



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

# Lost Creek

Children's Discovery Trail Guide



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

Southern Nevada District Office • Nevada





# LOST CREEK-CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY TRAIL GUIDE

Thank you for spending time learning and observing some of the secrets that Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area has to offer.

Feel free to talk to a ranger or naturalist at the visitor center if you have questions.

Please follow the following "Leave No Trace" principles during your visit:

- **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO- BE PREPARED!** Bring clothes to protect you from cold, heat, or rain. Use maps to show you where you'll be going and so you won't get lost. Remember to bring a leash for your pet and plastic bags to pick up your pet's waste.
- **CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATH-** Stay on the main trail to protect nature and keep from wandering off by yourself.
- **TRASH YOUR TRASH-** Pack it in, Pack it out. Put litter, even crumbs, in trash cans or carry it home. Use bathrooms or outhouses when available. If you have to "go," act like a cat and bury poop in a small hole 4-8 inches deep and 100 big steps from water. Place your toilet paper in a plastic bag and put the bag in a garbage can back home. Keep water clean. Keep soap, food, and poop out of lakes and streams.
- **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND-** Leave plants, rocks, and historical items as you find them so the next person can enjoy them. Treat living plants with respect. Hacking or peeling plants can kill them. Good campsites are found, not made. Avoid digging trenches or building structures in your campsite.
- **BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE-** Use a camp stove for cooking. It's easier to cook on and clean up than a fire. Be sure it's OK to build a campfire in the area you're visiting. Use an existing fire ring to protect the ground from heat. Keep your fire small. Remember, campfires aren't for trash or food. Avoid snapping branches off live, dead, or downed trees. Instead, collect loose sticks from the ground. Burn all wood to ash and be sure that the fire is completely out and cold before you leave.
- **RESPECT WILDLIFE-** Observe animals from a distance and never approach, feed or follow them. Human food is unhealthy for all animals and feeding them starts bad habits. Protect wildlife and your food by storing your meals and trash. Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- **BE KIND TO OTHER VISITORS-** Make sure the fun you have in the outdoors does not bother anyone else. Remember that other visitors are there to enjoy the outdoors. Listen to nature. Avoid making loud noises or yelling. You will see more animals if you are quiet.



## A natural resource education guide for school children.

The purpose of this guide is to orient students and teachers to the natural area found in Lost Creek Canyon. Information about flash flooding, shrub and tree identification, uses of plants, early Native American lifestyles, natural springs and resource sensitivity is included.

More in-depth information on all these subjects is available from naturalists at the Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center. Visitor center hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily.

## Safety, Desert Conservation and Ethics

### Desert Safety

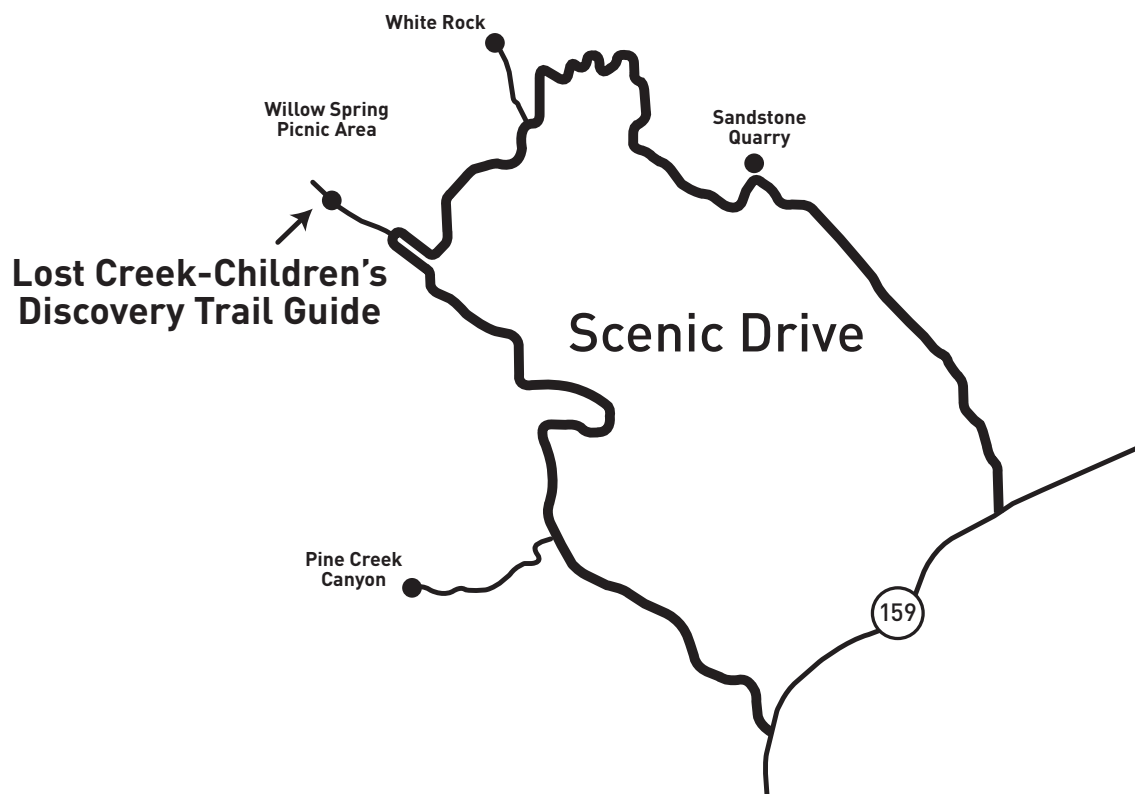
While examining plants and rocks, be aware that these may be the homes of small animals. Lift rocks from the far side so scorpions and spiders are not able to sting or bite you. Never put your hands where you cannot see first - especially in the shade. Snakes prefer shade to keep cool.

