

WELCOME

Imperial County lies within the 7-million-acre Colorado Desert in southern California. This unique desert landscape is characterized by broad valleys and low, rugged mountain ranges carved by washes from the draining of seasonal rains. Though elevations range from 275 feet below sea level to nearly 10,000 feet in the mountains, most areas are below 1,000 feet. Summer daytime temperatures in the Colorado Desert can reach more than 110 degrees, and the average annual rainfall is only 2.92 inches. This region contains habitat for wildlife, supports commercial operations such as mining, renewable energy, and utility transmission, and provides a variety of recreational opportunities, including three open areas that are popular with off-highway vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts.

The public lands in western Imperial County are managed according to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980 and its amendments. In 2003, one of the amendments designated legal routes of travel for motorized vehicles in the western Colorado Desert (referred to as WECCO). A primary emphasis of the WECCO plan is the designation of routes that protect the cultural, wildlife, and other sensitive resources throughout the area while still providing visitors access to historic sites, wilderness, recreational activities, and wildlife viewing.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE



Routes of Travel Designations

There are numerous opportunities for OHV recreation on the lands managed by BLM's El Centro Field Office. Miles of trails await all types of OHV enthusiasts. 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. The WECCO planning area is designated as a "limited use" area for vehicle travel, which means that vehicles must stay on approved, signed routes (open routes) and that no cross-country vehicle travel off of those routes is allowed unless you are in a designated OHV open area.

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) 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 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.

BLM Routes of Travel for Western Imperial County, California



EMERGENCY INFORMATION: Police-Fire-Ambulance 911 or 760-339-6311

Imperial County Sheriff's Office	760-339-6311 or 1-800-452-2051
California Highway Patrol (El Centro Office)	760-482-2500
CHP Local Road Conditions	760-482-2555
U.S. Customs and Border Protection Tip Line	1-800-BE-ALERT
Border Community Threat Hotline	1-800-901-2003
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/elcentro
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park		
200 Palm Canyon Dr. Borrego Springs, CA 92004	760-767-5311	www.parks.ca.gov
Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area		
5172 Highway 78 Borrego Springs, CA 92004	760-767-5391	www.ohv.parks.ca.gov

DESERT SAFETY

In the Colorado Desert, temperatures in the summer often exceed 110 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, it is very important to advise others of where you are going and when you plan to return.

BLM/CA/GI-12/019 +8300



WILDLIFE

The Colorado Desert provides habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. While it seems that little could survive this harsh, arid environment, many species have adapted to extreme temperatures and very little rainfall. Plant communities consist of creosote bush-white burr sage scrub, desert wash habitat, and mesquite thickets. Along most routes, wildlife tracking enthusiasts will likely find tracks ranging from deer to kangaroo rat to round-tailed ground squirrel to beetles and scorpions. Close to a thousand species of insects and arachnids inhabit the desert. Bird life is plentiful, especially during migration season. Golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, kit foxes, coyotes, and badgers represent some of the larger predator species.

Maintaining the delicate balance of the desert environment is critical to the survival of the wildlife and plant life found here, particularly those species that are rare, sensitive, threatened, or endangered. Please respect the wildlife you encounter on your visit to the area, and avoid unnecessary impacts to desert habitats.

Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard

The flat-tailed horned lizard inhabits the sparsely vegetated desert surrounding the Imperial Valley and ranges into western Arizona and Baja California, Mexico. Five resource management areas have been established to conserve the species within its range. The species has a flat, round body with thornlike spikes on the crown of its head and spiky scales. To avoid predators, these lizards rely on camouflage within the sand or gravel and appear to swim when they quickly burrow into the sand to escape. Their preferred prey is ants, which they capture with their sticky tongues. The flat-tailed horned lizard is one of a variety of reptiles found within the western Colorado Desert ecosystem.

