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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
King Range Project Office
P.O. Box 189, 768 Shelter Cove Road
Whitethorn, CA 95589
www.ca.blm.gov/kingrange

King Range National Conservation Area: Roads & Trails Report

December 3, 2025

Winter storms can create road closures due to heavy snow, flooding, downed trees, and/or downed power lines.

This Roads and Trail report is best used in conjunction with a King Range National Conservation Area (KRNCA) “Map & Guide” and “Trip Planning Guide” which can be found at both the BLM KRNCA home page and the KRNCA Wilderness Permit reservation site (Recreation.Gov). Conditions can vary dramatically in this area as it encompasses 68,080 acres from sea level up to 4,088 feet. Please familiarize yourself with boundaries (National Conservation Area, King Range Wilderness, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, and private properties).

Roadways: Roads throughout the KRNCA are narrow, winding, and often rough. Drive slowly and watch for potholes and steep shoulders. When navigating roadways within the KRNCA, ensure appropriate vehicle safety equipment is present in automobile (i.e., properly inflated spare tire, jack, and wrench). Cellphone reception is very limited to none; an SOS emergency communication device is recommended.

Trails: Trails throughout the KRNCA include the Lost Coast Trail and a wide array of upland trail networks to create your own adventure. Conditions to consider when planning a trip include tides, landslides, weather, creek crossings, water sources, dramatic elevation, and downed trees. Map reading skills are necessary. Cellphone reception is very limited to none; an SOS emergency communication device is recommended.

Water Sources: All sources of water throughout the KRNCA require treatment and/or proper filtration. Creeks along the coast are often reliable sources of water all year. High country springs are susceptible to water scarcity. Plan and carry sufficient water in case none is available.

Waste Disposal

Visitors are asked to follow *Leave No Trace* (LNT) guidelines when recreating in the King Range Wilderness. Human waste is to be disposed of in the sand near the tide line by digging an eight-inch-deep cathole and burying it – DO NOT turn your back on the ocean. Always go at least 200ft (70 paces) away from water sources (creeks), and never bury waste in or around campsites. Please pack out toilet paper and feminine hygiene products.

To report any road, trail, and/or water sources issues, please contact:

(707) 986-5400 (KRNCA Project Office)

BLM_CA_Web_KR@blm.gov



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ROADS	
Roads Sections (A-Z)	Comments
Briceland-Thorn Road	<u>Paved</u> roadway from Thorn Junction for approximately 8 miles South of Shelter Cove Rd., and <u>unpaved</u> for the last mile to Four Corners junction.
Chemise Mountain Road	<u>Paved</u> roadway for approximately 2.5 miles South of Shelter Cove Rd., and <u>unpaved</u> roadway for approximately 4.5 miles to Four Corners junction.
Ettersburg Road/Wilder Ridge Road	Southern section is known as Ettersburg Rd and the Northern section is known as Wilder Ridge Rd. RVs and trailers are not recommended due to multiple unpaved sections, collapsed one way road sections, and winding turns throughout. The only fuel opportunity is at the Honeydew Country Store, located approximately 23 miles West of US-101 at the Mattole Rd/Wilder Ridge junction.
King Peak Road (<u>Unpaved</u>)	High clearance and 4WD recommended. Multiple private properties along road – review map and look for appropriate signage. Do not drive RVs or trailers North of Tolkan Campground. Potholes and storm berms present throughout. Multiple small creek crossings at steep angles between Tolkan and Wilder Ridge Rd. junction.
King Range Road (<u>Unpaved</u>)	High clearance and 4WD required. Do not drive RVs or trailers North of Tolkan Campground. Potholes and storm berms present throughout. Steep angles and narrow sections throughout.
Lighthouse Road	Paved narrow roadway from Lighthouse Junction for approx. 3 miles West of Mattole Rd., and unpaved for the last 2 miles to Mattole TH & Campground. Subject to slide out in the winter months, contact the country for updated information. (https://humboldt.gov/3664/Road-Conditions)



