

WELCOME

The Eastern San Diego County planning area spans a portion of the eastern escarpment of southern California's Peninsular Ranges. It is a land of remarkable diversity, encompassing a range of environments from pine forests and flowing streams to palm oases overlooking shimmering desert basins. Small bands of Kumeyaay and Mountain Cahuilla Indians resided in this area and used an intricate trail network between the desert mountains and the Pacific coast. Early Spanish, Mexican, and American pioneers and settlers traversed the region on their way to developing coastal population centers. Except for cattlemen who established isolated ranches in order to graze their stock in the grassy valleys and shrub-covered hills, few of the newcomers settled here. Today, much of the region remains wild and uncrowded in spite of

the steady growth of the urban society only a short distance to the west.

Scattered in a north-south band along the mountain front are 102,869 acres of public land under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Most of the higher land to the west is part of the Cleveland National Forest, while the low desert country to the east is part of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and a number of small Indian reservations are interspersed with national forest lands. The planning area borders Imperial County to the east and Mexico to the south; Riverside County lies to the north, and the rest of San Diego County lies to the west.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Colorado Desert contains thousands of cultural resources, including historic and prehistoric archaeological sites and artifacts (objects made or used by humans). These fragile, nonrenewable resources provide a rich legacy of more than 10,000 years of human history in North America. Unfortunately, many of these sites have been disturbed by off-road travel or damaged by illegal artifact collection and vandalism. Damaging or disturbing cultural resources is subject to severe civil and criminal penalties, including those stipulated in the Archaeological Resources

Protection Act of 1979. Enjoy and respect these resources by viewing, sketching, or photographing them; take care not to disturb the surface of the site and leave artifacts and other objects in place and untouched. Also respect these resources by not disclosing their sensitive locations through social networking or other public media. Please help protect our archaeological legacy so that future generations may also visit, enjoy, and learn about our heritage.

WILDERNESS

Wilderness areas are special places where the land and resources retain a primeval character and remain essentially undisturbed. These areas provide habitat for numerous wildlife species, sources of clean water, and natural laboratories for research and education. They also provide extraordinary opportunities for solitude, as well as recreational activities such as hiking, climbing, horseback riding, birdwatching, and stargazing. Visitors should expect primitive terrain with no facilities, trails, or other improvements. In accordance with the 1964 Wilderness Act, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or other form of mechanical transport is allowed in wilderness. Wilderness boundaries are set back 30 to 300 feet from the roads or trails leading to them.

Carrizo Gorge Wilderness

The Carrizo Gorge Wilderness offers some of the most expansive scenic vistas in the California Desert, often stretching 100 miles or more. The panorama includes the Salton Sea, Chocolate Mountains, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, and Mount Signal on the Mexico border. This wilderness is the only ecological transition zone between the Colorado Desert and the Peninsular Ranges represented in the National Wilderness Preservation

System. Three Peninsular bighorn sheep herds call the area home, and the San Diego horned lizard, Swainson's hawk, golden eagle, and other birds of prey have all been spotted here. California fan palms line the edges of dry washes and narrow canyons, creating desert oases.

Sawtooth Mountains Wilderness

Valleys and ridges alternate throughout this wilderness, with elevations rising from 1,400 to 5,600 feet. The ridges extend from the Laguna Mountains into the desert, creating the alluvial valleys of Vallecito, Inner Pasture, and Canebrake Canyon. Wildlife residents include the San Diego horned lizard, spotted bat, and willow flycatcher. Historically, Peninsular bighorn sheep made their home here, and today, transient sheep use the area. Prairie falcons, golden eagles, and Cooper's hawks spread their wings above the desert floor. More than 200 species of plants are believed to grow within this wilderness, where vegetation transforms from a dense chaparral at the higher elevations along the Laguna Mountains to low desert creosote brush. Many of the plant species are under review for listing as threatened or endangered.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

In 1976, Congress directed the BLM, under section 603(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), to review "those roadless areas of five thousand acres or more and roadless islands of the public lands" identified through inventory as having wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The BLM was also to periodically report to the President its recommendations as to the suitability or nonsuitability of each such area or island for preservation as wilderness.

Section 603(c) of FLPMA requires the BLM to manage each wilderness study area (WSA) to maintain the wilderness characteristics until Congress decides whether it either should be designated as wilderness or should be released for other purposes.

