

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park



Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



*Hidden waterfalls and
more than 100 miles of
trails through forest
and meadow silently
witness the regrowth of
Cuyamaca Rancho
State Park.*

California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(760) 765-3020**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact **interp@parks.ca.gov**.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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www.parks.ca.gov

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

13652 Highway 79

Julian, CA 92036

(760) 765-3020

East of San Diego, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park offers respite from the dry Southern California landscape. The park's 24,700 acres of oak and conifer forests and expansive meadows are broken by running streams.

Located in the Peninsular Range of mountains, Cuyamaca Peak, at 6,512 feet, is the second highest point in San Diego County. From the peak, visitors can see Anza-Borrego Desert State Park to the east and the Pacific coastline to the west. Over half of the park's acreage is designated as state wilderness.

HISTORY

Native People

The ancestors of today's Kumeyaay Indians occupied the Cuyamaca mountains from antiquity into the historic period. Their village sites are located throughout the state park, including *Ah-ha' Kwe-ah-mac'*

("what the rain left behind"), *Iguai'* ("the nest"), *Wa-Ku-Pin'* ("warm house"), *Mitaragui'* ("crooked land"), *Pilcha'* ("basket bush"), and *Guatay'* ("big house").

Historic mention of the Cuyamaca Kumeyaay begins in 1782 when Spanish Lt. Col. Pedro Fages noted that the villagers "approached me very pleasantly and I gave them some beads." However, the Kumeyaay did not want to give up their independence, and resisted missionization. In 1837 a Mexican expedition attacked the villagers of *Ah-ha' Kwe-ah-mac'* after the Kumeyaay raided two ranchos to the south, eventually exacting a promise from the Kumeyaay to leave the settlers alone.

Augustin Olvera of Los Angeles obtained the Rancho Cuyamaca grant in 1845. Olvera intended to harvest timber but his contractor, Cesario Walker "being afraid of the Indians, who made a kind of revolution, abandoned the place."

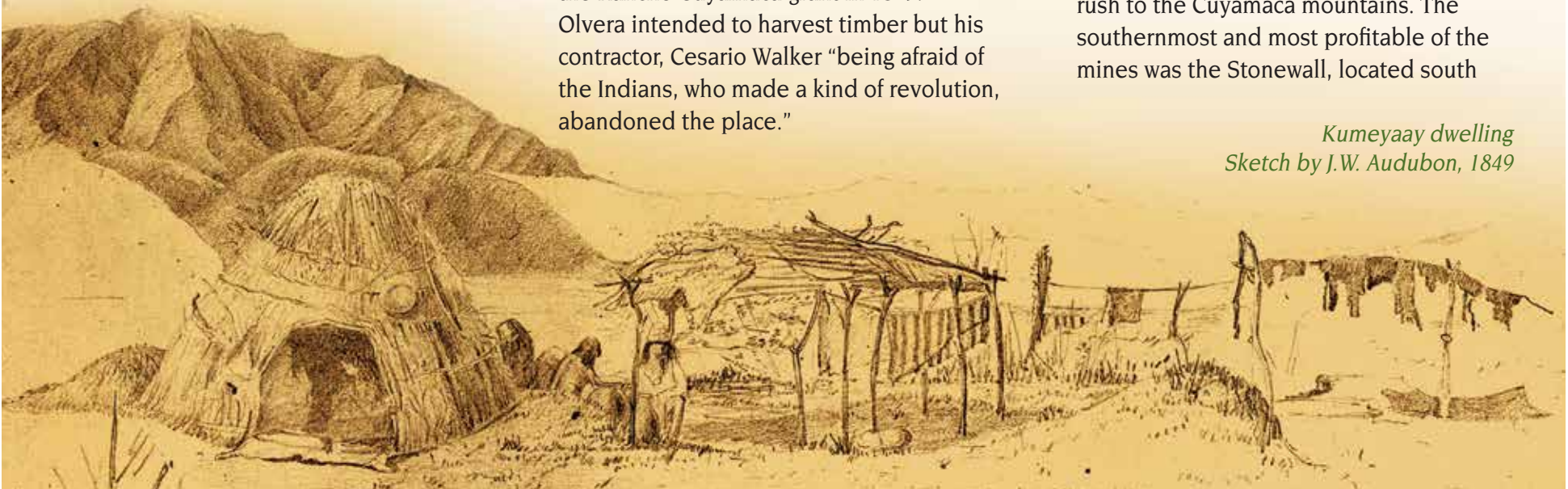


By 1857, few Kumeyaay remained. James Lassator reportedly bought 160 acres in Green Valley from the last hereditary chief of the region. Lassator's family maintained a home, hay fields, and a way-station there, supplying those using the area's early overland trails until after his death in 1865.