### Desert Conservation and Ethics

Do not collect plants, flowers or rocks because these may be food or shelter for smaller creatures. Other students will be using this same trail for learning about Red Rock Canyon. They will want to see the same natural objects that you examined to learn about the area.



**Do not write on rock walls. Leave their natural beauty for others to enjoy.**



# INTRODUCTION

## Welcome to Lost Creek-Children's Discovery Trail at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

You are about to set out on a hike, exploring with your senses. You will see, hear, smell and feel a few of the secrets this trail has to offer.

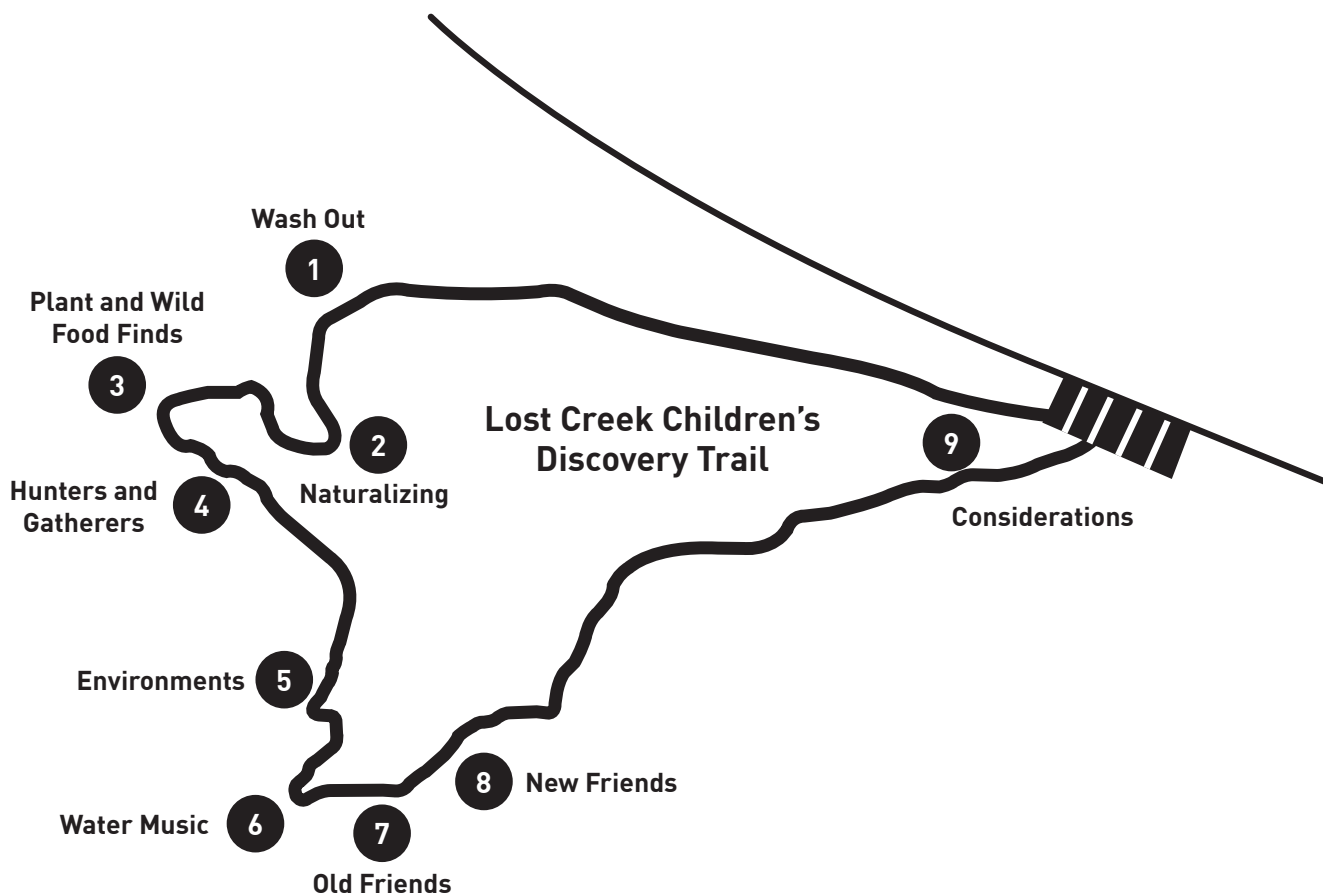
You will hike a half-mile, climb up and down several hills and scramble over several large sandstone rocks.