San Felipe Hills Wilderness Study Area

The San Felipe Hills WSA in northeastern San Diego County is about 18 miles west of Borrego Springs and 85 miles northeast of San Diego. The study area is 2 miles west of the unincorporated community of Ranchita, and its southeast corner borders Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. This 5,325-acre WSA consists entirely of public lands administered by the BLM. The WSA encompasses a northwest-to-southeast trending ridge that is 6.5 miles long and about 1.5 miles wide. The terrain consists of rolling hills that rise steeply from the surrounding valleys, with elevations ranging from 2,800 to 4,660 feet. The hills are covered with dense, scrubby chaparral, with small clusters of live oak and scrub oak on the lower slopes. A portion of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail passes through the study area.

San Ysidro Mountain Wilderness Study Area

The San Ysidro Mountain WSA in northeastern San Diego County is about 18 miles west of Borrego Springs and 85 miles northeast of San Diego. This 2,125-acre WSA consists entirely of public lands administered by the BLM, although it is surrounded by lands under other ownership.

The study area consists of the crest and south-facing slope of San Ysidro Mountain overlooking County Highway S22 and the unincorporated community of Ranchita. Elevations in the WSA range from 3,920 to 6,020 feet. The steep, rocky slopes are covered with chaparral, which gives way to stands of pine near the summit. Ribbons of green mark the major drainages, with relatively lush vegetation, including sycamore, willow, and other deciduous trees, and a thick understory of herbaceous plants. Although all streams are intermittent, larger streams may still have pools of standing water, even in late summer. From Highway S22, two improved dirt roads lead to the WSA boundary. The road into Buck Canyon provides access to the southwest edge of the WSA, while the Cherry Canyon road meets the southeast corner.

Table Mountain Wilderness Study Area

The Table Mountain WSA is 3 miles north of Interstate 8 in southeastern San Diego County, about 60 miles east of San Diego and 45 miles west of El Centro. This 1,018-acre WSA consists entirely of public lands administered by the BLM.

The WSA consists of the southern tip of a generally north-to-south trending ridge of the Jacumba Mountains. The southern end of the WSA contains both slopes of the ridge and the rolling land to either side. Moving north, the WSA boundary follows the section line that bisects the ridge, so only the east-facing slope is included in the northern third of the study area. Table Mountain, the feature after which the WSA is named, is actually over a mile south of the WSA. The WSA is located in the transition zone between semisucculent desert scrub and chaparral, with elevations ranging from 2,880 to 4,224 feet. The extremely rocky terrain exhibits the large, rounded granite boulders characteristic of the region. About 3 miles of primitive dirt road provide motorized access to the WSA boundary from Old Highway 80 to the south. The road is marginally negotiable by 2-wheel-drive vehicle most of the time.

RECREATION

Camping

Dispersed Sites: Camping opportunities can be found throughout the public lands administered by the BLM. Primitive campsites offer one of the best ways to experience the deserts of California. These sites are widely dispersed, undeveloped, and generally do not have signs marking them as campsites. They are usually clear of vegetation and have a hard compacted surface. The BLM generally allows dispersed camping on all BLM lands with the following conditions and exceptions:

1. Camping is permitted for up to 14 days within a 28-day period at any location, after which, campers must relocate at least 25 miles away.
2. Camping is prohibited within 300 feet of any developed water source, including water guzzlers or watering troughs, to keep water accessible to wildlife and livestock.
3. A permit may be required for campfires. Contact the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection or the BLM El Centro Field Office prior to your trip if you plan to have a campfire. Restrictions on fires vary depending on fire danger, county ordinances, and other variables.
4. In accordance with the California Desert Conservation Area plan, as amended, stopping, parking, and vehicle camping is allowed within 25 feet of designated routes of travel.
5. Tent camping is permitted within all wilderness areas managed by the El Centro Field Office.

Leave No Trace: Many dispersed campsites are showing signs of impact from heavy use. You can lessen your impact on the desert by following these principles of minimum impact:

- **Plan Ahead and Prepare:** Get to know the area, rules, regulations, and any other special concerns before you visit. Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.

- **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces:** Use designated routes. Camp at previously used sites. When there is no danger of rain or flash flooding, camp in washes, where signs of camping will eventually be washed away. Camp at least 300 feet away from water sources.

- **Dispose of Waste Properly:** Pack it in, pack it out. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Deposit human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep and at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Disguise catholes when finished. Pack out toilet paper in two sealable bags. Avoid polluting water sources.

- **Leave What You Find:** Protect cultural resources. Leave all artifacts as you find them. Leave natural objects and avoid damaging vegetation or transporting nonnative species.

