow the signs to the Lake.

The lake consists of 1,200 surface acres and is open 7 days a week from 6AM to sunset. Day use fee is \$6 per adult over 12, and \$3 for youth. Camping is \$30-\$50 per night depending on amenities, and there is a lake store that is well supplied for your needs.

There is a nice launch ramp available for \$7 per launch. Only boats with four-stroke engines or 2001 and later model direct-injection two strokes that comply with CARB emission requirements are allowed. Refueling is prohibited except in designated areas. Sail, electric and man-powered boats are permitted. Float tubes and kayaks are not allowed. Rental boats are available at the marina. Rental boats are available at the marina. Boat slips, dry storage and pull-thru storage is also available. Lake Skinner Marina: (951) 926-1505x4

Fishing permits are \$10 per day for adults, and \$8 for youth. There are trout, catfish, largemouth bass and striped bass. No Swimming/Skiing is allowed and boat speed is limited to "NO WAKE" which makes this a nice, quiet lake for fishing. Fish Report: (800) 234-FISH

This is a family friendly and quiet place to have a group campout. There is also a nice museum near the entrance with a wide variety of things for younger Scouts to do and animals to see.



## **Rancho Jurupa Park**

### **Rancho Jurupa Regional Park**

4600 Crestmore Road

Riverside CA 92509

Phone: (951) 684-7032

<https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/rancho-jurupa-regional-park/>

Rancho Jurupa Park is situated along the Santa Ana River and located behind Mt. Rubidoux just west of charming historic downtown Riverside. This popular award-winning regional park boasts a natural semi-rural setting of shady cottonwood trees, graceful meadows, and two lovely lakes, while still providing easy access to the entertainment opportunities and urban conveniences of the city.

Visitors to Rancho Jurupa Park enjoy a gorgeous 200-acre recreational area with many amenities including a thrilling splash pad for water play, a rock climbing playground, miniature golf surrounded by spectacular waterfalls, a disc golf course and two fishing lakes. Overnight guests can choose from two great campgrounds that suit the needs of tent and RV campers alike. Lakeview Campground is a popular camping spot for both RV and tent campers; while Cottonwood Campground is designed to meet the needs of RV campers. Day use hours are 7AM to sunset 7 days a week.

Day use fees are \$6 ages 13 and up, \$3 per child. Camping fees are \$40-\$55 per night. Fishing permits are \$10 per adult and \$8 per child 12 and younger.

(Sources: previous versions of Camping Guide, and listed websites)

## **Other Camping and Volunteer Resources**

A few more places to find awesome campgrounds, activities and volunteer opportunities:

### **California's Best Camping**

A Guide to the Golden State's Finest Campgrounds lists complete Information about more than 600 of California's Best Campgrounds. <http://www.californiasbestcamping.com/index.html>



### **Vista Recreation**

Vista Recreation is a private company who partners with multiple public agencies at the federal, state, and local levels to operate campgrounds and recreation areas under long-term concession agreements. They operate locations nationwide, and are continually expanding. Their website is designed to help you find the right location for your next outdoor destination: <https://vista-rec.com/>



## **National Public Lands Day**

People across the country have come together for National Public Lands Day for over 25 years - the largest, single-day volunteer event for America's public lands. This year, National Public Lands is September 28, but events will be held across the country between September 1 and October 8. Hundreds of thousands of individuals and volunteer organizations join hands on National Public Lands Day for maintenance, restoration, improvement, and cleanup projects as well as recreation and hands-on learning activities.

National Public Lands Day is also a fee-free day, meaning entrance fees are waived on all national parks and public lands. Learn more about National Public Lands Day and find an event near you at the National Environments Education Foundation website:

<https://www.neefusa.org/what-we-do/conservation/national-public-lands-day>



## **Revreation.gov**

<https://www.recreation.gov/>

Discover Camping Spots, National Parks & Forests, Tours and More. Discover the best American experiences; learn about epic camping spots, national monument tours, hiking through pristine national parks and forests, renting a cabin on federal lands and so much more.

Find you next adventure with the help of recreation.gov. They will help you dream up your next trip, figure out the details, and reserve experiences at over 3,500 facilities and 100,000 individual sites across the country. There's something for everyone on Recreation.gov, so get out there, experience America, and bring home a story!

## **Rivcoparks.org**

Prefer to start with local adventures? Discover areas in our council, local opportunities for camping and outdoor adventures.

<https://www.rivcoparks.org/>



**RivCoParks.org**  
RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL PARK  
AND OPEN-SPACE DISTRICT

**Consult the Guide to Safe Scouting when planning. The Guide to Safe Scouting is available online at <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/>.**

**NOTE:** Always check the park, lake or camp website for current fees, as well as conditions and closures due to fires, floods or other conditions.