Peninsular Bighorn Sheep

Californians are often surprised to learn that bighorn sheep live in their state. Peninsular bighorn sheep can be found in the rocky terrain of the Peninsular Ranges of southern California, from the San Jacinto Mountains in Riverside County south to the desert ranges of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Baja California. Although they avoid populated areas and are sensitive to disturbance, Peninsular bighorn sheep can be seen bounding across boulders and the steep terrain of mountain passes. They depend on access to desert washes and riparian habitat, especially during lambing season. Peninsular bighorn sheep are listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



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:

- Camping is permitted for up to 14 days within a 28-day period at any location. After this, you must relocate at least 25 miles away.
- 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.
- 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.
- In accordance with the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as amended, stopping, parking, and vehicle camping is allowed within 300 feet of designated routes of travel, except within sensitive areas (such as areas of critical environmental concern), where the limit is 50 feet, and in the Elliot mine area, where the limit is 25 feet.
- Camping is prohibited within 1 mile of any of the long-term visitor areas (LTVAs), where visitors are allowed to camp for as long as 7 months.
- Tent camping is permitted within all wilderness areas managed by the El Centro Field Office.
- Camping in the Yuha ACEC is restricted to designated areas only. There are no facilities within these designated areas.

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 within limited use areas. Camp in 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. 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.

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 any are closed 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 (archaeological resources at least 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 archaeological 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>). If you have any questions regarding your activities, then please contact BLM's El Centro Field Office for authorization.

Please note that vehicle travel within the Yuha ACEC is limited to only street legal vehicles with three exceptions: routes 274, 346, and 308 are open to all vehicles. Travel on routes within the Painted Gorge area is limited to certain times of year; routes are closed to vehicle travel from January 1 through June 30 due to the lambing season for Peninsular bighorn sheep. Additionally, vehicle travel is prohibited in military training areas.

The following OHV open areas provide ample opportunities to test individual driving skills over a variety of terrains. The lands adjacent to these open areas are limited use areas, private lands, or military practice bombing ranges. Please be aware of the posted signs showing the designations of the lands you are on.

Plaster City OHV Open Area

The Plaster City area provides approximately 41,000 acres of open desert. Two staging areas, Plaster City East and West, are popular primitive camping and day use areas. Plaster City OHV Open Area is located approximately 17 miles west of El Centro on County Highway 80 (Evan Hewes Highway). It can also be reached by taking the Dunaway exit off of Interstate 8, approximately 17 miles west of El Centro, and going north 1 mile.

Superstition Mountain OHV Open Area

Superstition Mountain includes approximately 13,000 acres, ranging from sand dunes to mud hills, and is located approximately 17 miles west of El Centro. It can be reached by taking Interstate 8 west from El Centro to Drew Road, then going north 1 mile to County Highway 80 (Evan Hewes Highway). Go west on Evan Hewes Highway approximately 2 miles, then north on Huff Road approximately 5 miles, then west on Wheeler Road.

Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA)

Ocotillo Wells provides 85,000 acres of mud hills, washes, and sand dunes ranging from sea level to around 400 feet in elevation. While most of the SVRA is an open area, there are certain portions where travel is restricted to designated routes (in Truckhaven and east of Poleline Road). The SVRA can be accessed from State Highway 78 about 20 miles west of State Highway 86. For more information, contact the SVRA at 760-767-5391.

State of California Off-Highway Vehicle Laws

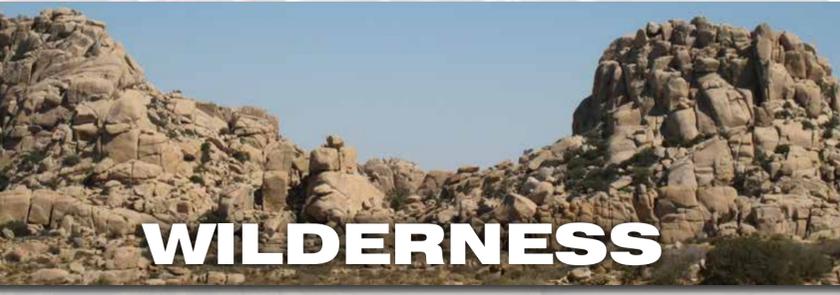
Many parts of the California Vehicle Code (CVC) are highlighted below, but not all California OHV laws are addressed here. Please remember, it is your responsibility to know the laws.

Helmet Usage - All-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders must wear an approved safety helmet (38505 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 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.



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.

