



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

Panoche Hills Griswold Hills Tumey Hills

Map & Guide

Other Local Resources

Mendota Wildlife Area

4333 Santa Fe Grade, Mendota, CA 93622
CA Dept of Fish and Game
(559) 655-4645

Los Banos Wildlife Area

18110 Henry Miller Rd
Los Banos, CA 93635
(209) 826-0463

Little Panoche Wildlife Area

Little Panoche Reservoir, California 93622
CA Department of Fish and Game
(209) 826-0463

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

31426 Gonzaga Road
Gustine, CA 95322
(800) 346-2711



Bureau of Land Management Central Coast Field Office

940 2nd Avenue
Marina, CA 93933
(831) 582-2200
BLM_CA_Web_CC@blm.gov
blm.gov/california

Desert Hills of the San Joaquin Valley

Bureau of Land Management public lands in the Panoche, Griswold and Tumey hills of southern San Benito and western Fresno counties provide a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities, including hunting, target shooting, camping, hiking, stargazing and wildlife viewing.

The rugged hills west of Interstate 5 provide habitat for many rare and endangered species, such as the San Joaquin kit fox, giant kangaroo rat, and blunt-nosed leopard lizard. Vegetation consists of annual grassland, with saltbrush, Mormon tea shrubs, and yucca. Typical plants found growing on the gypsum barrens found in the Panoche and Tumey hills include forked fiddleneck and protruding buckwheat.



Blunt-nosed leopard lizard. Photo by Ryan O'Dell, BLM.

RESTRICTIONS

- Closed to motorized use during fire season from mid-April to mid-October.
- No shooting zone within 150 yards of any developed area.
- There is no night hunting.
- Vehicles are restricted to designated routes.
- Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) are prohibited.

Panoche Hills

The Panoche Hills provide a “badlands” experience just a few hours from the Bay Area. Panoche Access Road winds east from Little Panoche Road (J-1 County Road), up the side of the valley and crests on a windswept plateau dotted with Mormon tea and juniper. Further south and east, the hills become a succession of razor-backed ridges and plunging canyons. The southern end of the hills encompass a series of terraces, along Panoche Creek, densely covered with saltbrush. The low ambient light in the region creates ideal conditions for stargazing, and both amateur and professional astronomers travel every year to the hills to view the Perseid meteor shower in August.

Griswold Hills

South from Panoche Road and north of the Vallecitos Valley, are the Griswold Hills. A foot trail from the day use area parking lot zigzags up the hillside to the ridgetop above. The Griswold Hills are a destination for hunters seeking upland game birds. Rock outcrops provide homes for the yellow-backed spiny lizard, which sports a bright black-and yellow collar and can grow to more than 12 inches long. In the spring, the hills are covered with mariposa lilies, Indian paintbrush, poppies and wild sage. There is also good habitat for the foothill yellow-legged frog and the western pond turtle.

Tumey Hills

South of the Panoche Hills are the Tumey Hills, a series of bare rolling hills and valleys dotted with saltbush. Two entrances along Panoche Road give access to the area. Both entrances have pedestrian walk-through gates for access when entrance gates are closed. Annual grasslands are lovely in springtime, with beautiful wildflower displays. Rarely seen federally-protected San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and giant kangaroo rats make their homes in these hills. Visitors enjoy a day use facility with parking, shade structures, picnic benches, vault toilets and an interpretive kiosk with a map and information about the area.



Photo by Michael Westphal, BLM.

Griswold Hills—Geology

The Griswold Hills are an east-west trending ridge complex completely located within the north-south trending Coast Range Geomorphic Province of Central California. In a general sense this east –west trending ridgeline is bounded; to the north by the Panoche Valley, to the east by the Tumey and Ciervo Hills, to the south by the Vallecitos Valley and to the west by the San Andreas Fault system.

Located approximately thirty-four (34) miles northwest of the city of Coalinga and fifty-eight (58) miles west-southwest of the city of Fresno – the Griswold Hills provide some of the best exposures of the sedimentary units making up the Coast Range’s Diablo Range. The largest component of the exposed sedimentary terrain in this east-west trending anticline is the late Cretaceous aged Panoche Formation. On the southern flank of the anticline, one can walk through successive sequential sections (with the exception of the regionally missing Oligocene-aged strata) from the aforementioned Panoche Formation to the Pliocene-aged Oro Loma Formation. In essence, other than the regionally absent strata from the Oligocene – one can view the sedimentary record left from over 90 million years of the Earth history in this area.