Please walk with care!

Carry water and dress according to the weather. Temperatures may range from 35°F/1.7°C in February to 110°F/43.7°C in July.

Go slowly along the trail. Watch your step. Enjoy all there is to experience.

We hope this booklet will help you to become aware of some of the many natural features that exist in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.





# WASH OUT 1

Look to your right and left. What do you see? \_\_\_\_\_

We are in a wash which fills up quickly with water when flash flooding occurs. When it rains, where do you think the water goes? \_\_\_\_\_

Look in front of you. How do you think all the large boulders got to where they are? \_\_\_\_\_

Flash floods are one of the many dangers in a desert environment. When it rains, all the water does not soak into the ground. The desert floor is hard, and the water rapidly runs off. Running water is the greatest erosional force in the desert. Yet the desert receives less than ten inches of rain a year. Do you think there are a lot of floods here? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you think flash floods are most likely to occur? \_\_\_\_\_

How can you avoid being caught in flash floods? \_\_\_\_\_



## PLANTS ALONG THE TRAIL 2

As you leave the wash and enter the vegetated area, see if you can locate and identify a cactus, a shrub and two trees along the trail by using the descriptions and drawings found on this page.

Put a check in the box by each one that you find.

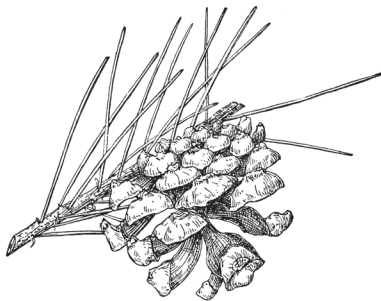
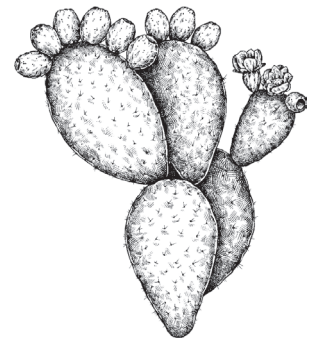


### ☐ Desert Manzanita

A medium sized shrub, leaves are bluish-gray, bark is red and berries look like small apples.

### ☐ Prickly Pear

A cactus, has pads that are oblong like a pancake. They have brown to reddish spines sticking out of the pads. They may have few spines or many spines like an old man's beard.