- **Minimize Campfire Impacts:** Use a lightweight gas stove for cooking. Fires, where permitted, should be kept small and within existing fire rings. Wood in arid environments is scarce, so bring your own firewood or do without.

- **Respect Wildlife:** Observe from a distance. Properly store food and do not feed wildlife. Keep pets away from wildlife.

- **Be Considerate of Other Visitors:** Be courteous and respectful. Yield to others on trails. Avoid making loud noises.

Target Shooting

Target shooting is allowed on lands managed by the BLM's El Centro Field Office as long as such activity is permitted by federal, state, and local laws. All federal, state, and county regulations apply to public lands. It is the responsibility of the shooter to know the laws.

When Selecting a Location:

- Access public lands only from public roads. Crossing private lands to access public lands is not permitted unless you first obtain permission from the private landowner.
- Check with the local sheriff or land management agencies before using an area for shooting. Private and state lands are located adjacent to many public lands. Do not shoot on private lands without the owner's permission. Shooting is not permitted in state parks.
- Find a safe backdrop. Shots fired across the open desert can travel for more than a mile. A spot with a large mound directly behind the target is ideal. Give serious consideration to downrange safety, including ricochets and trails hidden in the brush (43 CFR 8365.1-4 (a)(2); California Penal Code 372).
- Do not discharge firearms within 150 yards of residences, buildings, campsites, occupied areas, recreational areas, or domestic livestock.
- Do not shoot across a road, trail, or wash, including unpaved/remote dirt roads that can carry an unexpected, quiet mountain biker or fast off-road vehicle (California Penal Code 374(c)).

- Only shoot in areas well away from other concentrations of people and property.
- Do not shoot from a vehicle.
- Avoid sensitive wildlife habitats.
- Stay on designated routes. Cross-country travel is not permitted outside of off-highway vehicle (OHV) open area boundaries.

When on Location:

- Shoot only retrievable, freestanding targets. Do not shoot buildings, towers, fences (including the international border), or other structures (18 USC 1361; 43 CFR 8365.1-5(a)(1)).
- Do not shoot tracer or incendiary devices (43 CFR 9212.1(b)). Fire orders also prohibit steel core ammunition.
- Do not shoot glass objects, electronic waste, or items that may contain hazardous materials (i.e., Freon, propane, etc.) (43 CFR 8365.1-4(a)(2); California Penal Code 372).
- Do not attach targets to living plants or place targets up against rocks, plants, or solid objects. It is illegal to deface or destroy trees, signs, outbuildings, or other objects on federal lands that are for the public's enjoyment (CFR 8365.1-5 (a) (1) and (2)).
- Always pick up and remove targets, empty shells, and any other debris after you have finished shooting.

Areas Closed to Target Shooting: Due to high fire danger, wildlife management, safety concerns, and litter problems, several areas managed by the El Centro Field Office are closed to target shooting (43 CFR 8365.1-6). These areas include:

- Airport Mesa, Jacumba
- McCain Valley
- Table Mountain
- Jacumba Outstanding Natural Area

Hunting

Hunting is permitted on most BLM lands unless posted as closed (for example, hiking trails, developed recreation areas, and safety zones near housing). Public roads must be used for access to public lands. Crossing private lands to access public lands is not permitted unless you obtain permission from the landowner. Hunting is NOT permitted inside of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park or Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Special regulations apply in the Vallecito Ranch area owned by Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. State of California hunting regulations must be followed. Game species found on BLM lands include quail, deer, waterfowl, dove, pig, bear, and turkey. You are responsible for knowing whose land you are on while hunting and for following safe and prudent actions at all times. Some areas are closed to firearms for safety or environmental reasons. Also be aware of the other public land visitors who may be using the same areas for other recreational uses, such as camping, hiking, biking, and rockhounding. Seasons, closures, limits, and other regulations are specified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). For information about hunting regulations, contact the CDFW regional office at 3883 Ruffin Road in San Diego, CA 92123, 858-467-4201, or check the CDFW website (www.wildlife.ca.gov).

Rockhounding

Rockhounding is one of many recreational pursuits on BLM lands in California. Rockhounds are welcome to collect small, noncommercial quantities of rocks, minerals, and gemstones free of charge on BLM lands. **Commercial collecting for the purpose of sale or barter is not allowed without special authorization.** Rockhounds may use hand tools such as shovels and picks but must not use explosives or power equipment for excavation.

