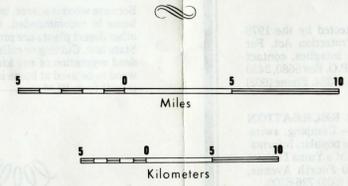
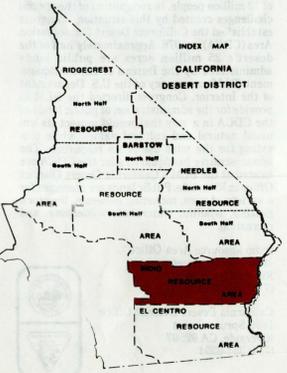


UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

**INDIO**  
RESOURCE AREA GUIDE



**LEGEND**

**ROADS AND PRIMARY ACCESS ROUTES**

- U.S., Interstate and State
- Two-Lane Paved
- Maintained Dirt
- Two-Wheel Drive (unmaintained, seasonal, high clearance recommended)
- 4-Wheel Drive
- Hiking Trail
- Resource Area Boundary
- BLM lands closed to vehicle use
- Open to motorized vehicle travel
- Park, Forest, Military and Other Areas
- Point of Interest
- Fault Line
- Cities, Towns, Services

Route Markers : U.S., Interstate, State

**CRITICAL SERVICE LOCATIONS**

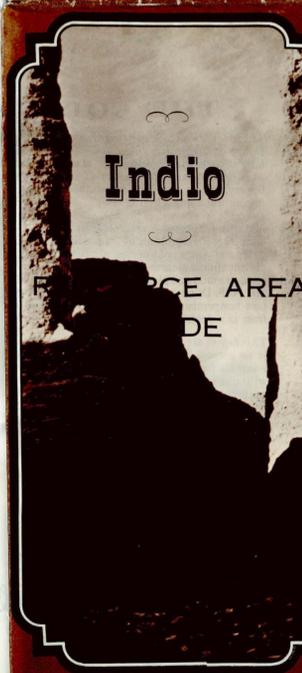
- Campground
- Gasoline Station
- Food Service
- Trailer Sanitary Station
- First Aid
- Telephone
- Viewing Area
- Rest Area

- Railroads**
- Single track
- Double or Multiple
- Standard Gauge
- Narrow Gauge
- Boundaries**
- State
- County
- Park or Reservation

- Airport
- Mine
- Landmark : School, Church, Other
- Spot Elevation in Feet
- Intermittent or Dry Stream
- Power Line
- Private Land

**BOMBING!**  
Large areas of the desert have been used for bombing ranges and maneuvers by the Armed Forces. Stay clear of any FLARES, SHELLS, or BOMBS. They may explode if disturbed. If found, please notify the nearest law enforcement office.

**Long-Term Visitor Areas**  
Long-term camping (in excess of 14 days) on BLM public land is limited to designated Long-Term Visitor Areas. A permit is required. For information, contact BLM Rangers or the Indio Resource Area Office.





# INDIO RESOURCE AREA GUIDE

## Man's Mark on the Desert



In more verdant times, perhaps as long as 100,000 years ago, early man hunted and gathered food from along streams and lakes that have long since gone dry. Research indicates that many different cultures occupied the desert through the centuries. Petroglyphs and intaglios, the mysterious ground drawings scraped into the desert floor, have been left behind to remind us of their passing.

Native Americans and their predecessors weren't the only ones to leave their marks on the land. Both Mexican and Anglo cultures have contributed. The desert is dotted with abandoned mines, old roads and trails, old homesteads and other historical features. The county's first trans-desert road, the Bradshaw Trail, built in 1863 to carry prospectors and supplies from California's coast to the new-found gold fields of Arizona, is still traveled today.

People continue to leave their mark on the land. For all its open space the desert is quite a busy place. Agriculture remains an important industry in both the Coachella and Colorado River Valleys. The land is criss-crossed by highways, railroads, aqueducts, and power-lines. The Coachella Valley has become a highly desirable place to live and is undergoing one of the highest growth rates of any area in the nation.

### ENERGY FROM THE DESERT

The search for energy is bringing new hopes and challenges to the desert. Interest in the prospects for new oil and natural gas fields is keen. So is the research to learn the secret of turning the Salton Sea's geothermal potential into inexpensive electricity. One of our newest alternative power projects involves one of our earliest energy sources — the wind. The future development of wind parks on public and private lands along the San Geronimo Pass will pioneer the technology of this emerging energy industry.



### OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV) USE

All public lands in the California Desert are designated in one of three vehicle-use categories: "Open," "Closed," or "Limited."

"Open Areas" are areas available for cross-country use. Vehicles may be operated anywhere within the posted boundaries of open areas.

"Closed Areas" are closed to all vehicle use. Off-highway vehicle use is prohibited. Hiking, horseback riding, and other forms of nonvehicular use are permitted.

"Limited Areas" are areas where vehicle use is allowed subject to some restrictions. In some limited areas, use is permitted on existing routes but cross-country travel is not allowed. In other limited areas, use is limited to specific "approved routes." Some areas may also be limited with respect to the time of year vehicles may be operated or on maps available from BLM offices. Unless otherwise posted, wayside parking or camping are limited to within 300 feet of routes of travel in limited areas.

Please help protect your public lands by observing OHV designations. Watch for OHV signs and read them carefully. Violation of OHV restrictions is punishable by fines and/or imprisonment.

For further information on OHV use, contact the Indio Resource Area or California Desert District Office of BLM.

# Welcome!

... to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Indio Resource Area! Over 1.6 million acres of public land stretching over the eastern two-thirds of Riverside County are available for you to explore and enjoy.

The location of the California Desert makes it an unusual recreation resource. Nowhere else in the world is so much easily accessible public land so close to a large, highly mobile, metropolitan population center.

We hope this brochure will help you have a safe, enjoyable visit. Whether you are a camper, hiker, photographer, hunter, sightseer, rockhound, or off-highway enthusiast, many opportunities await you.



### ADAPTING TO THE DESERT

While the creosote, burro bush, and brittle bush make up most of the plant cover, a surprising number of species can be found. Adaptation and perhaps patience are the keys to survival in this hot, arid land. Ephemeral spring wildflowers patiently wait. Only when temperature, daylight, and moisture mix into the right combination will the desert wildflowers literally burst forth with dazzling profusion. Other year-round plant residents adapt to the harshness and lack of water in a number of ways. The creosote bush has "learned" to take advantage of brief rain showers. It has a shallow root system that spreads close to the surface to catch moisture before it can evaporate. In contrast, a mesquite tree's roots dig deep, as far as 50 to 60 feet down, enabling them to tap underground water sources.

Animals must adapt to survive as well. Most simply wait out the daylight heat and are active only at night. The kangaroo rat, a common inhabitant, has adapted to the desert so well that they can go their entire lives without taking a drink. Their bodies manufacture water from the food they eat.

Each point of interest has been assigned a number which appears on the map. In addition, location coordinates keyed to the map are shown in parentheses.

**1 WHITEWATER CANYON (B-3)** — Access to the canyon is provided from the Whitewater Exit off Interstate 10, near the community of Cabazon. Supported by snow melt from Southern California's highest peak, Mt. San Geronimo, Whitewater Canyon provides a unique transition between the parched desert floor and the forested mountain slopes. The fast-running, shallow Whitewater River is ideal for single day outings and water "fun." Care must be taken to avoid the privately owned property in the canyon area.

A segment of the Pacific Crest Trail spans Whitewater Canyon. The Pacific Crest Trail forms the major western component of our National Scenic Trail. This continuous equestrian and hiking trail follows a 2,400-mile course along the Pacific mountain crest from Canada to Mexico. A 15-mile segment of the PCT traverses the eastern end of the Indio Resource Area through Whitewater and Mission Creek Canyons. Currently, the temporary Pacific Crest Trail route is in use until the permanent route alignment and trail construction can be completed.

**2 BIG MORONGO CANYON (C-2)** — Access from the north is through Covington Park and Big Morongo Wildlife Reserve located in the town of Morongo Valley. Entrance to the canyon's south end is accessible via the dirt gas line road which leaves Indian Avenue 1 mile east of its junction with Hwy. 62.

The year-round flow of fresh water through Big Morongo Canyon supports one of the largest cottonwood/willow riparian habitats on the California Desert. An unusually high number of both plants and animals, including mule deer, bobcat, and bighorn sheep are found here. Bird diversity is the canyon's trademark, though. Over 235 different species have been found here. Several rare or unusual sightings have helped Big Morongo Canyon gain a national reputation as a birding "hotspot."