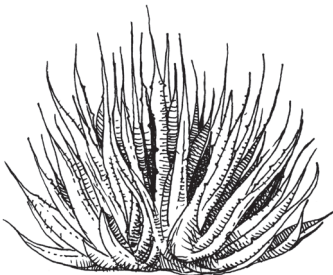
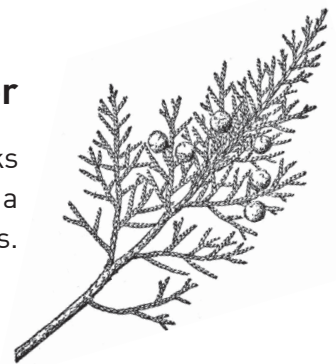


### ☐ Piñon Pine

A tree, the single needles are one inch long. The seeds inside the pine cones taste great when roasted. The Native Americans cooked them in roasting pits.

### ☐ Utah Juniper

A tree, has scalelike, light green foliage. The bark is gray in color and looks like it is peeling. The cones are round, small, have a blueish color and have a waxy covering, often mistaken as berries.



### ☐ Agave

A cactus, small, thick, wide toothed leaves. Will grow 7 to 10 years, shoots a stalk 15 feet tall in 30 days to bloom and produces fruit before it dies.

## PLANT AND WILD FOOD FINDS 3

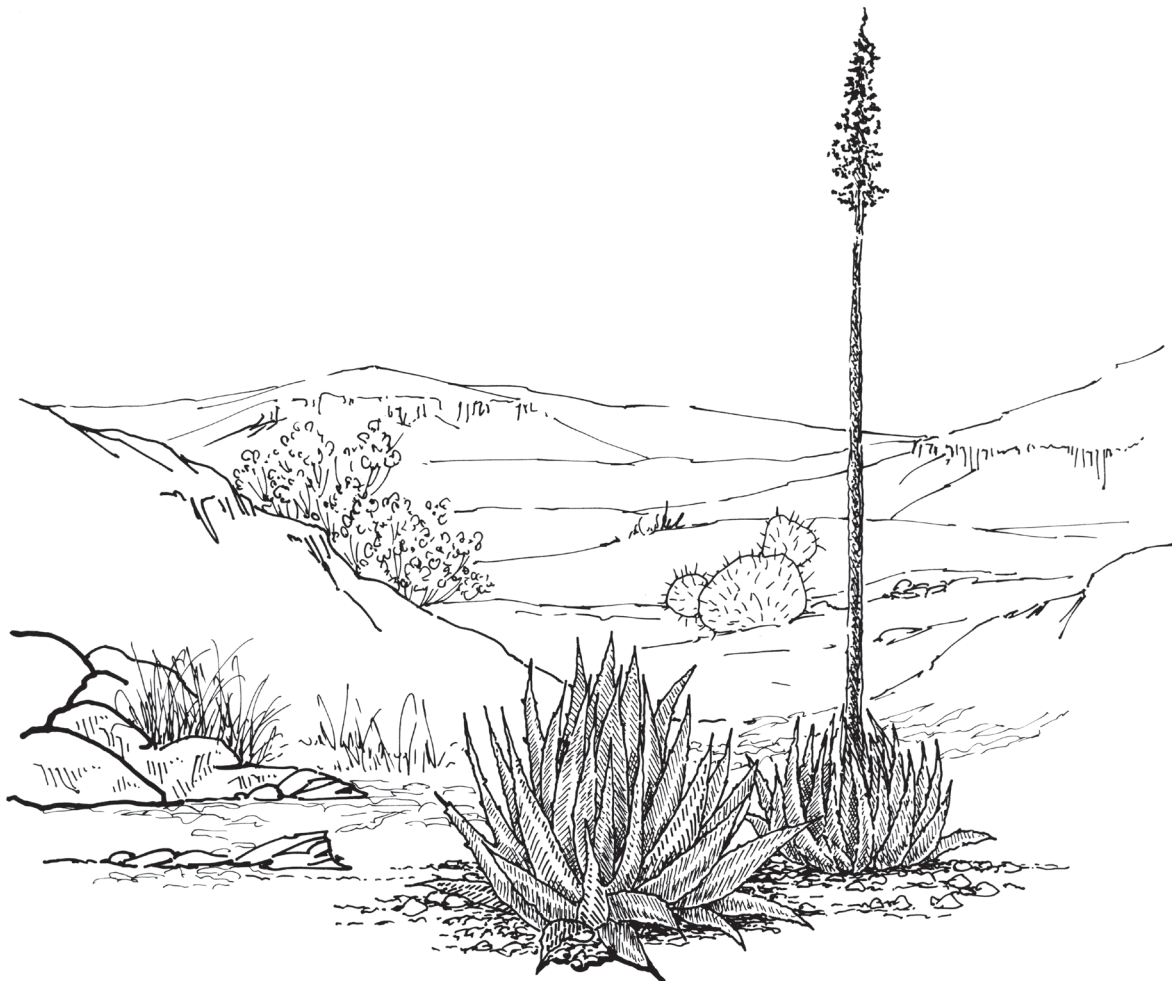
Several hundred years ago, the Southern Paiute people, also called the Nuwuvi walked the same trail in search of the agave plant, piñon pine nuts and many more edible plants. These plants served as a major source of food. They ate the inner part of the agave, much like we eat an artichoke, after roasting it.