Noncommercial collecting is allowed on most federal lands, but there are some exceptions. Some lands are withdrawn or reserved for certain purposes, such as outstanding natural areas, research natural areas, recreation sites, and national historic sites. Other lands are not open to collecting due to the presence of mining claims. Please contact BLM's El Centro Field Office for information about collecting areas, including whether they are closed to rockhounding or have fire or vehicle-use restrictions.

Metal Detecting

Another recreational activity on BLM lands involves using metal detectors. Metal detecting is allowed on BLM lands as long as no artifacts (objects over 50 years old) are removed and surface disturbance is minimal. Avoid all cultural and archeological sites; leave artifacts undisturbed and report them to the appropriate BLM field office. Digging in or otherwise damaging archeological sites will lead to civil or criminal penalties. Metal detecting enthusiasts may remove a handful of rocks from picnic areas, campgrounds, recreational sites, and other areas as long as those areas are not part of a mining claim. Mining claims can be researched on BLM's land and mineral Legacy Rehost 2000 System (<http://www.blm.gov/lr2000>). Visit the BLM El Centro Field Office before your metal detecting trip to learn which areas contain sensitive resources that are off limits for collecting.

DESERT SAFETY

In Eastern San Diego County, temperatures in the summer often exceed 100 degrees. Visitors should plan accordingly and carry a minimum of a gallon of water per day for each member of their party, sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses, and a daypack. Cell phone and global positioning system (GPS) coverage may be limited in remote areas, so you may also want to carry maps and a compass. In addition, always advise others of where you are going and when you plan to return.

BLM Routes of Travel for Eastern San Diego County, California

EMERGENCY INFORMATION: Police-Fire-Ambulance 911

Eastern San Diego County Sheriff's Office	
Nonemergency dispatch	858-565-5200
Boulevard/Jacumba Substation	619-766-4585
Julian Substation	760-765-4718
California Highway Patrol	
El Centro Office	760-482-2500
El Cajon Office	619-401-2000
CHP Local Road Conditions	760-482-2555
U.S. Customs and Border Protection	
Dispatch	1-800-901-2003
Tip Line	1-800-BE-ALERT
CAL FIRE – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	
San Diego Unit	619-590-3100

For More Information Contact:

Bureau of Land Management • El Centro Field Office		
1661 S. 4th Street El Centro, CA 92243	760-337-4400	www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro.html
Bureau of Land Management • Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office		
1201 Bird Center Drive Palm Springs, CA 92262	760-833-7100	www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings.html
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park • Colorado Desert District		
200 Palm Canyon Dr. Borrego Springs, CA 92004-5005	760-767-4037 760-767-5311 (park office)	www.parks.ca.gov
Cottillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area		
5172 Highway 78 Borrego Springs, CA 92004	760-767-5391	www.parks.ca.gov

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Photo: Andrew Richter

WILDLIFE

Habitat

The planning area transitions from the Colorado Desert in the east to the coniferous forest of the Laguna Mountains in the west, with a pronounced increase in precipitation from south to north. This transitional situation creates a complex vegetation pattern that has also been modified by fire exclusion, flood, drought, and grazing. The vegetation is sparse along the southern limits of the area and very dense in the north, providing a complex variety of wildlife habitats throughout the planning area. The planning area provides habitat for an abundance of wildlife, including several sensitive species and species listed as threatened on the federal endangered species list. The area is also a migratory corridor for numerous species of neotropical migrant birds.

Maintaining the delicate balance of this desert environment is critical to the survival of the wildlife found here, particularly those species that are sensitive, threatened, or endangered. Please respect the wildlife you encounter on your visit to the area, and avoid any disturbance to wildlife habitat.

Peninsular Bighorn Sheep

The Peninsular Ranges population of bighorn sheep was added to the federal endangered species list in March 1998 and listed as threatened by the State of California in 1971. The population has been declining due to habitat loss, disease, predation, low recruitment, and residential and commercial development. The range of the Peninsular bighorn extends from the San Jacinto Mountains in Riverside County to the Mexican border. Most of the population lives along east-facing slopes of the Peninsular Ranges at elevations ranging from 300 to 4,000 feet on the northwestern edge of the Sonoran Desert, tending to concentrate around permanent water sources. In October 2006, the population was estimated at almost 800, with eight known ewe groups. Healthy females typically produce one lamb per year, with most lambs being born between February and May. Lambs become quickly independent and within a day or two are able to climb nearly as well as the adults. Ewes and lambs frequently occupy steep terrain that provides a diversity of slopes and exposures for escape cover and shelter from excessive heat. Lambs are able to eat native grass within 2 weeks of birth and are weaned between 1 and 7 months of age. By their second spring, lambs are independent of the ewes and, depending upon physical condition, may attain sexual maturity during the second year of life.

