



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# Desert Discovery Center

Your Recreation Destination - Barstow Field Office

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## Overview

The BLM's Desert Discovery Center is a 7,000 square foot facility surrounded by 12 acres of public land in Barstow. The Desert Discovery Center partners with local, county, state, federal and private agencies and organizations to provide students, educators and visitors year-round opportunities to learn about public land and the history of the Mojave Desert and the California Historic Route 66 National Scenic Byway. The Desert Discovery Center receives about 10,500 visitors per year.

The partnership created environment-based education programs that provide focused learning of the natural world while inspiring environmental stewardship. Programs are offered to K-12 students, high desert residents, and visiting visitors from all over the world. Visitors can enjoy a native plant and animal habitat in a secret garden and pond area with art installations.

## Old Woman Meteorite

The Desert Discovery Center houses the "Old Woman Meteorite", the second largest meteorite found in the United States. In late 1975, the meteorite was discovered in the southwestern portion of the Old Woman Mountains. The Old Woman Meteorite was sent to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. for study, with results signifying it to be one of a kind. Its authenticity was verified by Dr. Roy Clarke of the Smithsonian Institute.

The Meteorite weighs 6,070 pounds, and is 38 inches long, 30 inches wide and 34 inches high. It is composed mostly of iron, contains about 6% nickel and has trace amounts of cobalt, phosphorus, chromium and sulphur. In 1980, the Smithsonian sent the meteorite back to the California Desert and remains on permanent display at the Desert Discovery Center.

## Main Street Murals

The Main Street Murals is the nonprofit lead for the partnership and facility. Their mission is to develop and implement a comprehensive formal and informal education center with programs focusing on the natural, cultural, and historic resources associated with the Mojave Desert.

## California Historic Route 66 National Scenic Byway Gateway

The Desert Discovery Center also serves as a BLM Route 66 Gateway partner to help enhance public awareness to promote, preserve, and protect cultural and historic resources along the California Historic Route 66 National Scenic Byway between Needles and Barstow, and adjacent BLM-managed public land, and National Conservation Lands, including the Mojave Trails National Monument.

In 2015, the BLM and California Historic Route 66 Association completed a Corridor Management Plan for this segment of Route 66 and in 2020, partnered to submit a byway nomination. In February 2021, the Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byways Program designated the California segment of Route 66 a National Scenic Byway. The Desert Discovery Center is the doorway to discover the California Historic Route 66 National Scenic Byway's ten thousand year history.

## For More Information

Contact the BLM Barstow Field Office  
(760) 252-6000  
<https://www.blm.gov/barstow>