## **About the Order of the Arrow**

For over 100 years, the Order of the Arrow (OA) has recognized Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. This recognition provides encouragement for others to live these ideals as well. Arrowmen are known for maintaining camping traditions and spirit, promoting year-round and long term resident camping, and providing cheerful service to others. OA service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich and help to extend Scouting to America's youth.



### **Mission**

The mission of the Order of the Arrow is to fulfill its purpose as an integral part of the Scouting America through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.

### **Purpose**

As Scouting's National Honor Society, our purpose is to:

- Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.
- Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.
- Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.
- Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

### **History**

In 1915, Camp Director E. Urner Goodman and Assistant Camp Director Carroll A. Edson searched for a way to recognize select campers for their cheerful sprits of service at Treasure Island Scout Camp in the Delaware River. Goodman and Edson founded the Order of the Arrow when they held the first Ordeal Ceremony on July 16th of that year. By 1921, as the popularity of the organization spread to other camps, local lodges attended the first national gathering called a Grand Lodge Meeting.

The Order of the Arrow was one of many camp honor societies that existed at local Scout camps across the country. As the years went on and more camps adopted the Order of the Arrow's program, it gained prominence and became part of the national Scouting program in 1934. By 1948, the OA, recognized as Scouting America's national brotherhood of honor campers, became an official part of the Scouting America. Toward the end of the twentieth century, the OA expanded its focus to include conservation, high adventure, and servant-leadership.

Throughout the years, the Order of the Arrow has played an integral role in the program of Scouting America and in the community service its members contribute to their communities. To date, more than one million people have been members of the Order of the Arrow.

Presently, the Order of the Arrow consists of nearly 300 lodges, which form approximately 48 sections in four regions. Leadership positions and voting rights are restricted to members under the age of 21. Through the program, members live up to the ideals of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service set forth by E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson.



## **Membership**

The OA has more than 160,000 members located in lodges affiliated with approximately 270 local councils. As of August 2018, there is now an OA lodge in every council across the US.

## **Membership Eligibility**

Unit elections are permitted in Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scout units. The Order of the Arrow membership requirements are as follows:

- Be a registered member of the Scouting America.
- Have experienced 15 nights of Scout camping while registered with a troop, crew, or ship within the two years immediately prior to the election. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Scouting America. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement; the balance of the camping (10 nights) must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each. Ship nights may be counted as camping for Sea Scouts.
- At the time of their election, youth must be under the age of 21, and hold one of the following ranks corresponding to the type unit in which they are being considered for election: Scouts BSA First Class rank, the Venturing Discovery rank, or the Sea Scout Ordinary rank or higher, and following approval by the Scoutmaster, Crew Advisor or Sea Scout Skipper, be elected by the youth members of their unit.
- Adults (age 21 or older) who meet the camping requirements may be selected following nomination to and approval by the lodge adult selection committee.

## **Lodges**



Scouts from the Order of the Arrow refurbished the Strawberry Creek Bulletin Board at Camp Emerson (Photo: J. Hermes)

Each local Scout council is encouraged to have an Order of the Arrow lodge. Each lodge is granted a charter from the National Council, upon annual application. The OA lodge helps the local council provide a quality Scouting program through recognition of Scouting spirit and performance, development of youth leadership and service, promotion of Scout camping and outdoor programs, and enhancement of membership tenure.

*This material was adapted from the "OA Factsheet" from the Scouting America national office.*

## **Mission of the Lodge**

The mission of the lodge is to achieve the purpose of the Order of the Arrow as an integral part of the Scouting America in the council through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.

## **About Cahuilla Lodge**

Cahuilla Lodge # 127 was formed January 1, 1973. It was formed from the merger of two older Lodges, Tahquitz Lodge # 127 and Wisumahi Lodge # 478 when the California Inland Empire Council was formed. In 1974, when Grayback Council was absorbed by our council, A-tsa Lodge # 380 also joined Cahuilla. In 2006, the portion of Navajo Lodge # 98 in San Bernardino County joined our Lodge. For more information or to contact the Order of the Arrow, visit us at <http://www.snakepower.org>.