Study the picture of the agave plant. Watch carefully for this plant along the trail.

Caution! Be careful when you find an agave. The leaves of the plant are sharp and can cut your fingers or hand.

Did you find the agave? \_\_\_\_\_

What did you observe about the agave? \_\_\_\_\_



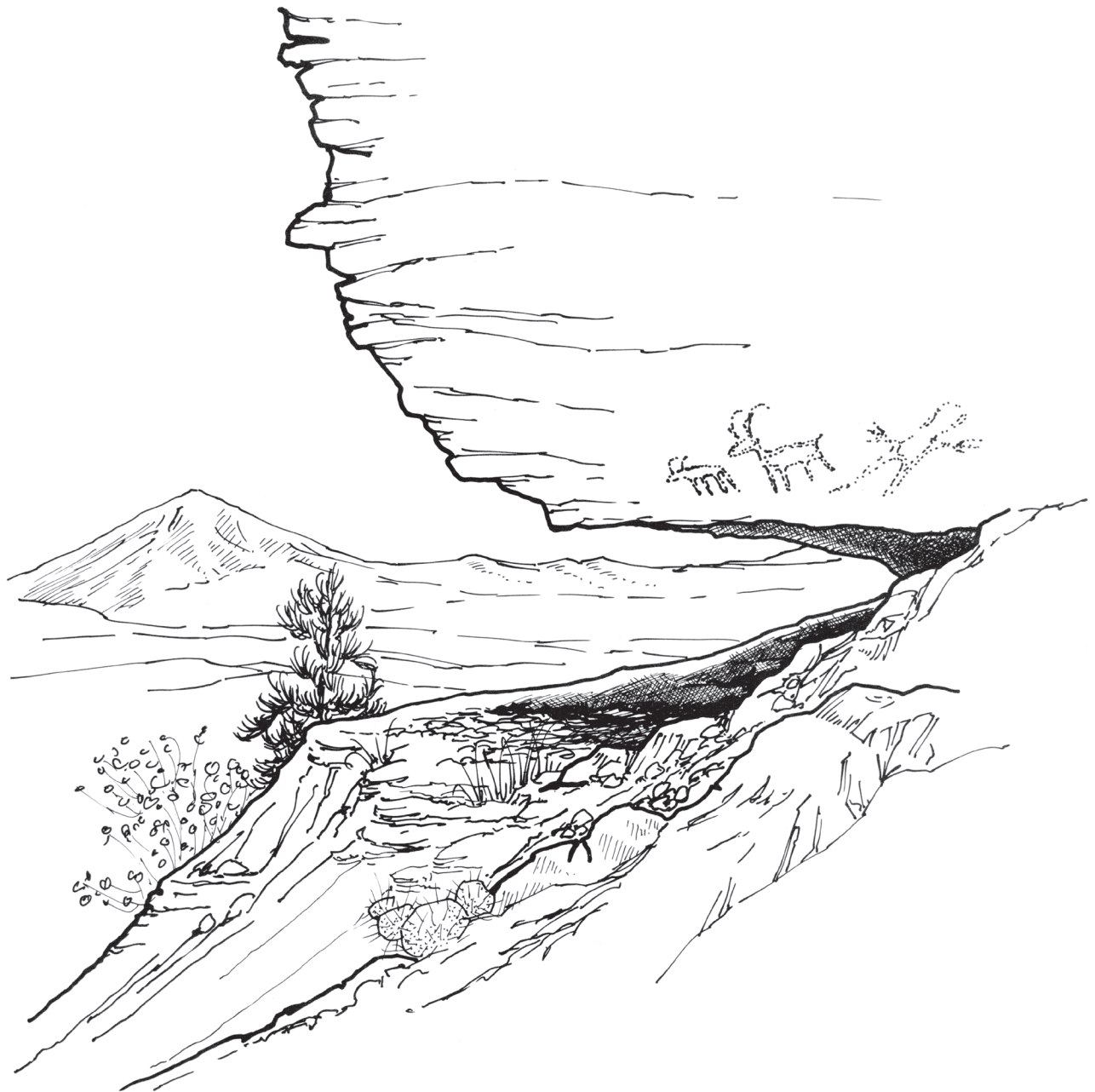


## HUNTERS AND GATHERERS 4

The Nuwuvi people searched for plants every day. They got meat from game animals they killed.

As the seasons changed, the Nuwuvi moved their homes. Oftentimes, they lived in rock shelters, like the one in front of you. In the heat of the summer, they moved up into the mountains, looking for game and enjoying the cooler weather. In the winter months, they would live closer to the desert floor.

Lost Creek and Willow Spring are rich in cultural resources. Along with rock shelters, you might see pictographs, which were painted on the rocks. Other cultural resources are petroglyphs carved into the rocks with tools made from local materials and agave roasting pits, which are limestone-lined cooking pits.



## ENVIRONMENTS 5

You have already experienced several distinct environments on your hike today. In front of you is another: a desert meadow. Think of all the different plants and animals that inhabit each environment you have seen. Think about where you would expect to find a cottontail rabbit, a desert bighorn, a quail, a whiptail lizard or butterflies. Why do certain forms of life only live in certain environments? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Look around at the grasses and rushes to the left of the trail. Look at the different colors and shapes! Listen to the wind rustling through the meadow.

