MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE

WELCOME

S
igned into law October 31, 1994, the California Desert Protection Act created the 1.6 million acre Mojave National Preserve in the heart of the Mojave Desert. Mojave National Preserve was established to preserve outstanding natural, cultural and scenic resources while providing for scientific, educational and recreational interests for current and future generations.

Three of North America's four deserts: the Mojave, Great Basin and Sonoran meet in the Preserve to form an immense transition zone. With sand dunes, volcanic cinder cones, desert scrub land and mountain-top forests, Mojave is a land of great diversity.

Mojave is also home to nearly 300 species of animals, including desert bighorn sheep, coyotes, mule deer, and the protected desert tortoise. There are also many types of birds that inhabit the area such as the golden eagle, quail, hummingbirds and roadrunners. Desert plants and animals are adapted to living in this hostile environment. Many have waxy surfaces to reduce moisture loss while the cactus stores its water in fleshy stems. Other common plants include the creosote bush, mesquite, Joshua tree, sagebrush, juniper and pinon pine. With sufficient rainfall during winter and spring, wildflowers can bloom in abundance blanketing the ground in rainbow colors. In all, the Preserve offers one of the most unique ecosystems in the Mojave Desert.

COME PREPARED

Temperatures during the summer often exceed 100F. Be sure to bring enough water for you, your passengers and your vehicle. When hiking carry at least one gallon of water per person. Wear clothing that will protect you against the sun and wind. Nights during the summer may be cool so bring extra layers of clothing. The winter months may also bring adverse weather conditions. Temperatures may drop to below freezing with snow and freezing rain always a possibility. When adventuring on rugged 4x4 roads always let someone know where you are going and bring tools with you that will help if you become stuck in the sand or get a flat tire.

Camping

There are two developed campgrounds in Mojave National Preserve located at Hole in the Wall and at Midhills and also some sites at Providence Mountain State Recreation Area. Mojave's campgrounds have picnic tables, fire rings and pit toilets. Water is available at both campgrounds and is seasonal as the weather changes. Group camping is available at the Hole in the Wall Group and Iguanodon site by reservation only. Camping is also permitted in the backcountry by applying for a permit at least 5 miles from main roadways. When selecting a campsite outside of the established campgrounds please choose a site that has been traditionally used and do not disturb any of the native vegetation. Please call the Baker Information Center for more details.

Cinder Cones (C-3) More than 30 young volcanic cones clustered on the surface of old lava flows are probably the best example of recent volcanic activity (1,000 years ago) in the Mojave Desert. Aiken Cinder Cone Mine Road provides an interesting side trip through the heart of the region. High clearance 4x4 vehicles are recommended.

Hole-In-The-Wall (D-5) At an elevation of 4,300 feet, this popular destination features unusual volcanic rock formations and activities including camping, picnicking and the nearby visitor center. There are also two trails leaving from the area: the Hole In The Wall Rings Trail, leaves the picnic area and travels west approximately one-quarter mile through the volcanic rock using metal rings to descend and the other, the Hole In The Wall Midhills is seven mile trail which starts on Wildhorse Canyon Road near Hole In The Wall and winds through the terrain to Midhills Campground-Elevation change of 1,100 feet. Rock formations on the fragile volcanic rock is not recommended.

PIUTE CREEK/FORT PIUTE (C-7) is located on the easternmost side of the Preserve. It is a favorite of birders, Mojave desert wildlife and trout fishers with stretches along the ridge of the same name, one of the only free flowing streams in the Mojave Desert. It was an important water source for Indians, early explorers and animals. Fort Piute was built by the U.S. Army and served as a base from November 1867 to May 1868. Opportunities abound for hiking and bird watching.

CLARK MOUNTAIN (A-4) is the highest peak in Mojave at 7,929 feet. Mountain tops receive two to three times the rainfall of the lower elevations and are much cooler. These unique habitats support a variety of unique species of plants and animals and areas even a few miles away are among the most interesting desert ecosystems.

PROVIDENCE MOUNTAINS STATE RECREATION AREA (MITCHELL CAVERNS) (D-5) This area is managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and is open for camping, hiking and picnicking. Also open are the Mitchell Caves, known as Mitchell Caverns.