Coyote Mountains Wilderness

The Coyote Mountains, a fishhook-shaped mountain range, make up 40 percent of this wilderness. Part of the Carrizo Badlands lie within the northern portion of the wilderness, their narrow and twisting gullies giving the landscape its austere, forbidding appearance. A group of unusual sandstone rock formations, believed to be 6 million years old, add to the character of this region. The barefoot gecko is known to make its home among the mountain ridges.

Fish Creek Mountains Wilderness

The Fish Creek Mountains resemble a plateau rising like a great wall above the desert basin. From a distance, few dramatic peaks are visible. However, on closer examination, a rugged land of

jagged ridges and peaks appears above twisting canyons and small valleys, creating a pristine natural environment. The steep mountain slopes contain limestone outcrops that have resisted erosion. As a result, water from cloudbursts has created narrow chutes swirling with water. Shielded from the sun's evaporating rays, water remains at the base of these chutes year-round, serving as natural tanks for wildlife. A portion of the ancient Lake Cahuilla shoreline is visible within this wilderness. The lake was a large body of fresh water that once covered the Imperial and Coachella Valleys before receding approximately 400 years ago.

Jacumba Mountains Wilderness

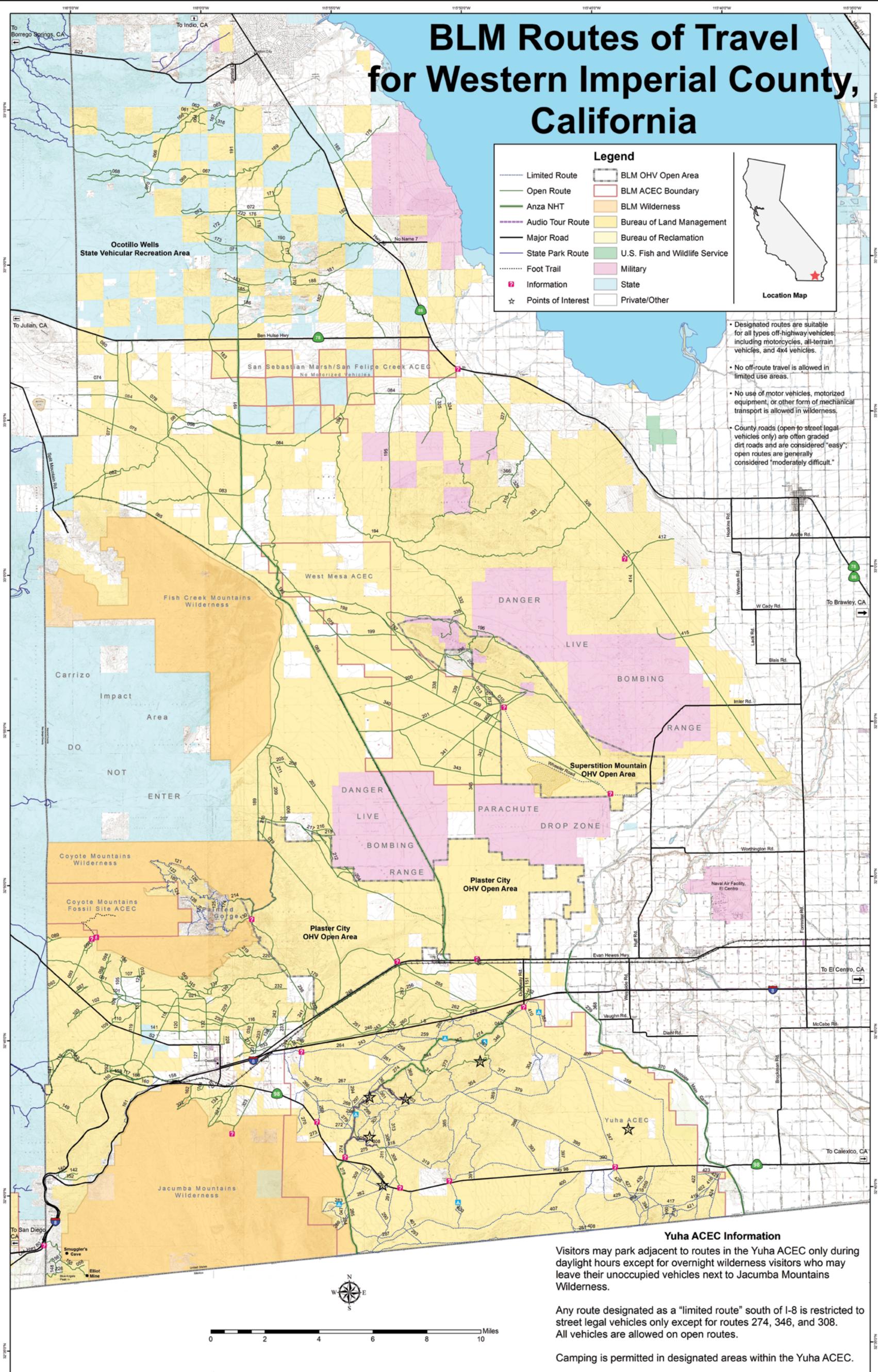
The Jacumba Mountains sit on the eastern flank of southern California's coastal Peninsular Ranges, extending to the international border. The Jacumbas are a broad range, made up of ridges and intervening valleys. Each successive ridge is lower than the next, creating a great staircase that descends dramatically from the Peninsular Ranges into the Colorado Desert. This wilderness contains four transitional areas, each containing a different set of features. The westernmost portion provides habitat for mule deer, Peninsular bighorn sheep, golden eagles, and the Mexican Trinidad Merriam kangaroo rat. Small oases of native California fan palms dot the Myer Valley/Pinto Canyon region. Rugged mountains split Myer Valley from Davies Valley, the largest valley in the wilderness area. Large areas of "desert pavement," or deposits of surface cobbles, cover the surface. Skull Valley, located on the eastern side of the Jacumba Mountains, is a closed basin with a dry lake bed on its floor.