Write a sentence or two describing what makes this a good environment for plants and animals to live:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

After a winter snowstorm or a summer thunderstorm, numerous waterfalls cascade upon the rocks. A few yards down and to your right, a trail continues to a large waterfall. The waterfall is part of a box canyon. If you would like to explore the box canyon and take a chance at seeing a running waterfall, then follow the trail, and you will reach the end of the canyon. If no water is flowing, you will see a wide black line upon the headwall in front of you. This line is produced by the water cascading down after a storm, leaving behind dissolved minerals. You will also see old friends.



# WATER MUSIC 6

Sit down with care and close your eyes. Listen closely to the many sounds around you.

What do you hear? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do the sounds make you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did the water have different tones? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

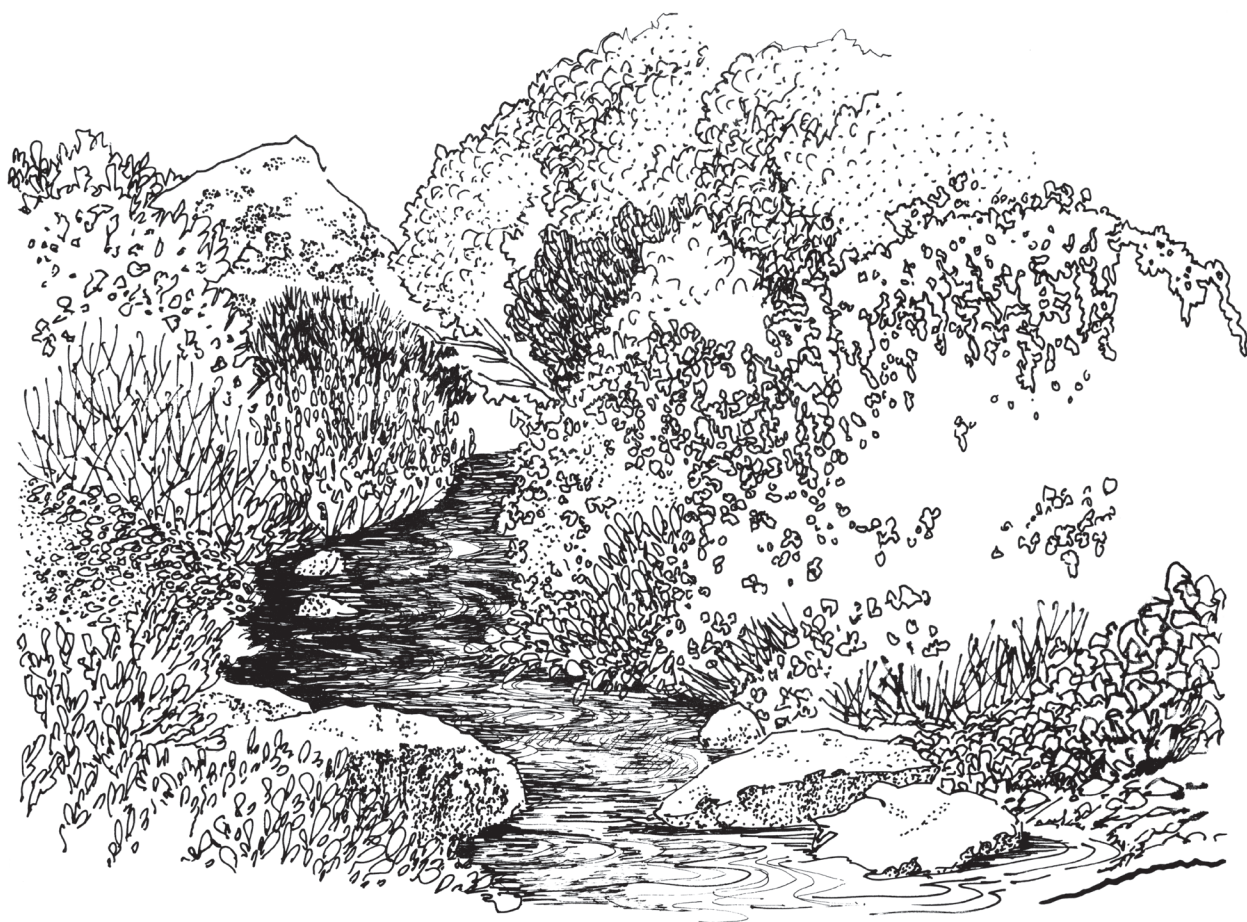
Were they pleasing to the ear? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Write down what it sounds like: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## OLD FRIENDS 7