Traces of the Past

The Panoche, Griswold and Tumey Hills are underlain by marine sedimentary rocks primarily of Cretaceous age (65 million years ago). During the Cretaceous, most of California that we see today was underwater. Small islands, representing the very highest points of the present day Coast Range, had just begun to emerge from the ocean. The present day Central Valley was a shallow sea. Large sea-dwelling reptiles, such as Mosasaurs and Plesiosaurs, swam the shallow seas along with sea turtles and other marine animals near the islands.

Both the Tumey Hills and Panoche Hills have produced important fossil discoveries, including mosasaurs and



hadrosaurs. Removal of vertebrate fossils is prohibited without a permit from BLM.



Plesiosaur Vertebrae Photo by Ryan O'Dell, BLM.

Camping & Hiking

Primitive, dispersed camping opportunities on BLM public lands in the Panoche, Tumey, and Griswold Hills are limited to 14 days within any 30-day period at a particular location. Motor vehicles must stay within 15 feet (roughly 1 vehicle length) of designated routes. Hiking opportunities are available along existing routes that are not designated for motor vehicle use.

Please practice Leave No Trace® principles when visiting all public lands.

RULES REGARDING FIRE USE

A California Campfire Permit is required for any dispersed campfire on public lands. The free permit can be obtained from the Central Coast Field Office, or on-line at www.preventwildfireca.org.

Seasonal fire restrictions may prohibit campfires and other activities that have the potential to cause a wildfire. Know before you go.

Additional responsibilities include carrying water and shovel to prevent an escaped campfire, and ensure the fire is dead out. Never attempt to build a campfire during windy conditions or leave a campfire unattended.

Livestock Grazing

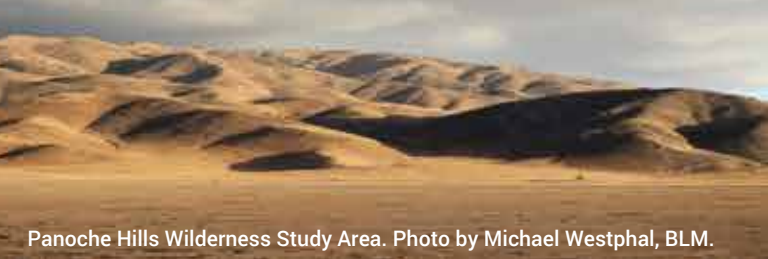


Photo by Ryan O'Dell, BLM.

Livestock grazing has occurred on public lands in the Panoche, Tumey and Griswold Hills since the 1800's and continues today under the BLM grazing leases authorized by the Taylor Grazing Act of 1942. Please do not disturb or harm the livestock animals grazing on public lands.

Hunting

Hunting opportunities on BLM public lands within the San Joaquin Valley consist primarily of game birds (chukar and quail), wild pig and deer. The BLM and California Department of Fish and Game manage



Panoche Hills Wilderness Study Area. Photo by Michael Westphal, BLM.

game animals for hunting by providing watering sites (guzzlers) and planting cover shrubs. All areas are known for the bird and pig opportunities, with deer being found primarily in the Griswolds.

Special Designations

Two Wilderness Study Areas (WSA):

Panoche Hills North and Panoche Hills South, are managed for their wilderness qualities until Congress determines their suitability for official Wilderness designation. No motorized access is allowed within the WSA to prevent impacts to these values.

Much of these public lands are also part of the Panoche-Coalinga Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the Monverro Dunes Research Natural Area (RNA), which are managed to preserve and protect many special status plants and animal species that inhabit the region. Sightings of endangered San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard and giant kangaroo rats are not unusual; however, wildlife viewers should take care and avoid disturbing these sensitive species in their natural habitats.