Lodge members working in Joshua Tree National Park (Photo: M. Hare)



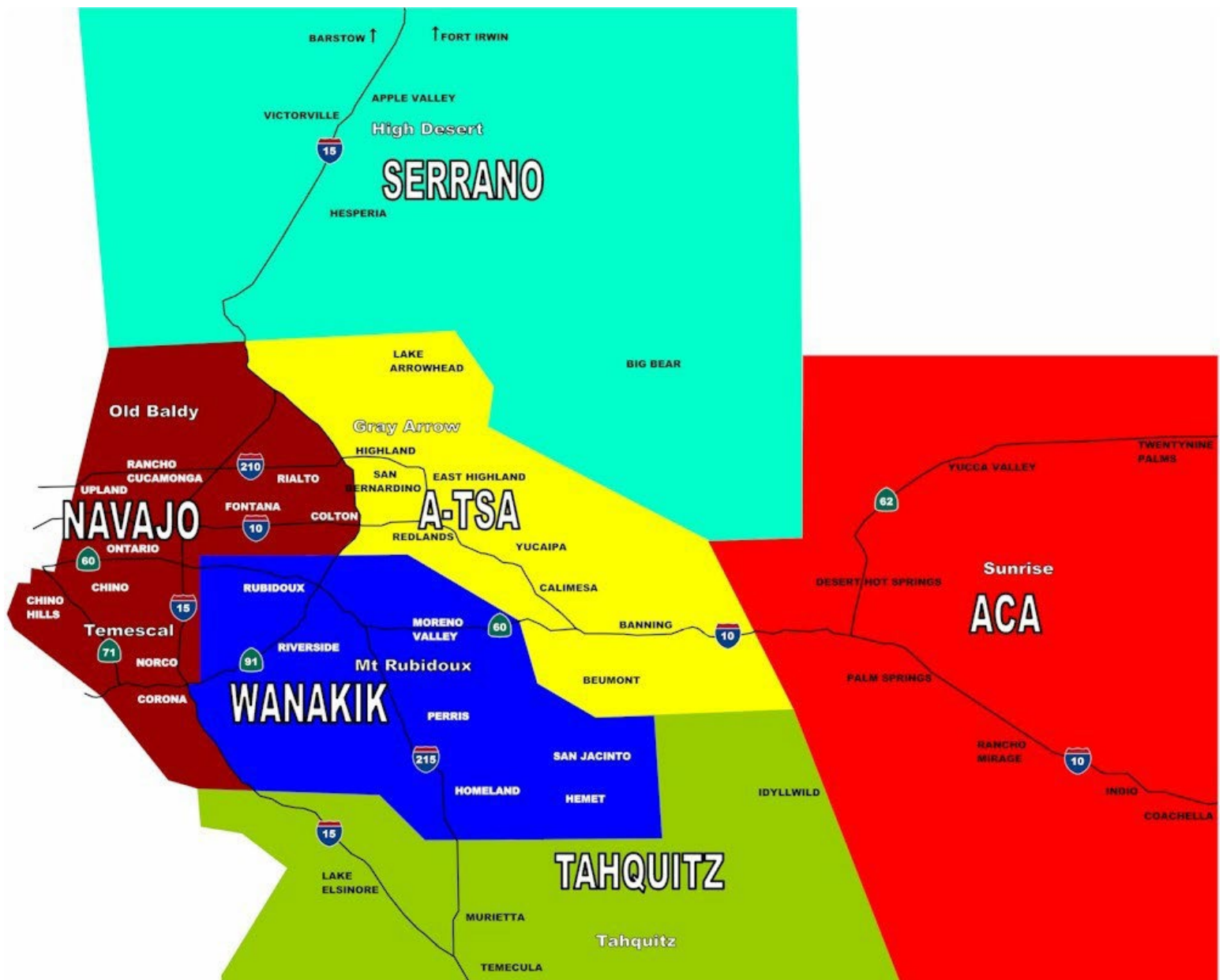
Lodge members playing in the snow (Photo: M. Hare)



Members of Cahuilla Lodge at Area Corps 2 service project in Joshua Tree (Photo: C. Blessum)



## Map of Cahuilla Lodge Chapters and Districts



## **Acknowledgements**

The major revision (version 4.0) to this guide would not have been possible without the assistance and guidance of my professor Ara Pachmayer, PhD. I would also like to thank the following for their contributions:

All the unit leaders who gave me feedback on what they would like to see in the updated guide via the survey I sent out.

California Inland Empire Council Outdoor Ethics advocate Paula Boothe for her input and guidance on the Sustainability and Outdoor Ethics in Scouting America outdoor programs section.

Scouts, Scouters, and Cahuilla Lodge members who submitted photos and information on their favorite campsites.

My classmates, who reviewed and gave valuable feedback on ways to improve the guide.

If you would like to assist on the 2026 version, which will be another major revision, please contact me at [3rdVice@SnakePower.org](mailto:3rdVice@SnakePower.org)

I hope that this guide will be a valuable resource in planning sustainable and memorable outdoor adventures.

See you on the trail,

Andrew Blessum  
Cahuilla Lodge  
California State Polytechnic University, Class of 2024



A Publication of Cahuilla Lodge # 127, Order of the Arrow  
California Inland Empire Council # 45



Photo courtesy of National Park Service