



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management administers 342 million acres of public land which are mostly in 11 western states and Alaska. These lands comprise about 20 percent of the area of the United States. In California, BLM is responsible for 17.1 million acres of public land, and for mineral resources on 32.5 million acres of other lands. The Bureau manages public lands for recreation, minerals, livestock grazing, wildlife, watershed, timber, wilderness, and cultural values under principles of multiple use.

Clear Creek Management Area

A variety of unique features combine to make the Clear Creek Management Area an interesting place to visit. Opportunities abound for off-road vehicle recreation, mineral collecting, hunting, camping, and sight-seeing.



Safety Tips

1. Stream crossing is dangerous during heavy winter storms. Wait for stream levels to drop before crossing.
2. Use caution around mining areas. Abandoned mine shafts and structures are potential hazards.
3. Have the proper equipment, tools, clothing, and enough fuel for your travels. It's best not to ride alone.
4. Read and follow the safety precautions for asbestos.

Where To Ride



Designated areas are available for open riding. Go slow and stay to the right on main roads.

Of Clear Creek's 50,000 acres, 25,000 are designated "open" to vehicle use. This includes most of the bald hills and vehicle routes away from stream areas and other sensitive zones.



Rugged terrain challenges four-wheelers. Watch for steep drop offs.

In the Clear Creek Management Area enjoyment and safety go hand in hand. Plan to bring the following essential items with you on your trip.



1932 PHOTOGRAPH

1982 PHOTOGRAPH

Most barren hills are the result of natural processes — they were not caused by man's activities. Photo at left was taken in 1932, which can be compared to the present-day photo.

Wildlife and Hunting

This remote area provides suitable habitat for species such as the mountain lion. Golden eagles and prairie falcons also occur in the area.



Game animals include wild boar, black-tailed deer, quail, and dove. The best areas for hunting are the northwestern and southern portions of the area.

Other animals living here include bobcats, raccoons, gray foxes, turkey vultures, hawks (several species), rattlesnakes, and the California ground squirrel. Many wild animals are nocturnal — the best times to spot wildlife are early morning and early evening.

Regulations

1. Ride only on open areas and trails.
2. Go slowly and stay to the right when traveling on the Clear Creek county road and other heavily traveled routes. Vehicle use on county roads is subject to regulation under the California vehicle code.
3. No shooting within 1/4 mile of the Clear Creek road. Find a safe area for shooting away from camp areas. Discharging firearms on any public road is prohibited by section 374c of the California vehicle code.
4. Spark arrestors are required on all vehicles.
5. Do not cut live vegetation. Use only dead and down wood for campfires.
6. No camping in the San Benito Mountain Natural Area.
7. Respect the rights of private landowners and be courteous to other recreationists.
8. Leave a clean camp and a dead fire.

For Additional Information Contact:
Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 365
Hollister, CA 95024-0365
(408) 637-8183

For information on the California Off-Highway Vehicle Safety Program contact, the Foundation for Off Road Vehicle Safety at: 1-800-ALL-OHVS

Emergency Information
Dial 911
San Benito County Sheriff — (408) 637-5323

Phones are available at Idria (nearest pay phone) or at Beaver Dam CDF Station (during fire season only).

The nearest California Department of Forestry Station is Beaver Dam on the Coalinga Road, 10 miles north of the Clear Creek turnout.

Geology and Mineral Collecting



Rock hounds search for rare and beautiful minerals.



Melanite garnets.

The extensive barren hills are one of the area's most prominent features. They are made up largely of chrysotile asbestos, a form of the mineral serpentine. A massive serpentine intrusion, four miles wide and 14 miles long, roughly outlines the management area. This serpentine mineral body soaks up water like a sponge and maintains a flow in Clear Creek when most other streams have dried up. The water is unsuitable for drinking because it contains harmful asbestos fibers.