Gold Mining in Cuyamaca

The 1869 discovery of gold near today's town of Julian triggered a brief but frenzied rush to the Cuyamaca mountains. The southernmost and most profitable of the mines was the Stonewall, located south

Kumeyaay dwelling
Sketch by J.W. Audubon, 1849



of the Laguna Cuyamaca. By 1872, this profitable hard-rock mine supported a permanent worker's camp and mill. In 1886 mining entrepreneur and soon-to-be California Governor Robert W. Waterman purchased and expanded the Stonewall's operations. At its peak from 1886 to 1891, the mine produced over 7,000 pounds of gold while regularly employing 200 men and housing their families at its company town, Cuyamaca City. Financial problems ensued after Waterman's death, and by 1892 hard-rock mining had ended.



Stonewall Peak hikers

Later owners separated remaining gold from previously milled ore tailings with cyanide leaching until final closure in 1906. After the miners left, Cuyamaca City continued for several years as a mountain resort.

Becoming a State Park

Capitalist Ralph M. Dyar bought the rancho in 1923, along with partners planning a resort development for the lakefront's northern half. Dyar also built his family a beautiful second home in Green Valley, using local stone and salvaged materials from the Stonewall Mine ruins. The Dyar House later served as park headquarters and visitor center until the 2003 Cedar Fire reduced it to ruins.

The Great Depression ended Dyar's development plans; in 1933 he sold the property to California for its new State Park System. Cuyamaca Rancho State Park was doubly benefited in the 1930s by the placement of two Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps that provided National Park Service designers and CCC labor to develop the park's initial and distinctive "park rustic" facilities, including many of today's popular campgrounds and trails.

NATURAL HISTORY

The Cedar Fire

On October 25, 2003, a lost hunter lit a signal fire, hoping to be found. That signal fire quickly burned out of control and became the biggest wildfire in California's recorded history. The fire took nearly two weeks for containment and burned a total of 280,278 acres, including 90% of Cuyamaca Rancho's 24,700 acres.

Reforestation

The slow rate of forest regeneration has prompted a reforestation project to replant a portion of the park using grants and donations from private companies.

Severely burned areas may take years to regenerate, but grasses, shrubs and some conifers have already begun the recovery process.

Wildfires are still a threat. Please be careful to observe the park rules regarding fires, and report any fires you see to the nearest ranger station.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Today the rich forest lands at Cuyamaca Rancho are returning at a slow rate. The trees include magnificent oaks, willow, alder, and sycamore. Conifers like incense cedar, white fir, and Coulter, sugar, ponderosa, and Jeffrey pine are also making a comeback.

Visitors may see a gray fox, badger, bobcat, or mountain lion. Park amphibians include the Pacific and the canyon tree frogs, and reptiles like the mountain king snake, striped racer, and rattlesnake.



More than 100 bird species live in the area, including acorn woodpeckers, northern flickers, redtailed hawks, and sage sparrows. A bird list is available at park headquarters.



Pacific tree frog

RECREATION

Trails—Cuyamaca Rancho State Park has more than 100 miles of riding and hiking trails. The popular 3.5-mile hike up Lookout Fire Road to Cuyamaca Peak offers spectacular 360-degree views of the ocean, the desert, the Salton Sea, and across the border into Mexico. The 2-mile trail to the top of Stonewall Peak—only moderately difficult due to many switchbacks—climbs from 4,800 to 5,700 feet to overlook the old mine site. The 9-mile Harvey Moore Trail is a difficult hike beginning near the Sweetwater River Bridge north of Green Valley. The round trip takes eight hours. The restored Paso Picacho Self-Guided Nature Trail gives a brief overview of the role of change in nature. The visitor center has hiking trail maps available.



Horse trails for equestrian recreation

Interpretive programs—The Stonewall Mine site exhibits a pictorial history of this Southern California gold mine. The park's visitor center features regional plant and animal exhibits; it also describes Kumeyaay native life before European settlement.

Picnicking—Developed picnic areas at Paso Picacho and Green Valley have tables, barbeque stoves, and accessible restrooms. Paso Picacho group picnic area holds up to 75.

Camping—Family campsites with tables and fire rings are available, with accessible restrooms nearby. Trailers are limited to 30 feet long. Motor homes up to 24 feet may use Paso Picacho; Green Valley fits RVs up to 27 feet. Six rudimentary camping cabins with wooden bunks and nearby restrooms at Paso Picacho are reservable year-round.