LIMITED USE AREA
VEHICLES ALLOWED ON DESIGNATED SIGNED ROUTES ONLY
NO CROSS COUNTRY VEHICLE TRAVEL ALLOWED

ROUTE OPEN TO ALL MOTORIZED VEHICLES

LIMITED ROUTE
ROUTE RESTRICTED TO STREET LEGAL VEHICLES ONLY

BLM Routes of Travel for Western Imperial County, California

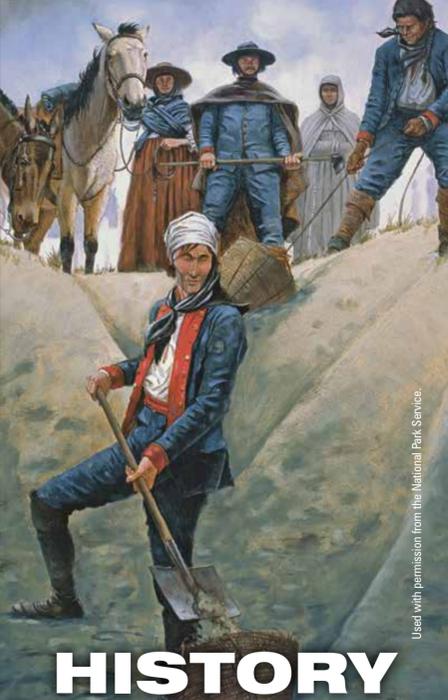


Legend

--- Limited Route	□ BLM OHV Open Area
— Open Route	□ BLM ACEC Boundary
— Anza NHT	□ BLM Wilderness
--- Audio Tour Route	□ Bureau of Land Management
— Major Road	□ Bureau of Reclamation
— State Park Route	□ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
--- Foot Trail	□ Military
★ Information	□ State
☆ Points of Interest	□ Private/Other

Location Map

- Designated routes are suitable for all types off-highway vehicles including motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and 4x4 vehicles.
- No off-route travel is allowed in limited use areas.
- No use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or other form of mechanical transport is allowed in wilderness.
- County roads (open to street legal vehicles only) are often graded dirt roads and are considered "easy"; open routes are generally considered "moderately difficult."



HISTORY

The Colorado Desert contains thousands of historic and prehistoric archaeological sites as well as other cultural resources that demonstrate the rich and important legacy of more than 10,000 years of human history in North America. Unfortunately, many of these sites have been damaged by unauthorized artifact collection, vandalism, and off-route travel. Removing or damaging artifacts and other antiquities found on public lands is illegal and subject to severe civil and criminal penalties. Please remember that cultural resources are fragile and nonrenewable—enjoy them by viewing, sketching, or photographing them. Take care not to disturb archaeological sites by leaving artifacts and other objects in place and untouched. Please help protect our archaeological legacy so that future generations may also visit, enjoy, and learn about our heritage.

★ Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and Overlook

In early December 1775, nearly a month and a half after starting his overland expedition to colonize Alta California, Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza entered the Yuha Desert. The winter journey to escape the searing summer desert heat had nearly backfired as freezing rain, snow, and biting winds threatened the success of the expedition. More than 240 people traveled with Anza, including army regulars, soldier recruits with their families, and livestock wranglers. Gathering what little firewood they could find, the colonists struggled to keep meager fires burning throughout the night. The women and children were hit especially hard.

Nearly a week after leaving the Colorado River, the group was desperate to find water. A year earlier, Native Americans showed Anza where to find water by digging near mesquite hummocks. Anza helped keep the wells in the area now known as Yuha Well open throughout the night, managing to water many of the saddle animals. When the skies cleared briefly, Anza and the settlers were dismayed to see the distant mountains covered in snow. Before the storm ended, almost 40 stock animals died from cold and injury.

As the expedition continued north, the group took refuge at San Sebastian Marsh. Here, with an ample water supply and forage for their animals, the colonists held a grand fandango, or fiesta. With bawdy songs and dancing, the colonists revelled late into the night to mark their passage across the desert. They had survived the most difficult segment of the entire journey. Ahead, a new life awaited them on the edge of the Spanish frontier.

The Juan Bautista de Anza Overlook provides a panoramic view of the Yuha Desert. To access the overlook, take route 274 north from State Highway 98 and turn east on route 308.

★ Yuha Well

More than 200 years ago Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza's party, guided by Native Americans, replenished their water supplies here before pushing on. The Yuha Well became an important oasis for later travelers and settlers who followed Anza's trail through the desert. The well is located off of route 346, east of route 302.

★ Yuha Desert

The Yuha Desert, a component of the much larger Colorado Desert, is rich in both human and natural history. It is hard to imagine that this landscape, which is millions of years old, was once an ocean floor.

The Yuha Desert is a BLM area of critical environmental concern (ACEC). It is home to sensitive plants and animals as well as historic and prehistoric cultural sites. It is a limited use area, meaning that travel is limited to designated routes of travel to protect these resources, so please observe all posted signs. An audio tour describing several points of interest in the area is available online at http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/arch_cult/yuha_pc.html; more information is available from BLM's El Centro Field Office. The Yuha Desert can be accessed from State Highway 98 and from the Dunaway Road exit off of Interstate 8.

★ Yuha Geoglyph

Geoglyphs, or intaglios, are ground figures constructed by Native Americans in the Colorado River area. These ground figures were made by removing rocks or soil from the ground surface to expose the lighter colored rock or soil below; their meaning remains unknown. The Yuha Geoglyph, located off of BLM route 274, east of route 300, was damaged extensively by vandals in 1975 and is now protected by a fenced enclosure. In 1981, the Imperial Valley College's Barker Museum and the BLM restored the Yuha Geoglyph to its present condition. Geoglyphs are extremely fragile, so please do not disturb them or travel on them.

★ Fossil Shell Beds

These remarkably well-preserved fossil shells are remnants of Miocene oceans in the Imperial Formation, which covered most of Imperial and central Riverside Counties about 6 million years ago. Rules for the collection of fossilized shells can be obtained from BLM's El Centro Field Office. The fossil shell beds are located off of route 346, west of route 353; a four-wheel drive vehicle is strongly recommended.

★ Crucifixion Thorn

This unique plant assemblage is rare in California but is fairly common in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. These plants resemble the plant said to have been placed on the head of Christ at the time of crucifixion. The plants can be seen off of State Highway 98, along route 282.

Yuha ACEC Information

Visitors may park adjacent to routes in the Yuha ACEC only during daylight hours except for overnight wilderness visitors who may leave their unoccupied vehicles next to Jacumba Mountains Wilderness.

Any route designated as a "limited route" south of I-8 is restricted to street legal vehicles only except for routes 274, 346, and 308. All vehicles are allowed on open routes.

Camping is permitted in designated areas within the Yuha ACEC.