



Red Rock Canyon NCA Environmental Education Program

Red Spring Boardwalk

Location: East of the Visitor Center and Scenic Loop on Calico Basin

Length: ½ mile round trip

Difficulty: Easy; wheelchair accessible

Estimated Minimum Hike Time: 30 minutes

Facilities: Four vault toilets; two near picnic area, two across parking lot. No water available.

General Description:

This boardwalk hike starts in a picnic area, then leads to a loop near Red Spring. There are several stops with wayside signs along the trail.

Background:

The year round Red Spring is fed by snow and rainfall. This precipitation soaks into the limestone mountains, moving through the rock until it reaches an impermeable layer, such as shale. This then forces the water into a more concentrated stream, creating the perched spring we see today.

The reliable springs, and consequent variety of edible plants, richer soils, and abundance of animals, has made Red Spring an important area for more than six thousand years. Evidence of various Native cultures can be found in the area through pot shards, projectile points, and grinding stones. Several examples of rock art, estimated to be five thousand years old, can also be seen from the boardwalk.

In 1876 Sandstone Ranch was developed by James B. Wilson and George Anderson. The ranch was the first cattle ranch operation in the area, and Wilson remained until his death in 1906. In 1915, Ella M. Mason filed for water rights and was granted a 162 acre homestead in 1922 through the Homestead Act.

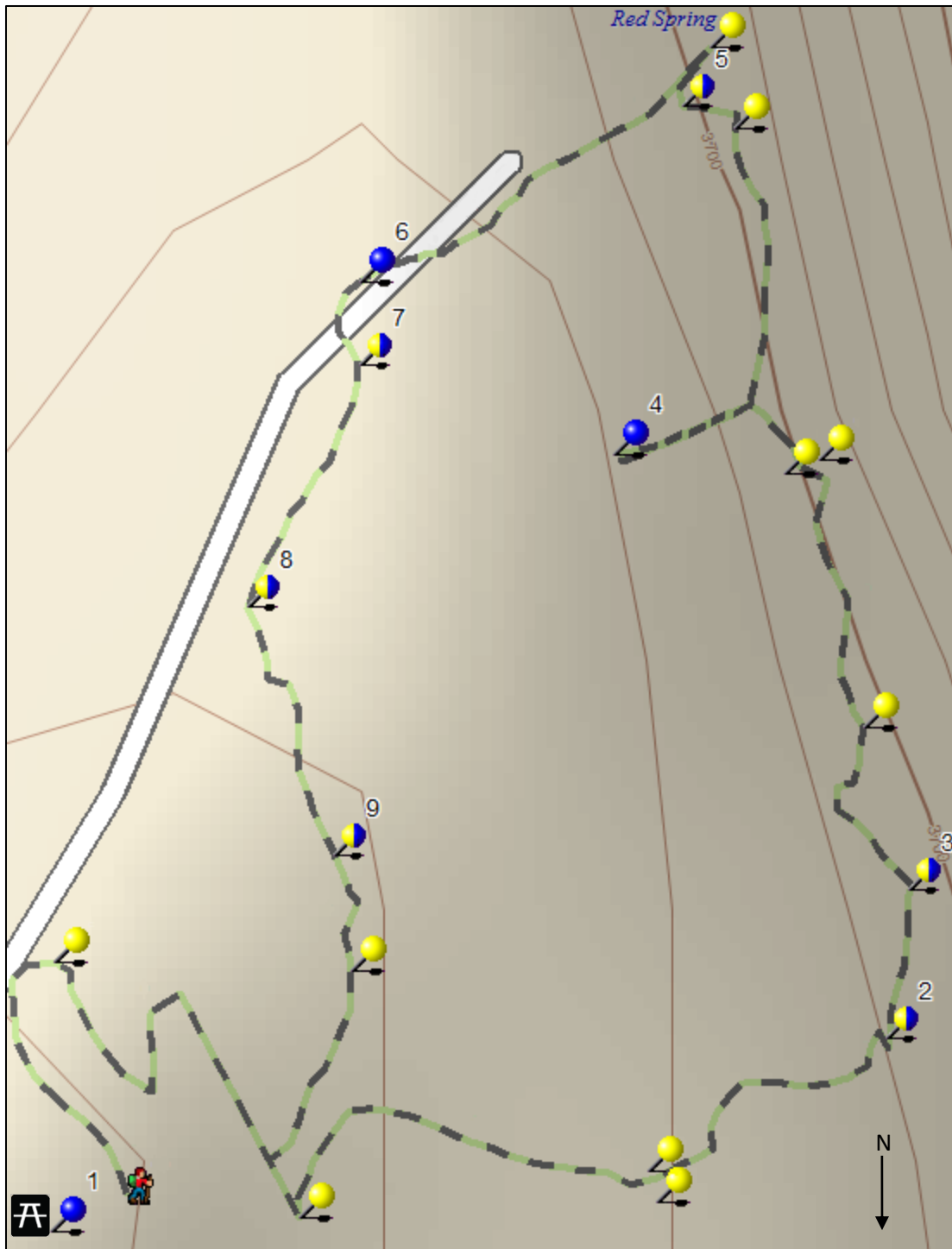
In 1944 the land reverted back to the Sandstone Ranch and was turned into a vacation retreat for the Chet Lauck family. They continued to run a cattle operation and opened a boys camp, naming it the Bar Nothing Ranch. The ranch was bought by German actress Vera Krupp in 1955. She renamed it Spring Mountain Ranch, leased an additional 300,000 acres of federal grazing land, and ran the largest cattle operation in the area until she sold the ranch in 1967.

Upon the sale, the Department of the Interior established Red Rock Canyon Recreation Lands to protect the area. This was increased to 198,000 acres and designated as a National Conservation Area in 1990. Through decades of livestock use and a large number of recreational visitors, the fragile system at Red Spring was damaged and many of the endemic species were nearly destroyed. The boardwalk was built in 2005 to help protect and restore the area, and today enables visitors to enjoy it in its healthy, natural state.

About the Hike:

The following trail map includes markers for suggested activity stop locations. It is not necessary to use any or all of these locations, and depending on the activities you choose you may only use a few. Please see each activity for which stops are suggested for that particular activity's location.

Red Spring Boardwalk Trail Map



Legend	
	Trail
	Trailhead
	Picnic Area
	Suggested Activity Stop Locations
	Wayside signs