



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

Rainbow Basin Natural Area

Owl Canyon Campground - Your Recreation Destination - Barstow Field Office



Overview

The Rainbow Basin Natural Area, managed by the BLM's Barstow Field Office, is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) with outstanding landscapes, geological, and paleontological features.

Visitors are drawn to the diverse multi-colored rock landscapes, and scenic canyons and washes. The multicolored rock walls are accented by changing light conditions, creating dramatic photographic opportunities and the washes are good hiking trails to spot wildlife and take in views.

A variety of desert wildlife are found in the Rainbow Basin, including pronghorn, prairie rattlesnakes, mule deer, jack rabbits, birds, insects, lizards, and the desert tortoise. Wildlife viewing is best during early morning and evening hours. In Fossil, Coon and Owl Canyons, birds gather in thick vegetation, which provides wildlife water, food, and shelter.

Recreation activities include hiking, camping, photography, sightseeing, vehicle touring, and horseback riding. The Fossil Canyon Loop Road, a one-way narrow dirt road, is an interesting route for vehicle touring. A high clearance or four-wheel drive vehicle is recommended and do not attempt the loop in a RV or trailered vehicle. Fossils found in the area include camel, three-toed horse, do-bears, sabre-tooth cats, mastodons, and pygmy rhinoceros.

The Rainbow Basin Natural Area is about eight miles north of Barstow, off Irwin Road (not Fort Irwin Road). The main access route is Fossil Bed Road.

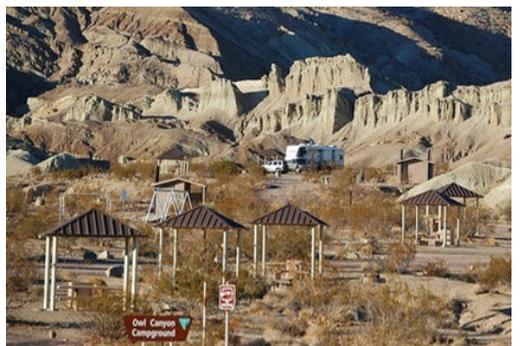
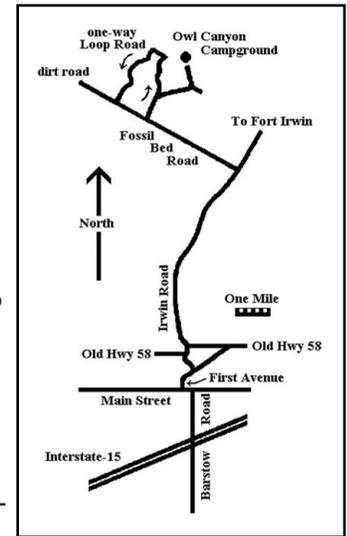
Know Before You Go

- Permits are needed to remove fossils. If any are found, leave them in place and notify the Barstow Field Office at (760) 252-6000.
- Be aware weather extremes and poisonous snakes are common desert hazards. Rainbow Basin also has a flash flood risk. Avoid low-lying areas during storms and remember that rain upstream can cause flooding even though it is not raining in the immediate area.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Bring adequate water, food, clothing, and first aid supplies.
- Rainbow Basin is a mix of public and private lands. Respect landowners' rights. All BLM California Desert District offices sell Land Status maps that show land ownership (public, private, state and military).
- Drive only on routes signed as open. Routes not signed as "open" are closed to all vehicles. All washes are closed to vehicle travel to protect these areas.
- Staging off-road vehicles/ATVs is prohibited in the Rainbow Basin ACEC and Owl Canyon Campground.

Camping and Fees

For More Information

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



The Owl Canyon