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<p>Mattole Road (Honeydew – Petrolia)</p>	<p>Paved roadway for the 14.3 miles between the communities of Honeydew and Petrolia. Note that East of Honeydew, the road becomes Bull Creek Rd. Frequent road work- be prepared for stops. (https://humboldt.gov.org/3664/Road-Conditions)</p>
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Paradise Ridge Road (Unpaved)	High clearance and 4WD required. Do not block roadway for access to the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail. Finley Ridge Road is not accessible to the public.
Prosper Ridge Road (Unpaved)	High clearance and 4WD highly recommended. Steep terrain and potholes present throughout.
Saddle Mountain Road (Unpaved)	High clearance and 4WD is required.
Shelter Cove Road	Well maintained, paved route with lots of sharp turns. Allow plenty of space between vehicles, slow down at turns, use lower gears on descent, and only pass others at pullouts with clear forward visibility. Fuel opportunity limited to Shelter Cove General Store, approx. 22 miles West of Redway.
Smith-Etter Road (Unpaved)	High clearance and 4WD highly recommended. Open seasonally from April 1 to October 31. (The season of use may vary based on rainfall/soil conditions that could cause road damage and/or soil erosion).
Telegraph Ridge Road (Unpaved)	High clearance and 4WD highly recommended. Overgrown and brushy. Limited parking and turnaround space at Spanish Ridge TH. Open seasonally from April 1 to October 31. (The season of use may vary based on rainfall/soil conditions that could cause road damage and/or or soil erosion).
Windy Point Road (Unpaved)	Steep, unpaved road with loose rocky debris. High clearance and 4WD REQUIRED. If you drive down Windy Point Road without 4wd, you will not make it back out. Open seasonally from April 1 to October 31. (The season of use may vary based on rainfall/soil conditions that could cause road damage and/or soil erosion).



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Navigation along the Lost Coast Trail (LCT) has become more challenging due to coastal erosion. Large boulders and other obstacles have impacted all LCT impassable sections. This includes between the Sea Lion Gulch (Lat: 40.240040, Long: -124.331498) and Randall Creek (40.200448, -124.282818) as well as from Miller Flat (40.122317, -124.162861) to Gitchell Creek (40.093685, -124.102281).

Field reports indicate spontaneous falling rocks and other debris from the bluffs while hikers are navigating the LCT. Extreme caution is warranted near the bluff areas, tributaries, and coastal watersheds.

Many of the upland trails can have numerous downed trees from CA winter storms.

TRAILS	
Trail Sections (A-Z)	Comments
Buck Creek Trail (4.5 miles) (400 ft climb, 3,300 ft descent)	<i>From Saddle Mountain Trailhead and off the King Crest Trail, the Buck Creek Trail descends knee-jarringly to the beach. The trail traverses dry, brushy ridges with sweeping coastline vistas and descends through lush glen-like forests to the beach at the mouth of Buck Creek.</i> Watch for widow makers and downed trees from the “Horse Fire” in 2015 that burned 146 acres. Burned area has high regeneration with high density of brush. Watch for poison oak, and ticks. Check tides as this trail leads into an “impassible zone”. Landslide covering entirety of trail with loose material and downed trees present near the mouth of Buck Creek. Scrambling is required to pass. Proceed with caution.
Chinquapin Loop Trail (2.1 miles)	<i>Drops off the West side of Chemise Mountain before rejoining the Lost Coast Trail. It provides access to Nick’s Camp.</i> Several large, downed trees that will require light clambering to pass. Heavy leaf debris and sections of uneven tread - watch footing.
Cooskie Creek Route (11 miles) (2,400 ft climb) Cooskie Creek Spur Route (1.2 miles) (2,300 ft descent)	<i>Solitude and limitless vistas abound, most notably from “Gorda 2”, as the route passes through golden grasslands and wind sculpted pockets of forest. The Cooskie Spur Route descends to the beach at the midpoint of the route.</i> This route is not maintained. Trail markers may be present but be prepared to use route finding skills. Route can be confusing due to tall grasses and game trails. Part of the route adjoins private property – please respect owner’s privacy. Cont.