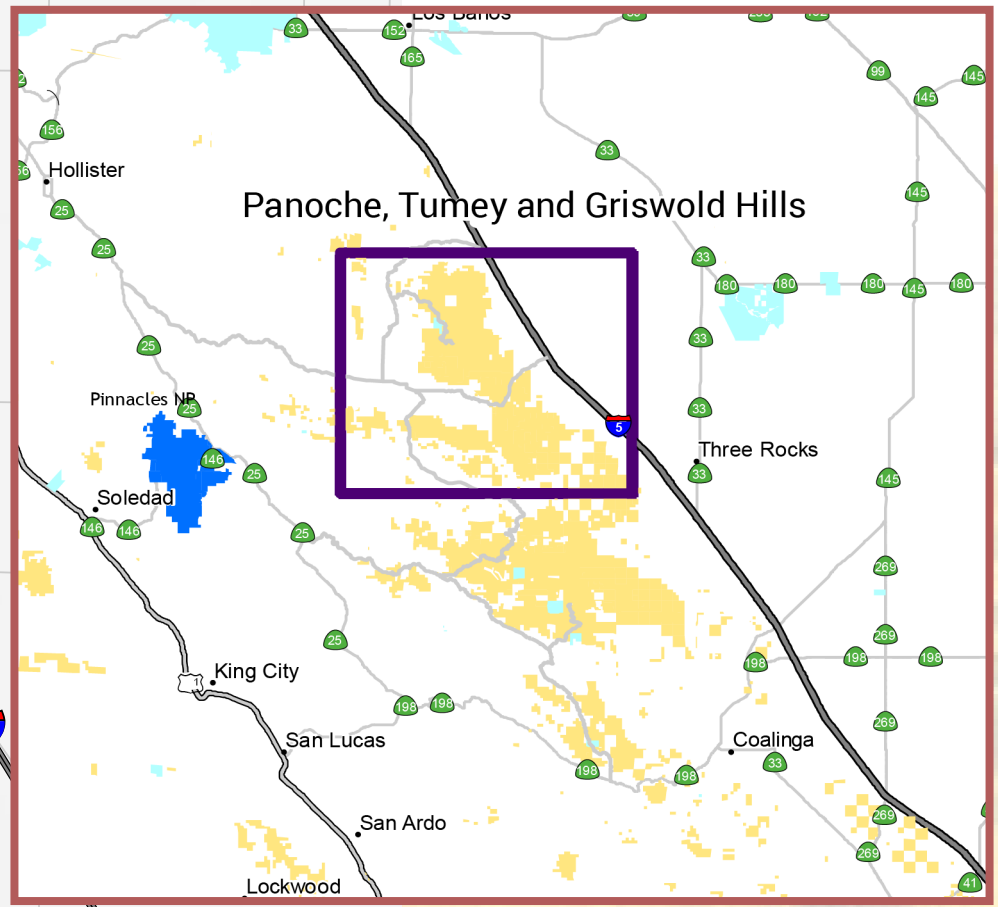
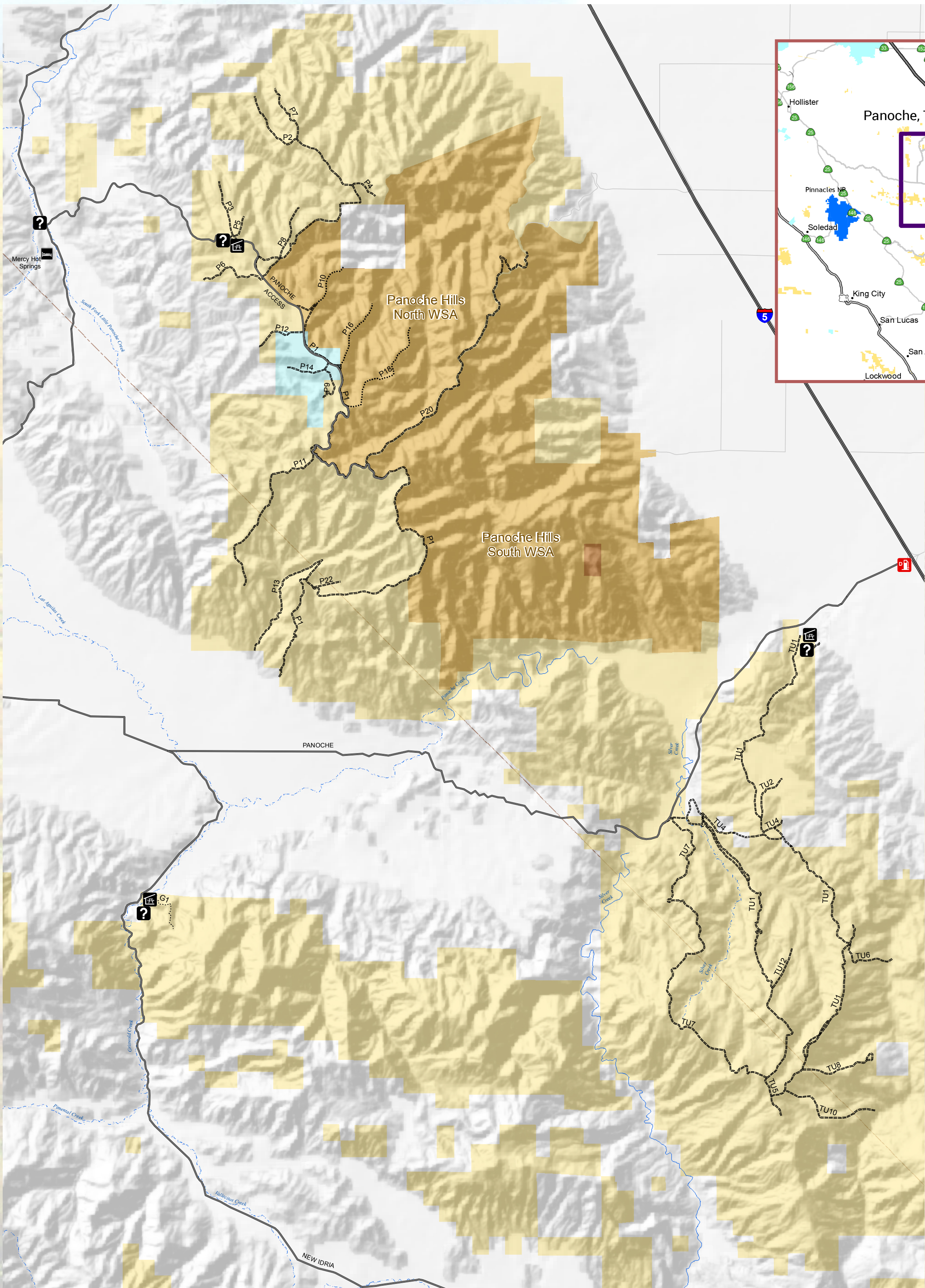
Photo by Michael Westphal, BLM.