Photo: William B. Hays



OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE RECREATION

Routes of Travel Designations

All routes in this planning area have been classified as motorized or nonmotorized. Motorized routes are open to all vehicles, including OHVs. Some motorized routes may have additional limitations on use, including vehicle size, vehicle type, and season of use. Nonmotorized routes would be closed to motorized vehicles, including OHVs, but open to biking, hiking, and equestrian use. Please keep in mind that you are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with all OHV regulations. Please obey all signs regarding the management of public lands and routes.

State of California Off-Highway Vehicle Laws: Many parts of the California Vehicle Code (CVC) are highlighted below, but not all California OHV laws are addressed here. Please remember, it is your responsibility to know the laws.

Helmet and Safety Belt Usage - All-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders must wear an approved safety helmet (38505 CVC). Utility vehicle (UTV) drivers and passengers also must wear an approved safety helmet (38601 CVC). Safety belts are also required for drivers and passengers in UTVs (38602 CVC).

Required Rider Safety Training - No person under the age of 18 shall operate an ATV unless he or she has taken a certified safety course or is under the direct supervision of an adult who has the appropriate safety certification in his or her possession (38503 CVC). For ATV certification information, please contact the ATV Safety Institute at 1-800-887-2887.

Parental Supervision - No person under the age of 14 shall operate an ATV unless that person satisfies the requirements of 38503 CVC (safety certification) and, in addition, is accompanied by and under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian (38504 CVC).

Noise Restrictions - Noise emissions of off-highway vehicles shall be limited to not more than 96 dBA if manufactured on or after January 1, 1986, and not more than 101 dBA if manufactured before January 1, 1986 (38370 (h)(1) CVC). Other restrictions may apply. Please visit the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division Web site (<http://ohv.parks.ca.gov>) for more information.

Carrying of Passengers - No operator of an ATV shall carry a passenger while operating on public lands, except that one passenger may be carried if the ATV is designed to carry a passenger (38506 CVC).

Operating an OHV Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs - It is unlawful for any person who is under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any drug, or under the combined influence of an alcoholic beverage and any drug, to drive a vehicle (23152(a) CVC). Driving off-road or on-road with a suspended or revoked license is against the law (14601 CVC).

Speed Laws

- Basic Speed Law:** No person shall operate an off-highway vehicle faster than is safe for conditions (38305 CVC).
- Prima Facie Speed Limit:** The prima facie speed limit within 50 feet of any campground, campsite, or concentration of people or animals shall be less than 15 mph unless changed as authorized by the CVC (38310 CVC).