Big Morongo Canyon provides excellent day hiking. Travel through the canyon is restricted to foot and horseback riding.

**3 PALM SPRINGS AREA (C-4)** — Nestled at the eastern base of the San Jacinto Mountains in the Coachella Valley, Palm Springs and its environs offer a variety of activities and vistas.

**3A. PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY (B-4)** — Located north of Palm Springs off of Highway 111, the tramway originates at the 2,000-foot level and terminates at the 8,000-foot level in the heart of Mt. San Jacinto State Park. Hiking trails into the surrounding San Jacinto mountains offer spectacular views.

Although a short trip, the ride covers four complete geologic life zones. This would be approximately equivalent to the changes one would find when traveling from Sonora, Mexico, to Alaska.

**3B. PALM SPRINGS DESERT MUSEUM (C-5)** — Located in downtown Palm Springs, the museum provides exhibits of direct interest to desert users. One large display, "The Saga of the Desert," interprets the natural history of the desert and focuses on geology, biology, and anthropology. The second exhibit, "The Hall of the Southwestern Indian," is concerned with the relationship between the local Cahulla Indians and tribes in Arizona.

**3C. THE LIVING DESERT RESERVE (D-6)** — Located in Palm Desert near Highway 111, this park incorporates many miles of nature trails which reflect six different desert habitats: Wash beds, sand dunes, rock bajadas, barren hillsides, creosote bush flats, and an ephemeral lake. Over 20 species of mammals live in the reserve and a variety of desert vegetation provides refuge for many species of birds.

**3D. PALMS TO PINES HIGHWAY (D-6)** — State Highway 74, known as the Palms-to-Pines Highway, joins the community of Palm Desert with the mountain communities up the San Jacinto Mountains. The twisting road, which climbs dramatically through the Santa Rosa Mountains, provides outstanding examples of the contrasting desert and mountain geology and vegetation. Each turn exposes spectacular views of the valley floor.

Vegetation changes quickly from palms, creosote, and other desert varieties to pines, manzanita, and juniper in the higher elevations. Numerous turnoffs are provided for viewing and photography.

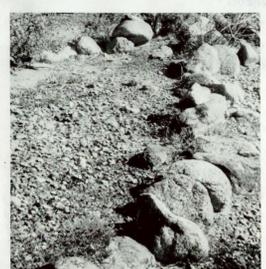
A BLM interpretive display is located at the vista point overlook.

**4 SAN ANDREAS FAULT ZONE (D-4, E-4)** — North of Interstate 10 along the southern base of the Indio Hills, evidence of the San Andreas Fault Zone is apparent. An ancient fault trace is highlighted by palm oases which cling to the feet of the Indio Hills. Movement along the fault crushes the rocks, creating a claylike fault " gouge " that retains water. Vegetation is attracted to these linear gouge zones, and is indicated by lines of palms on the hillsides.

**5 LAKE CAHUILLA COUNTY PARK (E-6)** — This man-made lake and county park is situated at the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains near the community of La Quinta. There is excellent fish & an interesting archaeological site nearby. Circular rock structures called "fish traps" were built by the Cahulla Indians over four hundred years ago to catch fish. To view the traps, you must obtain permission from the private landowner. The fish traps were built on the shoreline of ancient Lake Cahulla which once filled the Salton Trough. The beach line of this lake is clearly visible on the mountainside above the "traps." Note how the dark rugged rock of the mountain changing abruptly to the lighter colored sand and gravel beach terraces of the ancient lake.

**6 SANTA ROSA MOUNTAINS (C-5)** — The BLM and the California Department of Fish and Game are working together to manage the peninsular bighorn sheep habitat in the Santa Rosa Mountains. These mountains contain the largest population of this species of bighorn sheep in the United States. Unfortunately, sheep habitat has been lost due to increased development of private lands. The intent of the cooperative project in the Santa Rosa Wildlife Habitat Area is to preserve the pristine character of the habitat within the wildlife area to create a lasting sanctuary for these majestic animals.

While motor vehicle access to the mountains is limited, with some areas closed to vehicular travel to protect sensitive resources, excellent hiking opportunities abound.