Every tree has a character of its own. The Ponderosa Pine tree before you is no exception. Close your eyes and run your hand over the bark.

How does it feel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Look way up through the branches. What do you see? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you give the tree a name? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does the bark smell like? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why does a tree grow here? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## NEW FRIENDS 8

You have returned to the wash. Can you spot the Desert Willow from looking at the picture? Feel the branches of the Desert Willow in front of you.

What do the branches do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does this tree feel in comparison to others you have touched today? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think the branches of the Desert Willow are bendable and green? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do these trees grow here? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## CONSIDERATIONS 9

Before you leave the Lost Creek-Children's Discovery Trail and Red Rock Canyon, consider the following questions:

Did Red Rock Canyon supply the Nuwuvi with all of their needs? How? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

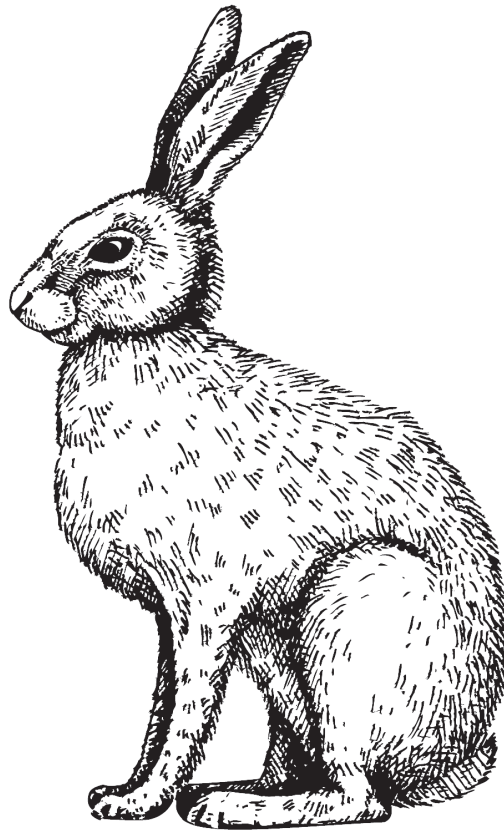
---

Do you think people today still need places like Red Rock Canyon? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