Paso Picacho Group Camp accommodates up to 40 campers with 20 cars or light trucks. **Equestrian** campsites at Green Valley have spaces for two horses and a rig. Riding groups may camp at Los Vaqueros Group Horse Campground, near the California Riding and Hiking Trail.

Reserve cabins and campsites by calling (800) 444-7275 or visiting www.parks.ca.gov.



Accessible Cedar Cabin at Paso Picacho

Primitive horse trail camps are located at Granite Springs and Arroyo Seco, with family campsites for up to eight people. One group site holds up to 16 people. To use the trail camp, register at park headquarters, the Paso Picacho contact station, or the Green Valley campground. Primitive sites are in an unlighted, remote area, so check in early to set up camp well before dark. **Horse corrals are available, but equestrians should pack in feed because grazing is not allowed.**

PLEASE REMEMBER

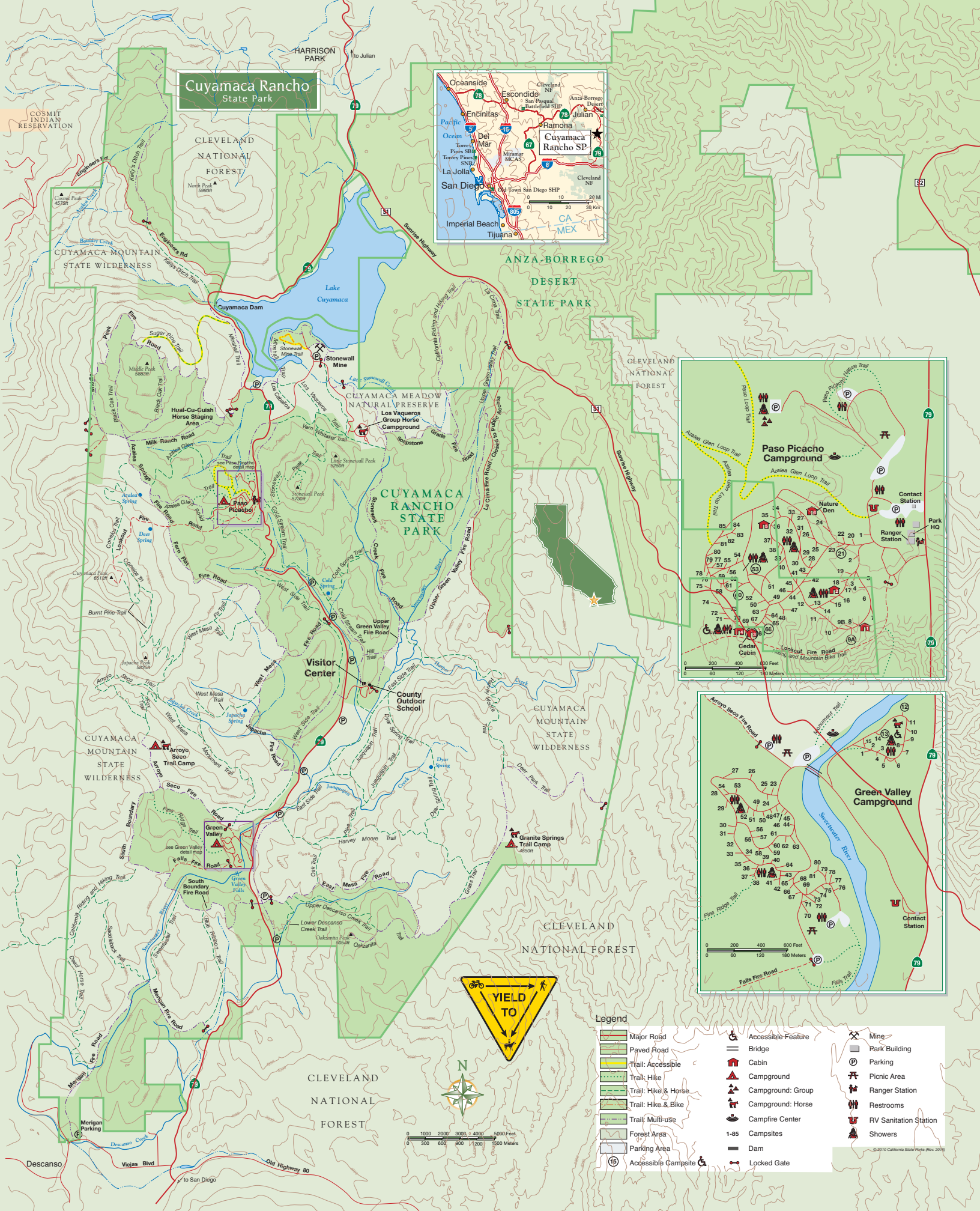
Dogs must be attended and leashed at all times. Except for service animals, pets are allowed only on paved roads.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