**7 MECCA HILLS RECREATION AREA (H-6)** — Five miles north of Mecca, turn off Highway 195 onto Painted Canyon Road. Follow the dirt road 3.8 miles to the main camping area. Located one-half hour from Indio, the Meccas provide a variety of recreational and educational opportunities such as motorized vehicle use, sightseeing, photography, wilderness, and scientific research.

Of the 41,300 acres contained in the Mecca Hills Recreational Area, over 20,400 acres are public lands managed by BLM. In order to preserve a safe, high quality experience for the recreational pursuits available here, the Mecca Hills have been divided into motorized and nonmotorized use zones. The northwest half, nonmotorized use area, offers outstanding hiking, camping, and sightseeing opportunities. The southeast half provides similar recreational opportunities plus an extensive network of routes of travel ideal for OHVs. Vault toilets are the only facility provided.

Spectacular geologic scenery abounds in the Painted Canyon area within the Mecca Hills. This colorful canyon country is located on the San Andreas Fault.

**8 SALTON SEA (H-8)** — Between the years 1905 to 1907, flood waters from the Colorado River broke through a canal bank in Mexico and flowed westward into the Salton Sink forming what is now known as the Salton Sea. Covering about 360 square miles, this inland salt lake lies 235 feet below sea level and averages 12 feet in depth.

Recreationists come year-round to the Salton Sea to boat, water-ski, fish, hunt, and camp. The best fishing for corvina and sargo takes place during the summer months when water temperatures rise to the 90 degree range. **Salton Sea State Recreation Area**, a unit of the State Park System oriented toward boating and camping, is located along the northeast shore. For information, contact Salton Sea State Recreation Area, General Delivery, North Shore, CA 92254. Phone (619) 393-3052. West shore developments are located along Highway 86 near Salton City, Salton Beach, and Desert Shores.

**9 JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT (J-3)** — This large National Monument (over 850 sq. miles) provides a transition zone between the Mojave Desert to the north and the Colorado Desert to the south. It is located north of Interstate 10 in the Little San Bernardino Mountain area.

Joshua Tree National Monument was established in the 1930s to protect some unique desert terrain. Unusual rock outcrops, spectacular springtime wildflower displays (depending upon rainfall), extensive stands of Joshua trees and palm oases are just a few of the many attractions available. Campsites and picnic areas, in addition to other visitor facilities, are located throughout the monument.

**10 OROCOPIA MOUNTAINS (I-7, J-7)** — The rugged Orocoopia Mountains support one of the largest herds of desert bighorn sheep in Riverside County, comprised of about 50 animals. The Red Canyon Jeep trail, which skirts the north rim of Red Canyon, provides excellent views of the Chuckwalla Mountains and Chuckwalla Bench from the brightly colored walls of this canyon.

**11 THE BRADSHAW TRAIL (I-7 to S-8)** — In the early 1860s, mining equipment and supplies were transported by ship from San Francisco to the gold mines at La Paz, Arizona, by way of the Gulf of California and up the Colorado River. To reduce the time required to move the supplies in, and the gold out, William Bradshaw explored an overland route from San Bernardino. Following the direction of local Indians, a stagecoach route was established, which was to become known as the Bradshaw Trail. Beginning at Dos Palmas (near what is now the Salton Sea), the trail ran through the Chuckwalla Valley and ended at Bradshaws Ferry on the Colorado River. The trail was used extensively between 1862 and 1877. At this time two factors, reduced gold output and the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad track to Yuma, Arizona, virtually eliminated the need for the trail.

When following the Bradshaw Trail today, you must take extreme caution to insure that you do not inadvertently enter the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range, which is located immediately south of the trail.

**12 CHUCKWALLA BENCH (M-7)** — The "Bench" is a scenic plateau of bajadas (raised plains of merging alluvial fans), washes, and desert pavement located between the Chuckwalla Mountains and the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range. This area is recognized as one of the best examples in California of a diverse Colorado Desert plant community. The Chuckwalla Bench is a natural cactus garden with nine different species of cacti, one of which is the rare 6- to 15-foot-high Munz Cholla cactus. It is also an important refuge for the protected desert tortoise, our California State reptile. The historic Bradshaw Trail, which runs along the southern boundary, provides vehicle access through the Chuckwalla Bench.