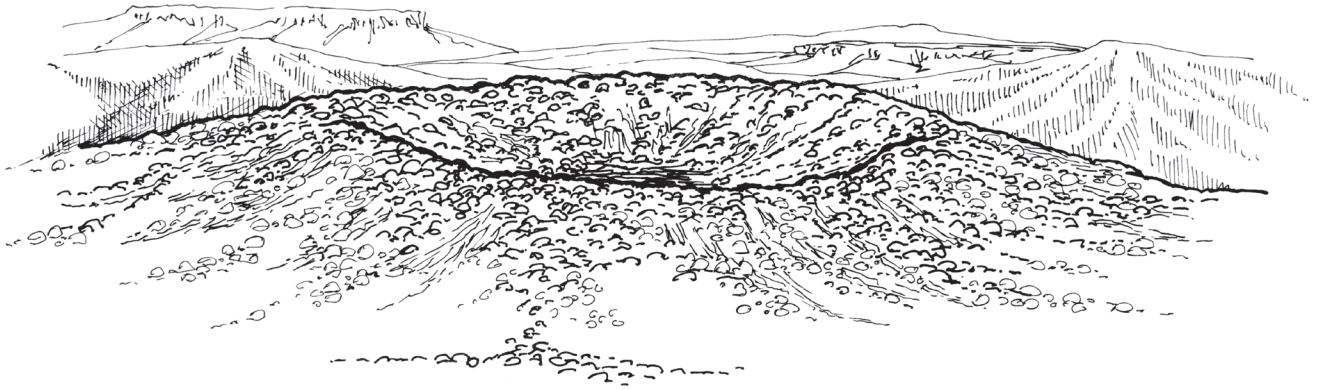
---





## OPTIONAL STOP: ANCIENT KITCHEN

The roasting pit is 0.4 miles from the Lost Creek-Children's Discovery Trail parking lot by trail. If you choose to drive to Willow Spring Picnic area, the agave roasting pit and pictographs are about 50 yards from the restroom on the East side of the road.



Try to imagine how many roasts took place here. Each piece of limestone you see was only used a few times to provide heat for cooking. After a roast, the Nuwuvi would remove the rocks to get the cooked food below. In addition to agave, the Nuwuvi roasted many types of plants and meats in roasting pits.

Would you like to have been a Nuwuvi living in Red Rock Canyon cooking your food in a roasting pit and living in rock shelters? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

# GLOSSARY

**Cactus-** a plant with fleshy stems and branches with scales or spines instead of leaves.

**Cultural Resources-** fragile and non-renewable remains of human activity, such as pottery, drawings or dwellings.

**Desert-** a region receiving less than ten inches of rain each year.

**Environment-** a person's, plant, or animals total surroundings.

**Erosional Force-** the movement of particles of the land surface by wind, water, ice or earth movements.

**Foliage-** the leaves of growing plants.

**Limestone-** a rock type formed chiefly of the remains of shells or coral.

**Meadow-** a tract of grassland.

**Mineral-** any substance that is neither animal nor vegetable: inorganic matter.

**Natural Elements-** parts of the environment, as in soil, water, air and sunlight.

**Nuwuvi/Paiute-** a Native American tribe that has inhabited southern Nevada for hundreds of years.

**Petroglyphs-** carvings on rocks made by various southern Nevada Native American groups hundreds to thousands of years ago.

**Pictographs-** paintings on rocks drawn by various southern Nevada Native American groups hundreds to thousands of years ago.

**Roasting Pit-** a circular limestone ring where Native Americans buried and roasted their food.

**Rush-** a grass-like marsh plant that has a round, hollow stem.

**Sandstone-** a rock type composed predominantly of small quartz grains cemented by iron oxide, lime, silica or other materials.

**Wash-** a river bed created by flash floods. It is normally dry except after heavy rains when it flows with a strong current.

## **This publication was designed, written and illustrated by staff members of the Bureau of Land Management in Nevada.**

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the stewardship of our public lands. It is committed to manage, protect, and improve these lands in a manner to serve the needs of the American people for all times. Management is based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield of our nation's resources within a framework of environmental responsibility and scientific technology. These resources include recreation; rangelands; timber; minerals; watershed; fish and wildlife; wilderness; air; scenic; scientific and cultural values.

Cost of production and printing of the Lost Creek-Children's Discovery Trail Booklet supported by Southern Nevada Conservancy.

Original text and editing by Geoff Gross and Becky Bell. Text revisions by Carol Ward. Illustrations and maps by Diane Colcord.

Revised text and editing by Kate Sorom, Margie Klein, Jennifer Maggio and Janis Kadlec.