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	<p>Cont.</p> <p>Watch for poison oak and ticks. Cooskie Creek proper may be difficult or impossible to pass during winter conditions. Check tides as this trail leads into a “impassible zone”.</p>
<p>Hidden Valley Interpretative Trail (2 miles)</p>	<p><i>Offers visitors an easy to moderate hike with a variety of views from mountain valley prairies, the Pacific Ocean, to a historic apple orchard.</i></p> <p>Low gradient trail with several low lying, wet areas. Site of a historic apple orchard. Watch for poison oak and ticks. Trail is regularly brushed in the summer.</p>
<p>Horse Mountain Creek Trail (4.2 miles) (300 ft climb, 1,700 ft descent)</p>	<p><i>Passing through the forest with a few grassy openings, the trail joins the beach about 0.2 miles North of Horse Mountain Creek. This is the most gradual mountain-to-beach trail.</i></p> <p>Several downed trees on the trail. Loose tread around switchback areas and various small wildlife holes throughout - watch footing. Large amount of low-lying poison oak. Long pants are recommended.</p> <p>8/15/2024: Slide impeding 50 feet of trail, near mile 2.5, requires light clambering to pass.</p>
<p>King Crest Trail (Saddle Mountain Trailhead to King Peak Summit) (5.8 miles) (900 ft descent, 800 ft climb)</p>	<p><i>Straddling the “spine” of the King Range, this trail offers views of the intense geologic and wildfire impacts that continue to shape and change these mountains.</i></p> <p>There are several downed trees along the trail that require light to moderate clambering to pass. Small portions of trail overgrown with brush.</p>
<p>King Crest Trail (King Peak Summit to Northslide Trailhead) (5.6 miles) (2,300 ft descent, 700 ft climb)</p>	<p><i>The trail descends from the spectacular 360-degree vista of King Peak through a mixture of chaparral and forest along the coast.</i></p> <p>There are several downed trees along the trail that require light to moderate clambering to pass. Trail tread at awkward angles and signs of erosion at various points – watch for footing while</p>



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	traversing away from steep drop-offs. Small portions of trail overgrown with brush.
Kinsey Ridge Trail (4 miles) (2,300 ft descent)	<i>Follows a dirt road to the heart of the Lost Coast shoreline, offering glimpses of the coastline and Big Flat as it descends through breaks in the forest.</i> This trail is well-used and maintained. The trailhead is at a locked gate which may be impassable to stock animals.
Lost Coast Trail – Northern Section (Mattole to Randall Creek) (8.3 miles)	<i>The King Range NCA offers one of the few coastal wilderness hiking experiences in the United States. Hikers can view sea lions, tidepools, and spectacular spring wildflowers. Although the trail is level, you must traverse gravel, cobbles, soft sand, and grassy marine terraces.</i> Elephant Seals are present along the beach at the Punta Gorda Lighthouse (restored in 2022) and can be protective of their territory and/or young. Elephant seals will occasionally block the Lost Coast Trail. Please stay 100 feet back, keep dogs on leash, and walk further East off trail if necessary. Signs of bluff erosion North of Sea Lion Gulch; watch footing while traversing away from the steep narrow drop-offs. Watch for falling rocks, landslides, and poison oak. Ephemeral streams have made small portions of the trail muddy.
Lost Coast Trail – Northern Section (Randall Creek to Big Flat) (8 miles)	Trail includes hiking in sand, on coastal bluffs, and along rocky shoreline. Watch footing along the coastal bluffs due to erosion and slides – still passable. Spanish Flat consists of heavy grass, watch for ticks.
Lost Coast Trail – Northern Section (Big Flat to Black Sands Beach) (8.3 miles)	Active landslides present within the Southernmost 4-mile impassable zone (North of Buck Creek). Further instability could occur unexpectedly and suddenly alter the ability to pass this section. Watch for falling rocks. At Split Rock (1.5 miles North of Black Sands Beach), pass on the East side of the rock formation, distancing yourself as far from the ocean as the terrain allows.



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<p>Lost Coast Trail – Southern Section (Hidden Valley to Needle Rock) (5.9 miles) (875 ft climb, 2,600 ft descent)</p>	<p><i>Mountain meadows and ridgetop vistas offer hikers a contrast to the Northern segment of the Lost Coast Trail. This portion of the Lost Coast Trail can be accessed by spur trails from both Wailaki and Nadelos campgrounds.</i></p> <p>Numerous trees down on trail from winter storms. This section of the Lost Coast Trail leaves the King Range National Conservation Area and enters Sinkyone Wilderness State Park.</p> <p>For more information about Sinkyone Wilderness State Park; Contact (707) 247-3318</p>
<p>Lightning Trail (2.6 miles) (1,900 ft climb)</p>	<p><i>The Lightning Trail is the shortest route to the summit of King Peak, with breathtaking vistas in all directions. The trail climbs a steady grade, crossing a stretch of old-growth Douglas-fir, before reaching chaparral near the crest. Upon reaching the first intersection, you can choose from two routes of similar distance to reach King's Peak. Take the left route to access Maple Camp, with a spring that may be dry during the summer.</i></p> <p>Loose rock prevalent towards King Peak. Portions of trail overgrown by low-lying brush towards King Peak. Watch for widow makers from the “Honeydew Fire” in 2003.</p>
<p>Miller Loop (2.4 miles)</p>	<p><i>Descends from the King Crest Trail, set in old-growth forest with a seasonal spring.</i></p> <p>Several larger trees down on East side of loop. Watch footing. Miller Camp is significantly overgrown with bracken ferns, be mindful of entry/exit points from Loop Trail to avoid disorientation. South side of loop (concurrently King Crest Trail) has trail tread at awkward angles and signs of erosion at one point – watch footing while traversing away from the narrow and steep-drop off. Spring is located in the South East corner of camp and can be hard to locate.</p>
<p>Rattlesnake Ridge Trail (5.7 miles) (3,600 ft descent)</p>	<p><i>This trail leaves the King Crest Trail 4.3 miles West of the King's Peak. It is recommended for adventurous backpackers who don't mind a challenging route and creek crossings. It follows Rattlesnake Ridge before descending through the forest. Ferns and mosses line the boulder-choked channel of</i></p>