Over 100 different minerals can be found here. Some, such as our state gemstone benitoite, occur no place else on earth. Chromite, cinnabar (mercury ore), magnetite, and asbestos have been mined in the area. Many beautiful minerals are valuable as gem materials or for display. Look near rock outcrops and stream channels for these minerals.

HOW TO TREAD LIGHTLY

Obtain a Travel Map from the Resource Area, or regulations from other public land agencies. Learn the rules and follow them.

Avoid running over young trees, shrubs, and grasses — damaging them or killing them.

Stay off soft, wet roads and trails readily torn up by vehicles (particularly during hunting season). Repairing the damage is expensive.

Travel around meadows, steep hillsides, or streambanks and lakeshores easily scarred by churning wheels.

Resist the urge to pioneer a new road or trail, or to cut across a switchback.

Stay away from wild animals that are rearing young or suffering from food shortage. Stress can sap scarce energy reserves.

Obey gate closings and regulatory signs. Vandalism costs tax dollars.

Stay out of Wildernesses. They're closed to all vehicles. Know where the boundaries are.

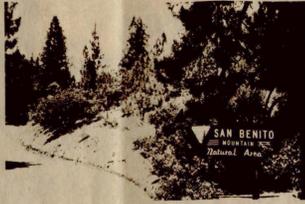
Get permission to travel across private land. Respect landowners' rights.

Future opportunities for exciting travel with your recreation vehicle are in your hands, so—

TREAD LIGHTLY AND SAFELY

Vegetation

A highly unusual plant community exists in this area. Some plants have become specifically adapted to the serpentine soil in spite of the low nutrient levels on the bald slopes. Two of these, the San Benito evening primrose (*Camissonia benitensis*) and Rayless lily (*Lilium discoides*), are considered rare or endangered.



Sensitive environmental zones such as the San Benito Mountain Natural Area are closed to vehicles to protect important natural values.

A nontypical brushland community covers most of the area. Leather oak and manzanita dominate over some of the normal chaparral species.

The Clear Creek forest is unique. Nowhere else do Jeffrey, Coulter, and Digger pines occur together. Incense cedar is found in a number of unusual places throughout the area. Oddly, this forest lacks hardwoods.

The San Benito Mountain Natural Area was established in 1971 to allow a portion of this interesting plant community to survive naturally.



San Benito Evening Primrose (*Camissonia benitensis*).

Other Resources

There are several other valuable resources present in the Clear Creek area. Portions of the area are leased for cattle grazing. In the future, timber may be harvested from some of the forest stands. Ideal sites for radio facilities are provided on San Benito Mountain (elev. 5,248 feet) and Santa Rita Peak, two of the highest mountains in the California Coast Range. Water from the area's watershed is used for agriculture, ground water recharge, wildlife, fish habitat, and recreation.



Radio facilities on Santa Rita Peak.

ASBESTOS INFORMATION

Visible in the area most enjoyable during the winter months. Airborne asbestos dust is present especially when the weather is dry and there is a known health hazard. Inhalation of asbestos has been linked with cancer and other diseases. No one can say exactly how much dust there is, but it's wise to minimize your exposure.

The Bureau of Land Management advises those who choose to visit the Clear Creek Area to follow these recommendations:

1. Stay away from the Clear Creek Management Area or wear appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing, including a respirator approved for asbestos. (Look in the Yellow Pages under Safety Equipment.)

2. During regular health check-ups, make your doctor aware of your history of asbestos exposure in Clear Creek.

3. Thoroughly wash all mud and dust from your vehicle, including wiping down all interior surfaces with a damp cloth, after you leave the area. Wash clothing worn in the Clear Creek Area separately from other clothing.

4. Do NOT drink water from streams or springs in the Clear Creek Management Area.

5. Due to the asbestos hazard, BLM DOES NOT encourage use of the Clear Creek Management Area.



The health hazard is present throughout much of the area — not just at asbestos mines.