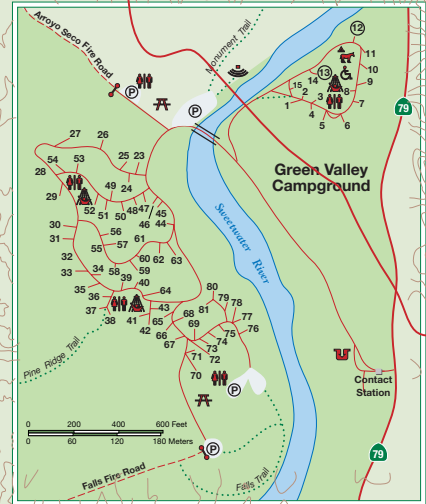
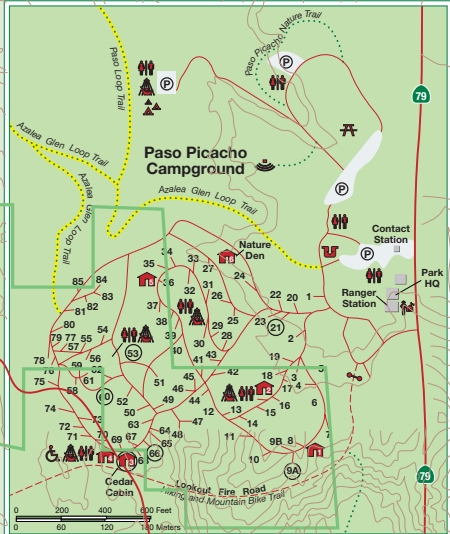
One equestrian campsite at Green Valley, Cedar Cabin and five campsites at Paso Picacho, and the Azalea Glen and Stonewall Mine hiking trails are accessible. Accessible parking and restrooms are near the visitor center. Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs 92004 (760) 767-4205
- San Pasqual Battlefield State Historic Park
15808 San Pasqual Valley Road
Escondido 92027 (760) 737-2201

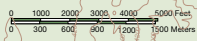


Cuyamaca Rancho State Park



Legend

- Major Road
- Accessible Feature
- Mine
- Paved Road
- Bridge
- Park Building
- Trail: Accessible
- Cabin
- Parking
- Trail: Hike
- Campground
- Picnic Area
- Trail: Hike & Horse
- Campground: Group
- Ranger Station
- Trail: Hike & Bike
- Campground: Horse
- Restrooms
- Trail: Multi-use
- Campfire Center
- RV Sanitation Station
- Forest Area
- 1-85 Campsites
- Shower
- Parking Area
- Dam
- Accessible Campsite
- Locked Gate





HIKING TRAILS

To:	From Green Valley	From Paso Picacho
Japacha Spring	2.5	6.5
Arroyo Seco	1.5	8
Airplane Monument	2	6
Merigan Parking	4.2	-
Granite Springs	4.5	7.5
Stonewall Peak	7	2
Azalea Spring	7	1
Azalea Glen	8	1.2
Cuyamaca Peak	8	3.5
Middle Peak	9	4



EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

To:	From Los Vaqueros
Azalea Spring	3.9
Dyar Spring	6.2
Sweetwater Bridge	6.5
Granite Springs	7.2
Arroyo Seco	8.5
South Border on CA Riding and Hiking Trail	11.9
William Heise County Park on Kelly's Ditch Trail	6+

No horses on Lookout Fire Road



BIKING TRAILS

From Visitor Center to:	
Stonewall Creek Fire Road	.8
Soapstone Grade Fire Road	3.1
Stonewall Mine	4.6
Milk Ranch Road	6.2
Sweetwater Turnout	1.4
From Milk Ranch Road to:	
Middle Peak (top)	2.7
Azalea Spring	2.3
Cuyamaca Peak (hard climb)	4.3
From Sweetwater Turnout to:	
East Mesa Fire Road	1.3
Granite Springs	5.8
Deer Park Trail (park boundary)	8.4

All distances in miles

Please Note: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this map. However, occasionally portions of trails may be closed or otherwise restricted. Please observe all posted orders.

This park receives support in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information, contact: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Interpretive Association
P.O. Box 204 • Descanso, CA 91916
www.crspia.org