The region has long been known to bird enthusiasts for the uncommon species that can be seen, such as phainopepla and mountain plover. Other animal species, like the San Joaquin antelope squirrel with its distinctive stripes, can also be seen by the alert wildlife watcher. The rare Ciervo aegialian scarab beetle and the San Joaquin dune beetle are found only in the Monverro Dunes.

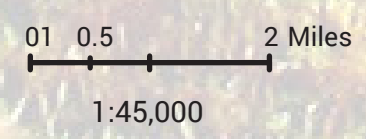
How Can I Help?

Anyone can volunteer. Youths must volunteer with a parent/guardian, or be a part of an organized group such as a school, civic or church with written consent. To become a volunteer, apply at [Volunteer.gov](https://www.volunteer.gov) and/or contact the BLM California Central Coast Field Office nearest you.





- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Wilderness Study Area
No Motorized Access Year Round
- County Boundary
- ? Kiosk
- P Picnic Area - Trailhead
- S Services
- M Mercy Hot Springs
- Trail
- BLM Roads
- County Roads
- Interstate
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

RESTRICTIONS

- Closed to motorized use during fire season from mid-April to mid-October.
- No shooting zone within 150 yards of any developed area.
- There is no night hunting.
- Vehicles are restricted to designated routes.
- Park within 15 feet of designated routes.
- Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) are prohibited.



1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Rules Regarding Fossil Collection

For animal fossils (includes shells):

1. Vertebrate fossils (any animal with a backbone) CANNOT be collected.
2. Shells CAN be collected.

For plant fossils:

1. Collecting plant fossils of scientific interest including fossilized leaves or needles, plant reproductive structures (cones, flowers, seeds), and fossilized logs (> 6 inch diameter) is PROHIBITED.
2. Small diameter (< 6 inches) fossilized branch fragments CAN be collected.

Any and all fossil collection must be for personal use only.

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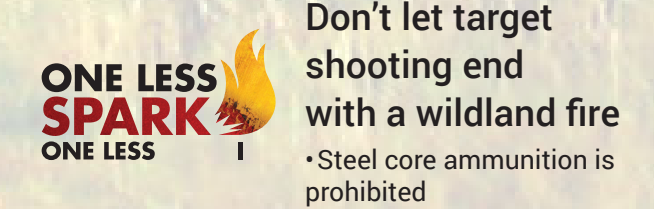
Restriction on Lead Ammunition

In order to prevent the accidental poisoning of California condors, lead ammunition had been banned for hunting in California.

Tips for Responsible Recreational Shooting

- Never shoot if you do not have a clear view of your target and beyond
- Shooting sites should have high dirt berms free of rocks and vegetation
- Don't shoot upon or across roads, waterways or trails
- Don't shoot glass or other objects that can shatter
- Remove your target materials, shells and trash
- Don't shoot at trees, cactus or other living things
- Don't shoot household appliances or other objects dumped
- Practice target shooting only in areas open to recreational shooting

Report unlawful activity to authorities by calling 9-1-1



- Incendiary or tracer rounds are prohibited
- Exploding targets are prohibited