**13 HAUSER GEODE BEDS (Q-9)** — Located 8 miles south of Coon Hollow Campground just inside Imperial County, offer a popular rock-hound area for small round geodes. Petrified palm root, Jasper and agate also lure rock collectors. Look for previously dug holes and trenches, but stay clear of the deeper holes having dangerous overhangs which may collapse.

**14 WILEY WELL CAMPGROUND (R-7)** — This historic well and wash-side campground is situated along Wiley Well Road 9 miles south of Interstate 10, where the old Bradshaw Trail intersects the well-maintained Wiley Well Road. Twenty-one primitive campsites are available next to the dry wash where ironwood and palm trees give some shade. Picnic tables, grills, water and vault toilets are provided. A sanitary disposal station for trailers is available at the Wiley Well Rest Area on Interstate 10. Campers should bring their own firewood.

**15 RICE VALLEY DUNES (S-2)** — These low shifting dunes are located 20 miles north of Blythe. From Blythe take Lovekin Avenue north to the Blythe-Rice Road. This is an open area for OHV recreational use.

**16 GIANT INDIAN INTAGLIOS (U-4)** — Approximately 15 miles north of Blythe just west of Highway 85, the route to these huge scrapings in the desert's crust is well signed. These giant figures of men and animals are significant cultural resources. The intaglios (in-TAL-ios) are fine examples of a phenomenon rare in all human history. Equivalent examples are known in only a few places over the entire world.

Whether the figures were constructed for ritual use or made simply as art objects is not entirely clear. Much remains to be learned about these giant ground figures.

Cultural resources are protected by the 1979 Archaeological Resources Protection Act. For further information on the intaglios, contact BLM's Yuma District Office, P.O. Box 5680, 2450 Fourth Ave., Yuma, Arizona 85364. Phone (602) 726-6300.

**21 COLORADO RIVER RECREATION SITES (T-9 and vicinity)** — Camping, swimming, fishing, and boating are popular. Information can be obtained from BLM's Yuma District Office, P.O. Box 5680, 2450 Fourth Avenue, Yuma, Arizona 85364. Phone (602) 726-6300.

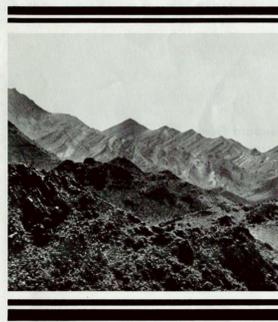
# Points of Interest

(refer to map on reverse side)

## THE COLORADO DESERT

The Indio Resource Area lies within the Colorado Desert portion of the larger Sonoran Desert, or Low Desert, a fascinating land of endless horizons, mysterious landscapes, and unique natural beauty. It can also be a harsh, and at times, uncompromising environment. The Colorado Desert is recognized as the hottest, driest desert in the United States. Rainfall is scarce and unpredictable. Precipitation averages five inches a year, and sometimes comes all at once during violent thunderstorms. In the winter, temperatures are mild and pleasant, usually between 40° and 70°F. During the summer though, the hottest temperatures in the nation are recorded from this desert.

This desert area is a geologist's paradise. There is an extraordinary variety of rock types and minerals found here, including some minerals with enormous commercial value. Many geological processes and phenomena can be observed. One of our earth's most active architects, the San Andreas Fault, is clearly discernible in several locations. Between Desert Hot Springs and the Mecca Hills.



### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The vast open spaces of the California Desert are uniquely situated within a few hours' drive of 12 million people. In recognition of the special challenges created by this situation, Congress established the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) in 1976. Approximately half of the desert's 25 million acres are public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Congress directed the BLM to provide for the administration of public lands in the CDCA in a way that would protect its unusual natural and cultural values while providing for the wise use of its resources. The administrative headquarters for the CDCA are located at the BLM's California Desert District Office in Riverside. Public lands are managed for a variety of uses, including minerals, livestock grazing, wildlife, watershed, wilderness, and recreation.

Indio Resource Area Office  
1695 Spruce Street  
Riverside, CA 92507  
(714) 351-6663

California Desert District Office  
1695 Spruce Street  
Riverside, CA 92507  
(714) 351-6394