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	<p><i>Big Flat Creek, which you must cross multiple times on the way to the coast. Bear Hollow Camp can be accessed via this trail.</i></p> <p>Trail subject to heavy weathering and erosion. Trail washouts regularly occur. Steep conditions on lower Western, half including on switchbacks. The trail crosses Big Flat Creek at multiple points and may be difficult or impossible to navigate and/or pass during winter conditions – look for rock cairns.</p>
<p>Spanish Ridge Trail (4.7 miles) (300 ft climb, 2,400 ft descent)</p>	<p><i>This trail is great for a quiet trek with wide-open vistas, especially to the South. It provides a steep descent to the beach along a grassy ridgeline.</i></p> <p>Be prepared to use route finding skills. This route primarily follows decommissioned roads. Grass and brush grow high and game trails make the last two miles of decent difficult to navigate.</p>
<p>Tolkan Terrain Park – Paradise Royale <u>Loop</u> Trail (14 miles)</p> <p>Pacific Rim Trail (9 miles)</p>	<p><i>The King Range Bike Trail System provides an opportunity to experience lush temperate forests, rugged chaparral covered ridgetops, and spectacular ocean views. There are tight switchbacks, steep stairs, a long flowing decent and forest views.</i></p> <p>Mountain bike (MTB) riders should exercise caution on the entire MTB trail network. Prepare for slippery single-track conditions in the fall and winter due to leaf debris and loose rocks on the trail. Degrading tread on Pacific Rim. This trail network is multi-use and open to Level 1 Ebikes: yield to hikers and equestrian users.</p> <p>NO MOTORIZED VEHICLE USE</p>



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NOTE: Upland trails are prone to extreme heat conditions, and springs are susceptible to water shortage in all seasons. Winter rains may only provide short term relief. Always plan and carry sufficient water to stay safely hydrated if springs are dry.

SPRINGS	
Springs (A-Z)	Comments
Bear Hollow	7/2/25: Water available. Flow rate is susceptible to recent drought conditions and extreme heat.
Bonus	7/1/25: Water NOT available. Flow rate is susceptible to recent drought conditions and extreme heat.
Maple	7/2/25: Water available. Flow rate is susceptible to drought conditions and extreme heat.
Miller	7/2/25: Water available. Low Flow. Flow rate is susceptible to recent drought conditions and extreme heat. Located in Southeast corner of camp area. Path to spring is overgrown and may be challenging to locate.
Nick's Camp	7/2/25: Water Available. Flow rate is susceptible to recent drought conditions and extreme heat.
Pinnacle	Water flow not observed, accessible water not present.
Telegraph	9/9/2025: Water available. Flow rate is susceptible to recent drought conditions and extreme heat.



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Campgrounds (A-Z)	Comments
Mattole Campground (Tent/Trailer)	23 sites available. Self-registration kiosk present. First come-first serve. Bathroom facilities present. No potable water. Maximum trailer length is 24 feet.
Nadelos Campground (Tent <u>ONLY</u> Campground)	8 sites available. Walk-in <u>ONLY</u> . Self-registration kiosk present. First come-first serve. Bathroom facilities present. No potable water. No space for trailers or RVs. CLOSED OCTOBER-MARCH
Tolkan Campground (Tent/Trailer)	9 sites available. Self-registration kiosk present. First come-first serve. Bathroom facilities present. No potable water. Maximum trailer length is 24 feet.
Wailaki Campground (Tent/Trailer)	13 sites available. Self-registration kiosk present. First come-first serve. Bathroom facilities present. No potable water. Maximum trailer length is 24 feet. CLOSED OCTOBER-MARCH