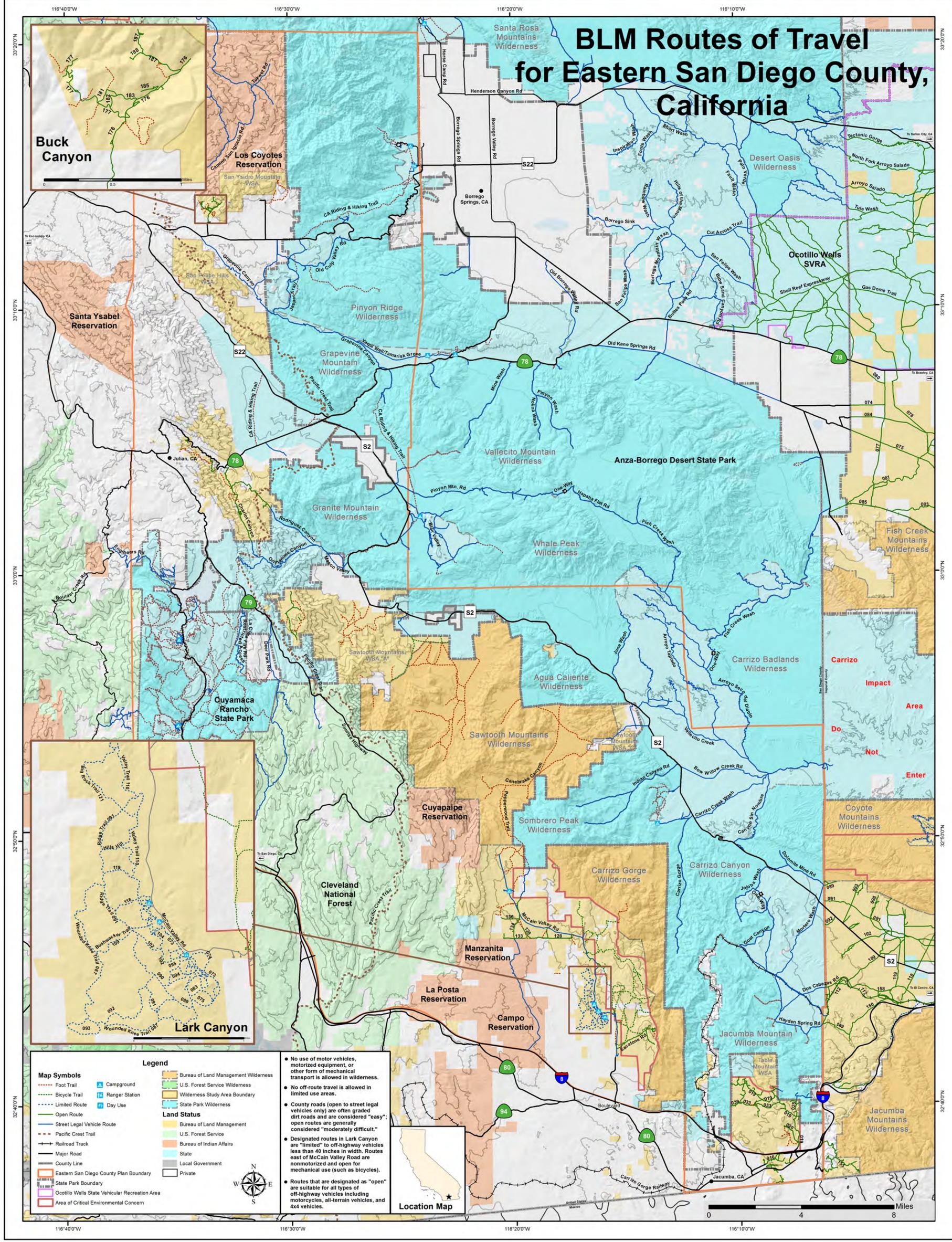
Registration

- Vehicles operated on federal and state highways and county roads must be licensed for highway use (4000 (a)(1) CVC).
- Off-highway vehicles owned by California residents must be registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles and properly display a valid Green Sticker or Red Sticker Vehicle Identification Tag (38020, 38010 CVC) on the vehicle (38170 CVC).
- Off-highway vehicles that do not have a valid registration or permit from the owner's home state (or Mexico and Canada) will be required to purchase a California nonresident permit (sticker) through selected vendors in California, Nevada, and Arizona. Permits may also be purchased from the California State Parks, 916-324-4442 (38020 CVC).

Required Equipment - Any off-highway vehicle must be equipped with an approved muffler, brakes, and spark arrester. A headlight and at least one red tail light are required for operation at night (38330 CVC).

Environmental Damage - No person shall operate an off-highway vehicle in a way likely to cause environmental damage (38319 CVC, 43 CFR 8341.1 (f) (4)).

Firearms - Firearms must not be discharged within 150 yards of residences, buildings, campsites, occupied areas, recreational areas, or domestic livestock. Shooting from or across any road is prohibited. Shooting from a vehicle is prohibited. It is unlawful to carry a loaded weapon in a vehicle (California Fish and Game Code 3004, California Penal Code 374c, 12034, and 12031, respectively).



Supplementary Rules

The following rules apply on public lands administered by the BLM California Desert District unless explicitly authorized by a permit or other authorization document issued by the BLM:

- Public nudity is prohibited at all developed sites and areas and all off-road vehicle (ORV) open areas.
- It is prohibited for a person to ride in or transport another person in or on a portion of an ORV or trailer that is not designed or intended for the transportation of passengers.
- It is prohibited to use as firewood, or to possess any firewood materials, containing nails, screws, or other metal hardware, including, but not limited to, wood pallets and/or construction debris.

- Possession of glass beverage containers is prohibited in all developed sites and areas and all ORV open areas.
- It is prohibited to place into the ground any nonflexible object, such as, but not limited to, metal or wood stakes, poles, or pipes, with the exception of small tent or awning stakes, at all developed sites and all ORV open areas.
- It is prohibited to reserve or save a camping space for another person at all developed sites and areas and all ORV open areas.
- All persons must keep their sites free of trash and litter during the period of occupancy.