Asbestos is a fibrous silicate mineral which occurs naturally in the soil throughout much of the Clear Creek Area. Individual asbestos fibers are very tiny — hundreds of times thinner than a human hair. When the soil is dry, asbestos fibers are easily introduced into the air by the action of vehicle tires or other physical disturbance. Airborne asbestos dust is known to be hazardous to human health.

Most statistical information on the health effects of asbestos is based on long-term, occupational exposures. In some cases, minimal exposures have resulted in very serious diseases. Available data show that the greater the exposure, the greater the risk of developing asbestos-related diseases. There is no known safe level of exposure.

On November 4, 1983 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published in the Federal Register, an emergency temporary standard for occupational exposure to asbestos. This emergency regulation reduced the allowable level of asbestos exposure to 1/4 of the previous level. In publishing this emergency regulation, OSHA labeled higher levels of exposure to asbestos dust as a grave danger to employees health.

Studies by the University of California at Berkeley have shown that short-term, recreational exposures at Clear Creek are often higher than industrial limits set by OSHA. However, overall exposures of recreationists at

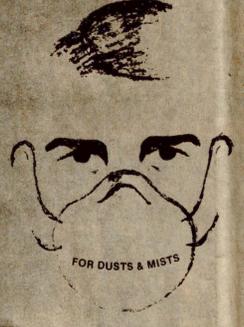
Clear Creek are probably much less than occupational exposures, due to the intermittent nature of recreational use. No one can say exactly how much of a health risk there is.

The following diseases are associated with exposure to asbestos:

Asbestosis — A condition resulting when inhaled asbestos fibers cause irreversible lung scarring. Breathing becomes very difficult. Symptoms appear ten to twenty years after exposure. This disease is similar to "black lung" in coal miners and it is usually associated with occupational exposures.

Mesothelioma — A rare, but fatal cancer of the membrane lining the chest or abdomen. It is almost always associated with asbestos exposure. Occasionally, minimal exposures, such as those experienced by family members of asbestos workers have resulted in the disease. Among heavily exposed asbestos production workers it is responsible for one out of every ten deaths. Symptoms appear twenty to forty years after exposure and death occurs within two years.

Cancer — Asbestos has been linked with cancers of the lung, stomach, large intestine, kidney, larynx, and rectum. Cancers may appear twenty to forty years after exposure. Cigarette smoking combined with asbestos exposure greatly increases the risk of lung cancer.



FOR DUSTS & MISTS

Wearing a respirator approved for asbestos dust is one way to reduce your exposure.

Clear Creek Management Area

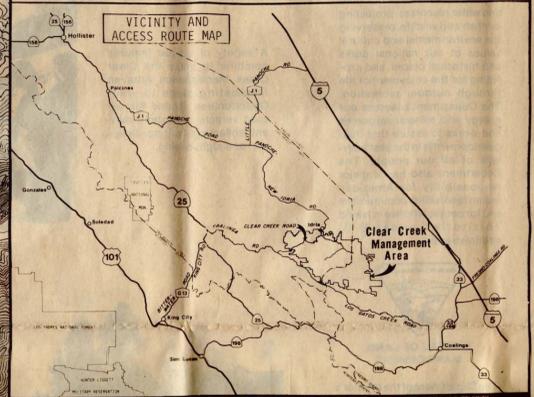
Price \$1.00



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District



CLEAR CREEK MANAGEMENT AREA

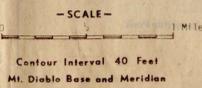


LEGEND

- Public Land (BLM)
- State Land (California)
- Private Land
- Open to Vehicle Use
- Vehicle Use Limited to Designated Routes
- Closed to Vehicle Use, except for Routes Shown
- Main Vehicle Routes (Light Line)
- County Roads (Heavy Line)
- Locked Gate
- Hazardous Asbestos Area - See Other Side
- No Shooting Zone

NOTE: Permission of landowner is required to cross private property.

U.S. Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District
Hollister Resource Area Office
P.O. Box 365
Hollister, CA 95204-0365
Phone: (408) 637-8183



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